



Security Council

Distr.: General
26 June 2020

Original: English and French

Letter dated 25 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer, and the Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, Edmund Yakani, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Viet Nam, in connection with the video teleconference on the reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan convened on Tuesday, 23 June 2020.

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, the briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Nicolas de Rivière**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, David Shearer**

I thank the Council for the opportunity to brief it on the situation in South Sudan.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the devastation caused by coronavirus disease (COVID-19) to the people and economies of all Member States and nations around the world. These are truly challenging times.

Some early-affected countries are now beginning to emerge from the crisis. But for others, the full impact is only beginning to hit. South Sudan is one of those countries. While its 1,900 recorded cases appear low, limited testing, as well as social stigma, are obscuring the true magnitude of the virus. The only antidote to COVID-19 is prevention. The Government's prevention measures, informed by World Health Organization guidance, have been communicated constantly through campaigns across the country, supported by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Yet, despite widespread awareness, observance of the measures has remained patchy. Few will submit to isolation at home. The need to earn a living means people's behaviour remains unchanged; not working today means not eating tomorrow.

Our greatest fear regarding COVID-19 is its potential impact on the already fragile health system. Disruption to vaccinations, maternal health services or routine treatment for curable diseases like malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia will result in a devastating increase in deaths — likely greater than the predicted loss of life from COVID-19. That is the lesson we must learn from Ebola in West Africa, when 11,000 died from the virus but many more died from totally preventable health problems.

To keep clinics open, it is imperative that health workers have personal protective equipment. Already, 86 health workers have been infected. Personal protective equipment is in short supply, and health workers are fearful. Meanwhile, their salaries continue to go unpaid.

Experts predict the pandemic will peak in July or August. For those who become seriously ill, there is little in the way of critical care. International support and the Ministry of Health have expanded the infectious diseases hospital in Juba. In the regions, UNMISS has renovated and equipped hospitals in 10 states. Non-governmental organizations are stepping up to staff those facilities, but equipment and expertise are severely lacking. We are doing what we can to give limited care to critical patients who previously had nothing. But more importantly, the measures are designed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to other facilities that are treating common but lethal illnesses.

The challenge for peacekeepers and humanitarians alike is to balance carrying out critical work while exercising a duty of care to keep our staff safe so that, in turn, they can continue to deliver. That means that peacekeeping patrols — which must interact with local populations — are currently prioritized to critical areas where lives are at risk.

The efforts of United Nations police (UNPOL) are also more focused. Two weeks ago, UNPOL was called on to quell fighting between youth in the Juba protection of civilians site. Dozens of Rwandan police officers physically intervened and, in doing so, exposed themselves and others to COVID-19. Their partner contingent was unable to provide support as it was in quarantine because some of its personnel tested positive in earlier operations.

We ask our people to take risks to do their jobs, but we have a duty to ensure that they are well equipped and that the risks they take are necessary. If we do not ensure this, we could lose our operational capabilities and possibly lives.

Following my briefing in March (see S/PV.8741), there have been some encouraging steps towards peace — the formation of the transitional Government, the appointment of Vice-Presidents and a joint Cabinet and the gathering of troops at training sites for reunification. That is positive, particularly if we compare it to less than a year ago, when the transitional Government seemed in doubt and Riek Machar's return to Juba uncertain.

Last week, a four-month stand-off between parties over the allocation of states ended. The individual governors are yet to be named, but women need to take at least three of the positions. Those appointments are critical to filling a power vacuum. The political impasse, on top of the COVID-19 lockdown, caused conflict to escalate, with violent incidents multiplying four-fold in two years.

In Jonglei, Unity, Lakes, Warrap and Western Equatoria, hundreds of civilians have been killed, women and children abducted, property stolen or destroyed and over 60,000 people displaced. The violence can no longer be pigeonholed as intercommunal". Fighters in uniform have been spotted, suggesting that organized forces may be joining the conflict, which risks unravelling the ceasefire.

A truly unified national leadership would have acted promptly and stepped in to curb the conflict. Instead, the violence has been allowed to play out and is being used to sort out power arrangements at the national and subnational levels. This cycle of impunity continues to fuel serious human rights violations where civilians once bore the brunt of violence.

The tensions have also been reflected in riots among different communities living in protection of civilians sites. Today, residents of such sites face greater intimidation from people they live alongside than from the external threats for which the sites were established.

Tragically, the escalating violence has hit the most desperate even harder. People in Jonglei live in what is described by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the "famine triangle", where livelihoods were overwhelmed by last year's floods.

A new addendum to the humanitarian response plan, outlines the deterioration, combined with a hike in food prices from COVID-related transport delays. About 7.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance, an increase of 1.6 million, including many urban poor who previously did not rely on aid. Last week, the humanitarian country team launched a \$390 million addendum to its original plan to respond to the additional needs.

My report today might have been bleaker had it not been for the recent agreement between the parties on the allocation of states. However, the peace process is faltering. It requires renewed energy and a reset.

I would like to leave the Council with three key takeaways.

