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Seventy-sixth year

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Auväärt	(Estonia)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Maman Sani
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Lagha
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Roscoe
	United States of America	Mr. Hunter
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2021/566)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2021/566)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and Mr. Rajab Mohandis, Executive Director and co-founder of the Organization for Responsive Governance.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/566, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

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

On 9 July, the Republic of South Sudan will mark its tenth anniversary as an independent State. Council members will recollect the jubilation 10 years ago when we welcomed South Sudan to the family of independent nations. The international community pledged its support to South Sudan at that time. That commitment remains as important and as urgent today as the world's youngest nation strives to deliver peace and security to its citizens.

I am pleased to report some progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan since our last report in March (S/2021/172). Allow me to highlight three notable advancements.

First, on 10 May, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity established a taskforce to oversee and coordinate transitional justice and other judicial reforms

Secondly, on 11 May, President Salva Kiir Mayardit reconstituted the national legislature and appointed 550 new members to that legislature. That, too, was a distinct step forward.

Thirdly, on 25 May, President Kiir Mayardit, with the Sudan's Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, in attendance, officially launched the permanent constitution-making process in Juba. Drafting a national constitution is the quintessential act of sovereignty. It expresses the highest aspirations of a nation and its most cherished values. An inclusive national conversation will lay a foundation for a social contract among the citizens of the country and engagement in an inclusive process will increase the probability of a durable peace.

In addition to those achievements, I would like to inform the Security Council that on 17 March, the Bentiu protection of civilians site was redesignated as an internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp. The freed-up peacekeepers are now deploying to more remote locations, such as Koch and Mayom, enhancing confidence and stability in areas of IDP returns. Concurrently, the efforts of United Nations Mission in South Sudan are ongoing to support the Government of South Sudan in protecting displaced populations. The last protection of civilians site in Malakal retains its protective status owing to protracted insecurity in and around the area. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) will continue to dedicate provide physical protection, as required.

I am also pleased to report that, as commissioned by the Security Council, a needs assessment mission for the conduct of free and fair elections was conducted from 6 to 26 May. A detailed report will shortly be submitted to the Council. UNMISS is firmly committed to supporting such elections. However, our work must be aligned with that of South Sudanese stakeholders and institutions and in partnership with the international community, especially the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Notwithstanding those markers of progress, the overall implementation of the Revitalized Agreement is progressing slowly. The formation of the legislature remains incomplete. The constitution of the Council of States and the nomination of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker is pending. UNMISS continues to encourage the Government to continue with those processes, while ensuring the adequate representation of women and young people at all levels.

Similarly, the transitional security arrangements remain behind schedule. The formation and graduation of the unified forces is a critical element of South Sudan's transition, intended to prevent the intractable relapse into conflict. Troops continue to suffer in cantonment and training sites without adequate shelter, health care and food. It is therefore important that the precondition of a coherent command and control structure be finalized, followed by the graduation of the forces. The recent announcement by the Presidency, that is, both the President and the Vice-President, in support of the rapid implementation of chapter II of the Agreement, including expedited graduation of the new unified forces, is encouraging. It is our hope that the commitments so publicly made will be duly delivered on.

I would like to highlight the pervasive insecurity, in particular intercommunal violence, which continues to obstruct the realization of a durable and sustainable peace in South Sudan. This year, more than 80 per cent of civilian casualties were attributed to intercommunal violence and community-based militias.

The UNMISS force continues to interrogate the impact of its own response to those threats and its commitment to being a highly mobile force in a highly mobile posture. Deploying, often pre-emptively to in conflict hotspots, the UNMISS force has maintained a presence in strategic areas during the rainy season, enduring extreme weather conditions. Those initiatives, among others, have contributed to some reduction in violence as compared to the previous year.

Nevertheless, weak or absent State governance institutions throughout South Sudan have enabled spoilers to exploit perennial communal and ethnic cleavages. Entrenched insecurity has hindered the cultivation of crops and has contributed to a vicious cycle of livestock raiding. Many communities are dangerously short of food supplies in places such as Warrap, Lakes and Jonglei, to name but a few. Meanwhile, in the Equatorias, the National Salvation Front and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces remain engaged in intermittent armed conflict.

I recently led a delegation of representatives from the AU, IGAD, the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and

Evaluation Commission and the African diplomatic community based in Juba on a visit to Pibor. We all share a deep concern over the resumption of violence between communities in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. While recognizing the importance for the Government to take concrete steps to address the root causes of the conflict, UNMISS is collaborating with local authorities and communities in Jonglei to promote reconciliation, secure the release of abducted women and children, and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Worryingly, weakened rule-of-law institutions and economic deterioration have led to increased criminality and the targeting of humanitarian workers. This year alone, four humanitarian workers have been killed and millions of dollars of humanitarian supplies looted or destroyed. The callous and indiscriminate killing of humanitarian workers is deplorable. UNMISS recognizes its own important contribution to creating a safe environment for humanitarian partners, and the Mission will continue to take the lead in promoting and advocating for safe conditions that for the delivery of life-saving services.

At the international level, UNMISS continues to support the efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio to facilitate dialogue and calls on the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance to build on the declaration of principles reached in Naivasha, Kenya, earlier this year.

Upon my arrival in Juba, I had the opportunity to meet with the President and senior Government officials. I also travelled to all 10 states to hear directly from the South Sudanese people. What has emerged from those engagements is that local authorities want assistance in tackling subnational conflicts and the widespread presence of firearms. They require support and infrastructure. The lack of infrastructure and extreme flooding make access to many parts of the country challenging. In other parts of South Sudan, long spells of drought have compounded existing vulnerabilities. In that regard, the Mission is committed, with the United Nations Development Programme, to addressing climate-related security concerns in South Sudan.

In the current mandate, the Security Council recognized the imperative of peacebuilding and directed UNMISS to advance a three-year strategic vision around that imperative. In that regard, please

allow me to share some thoughts on five key tracks of that vision.

First, South Sudan is fortunate in having concluded a multi-stakeholder peace agreement to guide its transitional path. Making irreversible progress towards peace requires tangible gains on implementing the agreed transitional benchmarks. Those benchmarks include significant markers regarding an enduring national accommodation and lasting peace in the form of elections, a new constitution and the establishment of democratic institutions.

Secondly, we commit to making optimal use of one of our distinctive assets — our uniformed personnel. Through their assistance, the Mission intends to enhance general security, contributing to a safe and secure environment for political progress that would also allow for the urgent and necessary delivery of humanitarian assistance along with the conditions necessary for refugees and IDPs to return and earn a livelihood.

Thirdly, as critical as is the contribution of uniformed personnel are civil and political engagements at the grassroots level. They enable conditions and arrangements under which neighbouring communities can live together. Our widespread engagement throughout the country has increased in scale and importance in that area.

