



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 17 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (on behalf of the Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan”, convened on Tuesday, 15 December 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to permanent representatives of the members of the Security Council dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefing and statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(signed) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer**

I thank members of the Security Council for the opportunity to brief them once again.

I want to go back to this time last year. Then, the political situation was fragile. Parties had just agreed to a second extension of the pretransitional period, further delaying the peace deal for 100 days. The lack of political will among the leaders was provoking disillusionment and anger among their citizens.

I am pleased to report, as we come to the end of 2020, that there has been progress. Through compromise, parties have successfully formed a transitional Government, led by President Salva Kiir with First Vice-President Riek Machar. All states and counties positions have been allocated, and nine out of 10 Governors are in place. The Council of Ministers is meeting, and most national institutions are functioning, at least at a basic level. Those achievements are to be commended.

Progress, however is lagging. Transitional security arrangements aimed at unifying security forces are stalled, leaving combatants in training centres often without adequate food or shelter. The dispute over the proposed governorship of Johnson Olony in Upper Nile — the only Governor yet to take up office — is being used to halt the appointment of country commissioners, an essential level of local Government. The hold-up leaves a local vacuum of power and makes it difficult to nip in the bud brewing intercommunal violence.

Momentum in South Sudan's peace process is linked to the strength of international engagement. However, attention by Member States in the Horn is understandably directed elsewhere, contributing to the sense of drift, which is frequently remarked upon. Nevertheless, collectively, we need to remain focused on South Sudan to guide peace implementation.

So far this year, more than 2,000 civilians have lost their lives during local-level conflict, which is being weaponized and turbocharged by external actors acting in their own economic or political interests. In the past quarter, violent incidents dropped 64 per cent compared to the previous quarter, but as the dry season approaches, we are preparing ourselves for a possible resurgence of volatility.

Several underlying factors have created a perfect storm for those already facing hardship. Acute food insecurity is affecting more than half the population. It is driven by displacement from conflict, severe flooding affecting 1 million people, with the loss of livestock and crops, and a worsening economic situation owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), on top of existing pervasive poverty.

The latest Acute Food Insecurity analysis of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has found that communities in six counties are facing “famine likely” or “catastrophic” conditions. Humanitarian workers are doing their best to assist those in need although, tragically, nine have been killed this year, three times the number killed in 2019.

Historically, the dry season exacerbates those problems. Farmers and pastoralists have lost crops and cattle, and often seek to recover their losses through violent raids on others. Competition for scarce resources like grazing land and water also become points of tension between farmers and cattle herders during migration.

Anticipating that, we have established five new temporary bases in conflict hotspots in line with our “proactive, robust and nimble” approach to peacekeeping

and peacebuilding. Our integrated military and civilian teams are in place right now to deter violence, and support reconciliation so that communities can reach an agreement to peacefully coexist. That presence has markedly de-escalated conflict, particularly where we can make contact among parties early.

The South Sudan Government's refusal to enable access to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to many areas has hampered this kind of work considerably. While those restrictions have eased over recent weeks, we will continue to monitor and report progress.

In the medium-term, the addition of the multi-donor Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund in South Sudan will target the underlying causes of violence. It harnesses the particular skills of United Nations agencies, non-governmental agencies and UNMISS in the pursuit of a common strategy.

Our seven engineering contingents have also undertaken a major road-building programme to repair 3,200 kilometres of roads. Improving roads will boost connections and communication among regions and will increase trade, which generates economic incentives, create jobs and development but, most significantly, builds peace.

Meanwhile, at the national level, UNMISS is working to establish underlying agreements on vital aspects of the peace process. A number of dialogue forums have been held with political parties, women, youth, media and faith-based organizations, most notably on the essential issue of drafting the Constitution.

Let me touch on the transition of the protection of civilians (POC) sites to conventional displacement camps. The POC sites were established seven years ago to protect people fleeing from intense conflict. That threat no longer exists today, with most residents now moving daily among the camps and towns, while still being able to access humanitarian services.

In the past three months, Bor, Wau and Juba POC sites have been successfully transitioned. That occurred smoothly, as a result of joint planning and consultation with national and local authorities, security services, humanitarians and the displaced communities themselves. Planning is under way at Bentiu, where the Government and the opposition began joint policing, and Malakal, which is more complex and will only transition when the time is right.

At the newly designated camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), the transition has occurred without incident, and UNMISS remains engaged in support of the displaced communities. Our United Nations police officers provide comprehensive support for their national counterparts, have co-located with them in police posts and are providing training for community policing.

The Government, with UNMISS technical support, has assumed ownership of the sites and is now obliged to work towards more durable solutions whereby IDPs can return home to live safely and with dignity.

I also want to touch briefly on the recently completed independent strategic review of UNMISS, which was sparked by the changed situation in South Sudan. A ceasefire has been in place for three years and a peace agreement for two, and the Transitional Government is functioning. Although subnational violence has been a tragic feature this year, it is important to remember that the scale of violence and displacement is significantly less than in 2016 when the war among political actors was at its peak. That progress has enabled the redesignation of the POC sites. The changed circumstances also require the UNMISS mandate to evolve, which was the rationale behind the Council's instructions for the review, pursuant to resolution

2514 (2020). UNMISS strategy going forward creates important opportunities, some of which are touched on in the independent strategic review.

First, although UNMISS is termed a peacekeeping mission, our central task is a political one. We understand that politics must have primacy in our efforts to achieve our peacebuilding and protection goals in a country that has suffered from a persistent lack of political will among its leaders to implement change. That cannot happen on its own but requires the Mission to have a close strategic partnership with the countries of the region and continent.

Secondly, our duty is to provide protection to those who need it most. The withdrawal of troops from passive, static duties at POC sites will enable increased outreach, through hub-and-spoke action and enhanced mobility, to areas where civilians' lives are threatened. Retaining assets in order to be nimble and proactive is essential to our effectiveness. The change will also allow for a gradual downsizing of overall force numbers.

