



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8859th meeting

Wednesday, 15 September 2021, 10.10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Flynn	(Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Kenya	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam	Mr. Pham

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2021/784)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2021/784)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; Ms. Reena Ghelani, Director for Operations and Advocacy in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Merekaje Lorna Nanjia, civil society activist.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/784, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

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

On 12 September, South Sudan marked the three-year anniversary of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. That agreement provides the only broadly agreed framework through which long-term stability and durable peace can be achieved in South Sudan.

I am pleased to report some positive developments registered since my latest briefing in June (see S/PV.8801). On 30 August, we saw the inauguration of the reconstituted Parliament, members of which were sworn in on 2 August. South Sudan made the historic appointment of the country's first woman Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and woman Deputy Speaker of the Council of States, indicating

a commitment to increasing the number of women in leadership positions.

Those positive steps must now be complemented by the reconstitution of the subnational State legislatures. That development paves the way for a much-delayed charge on the legislative programme envisaged by the peace agreement. The legislative agenda is extensive. It includes the passage of priority bills already prepared by the National Constitution Amendment Committee on the reform of security, financial, judicial, constitutional and electoral institutions.

Certainly, the reconstitution of the national Parliament presents an opportunity to inject urgency into the implementation of the peace process. A ministerial task force has now presented a bill on the constitution-making process to the Minister of Justice and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The constitution-making process is an important peace process benchmark, as well as being a critical step forward in its own right. It should signify a social contract between all South Sudanese on the arrangements by which they can live together in peace and harmony. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations country team are working with local organizations to ensure that constitutional consultations are inclusive and voices outside the political elites, particularly at grassroots levels, are heard.

As provided by the peace agreement, electoral preparations should be conducted in parallel with the constitution-making process. The recommendations outlined in the report of the needs assessment mission offer an opportunity for UNMISS to provide technical support that will enhance the likelihood of a free and fair electoral process that will be acceptable to all. President Kiir has himself recently acknowledged that an open and fair election is critical for South Sudan to proceed with its transition. He has emphasized that its preparation needs an early start.

There is no consensus on the exact timelines. Relying on the two extensions to the transitional period, the most generous interpretation would see elections in early 2023. That would require the completion of a voters roll by mid- to late 2022. Unless there are adequate technical and political preparations, the event could be catastrophic instead of a national turning point. For those reasons, we believe the Council should issue every encouragement to those involved, including

the international community, to focus their attention on that task.

The launch of the consultative process for the commission for truth, reconciliation and healing is another important development. It will allow for public acknowledgement of past human rights violations and lay the basis for support to the victims of conflict. That is a central element to healing and subsequent stability.

In my most recent briefing, I informed the Council of the establishment of a high-level coordination committee composed of senior representatives from the Government and UNMISS. That arrangement has improved the freedom of movement of UNMISS patrols. Consequently, our support for the delivery of humanitarian goods and services, our ability to move freely to hotspots and the resupply of our temporary operating bases have improved.

We acknowledge the unity Government's progress on the implementation of chapter four of the agreement. The contemplated economic reforms are intended to improve macroeconomic stability and the transparency of public finances. One of the first tasks of the new Parliament will be to pass the budget. Efforts in public finance management, with the support of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, have enabled South Sudan to address salary arrears and harmonize exchange rates. It is critical to encourage the Government to sustain those efforts, ensuring that economic benefits filter down to all South Sudanese people.

While we commend those positive developments, we are mindful of the significant challenges that still face the peace process.

The realization of the transitional security arrangements is pivotal to almost every aspect of the agreement. For example, the electoral process can only be guaranteed by an impartial, unified security apparatus. The lack of progress in the implementation of the transitional security arrangements is now a major challenge. We commend the efforts of IGAD and the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to encourage the parties to reach consensus on the unified command and control structures of the new national security institutions. President Kiir has himself assured that that will be agreed imminently, as will the graduation of uniformed personnel currently stationed in training centres. We encourage the parties

to compromise in the interest of achieving that vital benchmark without further delay.

An unfortunate result of the slow pace in the implementation of the transitional security arrangements are the fractures within the official opposition, namely the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO). The desertions by forces led by Generals Simon Gatwech Dual, Johnson Olony and Thomas Mabor Dhul and the conflicts between those groups and the forces loyal to Riek Machar will undermine the peace process. At the political level, that has exacerbated the imbalance between the main parties — the main pillars — to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

It is imperative that the parties put aside adversarial politics to work as a unity Government in support of peace. For that reason, I joined the IGAD Council of Ministers and the South Sudan presidency in calling on both factions to resolve their differences peacefully and politically. UNMISS will, in any event, be closely monitoring the evolution of the divisions within the SPLM-IO, given that they could ignite violence within internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

Monitoring bodies report a decline in fighting between parties to the agreement. While that is positive, the increase in subnational violence, as seen in Greater Tonj, Tambura and elsewhere, is of great concern. The situation is aggravated by the proliferation of small arms and, outside Juba, underresourced State governance and security structures. There have been efforts to address some of that violence, including by UNMISS. While reiterating the Government's overall and primary responsibility to do more to protect civilians, we are increasing our grassroots engagements to promote community harmony and making available alternative rule-of-law institutions.

The redesignation of all protection of civilians sites as IDP camps has been largely successful, save for Malakal, which remains a protection of civilians site. One of the positive results of that process has been greater flexibility on how we utilize our peacekeepers. Increasing the number of temporary operation bases and long-range patrols has allowed our peacekeeping force to provide a security presence and create space for political reconciliation in hotspots such as Tambura, Tonj and Koch. We are also extending our reach, our transport technologies and the periods that we are

present in areas of intercommunal conflict during the rainy season so as to extend our peacekeeping force from a six-month to a full twelve-month operation each year.

Both the Government and South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA) have blamed each other for insecurity on the Juba-Nimule road, the arterial route linking South Sudan to its southern neighbours. The Government has recently paused its participation in the Community of Sant'Egidio-led talks, accusing SSOMA of responsibility for the attacks on civilians on this road and, accordingly, of engaging in talks in bad faith. For our part, we are committed to supporting the work of the Community of Sant'Egidio in bringing the holdout parties within the framework of the peace agreement.

We are concerned about the increasingly restricted civic space, the detention of journalists and leaders of civil society groups and the shutting down of Internet service providers following the calls for non-violent protests by the People's Coalition for Civic Action. We urge all participants in the peace process to continue to work together in a respectful and inclusive manner so as to expand civic and political space for an intra-South Sudanese dialogue. Concomitantly, the restriction of this space is not auspicious for the creation of an environment in which elections can take place.

