



Security Council

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Letter dated 5 March 2021 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; and Ms. Jackline Nasiwa, Founder and National Director, Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya — on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — Mexico, the Russian Federation, 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 Wednesday, 3 March 2021.

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

(Signed) Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing 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 you for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today.

Last week marked the first anniversary of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. There have been some positive steps forward. The South Sudan presidency and Council of Ministers have been formed, the full complement of state-level leaders is in place and lower-level officials have been announced. Overnight, the President delegated power to the Governors of all 10 states in a decree.

These are welcome steps. But after a year, progress has been slow. The Transitional National Legislative Assembly still waits to be reconstituted, and there has been minimal progress on constitution-making, transitional justice and economic reform.

Most important, the unification of forces has yet to occur despite multiple self-imposed Government deadlines. Thousands of troops fester in cantonment sites without adequate shelter, health care or food.

This slow implementation comes at a cost. The power vacuum at the local level has opened up opportunities for spoilers and national actors who have exploited local tensions and fuelled violence.

We saw the impact of that in Jonglei last year. Today, in Warrap, there is a worrisome surge in violence among various heavily armed community militias that Government forces have yet to contain.

For the moment, conflict in the Equatorias has diminished. Meanwhile, reconciliation initiatives in Jonglei have also reduced violence to an occasional outbreak.

There is also a humanitarian cost. Subnational conflict, combined with the devastation of flooding, has created places of critical need like Jonglei and Warrap. Humanitarian agencies are providing critical assistance despite nine aid workers having lost their lives last year while courageously carrying out this work.

It is estimated that most of the country requires food aid. More encouragingly, the latest assessment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations shows a year-on-year increase in cereal production and a marked lift in land cultivated — back to 2016 levels.

Across the country, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) continues to protect and support South Sudanese in need despite many challenges. Our engineers, from seven different countries, are exploiting the dry season to build and improve 3,200 kilometres of roads, including between Bor and Pibor, which we hope will aid reconciliation among the Murle, Dinka and Nuer communities.

Work on a road linking the Sudan border to Bentiu and south to Rumbek is aimed at increasing trade and prosperity for citizens in the impoverished areas that it passes through. I cannot overstate the tangible impact of that work — it is an often-overlooked legacy of our peacekeeping. In a country with just 400 kilometres of paved roads, improving roads boosts communication, increases trade and jobs and, most critically, builds peace by linking communities.

The follow-up from the redesignations of the Bor, Wau and Juba protection-of-civilians sites has continued smoothly. Camp residents, for example, initially voiced opposition to the South Sudan National Police Service entering the sites. Today they

report crimes directly to nearby police posts and welcome their intervention. Just last week, local police entered the Juba internally displaced persons (IDP) camp to quell a fight between youth gangs and arrested several suspects. The United Nations police is still right alongside the South Sudan National Police Service, providing support and even co-locating with them in some areas.

This is all indicative of a changing context. The independent strategic review commissioned by the Council, as well as our mandate renewal, will guide us on a course that is more fit for purpose.

The use of peacekeepers is only one means of protecting civilians. More important in the long term is to create a protective environment where all citizens benefit from the rule of law. That is why we are looking to redeploy staff and resources to build the capacity of important institutions, including the courts, the justice system and the National Police Service. Individual police officers will train and mentor local police.

We are also looking to build on the success of the mobile courts by making them permanent so that all victims have access to justice. It means putting the South Sudanese in the hot seat to tackle the impunity that has plagued this country, particularly with regard to sexual violence, in order, ultimately, to have fewer victims.

We are also prioritizing technical support for security sector reform and preparations for elections. Our forces have been more mobile in recent months, establishing new temporary bases and increasing patrols to hotspots. Those efforts are bolstered by troops previously confined to static duties at protection-of-civilians sites.

Most of these initiatives are integrated with civil affairs and human rights staff to bring communities together, deter violence and address underlying causes.

Over the next two years, force numbers will gradually diminish by about 7 per cent as we shift resources to assets that will further boost our mobility.

These are just a few examples of our work. Of course, we are not alone in our efforts. As always, we partner with the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, with whom we work as colleagues and share a written memorandum.

Since I will be departing my post next month, this will be my last briefing to the Security Council as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. So, I beg the Council's indulgence to speak for a couple more minutes to share some personal reflections.

At the end of my four years in South Sudan, I look back with a certain level of comfort about how far the country has come. There is a ceasefire, a peace deal, a transitional Government, a presidency, a Council of Ministers and Governors, and local leadership is slowly being installed. The majority of people who flocked to protection-of-civilians sites have either left or now live in newly transitioned IDP camps — a result of improved political security.

Overall, political violence has reduced tenfold, as compared to the number of people who were dying or displaced due to widespread conflict in 2016. A caveat is our concern about the upsurge in armed community militias, seemingly in open defiance of State forces.

The uniformed and civilian staff of UNMISS make a real difference in lowering the level of that kind of violence and bringing diverse communities together. We are a stabilizing force that extends well beyond our physical presence — and is welcomed by nearly 80 per cent of South Sudanese who we have independently surveyed.

We also continue to push the peace process forward by working closely with all political parties, in coordination with our regional and international partners.

However, the reality is that the peace process remains extremely fragile. Many citizens are wary about the lack of political will and fear progress may collapse. It is for those people that we, the international community, must remain united and committed to pushing the peace process forward. We cannot sit on the sidelines as spectators. Look back four years. That is what failure looks like, and it is in no one's interests to return.

There are two areas I want to touch on that I believe we have addressed far more poorly than we should have.

First is the continuing absence of a financial system that works for the people of South Sudan. The wealth of this country — from oil and elsewhere — bypasses its people and is siphoned off in secrecy, with no public accountability for how it is spent. Increasingly, people are asking the obvious question: why would key decision-makers who benefit from their current positions hold an election that could put their access to power and resources at risk?

Secondly, I am struck by the immense pride the South Sudanese people have in their country. The massive United Nations presence will inevitably bump up against their hard-won sovereignty, a word that is used so often but holds deeper significance.

True sovereignty means responsibility, being responsible and really caring, in a tangible and demonstrable way, for all the nation's 12 million citizens. It also means independence. Yet South Sudan is perhaps one of the most dependent nations in history. Its education and health systems and its roads and infrastructure are provided by outsiders.

That is where I feel that we, the international community, also have a responsibility. We fail to question our role and do not acknowledge the influence of institutional pressures and ambitions on our actions. We have too eagerly stepped in and shouldered responsibilities that should fall on the South Sudanese people. This has only increased their dependency, which has undermined their dignity.

On several occasions, the President has said to me: "David, you are turning us into a nation of beggars". He has a valid point. But it is a two-way street; his Government also has to step up.

State-building is a finely tuned endeavour that constantly needs to be re-evaluated and questioned. I have so much admiration for the South Sudanese, with whom I have thoroughly enjoyed working. They are, without a doubt, the toughest, most resilient people I have ever met. And yet, despite hardship, they can sit, discuss and not give up. Perhaps above all, I have enjoyed their wonderful sense of humour and their ability to laugh in the face of tremendous adversity.

