



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9219th meeting

Tuesday, 13 December 2022, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Raguttahalli (India)

Members:

Albania	Ms. Dautllari
Brazil	Mrs. Aguiar Barboza
China	Mr. Sun Zhiqiang
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Ireland	Mr. McSwiney
Kenya	Mr. Ndung'u
Mexico	Ms. Curzio Vila
Norway	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2022/918)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.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/2022/918)

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.

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; and Major General Charles Tai Gituai, interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

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/2022/918, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

At this meeting, the Council will hear briefings by Mr. Haysom, Major General Gituai and Ambassador Michel Xavier Biang, Permanent Representative of Gabon, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan.

I give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan.

Since my previous briefing (see S/PV.9134), there has been some notable progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. With the adoption of essential bills, such as the constitution-making bill, and the ratification of the road map by the national legislature, Parliament is again functioning. I welcome President Salva Kiir Mayardit's directive that parliamentarians continue working until

legislation underpinning the road map is passed, rather than taking an early recess.

The graduation of the first phase of the necessary unified forces is largely complete, with only Bentiu, in Unity state, remaining, due to unprecedented floods in the state. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) provided critical logistical and transport support to that process. The second phase must now receive urgent financial, logistical and political support by the Government. It is essential that the ranks of the graduating forces and their deployment plans be finalized and implemented so that the force can begin to serve as a truly national army. Some reports of limited deployments of the integrated forces to hotspots in northern parts of Warrap state and Kodok, in Upper Nile, are encouraging.

In my recent engagements with President Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar and other national leaders, I underscored the need for consistent and continued progress on the road map benchmarks, to which the parties recommitted themselves just months ago. We urge stakeholders to conceive of the road map not as a box-ticking exercise, but rather a qualitative process to lay the proper foundations for a stable and democratic nation.

In that connection, UNMISS is mindful that legal and technical arrangements for elections should be finalized soon. The National Constitutional Amendment Committee has reviewed the National Elections Act, which is the first step in providing the legal basis for the reconstitution of the National Elections Commission, which will manage the electoral process. While I commend the progress of the Committee in reviewing the act, I note that the issue of the implementation of quotas for women and persons with disabilities remains unresolved. I encourage the parties to reach a compromise on the matter so that that legislation can be finalized at the earliest possible moment.

Further to that, I note with concern that deadlines relating to the Political Parties Act, the Political Parties Council, the reconstituted National Constitution Review Commission and the establishment of the Constitution Drafting Committee have been missed. We consistently remind the South Sudanese that the two-year extension should not be regarded as a holiday break. We are concerned that delays are already having a domino effect on subsequent key benchmarks.

As things stand, our position on elections remains consistent, with the needs assessment mission having recommended a two-phased approach. The first phase — fulfilling legal requirements, preparing the grounds and environment for the conduct of elections — has yet to be completed by the parties. And material assistance for their actual conduct should be contemplated only upon completion of the first phase. Accordingly, it is important that the parties receive a unified message from the Security Council and the international community on the criticality of the implementation of the provisions concerning elections.

I would like to commend the Transitional Government of National Unity for the successful completion of the sixth Governors' Forum, held in Juba and supported by the United Nations. That platform afforded government officials an opportunity to constructively exchange views on good governance and the relationship between the centre and the periphery. UNMISS advocated for the inclusion of civil society voices in the next round.

Ahead of the dry season, we are particularly concerned by the clashes among armed militias, which are causing displacement in northern Jonglei and Upper Nile. We are worried about the intercommunal violence in northern Warrap and ongoing cattle-raiding and migration related conflicts in the Equatorias. On the margins of the Governors' Forum, I met several of the governors to encourage dialogue and the development of mutually agreed arrangements towards addressing those challenges.

The security situation in Upper Nile State continues to be a particular concern and has the potential to further deteriorate. This follows a year-long fracturing of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) and the splintering of the Kit-Gwang group, which has manifested in clashes along the strategically important Nile River corridor. Violence in the area has taken on an ethnic dimension, and I condemn the human rights violations and abuses that have included killings, conflict-related sexual violence, pillaging and large-scale displacements. Thousands of civilians have fled towards the UNMISS temporary operating base at Kodok and to the protection of civilians site in Malakal, which is already congested beyond its capacity. UNMISS is coordinating with humanitarian partners on the ground to accommodate new arrivals and is engaging politically at the state

and national levels to bring the needed attention to the conflict and encourage a resolution.

UNMISS convened a meeting of international partners on 2 December to respond to the ongoing violence and issued a public statement calling for the Government to intervene while urging the multiple protagonists to cease clashes and desist from any further human rights violations. We have warned that credible elections cannot take place in such an environment, and that there will be consequences for those promoting the conflict.

Here, I must flag our concern at the militarization of the Nile River. UNMISS is calling on all actors to respect this national asset as a highway for humanitarian assistance and sustainable economic development. Our hope is to deter actors from extortion and abuse along this corridor.

On a related note, I would draw the Council's attention to the funding constraints of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, established by the peace agreement and which is now needed to investigate the violence in Upper Nile.

We also express concern at the pause in the Sant'Egidio process leading the engagement with holdout non-signatory groups. We urge all parties to embrace dialogue to advance their interests.

We welcome the intended visit of His Holiness the Pope to South Sudan in the first week of February in the hopes that it will consolidate peace and understanding between the South Sudanese political leadership.

Tensions will continue to simmer and intensify as the electoral date draws closer. UNMISS will remain steadfast in prioritizing the protection of civilians in all aspects of our mandated tasks — whether responding to pressing protection needs, like subnational violence, or supporting a broader peace to take root, one that is underpinned by institutions of justice, human rights and accountability. These efforts will go a long way to support an expansion of civic and political space and a culture of non-violent debate and dispute resolution.

UNMISS is working in a whole-of-Mission approach towards those objectives. This includes support to civil society, academia and political parties generally, while specifically exploring their roles in supporting the constitution-making and electoral processes. Simultaneously, we are conducting intensive

key leadership engagements to encourage the political resolution of intercommunal conflicts, by deploying civilian-military teams to temporary operating bases. These efforts have contributed to the overall reduction in the number of civilian casualties, year-on-year.

We continue our efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence. In 2022, the United Nations police has supported over 36 police-community relations committees, focusing inter alia on sexual and gender-based violence. In supporting national-level efforts, UNMISS joins the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict in encouraging the Transitional Government of National Unity to fully implement the 2014 Joint Communiqué of the Government of South Sudan and the United Nations on Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which contains clear and time-bound commitments to tackle conflict-related sexual violence. We are working closely with international stakeholders to launch community violence reduction projects in areas of relative calm that will support ex-combatants and communities to access alternative livelihoods.

