



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8560th meeting
 Tuesday, 25 June 2019, 10.40 a.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
South Africa	Ms. Bekwa
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2019/491)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 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/2019/491)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): 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. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights; and Ms. Lydia Minagano, from the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

Ms. Minagano is joining today's meeting via video-conference from Juba.

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/2019/491, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Shearer.

Mr. Shearer: It is my pleasure to brief the Security Council on the two overarching areas of focus of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), namely, building durable peace and protecting civilians in South Sudan.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan continues to hold and, except for areas in Central Equatoria, the ceasefire is in process. Just that one simple reality of peace has produced significant change. The drop in political violence, based on the trend of past years, has meant that hundreds, if not thousands, of people are alive who would otherwise not be. Many displaced families have decided it is safe and time to return to

their homes. Since the signing of the peace agreement, according to the International Organization for Migration, more than half a million people have done gone home, including more than 210,000 who have returned from neighbouring countries.

Humanitarian partners report improved access to areas of need, although bureaucratic impediments continue to dog some operations. Their efforts have been assisted by the rehabilitation of 2,500 kilometres of roads by the five engineering companies of UNMISS and World Food Programme (WFP) projects. That has enhanced the ability to move food to remote locations in advance of the rains and cut down on expensive airdrops. Together with opening of river corridors and a reduction in illegal checkpoints across the country, WFP reports cost efficiencies of up to \$113 million.

The most recent food security analysis, however, remains dire. Seven million people are facing crisis, or worse. But, for the first time in years, some counties saw slight improvements, where relative calm has enabled households to resume cultivation. Those positive signs come from a very low base. But it is a glimmer of what is possible with peace. It is vital that that trend continue.

Since the signing of the peace agreement, more than 110 rapprochements have occurred in communities around the country. UNMISS has directly facilitated more than a quarter of them. I attended a number of those meetings, including a recent joint delegation with the Special Envoy of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for South Sudan and the Chair of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. Helicoptering into Panyume in Central Equatoria — a proposed opposition cantonment site where tensions remain high — we were met by dozens of opposition soldiers. Their welcome was warm and we sat under mango trees together with hundreds of local people to talk reconciliation. We then flew to Yei, where we met with Government authorities, youth, women and religious leaders.

The visit showed that, while groups are on opposite sides of the political divide, their experiences of war and hopes for peace are the same. That one example matches what my colleagues and I witnessed on many occasions in recent months across the country where the sides have come together. The desire for peace is palpable, and there is a fierce aversion to any renewed fighting. My observation is that the pace of dialogue and peacebuilding at the grassroots level is moving much

faster than among the elites negotiating nationally. The country's politicians need to listen to the mood of the people and follow the lead set by the local communities. In that vein, it is a shame that the national dialogue process has so far failed to achieve the inclusivity required for a true consultative process.

The strong desire for peace is echoed in results of a perception survey that we carried out, which interviewed 2,400 people in 10 different locations. The survey exposed the shocking impact of the conflict: 79 per cent of the people interviewed reported that members of their family had been killed. The same proportion reported family members forced to flee violence. And yet, remarkably, 89 per cent of those interviewed believe there will be lasting peace by the end of the year. We should be frank. The fighting has stopped because the leaders ordered their soldiers to stop. If it resumes, against the will of the people, it will be because those same leaders want it, and ordered it, to happen.

In May, the parties unanimously decided to extend the pre-transitional period, thereby delaying the formation of a transitional Government until 12 November. While the postponement is disappointing, it does give time to resolve outstanding issues that might have otherwise derailed the peace deal. Implementation is frustratingly slow. Many benchmarks are still to be met. More compromise is needed, particularly from the Government, which holds the much stronger position. The transitional Constitution, which incorporates the peace agreement, has been returned to the National Constitutional Amendment Committee for further updates. The Independent Boundaries Commission reported back last week; How its conclusions play out in the coming weeks remains to be seen. Security reform and the unification of armed forces has been sluggish, despite the much-appreciated efforts of IGAD Special Envoy Ismail Wais. UNMISS is providing political and technical guidance to help the parties in line with its new mandate.

A fundamental challenge is the lack of regular face-to-face meetings between President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar. If former bitter enemies can put the past behind them and reconcile at the local level, their national leaders must do the same. Leader-to-leader meetings, preferably held in Juba, are critical because trust and confidence cannot cold-start the day a new unified Government is formed. The Government should also meet its commitment to

release the funding it pledged for implementation, as an example to other donors.

The African Union, IGAD and the United Nations have been working collectively to support the process. We are strongly unified in our position that the most recent six-month extension should be the last one. We accept that some tasks may not be entirely complete by November— however we define “complete” — but that should not delay the formation of the transitional Government. We should see the peace agreement as a living document, not set in stone. There are no pre-transitional tasks that cannot be achieved within a unified transitional administration. In fact, there are many advantages to decisions made collectively within a transitional Government, because they will be made collectively and transparently and parties will be better held to account by citizens.

The decision of the United Nations in 2013 to open its gates to people fleeing for their lives was one of the most noble actions the Organization has ever taken. It saved tens of thousands of people and remains at the heart of our protection of civilians mandate. However, our mandate also stresses the importance of supporting conditions for the safe, informed, voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. So far, actual numbers of returns are relatively small compared to the 2.3 million refugees and the 1.9 million internally displaced, but there is a growing trend of return.

Prior to the signing of the peace agreement, the number of people returning home each month averaged about 18,000. Since the peace deal was signed, that number has jumped to 76,000 each month. Some families have returned under their own devices, but thousands of others — particularly those living in protection of civilians sites — will need assistance. Most wanting to go home are women and children without the ability or resources to leave without help. UNMISS, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian partners are providing that support in line with international humanitarian principles and are following guidelines agreed by the humanitarian country team.

A key challenge ahead is the lack of basic services within communities of return. Today, the reason most commonly cited by IDPs for not wanting to leave a protection of civilians site is a reluctance to take their children out of school, not insecurity. In

parallel, UNMISS is shifting its focus from static duties — guarding protection of civilian sites — to more long-range patrolling, concentrating on areas of return. A substantial component of UNMISS's effort is now devoted to protection of civilians site protection.

Despite the reduction in political violence, fighting continues in Central Equatoria, causing ongoing suffering. Early next week, UNMISS will release a human rights report on the situation. Our investigations reveal atrocities committed by all sides against civilians, including killings, rape, abduction and looting. In response, UNMISS has beefed up its presence in Yei and matched that with political engagement. The protection of civilians will continue to be a top priority, but our protection role will naturally diminish if there is peace. We can then look to adjust our troop requirements accordingly, while continuing our mediation and peacebuilding efforts.

In two weeks, South Sudan will celebrate its eighth anniversary of gaining independence. With that sovereignty comes responsibility — an obligation that is acknowledged only rarely and that includes the leaders' use of the country's resources in the best interests of their citizens, not their own. The message from the people of South Sudan that we have heard in that regard is very clear. Leaders must live up to their responsibilities and give the people peace.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Shearer for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gilmour.

Mr. Gilmour: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the human rights situation in South Sudan and its impact on peace and security.

In line with the important progress that Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), has just reported, since last September the Human Rights Division of UNMISS has documented a significant and welcome decrease in the number of human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by Government forces and organized armed groups throughout the country. A major exception to this, however, has been the continued prevalence of sexual violence by parties to the conflict, which Ms. Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-

General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, has briefed the Council about and which I will not repeat.

