



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**8987**<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Monday, 7 March 2022, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mrs. Alhefeiti . . . . . (United Arab Emirates)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Ms. Dautllari
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
France . . . . .	Mrs. Gasri
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Boateng
India . . . . .	Mr. Raguttahalli
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Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kimani
Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation . . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2022/156)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2022/156)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; Major General (Retired) Charles Tai Gituai, Interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; and Ms. Riya Williams Yuyada, civil society briever.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/156, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

**Mr. Haysom:** I thank the Council for this opportunity to brief it on developments in South Sudan.

This year, 22 February marked the two-year anniversary of the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. In that period, the ceasefire continued to largely hold and civilian casualties were significantly reduced over the past year. Executive appointments at the national and state levels were concluded. The Transitional National Legislative Assembly and Council of States were reconstituted, as were the state parliaments. Moreover, key institutions of Government at the national and state levels are in operation. The Cabinet endorsed the permanent constitution-making bill, and a task force was established to operationalize the transitional justice mechanism of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

Despite a formidable legislative agenda, parliamentary proceedings are now in motion. The

debate on the 2021-2022 national budget is a positive step, particularly in view of reforms that South Sudan has undertaken. Similarly, the President's recent commitment to economic and financial management reforms is welcome. I also acknowledge the launch of the joint technical working group, in which the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), supporting the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission and other partners, is advancing the design of a community violence reduction project. The project will serve as a bridge until national plans are in place for a broader DDR programme.

I also welcome the decision of the Pagan Amum and General Paul Malong factions of the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA) to engage with the Government of National Unity, under the Community of Sant'Egidio-led mediation initiative. I encourage the SSOMA faction, led by Thomas Cirillo, to join those efforts, as the hold-out parties also have a responsibility to promote peace in South Sudan.

As we enter the remaining 12 months of the transitional period and even as we acknowledge some progress, we are mindful of the accumulation of unfulfilled commitments and the imperative to address them in the limited time at hand. Key pending benchmarks relate to the necessary conducive political and civic space, as well as technical and logistical prerequisites and an agreed timetable for free and fair elections. That is intended to bring the transitional period to a close.

While UNMISS stands ready to support the electoral process, the Government has not yet pronounced on the role of UNMISS or on a time frame for the elections. Critically, the constitution-making process bill is still pending and the process of drafting a new constitution for the country remains stalled. Likewise, although the parties have engaged on transitional security arrangements, the actual graduation of unified forces is yet to commence, with no agreement on the command structure.

Stakeholders agree that the sluggish implementation pace is a cause of disillusionment among the people of South Sudan. That worrisome trend has the potential to undermine the peace agreement. In that connection, the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission has called for the parties to resolve their

disputes, as provided for in the peace agreement, as it remains the agreed pathway to sustainable peace.

Slow implementation comes at a cost. Peace dividends remain elusive. Nowhere is that more clearly reflected than in the frustration of marginalized youth, many of whom have joined tribal militias, as we see in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, or channel their anger at humanitarians and peacekeepers. In 2021, five humanitarian workers were killed. This year already, two have been killed.

The dire economic situation and its impact on youth has resulted in a surge in criminality and xenophobic hostility towards humanitarians and peacekeepers. It is critical that their important concerns be taken into consideration in our overall response and addressed in a manner that acknowledges the voice of the youth, while manifesting zero tolerance for violence directed at humanitarians.

The Mission is supporting the development of the national action plan for youth, peace and security in partnership with the South Sudan national coalition for youth, peace and security, a group of 30 national civil-society organizations. The Government must create the prospect of a future for South Sudan's young men and women.

Subnational violence continues to spread. That includes the perennial conflicts in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area; the emerging cross-border conflicts in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, Unity and Upper Nile states; and the Abyei Administrative Area. All of that underscores the need to liberate South Sudan from the repetitive cycles of violence and revenge. That in turn is fuelled by national and local political competition, some involving non-signatory armed groups, some involving intra-Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition clashes — that is, the opposition in the Government — and community disputes over land and resources, including those induced by climate change. With the dry season setting in, a spike in intercommunal violence has been observed in the past month.

As briefings from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have demonstrated, this year overall humanitarian needs are projected to continue growing. Yet donors' appetite to furnish additional resources to South Sudan is trending in reverse. The third year of consecutive floods, exacerbated by insecurity and the prolonged impact of the coronavirus

disease, has strained coping mechanisms, destroyed farmland, killed livestock and threatens dikes and similar flood-mitigation infrastructure, all causing further displacement and unprecedented food insecurity. That bears negatively on the prospects for next year's agricultural season in a country that should otherwise be the breadbasket of the region.

With regard to the efforts made by UNMISS, over the last two years the Mission has provided an extensive programme of assistance to political parties to facilitate consensus around multiparty electoral policies and alliance-building. UNMISS stands ready to provide technical advice on constitutional and electoral matters, acknowledging that, ultimately, those are sovereign choices for the South Sudanese to make.

Since 2021, UNMISS has established 125 temporary operating bases to prevent and respond to conflict hotspots, working with humanitarian partners and leveraging our capacities to support political solutions. That includes our national and field-level presence across 10 states, deploying integrated civilian-military teams for grass-roots engagement and using the collective weight of the diplomatic community for leadership engagement and advocacy in Juba. Civilian and military efforts complement each other, as neither is effective on its own. Our peacekeeping activities have been supplemented by 17 conflict-resolution engagements, which have yielded 34 intercommunal peace agreements.

The Mission has enhanced its capabilities by moving away from static, base-centric security tasks. We have made efforts to maximize the mobility of the force so that it can respond to threats the full year round. Importantly, the Mission's strategic interventions contributed to a 42 per cent decline in the number of civilian casualties over the past year. The Mission will continue to pivot to a more responsive posture through its early-warning system and meeting the most pressing protection needs.

But the conduct of short and long-term patrols has on the one hand yielded results but on the other also given rise to challenges, particularly as civilians establish settlements for internally displaced persons around the temporary operating bases. That creates difficulties in redeploying force assets to other hotspots. The result has been a pressure on our capacity to address a wider range of contingencies, including those expected to

arise in the more political environment of political competition and tension.

Concurrently, we continue to work with the South Sudan National Police Service as it takes on responsibilities for the protection of civilians, including preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence, which remains a key concern in South Sudan.

UNMISS is working with humanitarian and development partners on planning joint programmes over the medium term. While preparedness planning is essential ahead of the next rainy season, a gender-inclusive triple-nexus approach — meaning, integrating development, peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts — is required to achieve successful and sustainable intervention. A longer-term reduction in conflict will assist in reviving the Equatorias as the breadbaskets of South Sudan.

Concerning the international community's efforts, the Revitalized Agreement remains a valid framework for building political stability. The proposed Kampala “principals’ retreat” offered an opportunity to address the remaining roadblocks to implementation. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other partners are required to overcome the current impasse, which has led to the postponement of the Ugandan initiative.

The support of regional and international partners remains critical. The call of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council for a trilateral AU-United Nations-IGAD evaluation of the electoral and constitution-making needs of South Sudan presents a platform to leverage our comparative advantages. The Mission intends to be an active partner in that effort.