I will miss this young country, and I wish it well from the bottom of my heart. But for me, now is the right time to move on. The transformation of South Sudan from conflict to recovery is under way. The Mission is hopeful, performing strongly and poised to implement change.

My replacement, Nicholas Haysom, is a friend and no stranger to South Sudan. I am delighted that he will succeed me.

Because of the collective efforts of so many, particularly those in the region, South Sudan is in a better state. It is inching forward frustratingly slowly, with still so much to do before its citizens can truly enjoy a peaceful and prosperous future.

I want to thank the Council. I particularly remember the visit to Juba by Council members in October 2019, during a fragile moment of the peace process. They were confronted by, and listened to, the complexities of forging peace in this country. Through their actions, they mobilized to push the peace process forward with the full weight of the Security Council and, by extension, the world. It gives

us — both me personally and those I represent — enormous encouragement, and I am grateful.

I also thank the United Nations family in South Sudan for their unwavering support and hard work, together with the vast number of non-governmental organizations — both national and international — that, collectively, have bravely helped and saved the lives of so many and overcome many prejudices against peacekeeping operations to work collaboratively with the Mission.

I am proud to have worked with some very special people in this Mission — people who live in some of the toughest conditions of any United Nations mission on the planet, far from their loved ones. Yet every morning they get up and do their best. I am grateful to them.

My last words are to the people of South Sudan, who inspire me with their seemingly endless patience and hope as they fight against tremendous odds to achieve the much brighter future they deserve. My thoughts and best wishes are with them always.

Annex II

Briefing by the Founder and National Director of the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice, Jackline Nasiwa

Good morning and warm greetings from South Sudan. I am Jackline Nasiwa, Founder of the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice, a local non-governmental organization that works on human rights, justice, peacebuilding and women's rights in South Sudan. I thank you for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today.

As in many other parts of the world, the coronavirus disease pandemic has devastated South Sudan. Cases are on the rise daily, crushing an already weak health-care system that cannot meet even basic demands for services. The pandemic comes amid myriad other issues: floods in most parts of the Upper Nile region; famine in Jonglei and Pibor; continuous violations of the ceasefire by its parties, including in the cantonment sites; fighting with non-signatories to the agreement; communal violence causing loss of lives and property; sexual violence against women and girls; displacement; and broader public health crises. Our economy has collapsed due to the mismanagement of revenue and national resources, thus denying citizens basic services. That is South Sudan today.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is at risk of collapse without the Council's unwavering support and unified stand. In the two years since the Agreement was signed, the parties have embarked on steps that, to me and many of my fellow citizens, appear to be merely drops in the ocean. They have established the executive arm of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity at the state and national levels; begun the process of cantonment and training of the necessary unified forces; announced the formation of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission; and drafted bills on security and governance, as well as the Constitutional Amendment (No. 8) Bill 2020, incorporating the Agreement into the transitional constitution. But much more remains to be done. I am deeply concerned by the unacceptably slow pace of implementation and the lack of political will shown by the parties as my people continue to suffer on a daily basis.

Our leaders must be held accountable for implementing key aspects of the peace agreement in the remainder of the transitional period. That is what our people around the country are calling for. My colleagues and I recently visited local communities in parts of Upper Nile, Equatoria and Bahr el-Ghazal, and that call was echoed by those we met, who demanded accountability and justice in order for peace to be realized for civilians, for women and children who have suffered conflict-related sexual violence and for those who have lost lives and property. Ordinary civilians need security and peace. They need their plight to be recognized and, when it comes to war, they need from their leaders the reassurance of "never again". Indeed, the people demand an end to war, corruption and the violation of human rights. Above all, they need truth and reconciliation.

Close monitoring of the peace implementation framework is essential, as is completing key tasks such as the reconstitution of state and national legislatures; the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms; the adoption of draft laws and the Constitutional Amendment Bill on the Peace Agreement; the operationalization of the cantonment sites; the screening and training of forces; the provision of basic services, including medicine and food, to the cantonment sites; and ensuring support for the disarmament and demobilization processes. Human rights must be the foundation of all these processes; a failure to uphold human rights will result in continued inequality, division and more violence.

South Sudan is subject to a binding international framework that states that women's equal participation is both a right and a necessity for peace. However, the threshold for the participation of women as provided for under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which calls for 35 per cent representation — thanks to hard-won advocacy efforts by women's civil society groups — is far from being met. The few women who have been appointed so far make up less than 20 per cent at the national and state level. In some states, including Warrap, Jonglei, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Unity states, women's representation is around 11 to 17 per cent, while at the county level women make up only about 2 per cent.

The parties to the Agreement have ignored and excluded women's leadership in key governance structures and institutions. Women have lobbied and advocated for inclusion with party leaders, but in a male-dominated society with a long history of inequality and marginalization of women's rights and leadership, the fight for equality cannot be the burden of South Sudanese women alone. The Security Council must pressure the parties to take concrete steps to ensure that the 35 per cent quota is met at all levels of governance and consider this in measuring progress towards implementation.

When I first briefed the Security Council in May 2018 (see S/PV.8249), I noted the need for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to better collaborate with civil society. I am glad to inform the Council today that my organization and other civil society organizations are working with UNMISS in pursuit of grass-roots peace efforts, the protection of human rights and in support of women's leadership and peacebuilding. This support must be expanded, however; and in order for it to be sustainable, local capacities to continue this work must be built.

The protection of human rights defenders, particularly women defenders, is critical, given the closing of civic and political spaces for civil society, media and political parties in South Sudan. For instance, civil society organizations are required to get security clearances to conduct workshops, training and meetings on all aspects of governance, health, humanitarian support and service delivery. Some civil society colleagues have received summonses from the authorities for speaking out against corruption and for the need for accountability. UNMISS must join civil society in advocating respect for such fundamental rights as the freedom of assembly and association and the freedom of speech and access to information. UNMISS should further support human rights defenders and civil society organizations that face any intimidation for carrying out their essential work.

We thank the Council members for the humanitarian support the international community has extended so far, but peace and stability are the only assurances of the future of our communities. To date, 11 South Sudanese women have briefed the Council. We are tired of sharing the same stories of war, trauma and loss. Having visited many of the affected communities, I can personally attest to the fact that, after enduring decades of conflict, the resilience of my fellow South Sudanese is fading. Although ours is a history of struggle for liberty, freedom, prosperity and dignity, we can struggle no more. We have endured endless traumas — losing our children and loved ones, being displaced from our homes, dying from hunger and disease and witnessing the impunity with which rape and other horrific acts have been committed under the watch of the Security Council and its States members. To expect the South Sudanese to remain resilient in the face of such trauma is unacceptable. We need the Council to act now before even worse things happen.

Peace be with us all.

Annex III**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: Chinese]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the United States for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for March 2021. I expect that, under the President's leadership, the Council will successfully complete the work on its agenda this month. I also thank the United Kingdom for its great accomplishments during its presidency in February.