First, what is needed from the Transitional Government of National Unity? A unity government, by definition, takes decisions collaboratively — whether as a presidency or cabinet. This way of working needs to become a habit, not an exception. A unity Government acts in the best interests of all its people, regardless of ethnic identity, and should act collectively and swiftly to curtail conflict in the states. Within a unity Government, parties would negotiate their positions, but important decisions, such as the Constitution, would remain true to the peace agreement. And,

collective solutions must be found to advance transitional security arrangements so that soldiers no longer abandon locations in the absence of food and supplies.

Secondly, we acknowledge that regional partners and peace guarantors are beset by their own COVID-19 struggles, but it is vital that the guarantors and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development remain actively engaged to maintain momentum in the peace process.

Thirdly, COVID-19 is going to hit hard, but not in the way that we think. Yes, people will die from the virus, like everywhere else in the world. However, the real threat to the people of South Sudan lies in the collapse of the already fragile health system. That could result in many, many more lives being lost — a tragedy that can be prevented.

Lastly, I would like to finish with a message from the United Nations to the Transitional Government and the people of South Sudan: We are here, standing strong with them as we pass through this COVID-19 emergency. The United Nations, humanitarian agencies and donors have remained and, together, we are saving and changing lives. By working together, we can overcome COVID-19 and push the peace process forward so that South Sudan can achieve the lasting peace and prosperity it deserves.

Annex II

Statement by the Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, Edmund Yakani

I would like to thank the delegation of France for the opportunity to speak to the Council today on behalf of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), which is a member of the South Sudan Civil Society Forum, a coalition of over 200 groups working to promote peace, freedom and respect for human dignity. Our recommendations on priorities for civilian protection in South Sudan have been drawn up with our partner, the Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, and distributed to the member delegations of the Security Council.

On 22 February, the people of South Sudan welcomed the news that the Government and opposition groups had formed the central Government Cabinet of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. On 17 June, the people of South Sudan welcomed the news that, also after long delay, the Government and opposition groups agreed to allocate the states among themselves.

We know that the political will to implement the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in a timely manner is lacking, and it should be addressed by the Council.

From the months of May to June, we have witnessed continuous fighting between Government forces and the forces of the National Salvation Front in the areas of Yei, Lainya and Morobo, which has led to the displacement of civilians and associated violations, including looting of civilian properties and crimes of gender-based violence like rape. These are worrying signs, and the Security Council must continue to insist that the ceasefire be respected.

Our peace is fragile. The cessation of hostilities agreement of 21 December 2017 and the subsequent Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed on 12 September 2018, have been violated multiple times, yet no one has been held to account for those violations. The recent Rome Declaration, signed by the Government and the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance on 13 January, has also been seriously violated on repeated occasions, and those responsible for the violations have enjoyed complete impunity. In the course of the violations, civilians have been killed, abducted, tortured, raped and forced to flee their homes.

Yet violations of human rights and humanitarian law have rarely resulted in criminal prosecution in South Sudan. We believe that there must be some effective and reliable deterrent to prevent the rampant rape, extrajudicial killings and the obstruction of humanitarian access that have become routine in South Sudan. We urge the Security Council to insist on the immediate establishment of both the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and the Compensation and Reparation Authority and to support efforts to strengthen the national criminal justice system. Further, the Security Council should call on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to support continued outreach to and engagement with the armed groups so that they respect the peace agreement they signed.

For sustainable peace and stability to be achieved in South Sudan, there must be continued efforts to build trust and confidence between armed actors with a view to ensuring that they can effectively work together in the same Government towards a common goal.

Much of the intercommunal violence in South Sudan is politically motivated, and that has escalated recently as a result of competition among elites over natural resources but also of increased cattle raiding. The divisions between ethnic

communities have grown so deep that it is sometimes difficult for us to coexist with each other. My organization supports community engagement in dialogue to resolve differences without violence. We urge the Security Council to call for increased support to local peacebuilding initiatives and for the timely establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing provided for in the peace agreement.

We urge the Security Council to help ensure that our peace does not fall apart again.

Peace requires that we South Sudanese be honest with ourselves. We must be free to openly deliberate and debate the governance challenges we face, including corruption and impunity. The peace agreement provides for specific roles for civil society, women and youth representatives in many of the bodies it envisages. These representatives will join bodies tasked with planning security sector reforms, monitoring the ceasefire, ensuring reconstruction in conflict-affected states and paying reparations to those affected by violence. However, in a context where critical voices are stifled and where peace and human rights activists, such as Monday Moses, are arbitrarily detained, no one will be free to contribute effectively to those bodies or to speak up when the provisions of the peace agreement are not implemented. Please continue to call for respect for freedom of expression and for the release of those who are arbitrarily detained.

We urge the Security Council to pressure the parties to complete the formation of the transitional national legislative assembly, the Council of States and State and local Governments in a timely fashion; ensure that the ceasefire is respected and honoured by all parties; support the immediate establishment of the institutions of transitional justice specified in the 2018 peace agreement; and ensure that humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian workers is a priority for the international community.