With regard to the mandate renewal, it is my view that the three-year strategic vision called for by the Security Council, as informed by the five tracks of the development of our engagement, has sharpened UNMISS's core mandate and remains an appropriate framework. The present troop ceiling — 17,000 peacekeepers and 2,100 police officers — ensures flexibility as UNMISS addresses contingencies and plans for 2022.

We anticipate a mandate flexible enough support the conduct of free and fair elections, upon the request of the Government. That in turn will be contingent upon progress in implementing the peace agreement. As I have stated before, elections have the potential

to be a nation-building moment or a catastrophe. Much depends on the political will and leadership of the South Sudanese working together.

In conclusion, though progress has been undeniably slow, there is still space — even a window of opportunity — to capitalize on the country's relative stability to pursue and ground a democratic transition. The Mission, as ever, stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of South Sudan as they collectively chart their way forward towards sustainable peace. I thank the Council for its continued and strong support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Gituai.

**Mr. Gituai**: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council for the first time as Interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. I would like to offer my congratulations to the United Arab Emirates on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March, and I thank it for having invited the Commission to brief the Council this morning. We wish it the best in its presidency.

The reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC) is the official oversight body mandated to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which was mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The Commission oversees the mandate and tasks of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, including the adherence by the parties to the agreed timelines and implementation schedule.

The Commission is obligated, under article 7.9 of the revitalized peace agreement, to submit quarterly status reports, followed by detailed briefings to the Council and to the following: the Revitalized Unity Government Council of Ministers; the Transitional National Legislative Assembly; the Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government; the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers; the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; the Peace and Security Council of the African Union; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Since the revitalized peace agreement was signed in September 2018, the Commission has submitted 13 status-of-implementation reports.

Although there has been some progress in the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement, the end of the transition period, in February 2023, is fast approaching, and yet several critical tasks of the agreement remain unimplemented. Therefore, my briefing to the Security Council will focus on the key milestones achieved in the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement to date, and critical pending states, tasks and requirements for the conduct of elections at the end of the transition period, as per the Agreement. I will also highlight recurring challenges and conclude with recommendations.

As Council members may recall, in July 2016, armed conflict broke out in South Sudan, within one year of the signing of the 2015 agreement, barely two months after the first coalition Government was formed. By contrast, the 2018 revitalized peace agreement has entered its fourth year, and Revitalized Unity Government marked its second anniversary last month, February 2022, which is an indication of its comparative success.

Since its signing, the Revitalized Peace Agreement has contributed significantly to the following: cessation of violence across the country among the signatories of the agreement and continued holding of the permanent ceasefire; the establishment and reconstitution of all pretransition institutions and implementation mechanisms of the Agreement; establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and state-level government; the constitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the state assemblies; the incorporation of the revitalized peace agreement into the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, as amended; the review and amendment of four security-related laws by the National Constitutional Amendment Committee, which has been submitted by the Revitalized Unity Government and is awaiting enactment; the recruitment, screening, selection and training of the unified forces, with approximately 50,000 trainees awaiting graduation under deployment; opening of humanitarian corridors, which has facilitated gradual voluntary return of some of the refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); stabilization of the exchange rates and progress in implementing some economic reforms by the Revitalized Unity Government; and

development of a road map for implementing the requirements of transitional justice and the making of the permanent Constitution.

The foregoing progress notwithstanding, some critical tasks of the agreement remain pending, most notably, the following: establishment of the Ad Hoc Judicial Reform Committee mandated to study and recommend appropriate judicial reforms to the Revitalized Unity Government; ratification of eight bills by the Transition National Legislative Assembly, namely, six security bills, the constitution-making bill and the political parties bill, with the establishment of the Political Parties Council, amendment of the National Election Act 2012 and the setting up of a competent and impartial National Election Commission; the unification of forces and their deployments; implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; addressing the challenges of reconstruction, repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs and returnees; establishment of the Special Construction Fund and Board, and the convening of a South Sudan pledging conference to support its humanitarian and reconstruction efforts; informing the public finance management institutions, especially the National Audit Chamber and the Anti-Corruption Commission, to enhance transparency and accountability; establishment of the three transitional justice mechanisms, namely, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, and the Compensation and Reparation Authority, and completion of the permanent constitution-making process to guide the conduct of elections.

In R-JMEC's assessment, the tasks most critical for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and the fulfilment of the revitalized peace agreement are the unification of forces and their deployment; enactment of the permanent Constitution; review of the political parties and electoral-related laws; and the constitution of the Political Parties Council and the National Election Commission. I wish to underscore the importance of a people-led and people-owned permanent Constitution, which will be the cornerstone of the State of South Sudan, preparing the way for democratic transition through free, fair and credible elections.

Overall progress in implementation of the revitalized peace agreement has generally been very slow from the beginning, and there are several recurring challenges facing it. The challenges include lack of sufficient

resources, both financial and material, needed for the implementation of the agreement; insufficient political will and commitment from some actors; trust deficits among the parties and capacity gaps; subnational violence and activities of holdout groups; military defections from one signatory party to another; flooding and the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Given the challenges facing implementation, the critical tasks pending and the agreement timeline nearing expiry, R-JMEC has tasked the Revitalized Unity Government with reviewing the status of the implementation of the agreement and develop a clear road map and strategy within the framework of the revitalized peace agreement on how to implement the outstanding critical tasks as the end of the transition period approaches. The road map should be consensus-based, with verifiable benchmarks and timelines.

I would like to conclude with the following recommendations to the Council. It should actively engage the Revitalized Unity Government to ensure implementation of the critical outstanding tasks, especially the unification of forces and the permanent constitution-making process, both tasks being fundamental to the holding of free, fair and credible elections; encourage the Revitalized Unity Government to reconcile its interparty differences and work collegially in the best interests of South Sudan and its people; assist the Revitalized Unity Government's efforts aimed at mobilizing resources from the international community to enhance implementation of revitalized peace agreement; support the Revitalized Unity Government to establish the Special Reconstruction Fund and convene a South Sudan pledging conference; provide support to conflict-affected states and communities, as provided for in the agreement, and continue supporting the full implementation of the revitalized peace agreement and the free, fair and credible elections.

Finally, I would like to appeal to the Council to remain seized of the peace process in South Sudan, to encourage it to consider visiting the country again and continue supporting R-JMEC in its mandate, including providing regular briefings to the Council on the status of the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Major General Gituai for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Yuyada.

**Ms. Yuyada:** Greetings from my sunny city, Juba.

I am Riya Williams Yuyada, a women's human rights and peace activist working with Crown The Woman, a local feminist non-governmental organization working on women's human rights in South Sudan. I appreciate this opportunity to brief the Security Council.

To date, 11 South Sudanese women have briefed the Security Council, and today I am the twelfth. We are grateful that the Security Council has recognized the importance of hearing from South Sudanese women in its discussions.

As my civil society colleagues have previously highlighted, since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan over three years ago, there has been limited to no progress in implementing crucial provisions of the agreement with respect to security sector reform, constitutional and electoral reform, judicial reform and transitional justice. Although major towns including the capital Juba remain calm, violence has increased at the local level.