That also highlights the significance of the fourth component — existing rule-of-law institutions. A strong and well-developed justice chain is integral to breaking the cycle of violence and holding peace spoilers accountable.

Finally, UNMISS is keenly aware that all those endeavours cannot be accomplished alone. Therefore, the Mission intends to enhance collaboration and promote greater coherence among the international partners, including IGAD, AU, the European Union, the Troika, neighbouring States and the diplomatic community in general.

Enhanced engagements with the transitional Government will also be key going forward. In that regard, the recent establishment of a high-level coordination forum with the Government to deal with movement restrictions and operational challenges is an important step.

In conclusion, I would like to share that we are well placed to execute our mandate more effectively.

I take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of our uniformed and civilian personnel. As is the case for all peacekeeping missions, working in the midst of the coronavirus disease pandemic has been seriously challenging. I am proud of our personnel, who have risen to the challenge and continue to work away from their family and often in austere and uncertain conditions.

On that note, I thank Council members for the support we have received and will continue to receive.

The President: I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mohandis.

Mr. Mohandis: It is my distinct honour to brief the Security Council on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the independence of my country, the Republic of South Sudan. I brief the Security Council with great humility on behalf of my colleagues in civil society and millions of South Sudanese citizens.

This briefing is looking at what has worked well, why things did not work so well and what it means; the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; what we may expect moving forward and finally the way forward.

The declaration of the independence of South Sudan was a great historic moment that gave hope to South Sudanese on 9 July 2011. It brought a sense of satisfaction, indicating the achievement of a lifetime dream for which millions of our people across generations had paid the ultimate price.

South Sudanese who were internally displaced and those in refuge in neighbouring countries returned to the country, settled and started rebuilding their lives. Many built houses, produced their own food and engaged in business. Local Governments were operational throughout the country. In most parts of the country, the movement of people, goods and services was safe, day and night. The country had the resources and international good will to support development in all sectors.

The country had the legal frameworks necessary to govern itself. The laws attempted to address historical gender injustices and imbalances by providing for 25 per cent affirmative action for women at independence, which has now been raised to 35 per cent.

In summary, South Sudan at independence had resources, institutions, professionals and legal

frameworks to govern itself, deliver basic services and set the country on the path to development. Unfortunately, all that potential was quickly squandered, leading to increased State fragility and failure.

I will mention and explain only two main reasons that I believe hampered progress in South Sudan. The first was ineffective political leadership and the second was a neglect of principles that guided the struggle for our liberation and independence. Those two sources of our predicament as a country caused a meltdown in all sectors, including politics and governance, security and the economy.

Leadership is almost everything a country needs in order to make progress. It defines a unifying national vision to set a direction for a country, and provides the means and creates the environment necessary for the realization of the vision. That has been grossly lacking in South Sudan since the country became independent and, as it stands now, there is no clarity as to where the country is heading.

South Sudan is a product of decades of liberation struggles with clearly defined purpose and principles. The text of the declaration of our independence recalls that our people led a “long and heroic struggle for justice, freedom, equality, human dignity and political and economic emancipation”. The declaration further states that we, the people of South Sudan, “resolved to establish a system of governance that upholds the rule of law, justice, democracy, human rights and respect for diversity”. However, barely 30 months into our independence, our country descended into multiple civil wars and made it even more difficult to realize these principles.

The net effects of the leadership failure and neglect of the principles that guided our struggle for liberation and independence are severe. The main effect is State failure. The South Sudanese State is unable to perform its basic functions of government, such as maintaining security for itself and for all citizens, enforcing law and order, delivering services to the population and meaningfully resolving the multiple conflicts in the country.

From our perspective as civil society, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan provides a reasonable framework for peace in our country. The consistent and full implementation of the agreement would enable the South Sudanese to restore peace,

security and stability, address the humanitarian crisis, reform and strengthen the effectiveness of public institutions, deliver transitional justice, write a permanent constitution and conduct credible elections within the agreed implementation schedule.

As it stands now, however, 33 of the 44 months of the original timeline of peace implementation have elapsed without achieving key milestones of the peace agreement. The transitional security arrangements, which were supposed to have been accomplished in the first eight months of the peace agreement, are collapsing. Not a single soldier of the initially agreed 83,000 necessary unified forces has graduated. Due to an acute shortage of food and medicines, the forces have been deserting their cantonment sites and training centres. The report of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, presented at the seventeenth plenary session of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, held in Juba on 20 May, indicated that there were only about 75 soldiers left in a cantonment site that held had about 1,500 soldiers. Needless to say, the functioning of all the security mechanisms created by the peace agreement is severely impaired due to lack of funds.

While implementation of the transitional security arrangements delays and falters, civilians continue to pay the price of insecurity in the country. It may be noted that women have been among the main victims of this situation. In a nationwide public consultation held with women in all 10 states of the country in March this year, they strongly expressed concerns about the slow implementation of the peace agreement and the poor delivery of basic services, such as health, education and water. They felt that the implementation of the peace agreement’s affirmative-action quota of 35 per cent would help increase the voices of women in public decision-making geared towards the resolution of the crisis in the country. However, most of the parties to the peace agreement have not been meeting their share of the 35 per cent representation in the institutions of the unity Government.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is the mediator and main guarantor of the peace agreement. With regard to the peace agreement, the effectiveness of IGAD appears to be diminishing. First, almost all States members of IGAD have been more involved in their internal issues rather than in regional efforts over the past 12 months. Secondly, the South

Sudanese parties to the peace agreement have become fairly immune to pressure from IGAD. For example, IGAD called on them to dissolve Parliament within two weeks, but it took over 10 months for that to happen.

The current situation of ineffective leadership and deliberate neglect of the purpose of our independence have kept our country in crisis for the past 10 years. Without a change in this status, the future can only be expected to remain the same or even worsen. The volatile political, economic, security and humanitarian situations are likely to remain mutually exacerbating. This will further complicate the situation for civilians in the country and stifle efforts to address the crisis and restore peace, security and stability.

It is also highly likely that the civil population, civil servants and political groups will become increasingly frustrated. These public frustrations risk causing instability of their own through demand for improvement, especially in the security, economic and humanitarian situations in the country.

IGAD member States are likely to remain occupied in their internal national issues. This will only leave the parties on their own, without robust regional oversight and support.

Turning to the way forward and learning from the past 10 years, South Sudan needs to chart a new and clear path for the next 10 years.

First, South Sudanese who genuinely represent the suffering masses need to be at the core of the solutions moving forward and not just those who wield power by the barrel of a gun. On this note, the full spectrum of civil society — civil society organizations, faith-based leaders, women, youth, professional groups and the business community — must demand of the leaders in the unity Government that they effectively discharge their mandates, as stipulated in the Constitution and the peace agreement or accept a reconfiguration of the political order into one that is capable of meaningfully resolving the problems in the country.

