



**United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan  
Office of the Force Commander**

**FORCE COMMANDER'S REMARKS DURING THE HANDOVER CEREMONY  
OF THE COMBINED SPLA AND UPDF CONTINGENTS TO RTF COMMAND  
ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Chief Guest, Governor Joseph Bakosoro,

SRSG Moussa,

Ambassador Madeira,

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

I speak on behalf of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Her Excellency Hilde Johnson who would have been here but has other engagements.

It is an honour to be present at the handover of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Ugandan Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) contingents of the Regional Task Force (RTF) to the RTF Command.

UNMISS recognizes the importance of the role of the Regional Task Force – a joint AU and UN initiative, focused on security in the sub-region, particularly in the areas where Uganda, South Sudan DRC and CAR intersect.

We are in the geographical heart of Africa, and securing this region will contribute in no small way to guaranteeing the peace and development of the peoples of this part of Africa.

UNMISS is happy to support this effort. It is also expected to do so: The UN SC has called upon UNMISS to "***coordinate with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and participate in regional coordination and information mechanisms to improve protection of civilians and support***

***disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts in light of the attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the Republic of South Sudan and requests the Secretary-General to include in his UNMISS trimesterly reports a summary of cooperation and information sharing between UNMISS, the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), and regional and international partners in addressing the LRA threats".***

UNMISS equally has a Protection of Civilian (PoC) mandate in relation to the LRA threats in South Sudan. In considering the deployment of our troops, UNMISS took this threat into consideration. Our deployments in Yambio, Ezo and Tambura are such examples. Rwandan Battalion's active patrolling along the sensitive border areas, in the areas of these deployments, comprise an effective component of UNMISS PoC approach.

I must state however that UNMISS does not have a mandate to conduct joint operations in the hunt for the LRA; except in relation to the PoC threat.

UNMISS has provided basic support to the AU-RTF in Yambio including an office, internet facility, etc. UNMISS Military Liaison Officers have regular meetings with the AU-RTF Command with a view to enhancing military and civilian information sharing and coordination. Indeed, the SRSG and I have also paid visits and engaged with the RTF with a view to facilitating coordination.

Finally, let me use this opportunity to appreciate the efforts of the United States and its advisors who have been supporting through training of the contingents, intelligence and technical expertise, etc in the common effort aimed at eliminating the LRA menace.

I thank you on behalf of the SRSG and wish you all the best from UNMISS.

Thank you.