We also urge the Council to support the official launch of the implementation plan by the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict in accordance with the signed joint communiqué dated December 2014 on the prevention of sexual violence. It must take effective measures to support the protection of civic space by actively promoting the engagement of independent South Sudanese civil society in all aspects of governance, development and peacebuilding and by pressuring the Government of South Sudan to respect freedom of speech and association. It is especially important that the international community stand against the unwarranted persecution of journalists and civic activists.

We call on the Council to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping forces work to promote accountability and the rule of law by increasing engagement with communities and enhancing protection for individuals and communities. We urge it to lobby members of the international community to facilitate the proposed African Union Peace and Security Council decision of the 917th meeting online dated 9 April 2020 on the situation of South Sudan to conduct a South Sudan peace needs assessment.

Our recommendations are laid out in more detail in the document we have shared with the Security Council. We urge the Council to continue its engagement with civil society and support for peace in South Sudan. We have come this far only because of the international community's support, and we need the Council's help to make further progress.

Annex III

Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, José Singer Weisinger

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer and Mr. Yakani for their briefings.

First of all, we would like to commend the decision of President Kiir to establish a high-level task force to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as well as the appointment of First Vice-Presidents Machar and Abdelbagi to head this task force, which shows what can be achieved if the peace process advances.

While this action and the holding of the ceasefire among the parties are encouraging developments, we remain concerned that the implementation of the peace agreement has been inconsistent, which is having very serious consequences for the population. This political deadlock is preventing the formation of critical institutions, including the appointment of the State leadership required to lead a COVID-19 response at the local level. Amid this power vacuum, community violence is escalating, which has led to casualties and displacement and has hindered the work of aid agencies.

In addressing this challenge, we must pay the utmost attention to the human element in this crisis. The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is deepening as the dire emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic adds more perils to an already critical situation. More than 9 million people are in need of food assistance and a sharp spike in confirmed COVID-19 cases is making South Sudan one of the countries in the world where there is a faster growth of the virus. This situation is highly concerning when 56 per cent of the population has no access to basic health-care services.

Another source of concern is the persistent levels of sexual violence. Women and girls in South Sudan face some of the highest levels of violence in the world, and 80 per cent were at risk even before the pandemic. Now they are forced to quarantine with their abusers and cut off from their support systems.

In that regard, we strongly encourage the Government of South Sudan to ensure accountability for these serious violations, including compliance with the provisions prohibiting sexual violence by all parties. Likewise, we urge the Government to establish a specialized court for sexual and gender-based crimes to advance the work of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and to provide support to survivors.

On the other hand, we are hopeful that the 35 per cent quota for women will be fulfilled. The appointment of nine women in the Transitional Government of National Unity falls short at 25 per cent.

We understand that, due to the COVID-19 emergency, the focus has shifted to confronting this pandemic. However, dealing with this challenge should not, in any way, come at the expense of the peace agreement. In that regard, we urge the parties to prioritize advancing the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and to continue their negotiations in good faith to avoid a major crisis, with devastating consequences for the population.

While facing the COVID-19 pandemic and other conflict inducers, it has never been as urgent to stop the political stalemate and to de-escalate the intercommunal violence in order to end the legacy of disease, hunger, abuses and displacement. In that regard, it is necessary that the United Nations continue to support the people of South Sudan, in cooperation with the Government. Consequently, the United Nations

Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) must be able to have timely and unhindered access for operations and humanitarian activities. We urge the South Sudanese Government to end violations of the status-of-forces agreement and the widespread restrictions on the movement of UNMISS personnel.

It is imperative that efforts be directed towards an agreement that directly involves the Sudanese leadership, finds common ground and pushes towards a reasonable and sustainable compromise. We owe it to the people of South Sudan.

Annex IV

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr David Shearer, and Mr. Edmund Yakani for their briefings.

First, let me welcome the recent compromise reached by President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar on the allocation of states. It is a positive and a long overdue step towards a better future for South Sudan. Estonia encourages all parties to maintain the momentum towards further implementation of the peace agreement, including its transitional justice provisions. We hope that such a momentum will help resolve the slow movement on transitional security arrangements.

We are alarmed by the increase in intercommunal violence, including the use of military-grade weapons and tactics. The Government of South Sudan should open investigations and prosecute the individuals who bear the primary responsibility for this violence. Such vile actions again show us the necessity of the sanctions and the territorial arms embargo.

Continuing in the same vein, Estonia believes that it is important to appoint Governors with no human rights record. This sends a clear signal that grave human rights violations have no place in South Sudan's public administration. It is also a way to send a positive message to the population of South Sudan, showing that attacks against civilians are not rewarded.

We remain very disturbed by the dire humanitarian situation in the country. The situation has got worse due to the pandemic. Fifty-six per cent of the population has no access to even primary health-care services. Displaced people in camps or camp-like settings are in increasing danger due to overcrowding, poor access to safe water and sanitation and limited health care and related services. Added to that food insecurity, approximately 2.4 million children are out of school. I agree that it is a lot to deal with, but where there is a will, there is a way.