Thirdly, the shift out of POC sites will enable a focus on strengthening the capabilities of the South Sudan police and addressing the insidious impunity that persists. That will occur together with increased support for prosecutors and courts, building on the success of the mobile courts. Only by extending the domestic rule of law can we end impunity, particularly with regard to gender-based violence.

Fourthly, as well maintaining the momentum of the peace process, preparations must begin for elections and for becoming more proactive on security-sector reform and, ultimately, disarmament and reintegration.

Yes, there have been some political gains, despite the impact of COVID-19. However, we are acutely aware that the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan continues to stagnate, with many benchmarks well behind schedule. We urge the parties to take concrete steps to breathe fresh life into the process and above all to compromise in order to achieve the peace dividends that citizens deserve. As always, we will be right by their side, doing everything we can to make the hopes of the South Sudanese people for a peaceful and prosperous future a reality.

## Annex II

### **Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock**

Back in September, if members recall, I briefed the Security Council on worsening food insecurity in South Sudan (see S/2020/930, annex I), and one day after that, with David Beasley and Qu Dongyu, I warned the Council of multiple famines looming. Since then, I have also provided the Council with a detailed description of what a famine does to a human being's body and mind in a briefing I gave to members on Yemen (see S/2020/1109, annex II).

Unfortunately, people in parts of South Sudan, as Special Representative David Shearer alluded to, are on the brink of famine today. The Real-Time Quality Review of the global Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which was just completed, identified five counties in Jonglei, Warrap, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states — Akobo, Aweil South, Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South — where between 5 and 10 per cent of the population are living in IPC phase 5, meaning they face “catastrophic” levels of food insecurity. In some places, the number of people in IPC phase 5 is going to grow from now to July 2021. Although this analysis at the country level continues to be finalized, the IPC Review Committee also presented a “famine likely” situation in western Pibor county last week. It would therefore be fair to say that our fears from September have now materialized in these six counties. How did we get here?

Millions of South Sudanese people have been pushed to the breaking point. Violence, flooding, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and a deteriorating economy are making an already bad humanitarian crisis much worse, especially in the six counties that I just mentioned. Violence continues to be one of the main drivers of severe food insecurity in South Sudan, and, correspondingly, we see the highest levels of acute food insecurity in the places most affected by violence.

In the first half of the year, four successive waves of major violence in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area displaced nearly 160,000 people. In Warrap state, where three of the counties with IPC phase 5 classification are located, nearly 100,000 people were displaced, owing to violence from May to June. Two consecutive years of intense flooding have subsequently made the situation worse. More than half a million people in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and close to 400,000 people in Warrap state have been affected by the compounded effects of flooding and fighting. On top of that, COVID-19, with its socioeconomic impact, has made life even harder.

South Sudan's economy continues to contract, partly as a result of falling oil prices. Essential commodity and food prices are increasing in the face of a rapidly depreciating exchange rate and subsequent inflation. Overall this year, 7.5 million people in South Sudan — which, we should remember, is more than 60 per cent of the entire country — are in need of humanitarian assistance. That number is likely to increase once the IPC results are finalized.

Considerably more than 1 million children under the age of five are predicted to be malnourished. That is the highest number in four years. Families facing the most severe food security problems have already exhausted their emergency coping strategies and consequently rely on food aid if they are going to survive. Under such extreme conditions, people, especially women and girls, are left with little choice but to adopt harmful coping mechanisms. Girls are more likely to be forced into early marriage or drop out of school. In many cases, as we know, when girls drop out of school, they never return.

What are humanitarian partners doing to try to meet the growing need to stave off famine? The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and South Sudan Humanitarian Fund continue to play an important role. I have provided \$39 million from CERF to South Sudan so far this year, a substantial proportion of which is for addressing rising food insecurity. That includes the \$7 million allocation I made the other day as part of the overall special CERF allocation for dealing globally with food insecurity.

Humanitarian agencies and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) in South Sudan are scaling up a response across sectors in all of the worst-affected six counties. Agencies working on food security were able to distribute emergency food to nearly 78,000 people in Pibor in November. The World Food Programme (WFP) has expanded its air fleet so that we can get food, nutrition and health-care services delivered more quickly in a challenging logistical and security environment.

But we need to do more. We need more funding to ensure that food, livelihoods, health-care services and other life-saving programmes are supported in the six counties that I talked about earlier, as well as across the entire country. At nearly \$2 billion, the South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020 is the largest ever for the country. It is currently only two-thirds funded as we approach the end of the year. We expect needs to be even higher next year. Early funding would help a lot to get ahead of needs, which we can expect to see increase in early 2021 as a result of the dry season, as Mr. Shearer alluded to.

I want to pay special credit to our humanitarian colleagues in South Sudan, led ably and with great dedication by Mr. Shearer's deputy, Alain Noudéhou. Most humanitarian workers in South Sudan are themselves South Sudanese. The humanitarian response in country has kept millions from sliding into famine. Aid agencies have assisted more than 6 million people across the country this year. UNICEF, the WFP and the agencies, especially the NGOs they work with, have already treated nearly 600,000 children affected by acute malnutrition, and I am pleased to report that 94 per cent of those children have recovered. That shows how effective support can be if people get the help they need on time and aid workers are able to do their job.

Once again, however, as Mr. Shearer also alluded to, it is getting harder for aid workers to deliver assistance in South Sudan, especially in the parts of the country that are facing the most severe food insecurity. Access in Greater Pibor Administrative Area has been particularly difficult this year. Health-care clinics and food warehouses have been looted on at least 20 occasions in Jonglei and Pibor. Some 144 aid workers had to be relocated this year because of threats to their security. Most abhorrently, as Mr. Shearer said, nine aid workers have been killed this year in South Sudan, eight of them in Jonglei and Pibor. Two more aid workers have been killed since I last briefed the Council in September. That is unacceptable. All aid workers, from local and international NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations agencies, which continue to stay and deliver in an extremely challenging environment, must be protected.

Let me conclude by reiterating three things that need to happen now to prevent the famine problem worsening. First and foremost, all actors with any influence must work to de-escalate the violence. Humanitarian partners are worried that a spike in violence in early 2021 is likely as the dry season starts, because we have seen such spikes in previous years and we worry particularly about their effects on people. That could be catastrophic and would push many more people to the brink. We also need to see efforts continue to find political solutions, obviously, in order to end the violence that causes such famine trends.

