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UNHCR saddened by deadly incident in South Sudan's Doro refugee camp

JUBA, South Sudan, (UNHCR) – The UN Refugee Agency is deeply saddened by the tragic death of a refugee and two local South Sudanese who sustained fatal injuries during an incident in Upper Nile's Doro refugee camp this week.

UNHCR staff on the ground are gathering exact details about the circumstances of these deaths. However, initial reports suggest that members of the host communities and refugees clashed on Monday during a football match organized as part of UNHCR's broader efforts to promote peaceful coexistence among communities.

Tensions have been growing between the two communities for weeks over the alleged theft of pigs and goats. Refugees and locals have traded accusations over looting of livestock, but further investigation is required to confirm the facts. Sadly, Monday's incident led to further inter-community violence and deterioration of the security situation in Maban. As a result, scores of injured were rushed to Bunj hospital and a number of houses were burnt to the ground on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"This is an act of senseless violence and our thoughts and prayers are with those families who have lost their loved ones," says UNHCR Representative Ahmed Warsame.

UNHCR in coordination with South Sudan's Commission for Refugee Affairs continue to engage the local authorities and representatives of both the refugee and host community to help calm down the situation. UN peacekeepers have immediately deployed to the scene to support the local authorities in re-establishing order and have established a buffer zone between the Sudanese and South Sudanese populations.

The security environment remains volatile. "We are very concerned with reports of the heightened presence of armed groups in Maban camps as well as weapons circulation," says Warsame. "Whilst deeply appreciating the hospitality and generosity of South Sudan and its people towards refugees, we strongly appeal to the authorities to provide safety and security to those in need and to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps. UNHCR will continue to work with communities and partners to enhance social cohesion and to promote redress and reconciliation in Maban."

South Sudan hosts more than 266,000 refugees, mostly from South Kordofan and Blue Nile States in Sudan. Over 134,000 refugees live in four camps in Upper Nile's Maban County.

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