We call on the Government of South Sudan to do its utmost to help its citizens. This requires keeping the humanitarian assistance and protection flowing, as the impact of the pandemic is growing. We know the capabilities of the country; it is therefore of major importance to take note of all precautionary measures. That said, the pandemic should not be used as a pretext to impede implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) or to slow down the implementation of the peace agreement. It is sad to see that violations of the status-of-forces agreement are on the rise. Moreover, not allowing medical evacuation flights is unacceptable, as UNMISS peacekeepers are risking their lives to help others.

Last but not least, I want to thank the UNMISS personnel and Mr. David Shearer for all their work during these testing times. They have done a tremendous job supporting the country and the civilians.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen**

[Original: English and French]

I, too, would like to thank David Shearer and Edmund Yakani for their very enlightening presentations. I would like to emphasize three points: the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the increase in intercommunal violence, and the need to continue the peace process.

First, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sudan are extremely concerning, in particular for an already fragile health system, as David Shearer has highlighted. The people of South Sudan, who were already suffering from a serious humanitarian crisis and lack of access to basic health care, are particularly vulnerable, as we all know.

However, measures to fight COVID-19 must not result in limiting humanitarian access or the mobility of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The violations of the status-of-forces agreement in recent months, as well as the recent attacks against humanitarian workers, are intolerable. The protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, is an obligation that applies to all. We also call on the Government to take action to combat hate speech and calls for violence against United Nations personnel.

Secondly, the increase in intercommunal violence since the beginning of the year is also very concerning. Intercommunal violence aggravates the humanitarian crisis, in particular by driving new displaced people onto the roads. Sexual violence and violence against children are unbearable and perpetrators must be brought to justice. The establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, provided for in the agreement with the support of the African Union, should contribute to fighting impunity and reducing the scale of violence.

In that context, I would like to commend the efforts of UNMISS to increase its mobility and to deploy as best as possible in these conflict zones, in particular through temporary bases. Conflict prevention actions at the community level are also more relevant than ever.

I would also like to reiterate that the sanctions regime remains essential to fighting violence, limiting the proliferation of weapons and deterring perpetrators of human rights violations.

Finally, France calls on the Transitional Government of National Unity to spare no effort in order to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. The peace process must continue, despite the severe constraints of the COVID pandemic. An agreement on the distribution of the seats of the governors is urgent. As we know, lack of authorities at the local level favours intercommunal violence. Progress on security arrangements is also expected. Furthermore, this peace process must progress with respect for fundamental freedoms, in particular for journalists and civil society. It must also fully involve women and young people. This is a sine qua non condition for lasting peace.

Before I conclude, I would like to express France's support and appreciation to all United Nations personnel, as well as to all humanitarian and medical personnel in South Sudan. In this particularly difficult period, their work is more necessary and more admirable than ever.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Muhsin Syihab

Allow me to join other Council members in thanking the briefers, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer and Mr. Yakani, for their insightful briefings.

Indonesia commends the formation of the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and a lasting permanent cease fire in South Sudan. We note the commitment of all parties to maintaining dialogue towards a lasting peace.

Yet Indonesia remains concerned over several developments on the ground, which if left unchecked, would endanger the overall peace process. In that context, we underline following issues.

First, with regard to mitigating coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the work by national authorities, reinforced by adequate international assistance, in curbing the pandemic and its impacts is critical. We commend President Kiir's action to establish a national task force to curb the spread of COVID-19.

While the strict travel restriction measures are necessary, my delegation is concerned about the impact of such restrictions on freedom of movement of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and its operation.

We urge the Government of South Sudan to enhance its cooperation with UNMISS in navigating through this pandemic. This is especially vital for an effective provision of humanitarian and medical assistances. Certainly, this cooperation must also ensure the safety, security and health of all peacekeepers and UNMISS staff.

Second is the need for an immediate response to intercommunal violence. The sharp increase in intercommunal violence, particularly in Jonglei, is very alarming. We are further concerned that more than 36,000 people have been internally displaced due to these clashes in 2020 alone.

Indonesia once again underscores an effective and immediate response to this threat. Left unchecked, it could potentially rollback the progress that has been achieved in the peace process. We need to ensure that there will be no relapse into violence anywhere in South Sudan.

In that regard, we commend UNMISS active role in responding to intercommunal clashes, including through community engagement and dialogue facilitation. We expect that all sides will duly respect UNMISS freedom of movement, especially in community engagement and dialogue facilitation.

Thirdly, there is a need to accelerate the political process. Indonesia commends the agreement last week on the allocation of 10 states. We look forward to further progress in the peace process, in particular, in concluding the transitional security arrangements, as mandated under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

We encourage all parties to maintain dialogue and accelerate the political process. While Indonesia believes in inclusive dialogue that accommodates all parties, it also believes that the present situation in South Sudan requires an immediate and comprehensive response. The priority parties put on peaceful resolution needs to be seen consistently through their clear actions, with adequate and sustained support from the region as well as the international community.

To conclude, this is indeed a critical time in South Sudan's journey to peace. We in the Council should also play our role effectively to ensure that the challenges

on the ground do not derail the overall peace process. Indonesia remains committed to working together with South Sudan to enable lasting peace for all of its people.

Annex VII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his report (S/2020/536), which adequately describes recent developments in the situation in South Sudan in the political, economic, security and humanitarian fields, as well as the threat posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) to the dynamics of peace, security, stability and development under way in the country.