Crucial though it is, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan does not address all divisions, with their increasingly ethnic dimensions, that lie at the root of the conflict or the extremely high levels of corruption, which continue to undermine sustainable peace and justice in South Sudan, as well as the economic and social rights of the population.

We have just heard about the continued serious violations in Central Equatoria; I will not repeat them.

In other parts of South Sudan, the violence has shifted primarily to acts perpetrated by community-based militias and armed elements. Frequently referred to as cattle raids or intercommunal violence, these incidents have largely evolved from a traditional practice to acts of political violence involving State actors, including State security forces, elements of organized armed groups and self-defence groups established by local communities. Since the signing of the revitalized agreement in September 2018, civilian casualties resulting from this form of violence have far exceeded those resulting from violations and abuses by conventional parties to the conflict.

The restriction of political and civic space is also a worrying trend. Freedom of expression is under constant attack in the country and is closely linked with the unfettered power of the National Security Service to impede citizens' civil and political rights. Surveillance, intimidation and arbitrary arrests are commonly used to restrict the activities of human rights defenders, critics and journalists. The case of Mr. Peter Biar Ajak is noteworthy in that regard.

The real guarantee of lasting peace in South Sudan lies with efforts to end impunity. Many reports have concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that gross violations of international human rights law and of international humanitarian law, and international crimes have been committed by the parties to the conflict. Those include joint reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNMISS, those of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) as well as the reports of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, established by the Human Rights Council.

Despite all that evidence, however, no significant action has been taken against the perpetrators. And to break the long-standing cycle of impunity, as well as to prevent future violations, we believe that the transitional justice mechanisms outlined in the peace agreement must be implemented. The Government has not yet signed the memorandum of understanding with the African Union for the establishment of the hybrid court.

UNMISS has supported the State in its efforts to deliver justice at local levels, offering what David Shearer has just called some important glimmers of hope amid the challenges facing the country, including through mobile court initiatives. The UNMISS-supported mobile courts in Bentiu and Malakal have led to the conviction of at least three members of organized forces for rape. We are encouraged that, on 14 March, Government speakers — including the Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs and the Chief of the South Sudan Defence Forces — publicly conceded that members of the Government security forces had been involved in perpetrating sexual violence and urged commanders to ensure that the perpetrators of these acts are held accountable. Real change starts with an acknowledgement of the problem, so we welcome that step.

The UNMISS Human Rights Division also regularly engages with and provides support to national authorities, security forces, civil society organizations and community groups on a range of human rights issues. It supports human rights forums in all of the field offices, such as that held in Bentiu last week, chaired by the state Governor and attended by key partners, to address justice and sexual violence in hotspot areas.

In conclusion, we hope that the international community and the Security Council will continue to urge as strongly as possible the South Sudanese parties to implement their commitments to ending hostilities and to stopping the sexual violence. As we have just heard Special Representative David Shearer say, let us be frank. The fighting has stopped because the leaders ordered the soldiers to stop. That surely applies to the continued human rights violations and the sexual violence. If the leaders order the soldiers to stop those crimes, they too will largely stop. We also hope that everyone, including the Council, will continue to press the parties for the establishment of the accountability and transitional justice mechanisms outlined in the revitalized agreement.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Gilmour for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Minagano.

Ms. Minagano: I thank you, Mr. President, for this invitation to brief the Security Council on the situation of women and girls in South Sudan. Today marks more than nine months since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, yet the fighting has yet to fully cease. While women and girls are affected disproportionately by the years of conflict and the current humanitarian crisis, I want to speak not only of their despair, but also of their resilience and of what they need to rebuild their country.

My name is Lydia Minagano, and I speak in my capacity as Project Manager of the Peace Implementation Monitoring Initiative, a network of civil society organizations working to monitor progress and challenges in implementing South Sudan's peace agreement. I am a member of the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board, one of the mechanisms of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and a member of the South Sudan Women's Coalition for Peace, which participated in the peace talks in 2018.

My statement will focus on four key areas. The first is the gendered nature of the conflict, especially its impact on women and girls. The second is the need to strengthen women's meaningful participation in the implementation of the peace agreement, as well as all decision-making processes that will impact the future of South Sudan. The third is the critical need for security sector reform. The last is the importance of consulting with civil society in South Sudan, particularly women-led organizations.

The conflict of the past five years is deeply rooted in gender inequality. That has resulted in widespread violations of the rights of women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement and the denial of basic access to livelihoods. As Council members know, South Sudan has one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls in the world. Entrenched discrimination and harmful practices, such as early and forced marriages, have contributed to an environment where gender-based violence against women and girls is widespread.

As I address the Security Council today, more than 50 civilian areas are still occupied by the military, according to the June 2019 report of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. Although the military has vacated some civilian areas, its continued presence in other areas still puts women and girls at risk of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. Without accountability for gender-based violence and challenging those in our communities who permit such actions we cannot move forward.

The majority of those displaced by the conflict in South Sudan are women and children. I have listened to too many stories of women and girls who have fled as refugees to Uganda, or spent years stuck in the protection of civilian sites, where they are exposed to diseases and lack access to basic services, such as education for their children. One 14-year-old girl in Uganda told me how she lost her mother in a refugee camp owing to a simple fever. The pain and agony in that little girl's face still haunt me today. Nobody should die from easily treatable or preventable diseases.

For women, peace is more than just a signed agreement. Its dividends must be felt in the daily lives of every man, woman and child in South Sudan. In the ongoing political processes, priority should be given to enabling women and women-led organizations to heal themselves and their communities. That means ensuring equal access to livelihoods, reproductive health services, psychosocial support and legal services.

South Sudanese women advocated tirelessly for a place at the table during the High-level Revitalization Forum, which led to the signing of the peace agreement. We also fought to secure a 35 per cent quota for women's inclusion. However, that quota was not fully implemented during the nomination process to the pre-transitional arrangement bodies. Resolution 2459 (2019), which was adopted in March and calls on all parties to ensure the full and meaningful participation of women in the peace process, is an important step forward. However, that call must be backed by regular follow-up and specific monitoring measures to ensure it is adhered to and that there is accountability for the lack of its implementation.

Security sector reform (SSR) is essential for long-term peace and stability in my country. SSR must ensure that all security-sector actors are competent, professional and responsive. Anti-corruption and human

and women's rights training on an ongoing basis is essential, as are accountability standards for leadership. Furthermore, diversity and inclusion must be central to reform efforts. The security sector must represent all the people of South Sudan. That means ensuring not only regional diversity, but the representation of men and women. The needs of women in the armed forces and in the cantonment areas must be addressed.

The slow progress in the cantonment of all forces is an urgent outstanding issue and an important aspect of transforming the security sector, as it will allow for the professionalization of the army. I urge the parties to the agreement to ensure that major milestones for security sector reforms are achieved. Delays in professionalizing the army mean delays in ensuring the proper protection of women and girls.

Comprehensive security sector reform backed by economic recovery programmes is necessary in order to win the trust of displaced women and girls so that they can return home safely and voluntarily and start rebuilding their communities. That can be achieved only by ensuring that their rights are protected and that they have adequate support for reintegration when they return.