Secondly, humanitarian agencies frankly need more support from the Government of South Sudan for safe and unhindered access so that they can reach people who desperately need help.

Lastly, humanitarian agencies, if they scale up their assistance as necessary, need to receive all possible resources, particularly in order to deal with severe food insecurity. We therefore need additional resources for the Humanitarian Response Plan. And I once again urge donors to please give generously and quickly.



**Annex III****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan**

I have the honour to brief the members of the Security Council for the first time in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 concerning South Sudan, and since the previous briefing by my predecessor, on 17 December 2019 (see S/PV.8688). In my statement, I intend to provide a brief overview of developments in the Committee since the beginning of 2020.

As with the Panel of Experts, whose members have been unable to travel to South Sudan since my mandate began, the work of the Committee has been equally affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with most of our meetings held on a video-teleconference platform. However, despite that, the Committee has continued to conduct its work with efficiency and fulfil its mandate.

To date, the Committee has met on one occasion in person and four times in a closed video-teleconference. On 7 February, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan in a meeting in Conference Room 7 that was open to all Member States, concerning the Panel's interim report (see S/2019/897), which was submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 2471 (2019).

In April 2020, the Committee received a presentation by the Panel of Experts on South Sudan concerning the Panel's final report (see S/2020/342), submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 2471 (2019), and discussed its recommendations through a written format.

On 25 June, during a closed video-teleconference, the Committee heard a presentation by the Panel of Experts in a meeting open to regional Member States neighbouring South Sudan concerning the Panel's final report, and heard a briefing by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, in his capacity as Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), on IGAD's most recent efforts to support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

On 7 August, during a closed video-teleconference, the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the work plan of the Panel, the mandate of which was renewed pursuant to resolution 2521 (2020). On 16 October, again during a closed video-teleconference, the Committee received a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

Finally, during the closed video-teleconference held on 20 November, the Committee heard a presentation by the Panel of Experts on the Panel's interim report, which was submitted pursuant to paragraph 18 of resolution 2521 (2020), and discussed its recommendations.

Since the beginning of the year the Committee has received three exemption requests with regard to the arms embargo, two of which have been granted. In addition, four exemption requests, all of which were granted, were received concerning the travel ban and asset-freeze measures.

Lastly, I would like to thank Member States, including those that are neighbours of South Sudan, for their engagement with the Committee and participation in meetings of the Committee this year. I encourage Member States to continue strengthening their cooperation with the Panel of Experts and the Committee.



**Annex IV****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Karen Van Vlierberge**

[Original: French]

At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their very informative briefings.

I will talk about three issues: first, the political and security situation; secondly, the worrisome increase in violations of the cooperation agreement with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); and thirdly, the exploitation of natural resources.

In his most recent report (S/2020/1180), the Secretary-General acknowledges the gradual progress that has been made in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, but overall, we have witnessed a deadlock on many fronts. The most recent report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan (see S/2020/342) confirms that security arrangements remain at a standstill. No Governor of Upper Nile has yet been appointed. We hope that the conference to be held in Juba from 16 to 19 December on peace, reconciliation, healing and unity among the people of Upper Nile can contribute to progress in that regard. Political momentum has eroded, owing to party fragmentation, political exclusion and defections. In addition, very little progress has been made on the issue of accountability mechanisms. The hybrid court for South Sudan has still not been established.

This is very disappointing and also deeply worrisome. In his report, the Secretary-General rightly states that there is a clear link between the delay in implementing the peace agreement and the violence in the country. The section on the security situation is once again a long one, thanks to many appalling incidents and despite the fact that major flooding has reduced the level of violence. And it is civilians who continue to pay a heavy price for the violence. The continued increase in the number of kidnappings of civilians, including women, girls and boys, in particular by the National Salvation Front and other armed elements, is just one example. We urge all parties to recommit to the full and inclusive implementation of the peace agreement.

We encourage UNMISS to continue to support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the peace process, and call on it to continue to protect civilians, including by establishing temporary operational bases. Belgium is deeply concerned about the sharp increase in the number of violations of the cooperation agreement between the authorities and the Mission. Denying access to UNMISS patrols is totally unacceptable. We call on the Government of South Sudan to guarantee unimpeded access to UNMISS to enable it to conduct all its mandated duties, in line with its international obligations.

We are also extremely concerned about the continuing high levels of violence against humanitarian actors and the obstacles being created to humanitarian assistance. In 2020 alone, nine humanitarian workers were murdered. The Panel has been able to determine that the South Sudanese Army and the National Security Service have regularly denied humanitarian access to conflict areas, for example to Warrap in August of this year. That is unacceptable. The right to receive assistance is a humanitarian imperative and an absolute right for all South Sudanese citizens.

Lastly, I would like to touch briefly on the exploitation of natural resources in Southern Sudan. In its most recent progress report, the Panel of Experts believes that there is a high probability that the mining sector, which is increasingly mechanized, will attract the greed of armed groups. The Panel is already reporting that armed groups are blocking access to mining and gold-panning sites. The lack of access makes it difficult to investigate either the activities of groups at those sites or their impact on the local community. Belgium therefore supports the Panel's recommendation that UNMISS be asked to report on areas of insecurity and investigate violent incidents against civilians related to the illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources.

**Annex V****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Dai Bing**

[Original: Chinese]

I thank Special Representative Shearer, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, and Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy for their briefings. With regard to the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/1180), I would like to discuss the following points.

First, we must continue to advance the political process. South Sudan is actively engaging in political dialogue and seeking to consolidate the ceasefire, and has made positive progress on issues such as promoting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and reorganizing the Transitional Legislative Assembly. It is hoped that all parties will continue to proceed with a view to fostering the overall and long-term interests of the country and its people, strengthening mutual trust, properly handling differences, resolving issues such as the appointment of a Governor of Upper Nile as soon as possible and assuming the main responsibility for implementing the Revitalized Agreement. The international community should fully respect South Sudan's leadership in promoting the political process, support the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in playing a greater role, and provide targeted assistance and support.