China wishes to thank Special Representative Shearer for his briefing. Since assuming the post of Special Representative, Mr. Shearer has actively fulfilled the mandate of the Security Council and made a significant contribution to promoting the political process in South Sudan, protecting the safety and security of the people and assisting in humanitarian relief. China wishes to express its appreciation. I also listened attentively to Ms. Nasiwa's briefing.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of South Sudan. Over the past 10 years, the people of South Sudan have overcome numerous challenges and made new progress in nation-building. At present, the situation in South Sudan presents both opportunities and challenges. All parties in the country should redouble their efforts, and the international community should continue to provide constructive assistance. I wish to highlight the following.

First, there is a need to maintain the positive momentum in the political process. For some time now, on the whole, the ceasefire in South Sudan has been holding, and positive progress has been made in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in key areas, such as the formation of a Government and the appointment of governors in the newly created states. China welcomes these developments.

We encourage all parties in South Sudan to consolidate existing gains, move forward on the key tasks of making security arrangements, constituting the parliament, preparing for general elections, staying the course in implementing the Agreement and resolving potential differences by peaceful means. We call on the armed factions that have not yet joined the Agreement to do so as soon as possible. The implementation of the Agreement faces practical difficulties, including the lack of funding.

We hope that the international community will provide responsive assistance. The African Union (AU), regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and such countries as the Sudan have made a significant contribution to the implementation of the Agreement. Their efforts should continue to be supported by the international community. China calls on the international community to respond to the AU's initiative and lift sanctions against South Sudan as soon as possible.

Secondly, it is necessary to continue to improve the security situation. Communal and ethnic conflict continues to pose a security threat to the people of South Sudan. This issue has been around for a long time and is caused by complicated origins, and it therefore requires a combination of responses, such as prevention, mediation, reconciliation and protection. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has devoted considerable efforts to this end, with some success.

The Government of South Sudan bears the primary responsibility for protecting civilians. China supports the international community in continuing to provide capacity-building assistance to the Government of the country.

Competition for resources remains a major cause of communal and ethnic conflict. Developing the economy and improving people's livelihoods can help eliminate the root causes of conflict.

Thirdly, it is necessary to assist in the response to such challenges as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The COVID-19 infection rate in South Sudan is reported to be as high as 15 to 25 per cent, which is worrisome. The immediate priority is to provide anti-COVID-19 support to the country, ensure timely and fair access to COVID-19 vaccines for those in need and curb the spread of the pandemic.

South Sudan is experiencing severe economic difficulties, and more than 8 million people may need humanitarian assistance this year. The international community should step up its support and assistance in this regard, alleviate the suffering of the South Sudanese people and help the country to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All along, China has actively supported South Sudan's economic and social development. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, China has provided several batches of anti-pandemic materials and humanitarian assistance to South Sudan. We have also decided to donate COVID-19 vaccines to the country. Chinese medical teams remain on the ground to help the local population. Chinese female peacekeepers are also actively involved in providing medical help to local people. China will continue to work with all parties to contribute to helping South Sudan address the challenges.

UNMISS has done a great deal and played a significant role in improving the situation in South Sudan. China pays tribute to the peacekeepers who have remained in their posts and fought against COVID-19. China supports the extension of the Mission's mandate. We hope that UNMISS will give top priority to the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and strengthen coordination and synergy with regional organizations, such as IGAD.

COVID-19 poses a serious threat to the health of key peacekeepers and affects the normal performance of peacekeeping operations, including those of UNMISS. This situation warrants our high attention. China has decided to donate COVID-19 vaccines to United Nations peacekeepers. China will continue to support the work of UNMISS.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations**

I thank the briefers for their comprehensive overview.

A year has passed since Estonia first spoke about the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in the Security Council (see S/PV.8741). In a year, the Government has been formed, states have been created and governors have been appointed. Some parties have adhered to the 35 per cent quota for women in their appointments. Estonia duly welcomes these developments. However, we must remain alert and not take any rash decisions that could jeopardize what the country has achieved so far. What we need to see is how the Government and governors work together towards implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan

In the light of some seemingly positive developments, we must not turn a blind eye to everything else. Security sector reform is behind schedule, owing to the lack of a coherent strategy, insufficient funding and, most important, inadequate political will. The agreed key transitional justice institutions, like the hybrid court, have not been established.

Serious and widespread violations and abuses continued last year. There was a 146 per cent increase in incidents, with a 120 per cent increase in the number of civilian victims documented. These are the hard facts on the ground, and they are what matter most to us. Subnational violence skyrocketed in 2020, and the linkages between local conflicts and national dynamics persist. It is very worrisome that civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict, including conflict-related sexual violence. It is disheartening to read about continuing incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, perpetrated by the parties to the conflict and civil defence groups. In this regard, we commend the conviction of soldiers for conflict-related sexual violence offences, and we hope that this will build momentum towards accountability. Impunity must be dealt with, and we truly hope that the appointment of state governors can turn the situation around.

The humanitarian situation is also a source of great concern. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/172) mentions, in comparison to last year, there has been an increase of close to 1 million people in need of assistance. In total, over 70 per cent of the population of South Sudan needs assistance. The food security situation is getting worse, and the numbers for acute malnutrition for children under 5 years of age have not been as high as they are now since the start of the crisis in December 2013. However, it is proving to be more difficult than ever now to aid the people in need, as humanitarian access has deteriorated. Violations of the status-of-forces agreement are sadly still occurring, which makes the job of UNMISS personnel in many cases impossible, leaving civilians without much-needed help and protection. In addition, there have been unacceptable cases of soldiers raiding and looting warehouses containing humanitarian aid, which is a clear violation of resolution 2417 (2018).

Last, but not least, I would like to thank David Shearer for his incredible dedication and work in leading UNMISS. We also want to highlight the work of the humanitarian organizations that have helped the people in South Sudan, and we thank them for it.

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

[Original: English and French]

I would like to echo my colleagues in the Security Council in starting my statement with warm congratulations for Ambassador Barbara Woodward and the United Kingdom Mission's team for their presidency of the Council in February. We also wish the United States every success for its presidency of the Council in this month of March.

At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. David Shearer for his briefing and congratulate him for his work at the helm of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and his absolutely outstanding and tireless work in the country over the past four years. I would also like to commend the extremely interesting briefing by Jackline Nasiwa to the Council today.

I would like to make the following four points.

France welcomes the recent progress observed in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which shows the Government's political will. The appointments of all the governors, most of the deputy governors and of authorities at the county level are important decisions. I also welcome the announcement of the establishment of the hybrid court for South Sudan, which has yet to be formalized through the signing of a memorandum with the African Union. In this regard, we welcome the role played by the region in encouraging this progress.

This momentum should be maintained and continued through the adoption of new measures. It is indeed high time to proceed with a number of them, starting with the formation of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. This is an essential step for making the necessary progress, particularly in terms of financial transparency, and for the approval of the budget, for example. I am also thinking of the rapid establishment of the truth and reconciliation commission and about security sector reform, which must be undertaken so as to establish a framework for security forces that includes adequate numbers of personnel under the authority of the civilian power. The impasse in the establishment of unified forces is concerning.

