



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9281st meeting

Wednesday, 15 March 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Afonso (Mozambique)

Members:

Albania	Ms. Dautllari
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon	Mrs. Koumba Pambo
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Jacobs
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2023/135)

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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/2023/135)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2023/188, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/135, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

China, Russian Federation

The President: The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, none against and two abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2677 (2023).

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

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I have the honour to deliver this explanation of vote after the voting on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3),

namely Gabon, Mozambique and my own country, Ghana.

At the outset, let me, on behalf of the A3, express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the Governments of Mozambique and Malawi for the tragic deaths and extensive infrastructural damage resulting from the devastating effects of Cyclone Freddy, which struck parts of the two countries. Our thoughts and prayers are with the peoples of the two countries at this difficult time. The A3 would like to take this opportunity to call for urgent international support for the emergency response in the two countries, to enable the affected populations to rebuild their lives.

The A3 welcomes the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 March 2024. We voted in favour of the resolution (resolution 2677 (2023)) because we strongly believe that UNMISS continues to be a stabilizing factor in the brotherly country of South Sudan and remains critical in addressing the multifaceted socioeconomic, political and security challenges in South Sudan, towards our collective quest for the much-desired peace and stability in the country.

As A3, we engaged constructively during the negotiations. Indeed, we worked to ensure that the African perspective, including the concerns of the South Sudanese authorities, to the extent possible, were reflected in the text. While we acknowledge that more could have been done, we are convinced that the present text is the outcome of best efforts and forms a good basis for future improvements that may be required.

The A3 stands in solidarity with the South Sudanese people and encourages bold political actions to further the national reconciliation efforts and the effective implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

In conclusion, we wish to commend the penholder for the professional manner in which the negotiations were approached and thank all Council members for their exceptional cooperation and flexibility.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on resolution 2677 (2023), on extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), proposed by the United States.

We support the work of UNMISS in that African State, which makes a significant contribution to stabilizing the situation and implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Despite the lack of logistical resources and shortage of personnel, the efforts made by the Blue Helmets are recognized by the local population and deserve all due respect.

However, we still have concerns about the version of the UNMISS mandate on the protection of civilians proposed by our United States colleagues, which provides for very broad freedom of action for peacekeepers without the necessary coordination with the country's Government. Such an approach to resolving the problem of intercommunal violence does not take into account the specific nature of the situation in South Sudan. It is intrusive and carries the risk of undermining the peace process at such a crucial stage for the country, with the end of the transition period and the start of preparations for the elections scheduled for December 2024. The country is now in particular need of support. We are convinced that successfully settling intercommunal conflicts can be undertaken only in close coordination with local authorities and by adopting a comprehensive approach to eliminating the root causes of violence and South Sudanese capacity-building, including by strengthening the joint armed forces currently being established. We call on peacekeepers to be guided by such principles in their activities.

We would also like to express our regret over the refusal of the United States sponsors of the South Sudan dossier to continue constructive dialogue on fine-tuning other language in the resolution, particularly with respect to climate, including giving peacekeepers roles in that regard that are not theirs, as well as retaining the language of resolution 2417 (2018), on hunger and conflict.

We believe that the newly demonstrated unwillingness of the United States informal facilitators of the South Sudan dossier to negotiate with all Security Council members in good faith and the abuse of their status to promote national interests is further evidence of the deep crisis in the current penholder system, which is fraught with efforts to artificially undermine host State trust in United Nations activities, including its peacekeeping operations. That once again affirms the need for a fairer distribution of such responsibilities among the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China commends the tremendous work being done by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to maintain peace and stability and to help expedite nation-building in the country. Since the establishment of UNMISS in 2011, as a key troop-contributing country, China has sent nine peacekeeping infantry battalions and 13 peacekeeping engineering and medical teams to South Sudan, where Chinese Blue Helmets made the ultimate sacrifice.

On South Sudan's path to peace and development, China has always stood with South Sudan. We are willing to continue to actively participate in the work of UNMISS and make positive contributions to the realization of peace and stability in South Sudan.

Regrettably, elements of resolution 2677 (2023), just adopted by the Security Council, put one-sided pressure on South Sudan. The mandate entrusted to UNMISS fails to fully take into account the situation on the ground and is mixed with the political self-interest of some countries. China therefore had to abstain in the voting. I would like to make the following clarifications.

First, South Sudan is the newest State Member of the United Nations. It has experienced years of war and has a weak development foundation. The international community should take an objective view of South Sudan's development stage and the difficulties and challenges that it faces in improving its governance and should offer South Sudan the necessary patience and encouragement.