Secondly, we must give major attention to humanitarian crises. South Sudan is facing multiple challenges, including the novel coronavirus disease, floods and fluctuations in international commodity prices. Economic difficulties have increased. More than 6 million people need humanitarian assistance and more than 3 million cannot return to their homes. International partners and financial institutions should increase emergency assistance to help South Sudan meet its urgent needs and the basic needs of its people. At the same time, they must find ways to help South Sudan rebuild its economy, achieve sustainable development and truly eliminate the root causes of conflict. China has been providing anti-pandemic supplies and emergency food aid to South Sudan since the start of the pandemic. The Chinese medical team has remained at its posts in South Sudan and is helping the people. China will continue to support South Sudan's fight against the epidemic and provide support to the degree that it is capable.

Thirdly, the sanctions on South Sudan must be lifted as soon as possible. The coronavirus disease pandemic is having a fairly negative impact there, and sanctions have worsened the situation. The African Union Peace and Security Council recently met to once again call for the lifting of sanctions on South Sudan. China calls on the international community to respond to the African Union initiative and lift the sanctions as soon as possible. This will help encourage all the parties to continue to participate actively in the political process and maintain the current good momentum. We hope that the midterm review of the arms embargo will change its working methods and achieve substantial progress.

Lastly, China appreciates the fact that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has worked to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus disease, while actively protecting civilians and providing technical support to the Government of South Sudan. It is hoped that UNMISS will give priority to the implementation of the mandate of the Revitalized Agreement, strengthen communication with the Government and resolve the restrictions that it has had to deal with in performing its duties. We are willing to work with the international community to play a constructive role in ensuring peace, stability and economic development in South Sudan and in fighting the pandemic there.

**Annex VI****Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

After listening carefully to today's briefings, we are encouraged by the fact that there are still no serious violations of the ceasefire and that the issue of the distribution of portfolios at the state and county levels has been largely resolved. However, we are concerned about the fact that the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has yet to produce tangible results, owing to the political crisis and the violence, food insecurity and economic collapse that continue to plague South Sudan.

The slow implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, the wave of intercommunal fighting, the increasing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the limited efforts to address transitional tasks are areas of particular concern. In that regard, we welcome the process led by the Community of Sant'Egidio, with the support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to include non-signatory groups from January 2021 onwards.

Regrettably, political progress is inextricably linked to security and humanitarian issues, and the increased intercommunal violence continues to have devastating consequences for vulnerable populations. As the primary victims of sexual violence, women and children remain disproportionately affected by the conflict. We call on the parties to make a greater effort to prevent violence and identify those responsible for such crimes. We therefore welcome the information that the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union has submitted a memorandum of understanding to the leaders of South Sudan on the establishment of the hybrid court for South Sudan. We urge the Government to sign the memorandum as a way to help end the prevailing culture of impunity.

In addition, we are deeply concerned about the food insecurity in South Sudan, where more than 7 million people suffer from alarming levels of hunger and malnutrition. The latest analysis of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification confirms that the populations of six counties in South Sudan are facing "famine likely" or "catastrophic" conditions and those of 73 other counties are dealing with extremely worrying levels of acute food insecurity. It is unacceptable that the people of South Sudan continue to bear that heavy burden and grapple with the adverse consequences of this conflict.

With regard to the participation of women in the decision-making process, we welcome the announcement of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement that the 35 per cent quota for women will apply to the remaining seats allocated to the party and that the country's two main parties are now led by women. It is essential that the gender provisions of the Agreement be fully implemented at all appointment levels through political will. We also welcome the initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to establish an enterprise development fund for young people. Capacity-building for youth is an essential part of the peace process in South Sudan.

It will be crucial to ensure that greater attention is paid to the remaining transitional tasks in the areas of governance, security, economy, humanitarian assistance and justice. When these provisions are effectively implemented, they will pave the way for State-building in South Sudan.

Since the end of our term on the Council is approaching and this is the last time we will speak on this issue, we hope that all parties to the conflict will show

genuine leadership and political will in the near future and that the peace process will continue to move forward for the benefit of a population that has endured far too much suffering.

**Annex VII****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt**

I thank Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their briefings.

I would like to start on a positive note and acknowledge the allocation of state- and county-level Government portfolios. However, in general, the thorough reports from the Panel of Experts (see S/2020/342) and the Secretary-General (S/2020/1180) make for grim reading. The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has mostly stalled and the deadlines for military unification and Government institutions are not being taken seriously enough. The economic reforms and the establishment of key transitional justice institutions, such as the hybrid courts, have not been implemented and the Upper Nile still has no Governor. We continue to hope that one will be appointed, which will make local mediation efforts easier.

We remain very disturbed about the continued extensive involvement of heavily armed civil defence groups in subnational violence and about its impact on civilians. We are afraid that the violence will continue in the dry season, which begins as soon as next month. The continued increase in civilian abductions, including of women and children, especially by the National Salvation Front and other armed elements, remains a major concern. Political actors are increasingly manipulating violence at the local level, and that in turn prolongs the national conflict. In the light of the horrendous human rights violations, we continue to support the sanctions and the territorial arms embargo. The allegations claiming that the arms embargo is detrimental to the ability to equip a unitary army and therefore to the prospects for peace are misleading, as the embargo includes provisions for exceptions.

For us, the importance of accountability cannot be stressed enough. It should also be vital to South Sudan to stop the cycle of violence and create conditions that enable its people to feel the dividends of the peace agreement. We therefore encourage South Sudanese authorities to promote local accountability initiatives in compliance with international humanitarian law standards.

The overall humanitarian situation in the country remains dire and has worsened in the rainy season. Heavy rains have displaced many and the food security situation has deteriorated. Sadly, humanitarian access has also deteriorated, mainly owing to the ongoing hostility directed at humanitarian workers. We call on the Government of South Sudan to help us deliver humanitarian aid, as it is a matter of life and death to so many. Sadly, UNMISS has experienced an exponential increase in denials of access for its patrols. We call on the South Sudanese authorities not to obstruct the peace process but to help it achieve its ends.