UNMISS continues to report routinely on the human rights situation in South Sudan. This year we have released five public reports on violence against civilians. In parallel, we welcome the activation of various investigation committees on subnational violence by the Government of National Unity, but I urge these bodies to share their findings and recommendations publicly. This would demonstrate the Government's commitment to accountability for perpetrators, justice for survivors and a pathway to reconciliation for all communities.

The worsening humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is a reminder of the imperative for the parties to deliver on their commitments in the peace agreement. Next year's projections estimate that 9.4 million people will need humanitarian and protection assistance. This is an alarming figure for a country of roughly 12 million people. The situation is exacerbated by flooding and localized drought. While humanitarian personnel are working tirelessly to offer shelter, health care, food, water, sanitation and other support, needs continue to outstrip the resources to assist. Humanitarians continue to give their lives in service, with nine personnel killed on duty in 2022. We urge partners to continue to respond generously to the humanitarian response plan.

Let me underscore that partnerships continue to underpin the overall strategy of this Mission, particularly

with multilateral institutions of the region. UNMISS is working with the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission in a trilateral task force to support the permanent constitution-making and electoral processes. We have worked closely with these and other partners in Juba, such as the Troika and the European Union, in good offices and conflict prevention efforts. I want to thank the Government of South Sudan for their strong support to the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which guides a three-year partnership towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Based on national priorities, it recognizes that there can be no lasting peace without sustainable development and there can be no sustainable development without peace in South Sudan.

In conclusion, we hold the view that the road map is a second mortgage on the Revitalized Peace Agreement, one which must be repaid in good faith and within the stipulated time frames. As moral guarantors and partners of that agreement, our collective task is to ensure that the parties have the best possible international support in order to help them fulfil their commitment to the people of South Sudan. I wish to thank the Council for its continued support towards that goal.

The President: I thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Biang.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, I have the honour to inform the members of the Security Council of developments since my predecessor's last briefing to the Council, on 15 December 2021 (see S/PV.8931). In my statement, I will provide a brief overview of developments in the Committee since the beginning of 2022.

With regard to the appointment of the Panel of Experts, following the consensus reached on the proposed list of experts pursuant to resolution 2577 (2021), the Secretary-General appointed the five experts to the Panel on 20 January. On 22 June, the Secretary-General reappointed the same five experts pursuant to resolution 2633 (2022).

To date, the Committee has met six times in informal consultations.

On 14 February, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the Panel's workplan for the mandate renewed by resolution 2577 (2021).

On 22 April, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the final report of the Panel (see S/2022/359), submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 2577 (2021), and considered the recommendations contained therein.

On 22 June, at a briefing for Member States, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the final report of the Panel, submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 2577 (2021).

On 1 July, the Committee was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

On 17 August, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Group's workplan for the mandate renewed by resolution 2633 (2022).

On 18 November, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the Panel's progress report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 18 of resolution 2633 (2022), and considered the recommendations contained therein.

Since the beginning of 2022, the Committee has received two requests for exemptions to the arms embargo, both of which have been granted. In addition, three requests for exemptions to the travel ban and assets freeze have been received, all of which have been granted.

Finally, I would like to thank Member States, including those neighbouring South Sudan, for their engagement with the Committee and their participation in the Committee's meetings this year. I encourage Member States to continue to strengthen their cooperation with the Panel of Experts and the Committee.

The President: I thank Mr. Biang for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Gituai.

Mr. Gituai: It is my pleasure to brief the Security Council today, just over nine months since I last briefed the Council (see S/PV.8987). I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council for the invitation, expressed in resolution 2633 (2022), adopted on 26 May 2022, to

“share relevant information with the Council, as appropriate, on its assessment of the parties' implementation of the Revitalised Agreement, adherence to the [Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access], and the facilitation of unhindered and secure humanitarian access” (*resolution 2633 (2022), paragraph 23*).

Furthermore, article 7.9 of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan mandates us to report to the Council every three months.

The reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC) is the official oversight body mandated to monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. R-JMEC oversees the mandate and tasks of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, including adherence by the parties to the agreed timelines and implementation schedule. R-JMEC comprises 43 members, per article 7.2, including the parties to the agreement, other South Sudanese stakeholders, regional guarantors, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU), the People's Republic of China and the troika — the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway — all of which participate in the delivery of our mandate.

My briefing to the Council will focus on the key milestones achieved in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement since my most recent briefing in March and critical pending tasks. I will also highlight challenges and conclude with my recommendations.

As reported to the Council in March, due to the slow progress of the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, R-JMEC urged the Revitalized Transitional Government to prepare a road map, including its strategy for implementing the Agreement's critical outstanding tasks.

The Revitalized Transitional Government duly developed a road map setting out the path to peaceful and democratic elections. The road map, entitled “Agreement on the Road Map to a Peaceful and Democratic end to the Transitional Period of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan”, has been endorsed by the R-JMEC and

ratified by the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly in accordance with article 8.4 of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. This detailed document, developed and owned by the parties to the Agreement themselves, contains a wide range of critical tasks and timelines, which, if implemented fully in letter and spirit, would ensure the conduct of peaceful and credible democratic elections in December 2024.

I will now give a chapter-by-chapter update on progress. On governance, the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly passed the following bills: the South Sudan people's defence force bill, the wildlife service bill, the national police service bill, the political parties bill and the constitution-making process bill. Other bills, such as the national prisons service bill and the civic defence service bill, are being processed by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly.

In addition, the National Constitutional Amendment Committee reviewed and drafted several amendments to the key priority legislation, including the National Audit Chamber Act, the Public Finance Management and Accountability Act, the Petroleum Act, the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, the National Election Act and the Anti-Corruption Commission Act. It is currently reviewing the National Revenue Authority Act, the Bank of South Sudan Act and the Banking Act.

The outstanding governance tasks required by chapter I include the judicial reforms in article 1.17, the completion of the reforms of national institutions and commissions, listed in article 1.19, and the reconstitution of the Political Parties Council, as well as the amendment of the National Election Act and the reconstitution of the National Elections Commission, in article 1.20.

On the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements, the Revitalized Transitional Government resolved the impasse over the unified command structure, including the appointment of unified commanders in April 2022. Furthermore, approximately 49,000 of the 53,000 necessary unified forces of phase one have been graduated. However, phase two of the unification of forces, which will complete the graduation of the necessary unified forces, has not yet begun and is overdue.

Insecurity persists in some parts of South Sudan. As highlighted in our recent joint statement by R-JMEC, UNMISS, the AU Mission in South Sudan, IGAD and

some members of the international community, R-JMEC is deeply concerned over the escalating violence in both Upper Nile and Jonglei states, with innocent lives being lost, thousands displaced and livelihoods and property destroyed. If not addressed urgently, the wider ramifications of such violence could destabilize the ongoing implementation of the peace agreement. It is important that the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM), which reports to the RJMEC, be given the necessary resources to investigate and evaluate such incidents of violence.