Secondly, the South Sudanese in their diversity should demand and ensure that South Sudan is governed on the basis of the principles that informed the struggle for the liberation and independence of our country.

The Security Council should support the efforts of South Sudanese from the categories outlined earlier in any initiative to address the crisis in the country. The support of the United Nations may take many forms.

The Security Council may work jointly with IGAD, the African Union and other actors in the international community to raise extremely high the cost of wilful sabotage of peace implementation, including the perpetuation of violence, human rights abuses and restrictions on civic and political space.

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

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Haysom for his briefing today and congratulate him on taking on his new role. We commend him, as well as the uniformed and civilian personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), for their work to protect civilians, deter violence, support peacebuilding activities and advocate for human rights, especially, as he noted, in today's even more challenging environment.

We greatly appreciate Mr. Mohandis's briefing from the perspective of civil society in South Sudan. It is essential that the Security Council continue to hear views such as his as we consider next steps on this important issue. We also welcome the participation of the representative of South Sudan in today's briefing.

As Mr. Mohandis pointed out, in a few weeks South Sudan will commemorate the 10-year anniversary of its independence. We recognize the pledge by South Sudan's leaders to restore peace and stability in the country through the implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, but we are concerned with the slow pace of progress. We strongly encourage South Sudan's leaders to accelerate implementation of the peace Agreement.

Last month, the Presidency announced appointments for the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, but members have yet to be sworn in. We urge the prompt finalization of the Legislative Assembly and the appointment and swearing in of the members of

the Council of States so that they can fulfil their duties as legislators.

We note the commitment by the South Sudanese parties and stakeholders at last month's constitutional workshop to a process that includes robust public consultation procedures to achieve a constitution that reflects the will of the people. Now the Transitional Government should deliver on that commitment expeditiously.

The United States views free and fair elections in South Sudan that are both timely and peaceful as essential to sustaining peace and stability in the country. We call on the Transitional Government to develop the institutional and legal framework necessary to ensure that elections are peaceful and reflect the will of the people. That includes ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in elections.

The United States looks forward to the results of the United Nations needs assessment on the electoral process currently under way. Delays in implementing transitional security arrangements in the peace agreement remain a significant barrier to progress. The Transitional Government must follow through on its commitment to expediting the graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces and the establishment of a joint command. Claims by some South Sudanese officials that the United Nations arms embargo prevents the graduation of Necessary Unified Forces are disingenuous. The arms embargo, which was recently renewed by the Council, includes straightforward exemption procedures should South Sudan require arms and materiel necessary for implementation of the peace agreement.

We call on South Sudanese officials to work together with the Security Council on achieving the benchmarks set out in resolution 2577 (2021), so that we can consider appropriate adjustments to the sanctions regime.

The United States is also alarmed at the rise of subnational violence in South Sudan, often involving large and well-equipped armed groups, sometimes with support from political actors and members of the security services. We deplore the violence against civilians which has been documented by UNMISS, including extrajudicial killings and sexual and gender-based violence.

This year has also seen a significant increase in the killing of and attacks on humanitarian personnel. We

call on South Sudan's leaders to take immediate and effective measures to protect civilians, humanitarian workers and internally displaced persons and to hold accountable those responsible for attacks on humanitarians.

The South Sudanese authorities continue to obstruct ceasefire monitors and peacekeepers; that is unacceptable. Ongoing restrictions on UNMISS patrols and movements, as reported by UNMISS, violate obligations under the Status of Forces Agreement. Those restrictions put civilians and UNMISS personnel at risk. We call on South Sudan's leaders to cease obstruction of the Mission and to view UNMISS for what it is: a full partner in the process of transition.

The United States remains committed to the people of South Sudan and to working closely with the Transitional Government, the Security Council and all stakeholders to enable peace and prosperity for the country and for the region.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): At the outset, let me thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the recent developments in South Sudan. I also thank Mr. Rajab Mohandis, Executive Director and co-founder of the Organization for Responsive Governance, for his insights. I join others in welcoming the representative of South Sudan to today's meeting.

Recent developments in South Sudan have been encouraging. The Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity completed one year in February. The peaceful cohabitation of various political parties despite their having diverging views provides hope for peace and stability in South Sudan. The beginning of the constitution-making process recently is another positive development. However, the Revitalized Transitional Government has a huge task ahead, as do the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The parties need to quickly reach a consensus agreement on the duration of the transition and on the time frame for holding the elections.

The reconstitution of a 550-member Parliament and the setting up of a task force to oversee the implementation of chapter V of the Revitalized Agreement are welcome developments. We hope that steps will be taken in the coming months to set up

and operationalize the Hybrid Court. The Community of Sant'Egidio-brokered peace talks between the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance and the Transitional Government, and the signing of a Declaration of Principles between the Transitional Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North demonstrates the commitment of the South Sudanese leadership to peace.

On the security front, the ceasefire has continued to hold, though localized violence has increased. That calls for the early establishment of the unified command of the military and the graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces, which is a critical aspect of the agreement. We appreciate the continuing cooperation between the Transitional Government and UNMISS in providing protection to internally displaced persons in the camps where they are located, which are now under the control of the Government. We urge UNMISS to continue to move forward on the transition of the Malakal protection-of-civilians site as conditions permit and in line with its mandate. The humanitarian needs of the population are increasing, and the international community needs to step in to bridge the huge funding gap of almost \$1 billion.

We are concerned over violations of the Status of Forces Agreement. The issue needs to be addressed at the earliest possible time in a proactive manner by the Transitional Government, working together with UNMISS.

India has been one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UNMISS since its establishment 10 years back. Indian peacekeepers have made a significant contribution to peace in South Sudan in implementing crucial aspects of the mandate, including engaging communities and helping them to successfully address challenges concerning their daily needs such as health care, drinking water and education. India has contributed more than \$2 million to UNMISS over the past year.

It is a matter of immense pride that 135 of my fellow countrymen serving as part of UNMISS were recently awarded United Nations medals for their outstanding performance in Jonglei state and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. I particularly salute the bravery of the three Indian peacekeepers who were posthumously awarded the prestigious Dag Hammarskjöld medal this year for their courage and sacrifice in the line of duty. Corporal Yuvraj Singh and Ivan Michael Picardo had

served in UNMISS, and Mulchand Yadav had worked with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. All three laid down their lives while serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions last year.

South Sudan is on the cusp of a historic moment. The youngest nation in the world will be completing a decade of existence as a sovereign and independent country in the next few weeks. Indeed, 10 years back India joined other Council members in welcoming South Sudan into the comity of nations, on 9 July 2011. India is cognizant of the enormous challenges that South Sudan is confronted with on its path towards peace and stability. We also recognize the progress made by South Sudan and its people, particularly in the past three years. It is important to maintain that momentum. We believe that at this transformative phase South Sudan requires the wholehearted support of the international community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the United Nations.