Last but not least, I want to thank the Panel of Experts, the staff of UNMISS and David Shearer for their tremendous work in a very testing environment.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst Estival**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank Mr. Shearer, Mr. Lowcock and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan for their comprehensive briefings. I want to emphasize four points.

First, France is concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. We welcome the progress on the distribution of portfolios at the state and county levels. However, we deplore the delays in the formation of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the appointment of a Governor of Upper Nile, as well as the lack of progress on the participation of women and young people. In the area of security and the fight against impunity, the formation of the unified forces and the establishment of the hybrid court for South Sudan should be progressing more rapidly.

Secondly, while the security situation has certainly improved since 2018 and, as has been said, the ceasefire remains generally respected by the parties, the relative decrease in violence in recent months should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that the conditions for a resumption of violence during the dry season are still in place. The causes of conflict are aggravated by the lack of positive prospects for the implementation of the peace agreement but also, as the briefings showed us, by the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation.

France therefore calls on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. We condemn the attacks on humanitarian workers, which caused 14 deaths in 2020. Such violence must not go unpunished. It is important for the Council to be more systematic in sanctioning the groups responsible. At a time when humanitarian needs are immense and some regions are on the brink of famine, humanitarian workers must be able to move around unhindered and without fear of being targeted.

The increasing number of kidnappings of civilians in the Equatoria region, attributable to the armed groups that remain active in the area, is also worrying. In that regard, France welcomes the mediation efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio to engage the armed groups that are not signatories to the 2018 agreement.

In what we can see is an extremely difficult environment, France commends the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its commitment, its efforts to adapt and its work in general. I am thinking particularly of the transfer of responsibility for protection-of-civilian sites to the South Sudanese authorities. We will, of course, carefully examine the strategic review to ensure that the Mission's mandate is geared more to a realistic objective, taking into account the will of the parties. The protection of civilians and the facilitation of humanitarian access will naturally remain at the heart of the Mission's priorities, in any event. The South Sudanese authorities must increase their oversight in this area, with the support of UNMISS. I commend UNMISS for its work and want to emphasize that restrictions on its freedom of movement are not acceptable.

In conclusion, France also supports maintaining the sanctions regime established by resolution 2206 (2015), including the arms embargo. Both South Sudan and the countries of the region must improve their implementation of the embargo. Obstacles to the work of UNMISS such as attacks on humanitarian personnel are



grounds for designation, which the Council must use in view of the challenges on the ground.

## Annex IX

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Christoph Heusgen**

In comparison to our efforts in Yemen, we have made some progress in the Council on South Sudan over the past two years. We have seen the implementation of some of the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. We have witnessed less violence in the country. The Transitional Government and most of the Governors are in place. Over the past two years, the protection-of-civilian sites have been gradually transformed into camps for internally displaced people. We have made progress and I think we have to recognize that.

But, unfortunately, we are also still seeing many deficiencies and negative developments. A number of critical tasks of the peace agreement are still outstanding. The transitional security arrangements have not been implemented. We still do not have unified security forces. We do not have the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. We continue to see violence in several pockets in the country. Key transitional justice institutions have not been established.

I would like to pick up on what Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Shearer said and underline how important it is that transitional justice institutions be put in place. They are needed to fight impunity. There continue to be massive human rights violations. There is gender-based violence, and we need to see impunity end. We need accountability. Otherwise we will not see peace and reconciliation in the country. That is a general theme. We discussed the issue yesterday with regard to Yemen. We see it in Syria. Those of us who travelled to Colombia saw how important accountability is to the peace process. With regard to the involvement of women and civil society, the 35 per cent objective has not been met.

The humanitarian situation is aggravated by floods. In South Sudan, we have yet another example of the repercussions that climate change has for security. We are alarmed by the fact that a large number of people are facing famine. Humanitarian workers find themselves increasingly at risk. Nine humanitarian workers killed is nine too many. Those responsible for these murders have to be brought to justice.

I think it is extremely regrettable that the Ambassador of South Sudan is not at this meeting. We have asked before that he listen to these discussions. I think it is disrespectful to the Security Council. It is also disrespectful to the countries that send their Blue Helmets and police to South Sudan and to those that are big donors of humanitarian aid. I would have asked the Ambassador to ask his Government to finally stop impeding the ability of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to move around the country. UNMISS is doing a fantastic job in bringing peace and security to the country and it is unacceptable that it does not have free access to every area. I would also have liked to ask the Ambassador to convey to the capital that there should be more financial transparency and expedited financial governance reforms in the country. We know that South Sudan has a number of resources. It is not comprehensible that a potentially rich country has a population facing famine. Much more has to be done, and we just heard about the illegal exploitation of resources. That is something UNMISS should look at.

We in the Council are in broad agreement. The only major point of difference among us is with regard to sanctions. I just cannot follow the argument that we should lift sanctions and the arms embargo. We heard from David Shearer that we still do not have a unified security force. There is fragmentation in the chain of command. Some units are ready to return to conflict. Lifting the arms embargo in

this situation is asking for more conflict and more victims. One argument urged us to lift sanctions because of the coronavirus disease. That is an argument I just cannot follow intellectually.

I would propose that everybody desperate to send arms to South Sudan instead increase the delivery of humanitarian goods. There are sanctioned individuals who have committed serious crimes and human rights violations. Do we want to promote impunity and have less accountability by lifting sanctions? No. I think that sanctions are a very important factor in stabilizing the peace process in South Sudan.

In conclusion, I want to thank my colleague the Ambassador of Viet Nam for doing the difficult task of chairing the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and, last but not least, Special Representative David Shearer. Over the past two years, I have been very impressed by Mr. Shearer's work and I thank him for being so principled. I fully support his proposal regarding the UNMISS review process for adapting the Mission to the changing realities on the ground. I also think that we must continue the job that he is doing and protect civilians in the parts of the country where they still face threats.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

Allow me to join other Council members in thanking the briefers for their insightful briefings.

