

U.S. Troops Sent to South Sudan to 'Evacuate Citizens'



Juba, July 14 (RHC)-- The United States Africa Command, or AFRICOM, has sent about 40 soldiers to South Sudan's capital of Juba to facilitate the evacuation of U.S. embassy personnel. The U.S. State Department says the decision takes place amid a tense ceasefire announced earlier this week following days of fierce fighting between President Salva Kiir's troops and rebels backing former Vice President Riek Machar.

Meanwhile, Washington said it was organizing flights to evacuate non-essential staff and U.S. citizens wishing to leave South Sudan, since commercial flights remain cancelled. Charter flights are reportedly evacuating hundreds of aid workers and other foreign citizens.

Renewed fighting between the government and rebels has led to a surge in violence in the world's youngest country, leaving at least 270 people dead since last Friday and risking the country's plunge into a new civil war.

Both the government and rebels have been accused of perpetrating ethnic massacres, recruiting and killing children and carrying out widespread rape, torture and forced displacements of populations to purge their opponents from areas.

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