We call for compliance with the 35 per cent quota set for the participation of women in institutions established by the peace agreement. We also encourage the authorities to support the participation of youth in all relevant processes.

The consolidation of a political dynamic is essential at a time when violence, the persistence of human rights violations, breaches of international humanitarian law and food insecurity threaten to jeopardize the progress made since 2018. The increase in local violence, which is often connected to the interference of national players, has a direct and strong impact on the population, particularly women and children. We also strongly condemn the violence that followed the defections of officers.

Conflict factors are aggravated by the deterioration of the humanitarian, health and economic situation. France calls on all parties to fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. We condemn the attacks against humanitarian workers. Such violence must not go unpunished, and it is important that the perpetrators of such acts be sanctioned by the Security Council and brought to justice. At a time when humanitarian needs are enormous, some regions are on the brink of famine and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to spread, humanitarian and medical personnel should be able to have unhindered

access, without fear of being targeted. It is also essential to ensure fair access to COVID-19 vaccines, in line with the recently adopted resolution 2565 (2020).

In this difficult context, France commends UNMISS for its commitment as well as all its efforts to adapt. I am thinking in particular of the transfer of responsibility for protection-of-civilian sites to South Sudanese authorities, even if, of course, the utmost caution is necessary to ensure these civilians are indeed protected. This process has effectively put the South Sudanese authorities in a position to perform this essential function, while at the same time freeing up capacity within UNMISS. The model of mobile courts is another aspect that has improved the prosecution of cases of sexual violence.

The renewal of the Mission's mandate by 15 March should build on these positive examples, so that the South Sudanese authorities can continue to build capacity, with the support of UNMISS. Beyond the expected political progress that I just outlined, this requires trust to be built between the Government and UNMISS. In this regard, I recall that all restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement are unacceptable.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Nagaraj Naidu Kakanur

Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam, and the delegation of United States on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. I also thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and her delegation for their able stewardship of the Council last month.

I join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Shearer for his briefing on recent developments in South Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We acknowledge the important role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General during his tenure and wish him success in his future endeavours. I also welcome his successor, Nicholas Haysom, to his assignment, in an area with which he is familiar.

The progress made over recent weeks in South Sudan towards implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is a welcome departure from months of impasse. We are encouraged by the fact that appointments to gubernatorial positions and the constitution of regional administrative structures, which were marred by delays after the formation of the unity Government in February last year, have now taken place. There has also been notable progress in the functioning of important Government institutions. The Council of Ministers is meeting regularly, and national institutions have begun to show their presence at the ground level. Three protection-of-civilian sites have seen a transition to internally displaced person camps, while preparations for other protection-of-civilian sites are currently under way. All these developments are indeed positive. We are also pleased to note that appointments by the opposition have adhered to the 35 per cent quota for women.

Despite the progress, South Sudan continues to face several impediments in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. The political defections, lack of trust at all levels and growing intercommunal clashes reflect the tenuous nature of the political and security situation. Key benchmarks of the peace agreement, particularly the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the appointment of the Council of States, are yet to be met. The ceasefire has held by and large across the country. But the lack of a coherent security strategy and funding is impeding progress on the implementation of the transitional security arrangements.

It is critical that parties to the Agreement work in good faith, leaving aside narrow political considerations, to move forward on the peace process. The support of the international community, particularly the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in bringing the parties together to expedite implementation of the Agreement will be crucial. We support such efforts.

On sanctions, the Security Council has committed to an ongoing review of all sanctions measures on South Sudan. We support all efforts seeking to establish a clear benchmarking process to assess the arms embargo, assets freeze and travel ban components, in full consultation with the Government of South Sudan and other regional stakeholders.

The humanitarian situation has remained worrisome, with flooding in many parts of the country. The intercommunal violence and the resulting displacement of communities, attacks on humanitarian workers and assets, and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic have all exacerbated the situation. While the United Nations-coordinated humanitarian response, with the assistance of donor partners,

has been largely effective, the funding gap of \$1 billion deserves the immediate attention of the international community. For our part, India recently supplied 70 metric tons of food aid, including rice, wheat and sugar, to South Sudan. We are now in the process of sending 10 metric tons of medical assistance to the country in the coming weeks.

In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, in response to Secretary-General's request, India promptly scaled up the UNMISS hospitals in both Juba and Malakal. These facilities, in addition to serving the UNMISS personnel, are also catering to the emergency needs of the local population. During an open debate at the Council last month, the External Affairs Minister of India announced a gift of 200,000 doses of "Made in India" COVID-19 vaccines for United Nations peacekeepers across the world, including those deployed to UNMISS (see S/2021/157).

We have taken positive note of the activities of UNMISS in implementing its mandate. The Mission should continue supporting South Sudanese police forces in ensuring the safety and security of camps. Its support for the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance will remain critical, in view of the difficult humanitarian situation. The decrease in violations of the status-of-forces agreement during the reporting period is a positive sign; so is the clearing of the backlog in the issuance of visas to UNMISS personnel. We have also taken note of the independent strategic review of UNMISS. Such periodic reviews of United Nations peacekeeping missions are important to ensure that a mission's objectives are in sync with the situation on the ground.

India is one of the largest troop contributors to UNMISS, which has been ably led by Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar. Indian contingents have been playing an important role in bringing communities together, including by carrying out several community development programmes. These have been highly appreciated by the people of South Sudan. It is an honour for us that the Indian contingent, of more than 800 peacekeepers based in Malakal, was awarded a United Nations medal for its exemplary service in UNMISS in December last year. The recipients included Major Chetna, an engineering officer, the only female peacekeeper among the Indian troops. The Indian battalion provided its services to local communities and humanitarian workers, not just in Malakal but also in far-flung places such as Kodok, Baliet, Melut and Renk, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indian peacekeepers are also playing an important mentoring role to prevent conflict-related sexual violence. Major Suman Gawani, an Indian woman peacekeeper, deployed earlier with UNMISS, mentored over 230 United Nations military observers and ensured the presence of women military observers in each of the Mission's team sites. In recognition of her service, she was named United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year in 2019. She also trained South Sudanese Government forces and helped them launch their action plan to prevent conflict-related sexual violence.

Lastly, 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, after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We have been extending bilateral assistance by way of projects in the agriculture, health and livelihood sectors in South Sudan. Indian oil companies have invested \$2.5 billion in South Sudan. Our capacity-building training programmes have been deeply appreciated by the South Sudan Government. We recently organized an online capacity-building programme on electoral technology for Government officials in Juba. India will continue to work with the Government of South Sudan in its quest for peace, progress and prosperity.

Annex VII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason

Thank you, Madam, and best wishes to you in your role as President this month. I also thank the United Kingdom for its presidency in February. My thanks go, too, to David Shearer for his informative briefing, for his leadership of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in such challenging circumstances over four years and for his reflections today. We also appreciate our second briefer, Jackline Nasiwa, for her insights.