Indonesia acknowledges the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, including on the allocation of state- and county-level Government positions. Despite that progress, the humanitarian situation and persistent intercommunal violence remain very concerning. Against that backdrop, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, we need an immediate response to the humanitarian situation. With more than 1.6 million people internally displaced and more than 1 million affected by heavy rains and floods, humanitarian assistance is critical. The current situation makes the persistent attacks on humanitarian and aid workers all the more worrisome. Indonesia condemns such attacks and calls on the authorities and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to safeguard all humanitarian workers and facilities.

We also note with concern the increase in violations of the status-of-forces agreement. Indonesia calls on all parties to respect the freedom of movement of UNMISS personnel, especially in delivering humanitarian assistance. We urge the Government of South Sudan to enhance its cooperation with UNMISS to ensure the effective provision of humanitarian assistance for the people of South Sudan.

Secondly, progress must be made in the political process. As the Secretary-General says in his report (S/2020/1180), the increasing intercommunal clashes are closely linked to the stalled political process, especially the implementation of the transitional security arrangements. All stakeholders, especially UNMISS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, should step up their efforts to support the Government of South Sudan in broadening dialogue and championing compromises to advance the stalled process.

Indonesia commends the tireless efforts by UNMISS to exercise its good offices to engage all stakeholders in pushing for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. With the possible reconfiguration of its mandate, we emphasize the importance of strengthening the role of UNMISS in facilitating dialogue as well as community engagement.

My third point is on the sanctions benchmarking process. Indonesia firmly believes that the sanctions regime should be aimed only at creating a conducive and sustainable environment in support of the peace process. Sanctions should never exist as a punitive measure but should be employed strictly as one of the well-thought-out ways whereby the peace process can clearly be seen to progress. Concerning benchmarks on South Sudan's sanctions, we emphasize that the role of sanctions in facilitating the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement should remain the primary element of the benchmarks. Moreover, we want to highlight the importance of engaging the region to ensure the effectiveness of sanctions in supporting the peace process.

In conclusion, this is indeed a critical time in South Sudan's journey to peace. All the relevant parties must play their role effectively to ensure that the progress achieved is sustained and built upon. Indonesia remains committed to working with South Sudan on its journey towards a lasting peace.

**Annex XI****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, David Shearer, for his briefing on the situation in South Sudan. Russia supports the work of the Blue Helmets and Mr. Shearer's good offices, which are an important component of the international community's efforts to stabilize the situation in South Sudan. We are also grateful to the countries that are contributing troops and police to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

We have taken note of the assessments of the humanitarian situation that Under-Secretary-General Lowcock shared with us today, as well as of the report of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan (see S/2020/1225), and we would like to commend the careful work of the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam in his capacity as its Chair.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is working, and the parties remain committed to implementing its arrangements. While we are seeing various problems with their full implementation, it is important that the South Sudanese demonstrate the political will necessary to find common ground.

We are encouraged by the decisions taken on 9 December by the South Sudan presidency, composed of the Head of State and the Vice-Presidents, on a number of key issues, including the formation of nine state-level Governments, the confirmation of county-level governing bodies and the intention to start forming both chambers of a transitional parliament.

We hope that the implementation of the interim arrangements, including those that have fallen behind schedule, will continue. Only by fully and completely implementing their commitments can the parties build mutual trust and avoid repeating past mistakes.

We are seeing a steady trend among South Sudanese refugees and internally displaced persons returning to their permanent places of residence, primarily thanks to the implementation of confidence-building measures and contacts between the opposing parties on the ground. It is important to ensure that the ceasefire continues to be respected. We urge those who are not yet party to the Revitalized Agreement to join the State-building process. In that context, we commend the mediatory role of the Community of Sant'Egidio.

There is no question that regional actors should play a leading role in sustaining the peace process in South Sudan. We welcome the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, embodying the principle of African solutions to African problems. We would also like to highlight the normalization of relations between South Sudan and its neighbours, including through the restoration of economic ties, which ought to have a positive impact on stabilization in the entire East Africa subregion.

In conclusion, we want to once again stress that progress in the South Sudanese peace process has been made thanks to the political will of the parties and the efforts of regional mediators rather than through the pressure of sanctions, to say nothing of unilateral restrictions. In accordance with resolution 2521 (2020), we expect to see benchmarks devised soon for reviewing the sanctions regime with the aim of adapting it to the realities on the ground.

## Annex XII

### **Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Halimah DeShong**

At the outset, permit me, on behalf of the three African countries that are members of the Security Council, that is, the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1), to thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Mr. Dang Dinh Quy, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, for their comprehensive presentations.

The A3+1 welcomes the recent positive developments in the South Sudan peace process. In particular, we commend the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for their resolve to complete the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and to address the issues surrounding the establishment of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States. Such developments testify to the strength of dialogue in the quest for lasting peace and sustainable development, as well as the Transitional Government's commitment to setting differences aside and fully implementing the Revitalized Agreement.

As we have previously underscored, South Sudan is a maturing democracy, determined to confront the trials of these unpredictable times, especially in the light of the unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We therefore look forward to the convening of a national conference in Juba for all communities of Upper Nile state to address outstanding issues and finalize the appointment of their Governor.

We also reiterate the importance of ensuring that the 35 per cent minimum quota for women in institutions of the Transitional Government is observed. Further, we applaud the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission for meeting those benchmarks with a 41 per cent and a 35 per cent proportion of women respectively.

The peace process is at a very crucial stage and will benefit from the inclusion of the parties that remain on the periphery. Accordingly, the A3+1 calls on the non-signatories to the Revitalized Agreement to capitalize on the current momentum, resolve their differences and join the peace process.

Despite the positive developments, South Sudan continues to be confronted by multifaceted challenges, as reflected in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/1180). The A3+1 notes with concern those challenges and would like to share some perspectives.

In terms of security, we welcome the maintenance of the ceasefire and the overall decrease in political violence prevailing throughout the country. Such developments are essential to ensuring the advancement of the peace process. However, we note deficiencies in the pace of the implementation of security-sector reforms and urge the authorities to advance initiatives to tackle intercommunal violence in states such as Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity and Upper Nile. We also call on the international community to provide support in that regard, especially in facilitating the full operationalization of the unified forces, which are cantoned in various training sites and awaiting graduation and deployment.