There are critical transitional security-arrangements tasks that have not yet been completed, including the funding and operationalization of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission programmes, as well as the strategic defence and security review, which is critical for security sector reforms.

With regard to humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, some humanitarian corridors remain open and continue to facilitate the free movement of goods, services and people across borders, including the voluntary return of more than 600,000 people since 2018. However, various factors have exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation in the country, including prolonged subnational violence, widespread floods, food insecurity, reduced funding and humanitarian access, and lack of basic services. Furthermore, the establishment of the Special Reconstruction Fund, in article 3.2 of the Agreement, a critical coordinating mechanism for recovery and development efforts, is long overdue.

As for resource, economic and financial management, it is encouraging to note that the Revitalized Transitional Government has initiated reforms in public financial management, and relevant banking and resource management laws are being reviewed. Furthermore, policy reviews and the management of natural resources, agricultural policies, strategies and programmes are under way. However, the comprehensive policy for the use and management of the country's water bodies, including but not limited to the River Nile, which was prioritized in the road map, has yet to be developed.

On transitional justice, the Revitalized Transitional Government conducted public consultations to help guide the legislation for the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing

(CTRH). The drafting of the CTRH bill and the Compensation and Reparation Authority bill is ongoing. On the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, the responsibility for its establishment lies with the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Revitalized Transitional Government, and it remains pending.

The making of the permanent constitution is critical for guiding the conduct of elections at the end of the transitional period, and some progress has been made in this regard. On 24 October 2022, the reconstituted Transitional National Legislature passed the 2022 Constitution-making Process bill, but it has yet to be presented to the President for his signature. Once signed into law, the Revitalized Transitional Government is expected to reconstitute and appoint all the institutions essential for the making of the permanent constitution.

During the road map phase, it is critical that the Revitalized Transitional Government provide an enabling environment for elections, including the opening and preserving of civic and political space for all in order to build confidence and participation in the process and expedite implementation of all critical outstanding tasks.

All actors — parties and stakeholders alike, including partners and friends of South Sudan — need to focus more on facilitating progress. To achieve this, it is necessary to continue building trust among the parties, enhance the capacity of implementers and address subnational violence and the dire humanitarian situation. Furthermore, the RJMEC, and the CTSAMVM in particular, face significant operational challenges following the withdrawal of United States funding.

I would like to close my statement with the following recommendations to the Security Council. The Council should increase its engagements with the Revitalized Transitional Government to adhere to the road-map timelines and prioritize their implementation through the provision of predictable, timely and adequate funding for all tasks. It should urge Member States to provide political, technical and logistical support to the Revitalized Transitional Government for the implementation of the priority areas of the road map, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the permanent constitution-making process and elections. It should also encourage the Revitalized Transitional Government to ensure that civic and political space are guaranteed and protected throughout the country.

The Council should also appeal to the Revitalized Transitional Government to urgently address the root causes of intercommunal violence and insecurity in the country, especially in Upper Nile and Jonglei States, and it should further appeal to the Revitalized Transitional Government to establish and operationalize, in collaboration with and with the support of international partners and friends of South Sudan, the Special Reconstruction Fund in order to pave the way for the mobilization of resources for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. It should also reach out to Member States to consider political, logistical and financial support for the monitoring and oversight institutions, namely, the RJMEC and the CTSAMVM, to enhance their operational capabilities.

Finally, I would like to appeal to the Council to remain seized of the peace process in South Sudan and consider undertaking regular visits to the country as a show of solidarity. The IGAD and the AU have responded very positively to the RJMEC's recent appeals for enhanced engagement with South Sudan. The importance of consolidating our efforts, speaking with one voice, bringing our collective leverage to bear and pushing for timely implementation of the road map cannot be overemphasized. For the road map to be implemented in letter and spirit within the stipulated timeline, the full support of the Security Council will be of great importance, as the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan continues to offer the best opportunity of lasting peace in South Sudan.

The President: I thank Mr. Gituai for his briefing.

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

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I would like to thank Special Representative Haysom and Ambassador Gituai for their briefings today.

(spoke in French)

We thank Ambassador Biang for his update on the activities and programme of work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan.

(spoke in English)

The United States expresses its gratitude to the leadership of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and to the women and men of the Mission and the police- and troop-contributing countries who

serve at great personal risk to protect civilians in South Sudan and mitigate conflict in many volatile areas.

South Sudan's transitional leaders must deliver the result they committed to in the peace agreement and address such immediate issues as the ongoing violence in Upper Nile State and the dire humanitarian situation we just heard about from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Ambassador Gituai.

We are gravely concerned at the escalating subnational and intercommunal violence, including in Upper Nile and Jonglei States, which reportedly killed an estimated 500 civilians and displaced another 15,000 in Upper Nile State alone. It is abundantly clear that South Sudan's leaders need to resolve this crisis. We urgently call on these leaders to act now and end the violence. We also urgently call on UNMISS to proactively deploy peacekeepers in hot spots in keeping with its mandate in order to protect civilians who are under the threat of violence. Time is of the essence to prevent any further loss of life. Any attempt to obstruct the Mission from providing life-saving work is simply unacceptable.

We are deeply disturbed by recent reports of human rights violations and abuses by Government and allied forces, particularly in Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei States. We have heard about killings, abductions and sexual violence, including, as we have tragically heard, the rape and gang rape of girls as young as eight years old. We strongly condemn all forms of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, which disproportionately affects women and girls, and we call for immediate accountability. Given the gravity of those crimes, we urge the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) to facilitate a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, as mandated in resolution 2633 (2022).

The humanitarian situation continues to worsen each year, with 9.4 million people in need of aid. We urgently call on South Sudanese officials to allow and facilitate the safe access and delivery of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan. We strongly encourage the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to work closely with humanitarian workers to facilitate the provision of essential services and protection to civilians in need.

On the political situation, we reiterate our disappointment with the decision of South Sudan's leaders to extend the transitional period for another two years, despite failing over the past four years to

deliver fully on the commitments they made in 2018 in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Each missed implementation benchmark further calls into question the political commitment of South Sudan's transitional leaders. We urge those leaders to meaningfully engage with civil society and other Agreement stakeholders in order to make the transition to a more inclusive process.

It is critical that the region, through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU), play an active role in holding South Sudan's transitional leaders to the commitments they have made. We therefore call on IGAD, the AU and the international community to press the transitional Government to implement critical reforms to establish Government institutions, implement economic and public financial management reforms, protect human rights and maintain security.

With respect to the sanctions regime, we continue to reiterate that the arms embargo does not prevent the South Sudanese Government from obtaining the military equipment needed for defence, and neither does it impede its ability to undertake critical security sector reform. To the contrary, the arms embargo in South Sudan is carefully tailored to facilitate the Government's access to the weapons necessary to provide security for its citizens. There is a clear exemption procedure that the South Sudanese Government can follow to secure swift approval for any necessary supplies. Furthermore, the provision of non-lethal military equipment for humanitarian or protective use requires only advance notification to the Committee.