As my colleague Angelina Nyajima Simon Jial pointed out to the Security Council in March (see S/PV.8480), civil society in South Sudan plays a crucial role in building and maintaining peace and security. They are not only instrumental in the delivery of life-saving humanitarian services, but are also key to implementing the peace agreement. In March, the Security Council responded to our call for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to work more closely with us by giving it a mandate to engage with women-led non-governmental organizations and with civil society more generally. We now expect the Council to fulfil that mandate. Civil society must enjoy a safe and enabling environment in order to carry out its work.

I would like to conclude by calling on the Security Council to ensure that the Government of South Sudan supports the implementation of the agreement with reliable and adequate financial resources; continue to call on parties to realize the 35 per cent quota for women's representation, especially in the upcoming transitional Government; encourage donors to support programmes for local and national civil society organizations; encourage UNMISS to continue to engage with diverse

women's groups, particularly those working to end sexual and gender-based violence in our communities, as a fundamental part of implementing its protection of civilians mandate, which should include the creation of safe spaces, which are critical for survivors and victims of sexual and gender-based violence; urge parties to the conflict to vacate all civilian areas; ensure the adequate protection of women and girls from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including psychosocial support; support the security sector in developing expertise and require professional training, including in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and a response that is tailored to the specific context of South Sudan; and ensure that the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) engages youth and young women in their programming. The majority of those who carry guns are young people, and it is much easier for young people to communicate with each another.

Lastly, the DDR process should also address the specific needs of female ex-combatants. Women make up the majority of my country's population, and South Sudan cannot afford to ignore us. Giving us the resources that we need to participate in the future of our country will directly contribute to South Sudan's peace, stability and development. For the generations of South Sudanese women and girls like myself, who have never known anything other than conflict, we hope the agreement will deliver the peace we yearn to see.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Minagano for her 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. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Shearer, Assistant Secretary-General Gilmour and Ms. Minagano for their briefings.

Although the implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan remains slow, the United States acknowledges that the parties continue to respect the ceasefire in most parts of the country.

We also note the consensus approach to extending the pre-transition phase.

Nevertheless, the potential for peace remains unfulfilled. Gross human rights violations and abuses persist, particularly in the Equatorias. Violent clashes continue to break out across the country. And by the end of July, nearly 7 million South Sudanese — more than 60 per cent of the population — will face severe levels of acute food insecurity, or worse, because of a human-made crisis.

With the reduction in violence, humanitarian workers are better able to prepare for, and take on, the hunger season, as they have increased access to South Sudanese in need. However, there remain ongoing obstacles to the international community's ability to assist with that effort and support the peace process overall. The Government must adhere to its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement to allow full and unrestricted freedom of movement for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

We are also concerned that, while there is increasing stability around the country, the Government continues to restrict key political and civic freedoms. In fact, that seems to have escalated since the signing of the agreement. There can be no real implementation of the agreement without true respect for the liberties guaranteed in South Sudan's own Constitution. We stress the need for face-to-face meetings between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, keeping in mind the 12 November date for the establishment of the transitional Government.

We are deeply disappointed by the verdict in the case of Peter Biar Ajak and five other men, just days after the Government of South Sudan took an important step by ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Government must guarantee citizens' freedom of expression, as stipulated in the Covenant, and abide by fair-trial guarantees.

The flow of weapons into South Sudan is another area of concern. We look forward to a day when peace in South Sudan negates the need for an arms embargo. But in the meantime, we welcome its renewal and call on the international community, and on the region in particular, to uphold the South Sudan sanctions regime and help make peace more profitable than war in South Sudan.

The Revitalized Agreement is central to the shift from war to peace. As a first step, the signatories will have to move beyond quarrels over procedure and instead use the remaining time during the extension period to make real progress. That means first coming to an agreement on security arrangements, including protection for opposition members of the transitional Government. It means ensuring the work of the Independent Boundaries Commission does not become a flashpoint for more violence. It means allowing UNMISS to fulfil its mandate to protect civilians.

It also means the Government of South Sudan's delivering on its \$100 million pledge to expedite the implementation of pre-transition tasks in a timely and transparent fashion. It means implementing the transitional justice provisions of the agreement, including engaging with the African Union to establish the hybrid court. And it means the opposition's pressing ahead with overdue tasks, such as moving its forces into cantonment and proceeding with combined training.

The United States calls on the South Sudanese parties who did not sign the agreement to renounce violence, adhere to cessation of hostilities agreements and seek political resolution to concerns about the peace agreement. We also call on the signatories to engage with such parties in a non-violent and constructive manner.

The efforts described are not simple, but there is evidence, particularly at the local level, that the parties can compromise and accomplish important results when they choose to work together. The alternative — a return to conflict and the loss of more South Sudanese lives — is intolerable. The South Sudanese people have already paid a devastating price for the war their leaders imposed on them.

We are convinced that the continued engagement of the region is key to building sustainable peace. We appeal to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to stay engaged and appoint a permanent chair to the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. We call on the region and the signatories to ensure the crisis in the Sudan does not impede the South Sudanese peace process. And we call on neighbouring countries to crack down on the illicit flow of financing from South Sudan into their banking systems and real estate markets.

We urge all parties to follow the positive examples of collaboration at the local level to fulfil South Sudan's

potential and bring lasting peace and security to the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. David Shearer for his briefing and for his outstanding work under difficult conditions. I also thank Mr. Andrew Gilmour and Ms. Lydia Minagano for their briefings.

On 9 July it will have been eight years since South Sudan became independent. Five of those years have been marked by the effects of civil war. The conflict has claimed the lives of nearly 400,000 people. One in three people have been forced to leave their homes. One in two face acute food insecurity, or worse. It is expected that about 860,000 children under the age of 5 will suffer from severe malnutrition in 2019. Women and girls are the most affected by violence, including degrading and barbaric sexual violence. No one is spared, neither women in their 80s nor 2-year-old girls. We can only imagine the intolerable suffering of the people of South Sudan, and it must spur real action from the leaders of South Sudan.

Just before 12 May, what was to be the end of the eight-month pre-transition period, the South Sudanese parties unanimously agreed to a six-month extension to allow for the implementation of the essential pre-transition conditions. The region and the international community supported that decision, but time is passing, no progress has been made and there is a real risk of compromising the gains that have been made. Unless there is significant political investment from the parties and the region, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to accelerate preparations for the transition period, the new deadline could be missed.

That is worrisome — the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan presents the window of opportunity to instil lasting peace in the country. We encourage all actors to spare no effort to achieve real progress on key issues in the implementation of the agreement. The parties must put in place security arrangements, finalize the determination of internal boundaries, create an implementation road map, organize face-to-face meetings of key political leaders and release the implementation funds announced by the Government. Non-signatory parties must sign the agreement. We support the Secretary-General's call for the parties to refrain from mutual recrimination and inflammatory

rhetoric. The firm commitment of the States of the region is essential to ensuring the implementation of the agreement.

The protection of civilians remains critical. Although political violence has decreased, there has been an increase in intercommunal violence in recent months. Human rights abuses continue. There can be no lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan without addressing those abuses urgently and effectively. We call for an end to the culture of impunity. We call on the Government to assume its responsibility to protect civilians, thoroughly investigate all cases of sexual violence and other abuses and bring those responsible for those crimes to justice. We call for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, including the hybrid court, to combat impunity.

Restrictions on the freedom of expression are unacceptable. A country can flourish only with a diverse and active civil society and free media. Political prisoners and prisoners of war must be released without delay. It is also unacceptable that the whereabouts of two staff members of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) has remained unknown since their arrest in 2014: the South Sudanese authorities should immediately inform UNMISS about their condition and location.