One of the factors driving the increased violence is the exclusionary nature of political and peace efforts at all levels in the country. Communities do not feel represented by officials, and there is no accountability for those who misuse their authority. This is a particularly important lesson for the Security Council to take into account when renewing the mandate for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

It is sad, disheartening and unacceptable that we keep raising the same issues with Council members, only to see the situation continue to worsen. We are tired of sharing the same stories of rape, child marriage, war, trauma and loss. Having visited many of the affected communities, I can personally attest that after enduring decades of conflict, the resilience of my fellow South Sudanese people is fading. Although ours is a history of struggle for liberty, freedom, prosperity and dignity, we can struggle no more. To expect the people of South Sudan to remain resilient in the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other trauma — losing our children and loved ones; being displaced from our homes; dying from hunger, floods and disease; and witnessing the impunity with which sexual violence, including rape and other horrific crimes under international law, have been committed under the watch of the Council and its Member States — is unacceptable.

As the transitional period comes to an end this year, South Sudanese are expected to go to the polls for general elections tentatively planned for 2023. However, in consultations with my fellow civil society members and having listened to citizens' views, including in refugee camps, there is agreement that the ground is not ripe for free, fair and peaceful elections. Not only is the necessary legal and institutional framework not in place, with less than one year before the planned elections, but the current insecurity and lack of confidence the people have, due to the failure to implement the revitalized peace agreement, can only have a detrimental impact on the legitimacy of the outcome, which risks further violence.

If steps are not taken to ensure that the election is inclusive, transparent and safe, we fear the outcome. In that context, all UNMISS support for the electoral process must be geared towards ensuring that it is safe, inclusive and in alignment with international standards. The Security Council must also clarify that under its existing protection-of-civilians mandate, UNMISS is expected to ensure the safety and security of all voters, poll workers, candidates and officials, as well as human rights defenders and activists.

The safety of civilians in the lead up to and during the elections will be at considerable risk, particularly given the recent defections by military actors within the parties to the agreement. Those defections only cast uncertainty on the sustainability of the revitalized peace agreement and securing our future. For proper elections to take place, citizens want to see that all forces are cantoned, that military forces and allied militias are unified under one central command trained to reflect a national professional army that is non-political and defends the people and territorial integrity and that a nationwide disarmament and demobilization programme is under way. Although the constitution-making-process bill is before Parliament, no steps have been taken to prioritize its adoption. Moreover, the constitution-making process ought to be consultative and citizen driven. Civic space and education on the electoral process and constitution-making are critical. Without guarantees that the Government will ensure freedom of expression and opinion, association and peaceful assembly, citizens are worried about elections and scared of its consequences.

Were I the first South Sudanese woman to brief the Security Council, I would discuss in-depth the ongoing, systematic and widespread sexual and gender-based

violence that is perpetrated with impunity, highlighting the way in which displaced women and women and girls with disabilities are particularly affected, noting the increase of domestic violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasizing that gender-based violence is rooted in systems of patriarchy and inequality. However, the Council has already heard detailed testimony and analysis on those very issues. I therefore want to reinforce that the insights shared by my civil society colleagues remain relevant, and I urge the Council to take forward their recommendations.

For my part, the issue that continues to be raised to our Organization is the denial of protection and justice to survivors of gender-based violence, resulting from near-total impunity. I want to briefly highlight the effect that this culture of impunity has on survivors.

In our work with and on behalf of survivors, the alleged perpetrators—often in positions of power—face little to no consequence for carrying out acts of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. The result is that alleged perpetrators, who continue to live and work in the community, are free to threaten survivors. There have been many occasions where we have feared for the lives of the survivors we work with, as well as for our own safety. The survivors we work with have no place to go. In all of South Sudan, there are only two safe houses—imagine that. Those safe houses cannot handle the increasing number of survivors who seek assistance and shelter. The increase in gender-based violence and the frequency of threats against survivors are both a direct result of the failure to establish a system of justice to ensure accountability for crimes, including those committed in violation of international law.

I welcome the Government's adoption of the joint action plan for the armed forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence in South Sudan. However, it is unfortunate that more than a year has passed since its adoption, and the implementation of the Joint action plan does not match the immense suffering and needs of the high number of survivors. Since 2013, countless victims are still waiting for justice, yet the Government does not invest in the judicial system or the establishment of the rule of law and refuses to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan enshrined in the peace agreement. Judges are paid peanuts and left unprotected; activists are threatened and intimidated with impunity. The civic space has closed. Women human rights defenders can hardly even obtain a copy of the Joint Action Plan

in order to supplement and support its implementation. Tell me, how can we continue our work for justice when every effort is made to deter progress?

I urge the Security Council to follow-up on its previous call on the Government of South Sudan to improve the judicial system and establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, as well as call for the swift implementation of the joint action plan, in particular the identification and adoption of practical measures to protect victims and witnesses. All interventions are supposed to be guided by a survivor- and human-rights-centred approach, which is currently not happening.

I will stop here and remind the Security Council not to remain loudly quiet about the violation of our human rights.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Yuyada for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and the briefers for their insightful and sobering presentations. Their reports provide a clear understanding of current developments and lack of progress in South Sudan and of the significant contributions that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is making in this country.

Let me start by thanking the women and men of UNMISS, who serve to protect the people of South Sudan. I also commend the troop- and police-contributing countries and civilian experts for their efforts to preserve peace and stability in South Sudan.

In his most recent UNMISS report (S/2022/156), the Secretary-General made clear that the Mission's mandated tasks remain valid. The United States agrees. To that end, I want to discuss four aspects of the situation in South Sudan — the security situation and protection of civilians, the widespread human rights abuses, progress towards democracy and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan and the importance of humanitarian access — and the role of UNMISS within them.

First, the United States remains deeply concerned about the volatile security situation throughout the country. Fighting between numerous armed actors has led to allegations of horrific human rights abuses,

including the killing of civilians, rapes, burning and destruction of villages and the looting of humanitarian supplies. We strongly condemn those atrocious acts of violence and the impunity with which they are taking place. And we urgently call on local, state and national leaders to immediately intervene and hold accountable the perpetrators of human rights abuses and attacks against humanitarian aid workers, regardless of affiliation.

Overall, the protection of civilians, including the protection of women and children, and accountability for sexual exploitation and abuse must continue to be a top priority for UNMISS. Ms. Williams Yuyada has made a demand that the Council deal with this issue and we need to listen to her request, which leads me to my second point.

The United States is appalled by the recent findings in the joint report of UNMISS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on human rights abuses committed in Tambura. The report documents 14 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, involving 64 victims. It documents the abduction of civilians. It documents the killing of at least 440 civilians. Horrifically, the report documents that political and security sector elites have instigated, facilitated and aided this violence and manipulated ethnic identities.

The victims and survivors of sexual violence were predominantly women and girls, of course. They were assaulted publicly and at least 19 of them who were publicly sexually assaulted were brutally killed during and after. One of those killed was a 13-year-old. The Security Council has to take these kinds of reports seriously. We cannot stay silent, and the region cannot stay silent. The Government of South Sudan must investigate and prosecute all those responsible for crimes committed, including and especially those in positions of command and authority. Similarly, we remain deeply concerned about reports of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UNMISS personnel over the past year, including two allegations filed last December. We urge all parties involved in these investigations to complete their inquiries in a timely and transparent manner and to ensure accountability for perpetrators if these allegations are substantiated.