However, the resolution is harshly worded and unbalanced in content, and blames communal conflict in South Sudan on violence at the national level and corruption by civil war actors in the capital. Such accusations are clearly not objective. Despite China's repeated requests for revisions, the overall tone of the resolution remains, regrettably, negative.

Secondly, issues such as elections, finances and resource management are internal affairs for any country. The Security Council should express its views on such issues based on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. It is up to the Government and the people of South Sudan to decide how to conduct elections in the country, allocate financial resources and sell oil resources. In making demands and imposing conditions regarding such issues without South Sudan's consent, the resolution clearly exceeds normal and reasonable limits.

Thirdly, South Sudan is one of the countries hardest hit by climate shocks. The international community should focus on helping South Sudan to strengthen capacity-building and enhance climate resilience. During the consultations, China repeatedly requested the inclusion of text calling on the international community, particularly developed countries, to step up actions and support, including funding, capacity-building and technology transfer, to improve South Sudan's ability to adapt and reduce its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. That text was supported by the African members as soon as it was proposed. It is difficult for us to understand why such a proposal to encourage useful and concrete efforts to help South Sudan to meet the challenges of climate change was rejected.

Fourthly, the protection of civilians is an important task of UNMISS. Peacekeepers from dozens of countries, including China, have worked tirelessly and even sacrificed their lives to that end. At the same time, in authorizing peacekeeping mandates, the Security Council must bear in mind that the country concerned has the primary responsibility to protect civilians. The task of a peacekeeping mission is not to replace the Government of the country concerned, but to help it to strengthen its capacity-building and support it in fulfilling its responsibility to protect civilians. The consent of the countries concerned, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence or to fulfil Security Council mandates are fundamental principles of peacekeeping, which cannot be transgressed.

Surprisingly, the initial draft text explicitly called for offensive action by UNMISS and provided for the Mission to take all necessary measures to engage any actor credibly preparing to launch attacks or engaging in attacks against civilians, including the Government of South Sudan and its proxies. It also provided for UNMISS to execute its mandate without the prior consent of the Government of South Sudan. Such statements go far beyond the basic principles of peacekeeping operations and seem to establish UNMISS as a locus of power above the South Sudanese Government, transforming the United Nations peacekeeping force into a multinational force.

Following firm requests by many parties, including the troop-contributing countries, the relevant controversial content was eventually revised, but there is still an overemphasis on the use of force as the preferred means of protecting civilians. In a side-by-

side comparison, this resolution's mandate on the protection of civilians also far exceeds the language of the mandate resolutions of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Such a mandate is likely to create new difficulties for UNMISS in carrying out its work and put more than 19,000 peacekeepers at risk. As a main troop-contributing country to UNMISS, China has strong reservations concerning that matter. It is not a privilege but a responsibility to serve as a penholder. Penholders should always remain objective and impartial, should fully take into account the views of the countries concerned and should address the legitimate concerns and demands of all parties. They should not dismiss or deliberately ignore other views, insist on placing national interests above the views of the countries concerned and the collective views of the Council, or even stop consultations to force a vote on a draft resolution when differences remain unresolved. That has occurred repeatedly in recent weeks and does no good in terms of maintaining the unity of the Council and ensuring its effectiveness. We urge the relevant countries to demonstrate the impartiality and inclusiveness that are expected of penholders and to make genuine efforts to reach a consensus.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Let me join others in expressing Brazil's solidarity with you, Mr. President, with Mozambique, and with Malawi and the people of Malawi, who are facing the devastating effects of Cyclone Freddy.

On behalf of the Brazilian delegation, I would like to reiterate our unwavering support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The situation in South Sudan is of great concern. The South Sudanese face a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need of food, water and health-care assistance. In addition, the ongoing intercommunal violence has caused significant suffering. In addressing the impact of climate change in South Sudan, the Security Council must acknowledge that peacekeeping operations are ill suited to dealing with the issue. We therefore call on the international community, in particular the developed countries, to increase their support for South Sudan. Food insecurity is our main concern. We are deeply concerned that one of the world's youngest populations lacks sufficient access to food. By scaling up humanitarian support,

the international community can alleviate the suffering of those most vulnerable. Moreover, financial and technical support can enhance South Sudan's capacity to adapt to environmental shocks, reduce the country's vulnerability to the worst effects of climate change and pave the way for long-term resilience.