I have text here on the dire humanitarian situation, but in view of the imminent briefing by Ms. Reena Ghelani, it is only necessary to say that we witness these developments with considerable trepidation. We are particularly concerned following the recent announcement by the World Food Programme that they have exhausted their resources for the current year and will not be distributing rations and food to a number of IDP and protection of civilians camps until 2022. For as many as 100,000 people, this will push those dependent on such food aid into famine, as well as exacerbate tension between IDPs and humanitarian agencies.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Council that UNMISS is committed to continuously examine and improve the impact of our interventions and, more broadly, to support the South Sudanese people in their search for a sustainable and overdue peace. I thank the members of the Council for the support we have received.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Ghelani.

Ms. Ghelani: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. In December 2020, the Council was briefed on the worsening food insecurity situation. This followed a warning to the Council that famine was looming in several countries, including South Sudan, in September of 2020 (see S/PV.8761) — one year ago.

Today, I will update the Council on the current humanitarian situation, the impact of the humanitarian response, the ongoing drivers of food insecurity and humanitarian needs and what is needed to prevent reaching the brink of famine again next year.

People in South Sudan currently face the highest levels of food insecurity recorded since independence. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said, over 60 per cent of the population are severely food insecure. The combined effects of conflict, climate shocks, displacement, the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the lack of investment in infrastructure and basic services have driven them deeper into need. More than 8.3 million people currently need humanitarian assistance, including 1.4 million children.

The United Nations estimated in December 2020 that 2.4 million people faced emergency levels of acute food insecurity — corresponding to the Integrated Phase Classification 4 or above — between April and July 2021. Further, some 108,000 people faced catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity — Integrated Phase Classification 5 — at the height of the lean season. People projected to be in Phase 5 were in the counties of Akobo, Aweil South, Pibor, Tonj East, Tonj North and Tonj South. In five of these six locations, conflict was the major driver fuelling displacement and leading to the loss of lives, assets and livelihoods and disproportionately impacting women and girls.

How has the humanitarian response progressed, and have we been able to stave off famine? Humanitarian agencies scaled up the multisectoral response in the at risk counties and showed extraordinary commitment to leave no one behind and pre-empt a further deterioration of the crisis. They reached over half a million people between January and June. This substantive response has been essential to averting famine. Humanitarians have prevented children from dying from chronic diseases as a result of undernourishment, and they have

managed to give hundreds of thousands of people a lifeline out of starvation.

This response, of course, has been part of a larger aid operation in South Sudan, where aid agencies assisted some 4.4 million people across the country between January and June with food, medical and nutritional care, water and sanitation, protection support and shelter.

Notwithstanding these gains, there has been limited change in the behaviour by non-State armed groups and certain youth groups that continue to hamper access. Since the beginning of this year, four aid workers have lost their lives in the line of duty and more than 170 aid workers had to relocate due to security threats. The destruction and looting of humanitarian facilities has continued, including the looting of over 1,000 metric tons of food, valued at more than \$1 million. In addition, frequent attacks on civilians and humanitarian convoys and roadside ambushes, in particular along the key supply routes, including the major pipeline in the south that the Special Representative mentioned, have disrupted operations and resulted in increased prices of essential goods for an already vulnerable population.

An alarming development this year has been interference of aid activities by armed youth. Humanitarians appreciate the Government's support and engagement on that issue and its promotion of the engagement of joint high-level missions with youth groups in parts of the country. The Government's leadership in that regard is greatly appreciated. Humanitarians also appreciate the support provided by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan through long-range patrols and the setting up of temporary operating bases in several locations, which have supported access for humanitarians.

This challenging situation has been further compounded by new emerging needs as a result of the sub-national violence referred to by the Special Representative. For example, the further deterioration in the security situation in Western Equatoria, has led to the displacement of 80,000 people and the interruption of assistance to thousands. Armed conflict in Central Equatoria, mainly with non-signatory parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and other armed factions, has also displaced more than 120,000 people since the beginning of the year.

The humanitarian needs have been further exacerbated by exceptional flooding for a third consecutive year, so far affecting nearly 420,000 people. With more heavy rains expected in the coming months, thousands of people will be forced to move from their places and homes and will require assistance and livelihood support. As South Sudan emerges from the lean season with hopes for the harvest season, there is a risk that flooding may lessen any food security gains, which could contribute to extreme food insecurity recurring next year.

The South Sudan humanitarian response plan of \$1.7 billion is the largest ever for South Sudan, but is only 56 per cent funded. The Central Emergency Response Fund and the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund have been critical tools in our response. Together, these tools have provided almost \$100 million to support food insecurity education and protection.

I thank the donors who have supported humanitarian operations in South Sudan for their generosity. The generous help that Member States have provided has helped to avert famine. As the Special Representative indicated, despite the resources allocated so far, funding challenges forced the World Food Programme (WFP) to reduce the scale of food rations in all refugee, protection of civilian and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps since April, affecting 700,000 people. As mentioned, in October they will be forced to stop support in other IDP camps due to supplies being reallocated or reprioritized to counties where people were at the brink of famine. Should resources become available, WFP would resume assistance to the 106,000 people affected in these camps.

South Sudan is also currently on alert for a resurgence of COVID-19, driven by the Delta variant. Measures adopted to mitigate and prevent the spread of the virus in South Sudan have had limited impact owing to the challenges in the ability of the health system to carry out vaccinations and low uptake of the vaccination.

Although we prevented a catastrophe this year, with all the challenges faced, we will have to remain ever vigilant to ensure that we do not come to the brink of a famine again in South Sudan next year.

Looking ahead, what do we need to support the humanitarian response into 2022?

First and foremost, all actors with influence must work to de-escalate the violence. What most civilians want is durable peace. While the peace process has had a real impact in parts of South Sudan, its implementation has progressed, as Council members have heard, at a slow pace and violence continues to erupt.

Secondly, humanitarians need continued support from the Government of South Sudan for safe and unhindered access to reach people who desperately need help.

And thirdly, while we need resources now for the humanitarian response plan to sustain the response, we also urge donors to give funding at scale early in 2022 so that we can get ahead of needs, which are anticipated to rise.

The President: I thank Ms. Ghelani for her briefing.

I give the floor to Ms. Lorna.

Ms. Lorna: I am deeply honoured and humbled by the invitation to brief the Security Council during this meeting dedicated to discussing the situation in my beloved country. Today, I address the Council, not as the Secretary General of the South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme, but as a citizen of South Sudan and an activist.

With Council members' permission, I should like to add my voice in emphasizing the importance of this meeting, especially at a time when the people of South Sudan are faced with many uncertainties and dilemmas regarding the immediate future of our country.