As the Secretary-General has told us, the peace process is at a critical juncture. There has been some progress in areas of the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, such as the appointment of 10 state governors, announcements in relation to the establishment of long-awaited transitional justice mechanisms and the Government's intention to move forward on establishing a transitional legislature. Concrete follow up to such announcements is now needed. A positive move would be, for example, signing the memorandum of understanding with the African Union on the hybrid court.

We certainly see engagement by regional bodies such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development as key, but it must be accompanied by all parties maintaining their commitment to the ceasefire. Equally, we expect non-signatories to lay down their arms and join the political process. The unfortunate reality remains that levels of subnational violence remain unacceptably high.

The bloodshed faced by civilians is quite simply tragic. During 2020, as we have heard, more than 2,000 civilians were killed in local conflicts. Ireland expresses serious concern over this violence. It results in a challenging human rights and protection environment, particularly for women and girls, as we heard in some detail today from Jackline.

Ireland strongly condemns all acts of conflict-related sexual violence in South Sudan. Such violence should never happen in the first place. However, when it does, South Sudanese authorities have a responsibility to protect victims and survivors and to ensure the provision of holistic and survivor-centred support services, including sexual and reproductive health services. Perpetrators, regardless of rank or seniority, must be brought to justice. Prosecutions for conflict-related sexual violence are welcome, but, with underreporting and limited accountability, we fear these cases are but the tip of the iceberg.

Ireland urges the South Sudanese authorities to accelerate the establishment of all institutions of Government and to implement the 35 per cent quota for women. We recognize the critical role of women and youth in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts and urge the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at every stage of the constitution-making process. The truth is that there may be a link between the recent upsurge in violence and the gaps in state administration, including below the level of governor. So, Ireland encourages authorities to urgently establish the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly and transitional security arrangements, with a particular need for policing services to be strengthened. Women should be fully represented in the arrangements. Their contribution will lead to more sustainable outcomes. We all know that.

An overall security strategy that provides an inclusive and comprehensive framework for decision-making is fundamental and critical for peace in South Sudan. The lack of movement on the establishment of the unified forces must also be rectified.

Ireland also expresses serious concern over the worrisome humanitarian situation. The latest reports indicate that a staggering 48 per cent of the population are projected to face severe acute food insecurity this month. While we know that the causes of this situation are many and varied, it seems clear that climate change is having a negative impact. We need to help address this situation.

As the Council considers the renewal of the UNMISS mandate this month, Ireland believes one of the Mission's key roles continues to be the protection of civilians. It is critical that UNMISS patrol areas where populations face most risk and threats. The Government of South Sudan has the responsibility to protect its citizens. We urge the Government to fully protect its citizens in the transitioned camps and throughout the country, where civilians are still suffering the effects of insecurity.

We would also urge the Mission to ensure that any future transitions are carried out in full consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including the humanitarian community, and that transitions take place only when the security situation allows, accompanied by robust risk assessment and mitigation. Experience alone teaches us that.

Finally, the reported violations of the status-of-forces agreement, especially in and around Juba, are deeply worrisome. Such violations place the protection of civilians in jeopardy. Ireland calls on the South Sudanese authorities to ensure unhindered access to all United Nations operations in order to ensure essential support and protection to those in need, as enshrined in the status-of-forces agreement.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Martin Kimani

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Kenya, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia (A3+1).

Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report (S/2021/172), as well as to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Mr. David Shearer, for his insightful briefing. We commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer for the outstanding work during his tenure at the helm of UNMISS, which saw the Mission make significant contributions to the South Sudan peace process and overall stabilization efforts.

We congratulate Mr. Nicholas Haysom on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS. We wish him success and look forward to supporting his work.

The A3+1 welcomes the overall improvement in the political and security situation in South Sudan, demonstrated by, among other things, the collegiality among the leadership of the parties; the gradual implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; the holding of the permanent ceasefire for more than two-and-a-half years and the transition of United Nations protection-of-civilian sites to camps for internally displaced persons under the responsibility of the Government of South Sudan.

It is notable that the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement has been incremental, with the recent significant breakthroughs being the establishment of the transitional governance institutions at the national and state level, and the completion of the appointment of state governors and deputy governors as well as other state-level officials.

Despite that progress, however, the implementation of some key activities on governance continue to fall behind schedule, in particular the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislature. We therefore urge the parties to expeditiously finalize the ongoing appointments of state officials and reconstitute the Transitional National Legislative Assembly.

We also urge the parties to remain committed to the principle of inclusivity, including the implementation of the agreed minimum 35 per cent quota for women's participation as well as youth engagement. Those are necessary to create the fundamental political and security foundation for the transition period.

It is encouraging that the overall security situation in the country continues to improve as the parties observe the permanent ceasefire. We commend the Government on the measures taken to address the low-level localized and ethnic conflicts that have been reported from time to time. We appreciate that this is a work in progress and that more remains to be done to address the root causes.

The A3+1 also notes with concern the slow progress of the implementation of transitional security arrangements, as stipulated under chapter 2 of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. That slow progress is largely attributable to the lack of technical capacity and limited resources. In that regard, we welcome the efforts to facilitate capacity-building in the security sector, including the training on leadership, peacebuilding and reconstruction held in Nairobi targeting senior officers of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and opposition commanders.

We reiterate that the overall stability of South Sudan can be guaranteed only through a comprehensive improvement of the security sector. We therefore call upon

the parties to expedite the ongoing process of the cantonment, selection, training and deployment of the necessary unified forces.

The A3+1 also takes note of the progress made under the Rome initiative of the South Sudan peace process and convey our appreciation to the Community of Sant'Egidio for its contribution and facilitation. We urge the parties to remain committed to the Rome process in the spirit of dialogue and compromise.

It is critical that the non-signatories parties join the transition process without further delay and actively participate in its implementation. We also call on all parties to honour their commitments on the cessation of hostilities and to make every effort to expeditiously conclude the ongoing discussions.

Important lessons have been learned during the past two and a half years of the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. There is no doubt that this is a complex and costly arrangement that will require the investment of a significant amount of time and resources. For instance, as noted in the current report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/172), critical institutions for the implementation of the peace process such as the National Constitutional Amendment Committee cannot proceed because of the funding gap.

In the light of those challenges, we wish to underscore the imperative for continued regional and international support for the implementation of the South Sudan peace process, including through robust diplomatic and political engagement; technical assistance; and financial and logistical assistance. Of critical importance in that regard will be the implementation of the transitional security arrangements and capacity-building of the justice, rule of law and public administration sectors.

We can never overemphasize the important role of UNMISS in supporting the people of South Sudan in their efforts to lay a firm foundation for the achievement of peace, stability and development. In that regard, the A3+1 welcomes the report on the UNMISS independent strategic review. The report will be critical in informing the upcoming review of the UNMISS mandate, with a view to making the Mission more fit for purpose. The expectations of the people of South Sudan and the region are that the new UNMISS mandate should be calibrated to respond to the evolving political and security situation, with a particular focus on giving concrete support to the peace process, including technical and logistical support for the mechanisms and institutions responsible for the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement.