Brazil recognizes the importance of regional cooperation in South Sudan. Accordingly, we call for continued partnership among the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to assist with the peace process and ensure lasting peace and stability in the country. We appreciate the South Sudan's growing cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission. Local initiatives that address the root causes of conflict and promote reconciliation will benefit from additional emphasis on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. South Sudan can count on Brazil's support for further engagement with the Commission. We acknowledge the importance of peacekeeping operations and their role in maintaining international peace and security.

We trust that the adopted mandate will enable UNMISS to continue its vital work in South Sudan, protecting civilians, supporting the peace process, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance and monitoring the violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We commend the Mission's proactive deployment and mobile operations. That flexible approach is critical to protecting those impacted by intercommunal violence in several conflict hotspots across South Sudan. The Mission has been vital in providing stability and establishing trust among local communities. We appreciate the courage and dedication of UNMISS personnel, who work tirelessly in complex and often dangerous conditions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Let me express our sympathy to you, Sir, and our sister country Malawi with regard to the victims of the cyclone. Our prayers are with you.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to address the Security Council on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Council members who sought our views on the mandate in order to work with us to produce a balanced text. We

also thank the troop-contributing countries for their tireless commitment to ensuring lasting peace in South Sudan. During the negotiation of the UNMISS mandate, it is important for the Council to observe the principle of consent, which is a fundamental aspect of the United Nations engagement in conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Adherence to that principle will enhance the mandate's credibility and legitimacy and help UNMISS carry out the mandate effectively. The respect of UNMISS for the principle of consent is crucial for the Mission's success in South Sudan. That will ensure that its work is seen as collaborative rather than as an imposition, and that it can carry out its mandate effectively to build a lasting peace in South Sudan.

We acknowledge the efforts of UNMISS in enhancing stability, protecting civilians and providing humanitarian assistance to the people of South Sudan. We urge UNMISS to continue working in close collaboration with the South Sudanese Government and to engage with communities to gain their trust. We recognize that the protection of civilians is of the utmost importance. But there is also a need to support the Government of South Sudan on its journey to fully implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and road map. The Government is committed to finding a sustained, lasting peace in South Sudan. To that end, despite the destabilizing behaviour of the non-signatories, the Government rejoined the Rome talks to continue engaging in dialogue with the holdout groups in the hope of reaching an amicable solution to their grievances.

We commend UNMISS and its partners for their humanitarian assistance efforts, which have helped to alleviate the suffering of people affected by the famine caused by displacement, economic instability, climate change and natural disasters. However, the need remains for sustained efforts by all friends of South Sudan to address the humanitarian needs and tackle the root causes of famine. That will require a coordinated and holistic approach that addresses the underlying challenges facing the country, including by working to establish a sustainable peace and stability, investing in economic development, improving access to food and other basic needs, and building resilience to climate change and other natural disasters.

In that regard, on behalf of the people of South Sudan, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the International Monetary Fund for supporting our nation

in stabilizing food prices and stimulating the economy. Its financial assistance and technical expertise have been instrumental in reducing inflationary rates and enhancing the availability of food supplies on the market. We recognize that the path to economic stability is a long and challenging one, but its unwavering support has brought us one step closer to achieving our goal. We look forward to continued collaboration.

As the Council is aware, my Government sought technical and electoral assistance from the United Nations. We are grateful that the United Nations has accepted to extend the necessary assistance towards the preparations for the elections. However, resolution 2677 (2023), just adopted, made the assistance conditional, which does not conform to the letter and spirit of United Nations support.

The Council repeatedly reminds South Sudan about the involvement of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the affairs of the State. I would like to reaffirm South Sudan's commitment through its constitutionally provided 35 per cent quota allocated to women and girls in all public positions. That quota has not yet been met, but it is our objective. It is therefore the responsibility of the international community to endeavour to constructively help South Sudan to achieve that goal.

Despite the numerous challenges faced by South Sudan, my country retains its sovereignty and its sovereign right as a State and a Member of this Organization. The Council should bear that in mind when considering matters concerning my country.

If the penholder had considered the proposals from my delegation and from some Council members, the resolution just adopted would have been more balanced and reflective of facts and realities on the ground in South Sudan. We therefore encourage the penholder to adopt a collaborative spirit in the coming resolutions.

In conclusion, we affirm our commitment to implementing the road map and appeal to the international community to support our peacebuilding and development efforts, particularly through technical resources to sustain our institutions as we head towards elections. We further affirm our commitment to working constructively with UNMISS and other international partners towards the attainment of lasting peace and development in South Sudan. Together, we can build a more peaceful and prosperous future for all of our people.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.