We also thank Mr. Edmund Yakani, Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, for his submission.

The Niger further wishes to commend the Government and the opposition of South Sudan for the sense of responsibility they have shown for the establishment, albeit partial, of the Transitional Government of National Unity, and urges them to make more compromises to make the establishment of that Government effective, while respecting the 35 per cent quota to be reserved for women, in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan of November 2018.

Furthermore, we welcome the establishment of the Joint Transitional Security Committee, which will certainly help in the implementation of the security arrangements of the peace Agreement. We also welcome the creation of the high-level task force to combat COVID-19 and the addendum to the 2020 humanitarian response plan, taking into account the challenges related to COVID-19.

The Niger deplors the lack of coordination at the State level and the disagreement over the posts of governors, and expresses concern about the acute humanitarian situation in the country, which makes displaced persons, who number nearly 4 million, vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19. The lack of coordination at the central level has largely contributed to the deterioration of the security situation and exacerbated intercommunal violence. It has also led to an increase in clashes between Government forces and certain opposition movements. We call on the parties to ensure the maintenance of the ceasefire.

In the face of the impact that COVID-19 has had, both on the people of South Sudan and on the ongoing peace, security and development dynamics, the Niger shares the Secretary-General's view that "the imperative to accelerate and consolidate peace implementation has never been so urgent" (S/2020/536, para. 110). To that end, we strongly call on the parties to make the implementation of the peace agreement their main priority for the establishment of lasting peace, in particular, and the economic and social development of the country, in general.

My delegation dares to hope that the appointment of the permanent chair of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission will help to strengthen the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism. To that end, we call on the parties to support the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in the implementation of its mandate, so that it may continuously provide the authorities with the necessary technical assistance to strengthen national monitoring mechanisms and effectively support the implementation of the peace agreement.

In the light of all the above, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation to the UNMISS personnel, from civilians to uniformed personnel, headed by Special Representative David Shearer, who, despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19, have swiftly redefined their priorities to prevent and mitigate the pandemic by supporting national efforts.

In conclusion, the Niger invites the partners of South Sudan to support the country's peacebuilding and development efforts, which could be jeopardized by the pandemic.

Annex VIII

Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy

We thank David Shearer for the update. Russia consistently supports the activities of the Blue Helmets in South Sudan, who play an important role in stabilizing the situation in the country. We also listened carefully to Edmund Yakani.

South Sudan faces challenges unprecedented in its history. We are convinced that the task of the international community, including the Security Council, is to provide the South Sudanese with the necessary support during the period of formation of this young State.

We note that, despite all difficulties, the parties to the conflict have managed to achieve significant progress in the peace process. The formation of new governing bodies and the completion of the pre-transitional period create the necessary conditions for South Sudan to advance towards political stability and national reconciliation, and the successful resolution of urgent tasks of socioeconomic development in the interests of the entire South Sudanese nation. It is important that the parties be ready to overcome disputes through dialogue. We look forward to continuing the implementation of the transitional arrangements as soon as the necessary conditions are in place.

We are encouraged by the information that the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity has achieved an agreement on the distribution of governor posts for 10 states. This opens a window of opportunity to calm the situation, removes obstacles to the peace process and creates the necessary preconditions for reducing the level of intercommunal tension.

We commend the overall decline in the level of armed violence since the signing of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. South Sudanese refugees and internally displaced persons are gradually returning to their places of permanent residence. We link this to the implementation of confidence-building measures and contacts between the protagonist parties on the ground. It is important that they continue to respect the ceasefire. We urge the South Sudanese to strictly adhere to these agreements. We also encourage non-signatories to join the State-building process.

When evaluating the latest news about intercommunal clashes, Juba is often admonished while the objectively difficult context of developments is often disregarded. South Sudan is experiencing the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which has not spared even the country's leadership. Outbreaks of violence in South Sudan each happen for different reasons at different times and places, but — most importantly — they do not pose a direct threat of large-scale destabilization. We therefore call for less pressure on Juba and more support for the South Sudanese people in this difficult period.

We hope that regional organizations will continue to play a leading role in accompanying the South Sudanese peace process. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, in accordance with the principle of African solutions to African problems.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the progress made in the South Sudanese peace process was not due to the pressure of increased sanctions on the country nor — in any way — because of unilateral restrictions. Instead, the key factor was the contribution of regional mediators. We therefore expect that the Council, in accordance with resolution 2521 (2020), will soon launch a comprehensive review of the sanctions regime with a view to adapting it to the realities on the ground.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

We would like to thank Special Representative Shearer and Mr. Edmund Yakani for their briefings.

We begin by reiterating the support of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and its ongoing efforts to support the peace process.

Yesterday marked exactly five months since the leaders of South Sudan committed to forming the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. That laudable decision remains essential for the restoration of peace, stability and the sustainable development of South Sudan. My delegation reaffirms its solidarity with South Sudan and urges all parties to comprehensively implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

There are notable advances in the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2020/536) on South Sudan. Significant residual challenges, however, need to be addressed, particularly the transitional security arrangements, the resolution of gubernatorial positions, as well as the establishment of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and a permanent Constitution. My delegation is encouraged by reports that the parties have agreed to nominate regional governors and we stress the importance of fulfilling the 35 per cent quota for women in Government, as anticipated in the revitalized agreement.