India firmly believes that our actions in the Council should enable the emergence of South Sudan as a confident nation in order to realize the dream of its leaders. Just as India and Africa fought colonialism together, India will continue to support South Sudan and its people in their journey towards sustainable peace and a prosperous future.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative Nicholas Haysom and Mr. Rajab Mohandis for their comprehensive briefings. I welcome Mr. Haysom to his first Security Council meeting as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan. We look forward to working closely with him. I welcome Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal, Permanent Representative of South Sudan, to our meeting today.

July 2021 marks the tenth anniversary of South Sudan's independence. Since the beginning of the year, further progress has been achieved in South Sudan. The Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity is functioning at the central and local levels. The permanent ceasefire continues to be largely upheld. We highly commend the recent reconstitution of the Transitional Legislative National Assembly (TLNA) of South Sudan. While the implementation of the Peace Agreement remains limited overall, the progress achieved so far should be fully recognized, especially when the country continues to face the challenges of

the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, natural disasters, intercommunal violence and food insecurity. The Sudanese parties should be further encouraged.

In the light of recent developments, I wish to highlight the following four points. First, we call on the Government of South Sudan and the relevant parties to step up the implementation of the Peace Agreement, particularly in the formation of the Necessary Unified Forces and the expeditious operation of the TLNA. We note with satisfaction that the high female representation in some federal and local agencies has met the 35 per cent goal, and we call on the Government to further facilitate women's participation and leadership in the transitional process, in line with the Peace Agreement. We commend and call for continued efforts from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other international partners in promoting peace and development in the country.

Secondly, it is critical to continue upholding the permanent ceasefire. Furthermore, we urge the Government of South Sudan to make greater efforts to address the intercommunal violence to prevent possible adverse impacts on the current transitional period. It is important to tackle the root causes of this issue. In this regard, more dialogue and confidence-building measures should be introduced to promote trust and reconciliation.

We commend and reiterate our support for the work of UNMISS, particularly in the protection of civilians. Viet Nam will continue to actively contribute to the work of UNMISS and promote the participation of our female peacekeepers in the Mission. We also commend the continued efforts of the United Nations Mine Action Service in mine-clearance and risk-education activities in the country.

Thirdly, it is equally important to tackle the increasing economic and humanitarian challenges in the country. It is concerning that the high level of food insecurity continues to affect more than half of the population in South Sudan, including over 108,000 people at the catastrophic level. We call on the international community to strengthen its humanitarian assistance to and financial support for South Sudan, as well as to provide further assistance to the country in combating COVID-19 and accelerating the process of vaccinating against the disease.

Fourthly, Viet Nam reiterates its position that Security Council sanctions should be only a temporary tool for promoting conditions conducive to the maintenance of international peace and security in special situations. Sanctions should be lifted as soon as the conditions are met.

We call on the Government of South Sudan and relevant parties to fully implement relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2577 (2021), with a view to moving towards the lifting of sanctions measures. As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, Viet Nam will continue to foster cooperation and dialogue between South Sudan and the States of the region in this regard, thereby contributing to long-term peace, stability and development in the country.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1). We take note of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (S/2021/566) and thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom and Mr. Rajab Mohandis for their briefings. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, our colleague Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal.

The A3+1 is fully cognizant of what South Sudan has gone through for years and acknowledges and commends the people of the country for the gradual and cumulative progress they have made in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. Notably, the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the formation of the State and lower levels of Government are paving the way for adoption of laws and policies that will further accelerate the peace process. The new administrative structures will also be critical to efforts aimed at improving governance, providing much-needed public services and dealing with insecurity, including by resolving localized intercommunal conflicts.

We salute all the parties for their continued commitment to the permanent ceasefire, which has now held for the last three years. We welcome the transition of a United Nations protection-of-civilians site in Bentiu, Unity state into internally displaced persons camps under the responsibility of the Government of South Sudan, as well as the return of refugees. These

positive developments are indicative of increased public confidence in the peace process and the country's nascent institutions.

The A3+1 is encouraged by the progress made under the Rome initiative of the South Sudan peace process, including the signing of the Declaration of Principles by the Government of South Sudan and the South Sudan Opposition Movement Alliance in Naivasha, Kenya. We commend the Community of Sant'Egidio and Kenya for their role and urge the parties to remain committed to the process.

To speed up and sustain the peace process, it is necessary to pay attention to a number of concerns. The A3+1 remains concerned by the slow progress of the transitional security arrangements. We acknowledge the limitations and challenges of technical capacity and resources. However, the parties can and should do more to advance the training, graduation and redeployment of the Necessary Unified Forces. Equally critical are the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the finalization of the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board, and the establishment of proper management systems of arms and ammunition stockpiles.

The A3+1 is also concerned at the dire humanitarian situation. Food insecurity remains alarming and has worsened owing to climate-change-induced challenges, including drought and resource-based intercommunal violence. The coronavirus disease pandemic has also had the greatest impact on the most vulnerable.

We extend our appreciation to all humanitarian agencies working in South Sudan for their assistance and urge international partners to continue to extend much-needed humanitarian support to address existing shortfalls. We further urge the Government to take appropriate measures to ensure the safety, protection and security of all humanitarian aid agencies and facilitate the delivery of assistance.

As a way forward, and in addition to the foregoing, the A3+1 wishes to underscore three points. First, as South Sudan celebrates its tenth anniversary, peace consolidation through State-building and institution-building must remain an utmost priority. With enhanced institutional capacity at the State level, South Sudan will be better positioned to address the root causes of conflict. In this regard, the launch of the permanent Constitution-making process envisaged

under Chapter VI of the Revitalized Peace Agreement is an encouraging step.

We commend the initiative by the United Nations in partnership with the Governments of Sweden, Ireland and Kenya to facilitate the conduct of the population and housing census in 2022. This is not only a key prerequisite for socioeconomic planning but also an imperative for the political process towards the conduct of the next general elections.

The A3+1 holds the view that South Sudan's engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) would be complementary to the efforts of the Council. We therefore encourage South Sudan to consider engaging the PBC for support for its programmes, including the development plan and the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan.

Secondly, the A3+1 reiterates its call for the increase of international support for South Sudan. The peace process and the Revitalized Agreement is complex and costly arrangement, requiring a strong political commitment, as well as a considerable amount of time and resources.

We are grateful for all diplomatic support, as well as technical, financial and logistical assistance from regional and international partners. We encourage the international partners to continue to provide the much-needed resources to sustain the peace and stabilization efforts.