The United States remains committed to the cause of peace and to the people of South Sudan.

Mrs. Aguiar Barboza (Brazil): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Haysom, Ambassador Biang and Major General Gituai for their briefings. I also welcome the delegation of South Sudan to this meeting.

We join the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in calling upon South Sudan's transitional Government and the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to engage in a constructive dialogue and address the implementation of the early benchmarks of the road map for a peaceful and democratic end to the transitional period.

We encourage inclusive negotiations among the parties, with the participation of women and persons with disabilities, focusing on the reconstitution of the Political Parties Council and the National Elections Commission. We acknowledge the importance of and the need to convene credible elections within the foreseen timelines. A new two-year window of opportunity appears to be more than sufficient to ensure that the long-awaited elections are held.

Brazil takes note with appreciation the support provided by the African Union and IGAD for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. In particular, we acknowledge the Community of Sant'Egidio for its relevant involvement with non-signatory groups through the peace process.

We also commend the continued graduation of the necessary unified forces. The unification of the armed forces is a vital pillar of South Sudan's institutional development. We are hopeful that the necessary unified forces will soon become a symbol of national unity.

We are concerned about the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, as food insecurity levels remain alarmingly high. As Special Representative Haysom previously stated, more than 80 per cent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. We commend the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and all the partners that have provided relief during these difficult times. The safety of humanitarian workers is also worrisome, and we call upon the transitional Government to redouble its efforts to address that issue.

In conclusion, we underscore Brazil's support for UNMISS. The Mission has remained crucial for providing protection to civilians in conflict-affected areas and for assisting internally displaced persons fleeing grim humanitarian conditions and human rights violations. It remains critical to a peaceful transitional order in South Sudan.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative Haysom and our briefers for their updates, in particular Major General Gituai. I welcome the update from the Permanent Representative of Gabon in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan in our meeting today.

I will make three broad points.

First, four months have now passed since the Government of South Sudan announced a two-year extension and subsequent road map for implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Progress remains woefully slow. The United Kingdom welcomes the passing of the constitution-making bill, as well as the continued graduation of the necessary unified forces. Such progress is long overdue, and we urge the Government to capitalize on that momentum and meet the remaining benchmarks within their agreed timelines. That is essential in order for free and fair elections to be held before the end of the agreement.

Secondly, the need for Government action to protect its civilians is no clearer than in Upper Nile state, where the conflict has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, as we heard. The United Kingdom condemns those attacks on civilians. We are gravely concerned by the potential implications of the conflict on the already severely overcrowded protection of civilians site in Malakal, as well as on wider peace in South Sudan. We call on the Government to protect civilians and create the conditions for an inclusive dialogue to stop the violence. Military intervention must not aggravate existing tensions or pose additional risks to civilians. We also reiterate our call for the Government of South Sudan to immediately remove obstructions and address the violence against humanitarian workers and civilians.

Thirdly, the situation in Upper Nile and the rising levels of insecurity across South Sudan require an urgent response from the international community to help save lives. The United Kingdom commends the United Nations Mission in South Sudan for its efforts to provide protection to civilians and for its coordination with South Sudan. A coherent, whole-of-United Nations approach across humanitarian, development and peace priorities is needed. We endorse the Secretary-General's encouragement for the Government and partners to apply a similar endeavour.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom remains committed to the South Sudanese people's quest for peace, prosperity and democracy. We once again call on the leadership to deliver real change for its people.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing on the developing situation in South Sudan. We listened to the briefings by the interim Chairperson

of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Ambassador Charles Tai Gituai, and the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations, Michel Biang, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, Akuei Bona Malwal, to today's meeting.

The Russian Federation fully supports the international efforts to stabilize the situation in South Sudan and strengthen peace and security in that country. Over the past few months, South Sudan has achieved further success in implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The decision to extend the transition period in the country was endorsed by key State institutions, and the road map adopted in August was incorporated into the Transitional Constitution. After the first contingent of the unified armed forces arrived at the end of August, the South Sudanese army was joined by new recruits from Jonglei, Bahr el-Ghazal, Unity and Upper Nile states. The National Parliament adopted several important bills, including the bill on the drafting of the country's constitution and its national police.

We call on the South Sudanese parties to work together to implement the road map. All entities operating within the context of the peace agreement, including the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, must have the necessary funding. We welcome South Sudan's role in the region and the country's readiness, despite its own issues, to help resolve the situation in the neighbouring country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through its participation in the East African Community regional force. The security situation on the periphery remains difficult. Intercommunal violence continues unabated. We are concerned in particular about the deteriorating situation in Upper Nile state due to the ongoing clashes among the wings of the Kit-Gwang faction. Meanwhile, we note the Government's response to those challenges, including the establishment of two commissions of inquiry into high-profile incidents in Mayom and northern Tonj counties.

We strongly condemn all violations of the Revitalized Peace Agreement and acts of violence against civilians, including humanitarian workers in South Sudan. We commend the mediation efforts of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority

on Development. We also note the work carried out in recent months by the Community of Sant'Egidio, which has succeeded in bringing together the two factions of the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance. We hope that the negotiations held under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio will continue. We would also like to commend the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and Mr. Haysom to mobilize support for the peace process in South Sudan.

We believe that further progress in the peace process and the successful holding of the general elections scheduled for 2025 will be impossible without effective armed forces. The unified forces that are being formed at the moment need international support now more than ever before. In order to facilitate that process, we believe that considering ways to further ease the sanctions regime imposed on the Republic of South Sudan would be justified. We call on our colleagues in the Security Council to heed the legitimate wishes of Juba, which are supported by its African neighbours in the spirit of solidarity.

Ms. Curzio Vila (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Haysom, the Permanent Representative of Gabon and interim Chairperson Tai Gituai for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to today's meeting.

Given that this will be the last time during its current term that Mexico will participate in a meeting on South Sudan as an elected member of the Security Council, I would like to make the following observations.

First, with regard to the political situation, the lack of progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan over the past two years has resulted in the extension of the transition period. We echo the appeal made by the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union to the Government of South Sudan to move forward with the process in an inclusive manner and without delay. We will follow with interest the work of the trilateral working group in its mandate to support the Government in preparing for elections and in the constitution-drafting process.

We welcome the fact that some progress was made during the reporting period in the area of legislation. We also note the graduation of the necessary unified forces and hope that the Government can take advantage of that situation to ensure that the integration

and deployment of those forces are carried out in full compliance with international human rights standards and in the best interests of the people of South Sudan.

Secondly, with regard to the human rights and security situations, we have followed with deep concern the outbreak of violence in Unity, Jonglei, Upper Nile and Central Equatoria states, among others, which has led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Human rights violations have also been reported, including serious violations against children.