The maintenance of the ceasefire is a positive step and remains critical to creating a climate of security. However, the reported uptick in intercommunal conflict, as well as violations against vulnerable groups, including conflict-related sexual violence, threats posed to internally displaced persons and the forced recruitment of children for armed conflict are disconcerting. My delegation is firm in its conviction that intercommunal conflicts will not be resolved unless their root causes are effectively addressed.

We also reiterate the importance of establishing strong and enduring institutions to ensure the safety of civilians and good governance. In that context, we align ourselves with the African Union Peace and Security Council's call for the finalization of all necessary instruments to operationalize the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

In addition, we are worried about the humanitarian situation, which has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its concomitant socioeconomic challenges. We reiterate our call for the lifting or easing of unilateral coercive measures in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including those imposed on South Sudan. Let us do all we can to propel South Sudan towards sustainable peace and development. Unilateral sanctions should be lifted in order to enable the Government to meet the people's needs.

Similarly, we look forward to the review of Council sanctions measures, in keeping with resolution 2521 (2020), towards the end of this year. We hope that progress on key benchmarks will facilitate a progressive easing of these sanctions.

As countries across the globe consolidate efforts to combat the pandemic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines calls on the international community to continue supporting South Sudan. We welcome the financial support thus far for the 2020 humanitarian response plan, but note that it is only 30 per cent funded. Greater technical and financial resources to regional and subregional organizations

instrumental to the peace process in South Sudan, such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, are necessary. We also urge greater financial support to South Sudan's national development strategy, in accordance with the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the South Sudan Vision 2040.

We welcome the formation of the high-level task force to respond to the pandemic and encourage enhanced collaboration with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and UNMISS. We further underscore the importance of facilitating humanitarian access to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

In conclusion, my delegation remains ready to work with the international community and South Sudan to ensure that peace and stability prevail.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

My delegation would like to express its gratitude to you for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank the briefers, Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, and Mr. Edmund Yakani, human rights and peace activist for their comprehensive and useful briefings on the developments in South Sudan.

We commend Mr. Shearer, Mr. Yakani and the team of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for all the work they are doing to contribute to peace and stability in South Sudan amid difficult conditions, which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

In my statement, I will focus on the political process, the humanitarian situation and the operations of UNMISS.

On the political situation, South Africa would like to continue encouraging all parties to work in unison to fulfil the terms of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The current environment, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, clearly presented a difficult dynamic for all, particularly in adapting to the pandemic itself amid the dire challenges predating it. Consequently, we urge the Government to be pragmatic and to remain steadfast in its determination to use all means necessary to fully establish the mechanisms and committees provided for in the Agreement.

South Africa continues to emphasize the importance of the revitalized agreement as the only mechanism that can help create a conducive environment for constructive dialogue and the necessary democratic processes for working towards sustainable peace and development in South Sudan. We underscore that only inclusive political dialogue that incorporates women can move the country forward and ensure that the whole populace is represented.

Furthermore, South Africa encourages the parties to work together to break the impasse over the allocation of state governorships. It is crucial to curb the uptick in intercommunal violence so as to not significantly undermine the progress achieved in stabilizing the security situation in South Sudan. The commitment to the cessation of hostilities enabled a lot of work and saved a significant number of lives.

As the international community, we have played a pivotal role in supporting South Sudan and we should continue to do so in a unified manner, especially given the economic impact of COVID-19 and the further limited financial resources for the implementation of the revitalized agreement.

For its part, South Africa will continue to play a key role in supporting the peace process in South Sudan through the mediation efforts of President Ramaphosa as Chairperson of the African Union High Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan, as well as Deputy President Mabuza as South Africa's Special Envoy to South Sudan. Our efforts are geared towards complementing the processes of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

On the humanitarian situation we, like many on the Council, are concerned about the impact COVID-19 is having in the country, particularly on those living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. The need is far greater now than it was before. Consequently, we urge international stakeholders to continue contributing to post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes. In addition, they should support efforts to repatriate and resettle IDPs and returning refugees in

South Sudan, and to rebuild their community livelihoods. Further, we urge the Government to provide the United Nations humanitarian agencies unfettered access to vulnerable areas.

Lastly, on the operations of UNMISS, we would like to encourage the Government to work closely with the Mission to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic responses. UNMISS continues to be a strong pillar of support to help the Government to attain its peace and stability objectives. We appreciate the strong collaboration between UNMISS and the region, and underscore the importance of that collaboration.

Annex XI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Kais Kabtani

I thank Special Representative Shearer and activist Yakani for their briefings.

The spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic across South Sudan seriously threatens to reverse the positive course embraced by the country towards inclusive and sustainable peace.

We stress that effective mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic is at the core of efforts to protect civilians and is crucial to the implementation of key remaining terms of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, notably the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, and to the advancement of the peace process at large.