Thirdly, the A3+1 notes that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is as old as South Sudan, having been established on the eve of South Sudan's independence. Today, UNMISS is one of the largest United Nations peace operations globally, with an annual budget \$1.17 billion. As the Mission marks its tenth anniversary, it is important for the Security Council to reflect on whether UNMISS has been achieving its mandate.

The most important role of UNMISS must remain to support the people of South Sudan in laying a firm foundation for the achievement of peace, stability and development. It is important that the Mission calibrate its priorities to focus on giving concrete support to the peace process, including technical and logistical support for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.

To conclude, the A3+1 would like to reiterate its appreciation for the continued efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental

Authority on Development and all international partners in supporting the people of South Sudan on their journey towards sustainable peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I congratulate Mr. Haysom on his appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, and I thank him for his briefing today. I also listened carefully to the briefing by Mr. Rajab Mohandis. I welcome the representative of South Sudan to today's meeting.

Next month, South Sudan will celebrate the tenth anniversary of its independence. We should take that opportunity as a new starting point to redouble our efforts to achieve the peaceful development of South Sudan. The international community should continue to provide constructive support. In connection with the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/566), I would like to make the following comments.

Recently, South Sudan's Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity has overcome numerous difficulties. It has completed the restructuring of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, improved the local government structure and started the constitution-making process, as well as achieving other significant progress. All parties in South Sudan should continue to advance the preparations for the general elections and the building of the unified forces and implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan so as to lay the foundation for lasting peace.

China calls on the opposition coalition to reach a peace agreement with the Government of South Sudan as soon as possible. The issue of South Sudan is complex and the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement cannot be achieved overnight. The international community should take the national conditions of South Sudan fully into account, fully respect its leadership in handling its own affairs, support the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other regional organizations in playing an active role and provide targeted assistance instead of merely exerting pressure. The Security Council should respond to the AU's appeal as soon as possible by lifting the sanctions against South Sudan and sending a positive message.

The ceasefire in South Sudan is generally respected, while the security situation remains fragile.

Intercommunal conflict, armed violence, competition for land resources and other issues persist. China calls on the parties concerned to respect their ceasefire obligations and actively commit themselves to the peace process. Intercommunal conflict is a long-standing issue. Efforts should be made to strengthen early warning, adopt preventive actions and promote intercommunal reconciliation in order to eliminate the root causes of the conflict.

The international community should strengthen the capacity-building of the Government of South Sudan and enhance its ability to protect civilians. At present, South Sudan faces great economic difficulties, significant food insecurity, insufficient health-care capacity and a huge shortfall in humanitarian assistance. The international community should continue to increase humanitarian assistance to South Sudan to combat the pandemic and provide coronavirus disease vaccines to help overcome the current difficulties.

China commiserates with South Sudan. We sent more than 3,000 tons of food and other humanitarian aid to its Government, as well as over 10 batches of anti-pandemic supplies, and dispatched medical expert teams. At the same time, we maintained our support to South Sudan in infrastructure construction, education, health care and other fields.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has played an important role in protecting civilians, advancing intercommunal reconciliation and promoting the implementation of the peace agreement, which China commends. We hope that UNMISS will strengthen its communication with the Government of South Sudan, enhance mutual trust and properly resolve problems, such as the restrictions on movement.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): Allow me to begin by joining other speakers in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his briefing and his honest analysis and reflections, as well as for setting out a very action-oriented plan for United Nations Mission in South Sudan going forward. It is clear from what he said that there are some encouraging signs at the higher political level, but that there are still very significant challenges at the security, governance, development and humanitarian levels. We also thank Mr. Rajab Mohandis for his briefing. As he spoke, it seemed to me that the solution to many of the challenges in South Sudan lies in the title of his organization, the Organization for Responsive Governance. Lastly, it is

also very good to see Ambassador Malwal here today. I hope that he can carry the messages that he hears back to Juba.

As many speakers observed, it has been almost 10 years since the world's newest nation was born, and it is good that, as the Security Council, we join in marking that important milestone. The peace agreement that we have again discussed today ended five years of subsequent war, and we commend the compromises shown in agreeing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. It is an important peace agreement, and it is good to hear of some of the steps being taken towards its implementation. However, reading the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/566) and listening today, it is also very clear to us all that so much more remains to be done, since the stark reality is that South Sudan remains one of the world's least developed countries, with its short history dominated by violence, corruption and subsequent suffering. Progress in implementing the peace process has been too slow and too limited. There are many reasons for that, but, again as we listened today, it is clear that one of the reasons is an absence of the political will necessary to deliver. We know that there are billions of dollars in oil revenues but, despite that, over the period the economy has significantly contracted. We also know that natural resources — those very oil dollars — are being exploited and public funds diverted, leaving next to no money available to invest in public infrastructure or services, as Mr. Mohandis set out so clearly in his briefing.

We should also acknowledge that there is a significant humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. Many more people are in need of humanitarian assistance than at any time since South Sudan's independence. The great tragedy of that is of course that the situation is largely human-made and preventable. Today we therefore call on the Government of South Sudan to take responsibility and act in genuine partnership with the donor community to address this crisis, because development assistance is only part of the solution. The Government itself must tackle corruption, drive economic reform and respect the status-of-forces agreement. With 60 per cent of the population facing acute food insecurity, obstructions against aid workers are unacceptable, as is the killing of humanitarian workers. We urge the South Sudanese authorities to take action to guarantee the safety of those delivering life-saving assistance and hold perpetrators

to account. If they fail to do so, we need to consider new sanctions listings.

We welcome the fact that the Security Council recently renewed the arms embargo, the sanctions regime and the Panel of Experts' mandate. We encourage the Government to take forward tasks on the arms embargo benchmarks, including the establishment of the necessary unified forces with a genuinely unified command.

In closing, let me reiterate the call for South Sudan's leaders to use this milestone — this decade anniversary — to reflect on the future they want for their country and build on their commitment to working together for the benefit of all, for the benefit of the people they are there to serve. We know what needs to happen, but all of it requires the Government of South Sudan to take ownership. I will not repeat the list of actions because my Kenyan colleague set out much better than I could, on behalf of the African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the actions that we need to see. But I will say that what we need is a renewed effort from the Government of South Sudan, with support from the international community, and that this can change South Sudan's course. We can ensure that the next decade delivers the stability and prosperous nation its people deserve, so let us seize that opportunity.

Ms. Juul (Norway): First, let me congratulate Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom on his new role. Norway wishes him all the best in that important endeavour. I also thank him and Mr. Mohandis for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to today's meeting.

As others have mentioned, this briefing is being held on the eve of an important milestone for both South Sudan and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) — the 10-year anniversary of the declaration of independence on 9 July 2011. A decade is not a very long time and as we reflect on the present and the way forward, we should apply a long-term perspective. South Sudan was born out of a long history of conflict, displacement and civil war. Violence marked the lives of generations. Basic infrastructure was lacking and many institutions had to be set up from scratch. Indeed, building a modern State takes time and is difficult. The complexity of the situation is reflected in the

three elements at the heart of the mandate of UNMISS: peacekeeping, peacebuilding and State-building.