Conflict is the main factor driving the humanitarian crisis and violence in South Sudan, a crisis that is completely man-made. Any delay in the implementation of the agreement will prolong the suffering of the people of South Sudan. The steps that are needed have been identified; it is now up to the parties to take them.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Special Representative Shearer for his briefing. We have listened to the statements made by Assistant Secretary-General Gilmour and Ms. Minagano.

Since the beginning of this year, the overall situation in South Sudan has continued to turn for the better, with the ceasefire holding in most regions. Most opposition leaders have returned to Juba. The South Sudanese Government and parties have been jointly promoting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and have carried out in-depth discussions on ceasefire monitoring, constitutional amendments, boundary demarcation, security and defence and other arrangements with positive results.

On 2 May, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the South Sudanese parties agreed to extend the pre-transitional period by six months. Large numbers of refugees have voluntarily returned to South Sudan, and an increasing number of displaced persons wish to return home, which fully demonstrates that peace in South Sudan has been further consolidated. China welcomes those developments.

At the same time, the situation in South Sudan remains challenging. The top priority is to continue to have South Sudan maintain the hard-won momentum in favour of peace. The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement holds the key to a political settlement of the issue of South Sudan. The international community, and the Security Council in particular, should lend greater support, while focusing on promoting the parties' efforts to further implement the Revitalized Agreement. Greater efforts should be made in the following three areas.

First, the ownership of the South Sudanese Government should be fully respected. The parties in South Sudan have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. International partners should enhance communication with the parties, and with the Government in particular, listen carefully to their input and provide the necessary funding and material and technical support in the political and security fields in the light of the country's needs

Secondly, support for IGAD should remain ongoing in its role as mediator. The international community should strengthen coordination with IGAD and the African Union to support their mediation efforts and help the South Sudanese Government and the opposition enhance mutual trust so that they can demonstrate greater flexibility and sincerity in order to reach agreement on such core issues as security arrangements as soon as possible. Efforts should also be made to push parties that have not signed the Revitalized Agreement to join the peace process as soon as possible.

Thirdly, humanitarian and economic assistance to South Sudan should continue to be provided. At present, priority should be given to helping address food security, assisting displaced persons with their return and resettlement, increasing investment in such fields as agriculture, energy, infrastructure, education and health care, and helping the South Sudanese people strengthen their capacity to rebuild their homes and

restart development. China highly appreciates the important contribution made by the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan to maintaining peace and stability in South Sudan and supports the Mission's continued efforts aimed at helping the South Sudanese parties implement the Revitalized Agreement and move forward in the peace process.

China supports peace and development in South Sudan. We will continue our active support and constructive participation in the peace process so as to contribute to lasting peace and sustainable development in South Sudan.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes today's briefing on the situation in South Sudan. We thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, for their excellent briefings. We also thank Ms. Lydia Minagano of South Sudanese civil society for her inspiring statement. Finally, I welcome the participation of Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal, Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations, in today's meeting.

Côte d'Ivoire remains concerned about the delays in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, signed on 12 September 2018, referred to in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/491). We recall that the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), had raised many hopes, especially since it had made it possible to significantly reduce the level of political violence and had brought about intranational rapprochement and the return of refugees. However, it must be noted that those achievements, while significant, fall short of the expectations of the international community.

The lack of progress in the implementation of some important provisions of the agreement in the pre-transition phase, which should have led to the formation of a Government of national unity, is a perfect illustration of this situation. My country therefore encourages the South Sudanese parties to seize the opportunity offered by the six-month extension period of the Revitalized Agreement, concluded by the parties themselves, to make decisive progress. It is on this condition that they could hope to maintain

and strengthen the multifaceted support of the United Nations and the international community for a peaceful way out of the crisis in South Sudan.

Côte d'Ivoire therefore strongly encourages the parties to rise above partisan interests and make the compromises needed to implement the key steps required for the success of the transition phase. In that regard, my country hopes that the efforts of the South Sudanese parties will focus on determining the number of states and their borders, reviewing and drafting laws, incorporating the agreement into the interim Constitution and providing for the billeting, training and redeployment of the armed forces.

In addition, Côte d'Ivoire echoes the Secretary-General's call for operationalization of the transitional security arrangements, security sector reform and the facilitation of the activities of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. In that regard, we welcome the commitment of the Government of South Sudan to disbursing \$100 million to finance the reforms provided for in the Revitalized Agreement.

An inclusive political dialogue that takes into account the contribution that South Sudanese women can make in the crisis-recovery process is essential for achieving lasting peace and stability. Côte d'Ivoire would also like to stress the importance of strong regional ownership of the Revitalized Agreement. We also welcome the continued involvement of the African Union and IGAD's initiatives. The meeting held in Addis Ababa on 2 May upon the initiative of the IGAD Special Envoy enabled all stakeholders to identify the major obstacles to progress and propose the extension of the pre-transition period.

Despite the persistent challenges in South Sudan, the multidimensional contribution of UNMISS to stabilization and peacebuilding efforts in the country is well established. Côte d'Ivoire joins the support expressed for the Mission and urges the Special Representative and his entire team to persevere in their daily efforts so as to fulfil the deep aspirations of the people of South Sudan for peace and security. Nevertheless, the efforts of UNMISS will be unsuccessful if the will of the South Sudanese parties does not evidence a real commitment to emerging from the current crisis and writing a new chapter in their country's history.

Accordingly, my country hopes that the unity displayed by the main political actors in South Sudan in the context of the spiritual retreat organized on 9 and 10 April upon the Vatican's request will be translated into concrete action on the ground. There are human and moral dimensions to the unspeakable distress of the people of South Sudan, as Ms. Minagano pointed out, which must challenge all the actors in the country and lead them to make the sacrifices necessary to put an end to it. The people of South Sudan and the international community fervently urge them to do so.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank Special Representative David Shearer for his briefing, which was, as usual, very enlightening. It was particularly helpful that the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Andrew Gilmour, was able to brief us today on the human rights situation in South Sudan, which, as we know, lies at the heart of the conflict. I wish also to welcome in particular Ms. Lydia Minagano and thank her for her testimony from the ground and for her commitment to peace. Her statement recalled the central role of the women of South Sudan in the building of a lasting peace.

I will focus on three points: the peace process, the humanitarian and human rights situation, and the role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan is a historic opportunity to put an end to the conflict in South Sudan, and France deplores the fact that the pre-transition period was extended by six months. It is imperative that this be the last postponement. Whatever happens, a Government of national unity must be formed in November. We encourage President Kiir and Riek Machar to work together to find a compromise on the thorniest issues, including security arrangements and the demarcation of internal borders.

In order for the peace process to succeed, in addition to direct dialogue between the two main actors, a number of other conditions must be met. First, the parties must sincerely commit to reaching an agreement. We welcome the fact that the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches have taken a very useful initiative in this respect that is aimed at reminding the South Sudanese authorities of their responsibilities.

The second condition is for the international community to support this process. Here I should like to stress the key role of the Intergovernmental

Authority on Development (IGAD) and welcome the work of its Special Envoy for South Sudan, Mr. Ismail Wais. The African Union and the United Nations must likewise support IGAD's efforts. It is also important for non-signatory armed groups to rejoin the peace process, and here I refer in particular to the National Salvation Front.

Finally, the quota for women provided for in the agreement must be respected. Women must be able to participate actively and meaningfully in the peace process at all levels and on all issues.