We welcome the steps taken by the South Sudanese Government to tackle the pandemic, particularly the appointment of a dedicated task force. We urge international partners to extend the needed technical and medical support, which, regrettably, remains in short supply.

We urge the South Sudanese authorities to commit to full and inclusive governance throughout the country so as to enable comprehensive humanitarian outreach to communities in need, ensure the protection of civilians and respect for human rights, and strengthen the rule of law.

We commend the continuous and crucial engagement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in mediating solutions between the parties and in ensuring the implementation of the peace agreement.

We welcome the continued provision of assistance and technical capacity-building by UNMISS in connection with its core mandated activities, and support the use of its good offices for promoting the peace process.

In the light of the pandemic-related restrictions imposed on the operation of UNMISS, it is important for the Mission to maintain consistent public outreach and engagement with communities, foster closer dialogue with the South Sudanese Government and enhance mobility and a light-footprint approach to its operations.

Tunisia's firm belief is that South Sudan needs to be backed by adequate international support and flexibility, including that of the Council, with due consideration of the humbling realities of the South Sudanese transition.

We stress that the meaningful engagement of the Council in South Sudan hinges on its genuine willingness to lift sanctions and accept a paradigm shift in the sanctions mandate. Sanctions measures should be seen as a cooperative rather than coercive tool to bolster confidence and trust among the South Sudanese parties and promote sustainable peace and economic growth in the country.

Last but not least, we emphasize the importance of addressing root causes and structural factors of conflict in South Sudan in order to prevent a relapse of violence and conflict, ensure holistic respect for human rights and lay the foundation for durable inclusive peace and sustainable development.

Annex XII**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

I would like to thank Special Representative Shearer and Mr. Yakani for their briefings today. I also wish to convey the United Kingdom's gratitude for the work that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) continues to do under immensely challenging circumstances.

In March, the Council unanimously commended the South Sudanese parties for demonstrating leadership. The formation of the revitalized Transitional Government Of National Unity was a significant moment in South Sudan's short history, and it gave the people of South Sudan renewed hope for a brighter future.

But in the past three months, the world has changed. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has affected all of us. South Sudan is no different. COVID-19 has already had an impact on lives across South Sudan, from the highest levels of Government to ordinary men, women and children. And UNMISS has also been affected, including through the sad death of a civilian staff member.

It is important that the measures taken to limit the spread of the virus allow life-saving services to continue. We are particularly concerned by the risks COVID-19 poses to those who have been made more vulnerable by forced displacement, including those living in protection-of-civilian sites. We thank UNMISS and all humanitarian actors on the ground for their efforts to mitigate those risks and hope that the South Sudanese authorities will make every effort to work with partners on preventing the spread of the disease, protect health-care workers and enable humanitarian access.

COVID-19 also poses obvious risks to the health and safety of peacekeeping personnel. We hope the Secretariat will continue taking all steps necessary to guarantee medical- and casualty-evacuation arrangements for all personnel as part of its efforts to ensure that UNMISS can keep delivering on its mandate.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned at recent increases in violent conflict. Since the beginning of the year, thousands of South Sudanese have been killed or injured in hundreds of separate incidents of serious violence, including, most recently, in May, in Jonglei state. I note that among those killed in Jonglei were three non-governmental organization staff, which underscores once again the dangers faced by humanitarian personnel as they go about their life-saving work in South Sudan.

The violence in the Equatorias stemming from the breakdown of the ceasefire has killed and displaced hundreds more. There have been shocking reports of sexual violence carried out by forces on all sides, which, of course, has a critical role to play in successfully reducing these conflicts and mitigating their impact, including through facilitating community dialogue and patrolling hotspots. Furthermore, COVID-19 is inevitably affecting the Mission's ability to carry out these vital tasks.

It is therefore all the more urgent for the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to expedite implementation of the peace agreement, even if that means confronting a series of difficult decisions. The delay in appointing state governors, for example, has created avoidable power vacuums that have exacerbated subnational tensions and fuelled violence. The United Kingdom urges the Transitional Government of National Unity to redouble its efforts aimed at making progress on the transitional security arrangements, strengthen its messaging to counter hate speech, misinformation and incitement to violence, and tackle impunity through enhanced accountability for sexual and gender-based crimes.

The United Kingdom remains committed to South Sudan. In March, I said, “now the hard work begins”. Three months on, much of that hard work remains to be done. The longer the parties delay, the harder it will become. Full and prompt implementation of the peace agreement by leaders working together in genuine unity with the best interests of their people at heart remains the best hope for South Sudan and its people in these uniquely challenging times.

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

I thank Special Representative Shearer for his briefing and his tireless leadership in support of stability in South Sudan. We would also like to thank Mr. Yakani for his steadfast commitment to advocating peace in the country. We stand shoulder to shoulder with him and other civil society advocates as they strive for the peace and security the South Sudanese people so richly deserve.

The people of South Sudan are facing monumental challenges as they confront both escalating violence and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The United States remains concerned about increasing violence in Jonglei state, including widespread sexual and gender-based violence, which has already killed at least 600 individuals this year and resulted in the abduction of 150 women and girls. The violence, which is spreading to other parts of the country, risks eroding gains in the peace process that the Security Council has sought to support.