Norway's support for the people of South Sudan has been consistent for the past 50 years. We are a partner in words and in deeds. South Sudan consistently ranks among our top aid recipients, as we want to see a country at peace with itself and in which all people — especially the most marginalized — enjoy basic human rights and benefit from the fruits of development.

There are important signs of progress. The cessation-of-hostilities agreement is in large part holding firm. And we appreciate all efforts to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and welcome the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly.

South Sudan has engaged constructively in the Sudan's peace processes, as witnessed by the Juba Peace Agreement and ongoing negotiations between Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North. We are impressed with the brave voices of local civil society. They need to be heard, especially those of young people. Independence means freedom and democracy means respect for different opinions.

However, overall we are disappointed with the current state of affairs. The people continue to suffer too much from national political dynamics and the absence of peace dividends, which continue to be the most important drivers of conflict and displacement in South Sudan. Subnational conflicts in turn create food insecurity and lead to a vicious cycle, one made worse when humanitarian workers are prevented from — or worst of all attacked during — the provision of life-saving assistance. Such attacks are unacceptable.

Climate change also exacerbates conflict and displacement in South Sudan, including through unseasonal flooding that sharpens competition for scarce resources. We are pleased to see that UNMISS is now mandated to address climate change.

Many issues need urgent attention. It is therefore necessary to prioritize. The national dialogue made specific recommendations in that regard. Yet, comprehensive peace is essential. We call on all parties to negotiate in good faith and reach inclusive agreements. And humanitarian actors need immediate and unfettered access to all areas of the country.

The Government of National Unity should speed up the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement, including the 35 per cent provision for the representation of women in Government positions. Work on the new and permanent constitution should start in order to ensure the inclusive and meaningful participation of women and young people.

Political leadership is crucial to ensuring that the next decade is better than the first. The current leader must honestly assess where progress is lacking and learn from those challenges. Support from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and regional actors is key to the successful implementation of the peace agreement and an irreversible transition to free and fair elections. We will continue to support IGAD and regional actors to those ends.

I want to conclude by stating that Norway's commitment to the people of South Sudan remains as strong as ever. We look forward to the day when the promise of 9 July 2011 is finally fulfilled.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing on the developments in the situation in South Sudan. We welcome Mr. Haysom in his first briefing to the Council. We sincerely wish him every success at the head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We will certainly continue to support the work of the Blue Helmets, who are an important part of the international community's efforts to stabilize the situation in South Sudan. We also thank the countries that contribute troops and police officers to UNMISS. We welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to today's briefing. We also listened carefully to Mr. Rajab Mohandis.

We believe that the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan and the completion of the pre-transition period have created the necessary conditions for the country to move towards political stability and national reconciliation.

We welcome the measures taken by the South Sudanese Government on key peacebuilding issues, including the appointment of state governments and the confirmation of county-level governing bodies. We also note President Salva Kiir Mayardit's recent decisions to reconstitute the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States and to begin work

on drafting a new constitution. We believe that only a timely and full implementation of the agreements reached will enable the parties to build mutual trust and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

We expect that work will continue towards forming unified armed forces of South Sudan. That work is complicated by an acute lack of the necessary material and technical equipment and financing.

We call on the non-signatories to the Revitalized Peace Agreement to join the process of State-building. We would like to highlight, in that connection, the initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio on conducting consultations among the representatives of the Government and the non-signatories. We hope that those negotiations will produce concrete results.

We also welcome the mediation efforts of the African Union and member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development towards providing assistance in implementing the concrete provisions of the peace Agreement. It is essential to maintain unity in their approaches. That makes it possible to act in the spirit of the principle of African solutions for African problems.

We must express our concern about the sporadic intercommunal armed clashes in a number of regions of the country. We strongly condemn any violations of the ceasefire agreement and any acts of violence against civilians, including humanitarian actors.

We are convinced that as the situation normalizes in South Sudan, we will need to conduct a review of the current sanctions regime in force against the country. We expect that, with a view to easing the arms embargo, the South Sudanese authorities will manage to make significant progress in fulfilling the benchmarks established by resolution 2577 (2021), adopted on 28 May.

In conclusion, we would like to note that next month we will mark the tenth anniversary of South Sudan's declaration of independence. The country currently faces unprecedented challenges. Nevertheless, we clearly see the aspirations of the citizens of South Sudan to peace and prosperity. Much remains to be done. We are convinced that the task of the international community, including the Security Council, is to provide the necessary support for Juba on the path towards consolidating this young State.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I would like to join my colleagues in wishing Nicholas Haysom a very warm

welcome and sincere best wishes in his new role — a challenging one, no doubt, but one in which we have every confidence that he will be able to deliver.

I also want to express my appreciation for the remarks made earlier by Mr. Rajab Mohandis. I am also very happy to see my friend and colleague, Ambassador Malwal, with us this morning.

As many before me have remarked, in a few short weeks we mark the tenth anniversary of the independence of South Sudan. It remains incumbent on all of us to ensure that the aspirations of the people who believed so much in the power and potential of that joyous moment can truly be fulfilled. We must work to deliver above and beyond the promise of peace, which will simply no longer suffice. Promise and potential need to be translated into action and real change for the people of South Sudan.

As the Secretary-General has noted, we have seen some important developments in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, such as the recent reconstitution of Parliament. We hope to see the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the African Union on the long-awaited and much-needed hybrid court. Yet we also have to acknowledge that the pace of progress should be greatly accelerated, particularly as the way forward is clearly signposted. That includes the benchmarks incorporated last month into the sanctions regime, setting out steps for the potential future lifting of the arms embargo.

We continually hear that the ceasefire is holding firm. That cannot be taken for granted. However, the absence of active conflict is not enough and subnational violence continues unabated. It is not enough when the number of civilian killings is doubling year after year, it is not enough when hunger is on the rise and it is certainly not enough when the most vulnerable remain subjected to the most heinous treatment, including from those who are meant to protect them.

It is distressing to hear how challenging the humanitarian situation has become, with South Sudan now facing its highest level of food insecurity since independence, exacerbated by conflict, climate and the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Ireland is also deeply concerned by the rise in attacks on humanitarian workers. We appeal to the South Sudanese authorities to better protect humanitarian

personnel and ensure accountability for those killed. The rise in violations of the Status of Forces Agreement is completely unacceptable and must stop. We welcome the meeting of 31 May but we need urgently to see sustained efforts by the Government of South Sudan to prevent and remove impediments to the work of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Ireland remains seriously concerned by the dire human rights and protection environment, which continues to disproportionately affect women and girls. The persistence of grave violations, including conflict-related sexual violence against children, also remains worrisome. We call on the Government of South Sudan to hold perpetrators accountable so as to break the recurring cycle of violence, provide services for survivors and ensure justice and support for them. We call again for the swift establishment and operationalization of all the transitional-justice institutions mandated by the peace Agreement. Steps must also be taken to address the increasing subnational violence and on that point I want to commend the prevention and containment efforts of UNMISS.

