



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Dautllari	(Albania)
<i>Members:</i>	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Moran
	Kenya	Mr. Ndung'u
	Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Jacobs
	United States of America	Mr. Mills

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2022/468)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2022/468)

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. Ghada Mudawi, Acting Director, Operations and Advocacy Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Lorna Merekaje, South Sudanese human rights defender, civil rights activist and peace advocate.

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/2022/468, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

I give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Council today on the situation in South Sudan. In my last briefing (see S/PV. 8987), I shared that a window of opportunity remained for South Sudan to meet the critical benchmarks required for it to complete its transition. With eight months remaining, that window is closing. That notwithstanding, I am reporting to the Council on the following progress.

After the opposition's withdrawal from the transitional security mechanisms following a tense security situation at the end of March, the parties were able to overcome a critical impasse to reach a breakthrough agreement on 3 April on a single joint command structure for the necessary unified forces. The formation of the reconstituted transitional legislature, at the national and State levels, has now

been completed, with all speakers sworn in and heads of specialized committees appointed. Renewed legislative activity and debate are noticeable. The fact that at least some of the political differences are being fought out in Parliament rather than outside it is a welcome development. The recent mandate extension of the National Constitutional Amendment Committee will now allow for the review of the National Elections Act. That is a prerequisite for launching the electoral and other legislative frameworks, including the reconstitution of the National Elections Commission.

I would like to commend the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan for advancing the provisions of chapter 5 of the agreement. The ongoing nationwide public consultations of the technical committees of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing demonstrate a commitment to justice, accountability, reconciliation and healing. Our hope is that that will help to create a more resilient and stronger society. Transitional justice is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. And following a nine-month delay, I welcome Parliament's adoption in March of a national budget for the year 2021-2022. However, with the fiscal year ending by the end of this month, I encourage the Government to submit the 2022-2023 budget to Parliament as soon as possible for its expeditious approval.

In the months ahead, what is needed is national leadership, resources and a visible commitment by South Sudan's leaders to fulfilling their responsibilities under the peace agreement and to taking the necessary steps for the country to exit the transitional period. As the Secretary-General mentions in his report (S/2022/468), with the agreement of 3 April to which I just referred, South Sudan's leaders have shown that they can make real progress when there is a sense of urgency and determination. We therefore expect that with the same sense of urgency, the parties to the peace agreement will now agree on a road map, as jointly called for by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the United Nations. The road map should serve to recommit the parties to the Revitalized Agreement and must be accompanied by clear benchmarks and timelines. In particular it should address the completion of outstanding tasks such as the graduation and deployment of the necessary unified forces, the approval of pending key legislation for the Constitution-making process and national elections,

as well as critical reforms of the security, judicial and financial sectors.

With regard to the elections, it is important to note that what is required is not only technical arrangements and logistics but also an appropriate political environment. The first of these refers to the necessary transparency and organization for the elections to be considered manifestly a true result of the votes cast, while the second refers to the presence of a political space for a robust and competitive political process that is nonetheless a nation-building event. Unless the parties demonstrate a collective common purpose, there will be challenges in meeting those commitments. The road map also offers an entry point for the international community to align targeted support for priority transitional tasks. It is our view that the sheer magnitude of the tasks ahead requires the international community's full and unrestricted attention. In that regard, I welcome the recent visit by the African Union Committee of Five, representing the African continent's renewed commitment to the transition to sustainable peace in South Sudan.

The scale of subnational conflict, which is now spreading from north to south and from east to west, is alarming. In Eastern and Central Equatoria, Unity, Warrap and Jonglei states, as well as in the Abyei Administrative Area, violence has been perpetrated against civilians, fuelling a cycle of cattle raiding, abductions, revenge killings and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence.

I welcome the steps taken by the Government to establish high-level investigation committees. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) will provide logistical support in the cases of Leer, Unity and Magwi, in Eastern Equatoria, for those investigations. Meanwhile, the Mission has conducted its own independent investigation into the conflict in Leer, which have revealed horrific human rights violations by armed youth from Koch and Mayendit counties.