The continued delays in the peace process are unacceptable. While there has been an agreement on the political formula to be used for appointing governors, the actual appointments and implementation of security arrangements need to occur in short order to have value. A priority in all of this should be the meaningful participation of women.

Existing humanitarian programmes must be supported and allowed to continue even in the face of the additional challenges posed by COVID-19. The United States supports South Sudan's efforts aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic, but we cannot accept the Government's using the virus as a pretext to curtail freedom of movement for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Even more egregious is South Sudan's denials of internal medical-evacuation flights for UNMISS staff. This must stop, and it must stop now. Given these challenges, we look forward to hearing how the United Nations is protecting its personnel who contract COVID-19. As Council members, we must not lose sight of the important progress we have sought to advance in South Sudan, such as the forming of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, which requires that additional steps be taken for it to become fully functional, and we can no longer tolerate any setbacks.

Moving forward, then, we call on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to appoint a permanent and empowered Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. African political leadership is essential for driving the peace process forward and for ending the violence. The United States is committed to working closely with the Transitional Government and its partners to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and ensure a better future for the people of South Sudan. However, we expect South Sudan's leaders to govern together as one Government and work in the best interest of its citizens.

A Government working together would immediately address outbreaks of violence anywhere in the country. A Government working together would look to UNMISS and the United Nations as valuable partners not only in providing safety and security for its citizens, but also in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. A Government working together would recognize the essential role played by humanitarian partners in delivering much-needed assistance.

Unfortunately, we still do not see the Transitional Government working together. We recognize the challenges posed by COVID-19, but we see the pandemic

as an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among all parties and stakeholders in the Transitional Government.

The United States remains committed to the full implementation of the peace agreement, just as we remain committed to the people of South Sudan at this most pressing time.

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

I would like to thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his insightful briefing. We fully support the work of the Special Representative and of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). I also thank Mr. Edmund Yakani for his statement.

Viet Nam warmly welcomes the recent positive developments in South Sudan, particularly the establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. It is especially encouraging that one out of five Vice-Presidents and 9 out of 35 Ministers are women. We commend the efforts of relevant parties aimed at continuing to resolve their differences and implementing the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

We are also pleased to see the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU), the United Nations and other relevant parties, which are contributing to the overall positive atmosphere. The role of IGAD as the mediator will continue to be critical in the transitional period.

We note the increasing challenges to the peace process posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and recognize the efforts of the Revitalized Transitional Government in responding to the pandemic. Furthermore, we are very much encouraged to see that the permanent ceasefire has continued to be maintained in most parts of the country, as stated in the latest UNMISS report (S/2020/536). While taking note of the complexity of the situation, particularly the issue of intercommunal violence and humanitarian challenges, the international community should recognize the important achievements of the South Sudanese parties in recent months.

In the light of the current situation, allow me to make the following observations. First, we reiterate the importance of the full implementation of the 2018 peace agreement by the parties in South Sudan. Viet Nam calls on the parties to resolve the pending issues in a timely manner, in the spirit of mutual trust and understanding. We note the recent reports that an agreement has been reached on the reorganization of the country's federated structure. We call on the South Sudanese parties to spare no efforts in advancing the joint security arrangements in the coming months, as this process is essential to the effective functioning of the Transitional Government. We also hope to see an increased participation of women in the transitional process.

Secondly, Viet Nam emphasizes how important it is to continue respecting the permanent ceasefire and refrain from any actions that may undermine efforts toward sustainable peace. Further effective measures are also needed to address the rising intercommunal violence, especially its root causes. In this regard, the role of UNMISS in the protection of civilians will remain significant.

We would like to commend the efforts of all members of the Mission, especially the female peacekeepers, in this difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vietnamese women represent 16 per cent of our peacekeepers in UNMISS, and they continue to do an excellent job. Our level-II field hospital continues its utmost efforts in attending to the needs of the people. Since the beginning of 2020, the hospital has provided treatment for nearly 1,000 patients and has been actively engaged in the Mission's COVID-19 response efforts.

Thirdly, Viet Nam notes with appreciation the recent positive economic development in South Sudan. At the same time, we acknowledge the critical

humanitarian challenges in the country, especially those resulting from the impact of COVID-19 and from the increasing adverse impact of climate change and natural disasters. We call on the Transitional Government and other parties in South Sudan to continue to make their best efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods for the South Sudanese people.

Fourthly, we reiterate our consistent position that sanctions shall only be a tool applied by the Security Council in a temporary and case-by-case manner to facilitate the maintenance of international peace and security. Such measures shall not adversely affect the livelihoods of the people, the essential functioning of the Government or the legitimate development of the country. These measures should be lifted when the required conditions are met. In this regard, Viet Nam will continue to work closely with relevant States Members of the United Nations, the Organization itself, IGAD and the AU to advance the implementation of the agreements among the South Sudanese parties, thereby facilitating the midterm review of the sanctions regime at the end of this year. We call on other Council members to do the same.

In conclusion, Viet Nam would like to reaffirm its support for the pursuit of peace, stability and development in South Sudan.