On the socioeconomic and humanitarian front, we are very concerned about the dire humanitarian situation, which has been further compounded by the

pandemic; the adverse effects of climate change, which have resulted in devastating floods, affecting more than 1 million people; the deteriorating economic situation, catalysed by plunging oil prices; and grave violations of human rights. We stress the importance of respecting international law, including adhering to international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as the status of forces agreement.

Equally, the protection of civilians, especially the groups that are most vulnerable, including women and children, remains paramount. In that context, we applaud the operationalization of South Sudan's first gender-based violence and juvenile court, which represents a landmark decision and highlights the Transitional Government's commitment to ending impunity for gender-based crimes and holding perpetrators accountable in South Sudan.

Finally, the A3+1 notes with appreciation the responsiveness of humanitarian partners to South Sudan and encourages the international community to continue contributing to South Sudan's humanitarian response plan to achieve its \$1.9 billion target. We also call for the lifting of unilateral coercive measures in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to enable the Transitional Government to meet the people's needs.

Our contemporary realities demand that we strengthen our assistance to South Sudan. The COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental obstacle and complicates the work ahead. However, South Sudan is showing its commitment to achieving the aspirations of its people. To ensure lasting peace in the country, the Revitalized Agreement must be implemented comprehensively and in a timely manner.

In conclusion, the A3+1 stands in solidarity with the Government and people of South Sudan. We reiterate our appreciation and support for the meaningful efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union, the European Union and the Community of Sant'Egidio to bring durable peace and stability to the country.



## Annex XIII

### **Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

Let me begin by thanking Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy for his update, as well as Special Representative Shearer and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock. Their briefings today provided a stark illustration of the dire and deteriorating humanitarian situation faced by millions of people in South Sudan, as well as the urgent need for the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. I note what David Shearer said about the fact that the violence is by no means as bad as it was previously — which is a mercy — but it is a sad and profound reality that more than two years after the conclusion of the Agreement and one year after the Council's visit to Juba, millions of people in South Sudan have yet to see real peace dividends.

This year we have seen the declining food security picture affecting millions and catalysed by subnational violence, slow implementation of the Agreement and record flooding. As Mark Lowcock made clear, the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, released on Friday, shows that there is likely to be a famine in western Pibor, and thousands more people living in famine-like conditions in five other counties. Resolution 2417 (2018) puts the onus on the Council to take action when we see a clear link between conflict and food insecurity, and that is unmistakably the case in South Sudan.

The situation will only worsen if we do not act. Now is the time for us to step up and show leadership. The United Kingdom is one of the major humanitarian donors in South Sudan. In October, we committed a further \$10 million in assistance in addition to our humanitarian aid outlay, which has totalled \$218 million in the past financial year. But international support and humanitarian aid alone cannot solve the situation. The ultimate responsibility lies with South Sudan's Government. It is a great shame that the representative of South Sudan has once again not made a request under rule 37 to be with us in the Council today as we discuss the plight facing millions of his compatriots.

We call on the Government of South Sudan to accept the gravity of the situation, to support the release of the full IPC analysis and to cooperate with and provide unfettered access to humanitarian partners. Efforts to impede the IPC process help no one, and although humanitarian aid is crucial, the bottom line is that the crisis can be resolved only if South Sudan's leaders show the required political will.

We must also recognize the human-made nature of this crisis. Successive cycles of violence have resulted in forced civilian displacement, abductions and notable increases in sexual and gender-based violence. We welcome the positive steps taken to build state-level institutions and we commend the commitment made last week to finalize state- and county-level appointments, which is significant. However, we need to ensure that those structures deliver tangible, positive impacts on people's lives and that governors and state officials guarantee unfettered humanitarian access as an immediate priority.

Stability is vital and can be achieved only through a fully inclusive process. We welcome the recent recommitment by non-signatories to the Revitalized Agreement to the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition), and we call on all parties to continue to engage constructively in the

Rome process. Let me also reiterate our call to South Sudan's leaders to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in that process.

The fact that famine is likely to occur should be a wake-up call for us all. At this moment of renewed crisis, we call on all parties to redouble their efforts to realize lasting peace and stability. It is therefore vital to ensure that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan is able to carry out its mandate unhindered. Bureaucratic and physical impediments are a direct contravention of the Revitalized Agreement, the status of forces agreement and international peacekeeping norms.

In conclusion, as we look to the end of South Sudan's first decade as an independent nation, our hope remains that a partnership can be forged between the donor community, the United Nations and South Sudan's Government and that 2021 will see a renewed effort to help end the humanitarian catastrophe in the country. The Government of South Sudan needs to see the donor community and the United Nations as partners helping them to resolve the crisis, and South Sudan's leaders need to put their people first.

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**Annex XIV****Statement by the Political Coordinator of the United States of America to the United Nations, Rodney Hunter**

I would like to thank Special Representative Shearer for his dedication to South Sudan and for his briefing today. Under-Secretary-General Lowcock's briefing on the humanitarian situation is a reminder that we all need to come together to fight hunger in South Sudan. We also appreciate the update from our Vietnamese colleague on the activities of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan.

Today the United States welcomes the progress that has been made in implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, forming the Transitional Government of National Unity and building institutions. We also welcome the announcement on 9 December by South Sudan's presidency of an agreement to promptly appoint officials to state- and county-level Government positions and to the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. The United States looks forward to those appointments being completed as soon as possible. We fully recognize the domestic, regional and international efforts in support of achieving peace in South Sudan.

However, for many in South Sudan, peace remains elusive. My colleagues met with a group of displaced persons in South Sudan only last week. They were just a few of the more than 1.6 million who remain unable to return to their homes due to the unstable security situation. A representative from that group told us, "Everyone is saying peace, peace, peace, but we don't see it. There is no peace."