We would like to underscore in particular the regrettable increase in the number of cases of sexual and gender-based violence. We condemn in the strongest terms rape and sexual assault as a method of warfare. Impunity with regard to those acts is alarming, and we urge the authorities of South Sudan to ensure that alleged perpetrators of rape do not occupy positions of power and that they provide the necessary compensation and protection to victims. We recall that that is a sanctions-designation criterion. We deplore the fact that that the Committee has not met to discuss that serious issue.

The protection of civilians and the situation in the camps for internally displaced persons are priorities for Mexico. We urgently call on the authorities of South Sudan to fully assume their primary responsibility for the protection of civilians. As long as progress is not made to resolve deep-seated differences, tensions will resurface, such as the recent tensions in states on the border with Abyei. We note the reconstitution of the Committee on the Final Status of Abyei and look forward to progress in that area, in line with the efforts of the African Union.

Thirdly, violence has exacerbated the dire humanitarian situation. As we heard, 8.9 million people are in need of assistance, and 75 per cent of the population suffers from severe food insecurity. In that complex situation, attacks on humanitarian workers are unacceptable. We call on the Government of South Sudan to take urgent action to remove bureaucratic impediments and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers. We also commend the initiatives and efforts to create safe spaces, such as the initiative that Special Representative Haysom mentioned to create a humanitarian corridor along the Nile in order to facilitate mobility and the provision of basic services.

Fourthly, with regard to the climate situation, South Sudan is one of the clearest examples of the tragic

impact of climate change. The destruction caused by flooding has been followed by another relentless rainy season. It is crucial to build capacity to cope with such phenomena, as they are likely to continue. In that regard, we welcome the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework as critical to the adoption of a long-term approach to addressing the causes of instability and building resilience.

I conclude by acknowledging the important work in South Sudan being done by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and Special Representative Haysom, as well as the United Nations country team and the humanitarian community. We hope that the extension will be leveraged in the transition phase to stabilize the security situation and provide encouragement to and protection for the people of South Sudan.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Special Representative Nicholas Haysom and the representative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for their briefings, and welcome the representative of South Sudan to today's meeting.

I would like to make three points. First, the 2024 elections have set a political horizon for South Sudan. In order to meet the magnitude of the existing challenges before the election period, the road map adopted in August must be immediately and fully implemented. That includes allocating the necessary budgetary resources and defining the legislative and constitutional framework, as well as institution-building, starting with the re-establishment of the National Elections Commission and the Political Parties Council.

I welcome the start of the process of the drafting of South Sudan's future Constitution. It is essential to create conditions conducive to the participation of civil society in order to ensure the credibility of the elections. In addition, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is mandated to support South Sudan in preparing for the elections. I welcome the role of the regional actors, whose cooperation with the United Nations is crucial.

Secondly, UNMISS is currently the main force ensuring the protection of the population, and we are deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation. Peacekeepers all too often have to intervene to put an end to the violence being fuelled by national political rivalries. The clashes in Upper Nile state are particularly alarming. UNMISS is also

protecting the population in Bentiu from a humanitarian disaster in the face of the ongoing floods.

In the light of the foregoing, we must recognize the reality that the protection of civilians will remain at the heart of the UNMISS mandate as long as South Sudan's security forces are not fulfilling that role and have not earned the population's trust. In that regard, we are encouraged by the decision to deploy the necessary unified forces in Upper Nile and Warrap. There is an urgent need to continue the efforts to integrate the combatants, and to equip, pay and deploy them on the basis of clear missions. We must also accelerate the ongoing efforts to limit the security forces' responsibilities and to reduce their numbers.

We hear South Sudan's calls for more capacity-building. Enabling the authorities to independently discharge their duties is of course essential in view of the UNMISS transition. Many tasks that are carried out by UNMISS and the United Nations country team already support that process.

Ensuring further engagement on the part of UNMISS will require the political will of the authorities, both in Juba and at the local level. Significant progress has been made over the past year on the measures defined in resolution 2567 (2021), including on the integration of combatants, the agreement on unified command and the easing of the restrictions on movement of UNMISS, which must continue. The redeployment of the forces is the next major step that can be taken between now and the renewal of the UNMISS mandate. Any United Nations support will, in any event, be conditional on the progress achieved in security sector reform and on ensuring respect for human rights.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his briefing, and we support the crucial work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We also thank the Ambassador of Gabon for his briefing and Major General Gituai for his update. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to today's meeting. Allow me to focus my statement on three key areas.

First, following the adoption of the road map, South Sudan parties are now presented with an opportunity to achieve real gains in preparing the country for elections in 2024. However, in order to be more effective, the road map must be implemented in an inclusive manner, include civil society and respect the agreed timelines

for delivery. We also welcome the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in South Sudan.

As the Secretary-General raised in his report (S/2022/918), we are concerned about some benchmarks that have already been missed, including the reconstitution of the Political Parties Council and the National Elections Commission, as that could result in leaders slipping back into the status quo. Similarly, focus must be placed on conducting the necessary security sector reforms. We welcome the completion of the graduation of the necessary unified forces. However, a clear plan is now required for their deployment in order to strengthen the security response in South Sudan. We commend the constitution-making process bill passed in October and hope it will provide a legal framework to guide the development of a permanent constitution.

Secondly, Albania condemns the ongoing violence in Upper Nile state and in northern Jonglei. We call for the hostilities to cease immediately in order to prevent further loss of lives. We commend UNMISS for its role and the physical protection provided to those seeking shelter at the Malakal protection-of-civilians site, as they are putting pressure on already stretched capacities. However, we recall that the Government of South Sudan bears the responsibility to protect civilians, and we urge them to take action and respond to the situation.

Human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, have continued to worsen and are even being used as a weapon of war by all sides. Albania strongly condemns that and urges the South Sudanese leaders to investigate all reports and hold perpetrators to account, including officials accused of overseeing systematic gang rapes. We also join other Security Council members in urging the Security Council Committee established pursuant to 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan to facilitate a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, as mandated in resolution 2633 (2022).

Thirdly, the humanitarian situation has, concerning, taken a heavy toll, owing to the outbreak of violence, food insecurity and climate shocks. South Sudan remains one of the most dangerous places for humanitarian actors. We urge the Government and the local authorities to guarantee full and unimpeded humanitarian access, protect humanitarian workers and remove bureaucratic hurdles in order to ensure support can reach those in need. We commend the efforts of

UNMISS to safeguard humanitarian access and the increased patrols to deter violence.

In conclusion, the next two years are crucial for South Sudan's leaders to make gains on the electoral and constitutional processes, to set the country on the path towards credible and democratic elections. We call on neighbouring States, regional organizations and the international community to continue to monitor the peace agreement and ensure that South Sudan finalizes the required security sector reform and passes the necessary legislation.

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

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom; His Excellency Michel Biang, Permanent Representative of Gabon and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan; and Major General Charles Tai Gituai, interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of our brother, Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal, Permanent Representative of South Sudan, in today's meeting.