While we appreciate that steps have been taken towards the implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, they have mostly been minimal, inconsistent, intermittent and taken at a slow pace. The parties do not seem committed to the full implementation of the peace agreement, thereby prolonging the transitional period and delaying critical governance reforms stipulated therein. Many citizens feel that the delayed implementation serves only the interest of the political elite, but prolongs the suffering of the masses. Hence, there is a need to exert more pressure and call for expeditious implementation of the peace agreement in letter and spirit.

The unhealed wounds and continued violence have left the country deeply fragmented and bleeding. Following the signing of the revitalized agreement,

there has been a reduction in violence associated with the national-level political conflict. Paradoxically, since 2018 there has been a systematic increase in the scale and intensity of so-called intercommunal conflicts in virtually every region of the country, resulting in higher civilian casualties. Women and girls in particular have been affected by conflict-related sexual violence and sexual and gender-based violence. That has resulted in massive and continued displacement, which many citizens are starting to think is by design. Examples of that are the violence and killings in Tambura/Yambio and Kitgwang and the killing of Catholic nuns and others on the Nimule road, just to mention a few. Almost everyone in the country is living in fear of armed robbery, sexual violence and all forms of violence, including the possible resumption of full-fledged violent conflict involving the key political actors in the country.

The citizens do not know who to trust any more. It is therefore prudent for the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to expedite the unification of the forces and implement comprehensive security sector reform and transformation and a responsive nationwide disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, without discrimination or favour.

While there are steps being taken to establish mechanisms of transitional justice, such as the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, to initiate the constitution-making process and to advance the ongoing public finance management and reform processes, the tendency to postpone critical issues — such as managing diversity and ethnicity, healing and reconciliation, accountability, reform and transformation — seems evident. The leadership seems hesitant to address those issues in an inclusive and decisive manner. In that connection, I advise that such important processes be led by independent and reputable South Sudanese personalities who have not participated in the immediately previous transitional governance arrangements and involve internationally reputable personalities to support the process.

Human right violations in South Sudan occur in different forms, ranging from keeping soldiers in cantonment areas and training camps for over a year now with minimal access to food, water, shelter, sanitary facilities and sanitary materials for women to the intimidating operating environment for civil society, women's groups, media and now the private sector, as

well as immense restriction on freedom of association, whereby holding workshops and public gatherings always require permission from State security, just to mention a few.

On 30 August, the Government rolled out heavy military hardware and deployed soldiers on the streets of Juba to deter a proposed protest. Traders who chose to keep their shops closed on 30 August owing to fear were fined. That further intimidated citizens and exacerbated the trauma. The big question is: Why would the State terrorize its own citizens?

It may be hard to believe, but since independence until today, not a single primary or secondary school has been constructed through national budget allocation. Education, health, water and roads do not seem to be national priorities. Youth unemployment is high and women remain largely excluded from national processes. Salaries for public servants, including the security sector, are paid sporadically, leading to the accumulation of unpaid salaries for over 6, 10 or even 15 months. Though there are reform initiatives, such as the public finance management reform process, to realize accountability, there is a need for adequate political will from the top leadership of the country and an independent judiciary and legislature to support the call for accountability and enable key institutions, such as the Anti-corruption Commission and the National Audit Chamber, to effectively operate.

Based on my engagement with the South Sudanese from all works of life in an effort to develop scenarios for South Sudan in 2025, the people of South Sudan continue to ask the following questions. First, when will the country mark an end to interim and transitional governance? Secondly, how can an inclusive, participatory and people-driven constitution-making process be realized in an environment where citizens need to obtain permission to hold any workshop or public gathering? Thirdly, how can we open up space for inclusivity and wider participation in national affairs, including the participation of women, youth and marginalized communities in national affairs?

Having said all this, I wish to advise and recommend the following.

First, in the spirit of resolution 2567 (2021) adopted in March, the Security Council should authorize the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to support the implementation of key legislative reforms and an inclusive and participatory constitution-making

process and facilitate the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections in South Sudan. That would help us.

Secondly, the Council should authorize UNMISS, in line with subparagraph 3 (a) (vii) of resolution 2567 (2021), to include provision of capacity-building, support and facilitation to the Government of South Sudan, not only in the rule of law and justice sector, but also in the governance and accountability sector.

Thirdly, the Council should authorize UNMISS to facilitate periodic engagement with the South Sudanese Government and civil society or citizens groups to build confidence and support implementation of the 2018 revitalized peace agreement.

I wish to mention that the struggle and sacrifice of the people of South Sudan for independence was in search of emancipation and a quest for establishing a State where every person enjoys justice, liberty and prosperity. However, the contrary is true: as we speak, only a chosen few enjoy the proceeds of our independence. In a real sense, the State is detached from the people. Investment in service delivery is minimal with no major State development projects in the country. Basic service delivery has been relegated to humanitarian agencies, and we truly thank them for their support. South Sudan could have done better and can do better if only the leadership were committed to peace and stability in the country.

The President: I thank Ms. Lorna for her briefing.

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

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Haysom, as always, for his dedication to South Sudan and today for a very timely briefing. I commend Ms. Ghelani, as always, for her work in coordinating the humanitarian response in South Sudan. I offer special thanks to Ms. Nanjia for her helpful and frank remarks, as well as her valuable recommendations to the Council. They were heard.

Let me begin by saying the United States reiterates its support for the people of South Sudan, and we reaffirm our strong commitment to supporting the sovereignty, independence and the territorial integrity of South Sudan.

Over the past two months, the Government of South Sudan has reconstituted the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and sworn in its members.

We certainly welcome this as a step forward in the peace process, but continue to urge South Sudanese leaders to follow through on their commitments and expedite the implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan through the completion of graduation and deployment of unified security forces, through the initiation of a permanent constitution-making process, the operationalization of the hybrid court and other transitional justice mechanisms and, of course, preparation for free and fair elections.

The United States takes note of the 15 July report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/661) presented pursuant to resolution 2567 (2021), which provided an assessment of security, procedural and logistical requirements needed to prepare for elections in South Sudan. Pursuing free and fair elections that are inclusive and peaceful and that reflect the will of the South Sudanese people will be critical for a transition towards a stable, democratic and self-reliant State. However, credible elections that reflect the will of the people must be preceded by an inclusive, transparent constitution-drafting process carried out in an environment that permits freedom of expression and provides space for political dissent.

Having heard from Ms. Nanjia, we certainly share the Special Representative's concerns about the Government's continued efforts to limit political opposition, including the recent arrest of local civil society members and the stifling of free speech and the freedom of association. The United States is also increasingly concerned at the prolonged violence at the subnational level throughout South Sudan, often involving large and well-equipped armed groups. Within the past month alone, as we have heard, tens of thousands of civilians in the town of Tambura in Western Equatoria were afflicted with violence between rival militias. The deteriorating security situation in Tambura has led to more than 40,000 internally displaced persons, disrupted humanitarian assistance for approximately 25,000 beneficiaries, and resulted in at least 26 deaths, the majority of whom were women and children.