In that regard, we wish to emphasize the following.

The fragility of South Sudan demands that the peace process be complemented by a robust peacebuilding programme. Some of the elements to guide that effort are within the provisions of the Revitalized Peace Agreement and could be easily implemented with little support. UNMISS should be mandated and capacitated to support such programmes, which include elements of transitional security arrangements.

State formation and institution-building in South Sudan remains a work in progress. That is what informed the establishment of UNMISS, on 8 July 2011. The Council should reflect on the founding mandate to inform the future trajectory of the activities of the Mission, including in consolidating peace and security, creating conditions conducive to development and strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government. Such a focus will be instrumental in helping South Sudan develop the institutional capacity to govern effectively and respond to the challenges of accountability on human rights, resource management and other areas of public services.

The recent improvements in the political and security situation make it opportune for the Council to evaluate the efficacy of the sanctions imposed on South Sudan. The A3+1 welcomes the ongoing exercise for the elaboration of well-identified

benchmarks that would guide the reviewing of those measures. We therefore call for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound targets that could be easily assessed against the progress achieved.

It is fitting that we continue to recognize the vital role played by South Sudan's neighbours and Africa on the difficult path to achieving a ceasefire and compromise in peacebuilding. In particular, we note the sustained efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Heads of State and Ministers in bringing the warring parties together to achieve a political settlement. In this period of instability in other parts of the region, we recommend that all conflicting parties consider the record set in South Sudan's peace process as a resource for them.

To conclude, the A3+1 reiterates its appreciation for the continued efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, IGAD and all international partners in supporting the people of South Sudan in their quest for peace, stability and prosperity.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank the United Kingdom once again for its outstanding leadership of the Security Council's work last month, and I reiterate to you, Madam President, my delegation's support for the success of your presidency.

I welcome Special Representative Shearer's report on the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the situation in South Sudan. We commend his work and leadership of more than four years at the forefront of the Mission, and we wish him success in his future endeavours. I also thank Jackline Nasiwa for her briefing on the role of civil society and the importance of the inclusion of women in the public life of her country.

Mexico is monitoring with cautious optimism the progress made in the South Sudanese political process, including the formation of state governments and the recent appointments made by President Kiir in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Equatoria, Jonglei and Warrap, in addition to the appointment of the Governor of Upper Nile.

Although slow, the implementation of some of the chapters of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan that establish the governance of the country is still encouraging. In that regard, Mexico calls for guaranteeing the full participation of women in the peace process as well as for their representation at all decision-making levels, in keeping with the 35 per cent quota and other gender provisions set forth in the agreement.

While we welcome the reduction in the number of confrontations over political differences, we deplore the significant increase in the number of attacks against civilians, including those against girls and boys. The UNMISS report notes that over the course of 2020, there was a 120 per cent increase in the number of attacks against the civilian population compared with the previous year. In that context, we are closely monitoring the transition of responsibilities for civilian-protection centres from UNMISS to the Government of South Sudan.

Mexico reiterates the importance of addressing the factors that are fuelling the conflict and that disproportionately affect civilians. Once again we can see how the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons invariably perpetuates cycles of violence. For that reason, we call for priority to be given to the weapons-collection programme and for greater effectiveness to be ensured in the comprehensive coordination strategies that allow us to tackle arms trafficking for both South Sudan and the region as a whole. Any review of the arms embargo must be based on the situation on the ground and the ability to control unrestricted arms flows.

We welcome the announcement of the joint plan of action on sexual violence in conflict, as well as the decision of the Yei court last September that convicted 26 soldiers of South Sudan's armed forces, for crimes of sexual violence. We note the deplorable situation of women and girls, who continue to be the victims of rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage, among other types of unacceptable violence. Mexico firmly condemns such practices and hopes that the implementation of chapter 5 of the agreement will allow for full accountability, compensation and key reparations that are necessary in order to reweave the social fabric.

The humanitarian situation is dire. In one year, the number of people in need of assistance has increased by 800,000, reaching 8.3 million. The floods that struck

the Jonglei region have exacerbated the existing food insecurity situation, which affects almost half the population. Insecurity and violence have caused 1.6 million people to become internally displaced. Mexico calls for guaranteeing safe access and free movement of humanitarian personnel in the performance of their functions, which are critical and must be carried out in strict adherence to international law and international humanitarian law.

Finally, Mexico calls for UNMISS to continue with its mandate. The Mission must have complete freedom of movement and guarantees for the carrying out its work. Reports of continual violations of the status-of-forces agreement by the Government are unnecessarily hindering the work of the Mission, which is operating in an inherently complex situation.

I reiterate Mexico's willingness to work constructively to ensure the renewal of UNMISS's mandate so that it can respond more effectively to the realities in South Sudan and the needs of the people.

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

[Original: Russian]

At the outset, let me congratulate the delegation of the United Kingdom on the completion of its presidency in the Security Council in February. We welcome Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and wish her a successful Council presidency in the month of March.

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Shearer for his briefing on the situation in South Sudan. We also listened carefully to Ms. Jackline Nasiwa's briefing.

We would like to thank Mr. Shearer for the tireless work that he has been doing in past years for the benefit of the people of South Sudan. We wish him every success in his future endeavours. Rest assured that Russia will continue to support the Blue Helmets as an integral component of the global efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation in South Sudan. We thank the countries that contribute troop and police contingents to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

We would highlight in particular the fact that UNMISS, upon authorization of the Security Council, promptly dispatched two company units and two helicopters to bolster the United Nations peacekeeping presence in the neighbouring Central African Republic, which needed urgent assistance in the framework of the electoral process.

The establishment of a Transitional Government of National Unity and the end of the pre-transitional period have created the conditions necessary for moving towards political stability and national reconciliation. That has already led to a significant drop in violence and a gradual improvement of the situation with respect to humanitarian access.

We see that the authorities in Juba responded appropriately to the signals coming from the international community and regional mediators, which called for the speeding up of the political settlement and State-building processes. We therefore welcome the decisions by the President of the Republic on a number of key issues, including the finalization of the process of building executive authority at the state and county levels, the endorsement of the composition of the new Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the formation of the first unit of the newly created unified armed forces. We expect the early practical implementation of all those decisions.

We welcome the fact that the South Sudanese parties were able to agree on a candidate for the office of governor of Upper Nile state. That should create a window of opportunity to overcome intercommunal disputes in the region.

The full implementation of the agreements will enhance mutual trust and prevent any recurrence of past mistakes. The sides should not lose the political will to find common ground. We call on all non-signatories to the Revitalized Peace Agreement to join the State-building process without delay.

We have concerns over the reported intercommunal clashes in some parts of the country. We strongly condemn any violations of the ceasefire and all acts of violence against civilians and the staff of the humanitarian organizations deployed in South Sudan.