The A3 has always stood in solidarity with the people of South Sudan, whose patience and resilience have been tested and overstretched by political uncertainty, conflict and economic hardship. We remain fully cognizant of their sobering history and their unrelenting quest to overcome the formidable security, political and socioeconomic challenges they face. Our statement will focus on four issues: first, the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; secondly, the transitional security arrangements; thirdly, the humanitarian and economic situation; and fourthly, the activities of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The A3 welcomes the steady progress made by the South Sudanese parties in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. We welcome the decisions by the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JEMEC) and the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly endorsing the 24-month road map for the peaceful and democratic end of the transition period. The consensus by the

parties on the equitable allocation of positions in the management of 17 national commissions and the passing of the constitution-making process bill of 2022 are also commendable.

We call on the South Sudan parties and the Government to commit the necessary political capital and resources to expedite the implementation of all pending tasks within the agreed timelines. We urge that the implementation process continue to be fully representative of the spectrum of all South Sudanese populations, including all regions of the country and political affiliations, as well as women, young people and civil society.

The A3 welcomes the decisions taken at the forty-eighth ordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers, held in Khartoum on 30 November, to undertake a joint ministerial visit to South Sudan and hold a biannual extraordinary IGAD ministerial meeting in order to review the progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. That high-level political engagement by the region is timely and critical in supporting and shepherding the parties to fulfil their own commitments. The A3 reiterates the call on friends of South Sudan and international partners to provide financial assistance for the two IGAD-supported peace-monitoring mechanisms — the R-JMEC and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism — to enable them to sustain their essential oversight role of the implementation process.

On the transitional security arrangements, the A3 welcomes the graduation of the necessary unified forces in various parts of the country, thereby fulfilling one of the key provisions of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. As we look forward to the deployment of the forces, we emphasize that the graduation should not be an end in itself but should mark the commencement of the envisaged comprehensive security sector reforms in the country. In that regard, we welcome the enactment by Parliament of the National Wildlife Service Act of 2022 and the South Sudan National Police Service Act 2022. We hope the ongoing review of pending security sector legislation will be finalized expeditiously. The continuous training and equipping of the South Sudan security forces will enable the Government to effectively address the worrisome trend and recurring localized conflicts in parts of the country, including in Upper Nile, Jonglei, Warrap and Unity states. However, the arms embargo imposed on South Sudan, especially

in relation to training assistance and capacity-building programmes, as well as non-lethal items and equipment, is a significant impediment. We reiterate the call on the Security Council to lift those unhelpful sanctions.

The criminal justice system is a useful tool for addressing the localized intercommunal violence, cattle raids and boundary clashes, but it cannot be a sufficient measure. At the local level, it is important for responsive peacebuilding activities, as well as intercommunal peace, dialogue and reconciliation, to be adopted to address existing grievances. We therefore urge the parties to expedite the implementation of the national reconciliation and healing activities as outlined in the Revitalized Peace Agreement.

I now turn to the humanitarian and economic situation, which remains deeply concerning. We welcome the signing of the 2023-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which aims to support the Government of South Sudan's vision in transitioning from humanitarian to sustainable economic development. Whereas the A3 appreciates the continued international humanitarian assistance provided to South Sudan, the time has come to also pay greater attention to supporting development interventions to address the root causes of conflicts and insecurity. The A3 urges the Government of South Sudan to urgently implement the economic and financial management reforms provided for in chapter IV of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. The A3 deplores, and indeed condemns, all acts of violence directed at humanitarian workers and installations. We urge the South Sudanese Government to take the required measures to protect humanitarian workers and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access to all parts of the country.

On the fourth and last point, the A3 commends UNMISS and the troop- and police-contributing countries for their continued commitment to the cause of peace in South Sudan across the four currently mandated tasks. The responsibility lies with the Security Council to ensure that the Mission lives up to the expectations of the South Sudanese people as a multidimensional peace operation. The A3 believes that UNMISS should play a greater role in facilitating the implementation of chapter II of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. We hope that will be achieved during the upcoming renewal of the mandate in March.

In conclusion, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya reaffirm their commitment to continue accompanying the

people and Government of South Sudan in their quest for lasting peace, stability and development.

Mr. Sun Zhiqiang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom, Ambassador Biang and Ambassador Gituai for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan at today's meeting.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is crucial for South Sudan to establish a national governance framework and achieve peace and development. The signatories to the Revitalized Agreement have agreed to a road map to extend the transitional period, providing a new opportunity for South Sudan to fully implement the peace agreement and complete the transition. China welcomes the positive progress registered over the past three months in constitution-making and the restructuring of key institutions and encourages all actors in South Sudan to put the interests of the people and the country first, maintain political engagement and continue to promote the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement in accordance with the parameters set out in the road map.

The support of the international community is indispensable for the peace process in South Sudan. At the request of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, the United Nations, the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, including the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), formed a technical trilateral task force on the constitution-making process for the permanent constitution and on electoral support. That initiative will help South Sudan implement the key provisions of the Revitalized Agreement. At the same time, the R-JMEC and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism should receive adequate and sustained funding. After the withdrawal of a major donor, China swiftly dispersed its annual contribution to the Mechanism. We will continue to provide support to the relevant monitoring bodies within our capacity.

Given the recent escalation in violence in Upper Nile and Jonglei states and attacks by militias on camps for internally displaced persons, the security situation is worrisome. China urges all militias to immediately cease violence, stop harming civilians and refrain from militarizing major rivers. We welcome the statement by the leaders of South Sudan urging a resolution to the conflict and the deployment of national forces to

the relevant regions. We encourage the Government to continue to take measures to ease tensions and promote national reconciliation. We also appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to stabilize the situation and protect civilians.

The key to improving the security situation in South Sudan is to enhance the security capabilities of the Government. Since September, several cohorts of the necessary unified forces have graduated, an achievement that deserves our recognition and welcome. At the same time, however, we must bear in mind that South Sudan continues to face economic difficulties as a result with regard to equipping and deploying the graduated necessary unified forces units, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform. The country still needs the financial and technical support of the international community.

It must be pointed out that the Security Council sanctions against South Sudan have already been overtaken by events. Certain sanction measures fail to achieve their intended effect and, on the contrary, impose limits on South Sudan's ability to bolster security. As we heard in the statement made on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, the Council should listen carefully to South Sudan's call for lifting sanctions and respond positively in a timely manner.

South Sudan currently faces an increasingly dire humanitarian crisis, with two thirds of its population facing food insecurity and nine out of 10 states affected by heavy rains and floods. In addition, the Ministry of Health has declared a measles outbreak. The international community should increase humanitarian and economic assistance to South Sudan. China welcomed the signing of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2023–2025 between the United Nations and the South Sudan, which we believe will contribute to finding holistic and comprehensive solutions to South Sudan's challenges through development efforts.