Meanwhile, violence continues in parts of Central Equatoria. On 22 August, hundreds of unidentified men attacked the Nuer refugee camp in Yei County, during which a non-governmental organization-run health facility was looted and vandalized. There were reports of health workers assaulted and harassed, and, tragically, multiple women were raped. Countless

South Sudanese have lost their lives in attacks, and, as Ms. Nanjia mentioned, that includes two Catholic nuns killed by gunmen on 16 August.

The safety and well-being of children is also a deep concern, as the conflict in Tambura could lead to an increase in gender-based violence, including sexual violence, particularly against girls, and to forced recruitment and use of child soldiers by armed groups and the denial of human humanitarian access to children in need.

We deplore the pervasive violence plaguing parts of Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria and elsewhere in South Sudan. The United States calls on South Sudanese leaders to take immediate and effective measures to protect civilians, humanitarian workers, internally displaced persons and women and children. We also urge the Government to hold accountable those responsible for abuse against civilians.

As we heard from Ms. Ghelani, the humanitarian assistance situation remains desolate. More than \$1 million worth of humanitarian supplies, badly needed by the South Sudanese people, have been looted or burned. The continuous looting, threats and violent attacks against humanitarian actors have led to the suspension of operations by numerous humanitarian agencies and a reduction of life-saving assistance to vulnerable citizens. We note that those attacking humanitarian personnel may be subject to sanction measures.

Let me end by saying the United States remains committed to the people of South Sudan and to working closely with the Revitalized Transitional Government, our fellow members of the Council and all stakeholders to enable peace and prosperity for South Sudan and the region.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico): Let me first thank the President for his very kind words of welcome for the work of the Council.

My delegation thanks Special Representative Haysom, Ms. Ghelani and Ms. Nanjia for their extremely useful briefings.

On 12 September, we marked three years since the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. Although significant challenges remain, such progress as the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the initiation of the consultation

process for the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing demonstrate the Government's commitment to the peace process. In this regard, Mexico calls for an accelerated implementation of the provisions of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, particularly those related to security issues.

We follow with concern the impact on the civilian population of the violent divisions within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition. In this regard, we urge the factions to resolve their differences peacefully, respect the ceasefire and ensure the protection of civilians at all times. We echo the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in stressing that the Revitalized Peace Agreement is the only framework for peace.

In recent weeks, Tambura has been the scene of serious clashes. Accordingly, we urge national and Western Equatoria leaders to opt only for the negotiated path and to work with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to build confidence among the communities affected by the violence.

We hope that the recent graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces will lead to the reduction of levels of violence throughout the country, in strict compliance with the norms of international human rights law. We acknowledge that the deployment of strategic UNMISS temporary operating bases in the area has been crucial in creating the necessary conditions for humanitarian workers to provide assistance to the more than 58,000 people who have been displaced since June.

The high number of incidents of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, abductions and arbitrary detentions is disproportionately affecting women and girls. Therefore, mechanisms like the Government's action plan for the armed forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence are vital, but much more needs to be done to ensure accountability and address rule of law deficits.

As Ms. Ghelani mentioned earlier, more than 8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the violence, floods, food insecurity and the health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease. The indicators point to a tragic situation, with more than 4 million displaced persons, 1.4 million children suffering from severe malnutrition and 380,000 people undergoing the impact of the rainy season. Moreover, conditions for humanitarian workers are precarious and becoming increasingly dangerous. We therefore call on

the Government to urgently take the necessary measures to ensure safe and unrestricted humanitarian access.

The democratic and inclusive spirit of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan must be felt in all aspects of South Sudan's political life. In that regard, I acknowledge that the appointment of a woman as Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly is a decisive step in the right direction. More concrete steps are needed, however, to achieve the 35 per quota for women's participation envisaged in the agreement. The creation of spaces, such as the South Sudan Women's Leadership Forum, is critical to including women's voices in all political processes. Their full, equal and meaningful participation is non-negotiable. The future of the country depends on the inclusion of all South Sudanese men and women.

In conclusion, I urge South Sudan, on the tenth anniversary of its independence, to redouble its efforts to consolidate the transitional process and ensure the holding of truly democratic elections. On his recent visit to South Sudan, Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix conveyed a message of commitment to and support for the peace process. My country supports that message and reiterates its full support for the very important work of UNMISS.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): At the outset, let me thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the recent developments in South Sudan. I also thank Ms. Reena Ghelani, from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Lorna Nanjia, civil society activist, for their useful updates and insights.

The developments in South Sudan during the past three months have provided the impetus for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Political violence has decreased and the parties have been, by and large, faithful to the revitalized agreement. The peaceful cohabitation of various political parties is reassuring and provides hope for peace and stability.

The presidency and leadership of the Republic of South Sudan have taken noteworthy steps. The appointment of new members to the Council of

States, with a large representation of women, their swearing into office in August, the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, the appointment of the first woman Speaker and new political appointments are indeed all positive signs. We encourage the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State to focus on the much-needed legislative work to meet the benchmarks set in the revitalized agreement.

Nevertheless, the recent suspension of the Rome initiative, in the wake of killings on the Juba-Nimule road, is a matter of concern. It is important to resume talks on a priority basis to revive the reconciliation process between the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance. We also note the launching of the consultative process for the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing. We hope that the South Sudan leadership and parties will work towards consolidating those positive developments in the coming months.

It is encouraging that economic reforms have continued to improve the macroeconomic stability and public finances in the country and have helped mitigate the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

On the security front, it is again encouraging that the ceasefire has continued to hold, although localized violence has increased. The defections, internal disputes and fighting within Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition has unfortunately resulted in fatalities. We commend the mediating role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in addressing the situation.

The continuing violence calls for the early establishment of the unified command of the military and the graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces, which is a critical aspect of the agreement. In that regard, we support the call made by the presidency of South Sudan for the cessation of hostilities among the rival factions and the observance of a reasonable distance to prevent further violence.

We appreciate the continuing cooperation between the Transitional Government and UNMISS in providing protection to internally displaced persons in camps for the internally displaced, which are currently under the control of the Government. We urge UNMISS to continue to move forward on the transition of the Malakal protection-of-civilians site as conditions permit and in line with its mandate. The humanitarian needs

of the population are increasing, and the international community needs to step in to bridge the funding gap in the budget.