We welcome the mediation efforts of the African Union and of the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which promote the

implementation of the concrete provisions contained in the peace agreements. There needs to be a unified approach that will allow for respect for the principle of African solutions to African problems.

We believe that we should not bring excessive pressure to bear on South Sudan in the form of sanctions. We are convinced that when the situation normalizes, we will have to review the sanctions regime in order to adapt it to the realities on the ground. As envisaged by resolution 2521 (2020), we expect that the Council will soon elaborate clear target indicators that will allow for a review of effective restrictions.

In general, we share the conclusions contained in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on developments in South Sudan (S/2021/172). We are committed to constructive work aimed at ensuring that the mandate of UNMISS is renewed. At the same time, we believe that the activities of peacekeepers in the country should focus on the promotion of a political settlement and the creation of conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Annex XI**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 Jackline Nasiwa for her briefing. Let me also take this opportunity to commend the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, David Shearer. Over the years, I and many others have seen his genuine, personal and tireless commitment to peace and stability in South Sudan. He has always put the people of South Sudan first. Members of the Security Council saw that first-hand during our visit in 2019. It has been a distinguished tour of duty, and my country thanks him for his service.

Twelve months on from the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, I want to welcome the appointment of a unified Cabinet and Governors and Deputy Governors in all states. We hope that those appointed can deliver tangible improvements to people's lives.

South Sudan's endorsement of a road map for implementing the transitional justice mechanisms, including the hybrid court, is also welcome. I urge the Government of South Sudan to expedite the memorandum of understanding with the African Union on the hybrid court.

While such steps are welcome, the overall progress has been too slow and too limited. Time after time, the Council has expressed its concerns and called for action. Yet what we and the people of South Sudan continue to see is inaction on a number of issues. Power vacuums at the local level have directly led to further suffering and civilian casualties. The Government needs to show the world that it is serious about peace. As the next step, we call for South Sudan to complete the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. We also call on the Government to ensure adequate training and resourcing of the necessary unified forces. Such action does not require any easing of the arms embargo but, should the Government wish to submit exemption requests, they are free to do so for the consideration of the Sanctions Committee.

We must acknowledge that more people are in need of assistance now than at any time since South Sudan's independence nearly a decade ago. There are 8.3 million people who are dependent on humanitarian assistance to survive. Sixty per cent of the population is facing crisis levels of food insecurity. There are 1.4 million children under the age of 5 who face severe malnutrition in 2021. That is 10 per cent of the entire population. We must do all that we can to scale up the humanitarian response.

The United Kingdom is giving more than \$175 million this year in response to the needs in South Sudan in addition to our large-scale funding of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility, providing vaccines around the world. I want to remind Council members of the importance of our adoption of resolution 2565 (2021) and the provisions within it calling for access to vaccines in conflict zones, which I hope will fully apply in South Sudan next year.

Reporting from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights provides further devastating insight into the impact of conflict on civilians. Violence against civilians continues. Rape and starvation are used as weapons of war. Now is clearly not the time to downgrade the Human Rights Council's oversight of the situation.

The South Sudanese Government needs to show that it understands the severity of the plight of its people, take responsibility and act in partnership with donor communities and the United Nations to resolve the crisis. That should include

full respect for the status-of-forces agreement. I also want to state our unequivocal support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and recognize the crucial protection role played by UNMISS.

One year on from the formation of the Transitional Government and almost 10 years since the creation of South Sudan, unfortunately, we have little to applaud. We can say that the situation could be worse but only because so often it has been worse. There are multiple systemic failings and, sadly, the elite do not choose to put the interests of the people first. We need an approach that incentivizes those elites to cooperate in the interests of all.

I note that the representative of South Sudan has again today chosen not to participate in our meeting. Indeed, we have not seen him here for a year. I understand that he has said that he does not want to join us because he feels that his country is criticized in our meetings. It seems to me that, if more time were spent by the leadership of South Sudan in listening to others rather than ignoring inconvenient voices, things might improve.

We cannot let the systemic drift continue. With a renewed effort from us all, including the Government and the politicians in South Sudan, substantial progress can be achieved. We should seize this opportunity so that, when we meet again ahead of the 10-year anniversary of South Sudan's independence, we — and more importantly, the people of South Sudan — can have something to celebrate.

Annex XII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield**

Let me start by thanking all the other members of the Security Council for their warm welcome. I am honoured to be here for my first official Security Council briefing, and I look forward to working with all the members. I also join them again in thanking the United Kingdom for its successful presidency.

I thank Special Representative Shearer for his briefing today. The United States deeply appreciates his service and accomplishments as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. He has greatly contributed to the pursuit of lasting peace in South Sudan, and we owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for his dedication. We also welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of Nicholas Haysom as his successor.

I also thank Ms. Nasiwa for her briefing on the situation in South Sudan from the perspective of civil society. It is so good to see her again and realize that she is still working hard to bring peace to South Sudan. She and her colleagues continue to inspire peacebuilders around the world. She is making the world a better, more peaceful place, and we are in awe of her courage. Voices such as Jackline's are so important. Civil society, particularly women in civil society, must be heard during our discussions in the Security Council on issues of international peace and security. Their ears are on the ground. They see and understand what no one else does, and, at times, they suffer like no one else does. During our presidency this month and beyond, we are therefore putting civil society front and centre at the highest levels of international diplomacy and decision-making. The United States unequivocally condemns acts of intimidation and reprisals against civil society briefers who engage with the Council or any other part of the United Nations.

This is a personal issue for me. When I was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, I visited South Sudan many times and worked with its leaders to help support the nascent nation. I care deeply about the forward progress of the nation.

I was therefore pleased when, one year ago, South Sudan's leaders announced their commitment to forming the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. In doing so, they reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement. That was a critical step towards restoring stability, peace and prosperity in South Sudan, and we acknowledge the actions that South Sudan's leaders have taken to advance the peace process.

Nevertheless, we know that the peace is fragile, and we need to see more steady progress towards a lasting power-sharing agreement to keep that peace intact.

Today I want to discuss three aspects of the situation in South Sudan: first, deep, serious concerns about increased violence and hunger; secondly, the necessary next steps in place in the peace process; and, thirdly, the vital role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in advancing South Sudan towards peace.

First, we must talk about the violence and hunger in South Sudan. Although direct conflict between the parties to the peace agreement is currently diminished, the violence has not stopped. Subnational fighting has simply surged in South Sudan and, worse, we are extremely concerned by indications that political actors are directly involved. That is not peace and it is not acceptable.

Such violence exacerbates an already devastating humanitarian situation. An estimated 7 million people face severe food insecurity. Conflict, severe floods, a

macroeconomic crisis and the impacts of the coronavirus disease have compounded to make the hunger situation dire. Those shocks disproportionately impact women and girls, who are also subject to increased violence and exploitation. They are suffering from the food crisis more than anyone.

In late December, global experts publicly warned about a likely famine in one area of Jonglei state. It is the second time in four years that the country has experienced starvation and extremely critical levels of acute malnutrition at scale.