Thirdly, the Government of South Sudan must swiftly implement key provisions of the revitalized agreement to work towards a true democracy. That

means an inclusive constitution-drafting process, public financial management reform, transitional security arrangements and transitional justice mechanisms — including the Hybrid Court for South Sudan — in order to ensure free and fair elections that reflect the will of all South Sudanese. Unfortunately, the Government of South Sudan is behind in meeting key electoral benchmarks outlined in the revitalized agreement, and that is simply unacceptable. We urge the Government to establish the legal and institutional framework required to conduct free and fair elections.

The diminishing civic space in South Sudan is hindering the country's progress towards democracy. In particular, the United States was seriously concerned by the detentions and arrests of journalists and civil rights activists by national security forces on 22 February. Journalists and activists belong on the beat; they belong on the street, not in prison. The Government of South Sudan must respect the rights of all citizens, in accordance with the Transitional Constitution. South Sudan needs to create an enabling environment for free and fair elections by respecting fundamental freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

Fourthly and finally, we urge actors at the national and subnational levels to do everything possible to facilitate humanitarian access. There are 8.9 million people estimated to need humanitarian assistance this year; that is 600,000 more than last year. This increase is driven by continued conflict, widespread flooding, deepening food insecurity, inflation, high food prices and a lack of access to basic services. These factors make the role of UNMISS so important. UNMISS must continue to work with all parties to implement its core task, and that is to create conditions that allow humanitarians unhindered access to the most vulnerable.

The United States remains committed to the people of South Sudan. We remain committed to working closely with the Transitional Government of National Unity, our fellow Council members and all stakeholders to enable peace and prosperity for the country and for the region.

**Mr. Ochoa Martínez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative Haysom, Major General Gituai and Ms. Williams Yuyada for their briefings.

I will begin by taking up one of the points raised by the briefers, namely, the preparation for elections.

The reports indicate that, as of today, the conditions for holding elections in the time frame envisaged, given the lack of progress in the area of security and in the drafting of the constitution, do not appear to exist. We will closely follow the results of the coordination and work undertaken by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the South Sudanese authorities to conduct an evaluation of what is needed for the holding of elections and the drafting of the constitution.

In this context, like Ms. Williams Yuyada, we are concerned about the reports of restrictions on civic space and the suppression of fundamental rights, such as the freedom of expression and association. As the Secretary-General has warned, it will be very difficult to conduct a credible electoral process if such prohibitions are in place. We call on the South Sudanese authorities to urgently address incidents of censorship, harassment and arbitrary arrests.

We also reiterate that the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan cannot be selective. Efforts must be focused on overcoming the existing obstacles, and we therefore acknowledge the efforts of the President of Uganda in organizing a forum to seek solutions and facilitate their implementation.

I would like to state that, although the ceasefire is holding, the security situation in the country is deplorable. Violence continues to be a critical factor that led to tens of thousands of displacements last year. In Tambura alone, some 83,000 people have been displaced and hundreds killed. Violence also has a direct impact on humanitarian operations. We condemn the attack on the World Food Programme convoy and the killing of two humanitarian workers this year. We call on the Government to minimize interference in humanitarian activities and ensure that there are no checkpoints requesting the payment of levies from humanitarian operations.

The causes of violence are multifaceted, fuelled by inter-party conflicts, ethnic divisions and economic depression, among others. In this regard, we recognize the efforts of state authorities to foster reconciliation and address the causes of instability.

We are closely following the Mission's work on the redesignation of the protection of civilians site in Malakal. While we know that the evaluation process will be rigorous, the change of status should occur only

when the conditions are in place. I mention this because we are following with concern reports of the recruitment of minors in the Bentiu camp, among others.

We recognize the challenge of protecting civilians faced by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and therefore urge the Mission to continue promoting preventive violence reduction projects, such as the reintegration of ex-combatants and inter-community conferences, in various parts of the country to ensure peaceful cattle migration.

I would like to emphasize the importance of the Council's recognition of the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters on the humanitarian situation and stability in South Sudan.

I conclude by reiterating Mexico's support for UNMISS and our readiness to work constructively to ensure that the Council can renew the Mission's mandate next week.

**Ms. Evstigeena** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his informative briefing. We also listened attentively to the information provided by the Interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Major General Charles Tai Gituai, as well as to the civil society representative, Ms. Riya William Yuyada. We have carefully read the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan and the work of United Nations peacekeepers there (S/2022/156).

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan continues to work and the ceasefire is largely holding. We note the de facto completion of the formation of transitional authorities in South Sudan and the start of work on a draft permanent constitution. We welcome the intentions of the South Sudanese leadership to hold elections in 2023. We trust that the peacekeeping Mission will be able to provide the necessary assistance in conducting those elections, if requested by the South Sudanese side.

We welcome the recent progress in the dialogue with non-signatories to the revitalized peace agreement, primarily in terms of the peace agreements between the Government and the breakaway Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition Kitgwang faction, led by General Gatwech Dual, and

Johnson Olony's Agwelek forces. We pay tribute to the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and, above all, the Sudan, in that process. We support Uganda's initiative to host a meeting among South Sudanese leaders. We are counting on continued mediation through the Community of Sant'Egidio.

We note the overall decrease in the level of violence in the country, as well as the readiness of an increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes. However, we are concerned by reports of sporadic local armed conflicts. We strongly condemn any violations of the revitalized agreement, as well as acts of violence against civilians, including humanitarian personnel working in South Sudan.

We believe that only the swift and full implementation of the agreements reached will help the parties enhance mutual trust and prevent the mistakes of the past from being repeated. We deem it particularly important to speed up the formation of the national unified forces. We urge the non-signatories of the peace agreement to join the State-building process.

We are convinced that, as the situation normalizes, we will need to adapt South Sudan's sanctions regime to the new reality in South Sudan. We must not forget that sanctions have never been a solution to the conflict in that country.

In the coming days, the Security Council is to renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, which plays a crucial role in stabilizing the situation in the country. The Russian Federation is determined to work constructively to reach an agreement on that document. We believe that it is important, first and foremost, to ensure that it adequately reflects the genuine needs of the country. We consider attempts to give the document a human rights focus and ramp up pressure on Juba on other issues under the pretext of elections as counterproductive.

We call on the Security Council to pay greater attention to assisting the authorities in the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement and building capacity to resolve the issue of local conflicts.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): First, I would like to thank Mr. Haysom for not only illustrating the achievements of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), but for also very clearly setting out the challenges that remain. I think he provided a very timely and insightful reflection on where we are

currently at as we work towards the renewal of the Mission's mandate.

I also want to thank Major General Gituai for his work. We are deeply indebted to him and his teams for the work they are carrying out to see through the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which is clearly a tough job.

I want to thank Ms. Riya Williams Yuyada specifically for the very sober and frank assessment she gave us this morning, particularly in terms of what is happening on the ground. We need to hear about that at the grass-roots level. I heard her say this morning that resilience is fading, which certainly struck me and, I think, others here in the Chamber. For my part, I want to reassure her that the phenomenal efforts of civil society groups on the ground in South Sudan are deeply appreciated and that she can rest assured that her work will surely always have the support of my country, Ireland.