More than 80 per cent of civilian casualties this year have been attributed to intercommunal violence and community-based militias. That violence divides communities and hampers reconciliation. Peace spoilers have also proven adept at instrumentalizing those conflicts for their own interests.

More positively, the decline in civilian casualties overall continues, as compared to the previous year. The Mission is challenged more than ever to sustain its

prevention and response efforts. UNMISS continues to deploy an increasingly mobile and robust posture, even amid challenging terrain and weather conditions. For example, the Mission is testing all-terrain amphibious vehicles in Jonglei as part of my commitment to transition UNMISS from a six-month mobile force to a year-round Mission — one that is better able to extend our integrated protection presence during the rainy season.

Our concern, however, is to avoid becoming a victim of our own success. While the deployment of our temporary operating bases offers short-term sanctuaries of peace, they are in ever-greater demand to enter and to remain in theatre, thereby stretching and immobilizing our resources. The UNMISS protection posture is predicated on our ability to deploy quickly where the needs are greatest. Quite frankly, we cannot be everywhere, which serves as a reminder that the primary responsibility to protect civilians rests with the Government itself.

The three-year strategic vision requested by the Security Council continues to be the framework for the integrated efforts of UNMISS. In addition to its multifaceted work related to the protection of civilians, the Mission has also been active in other priority areas. One important building block in that regard is the support it provides for strengthening the justice chain and promoting accountability.

In that regard, UNMISS is supporting the standing up of general courts-martial for Bentiu and Yei. In Yei, the General Court Martial is prosecuting 21 serious crimes by military personnel, five of which are related to sexual and gender-based violence. It is the first time that crimes of that nature have been referred to UNMISS-supported courts-martial in South Sudan. That support includes the provision of assistance to victims and witnesses through pre-trial counselling, translation and logistical support.

Another important aspect of support for the rule of law more broadly is enhanced community policing and the provision of individual training assistance and advisory support by the United Nations police to the South Sudan National Police Service. The Mission is supporting special courts in several states, such as a joint special mobile court for Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal.

In four conflict hotspots — Unity, Central Equatoria, the Jonglei and Greater Pibor Administrative Area and

Western Bahr El Ghazal — UNMISS participates in a joint programming effort that seeks to operationalize the humanitarian, development and peace and security nexus in order to address the root causes of conflict by implicating multiple actors across those sectors.

I acknowledge the support and vision of the reconciliation, stabilization and resilience trust fund and the donors who support it. The fund enables us to realize joint action with agencies, funds and programmes, from which we are beginning to see positive results.

The country is confronting a serious humanitarian crisis. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will provide a comprehensive briefing on the situation, but I would like to highlight the key issues and their far-reaching consequences.

As humanitarian needs have grown to an estimated 8.9 million people in need, resources are diminishing. Currently, only 26 per cent of the \$1.7 billion required for the humanitarian response plan has been received. Amid competing priorities, I urge the donor community not to lose sight of South Sudan and to continue its critical assistance, including to support more than 2 million women and 4.6 million children. Incessant flooding for a fourth consecutive year in Unity state and Jonglei, climate change-related displacement, food insecurity and a lack of livelihood opportunities for young people are now predicted. Those challenges will exacerbate existing needs and contribute to localized conflict over resources. Those affected are most often vulnerable women and children.

Moreover, humanitarian workers are increasingly targeted while delivering services to those in need. In that regard, I call on the Government to guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the general population and to bring those responsible to justice.

In view of the dramatic escalation of humanitarian needs, I must share my concern at the decision of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management to require humanitarians to provide additional documentation. Such unilateral decisions impede the ability of humanitarian partners to carry out operations that ultimately benefit the South Sudanese people. Both I and the Humanitarian Coordinator have urged the Government to review that decision as soon as possible and to engage constructively in the ongoing negotiation process with the humanitarian sector.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that, despite the delays, I believe that the only viable course of action remains the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement in letter and spirit, including with the full and proper participation of women in all the mechanisms contemplated by the peace agreement. I urge the continued commitment of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its member States, the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the members of the international community. Their sustained engagement and continued partnership is fundamental for ensuring meaningful support for South Sudan.