Experts also warned that, in the absence of humanitarian assistance, populations in other areas are in immediate danger of starving to death. South Sudanese Government officials have blocked the timely release of credible food security data, delaying warnings of that catastrophe and putting lives at risk. Worse, Government officials and other parties continue to impede humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance. That cannot be tolerated by the international community.

We call on South Sudan's leaders to stop the violence and ensure the immediate de-escalation of subnational conflict. We call on them to prevent human rights abuses and violations. We also call on them to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need, especially those who are starving or staring death in the face.

Secondly, we must discuss the necessary next steps in the South Sudan peace process. Accelerating the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement is essential to securing South Sudan. Stalling on the peace agreement risks the return of widespread political violence. We are committed to working together with the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, the region, the international community and the Security Council to encourage progress on the full implementation of the peace agreement, paving the way for credible elections and a peaceful transition.

To make progress towards peace, the leaders of South Sudan need to take urgent steps forward on governance and security arrangements. In terms of governance, it is long past time to establish the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. Its absence prevents South Sudan from advancing the legislation necessary to support lasting peace. It is also imperative that the Transitional Government make progress on drafting the constitution and strengthening the electoral commission.

Proper governance and real transition out of civil war must include the full, effective and meaningful participation of women. We welcome the appointment of three women deputy governors, but we are worried about South Sudan's failure to ensure 35 per cent women's representation in the Transitional Government. That stipulation of the peace agreement must be respected. We remain alarmed by the continued high incidence of gender-based violence, including by members of the security services and other armed groups. That is simply unacceptable. Gender-based violence cannot be used as a weapon of conflict.

On security, the peace process requires the security services to be vetted, trained and unified under a single chain of command. Until that happens, the people of South Sudan will not fully believe in the 2018 peace agreement.

We will always recognize when we see progress, too. We welcome the recent announcement by the Transitional Government to proceed with implementing chapter V of the peace agreement, including establishing the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and the Compensation and Reparation Authority. By implementing those three mechanisms, with engagement from local civil society, South Sudan is helping to support truth-telling, and truth-telling is necessary for holding those responsible for atrocities accountable.

Finally, I would like to address the role of UNMISS in furthering the peace process. The United States is currently working with South Sudan, the United

Nations, including the Security Council, and other stakeholders on the renewal of the mandate for the Mission. As South Sudan navigates this fragile transition period, UNMISS remains a critical component of the security, humanitarian and human rights architecture in the country. The Mission is essential for supporting the Transitional Government in fully implementing the peace agreement.

Restrictions on UNMISS patrols and movements by South Sudan's security forces are an affront to the Security Council. They violate obligations under the status-of-forces agreement and endanger the safety and security of peacekeepers. UNMISS operations protect civilians and save lives. We call on South Sudan's leaders to cease obstruction of the Mission and work with UNMISS as a full partner in the transition process.

The protection of civilians in South Sudan remains an essential task for UNMISS. Given the alarming levels of violence and hunger across the country and the lack of progress in the implementation of the peace agreement, we believe any force reduction for UNMISS should be gradual and, importantly, condition-based too.

The ongoing redesignation of protection-of-civilian sites demands continued close attention by UNMISS, as well as ongoing coordination and transparency with the humanitarian community and displaced persons. The Mission must be prepared to respond rapidly should security conditions deteriorate.

Let me conclude by making our position unmistakably clear. We see the situation in South Sudan as precarious. We are worried about the slow pace of the peace process and the levels of violence, and we believe that UNMISS has a critical role to play in protecting civilians and supporting peace. We therefore call on the leaders of South Sudan to accelerate the peace process and implementation of the peace agreement, reduce the levels of violence, work with UNMISS and open the gates for humanitarian access, especially to help with hunger and starvation.

This is a critical moment for South Sudan. We, the United States, remain committed to the country and its people, and we will continue to work with the Transitional Government, the Security Council, UNMISS, humanitarian groups and all stakeholders to bring peace to South Sudan.

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

Since it is the first open meeting of the Security Council this month, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Ambassador Barbara Woodward and her team for their excellent presidency in February, and our warmest congratulations and best wishes go to you, Madam President, and your team in this month of your presidency. You have our full support.

I would like to thank Mr. David Shearer and Ms. Jackline Nasiwa for their briefings.

Since the beginning of the year 2021, further progress has been achieved in South Sudan. The appointment of the Governor of Upper Nile in January completed the formation of gubernatorial positions in all states of South Sudan after a six-month effort. The Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity is functioning. The permanent ceasefire continues to be largely upheld. We also welcome the Government's approval to establish the African Union hybrid court. It is also encouraging that, according to the International Monetary Fund, South Sudan's economy recorded positive growth in 2020 despite the challenges of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

While the progress so far is encouraging, we note that the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement overall still remains limited. South Sudan continues to face the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic, heavy floods and other natural disasters. Intercommunal violence and food insecurity continue to be issues of concern, which can threaten the recent positive achievements. In this regard, I wish to highlight the following four points.

First, we reiterate our call to the South Sudanese parties to step up the implementation the peace agreement, particularly in finalizing two key provisions: the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the formation of the necessary unified forces.

We applaud the high female representation in several federal and local agencies, which has met the 35 per cent goal. We reaffirm our support for women's further participation and leadership in the transitional process and beyond.

We welcome the continued efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other international partners in promoting the implementation of the peace agreement. We further encourage IGAD to increase its mediation efforts during this critical period. More confidence-building measures should also be taken into account to promote trust and reconciliation.

Secondly, it is imperative to ensure that the permanent ceasefire continue to be upheld. In addition, we call on the Government to put in more efforts to address intercommunal violence in the country to prevent possible adverse impacts on the current transitional period.

We commend the role of UNMISS in the protection of civilians. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is encouraging that the Mission is striving to extend its protection of civilians beyond the protection-of-civilians sites. Viet Nam will continue to actively contribute to the work of UNMISS and promote the participation of our female peacekeepers in the Mission.

Thirdly, more efforts are needed to tackle the economic and humanitarian challenges in the country. While the country achieved positive economic growth in

2020, it is concerning that the high level of food insecurity continues to affect more than half of the population. We hope the international community will strengthen its humanitarian assistance and financial support to South Sudan, as well as provide further assistance to the country in combating COVID-19. Viet Nam will provide medical support to South Sudan in the fight against the pandemic within its capacity.

Fourthly, Viet Nam reiterates its consistent position that sanctions measures should be subjected to review in accordance with developments on the ground and removed when the conditions are met.

We look forward to receiving the report of the Secretariat on the proposals of the benchmarks to review the arms embargo and will actively engage with Council members on the establishment of such benchmarks. As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, Viet Nam will also continue to foster cooperation and dialogue among the Panel of Experts and South Sudan and regional States.

Before concluding, as this meeting is expected to be Mr. Shearer's last briefing to the Security Council as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, I would like to commend his leadership of UNMISS and his tireless efforts in promoting peace and development in the country throughout the past years. I congratulate Mr. Nicholas Haysom on his appointment as the incoming Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and look forward to actively supporting him.