Violence at the subnational level continues to cause civilian casualties, women and girls continue to be subjected to conflict-related sexual violence and humanitarian workers, as was noted earlier, continue to be killed. Floods and violence continue to threaten the civilian population, particularly in Jonglei state, where humanitarian actors will need full, safe and unimpeded access to address the famine that is happening today. As the recently released Integrated Food Security Phase Classification data tells us, hundreds of thousands of people in South Sudan are in immediate danger of starving to death in conditions we have not seen since 2017, when famine was last declared.

Now is the time for all of us, particularly South Sudan's leadership, to redouble efforts to ensure the purposeful implementation of the peace process. The Government must work quickly to build trust, consolidate the gains of peace and continue to make progress, particularly in the areas of governance, security arrangements and transitional justice. Implementation must take into account the needs and perspectives of women and girls, young people and internally displaced persons, and it must yield tangible benefits for the people of South Sudan. That must include the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all spheres and at all levels of political leadership and the peace process.

It must also encourage full implementation of the chapter V provisions of the Revitalized Agreement relating to transitional justice, including the establishment of a hybrid court, a compensation and reparation authority and a commission for truth, reconciliation and healing. Such justice efforts are critical to stopping the cycle of violence and supporting recovery. We encourage a greater leadership role for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other regional partners that continue to have a vested interest in the stability of the region.

The United States remains the largest provider of humanitarian assistance funding in South Sudan and we have increased that assistance during the coronavirus

disease pandemic. During the 2020 fiscal year the United States provided nearly \$982 million in humanitarian assistance to support the response to the crisis in South Sudan and for South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries. However, needs clearly outpace the funding. Donors will have to immediately and significantly increase their contributions to South Sudan in order to save lives there.

We continue to be a steadfast supporter of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and its life-saving work to protect civilians in conflict. We welcome and encourage continued UNMISS deployments in Jonglei and elsewhere to provide protection and deter violence against civilians.

The protection of civilians, including displaced persons, remains an essential task. As UNMISS continues to transition protection-of-civilian sites to camps for internally displaced persons and to turn security responsibility over to the Government of South Sudan, we urge for meaningful coordination and transparency with the humanitarian community and with the displaced themselves. Any future transitions should be based on security conditions, as well as the wishes and needs of displaced persons.

We look forward to beginning the process to renew the UNMISS mandate next year. We plan to work closely with South Sudan and all members of the Council to ensure that UNMISS can respond to and address the current challenges in the country.

On sanctions, the Security Council has committed to an ongoing review of all sanctions measures on South Sudan and is working to establish a clear benchmarking process to assess the arms embargo. Repeated public statements by South Sudan's leadership that the arms embargo should be removed to allow for the purchase of weapons to supply the unified forces are disingenuous. There is already a clear exemption procedure for the arms embargo that the Government of South Sudan can use if it requires any arms or materials to support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.

I do not need to remind the Council of the devastating consequences for stability in the region and for the people of South Sudan when Government and opposition forces used their weapons to wage the deadliest civil war Africa has seen in decades, often using such weapons against civilian men, women and children.

We call on South Sudan's leadership to engage in a serious conversation about the tangible steps it can take to assure the international community that any weapons in the Government's possession will not be turned against civilians or used to undermine the peace process. The United States stands ready to support South Sudan in that endeavour.

In conclusion, the United States is committed to a better future for the people of South Sudan. We are here to work with the transitional Government as well as the other members of the Council to help the country and the region achieve peace and prosperity.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their briefings.

Throughout 2020, South Sudan has achieved important progress on both the political and the security fronts. As the Secretary-General stated during the high-level debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union early this month, the ceasefire in South Sudan “has mostly held, and ... improved political stability across the country has generated cautious optimism” (see S/2020/1179, annex I). Such progress is very encouraging, given the fact that this young nation has been facing various challenges due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, heavy floods and other natural disasters in recent months. It is our sincere hope that in 2021 South Sudan will make further significant progress in achieving peace and development.

Despite the positive developments, progress in the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement in general has remained slow, as Mr. Shearer mentioned. While the permanent ceasefire has largely been holding, intercommunal violence remains an issue of concern. In that regard, I would like to highlight the following four points.

First, we call on the South Sudanese parties to put in their best efforts to fully implement the peace agreement, particularly in reconstituting the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and forming the necessary unified forces. We are encouraged to see female representation in the Government at the federal and local levels and reiterate our support for women’s further participation and leadership in the peace process.

We would also like to emphasize the role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other international partners in promoting peace and stability in the country. It is crucial to further strengthen confidence-building measures and technical assistance to the South Sudanese parties. We encourage IGAD, as the guarantor of the peace agreement, to increase its mediation efforts in that regard.

Secondly, the permanent ceasefire must continue to be upheld. Furthermore, it is imperative that the Government take effective and long-term measures to address intercommunal violence in the country in order to avoid adverse effects on the current peace process. We also commend the role of UNMISS in the protection of civilians in this difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic. We take note of the Mission’s continued transition of its protection-of-civilian sites to camps for internally displaced persons, under the ownership of the Government. In that regard, we encourage UNMISS to strengthen its support to improve South Sudan’s capacity in the protection of civilians. Viet Nam will continue to contribute to the work of UNMISS and promote the participation of its female peacekeepers in the Mission.

Thirdly, the economic and humanitarian challenges in the country must be addressed. The Government is facing a fiscal deficit of more than 50 per cent for the period from 2020 to 2021. We are particularly concerned about the high level of food insecurity, which affects more than half the population and has reached a catastrophic level in several areas. We urge the international community to strengthen humanitarian assistance and financial support for South Sudan, as well as to provide further assistance to it in the fight against COVID-19.

Fourthly, Viet Nam reiterates its consistent position that sanctions should be only a tool applied by the Security Council in a temporary and case-by-case manner to facilitate the maintenance of international peace and security. Such measures and their implementation should not adversely affect the livelihoods of the people, the essential functioning of the Government or the legitimate development of the country concerned. They should be subject to review in accordance with developments on the ground and should be removed when the conditions are met. In that regard, we look forward to the timely establishment of benchmarks on the arms embargo, with the aim of facilitating the review and ultimately the lifting of its measures.

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