

THE LATEST FROM SOUTH SUDAN

“In my briefing to Fr. General I had said on 18th December'13 that the lawlessness has not spread to other parts of the country. Within a General, two key towns, Bor and and though the national army death toll was very heavy. Later on rebels. Solidarity with South



between these two army camps, and for days they could not get out of their house because of the heavy shooting between the rebels and the national army. They were lying on the floor most of the time.

few days after my letter to Fr. Jongeli were captured by the rebels recaptured these two key towns the Malakal was also attacked by the Sudan has a large compound

Though, there was some kind of relative calm in and around Juba towards the end of the year we began to hear that the rebels were planning to launch an attack on the capital, Juba. Last Saturday (4th January '14) around 9 pm our sisters from Yei called and informed us that there was heavy shooting in and around Yei and they, the sisters, were worried and they did not know what to do. In fact, they were all lying on the ground fearing the bullets. At around 2.30 am, the same night, the Cathedral administrator of Yei diocese Fr. Tom Poru called me to inform about the shooting in Yei and also to find out, whether there was any lawlessness or shooting in Lainya. We did not have any problems here in Lainya.

According to Fr. Emmanuel Sebit, the Secretary General of the Catholic Diocese of Yei, close to Yei town, there are so many military camps and the Commanders of the Army in Yei County as well as in Morobo County are officers from the Nuer tribe and last Saturday night they defected with soldiers belonging to the Nuer tribe. They were the ones shooting and creating panic in and around Yei town. In the night itself they left for the bush and nobody knows where they are or where they have gone or where they are heading towards? Their disappearance to the bush has created panic and fear among the common people. Though peace talks are taking place in Addis-Ababa, we are also hearing rumors that the soldiers loyal to the former Vice-President are organizing themselves to take the national capital, Juba. Though the curfew hours were relaxed a bit, after the fresh shooting incident on 4th January '14 night, in and around Juba the present curfew hours are from 6 pm to 8 am.

5th January being a Sunday, I had planned to go to one of the outstation chapels and when I tried to contact the catechist of the chapel, I was told not to go there for the people were afraid of the rebels. So I went to another chapel for mass 12 kms away from the parish centre and did not meet any persons or vehicles on the way. A handful of people turned out for the Mass. Though, Lainya is not affected so far, hardly anyone came for the Mass last Sunday, people preferred to remain in their homes, fearing the rebels. Because of the situation, hardly any trading is taking place here in Lainya and hardly anything is available in the market or in stores and even if some things are available, they are very expensive. We do not starve. So far, we have enough to eat and drink. We have a small vegetable garden that is helping us greatly.

This morning (7th January '14) the Secretary General of the Diocese of Yei called us to inform that we should suspend any visit to the chapels till further notice. He also cited an example saying yesterday evening a vehicle was ambushed just 12 kms away from our place. It could be the work of the rebels, the govt. soldiers, or thieves, we do not know. Our Bishop was on his way to Juba to attend a meeting

yesterday and the soldiers refused to allow him to continue with his journey, for security reasons. Today too we do not see any movement of either persons or vehicles on the road. Though, so far we are not directly affected we can see some kind of fear, uneasiness and restlessness among our people.

Thanks for your prayers and concern.

Please keep the people of South Sudan and all of us in your prayers.

Sincerely Yours,

Fr. Francis SVD”