It was also very clear from her statement that we need to do better. We heard what she said about the horrific abuses occurring, including conflict-related sexual violence, which we find totally unacceptable and need to address. I also noted her assessment about the lack of readiness for elections on the ground. I want to thank her again for her candour to the Council this morning.

Ireland notes that the report of the Secretary General (S/2022/156) outlines welcome progress in some areas. In that regard in particular, I want to welcome the progress that has been made on the constitution-making process. We call now for its continuation in an open and inclusive manner, but we must say once again that we regret that the implementation of the peace process itself remains limited, at best. I believe that was reinforced, frankly, by what we have heard from the briefers today.

The fact is that progress is simply too slow and we are now hearing questions being raised as to how elections can actually be delivered next year. Urgent action by and cooperation between all parties, of course, remains essential and we need to promote an understanding and an acceptance that delivering effectively for citizens actually means embracing accountability. It is critical to the welfare of the people of South Sudan, as well as to their confidence in the peace process, that we see faster progress being made and concrete steps being taken.

The recent reports emanating from Tambura are particularly shocking. Politicized subnational violence and grave human rights abuses, including the systematic use of sexual violence, are completely and utterly horrifying and unacceptable. We fully agree with those here today who have said that we cannot look the other way in the face of such abuses. I also think it highlights the fact that UNMISS's role in monitoring and investigating human rights violations is not just critically important but absolutely necessary. The increased deployment of temporary operating bases by UNMISS to support populations that are affected by increased insecurity is extremely welcome. We see that as a really important step.

Ireland is very concerned by the alarming level of persistent humanitarian need in South Sudan. The sheer number of citizens requiring assistance is truly shocking. We regret not only the impact that has on the lives and prospects of young and old, as Mr. Haysom mentioned, but also the State's failure to invest the necessary energy and resources into tackling that crisis. As the humanitarian crisis deepens, full and unrestricted humanitarian access and the protection of humanitarian workers remains critical, as we have said a thousand times. All sides must respect international humanitarian law and allow aid to reach those vulnerable people who most desperately need it. That is a basic and fundamental concern.

In addition to that, we remain highly alert to the undeniable impact of climate change on peace and security in South Sudan. We have seen prolonged and intense flooding increase population displacement, disrupt agriculture and alter cattle migration patterns, all of which risk accentuating or provoking violence. Those are neither new nor unexpected phenomena, but we have been witnessing them as the results of climate impacts for some time. Climate and security are clearly interacting in South Sudan.

In recognizing the action that is required on that front, Ireland is proud to fund a climate security adviser with UNMISS to help to identify and address climate-related security risks and to support community-led-based peacebuilding measures to mitigate such risks and prevent violence.

I want to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNMISS colleagues for their steadfast efforts to bring about peace in the country, not least in relation to the Mission's protection

mandate, including its support for civil society, which is particularly important given the concerning reports of the shrinking civic space, of which we heard Riya Yuyada speak very clearly this morning. An open civil society space is particularly critical in the context of preparations — whatever the time frame — for elections. It is crucial to ensuring an inclusive democratic process in which all voices can be heard.

The peace workshops of the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network offer promise for meaningful participation by women, and I want to particularly welcome that. We are heartened by the development of the pilot community violence reduction project, and we look forward to hearing more about that in due course.

The importance of engagement by neighbours and regional actors, such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, cannot be overstated today. We welcome President Museveni's intention to convene a retreat in Kampala, as well as the recent visit of the African Union Peace and Security Council to Juba, Jonglei and Pibor.

We hope that both initiatives will help to chart a path forward for the effective implementation of the peace agreement, which we expect will include the establishment of the Compensation and Reparation Authority, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, as committed to by President Kiir Mayardit in his New Year message.

In conclusion, we want to support a pathway to a brighter future for South Sudan. It is clear that inclusive and democratic elections, hopefully in 2023, can represent a turning point for South Sudan, but that can happen only if South Sudan can work to fully implement the peace agreement. I believe that real peace is within reach. We know what that looks like, and it is achieved when basic needs are met, when human rights are protected — as we know, women's rights are human rights — and when the citizens of South Sudan are free and safe to express themselves without fear of repercussions. I believe that we wish them absolutely nothing less.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya (A3).

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom, Major General Charles Gituai and Ms. Riya Williams Yuyada for their briefings. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal.

The A3 statement will touch on five pertinent issues: the political situation; security; the humanitarian and economic situation; climate and security; and the UNMISS mandate.

First, on the political front, South Sudan is at a critical juncture with only one year remaining of the transition period under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. The A3 welcomes the progress made since the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity two years ago. The recent passage of the constitutional amendment bill (2021) and the launch of the screening and registration of the Necessary Unified Forces, as well as the recommitment to resuming negotiations with the non-signatory groups under the Rome initiative, are commendable. We urge the non-signatory groups to take the opportunity in the next round of mediation by the Community of Sant'Egidio to join the implementation of the peace process.

The A3 recognizes that further efforts are needed to register success during the transition period. While we remain mindful of the existing challenges, as reflected in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2022/156) and by the briefers this morning, there are also opportunities. We therefore urge the leadership of the parties to refocus their efforts and resources on the implementation of the remaining items of the revitalized peace agreement.

Fundamentally, the engagement and the role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and regional leaders, as well as the support of the United Nations and international partners, remain indispensable to the process.

The A3 welcomes the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council requesting a trilateral evaluation of the electoral and constitution-making needs for South Sudan. However, we share the view that elections alone cannot guarantee stability without adequate implementation of the provisions of the revitalized peace agreement. In that regard, the proposed South Sudan leaders' retreat for mutual confidence-building and for the parties to draw

up a road map for the remaining transition period remains critical.

Secondly, on the security situation, the A3 is pleased that the permanent ceasefire has held, but we remain seriously concerned by the worrying incidents of ethnic and intercommunal clashes in some parts of the country, as well as fighting among party factions. The A3 condemns such breakdowns of security and violence against civilians.

The Government of South Sudan has a duty to protect its civilians. We therefore urge the authorities to take steps to investigate all incidents of violence and ensure that those responsible are held legally accountable.

The A3 further reiterates that improvements in the security situation can be guaranteed only through implementation of the transitional security arrangements. It is incumbent upon the parties to expedite the unification of the armed forces and the graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces without further delays. The A3 also commends and supports the expansion of the community violence reduction programme as a critical measure in addressing some of the drivers of conflicts.

Thirdly, the A3 is deeply concerned by the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation in South Sudan. The drought currently ravaging the Horn of Africa has compounded the devastating impacts of last season's floods, which worsened food insecurity. We call for the urgent scaling up of humanitarian support.

While applauding the efforts of humanitarian partners, agencies and their workers for their continuous assistance to the people of South Sudan under these challenging circumstances, we also express concern and deplore the reported incidents of attacks, killings and harassment of humanitarian workers. Such reports, when verified, will not only be regrettable but they are, to say the least, unacceptable. We urge the Government to take appropriate measures to protect humanitarian workers and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need.

The A3 also reiterates its call for the lifting of sanctions and the arms embargo against South Sudan. They are counterproductive to the peace efforts and have had the unintended consequence of undermining the country's potential for economic investments. We hope that the Council and all those that have imposed

unilateral coercive measures will heed the call by IGAD and the African Union in that regard.