We remain concerned about violations under the status-of-forces agreement. That needs to be addressed in a proactive manner by the Transitional Government, working together with UNMISS authorities. We condemn the targeting of and attacks against humanitarian workers and assets, including the looting of humanitarian supplies in conflict-affected areas, which have had a significant negative impact on operations.

India has been one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UNMISS since its establishment a decade ago. Last month, India contributed to and partnered with the United Nations in rolling out the UNITE Aware platform, initially in four United Nations peacekeeping missions, possibly including UNMISS. We firmly believe that contemporary peacekeeping must be anchored in a strong ecosystem of technology and innovation that can facilitate United Nations peacekeeping operations in implementing their mandates in complex environments.

The Indian contingent in UNMISS is also contributing to the sustainable development and welfare of the people of South Sudan. Computer training and veterinary assistance camps have been organized by the Indian battalion during this month. It is a matter of immense pride that 135 of my fellow countrymen, serving as part of UNMISS, have recently been awarded United Nations medals for their outstanding performance in Jonglei state and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Indian peacekeepers Corporal Yuvraj Singh and Mr. Ivan Michael Picardo, who were posthumously awarded the prestigious Dag Hammarskjöld Medal this year for their courage and sacrifice in the line of duty.

In conclusion, 10 years ago, India joined other Council members in welcoming South Sudan into the comity of nations on 9 July 2011. India congratulates the Government and the people of South Sudan on their tenth anniversary as an independent and sovereign State. We believe that, in this transformative phase, South Sudan requires the wholehearted support of the international community, including from IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations. For its part, India will continue to support South Sudan and its people.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

We take note of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (S/2021/784) and thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom, Ms. Reena Ghelani, of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Lorna Nanjia for their briefings. We acknowledge and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, our colleague Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal.

Three days ago, South Sudan marked three years since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. That will be in the backdrop of the celebrations of the country's tenth anniversary of independence. The A3+1 wishes to congratulate the people of South Sudan on those momentous occasions, which present an opportunity for national introspection that we hope will mark a turning point for decisive actions to end the armed conflicts.

The A3+1 commends the South Sudanese parties for the recent progress in the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. The inauguration of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States, the unveiling of the task force to oversee and coordinate transitional justice and judicial reforms, the launch of the permanent constitution-making process, as well as the consultative process for the establishment of the commission of truth, reconciliation and healing, are commendable and positive steps.

It is our expectation that the new Parliament will expeditiously enact the necessary legislation to further accelerate the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement, as well as augment the ongoing efforts to improve governance, provide the much-needed public services and meaningfully deal with insecurity.

The A3+1 also welcomes the efforts made by the parties towards the achievement of the agreed gender representation in governance institutions. We applaud the historic appointment of the first female Speaker of South Sudan's Parliament and encourage the parties to remain committed to the principle of inclusivity, through the implementation of the agreed minimum

35 per cent quota for women's participation, as well as youth representation.

Despite the achievements, the A3+1 remains deeply concerned about the reported incidents of continued armed violence in parts of South Sudan. The increasing number of inter-ethnic conflicts, the fighting among factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition, as well as activities of non-signatory parties, constitute a violation of the cessation of hostilities and the permanent ceasefire. We find that to be unacceptable and reiterate our call on all parties to immediately end the violence and recommit to the cessation of hostilities and adherence to the permanent ceasefire.

The A3+1 notes with appreciation the swift action taken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in response to the security situation in South Sudan. We welcome the outcomes of the seventy-second and seventy-third extraordinary meetings of the IGAD Council of Ministers, held in June and August, as well as the follow-up visit to Juba by the Prime Minister of the Sudan and Chairperson of IGAD, His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Hamdok. We urge the Government and all parties to expeditiously implement the recommendations and decisions of IGAD without delay.

We also reiterate our call to the parties to put more effort into accelerating the implementation of the agreed transitional security arrangements so as to minimize the opportunities for violence. That includes the deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces, the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the finalization of the strategic defence and security review.

Our role as the Security Council and friends of South Sudan should be to encourage progress by extending the much-needed diplomatic, technical and financial support towards the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement.

The reported dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan is concerning. Nonetheless, it is also encouraging that the Government continues to provide the required protection for the internally displaced and the increasing number of returnees. We extend appreciation to all humanitarian agencies working in South Sudan for their assistance and urge international partners to continue to extend the much-needed humanitarian support to address existing shortfalls. Furthermore, we

urge the Government to take the appropriate measures to ensure the safety, protection and security of all humanitarian workers and agencies and provide the necessary facilitation for the safe and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

Finally, the A3+1 commends the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for continuing to support the people of South Sudan in their efforts to achieve peace and stability in their country. We note from the Secretary-General's report that the Mission continues to play its rightful role of providing critical protection, as well as technical assistance and capacity-building, to support the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. We call upon the leadership of UNMISS to fully utilize the provisions of resolution 2567 (2021) to expand that noble work. We are also encouraged by the measures taken by the Government and UNMISS to improve coordination and communication. Such measures have led to a significant reduction of incidents of infringement of the status-of-forces agreement.

In conclusion, the Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Kenya reiterate their appreciation for the continued efforts of all United Nations agencies, the African Union, IGAD and all international partners in supporting the people of South Sudan on their journey to sustainable peace, stability and prosperity.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Ms. Reena Ghelani and Ms. Nanjia for their briefings. I would like to focus on three points.

As others have done, France acknowledges the progress made in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, in particular the establishment of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the steps to set up the commission for truth, reconciliation and healing. The country's authorities have also made an effort to facilitate movement for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) within South Sudan, in accordance with the status-of-forces agreement.

France stands ready to assist the Security Council in providing support to South Sudan, provided that the Government achieves the objectives set by the Security Council. UNMISS is there to assist in that regard. While several commitments have recently been reaffirmed, the majority of the measures are pending, in particular

with regard to security sector reform, as well as the operationalization of transitional justice bodies.

The Security Council outlined its strategy in the UNMISS mandate, which is guided by the holding of elections, scheduled for the end of the transition. France takes note of the Secretary-General's recommendations for preparing for those elections. We encourage UNMISS to set up an electoral assistance team. We call on the authorities to start developing from now the legal framework for elections, to operationalize the national electoral commission and to allocate the necessary resources for the holding of elections.

To that end, we call on all parties to prioritize unity. The fragmentation of some of the signatory parties to revitalized peace agreement constitutes a threat to adherence to the ceasefire. We therefore welcome the efforts of the chairmanship of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to ease tensions.

Furthermore, France calls on all parties to fully uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In that regard, we are concerned about measures to quash calls to protest, the arrest and intimidation of people involved and widespread Internet blackouts, which are all unacceptable. We also call on authorities to guarantee the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful protest.