Like others, we look forward to elections being held in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement. However, we strongly urge the incorporation of appropriate constitutional guarantees on a consensual basis in advance of any elections being held. Ireland sees the full, equal and meaningful participation of women as a barometer of how a peace process is advancing. We know from experience that women's involvement is critical to peace. Ireland deeply regrets that the 35 per cent quota and the associated opportunity for women to be involved in peacebuilding has not been met. We look forward to the development of a new national action plan on women and peace and security to enable South Sudan to drive forward progress in that area.

We recognize that a vibrant civil society is also essential for sustaining peace and we call for the expansion and security of civil society space wherever its diverse membership can thrive.

While we are cognizant of the issues that the country is grappling with and the conscious effort required to alleviate them, let me state here today, without agenda or judgment, that Ireland believes in South Sudan as it did in 2011 — it believes in the potential of its people, in particular of its women and young people, as well as in the pathways to peace that have been identified. Furthermore, Ireland believes that further gains can

and must be achieved. It is now up to South Sudan to lead the way.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We extend a very warm welcome to Special Representative Haysom on the occasion of his first briefing to the Security Council as Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We also thank Mr. Mohandis for the insights he kindly shared with us and we welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan.

As we glance back over the past decade just one month before the tenth anniversary of South Sudan's independence, Mexico recognizes the commitment of the transitional Government. However, we urge the full and effective implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which constitutes the basis for progress, stability and growth in the country. The reconstitution of the Transition National Legislative Assembly and efforts towards the drafting of the constitution undoubtedly represent significant progress.

We note with concern the selective application of the provisions in terms of security regarding transitional justice, accountability, reconciliation and respect for the gender quota. Those are all pillars on which the governance and stability of the country will be built. The appointments to the Legislative Assembly are not in line with the 35 per cent quota for women. We reiterate that it is absolutely essential that we have the full participation of women and young people in the peace process.

South Sudan is facing its highest levels of food insecurity and malnutrition since its independence. Today 8.3 million people in the country are in need of humanitarian assistance. Given those circumstances, it is disturbing to see the resurgence of violence in parts of Central Equatoria and the plundering and violence in Tonj and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, as well as the ongoing attacks and threats against humanitarian personnel. Those attacks left at least two humanitarian workers dead in May. We call on the Government to exercise its responsibility to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance by creating the conditions and provisions necessary for security.

The protection of civilians continues to be one of the main challenges facing the Government. As part of the recent redesignation of the Bentiu protection-of-civilians site, we strongly call on UNMISS to maintain

a flexible posture when it comes to risk analysis, contingency planning and its capacity to respond in the event that the security situation in the recently redesignated camp requires it, as indicated in resolution 2567 (2021). We also call for the redesignation of the protection-of-civilians site in Malakal to be carried out when conditions allow.

The support and cooperation of UNMISS in protecting civilians remains vital, and we recognize that having the capacity for rapid deployment to address the changing situation on the ground is crucial. Mexico deplores the impact of the violence, especially in the Jonglei region, where in early May scores of people died. Those cycles of violence undermine the inter-ethnic peace process and chip away at the confidence between parties. Accountability is one of the sore points in the peace and reconciliation process. For that reason, we call on the authorities to conduct the necessary investigations and to prosecute the perpetrators of the violence that is ravaging Jonglei. We also are concerned at the reports of extrajudicial executions in Warrap.

The strengthening of the rule of law is one of the key issues under the Revitalized Agreement. The operationalization of and full compliance with the agreement must be a priority if we are to put an end to the cycles of violence and insecurity. Failure to fully implement the agreement would be tantamount to removing any guarantees of the future of the country.

I close with a special mention of civil society, whose contribution is vital to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Mr. Mohandis's briefing today is a reminder that the Council benefits when a plurality of South Sudanese voices are heard, which always help us to better grasp the situation on the ground there.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, should like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing and Mr. Mohandis for the very enlightening details he brought to our attention. I also welcome the presence of the representative of South Sudan, to whom we will soon be listening very closely.

I wish to assure Mr. Nicholas Haysom of France's full support. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) plays a key role, especially in the runup to the elections that are planned to be held when the transition is complete, and must also support the efforts of civil society, especially women and young

people, who both play a key role in the future of South Sudan.

France, like other partners, is concerned at the ongoing violence, especially in the Malakal, Upper Nile and Jonglei regions, and we call on the Government to put an end to it. That means in particular that governors and deputy governors must be given the resources necessary to carry out their missions.

We call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law, and we, too, condemn the attacks against humanitarian and medical workers. The South Sudanese authorities must bring to justice the perpetrators of those acts. The Security Council must also further sanction the perpetrators of attacks against humanitarian and medical workers. At a time when humanitarian needs are tremendous, such workers must be able to act without fear of being targeted and with the full support of the Security Council.

The facilitation of humanitarian access also requires guarantees of full freedom of movement for UNMISS. However, the increasing restrictions we have seen imposed over the past few months, especially by the security forces, demonstrate disregard for the Government's obligations.

France also stands ready to make the Security Council's outreach to South Sudan more meaningful provided that the goals set by the Council are met by the Government. The Security Council recently identified several options going forward. In March, when the UNMISS mandate was renewed, the Council expressed its willingness to adjust the staffing levels and mandate of UNMISS. In May, when the sanctions regime was renewed, we stated that we were prepared to review the arms embargo measures. The Council set clear conditions in that respect that must be realized by the Government of South Sudan, with the support of the Mission.

Here I wish to welcome the assumption by the authorities of South Sudan of their responsibility to ensure the security of displaced persons at former protection-of-civilians sites. The reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the formal launch of the constitutional process are also signs of progress and must be further strengthened.

The bulk of the measures are still pending, especially security-sector reform; the establishment of unified forces under a unified command structure; the

completion of the strategic defence and security review; progress on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration track; the proper management of weapons and ammunition stockpiles; and the implementation of an action plan for conflict-related sexual violence.

Lastly, the lifting of restrictions on UNMISS's freedom of movement and humanitarian access is among the pending measures, as is the operationalization of the transitional justice bodies, including the Hybrid Court, provided for under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, whose establishment was approved in February.

The President: I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Estonia.

I want to welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom to his first briefing on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and also to thank Mr. Rajab Mohandis for his presentation. I welcome the participation of Ambassador Malwal, the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, in this meeting.