The second key point I wish to make concerns the humanitarian aspect. The conflict in South Sudan is continuing to cause terrible suffering for the people of that country, in particular women and children. More than half of the population is suffering from food insecurity, and one third of South Sudanese remain displaced or refugees. The increase in the number of voluntary returns is encouraging, but we deplore the fact that at the same time intercommunal violence is causing fresh displacements. Although the ceasefire is generally respected, intercommunal and sexual violence have not decreased. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan mandated by the Human Rights Council indicated in its most recent report that these acts of violence and the grave violations of human rights accompanying them could, given their nature and their level, potentially constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The report notes restrictions on the freedoms of expression and movement in South Sudan as well as an increase in arbitrary detentions, the use of torture and forced disappearances. France therefore urges all parties to engage urgently in an in-depth dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We likewise call on all parties to establish and operationalize without delay the Hybrid Court for South Sudan with the support of the African Union. The perpetrators of these violations cannot remain unpunished. The prosecution of those responsible and reparations for victims are essential to fulfilling the conditions for a lasting peace. The Security Council also has a role to play and must make use of sanctions in order to punish and bring pressure to bear on those who commit such crimes. That is an important instrument of dissuasion.

France is equally concerned by the numerous grave violations against children, and we call on all parties that have already made commitments in this area to implement them, in particular in the areas of prevention, recruitment, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration. We call on the other parties to sign a plan of action and implement it. Here an ongoing dialogue must be maintained with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba.

We must also do everything in our power to meet the growing humanitarian needs, and the parties must ensure safe and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout the country's territory. This, of course, includes protecting humanitarian workers, which is an obligation on which we cannot falter. It is also crucial to continue hammering home the fact that the perpetrators of the crimes committed during this conflict must be brought to justice. There can be no impunity.

Thirdly, in this context UNMISS must fully implement its mandate. Protecting civilians, in particular women and children, must remain its top priority. We encourage the Mission to facilitate the return of displaced persons, as long as the returns are safe, voluntary, dignified and well-informed. We encourage UNMISS to support the peace process through the new provisions of its mandate, which allow for the provision of technical assistance to pre-transitional bodies and of help to the parties to assist them in making progress in implementing the Revitalized Agreement. We fully support the Special Representative in his good offices and encourage him to continue working closely with IGAD to that end. It would also be very useful for the Mission to continue providing support to the mobile courts and to develop that initiative. It is essential to bring justice closer to perpetrators if we wish to effectively combat impunity.

To conclude, I should like, on behalf of France, to most sincerely thank the United Nations teams and humanitarian workers who, in often difficult conditions, perform vital work for the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish at the outset to express our appreciation for the holding of this meeting and to thank Mr. David Shearer and Mr. Andrew Gilmour as well as Ms. Lydia Minagano for their important briefings.

Peru regrets that the transitional Government has not yet been formed, in keeping with the Revitalized

Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, owing to delays by the parties in the implementation of critical tasks during the pre-transition period. However, we trust that the six-month extension agreed upon on 2 May in Addis Ababa will enable the parties to complete their outstanding tasks and strengthen the major progress made thus far.

In this connection, we welcome the fact that the entry into force of the Revitalized Agreement has led to an appreciable drop in the level of political violence in the country. Nevertheless, it is our view that this is just a starting point that should encourage further progress in the peace process. We call on the parties to honour their commitments and to prepare for the transition period by giving priority to core outstanding issues such as force cantonment, selection, training, unification and deployment, and to the issue of determining the number and borders of states.

We are particularly concerned at the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan. There continue to be reports of incidents of such crimes, most of them attributed to Government forces. It is our hope that the action plan launched by the Government to tackle this issue will be translated into concrete action and that the next time we hear a report, there will have been zero victims.

We also deplore the fact that the humanitarian situation remains critical despite the fact that the conflict has eased. Food insecurity and the fragile economic situation in South Sudan continue to have a serious impact on civilians. Furthermore, we noted with interest the spontaneous return of 142,000 refugees, which shows that the people yearn for peace and to return to their homes. We must create conditions conducive to safe returns and provide the people with the basic services necessary for them to live dignified lives.

Here we welcome the response of the Central Emergency Response Fund, which provided \$11 million to deal specifically with almost 270,000 persons in various regions of South Sudan.

We are alarmed that there has been a consistent increase in intercommunal violence in the past few months, leading to 531 casualties, 192 per cent more than the previous year. We trust that a genuine commitment by the parties through the implementation of the agreement within the agreed timelines will make it possible to achieve peace and reconciliation throughout the country. We believe that we are close to

that objective, but we must not lose the momentum of the peace process. We commend the three churches on their efforts to reconcile the leaders in South Sudan and also welcome the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to help the parties to implement the key tasks needed to move to the transition stage. We welcome the joint visit of the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD to Juba on 10 May. The visit sent a powerful message to the parties and served as an effective endorsement of the peace process.

I conclude by highlighting the efforts undertaken by IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations, as well as the valuable work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. We reiterate the importance of maintaining unity in the Council in order to provide the political support and follow-up required to continue advancing the South Sudanese peace process and in working in close coordination with the African Union and IGAD.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank Ms. Minagano, Mr. Gilmour and Mr. Shearer for their important briefings.

The period under consideration saw some important developments in the process of implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which has been characterized thus far by its slowness. In May, the parties agreed by consensus to a six-month extension to the pre-transitional period in order to facilitate the resolution of critical aspects such as the delimitation of state boundaries and military cantonment and redeployment, *inter alia*. Progress in these areas has been limited and lacking in coordination and order.

In this context of political uncertainty, we are encouraged by the sustained ceasefire, ongoing rapprochement between the Government and the opposition, and the tireless initiatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other international actors, such as the Vatican which have enabled the revitalized peace agreement to survive and created forums in which to discuss ways to move forward and fulfil all pending tasks.

Unfortunately, this scenario has been plagued by threats against the civilian population and by a serious humanitarian crisis, including increasing acts of sexual violence and intercommunal conflicts, as well as the obstruction of access to United Nations Mission in

South Sudan (UNMISS) and humanitarian personnel. It is therefore essential that the militias and Government forces allow humanitarian personnel to move freely and without restrictions on the ground.

We are particularly concerned that 57 per cent of the population are suffering from severe or worse levels of food insecurity, with 45,000 persons enduring a potentially catastrophic situation. This reality is exacerbated by the negative impact of the lack of rain and the effects of climate change, in addition to the latent threat posed by the incidences of Ebola reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Beyond this political and humanitarian crisis, we are concerned about the vulnerability of the civilian population and serious reports of human and sexual rights violations. We are also concerned by the limitations faced by UNMISS personnel in terms of their capacity to address, monitor and investigate these violations.

With regard to crimes of a sexual nature, we are concerned that these cases of abuse are not being investigated or prosecuted and that the Government's actions to eradicate this scourge are inadequate. Impunity should not be the norm. We urge the Government to establish a process of accountability against perpetrators and we call for the provision of comprehensive services to survivors of sexual violence.

In this regard, we commend the Sudan People's Liberation Army for launching an action plan for sexual violence in conflict, focused on the accountability of commandos for acts perpetrated by their subordinates. We also welcome the initiative of UNMISS and the United Nations Development Programme to hold discussions with the authorities regarding the future establishment of mobile courts and the deployment of prosecutors in areas with insufficient or no prosecutorial capacity. All avenues must be pursued in order to establish accountability and put an end to this outrageous culture of impunity, while investing in mediation and peacebuilding efforts with the participation of women and youth.