We are also concerned about extrajudicial killings committed in the Warrap and Lakes states. We call on authorities to ensure respect for human rights and to combat impunity for the perpetrators of those violations, including those committed against women and children, which the briefers addressed in detail.

In addition, we condemn the attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel. As we are well aware, South Sudan is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for humanitarian workers. It is therefore important that the perpetrators of violent acts against them be brought to justice and sanctioned by the Council. As detailed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, humanitarian needs are immense and the risk of famine is increasing. In that context, it is vital that humanitarian and medical personnel be able to move about freely in order to deliver assistance to the population without hindrance or fear of being targeted.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Special Representative Haysom and Ms. Ghelani for the information they provided on the developments in the situation in South Sudan. We also listened closely to Ms. Nanjia's remarks and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan at this meeting. We would like to congratulate him and the South Sudanese people on the tenth anniversary of the country's independence on 9 July.

Russia stands ready, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to support Juba's efforts on the path towards peace and stability. We believe that the formation of the South Sudanese Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity and the conclusion of the pre-transitional period creates the necessary conditions for moving the country towards political stability and reconciliation.

We welcome the beginning of the work of the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States. Concluding the formation of the Parliament constitutes one of the most important political provisions of the transitional period, as stipulated in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The successful implementation of that task will mean the conclusion of the implementation of the political part of the peace agreement. In that connection, we note the political will of the South Sudanese side, and we hope for work to continue on implementing the remaining provisions of the peace agreement.

We also trust that work will continue on the establishment of the unified forces of South Sudan, which is complicated by an acute lack of the necessary material and technical resources and financing. We call on those that have not yet signed the revitalized agreement to join the State-building process.

In that connection, we note the initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio, and we trust that talks will continue between Government representatives and the non-signatories. We pay tribute to the mediation efforts of the African Union and the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to provide support in the implementation of specific provisions of the peace agreement. In particular, thanks to mediation by IGAD representatives, a truce was established between the factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, led by the First

Vice-President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, and General Simon Gatwech.

We are of course concerned by the sporadic intercommunal armed clashes in several areas of the country, as well as the socioeconomic and humanitarian situations. Humanitarian assistance needs to reach those who are in acute need of it. According to United Nations statistics, from April to June, more than 7 million people found themselves in a situation of food insecurity, while nearly 1.5 million children are undernourished. We firmly condemn any breaches of the ceasefire agreement or acts of violence against the civilian population, including against humanitarian personnel operating in South Sudan.

We are convinced that, as the situation in South Sudan returns to normal, there will need to be a review of the sanctions regime that exists with respect to the country. We trust that, with a view to easing the arms embargo, the South Sudanese authorities will manage to make significant progress in meeting the benchmarks established in resolution 2577 (2021).

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): I thank Special Representative Haysom and Ms. Ghelani for their comprehensive briefings, and Ms. Nanjia for her statement. I welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to this meeting.

We are encouraged by the continued progress achieved in the peace process in South Sudan as the young nation marks its tenth anniversary. We warmly congratulate the Government and the people of South Sudan on that important occasion and achievement.

We commend the reconstitution of the Transitional Legislative National Assembly of South Sudan and the recent decision to unify command of the forces and graduate the Necessary Unified Forces. While various challenges remain, the progress achieved so far should be fully recognized and built upon, and the South Sudanese parties should be further encouraged.

In that connection, I wish to highlight the following.

First, we call on the Government of South Sudan and the relevant parties to step up the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in order to sustain a peaceful transitional period culminating in national elections. We take note of the reports on internal issues among different parties in South Sudan. We call on the relevant parties to resolve their

differences and avoid any possible adverse impact on the peace process.

We also call on the Government to further facilitate women's participation and leadership to reach the 35 per cent goal, in line with the peace agreement. We commend and call for the continued efforts of the United Nations, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other international partners to promote peace and development in the country.

Secondly, it is critical to continue to uphold the permanent ceasefire. We urge the Government of South Sudan to put in stronger efforts to effectively and sustainably address intercommunal violence and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and facilities. Dialogue and confidence-building measures should be enhanced to promote trust and reconciliation in order to tackle the root causes of intercommunal violence.

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

Thirdly, it is critical to tackle the increasing economic and humanitarian challenges in the country. It is concerning that the high level of food insecurity continues to affect more than 7.2 million South Sudanese, which is over half of the country's population, with Integrated Phase Classifications of 4 and 5 — "Emergency" and "Catastrophe", respectively. We call on the international community to strengthen its humanitarian assistance and financial support to South Sudan, as well as to provide further assistance to the country in averting the threat of famine, combating the coronavirus disease pandemic and accelerating the vaccination process.

Fourthly, regarding the issue of sanctions, it is important to constantly review the implementation of the benchmarks established in resolution 2577 (2021) with a view to lifting measures in the light of the progress achieved. As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, Viet Nam will continue to foster cooperation among South Sudan, States in the region and other relevant parties in order

to ensure the full implementation of related Security Council resolutions, including by promoting field visits of the Committee in that regard.

To conclude, Viet Nam reiterates its strong support for the pursuit of peace, stability and development in South Sudan for its people.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I would like to thank Mr. Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, for his briefing. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the international community clearly remain committed to supporting South Sudan, while the Government has the primary responsibility for the welfare of its people. I would also like to thank Ms. Ghelani, from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Lorna Nanjia, representing women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders, who will continue to play an important role in South Sudan. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in politics, decision-making and peacebuilding is undoubtedly essential to the development of a future peaceful and democratic South Sudan.

Norway is deeply concerned about the security situation in South Sudan. The level of violence has increased and remains unacceptably high. We are particularly worried about fighting taking place along ethnic lines in Tambura in Western Equatoria. The slow implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is a significant driver of conflict. It creates discontent and provides incentives for destabilizing defections. The split of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition in Upper Nile is a case in point. Norway commends the rapid response of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), including calling a meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers and dispatching a high-level delegation to Juba. A collapse of the peace agreement will have dire consequences for the entire region. That level of engagement from South Sudan's neighbours has created welcome new momentum.

We stress the need now to focus on the implementation of chapter II of the Revitalized Agreement, on security arrangements, and urge the parties — in close cooperation with IGAD — to expedite that process. Norway welcomes the presidency's decision to immediately graduate the Necessary Unified Forces and to unify the command structure.

The Revitalized Peace Agreement mandates that the transitional period end in free and fair elections. The Government and the Transitional National Legislative Assembly should build on the workshop held in May and provide the legal basis for a constitutional conference as soon as possible. It is crucial that that process be led and owned by the people of South Sudan.