In two and a half weeks, South Sudan will be celebrating its tenth anniversary as a republic. We have seen some positive developments over the years, but there is still a long way to go to create a safe and stable environment for the South Sudanese. We commend the reconstitution of the National Legislative Assembly, and we duly hope that every change towards implementing the peace agreement will not simply be on paper but will also be operationalized. Sadly, we are still falling short of the 35 per cent quota for women's participation in the public sector that had earlier been agreed upon.

It is worrisome that too many political developments have been delayed over the past years, including most recently the elections that should have taken place in 2022 but are now postponed until 2023. Free, fair and peaceful elections are essential for the peaceful future of the country.

In the light of the upcoming elections, it is also necessary that activists and human rights defenders operate freely in South Sudan, not fearing for their lives. We call on the Government and the African Union to finalize the draft statute and the memorandum of understanding for the hybrid court to be operationalized.

On the positive side, we are encouraged to see that the ceasefire continues largely to hold. However, localized violence has been rising in many parts of

the country. Estonia is very concerned about the extradition executions carried out in Warrap state at the instruction of the Governor. This sends a counter-productive signal about accountability in South Sudan as a whole. We call on the Government to investigate these killings and to do so in compliance with its international obligations under international human rights law.

Community-based militias are continuing their violent manoeuvres in Jonglei, killing individuals and looting and destroying property. The cycle of violence cannot be stopped if the Government will not bring the perpetrators to justice. It is necessary to end impunity and enhance accountability. Otherwise, we risk seeing a rollback on the few gains South Sudan has achieved so far.

The Status of Forces Agreement violations grew by almost three times, compared to the previous reporting period. This hinders the work of UNMISS personnel and leaves civilians without much-needed help and protection.

I want to bring the attention to the humanitarian situation. South Sudan is facing its highest levels of food insecurity and malnutrition since independence. Approximately 60 per cent of the population is likely to face acute food insecurity. Humanitarian access continues to be challenged by the resurgence of armed conflict in some parts of the country and by attacks on humanitarian workers. Last month, at least two aid workers were killed. We strongly condemn the attacks on clearly marked humanitarian vehicles; it is unacceptable.

In conclusion, I want to thank Nicholas Haysom and UNMISS for their valuable work in South Sudan during the pandemic. I also want to convey my best wishes for the Republic of South Sudan on its upcoming tenth anniversary.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. Our delegation stands ready to cooperate with you, Sir, during your tenure. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the presence of Special

Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom after his taking up the leadership of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Juba. I hope he has been warmly welcomed and that he has settled in comfortably and feels at home in South Sudan. The assignment is challenging, but there is no better person to meet those challenges than Special Representative Haysom. In addition, I would like to welcome the statement of my brother, Mr. Rajab Mohandis, from Juba, who is representing civil society. I can assure him that the people of South Sudan and the leadership of South Sudan are as concerned about the situation in the country as he is, especially as we are about to embark on celebrating our tenth anniversary. His statement is therefore welcome at this juncture.

Before I continue, I would like, on behalf of the Government of South Sudan, to first express our condolences to the families of the humanitarian workers and the peacekeeping personnel who recently lost their lives in the line of duty, serving the people of South Sudan. I can assure the Security Council that most of these attacks are being investigated, but, unfortunately, when they happen, they happen far away, where there is no Government control, as a result of the delayed formation of State governance as part of the Revitalized Peace Agreement. But the Government will look into the matter, and wherever the perpetrators can be caught, they will be brought to justice. Nevertheless, I would also like Council members to understand that the Government is not everywhere in South Sudan.

At this juncture, we actually do not have much to say other than to inform the Council that we take note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/566) and that we hope that Special Representative Haysom will be able to find an amicable way to resolve or manage the challenges the leadership of South Sudan is facing, as laid out in the report.

Before concluding, however, I want to assure Council members that their views and concerns will be conveyed, that in a way we are not in fact deaf to what everybody is saying. As I mentioned earlier, the statement of Mr. Mohandis reflects the concerns of the people of South Sudan and the leadership of South Sudan. We are not happy with the way things are, and we would like to see the next 10 years better than the past 10 years.

However, I would like to say three things, with regard to some of the comments that have been made

in the Chamber this morning. First, we welcome the statement by the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1) and its encouragement and recommendations to the leadership of South Sudan. I would also like to say, with regard to our dealings with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), we are thankful to the Secretary-General for the letter we have received stating that we are qualified to receive support from the PBC. I would also like to say that we have actually started negotiating with the leadership of the PBC and that we are hopeful that by mid-July there will be an initial meeting — a high-level meeting — between the South Sudanese Ministers in various sectors with the PBC in order to discuss how the Commission can best help South Sudan and what kind of projects we would like to present to it.

Secondly, with regard to benchmarks, all Council members know that we are not happy with the embargo, but we would nevertheless like to bring to the Council's attention the fact that we think that UNMISS and Special Representative Haysom would have been the best situated to negotiate the benchmarks because, essentially, what is the Council really saying through the benchmarks? Indeed, the benchmarks are the Peace Agreement. If we implement the Peace Agreement, we will meet the benchmarks. Therefore, if the benchmarks are placed under the embargo, knowing that how we feel about the embargo, the Council is not helping the Special Representative fulfil his mandate. It would have been better if the benchmarks were assigned to Special Representative Haysom in his dealings with the leadership of South Sudan. I thought I would bring this point up today so that it can be reviewed in May of next year, if, God willing, everything goes well.

Finally, I would like to say that the Government is committed to signing a memorandum of understanding with the African Union (AU) on the formation and operationalization of the hybrid court. And I think that, this coming July, a delegation from the AU's Office of the Legal Counsel will come to South Sudan to meet with officials in our Ministry of Justice to try to finalize this point and see how soon we can complete this task. The Government is committed to it, and we think the hybrid court will be constituted soon. It is not imposed by the Peace Agreement, but Mr. Mohandis will know that there are people actually waiting for justice to be done and for perpetrators of events that occurred during the outbreaks of war in 2013 and 2016

to be held accountable. We are therefore committed to achieving that end, and we hope that as we go along the international community will assist us.

We hope that, as we go along, the international community will assist us. I think that the Russian representative talked about the lack of capacity and facilities in South Sudan. That is why we need the international community to come in. I have repeated several times that we do not need the money. I know that people think we are corrupt, so let them keep their money but bring us their expertise, bring as their material and help us deal with this situation. I would encourage that.

Before I finish, I was in South Sudan three months ago, where I saw that some countries represented on the Council were really engaged with the people of South Sudan in trying to build the capacity. Those countries' missions there are engaged and trying to help the situation. We are thankful for that and we encourage the international community to do more.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion on the subject in closed consultation.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.