It is imperative that this political process not become stagnant and that this new deadline be utilized in a wise and steady manner in order to ensure a sustainable South Sudanese-led peace process with enhanced regional and international support. There are no shortcuts or express routes to achieving peace in South Sudan. Now is the time to take advantage of the momentum and

foster political will and diplomatic creativity to avoid the failure of the revitalized agreement. This is the tool we must use; there is no contingency plan.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank the briefers — Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Shearer; Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Andrew Gilmour; and Ms. Lydia Minagano — for the information they have shared with us today.

Poland takes note of the extension of the pre-transition period in South Sudan. We continue to believe that the implementation of the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is crucial for durable peace and long-term stability in South Sudan. We call on all signatories to make good use of these additional months and spare no effort to step up preparations for a successful transition. The issue of transitional security arrangements is of particular importance in this regard.

We remain convinced that there can be no durable peace without inclusiveness and believe that the participation of women in the political process in South Sudan is indispensable. We also see a need for the genuine inclusion of youth and South Sudanese civil society in the peace process. It is our strong belief that only if its inclusivity is ensured will the transition be credible to the citizens of South Sudan and stand a chance of leading to sustainable peace.

Poland welcomes the fact that the permanent ceasefire continued to be widely respected throughout South Sudan and that the parties to the Agreement continued with their confidence-building measures. At the same time, we remain deeply concerned about the increased levels of intercommunal violence and persisting tensions. We believe that particular emphasis should be placed on reconciliatory efforts and supporting the intercommunal dialogue.

The human rights situation in South Sudan is also alarming. Serious human rights violations and abuses, as well as serious violations of international humanitarian law, persist and their perpetrators enjoy impunity. High levels of sexual violence against women and girls also continue to be an issue of grave concern. We call on the Government of South Sudan to spare no effort in bringing the perpetrators to justice and to fulfil its obligations with regard to the protection of civilians.

The dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan needs our full attention. Millions of South Sudanese are displaced and more than half of the population is suffering from food insecurity. There is no doubt that the people of South Sudan are in critical need of stability and State institutions that care for their citizens and provide basic services. We are convinced that this should be the end goal of the transition in South Sudan.

Poland believes that regional engagement remains critical to the sustainability of peace in South Sudan and considers that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its member States, as well as the African Union, have a key role to play in terms of the enforcement and monitoring of the implementation of the agreement. We believe that the Security Council should stand ready to support these efforts. Only the collective and unified approach of the international community can help to maintain this positive momentum in the peace process.

Let me conclude by thanking UNMISS for its tireless efforts to ensure the protection of civilians and a conducive environment for humanitarian actors to deliver their assistance and support the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. We are glad that, in the third quarter of this year, Poland will contribute to the efforts of UNMISS.

Ms. Bekwa (South Africa): We too would like to express our appreciation to the briefers today for their comprehensive briefings. We would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, David Shearer, and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for all the hard work that they are doing under difficult conditions in South Sudan.

I would like to focus my interventions on three key issues: the political situation, the security situation and the humanitarian situation.

On the political front, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan continues to be an integral part of creating engagement for constructive dialogue and democratic processes towards sustaining peace and development in South Sudan. Equally vital is that we encourage Mr. Riek Machar to return to Juba, as that will further enable the implementation of the agreement. In that regard, it is important that we all rally behind the peace process and encourage the implementation of all outstanding provisions. We concur with Special Representative of

the Secretary-General Shearer that this is the only path that will lead to peace and stability.

We note the decision of the parties on the unanimous agreement on the extension of six months of the pre-transitional period. However, we strongly urge the parties to do everything possible to implement all the remaining tasks of the pre-transitional period.

While we recognize and acknowledge all the positive strides that have been made, we are also cognisant that the situation in South Sudan remains very fragile, considering the slow progress and insufficient resources to sponsor the implementation of the revitalized agreement. We would like to urge the Council to support the implementation of the agreement, ensure that we keep the momentum going that has been created, and prevent South Sudan from sliding back into conflict.

We note with appreciation the work of the Independent Boundaries Commission, which has completed its work and submitted a report to the ministers of the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Addis Ababa on 19 June. We recognize that the boundary issues are still very divisive in nature and need to be treated in a transparent manner to minimize the risk of sparking conflict. We urge parties to continue working to resolve this matter.

On the security situation, my delegation is encouraged by the positive developments outlined in the Secretary-General's reports, particularly the report that the ceasefire is holding and that the violence has decreased. This is imperative to creating conditions conducive to making peace. South Africa wishes to call on all our international and South Sudanese partners to mobilize and make resources and relevant expertise available in support of the implementation of the agreement, especially with regard to the implementation of security sector reform.

For South Africa, the role of local communities in the security sector reform process is critical to ensuring local ownership, cultivating trust and confidence, and the legitimacy and success of the entire process. That can be achieved only through adequate and timely consultation with various stakeholders at all stages of the process. But more important to the process is the inclusion of women, as they are key to any sustainable conflict resolution.

On the humanitarian situation, we welcome the improvement of humanitarian access, which is a critical lifeline for thousands of vulnerable people. We further welcome the reports that, owing to increased peace, along with some positive signs of change, the security situation has improved, which has allowed some internally displaced persons to return, while cautiously also exploring options to return to other areas of relocation.

South Africa urges international stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes and to support efforts to repatriate and resettle internally displaced persons and refugees returning to South Sudan, as well as to help rebuild their communities and livelihoods. The pledge of \$100 million by the Government of South Sudan towards the implementation of the agreement is a positive step. We urge the Government to urgently disburse the funds for the implementation of the critical pending tasks.

In closing, we remain steadfast in our commitment to playing a key role in supporting the peace process in South Sudan through the mediation efforts of President Ramaphosa, as Chair 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. We continue to reaffirm that these efforts are always geared towards complementing the African Union's efforts, as well as IGAD processes. We continue to commend the hard work being done by IGAD in trying to support the South Sudan peace process.

South Sudan continues to be a critical part of the region, as its stability is interdependent with that of many countries in the region. More importantly, however, the people of South Sudan deserve to finally enjoy the tangible peace dividends that have eluded them for many decades.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I would first like to thank all the briefers. I hope that David Shearer and Andrew Gilmour will forgive me if I single out Lydia Minagano first in my remarks. This is the second time since March that we have had a very impressive woman from civil society in South Sudan briefing the Council.

While we heard from Mr. Shearer and Mr. Gilmour about the improvements with regard to the security situation and the overall human rights situation, there is still a lot of sexual and gender-based violence, which remains at a worrisome level and is unacceptable.

Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by the conflict. We heard the heartbreaking story about women and children who are displaced in camps. We have to continue to focus on that. We also fully support what many have said about the need to have women participate in the political pre-transitional and transitional processes. The quota must be reached and it must be an inclusive process.

Also, impunity must end. We still have not made progress on the hybrid court. We need to see that those who have committed the atrocities are actually brought before the court. With regard to the sanctions that we have imposed on South Sudan, those who are committing these crimes have also been inscribed on that list. Therefore, I also request that David Shearer, among his many tasks, continue to work very hard with civil society and look in particular at what is happening and not happening with regard to sexual violence, women's participation and impunity.

