

South Sudan: UN Mission weighs re-establishing presence in north-eastern town

1 November 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping mission is expected to reach vulnerable people in remote parts of South Sudan, as it takes a more “nimble and proactive” approach, the head of the operation said Wednesday during a visit to a hard-to-reach area in the country’s north-east.

“It’s clear that the needs of people in this location are immense,” said David Shearer, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)), adding that UNMISS is looking at ways of extending a presence in Akobo, a town near the border with Ethiopia.

The mission had operated a base in the town but it was closed following an attack in December 2013 in which two Indian peacekeepers and thirty civilians were killed.

Some 71,000 displaced people are currently living in Akobo and the surrounding area after fleeing fighting between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and opposition forces in the north-east.

About 10 to 15 humanitarian agencies are working in Akobo, which lies in an opposition-held part of South Sudan. “As UNMISS, we need to reach communities in need in all parts of the country, regardless of their ethnic or political background,” Mr. Shearer said.

The UNMISS mandate is to protect civilians and help create an environment conducive to the delivery of humanitarian aid, he added, “so it was important to hear from the humanitarians working here how the presence of peacekeepers and other mission personnel can help.”