Mrs. Alhfeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Haysom, and Major General Gituai for their briefings on the latest political, security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan, which my country has also been following closely. I also thank Gabon for updating the Council on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant

to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, and I welcome the participation of the representative of South Sudan in today's meeting.

Today's meeting takes place at a time during which South Sudan is witnessing heightened intercommunal tensions and clashes, particularly in Upper Nile state. We express our grave concern over the continued acts of violence, including rape, crimes, kidnapping and the killing of civilians, which have forced thousands of civilians to flee their homes, put their lives at risk and face more severe conditions.

In the light of those incidents, there is an urgent need to intensify efforts and reduce tensions and address their root causes, including by promoting dialogue and peaceful coexistence among communities.

Given the progress made towards the graduation of the necessary unified forces, we look forward to the next steps regarding their deployment, and we emphasize the importance of building on those efforts. That includes carrying out the necessary security reforms in order to address the urgent security challenges in the country. We underline the importance of ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation, as the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan moves forward.

The next period also requires redoubling efforts to accelerate the implementation of the tasks outlined in the timeline of the road map. The success of the Revitalized Agreement in achieving sustainable peace and economic growth depends on curbing intercommunal violence, completing the security arrangements and enacting the other necessary economic and political reforms. In that context, we further recognize the importance of South Sudan building on recent achievements, such as the adoption of the draft constitution-making bill and further advances in that area, while continuing to strengthen its cooperation with regional and international organizations to find the appropriate mechanisms to achieve the desired goals.

In reference to the statement by the three African States members of the Security Council on the decision by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to undertake a joint ministerial visit to South Sudan and hold biannual ministerial meetings to review progress of the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, we agree that such high-level political engagement by the region is both necessary and timely in order to

support the country's efforts in the implementation of that Agreement.

Exploring ways to address the worsening humanitarian situation in the country must be continued, especially with high levels of hunger and food insecurity, as two thirds of the country's population will suffer from extreme hunger next year — which is a matter of deep concern. We believe that the Nile River demilitarization initiative proposed by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) will have an extremely important role in addressing those situations by establishing a humanitarian corridor that will facilitate the transport of goods and provide life-saving services throughout the year. We stress the importance of unhindered access to such assistance by those in need. We also hope that the success of that initiative will contribute to the protection of humanitarian workers, as eight of them have been killed this year owing to the unfortunate attacks against them, which the United Arab Emirates strongly condemns.

On another issue, particular importance must be attached to the repercussions of climate change, which are very evident in South Sudan, as they lead to the exacerbation of food insecurity and the security situation in the country. Appropriate and sustainable solutions must be developed to address those repercussions in order to support stability and alleviate the humanitarian situation in the country. In that regard, we highlight the need to strengthen the resilience of communities and the importance of humanitarian operations using renewable energy, which benefits local communities and can mitigate long-term climate-related impacts.

In conclusion, I commend the work carried out by UNMISS under difficult and challenging circumstances, and thank the Special Representative for his tireless efforts.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Haysom, for his briefing and for the hard work he and his team are doing in an increasingly challenging environment. We also thank Major General Gituai for his briefing and welcome the update from the Permanent Representative of Gabon. We also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan in today's meeting.

Like others, we are deeply concerned by the escalating violence in Upper Nile and surrounding areas, including in and around the city of Kodok. Let me

emphasize that it is the Government's responsibility to protect civilians across South Sudan. It cannot choose to look away. It is crucial that armed intervention by state and national authorities are aimed at protecting civilians, including children, and preventing further violence. We call on all armed actors to immediately cease the violence. South Sudan's transitional leaders, as well as the political actors and community leaders in Jonglei and Upper Nile bear responsibility for the violence and for ending it. We urgently call on South Sudan's transitional leaders to act now. The Government must allow the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism investigate the conflict and hold those who continue to incite and engage in violations accountable.

We commend the efforts of the humanitarian community and UNMISS in response to the violence in Upper Nile, including in the protection of civilians sites in Malakal. The key question, however, is whether the current situation is sustainable, especially considering the limited resources and capacity of UNMISS in parts of the state and the lack of adequate and predictable interventions by the Government to protect civilians.

The last time we met (see S/PV.9134), Norway supported the Government's commitment to a road map for the implementation of the peace agreement. Three months later, the parties are already behind their own timelines, including the critical task of deploying united forces. There is also little progress on other promises such as fighting corruption and opening up civic space. South Sudan leaders must deliver the results they have promised in accordance with the timelines in the road map and do so by dedicating sufficient resources.

Finally, as this is my last meeting on South Sudan during our current tenure in the Council, allow me to end my statement with the following reflection. We have on many occasions discussed the advantage of early action and preventive diplomacy to save lives and reduce human suffering. A key challenge to the Council acting early has been a lack of shared understanding of the situation. Since independence 11 years ago, South Sudan has been caught in a cycle of broken promises, followed by armed conflict. That cycle continues today. Without actual commitment from the Government, there is a real risk that the ceasefire and the peace agreement will break down. The region played a key role in the comprehensive peace agreement in 2005, as well as in the subsequent agreements in 2015 and in 2018. And as guarantors of the peace agreement, the African Union,

the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and regional and international development partners, such as my own country, should recognize that South Sudan is again at the brink of disaster. We must use all the tools at our disposal to prevent it. The people of South Sudan have suffered enough.

Mr. McSwiney (Ireland): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his insightful briefing and him and his team for their untiring efforts in support of the people of South Sudan. I also thank to Major General Gituai for his briefing on the work of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. I would also like to thank Ambassador Biang for his briefing as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. This sanctions regime continues to play an important role in preventing conflict and promoting peace in South Sudan. I also wish to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan with us today.

The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and advancement of the transition process are key to building peace in South Sudan. The passing of critical bills in recent months, such as the constitution-making bill and the national budget, have been welcome developments. However, we remain concerned that the extension of the transition process became inevitable not only due to lack of preparations but also of political will. We now need to see progress. The people of South Sudan cannot wait any longer to see the peace dividends that have been promised for so long. Elections must take place as planned by 20 December 2024, and the strict deadlines of the road map's calendar must be met.

It is regrettable that early benchmarks have already been missed, and we call on the Government of South Sudan to urgently start implementing the road map. The freedom of speech, assembly and expression will be critically important to ensuring free, fair and credible elections. We remain deeply concerned about the stifling of civic space in the country and urge the Government to urgently address that. The implementation process of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan must be genuinely inclusive, with the meaningful participation of women, youth, and civil society.

The graduation of the necessary unified forces is a welcome step forward, but agreement needs to be found on how they will be integrated into the overall security sector under the civilian-led authorities. We are concerned by reports of the lack of training received by some force members, and we encourage ongoing training, including on human rights and conflict-related sexual violence. The reported 60 per cent overall decrease in violent incidents against civilians between June and September is welcome. We hope that reduction will continue. However, we remain concerned at ongoing levels of subnational violence, including in Upper Nile state. That includes horrifying instances of sexual and gender-based violence. We again call for the urgent implementation of the 2014 joint communiqué on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence to protect women and girls, to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure services for survivors.