I would also like to thank Mr. Shearer for his engagement and that of all the peacekeepers. They are doing a fantastic job. He mentioned how much they have done to protect refugees. He provided figures with regard to their return to their places of origin. It is very important that he continue to support that. As he himself highlighted, those returns must be safe, informed, voluntary and dignified.

Unfortunately, the fact remains that the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is still obstructed. It still does not have full freedom of movement. In that regard, I also urge the Government and all actors to guarantee that UNMISS can do its work.

I agree that the postponement to November of the deadline with regard to the establishment of the transitional Government must be the final postponement. As Mr. Shearer said, and based on our own analysis, there is no task that the pre-transitional Government authorities can accomplish that cannot be fulfilled by a transitional one. I appreciate what Mr. Shearer said about his activities relating to local reconciliation, but while it is very important that the communities get along, we have to go to the national level. It is absolutely essential that Mr. Kiir and Mr. Machar meet and do their job. That is what the people on the ground ask and expect of their leaders.

With regard to the political process, we are watching the important close cooperation between the

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and the United Nations. I would also like to highlight IGAD's outreach activities with non-signatories and the Holy See's plan for a spiritual retreat. If it helps, it will be very good to continue to do that and make some progress on reconciliation.

Lastly, coming back to human rights, I would like to underline the importance of guaranteeing fundamental freedoms in South Sudan. The two vital aspects are that human rights defenders must be able to do their job and freedom of expression must be guaranteed. We are appalled by the conviction of Peter Biar Ajak, a journalist who criticized the Government. This is about life in the international community. If all the journalists who criticized Governments were put in jail, there would not be enough jails. Freedom of expression is fundamental, including in South Sudan.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would like to thank our briefers. I want to express our strong support for Special Representative Shearer and the men and women serving in South Sudan on behalf of all of us here, and to thank them for all that they are doing on the ground.

On many occasions the United Kingdom has welcomed the genuine hope for a peaceful South Sudan that came with the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in September. It was inspiring to hear from Mr. Shearer about the enthusiasm and the desire of people all over South Sudan for that peace agreement to turn into substantive and lasting peace. Today I want to express once again the strong and unwavering support that the United Kingdom has for the people of South Sudan as they seek peace. Today's briefers reminded us, of course — and in that respect I pay particular tribute to Ms. Minagano — that the people of South Sudan cannot be expected to wait any longer for the implementation of lasting peace, not least given the still large numbers of people who are facing acute food insecurity — almost 7 million, according to a report last week from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. I am struck by the fact that 89 per cent of those surveyed believe that lasting peace is possible by the end of the year, despite the fact that 79 per cent of them knew of someone in their family who had been killed or forced to flee. There is therefore still a real opportunity in South Sudan.

Despite a promising start, however, crucial tasks remain unsolved, particularly with regard to security-

sector reform, agreement on State boundaries and the unification of forces. Today I want to urge all the parties to make the compromises needed to unlock progress in those areas. We supported the agreement in May this year to extend the pre-transition period, as a sign of the parties' desire to continue to work for peace. I now want to echo the calls of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other Council members for Salva Kiir and Riek Machar to meet and redouble their efforts to ensure that a transitional Government is formed in November. There should be no more delay, indeed there need be no more delays.

I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his and his team's efforts to support the hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese still living in protection-of-civilian sites. We share the desire that those sites should be reduced in size as the peace agreement delivers genuine improvements on the ground. We also want to point out that the Government of South Sudan has a primary responsibility for creating an environment conducive to returns and urge it to play its part in creating the stability necessary for the safe, durable and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

The United Kingdom also shares the concerns that Assistant Secretary-General Gilmour expressed today about restrictions on the political and civic space. Despite the extension of the pre-transition period, progress on justice and accountability continues to stall, and defence and security forces, including the National Security Service, continue to threaten and intimidate people perceived as critics. We are deeply troubled by the findings of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan with regard to responsibility at the highest level within the National Security Service for the abduction and killing of the human rights activist Dong Samuel Luak and the writer and opposition member Aggrey Idri, and by the failure of the Government to investigate or punish those involved. We urge the Government of South Sudan to meet its commitment to taking steps to end the culture of impunity, and in particular to sign the necessary agreements with the African Union to establish the hybrid court.

Ms. Minagano's presence here today is an important reminder for us all of the vital role of civil society in the peace process. She outlined a number of areas where we need to see action on delivering the agreement. As I said before, her account and that of the Special Representative show that after decades of violence,

people across the country are starting to work for rapprochement and build peace. The dire situation in South Sudan has been of serious concern to the Council for some time, but the peace agreement that was signed represented a new start and a new dawn. Around the table, we all desperately want to see progress, and there is still time for it. But it must not be wasted. There should be no more delays. The two main actors, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, have a responsibility to their people to come together and resolve the outstanding issues. The region and all of us around the table must support them. We must not let down the people of South Sudan, who still have such hope in their hearts.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I would like to thank the briefers, Mr. David Shearer, Mr. Andrew Gilmour and Ms. Lydia Minagano, for their informative briefings. It is also always a pleasure to see my brother Mr. Akuei Malwal, Permanent Representative of South Sudan, in the Chamber.

The Government of Equatorial Guinea deplores the delays in the implementation of the political and security tasks set out in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, signed on 12 September 2018. In that regard, we support the decision to extend by six months the pre-transition period for completing the immediate political and security tasks, since that will be a significant step forward in restoring peace to South Sudan.

We would like to remind the parties that the six months should not be wasted. On the contrary, it is the moment when they must assume their responsibilities and demonstrate the political will necessary for the full and timely implementation of the peace agreement, in letter and spirit, considering that it has already become clear that an inclusive political solution is the only way to achieve peace in South Sudan. My country hopes that the parties will work to make solid and rapid progress in resolving the transitional arrangements. The parties must also honour their commitments and refrain from acts that could cause an already fragile situation to deteriorate.

As a gesture emphasizing the determination and commitment of the Government of South Sudan to the peace process, we welcome its promise to contribute \$100 million to complete the outstanding activities of the pre-transition period, and we encourage it to disburse

that funding in a timely and transparent manner. We also encourage donors to continue to provide support to the Government so that the Revitalized Agreement can be fully implemented. While we commend the general respect for the ceasefire, we deplore the persistent sporadic fighting between Government forces and the opposition, as well as among the opposition groups. We also firmly condemn the continuing prevalence of sexual violence and brutality against civilians, and we urge the parties to spare no effort to bring those responsible for those atrocities to justice. We are equally concerned about the humanitarian situation and the attacks on humanitarian workers and the personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, which are totally unacceptable. We therefore urge the parties, particularly the Government, to ensure a more secure and supportive environment for the humanitarian workers who are working tirelessly to provide assistance to South Sudan's most vulnerable civilians.

In conclusion, my Government appreciates the mediation and commitment of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, as well as the staff of the United Nations team and non-governmental organizations for their work in providing humanitarian assistance to the population. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the African Union Commission for its active involvement in the collective efforts for peace in South Sudan. We want to reiterate our support for the people of South Sudan and its authorities in the peace process. My country maintains special ties with our brother country of South Sudan, and we continue to hope that it can overcome its current adversities and that its people can find a definitive solution to their problems.

Mr. Repkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the situation in South Sudan and on the peace process there. We listened attentively to all of today's briefers. We welcome the significant progress in the implementation by the parties of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan of 12 September 2018. It is important that they have demonstrated a willingness to resolve their differences by seeking what are often difficult compromises.