Fourthly, the impact of the extreme weather conditions cannot be overemphasized. It worsens the competition for resources between pastoralists and farmer communities and is a driver of the perennial low-level conflicts and insecurity in South Sudan. Therefore, developing strategies on climate change mitigation, adaptation and building resilience should be part of the recovery efforts and the development assistance extended to South Sudan.

Fifthly, the A3 commends UNMISS and the troop-contributing countries for their continued commitment to the course of peace in South Sudan. In view of the cumulative progress made since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement, the ongoing negotiations for the renewal of the UNMISS mandate provide an opportunity to calibrate that mandate and make the Mission more fit for purpose.

In that regard, the A3 believes that providing technical assistance, capacity-building and logistical support to national and local institutions across the four mandated tasks of UNMISS is essential. As a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, UNMISS should live up to the purpose for which it was established, including support for State and institutional capacity-building. That is critical if UNMISS is to achieve the three-year strategic vision.

The A3 welcomes the submission by South Sudan to engage with the Peacebuilding Commission. That offers a unique and resourceful opportunity to help the country advance peace consolidation, as well as to transition to post-conflict recovery and development. We also welcome the announcement by the World Bank of the \$34-million grant to aid in the implementation of public financial management reforms, in line with Chapter IV of the revitalized agreement.

In conclusion, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya reaffirm their commitment to continuing to accompany the Government and the people of South Sudan in their quest for lasting peace, stability and development.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho** (Brazil): Let me start by commending the personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for their brave and vital work. I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom and Major General Charles Tai Gituai, Interim Chairperson of

the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, for their informative briefings. I also thank Ms. Williams Yuyada for her participation. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, Ambassador Malwal.

I would like to highlight three issues in South Sudan that merit the Council's attention and action.

The first is the protection of civilians. We all know and appreciate that the South Sudanese authorities bear the core responsibility for that duty. In Brazil's view, that is also a cornerstone of the UNMISS mandate. In that sense, the recently published UNMISS brief compiling 2021 data on violence affecting civilians makes it clear that South Sudan has made progress. Not only violent incidents against civilians, but also casualties have decreased. We hope that this trend points to both enhanced protection and improved monitoring and investigation.

The second issue is the peace process. The establishment of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the adoption of the constitutional amendment bill are important transitional arrangements. However, the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan has been slow. We all know that all parties to the agreement should remain fully committed to peace. South Sudan therefore needs quicker action with regard to its Necessary Unified Forces. The South Sudanese Government should move faster to take advantage of the efforts and expertise of UNMISS.

The third and last point that I would like to raise relates to intercommunal violence. The recent killings in many parts of the country are deeply concerning. One wonders whether petty motives and inconsequential criminal behaviour are the causes of those incidents. Otherwise, if what fuels murder and destruction are revenge, unresolved disputes and broader dissatisfaction with the transitional security arrangements that the revitalized agreement promises to deliver, then the cases of intercommunal violence are even more dangerous. We appreciate the sustained efforts led by, among others, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Community of Sant'Egidio. However, we remain concerned. Dispute resolution, mediation and good offices will be truly effective only if sound development

strategies and the fair distribution of resources are in place and palpable to the concerned individuals.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Brazil's commitment to peace in every corner of South Sudan. We are proud that we have Brazilian experts, police officials and staff officers that contribute to UNMISS.

**Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom):** I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom, Major General Gituai and Ms. Williams Yuyada for their valuable briefings.

First, the United Kingdom would like to commend the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its continued efforts to protect civilians, build durable peace and support inclusive and accountable governance in South Sudan. As we approach the mandate renewal, it is our sincere hope that UNMISS continues to receive the Security Council's full support at this critical juncture in South Sudan's implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, particularly as we look ahead towards elections.

Two years have now passed since the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. We have each welcomed the positive steps taken during this time, including on national and state governance, and today we welcome the adoption of the constitutional amendment bill. Once again, however, we recognize that progress remains woefully slow. We should not forget the human price of those delays. It remains our sincere hope that the full implementation of the peace agreement will deliver positive change to the South Sudanese people.

Of particular concern is the continued lack of progress on the unification of forces and their redeployment. We echo the Secretary-General's concerns over defections and subsequent violent clashes between different armed factions across the country. Such incidents perpetuate division at a time when the need for unity is greater than ever. They are also against the letter and spirit of the peace agreement.

The human rights situation in South Sudan is also deeply worrisome. The continued crackdown on civic space, including harassment of human rights activists, the detention of journalists and restrictions on freedom of speech and association, are unacceptable. We also remain deeply concerned about the harrowing reports of violence, killings and the continued use of sexual

violence by the parties to the conflict, including the deeply disturbing reports of sexual violence in Tambura. As Ms. Williams Yuyada said earlier, the perpetrators must be held accountable. We call on the Government to South Sudan to fulfil its responsibilities with respect to its people.

Lastly, I would like to highlight our serious concern about the urgent humanitarian crisis. With an estimated 2 million people expected to be acutely malnourished in 2022, the crisis is set to become yet more severe unless the humanitarian response improves. For its part, South Sudan's Government must reduce interference in humanitarian activities and remove illegal checkpoints and other bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian delivery.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom would like to reiterate its calls on South Sudan's leaders to deliver on their commitments and foster the conditions for holding free and fair elections.

**Ms. Dautllari** (Albania): I thank Special Representative Haysom and the two briefers for their insights. We commend the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the troop-contributing countries for their important contribution to the Mission.

While political violence has decreased over the past years, the suffering of the people of South Sudan continues. The devastating effects of climate change have led to mass flooding and drought, causing hunger, displacement and a fight for resources. It is time to address those issues and build capacity and resilience. We commend the work of UNMISS to mitigate the devastation of the climate emergency in the short term.

As we heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, intercommunal violence has increased in recent weeks. The protection of civilians must therefore remain a key priority for UNMISS. We recall the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to protect civilians and humanitarian actors, allowing their full and unhindered access to those in need. We are deeply concerned about attacks on humanitarian workers in South Sudan. They are unacceptable.

As mentioned by our civil society briever, Ms. Riya Williams Yuyada, sexual and gender-based violence is still widespread. Accountability is key to fighting impunity, deterring further crimes and giving justice

and hope to the survivors of such atrocities. We support the mobile courts provided by UNMISS and would like to reiterate the need for the protection of witnesses and survivors, even in remote settings. In that context, we call on the Government, in cooperation with the African Union, to redouble its efforts in setting up the Hybrid Court for South Sudan. We are deeply concerned about continuing reports of human rights violations and abuses, as well as the harassment of journalists.

Despite some progress, the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan has been slow. We call on all parties to redouble their efforts and show action on their commitments.

We welcome the fact that the Government has committed to the path of elections. However, elections must be free, fair and credible, while being inclusive and ensuring the full, equal and safe participation of women and youth. The Government must ensure the necessary security arrangements to protect freedom of opinion and expression. Albania supports UNMISS in providing electoral assistance to deliver inclusive elections, although the primary responsibility lies with the Government of South Sudan.