The freedoms of expression, association and assembly are prerequisites for free and meaningful elections. Norway is therefore deeply concerned about the recent arrests, detentions and silencing of civil society activists and media. We stress the importance of the rule of law and the fight against corruption and impunity, and we commend the capacity-building efforts of UNMISS in those areas.

We continue to be deeply alarmed about the high level of food insecurity and increased humanitarian needs in South Sudan, which have been driven by intensified conflict, flooding, the coronavirus disease pandemic, disease outbreaks and displacement. Accessing areas of need with humanitarian assistance is challenging due to the rainy season and flooding, but also due to conflict and insecurity. We urge all parties to ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian workers. In that context, we want to note the marked improvement in access for peacekeepers.

Conflict is the most significant driver of humanitarian need, but we also know that climate change acts as a crisis amplifier and multiplier. In that respect, we are pleased to learn about the work currently being carried out by UNMISS to establish a working group on climate change and security. We hope that work will contribute to integrating climate-related security risks into the Organization's analysis, planning, conflict resolution efforts and responses.

The mandate of UNMISS is to assist the Government, which the international community remains committed to supporting. We therefore hope that the next phase will be marked by cooperation and common purpose for the benefit of the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Mr. Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, and Director Ghelani, from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings. I welcome Ambassador Malwal, Permanent Representative of South

Sudan, to our meeting today. I also listened attentively to the statement delivered by Ms. Lorna Nanjia.

In connection with the Secretary-General's latest report on South Sudan (S/2021/784), I would like to emphasize several points.

In the three years since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, the political process in South Sudan has made remarkable progress. Recently, South Sudan's leaders reaffirmed their commitments and reconstituted the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, with the appointment of the Speaker of the Assembly and other key positions. China welcomes those developments. The Revitalized Agreement provides the only policy framework for peace in South Sudan. All factions in South Sudan should maintain the current positive momentum and continue to advance preparations for the general elections and the building of the Necessary Unified Forces, among other tasks, so as to steadily promote the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.

The talks in Rome between the Government of South Sudan and the opposition have seen some difficulties. All parties should maintain a constructive attitude and sign the peace agreement as soon as possible. The international community should respect the leadership of South Sudan handling its own national affairs and support regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and play an active role. The Security Council should heed the AU's call to lift the sanctions against South Sudan as soon as possible in order to effectively improve the environment for peace and development in South Sudan.

At present, peace and stability have been generally maintained in South Sudan, and the ceasefire is holding. However, intercommunal conflict and armed violence still occur from time to time. Recent divisions within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition have added uncertainty to the security situation. Peace is hard-won. All parties concerned must therefore keep the overarching goal in mind, resolve differences through dialogue and consultation and work together in order to advance the peace process.

Promoting intercommunal reconciliation is a key link in the security and stability in South Sudan. Resolving intercommunal conflict cannot be accomplished overnight. Multiple means — combining

mediation, good offices and development — need to be adopted to eliminate root causes of conflict. The Government of South Sudan has made many efforts to that end, but has faced many difficulties. The international community should provide financial and technical support to help the Government of South Sudan to improve its capacity to protect civilians.

Although economic reform in South Sudan has achieved some results, many difficulties and challenges remain, including prominent food security issues, a severe coronavirus disease pandemic and a large gap in its humanitarian needs. We call on the international community to continue to provide humanitarian assistance and economic support to South Sudan in order to resolve its food security issues. The focus should be on increasing investment in agriculture, energy infrastructure, education and health care, among other fields, in order to help the people of South Sudan rebuild their homeland and stimulate their self-generated development momentum.

China is concerned about the difficulties faced by humanitarian organizations in South Sudan and hopes that the parties concerned will provide favourable conditions for authorized humanitarian relief operations. China will continue to provide assistance within its capacity to South Sudan.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has strengthened communication and coordination with the Government of South Sudan, with the Mission's freedom of movement improved and its capability to implement its mandate enhanced. China is one of the major troop-contributing countries to UNMISS and supports the Mission in playing a greater role in protecting civilians, promoting intercommunal reconciliation and assisting in the implementation of the peace agreement.

Over the past decade, parties in South Sudan have worked hard to overcome various difficulties and challenges and have taken important steps to rebuild the country. The international community and the parties in South Sudan must draw lessons from history, look towards the future and work together to propel South Sudan forward on the path of lasting peace and sustainable development, and thereby contribute to the prosperity and development of the region.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I wish to thank Mr. Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-

General for South Sudan, Ms. Ghelani and Ms. Lorna Nanjia for their briefings.

I would like to start by commending the Government of South Sudan on several positive and successful actions.

First, we welcome the advancement of the transitional justice agenda.

Secondly, the inauguration of the Parliament on 30 August was an important step towards democratic institution-building and accountability and, ultimately, the upcoming elections. It is crucial that they be well prepared. We hope that the Government of South Sudan will continue to implement the reforms set out in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Otherwise, the upcoming elections cannot be seen as transparent, credible and inclusive. One thing is to have the changes on paper, but we also want to see the Parliament working as it should.

Estonia is very concerned about the suppression of civic space. The arbitrary arrests, detention and harassment of human rights activists and the shutdown of major Internet service providers is unacceptable. We call for the immediate release of all individuals arrested during the planned protests. Civil society must be able to operate freely in South Sudan; it is in the interests of a peaceful future for the country. That is especially relevant bearing in mind the upcoming elections.

The recent internal disputes in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition are worrisome. Those disputes can break the already fragile peace, and we call on the opposing factions to refrain from fuelling the animosity. In that regard, we also welcome the swift intervention of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to find a solution between the opposing factions.

We remain concerned about the extrajudicial executions carried out in Warrap and Lakes states. It is disheartening to read that those executions had the approval of State officials. We call on the Government to investigate those killings, and we call on it to do so in compliance with its international obligations under international human rights law. The cycle of violence cannot stop if the Government will not bring the perpetrators to justice. That is necessary to end impunity and enhance accountability. We need to see improvements to the human rights situation in

the country, especially concerning conflict-related sexual violence.

The humanitarian situation continues to be very dire, affected by the tensions and conflicts in the region and exacerbated by extreme floods and the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease. The numbers outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/784) make for grim reading, with about 60 per cent of the population likely to face acute food insecurity and about 108,000 people already facing catastrophic hunger. Already four humanitarian workers have been killed this year. It is the Government's task to ensure a safe and secure environment for humanitarian partners to work in.

In conclusion, I want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan for their valuable work in South Sudan.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): Let me thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom, Ms. Ghelani and Ms. Nanjia for their insightful contributions. I would like to make three key points in response to what we have heard today.

First, the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan still falls far short of what is needed. That is fostering increased instability and exacerbating political divisions.