We believe that the decision by the parties to the conflict to extend the pre-transitional period was fully justified, and we realize that a number of objective

factors prevented its completion by the 12 May deadline. It will be important for the regional actors to maintain a united approach, as was shown at the session of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) at which the agreement of the parties was approved. We see that as a practical realization of the principle of African solutions to African problems. Besides that, the potential for effective cooperation among the United Nations, the Security Council and the relevant regional organizations is still there. We hope that will help the national reconciliation process, and that the IGAD member States will continue to support the South Sudanese peace process despite their other pressing issues.

We have noted the establishment and preliminary operationalization of the structures and mechanisms provided for in the agreement. We are pleased that the level of armed violence in the country and the numbers of human rights violations have decreased. An increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons have expressed the desire to return to their permanent homes. In our view, all of that is linked to the implementation of confidence-building measures and contacts between the opposing parties on the ground.

We join the Secretary-General's call to the South Sudanese parties to focus on security issues and complete the constitutional amendment process. In our view, only the parties' full and comprehensive compliance with the commitments they have undertaken will increase mutual trust and ensure that they do not repeat the mistakes of the past. We call on the South Sudanese parties to the conflict to make every effort to implement the outstanding provisions of the Revitalized Agreement. That is in their own interests as well as those of the country's ordinary citizens. South Sudan deserves to live in peace.

We believe that the positive momentum that we have seen in the South Sudanese peace process cannot be attributed solely to increased sanctions pressure and the introduction of an arms embargo. It is first and foremost thanks to the contribution of the regional mediators. Moreover, to some degree the embargo prevented the region from being more flexible in supporting the settlement through its own security initiatives.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I too would like to join others in expressing our appreciation to Special Representative David Shearer, Assistant Secretary-General Andrew Gilmour and Ms. Lydia Minagano

for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the Chamber.

We can see a number of positive trends in South Sudan, as attested to by the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/491). A permanent ceasefire has largely taken hold across the country, made possible by confidence- and trust-building at the sub-national level, much of it facilitated by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). There has been a decrease in armed conflicts, although sporadic clashes persist. We see refugees returning home and internally displaced persons (IDPs) voluntarily leaving UNMISS protection-of-civilian sites. But we are mindful that those gains are fragile and that their sustainability hinges on the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. My delegation would like to make three points today.

First, the Revitalized Agreement is the best and only option for South Sudan. We have made it clear before in this Chamber that we believe there is no plan B. We commend the continued engagement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to preserve the Revitalized Agreement and bring non-signatories into the peace process, and my delegation applauds the convening of a spiritual retreat for the South Sudan presidency in the Vatican in April. The extension of the pre-transitional period must be used to expedite all pending tasks, including transitional security arrangements, the resolution of boundary issues and the incorporation of the Agreement into the Transitional Constitution. Important steps have been taken on security arrangements over the past month, including the inspection and assessment of cantonment sites. Indonesia fully endorses the role of UNMISS in supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, using its good offices and by providing advice and technical assistance. We echo the call for the South Sudanese Government to disburse the funds for critical pending tasks in a timely and transparent manner.

Secondly, Indonesia stresses how vital it is to protect civilians and observe international humanitarian law. We are concerned about the increase in intercommunal violence and the continued human rights violations across the country. Restrictions on its movements have repeatedly prevented UNMISS from implementing its mandated tasks of protecting

civilians and investigating human rights violations, and we believe that accountability for such violations must be upheld. Ordinary citizens will not feel peace dividends if the perpetrators escape justice. UNMISS should continue to support capacity-building in the rule of law and to strengthen the judicial presence, including through mobile courts. My delegation recognizes the efforts made to promote human rights in the country, including through its recent ratification of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Thirdly, we appeal for enhanced humanitarian assistance for South Sudan. A durable solution is needed for the 1.9 million IDPs and 2.3 million refugees. More than half of the South Sudanese population, about 6.45 million people, are facing acute food insecurity. A further 45,000 are on the brink of catastrophe. South Sudan needs resources to enable it to prevent and anticipate the possible spread of Ebola from neighbouring countries. All the stakeholders on the ground must provide humanitarian actors with the necessary space for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

We are at a critical juncture in South Sudan's quest for peace. The role of UNMISS is now more valuable than ever, and Indonesia is proud to have contributed both military and police peacekeepers to UNMISS.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kuwait.

I thank Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights; and Ms. Lydia Minagano for their briefings.

In my statement, I will focus on three key points: political developments, the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the humanitarian situation.

On political developments, following the agreement of the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to extend the pre-transition process to November and the return of the majority of leaders to Juba, we hope that South Sudan will take advantage of this opportunity to achieve security and stability. We call for further measures to build trust among the various political actors. In that connection, we commend the

efforts of the Holy See to gather the South Sudanese leaders and to call on them to make further progress in order to overcome the wounds of the past and ensure a better future. We also commend the role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, including the recent efforts of its Member States to encourage non-signatory parties to the revitalized agreement to join it.

On the Mission's mandate, our meeting today is taking place at an important and delicate moment for UNMISS. While the security situation remains unchanged, the implementation of the pillars of the Mission's mandate remains crucial for the Security Council. We are pleased with the Mission's role in strengthening and building institutional capacities in South Sudan, particularly in the areas of security and justice. We call on all parties to maintain their cooperation with the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and to facilitate the Mission's movement.

With respect to the humanitarian situation, we welcome the increasing number of returning displaced persons and refugees. We hope to see that process continued in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner, and that those returning will be able to access basic services, on top of which are health and education services. We also welcome community reconciliation efforts in South Sudan and hope that they will be felt at all levels.

Moreover, we reiterate our condemnation of child recruitment and sexual violence in conflict, whoever the perpetrator may be. We call for the Mission's freedom of movement to be guaranteed, as provided for by the status-of-forces agreement. We also call for its tasks to be facilitated and for it to be allowed to accomplish its mandate to the fullest.

In conclusion, fewer than five months remain in the pre-transitional period, representing a crucial turning point in the history of South Sudan. We hope that we will be able to contribute both within and outside the Security Council to ensuring that the friendly people of South Sudan are able to realize their legitimate aspirations for the future.

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

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. President, on your successful presidency for the month of June. As you are about to conclude your tenure at the Security Council, we would like to thank you for the cooperation and friendship that you and your Mission have extended to us during the past two years. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome and thank Ambassador David Shearer, Mr. Andrew Gilmour and Ms. Minagano for their interventions and their reporting on the situation in South Sudan.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, we welcome the report of the Secretary General (S/2019/491), which covers the period from February to May 2019. We want to reiterate that confidence-building measures between the signatories of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan are improving steadily and that, as the Secretary-General reported, the revitalized peace agreement mechanisms and committees are meeting in Juba as scheduled.

While Mr. Riek Machar is not in Juba, I can assure the Council that close contact is being maintained between him and President Salva Kiir. We were all, of course, disappointed, as we were hoping that they would fly together from Rome to Juba. Nevertheless, we think that he will be in Juba before November.

As the Council is aware, the implementation needs major funding. As reported, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has pledged to allocate \$100 million to jump start the implementation of the peace agreement. Already some \$2 million has been spent towards food and cantonment preparation activities in greater Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal. Challenges exist, however. The peace implementation needs technical assistance and experts, which we hope the international community will provide.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the region and those international donors who have been supporting the revitalized peace agreement in terms of money, humanitarian support and personnel.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.