We support the renewal of the UNMISS mandate, while maintaining its four pillars. We are pleased to hear from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom that the present mandate, with a three-year strategic vision, is the appropriate framework.

In conclusion, Albania calls on all parties to implement the revitalized agreement, meet the key benchmarks, establish institutions and reforms, unify the command of the armed forces and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, youth and civil society in all peacebuilding efforts.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom, Major General Gituai and, not least, Riya Williams Yuyada for their insightful briefings.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan has now entered its final year. Yet, we continue to be deeply concerned about the situation in South Sudan. Time is running out if elections are to be held, as scheduled, at the end of the transitional period.

The level of violence remains unacceptably high and humanitarian needs are increasing. There are reports of

human rights violations and abuses in Unity state. We urge the Government to investigate those allegations and to hold perpetrators accountable. Competition for political control and resources among various armed actors is also causing fighting throughout the country, including among signatories of the peace agreement. It is fair to ask whether or not the permanent ceasefire is actually holding.

Subnational violence, combined with significant economic distress, threatens prospects for an inclusive constitution-making process and the peaceful conduct of elections. However, South Sudan has made some progress recently on public financial management reforms. Those reforms are important in addressing the link between economic mismanagement and insecurity across the country. We call on the Government to eliminate avenues for corruption, to increase transparency and accountability, especially for oil revenues, and to give higher priority to delivering services.

Blaming the slow implementation of the peace agreement on a lack of resources is not convincing. We commend the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its efforts to promote dialogue, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation at the local level. We also appreciate its focus on securing the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in local peace efforts.

Further efforts are needed. We call on all parties to end violence at all levels. We stress the need to finalize the implementation of chapter II of the peace agreement, on security arrangements, and urge the parties to expedite that process. The graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces and unification of the command structure are also essential and long overdue. Moreover, to create the conditions conducive to the holding of elections, we need to see a fundamental shift in the approach of the parties to the revitalized agreement. An inclusive constitutional reform process, led and owned by the people of South Sudan and built on shared values, is a unique opportunity for a young nation. Yet, it will be a positive experience only if there is political space and true freedom. Attempts to silence civil society activists and the media run counter to the spirit of the peace agreement, respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance.

We support President Museveni's invitation to a principals' retreat but regret the fact that, yet again,

it has been delayed. We strongly encourage South Sudan's leader to value and capitalize on regional peace initiatives.

Furthermore, Norway remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. Violence leads to increased humanitarian needs and prevents humanitarians from delivering assistance. We reiterate the fact that it is the Government's responsibility to protect civilians, including children. As we just heard from Riya Williams Yuyada, human rights violations, including sexual exploitation and abuse, are close to breaking up the very social fabric of South Sudan.

We also need to ensure that climate-related security risks are integrated into efforts to manage communal natural resources and conflicts over land ownership and rights. The Government's capacity to adapt to climate change and integrate climate-related security risks needs to be strengthened. We believe that there is an important supporting role for UNMISS in that area.

In conclusion, Norway strongly supports the renewal of the UNMISS mandate. We hope that the people of South Sudan will experience much-deserved peace and development in the coming mandate period.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Nicholas Haysom and Major General Charles Tai Gituai, Interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, for their briefings. We also listened carefully to the briefing by Ms. Riya William Yuyada.

The youngest Member of the United Nations, South Sudan, is confronted with unique challenges to its nation-building. The international community should demonstrate a greater level of patience with the peace process in South Sudan and provide constructive assistance. Instead of focusing on castigation and pressure, the international community should become a supporter of, participant in and contributor to the peace process.

Continued progress has been achieved in the implementation of the revitalized agreement. That momentum must be maintained. South Sudan's national legislative bodies have been reconstituted and amendments were made to the transitional Constitution. In his New Year's Day message, President Kiir reaffirmed his commitment to implementing

the revitalized agreement. China welcomes that commitment and hopes that all parties in South Sudan will maintain the current positive momentum and work together to advance the implementation of the agreement. We call on political parties that have not yet signed the peace agreement to join the peace process, without delay.

We applaud the important role of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Uganda and other countries and organizations of the region in achieving peace in South Sudan. Conflict resolution is the common aspiration of the people of South Sudan, and it requires a holistic approach. The recent security situation in South Sudan has been stable overall, but sectarian and intercommunal conflicts occur from time to time. We must carefully analyse the causes of the conflicts and resolve them with a combination of methods, including prevention, mediation, dialogue and development.

We must also respond to the early warning signs of conflict and address the settlement process after demobilization. The formation of the necessary unified forces is not a smooth process. As some challenges have been encountered, the international community should actively provide assistance and create favourable conditions for transitional security arrangements. China has been providing support for the establishment of the unified forces to the best of its capacity.

Development is the way to go for nation-building in South Sudan and requires greater investment. As a result of the coronavirus disease and floods, South Sudan's humanitarian needs remain high, with an estimated 8.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

China calls on international partners to increase their humanitarian relief efforts this year. That said, humanitarian relief can treat only the symptoms, not the root causes. The international community should help South Sudan strengthen its own development capacity and unleash its potential in the agriculture, energy and other sectors so as to achieve peace through development. Unilateral coercive measures have exacerbated the plight of the people of South Sudan, and China urges the countries concerned to lift them as soon as possible.

In terms of South Sudan's nation-building, China has always stood with the people of South Sudan. President Kiir has called on international partners to

shift more aid from the humanitarian to development sectors, to which China has responded positively.

Guided by the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and our bilateral framework, a number of key projects have been completed, including the Jur River bridge in Wau and the Juba teaching hospital. China also provided emergency food aid to South Sudan, sending out health expert groups and shipping out vaccines and medical equipment. Together with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Eastern Equatoria state, we have launched a pilot project to build capacities for youth and women engaged in eco-agriculture to help South Sudan fight the pandemic, help its economy to recover and improve its people's livelihoods.

Under the leadership of Special Representative Haysom, UNMISS has done a great deal of work to help implement the revitalized agreement and protect civilians. The level of coordination between the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS has been improved, and the number of violations of the status-of-forces agreement continues to decrease. That shows that strengthening communication between the Mission and the host country has a positive impact on ensuring the safety of peacekeepers and improving peacekeeping performance. China encourages both parties to continue to strengthen their cooperation and work together to implement the peace agreement.

**Mrs. Gasri** (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Nicholas Haysom and the two other briefers for their presentations.

France welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan. Several of the benchmarks established by the Security Council a year ago have been respected, including the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, the reduction in hindrances to the mobility of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the protection of displaced persons in areas that are now under the responsibility of the South Sudanese authorities.

However, the delays seen are cause for concern, given that the transitional period is coming to a close. The implementation of the security arrangements remains incomplete. The signatory parties must reach agreement on the composition of a unified command and finalize the training of fighters. Those measures are indispensable to creating conditions suitable for the

holding of elections. They are also part of the criteria with respect to a review of the arms embargo.

It is also vital to establish the legal and constitutional framework for elections and to operationalize the National Elections Commission. The freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly must be guaranteed, and we are counting on UNMISS, in coordination with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, to provide assistance in preparing for the elections and in assessing whether the conditions for a credible electoral process are indeed in place.