The first Irish ministerial visit to South Sudan in early September bore witness to the impact of conflict and climate change on individuals and communities. A fourth year of climate change-induced flooding has directly impacted over 1 million people. Combined with insecurity, that is fuelling a further deterioration in the humanitarian situation and is leading to vulnerable people being displaced multiple times.

The dangers facing humanitarian workers are also exacerbating the situation. It is deplorable that nine humanitarian workers have been killed so far this year, almost double the number killed in 2021. We call on the Government of South Sudan to create a safer environment for aid and humanitarian workers and to bring perpetrators of such attacks to justice.

The shocking truth is that two thirds of the South Sudanese population is likely to face acute food insecurity between April and July next year. That is almost 8 million people struggling to stay alive. That should not only sober us, but it should drive us to seek better for the people of South Sudan. We cannot just accept that the violence and insecurity is so entrenched that it cannot be solved. The road map by the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission gives us a plan to ensure a more peaceful and prosperous future for South Sudan. What we need now is political will to implement it.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of India.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, and Major General Charles Tai Gituai, interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, for their updates on the developments concerning the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). I also thank the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), Ambassador Michel Xavier Biang, for his briefing. And I welcome the presence of the representative of South Sudan in today's meeting.

South Sudan witnessed noteworthy developments during the reporting period. The parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan agreed on a road map to extend the transitional period to February 2025. The reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission also endorsed the road map. The Transitional National Legislative Assembly passed important legislation, including the constitution-making process bill. There was also agreement on the management positions on national commissions.

The successful graduation of the first batch of the necessary unified forces was completed, and their deployment plan is expected soon. The efforts to engage non-signatory groups in the Sant'Egidio process continued. The National Constitutional Amendment Committee completed its review of the National Elections Act. We believe those developments are significant and reassuring. The engagement of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development with the parties was an important factor in the progress.

We hope that progress will be consolidated further in the coming months by ensuring the inclusive and broad-based implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. The reconstitution of the Political Parties Council, the Constitution Review Commission, the Constitution Drafting Committee and the National Elections Commission needs to be prioritized. The effective and timely implementation of the benchmarks of road map as well as election preparations need the allocation of financial resources from the authorities.

The persisting incidents of violence, which result in the killing and mass displacement of civilians, remains a matter of concern. In that regard, the deployment of the necessary unified forces should be expedited to ensure security and contribute to intercommunal harmony.

The humanitarian situation remains a matter of concern. The international community, including the United Nations, needs to step up the efforts in support of the Government. The impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance need to be removed. And violence against humanitarian workers should be stopped immediately.

India has been one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UNMISS since its establishment. At present, we have nearly 2,300 troops serving in the country. In addition to their core mandate of protecting civilians and medical services, the Indian contingent in UNMISS is also contributing to the sustainable development and welfare of the people of South Sudan. Over the years, Indian peacekeepers have gone beyond the call of duty by undertaking a variety of social activities in that regard. I am glad to note that the United Nations has consistently acknowledged the outstanding contribution of the Indian peacekeepers in UNMISS.

In conclusion, India has long-standing relations with the people of South Sudan. India was the first Asian country to establish a Consulate in Juba in 2007. India has delivered humanitarian assistance to the country in the form of food grains and medicines, during the pandemic and before. Our capacity-building training programmes have been deeply appreciated by the South Sudan Government. We will continue to support South Sudan and its people on their journey towards securing sustainable peace and a prosperous future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency during this month. My delegation stands ready to offer its support to you and your team. In the same vein, allow me to sincerely thank you and your delegation for the support you have offered my country for the two years you have served on the Security Council. We will forever be indebted to your country.

My delegation would like to welcome and thank the three briefers before us today — Special Representative Haysom, Major General Charles Tai Gituai and my colleague Ambassador Michel Biang.

My delegation takes note of the 90-day report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/918), submitted to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 2625 (2022),

which endeavoured to tackle the events that transpired over the 90 days as of 1 September.

South Sudanese parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan are steadfast in its implementation, notwithstanding the challenges they are facing given its complexity. The 24-month extension of the transition period started to bear results with the graduation of the necessary unified forces. They are ready to be deployed in due course. It has not been an easy task, especially when the international community decided to sit on the fence when the time for its implementation came.

The security situation in South Sudan is relatively peaceful in the greater part of the country, especially after the state Governments were formed and are now taking shape in areas that were affected by subnational conflict, such as Lakes, Warrap and Western Equatoria. Nevertheless, Greater Upper Nile is still facing challenges of insecurity, caused mainly by non-State actors in Kit-Gwang factions of Simon Gatwech and Johnson Olony. That has caused a lot of displacement, loss of life and destruction of property. His Excellency President Salva Kiir Mayardit, in his closing remarks at the Governors forum last week, called for peace in Upper Nile and promised that the Government would remain seized of the matter.

The arms embargo, which the Council unfairly imposed on my country, has hampered the efforts of the Government to effectively undertake its responsibility to secure the country from both external and internal aggression. The communal conflicts we are witnessing are carried out by well-armed youth. It requires better-armed Government forces to disarm them. Externally, South Sudan is in a volatile region, politically and militarily, with countries in active conflicts, fragile States and post-conflict States. Therefore, directly or indirectly, the arms embargo compromises the security of our country.

One of the major challenges the country is facing is humanitarian situation, caused by both nature and conflict. However, the impact created by nature is an

existential threat, as is well-documented in the report of the Secretary-General. The situation is dire, and we would like to add our voice to that of the Secretary-General in calling on the international community to come to our aid by fulfilling its pledges. On its part, the Republic of South Sudan donated \$10 million towards the flood-mitigation effort. As much as climate change tends to get politicized, we who are experiencing its devastation and destruction consider it a reality that needs to be confronted with all the tools in our collective toolbox.

Last but not least, allow me to pay tribute to the troop-contributing countries. Their efforts are not in vain, and South Sudan appreciates their commitment and service to peace and humanity.

At the same time, let me also call on the Council to look into the question of sexual exploitation by some in the humanitarian community against internally displaced persons in South Sudan. Recent reports have mentioned issues related to sexual exploitation in Malakal and Wau civilian protection sites. Those are deplorable acts, especially by those entrusted to protect and safeguard those they are serving at their weakest point. Let the law be exercised equally.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate our sincere appreciation to you, your delegation and your country for your demonstration of friendship to me and my delegation. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours. To the other Council members whose terms end this month, South Sudan valued their help and the working relations we established with them. Let us continue the close relations we build during their term in the Council.

Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas.

The President: 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 4.45 p.m.