The United Kingdom welcomes recent areas of progress, including the inauguration of Parliament, exchange rate reforms and public financial management reforms. But three years on, delays in turning core commitments into action are compounding grievances and contributing to ongoing suffering and instability.

We share the concerns expressed by many today regarding recent splits in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and the destabilizing impacts of political manoeuvring. We welcome the role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and of Prime Minister Hamdok as Chair in seeking to resolve those divisions. We echo their call for all parties to refrain from violence and to focus on achieving peace and stability through compromise, trust and unity.

We also continue to call on all actors to work towards an improved security situation and for the long-overdue graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces.

But improved security alone will not be sufficient to strengthen trust between the South Sudanese State and its people. That will also depend on more people having a genuine stake in the country's governance.

That brings me to my second point. The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the restrictions on the freedom of expression imposed by South Sudan's Government in response to public calls for peaceful protests. I think that Ms. Nanjia's briefing reinforced that message. Intimidation, threats and pre-emptive detentions of civil society actors are unacceptable.

As we draw closer to the first national elections, we urge South Sudan's Government to respect the freedoms of speech, association and expression guaranteed in the transitional constitution. Those freedoms are vital to enable much-needed debate on the country's future. We encourage South Sudan's leaders to take concrete steps now to ensure that the path to elections will be open, inclusive and fair, starting with inclusive consultations on the constitution-making process.

Thirdly, we cannot ignore the fact that insecurity and political tensions are contributing directly to the suffering of millions of ordinary South Sudanese. We know that 7.2 million people — 60 per cent of the population — are likely to face acute food insecurity in the coming months. Increased violence has displaced tens of thousands and interrupted humanitarian delivery. Moreover, humanitarian workers and their assets continue to be targeted. That is deplorable and must end.

Let me to conclude by reiterating our call for South Sudan's leaders to focus on the bigger picture and on earning the trust of their people. South Sudan's future stability and prosperity depend on putting fundamental building blocks in place now, including an end to violence, respect for human rights and humanitarian access, and a path to inclusive and credible elections. The international community, including our United Nations family at this meeting, should united behind that effort.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ireland.

First, I want to thank our briefers, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Ms. Ghelani. Their interventions were extremely useful, but also worrisome. I want to thank Ms. Nanjia in particular for her participation today, as well as for

her eloquence and candour in outlining the challenges faced in South Sudan and the suggestions she made.

We have heard today concerning accounts of subnational violence, regressive political posturing, sexual and gender-based violence and a growing humanitarian crisis. As Ms. Ghelani outlined in her briefing, the appalling prospect of famine now once again threatens South Sudan. We should not forget that conflict is the single-greatest driver of hunger. We are also deeply alarmed at the increased violence and displacement around Tambura, where some 70 per cent of those killed recently are believed to have been women and children.

It is just over three years since the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan was signed, but we have not seen the progress hoped for. As mentioned in our previous meeting (see S/PV.8801), while the present ceasefire is not something we can take for granted, equally the country cannot move forward or contemplate elections if it represents the only noteworthy achievement to date. A ceasefire alone does not guarantee peace. It should become the foundation for peacebuilding and a broad-based political process, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of youth. While there has been good progress, we call on the South Sudanese authorities to ensure that the 35 per cent quota for women is met.

The obstacles facing South Sudan are many, from shrinking civil society space and widespread food insecurity, to extrajudicial killings and increasingly disaffected youth; however, they are not insurmountable. A renewed commitment by South Sudan's leaders, allied with the determination of the South Sudanese people and supported by the international and humanitarian communities, can overcome those challenges. In that regard, we welcome the launch of the joint action plan for the armed forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence and look forward to its implementation.

A recommitment and renewed political impetus can pave the way for the State to provide opportunities that citizens should legitimately expect: to protest in safety, to go to school, to work, to thrive — put simply, to have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled.

The protection of civilians is rightly at the heart of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan's mission, and we welcome its efforts alongside South Sudanese forces to deliver a safe and secure

environment, including through monitoring conditions at redesignated internally displaced persons camps. It is crucial that site transitions take place with the human rights of those affected being put to the fore.

Finally, I welcome and deeply appreciate the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, who is with us in the Chamber today. He was present in June when we stated unequivocally that Ireland believes in South Sudan (see S/PV.8801). We still do. We stand ready to assist him and his Government, and we look forward to continued engagement outside this Chamber.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you and your delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September. Our delegation is ready to cooperate with the Irish delegation during its term at the helm of the Council.

I also would like to thank all colleagues, members of the Council, who welcomed me today. I appreciate their concern. We listened to their statements. We hope for the best all the time. I would also like to welcome the briefers in the Chamber today: Special Representative Haysom, Ms. Reena Ghelani and, my sister, Ms. Nanjia. We thank them for their service to the people of South Sudan.

I would also like to pay tribute to and express my condolences for the Indian force personnel and the humanitarian personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty in South Sudan. We are sympathetic, and we appreciate their sacrifices for the people of my country.

Our delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/784). We thank him for highlighting some of the achievements recorded in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in the period covered by the report. We also recognize that many challenges remain, and the parties to the Agreement intend to overcome these challenges. However, we know that these challenges would be overcome faster and sooner with the encouragement of the international community.

We are hopeful that the international community will redouble its efforts and commitment to the people

of South Sudan to overcome these challenges. We appreciate the commitment shown, the efforts made and the assistance given to the people of my country, especially by the African Union and our partner, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Still, much remains to be done, and we need the assistance of the Security Council in overcoming the challenges and sustaining the peace process. In this regard, we are reliably informed that the International Monetary Fund and the South Sudanese financial authorities have agreed and developed a mechanism to stabilize the dollar rate in the market. The results so far are positive and encouraging for the improvement of South Sudan's overall economy.

The Security Council has been seized with the plight of women in South Sudan for a very long time. The delegation of Ireland is presiding over the Security Council in the month that the General Assembly is holding its high-level week, and traditionally the majority of delegations have been led by men. South Sudan was no exception: for the last nine year we have been attending the General Assembly with a delegation led by a man.

But this year, I am proud to report to the Security Council, our delegation will be led by the Vice-President the Republic of South Sudan, the Honourable Madam Rebecca Nyandeng Garang de Mabior. Moreover, she is leading a high-level delegation that includes five female Ministers who are serving in the current Cabinet. This is a source of pride, for we have always assured the Council that the pledge of 35 per cent gender representation is a serious pledge and that, as we solidify the peace process and unite our communities, this percentage will increase over time.

In conclusion, I encourage the delegations of the members of the Security Council to bilaterally meet, if time and rules around coronavirus disease allow it, with the members of the South Sudanese delegation to hear more about the general situation in South Sudan.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.