We take note in that regard of the caution expressed by the Secretary-General on this subject in his most recent report (S/2022/156). The South Sudanese authorities must focus on unity and provide the resources necessary to implement those priorities. As others have done, we call upon all parties to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the efforts made by the region, particularly the mediation of President Museveni.

Finally, we remain concerned at the high level of violence, which is affecting people already impacted by the flooding, the health crisis and the lack of basic services. We welcome the responsiveness of UNMISS in that area and call upon the authorities to continue their cooperation with the Mission in order to facilitate the deployment of judges and develop plans for reducing community violence. We condemn the confrontations between the signatory parties to the peace agreement as well as attacks against humanitarian and medical personnel. Those responsible for that violence must be brought to justice and be sanctioned by the Council.

**Mr. Raguttahalli** (India): At the outset, let me thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing on the implementation of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) mandate and the recent developments in South Sudan. I also thank the other briefers — the Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Major General Charles Tai Gituai, and civil-society activist Ms. Riya Yuyada — for their updates. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan at today's meeting.

Last month marked the two-year anniversary of the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity. Since our most recent meeting (see S/PV.8931), the ceasefire has continued to hold; the state legislatures have been reconstituted; and the

screening of the first batch of trained unified forces has been completed. The constitutional amendment bill has been passed in the National Assembly. Furthermore, President Kiir has reiterated his commitment to the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

Regional efforts to assist South Sudan are also gearing up, including the initiative by Uganda of holding a retreat. The African Union Peace and Security Council also held a meeting in January and requested a trilateral evaluation of the electoral and constitution drafting requirements. All those developments reflect the positive trajectory of progress in South Sudan.

In the coming days, the focus should be on further expediting the implementation of the agreement, particularly the graduation and unification of the necessary unified forces and addressing legislative issues concerning election preparations. We hope that the leadership of South Sudan will continue to take steps in the right direction. In that regard, we welcome the efforts at holding talks between President Salva Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar and hope that it will help to resolve outstanding issues, including with regard to the electoral timetable.

The implementation of the transitional security arrangements remains critical for the electoral process at the end of the transitional period, as does the early resumption of the Rome mediation by the Community of Sant'Egidio with the non-signatories.

The security situation has remained tenuous in some regions of South Sudan. Intercommunal and intracommunal violence has continued. However, the progress made in the peace process, particularly as concerns the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance factions continuing the dialogue with Government, has made an impact on the ground. We hope that the remaining non-signatory groups will also engage with the Government to enter the mainstream.

The humanitarian situation remains a matter of concern. The 2021 humanitarian response plan has had a significant deficit. The international community, including the United Nations, needs to step in with respect to resource mobilization and help to fill the capacity gaps faced by the Government.

Regarding the UNMISS mandate implementation, we have noted the improved communication between UNMISS and the Government. That development

is showing a positive impact on the facilitation of the Mission's operations, which is evident from the decrease in the number of status-of-forces agreements violations. We also take note of the integrated and cross-mission approach, including the setting up of temporary operating bases, and welcome the efforts being made by the Mission to promote accountability and mitigate intercommunal tensions.

We appreciate the Mission's efforts to support the rule of law and accountable institutions by supporting special courts, mobile courts and the development of a framework for victim and witness protection programmes. We also recall the provisions of resolution 2589 (2021) and the responsibility of the host State to bring the perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice. In that regard, we request an update from the Secretary-General in his next report.

We also appreciate the Mission's efforts to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need, particularly in flood-affected areas.

India has been one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UNMISS since its establishment more than a decade ago. At present, we have nearly 2,300 troops serving in the country. The Indian contingent in UNMISS is also contributing to sustainable development and the welfare of the people of South Sudan. It is a matter of immense satisfaction that the level II plus hospital in Juba and the level II hospital in Malakal operated by the Indian contingent have been functioning at full capacity, with high-grade capabilities.

At this transformative phase of its development journey, South Sudan requires the wholehearted support of the international community, including from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the United Nations. Our actions in the Security Council should encourage the authorities of South Sudan to move towards full implementation of the revitalized agreement. The Council also needs to be realistic and practical while setting out the mandate for the Mission.

In conclusion, India is cognizant of the enormous challenges with which South Sudan is confronted in its path towards peace and stability. India has been at the forefront of efforts to render humanitarian assistance to South Sudan. It supplied life-saving essential medicines in 2020, as well as in 2021 during the coronavirus disease pandemic. India has also provided 70 megatons of food-grain assistance to flood-affected people. India

is organizing an artificial-limbs fitment camp, which will benefit over 500 amputees very soon. India has also trained around a thousand South Sudanese nationals in different disciplines. India will continue to support South Sudan and its people in their journey towards securing sustainable peace and a prosperous future.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

At the outset, I thank Mr. Haysom and Mr. Gituai for their valuable briefings. I also thank Ms. Yuyada for her message and her call for peace in South Sudan in the Security Council today. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to today's meeting.

I would like to emphasize the support of the United Arab Emirates for all efforts aimed at fulfilling the interests and aspirations of the people of South Sudan for prosperity, development and peace.

From this standpoint, we believe that the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan remains the basis for achieving stability, peace, development and unity in South Sudan. We hope that the Government's efforts in this regard will lead to implementing the agreement with a view to realizing a peaceful solution that includes a meaningful and comprehensive dialogue with the concerned parties, as well as enhanced women's participation in the peace process, with the aim of reaching the goal of 35 per cent women's participation as per the agreement. In addition, continuing mediation efforts are necessary to enable the parties to move towards a lasting peace. In this context, we appreciate the constructive role of regional and international partners, especially the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations.

Despite the efforts made at the political level, the security situation in some areas remains a source of concern, especially in the greater Upper Nile region. This situation requires a comprehensive response, and all parties should exercise restraint. Greater focus should also be placed on protecting civilians, including women and children, who are subjected to sexual violence and gender-based violence.

Furthermore, the repercussions of climate change in South Sudan, especially on the humanitarian and security situations, require us to pay special attention to them. We look forward to continued joint

efforts between the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations country team, aimed at responding to climate and security challenges. It is important to support the efforts of the Government, in cooperation with the Mission, in order to take advantage of renewable energy for the benefit of local communities.

Moreover, the United Arab Emirates expresses its concern over the increasing humanitarian needs across the country. Recent United Nations reports indicate that around 9 million people require protection and basic services. Addressing these challenges, foremost among which is the unprecedented dangerous level of food insecurity, as well as the increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, requires intensifying collective international efforts while also calling on all parties to ensure continued access to humanitarian assistance.

We affirm our support for the efforts of the Special Representative and UNMISS, and we look forward to the Mission's continued work and coordination with the Government, as well as to collective and constructive Council engagement in the context of its mandate renewal.

As part of our pledge to highlight both the implementation of resolution 2565 (2021) and the contribution of the pandemic to fragility, we note that there obstacles to vaccination in South Sudan remain. According to the World Health Organization, fewer than 4 per cent of the population are fully vaccinated. We therefore welcome national plans to integrate coronavirus disease vaccination into routine immunization, and we emphasize once again the importance of implementing the relevant Security Council resolution.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates supports efforts aimed at promoting social and economic development, the values of peaceful coexistence and lasting stability in South Sudan.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion on the subject in closed consultations.

*The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.*