On that topic, I would like to mention our disappointment at the cancellation of the visit scheduled for early July of His Holy Father the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. I also take this opportunity to extend to the Council the request for a deliberation on whether a Council visit to Juba would be appropriate.

I thank Security Council members for their steadfast support for the people of South Sudan and extend my appreciation to all uniformed and civilian personnel of UNMISS, who serve in the name of peace.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Mudawi.

Ms. Mudawi: I thank you, Madam, for the opportunity to address the Security Council. I will brief the Council on the humanitarian realities that the South Sudanese people face, the challenges that we face in responding and what is needed to improve people's lives and strengthen their protection.

Since we briefed the Council in December (see S/PV.8931), most humanitarian indicators have deteriorated. Subnational violence continues. In March, violence displaced more than 40,000 people in the Abyei Administrative Area and Twic county, Warrap state — a worrisome development in that forgotten area. The displacement of people continues elsewhere due to subnational violence and conflict over resources such as cattle in places such as Equatoria and Jonglei.

Women and girls are at serious risk of gender-based violence when fighting breaks out, as we saw recently in Unity state, where the conflict in Leer, Mayendit and Koch counties resulted in numerous reports of women and girls being raped.

Against a backdrop of profound macroeconomic challenges, the drivers of conflict and climate shocks have resulted in a dire humanitarian situation. When it gets as bad as in South Sudan, the spectre of severe hunger and even famine results.

Food insecurity will persist this year. About 8.3 million people will likely experience severe food insecurity during the lean season, May to July. Of those, 2.9 million people will likely face emergency levels of hunger, known as Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) level 4, while 87,000 people will probably face catastrophic, famine-like levels of food insecurity/famine, known as IPC 5.

The other big driver of humanitarian need is climate-related shocks. South Sudan now faces a fourth year of above-average rainfall, which has disrupted the agricultural season and constrained food production. With 200,000 people already displaced in Unity state and with new flooding in areas water-logged from last year's flooding, at least half a million people will likely be impacted by floods this year. In Bentiu, flood waters from last year have receded slowly, limiting access to safe water and resulting in a high risk of cholera. With support from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and others, humanitarians have worked tirelessly to ensure that preparedness resources are in place ahead of the rainy season. Thanks to the Humanitarian Coordinator's whole-of-system approach, the impact of flooding this year could be mitigated in Unity state.

However, much needs to be done across the country, and resources are scarce. Flood mitigation measures over the years have been insufficient to prevent this annual, predictable and preventable misery. Collective action on climate mitigation and adaptation is needed in the years to come.

More than 2 million people remain internally displaced, and more than 2.3 million South Sudanese are refugees. For people to return, South Sudan needs to address the issues keeping people in a holding pattern of displacement — insecurity, the presence of explosive hazards, unresolved housing, land and property issues and lack of basic services. There needs to be planning for sites for internally displaced persons become permanent settlement locations. In short, durable solutions are needed.

Humanitarian partners are committed to stay and deliver, but South Sudan remains a dangerous place for humanitarians. So far this year, four humanitarian

workers have been killed in the line of duty. Last month, an armed group reportedly attacked a clinic in Pibor county and looted pre-positioned nutritional supplies. Such incidents are unacceptable.

This year's humanitarian response plan aims to assist 6.8 million people. We have reached about 3.1 million people, but have been unable to help the rest — not due to a lack of commitment, but a lack of resources. The \$1.7 billion humanitarian response plan is only 26 per cent funded.

The World Food Programme has had to reprioritize its food assistance programme. About 4.5 million people will now be targeted, instead of the initial 6 million, putting more people at heightened risk of starvation. The Food and Agriculture organization has also had to reduce plans for seed distribution, which reduces the ability of communities to feed themselves.

When our Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Sara Nyanti, visited Unity and Upper Nile states in April, women told her of their experiences of gender-based violence, health issues and the lack of education for their children. Representatives of women groups said that all they can do is “cry for peace, as without it, we will never be able to feed our children without help.”

They go on to say:

“We are being raped, harassed, we have no livelihoods, no opportunities and girls cannot go to school. Humanitarians are doing a great job for the vulnerable people and providing what they can, but we, as women, still have so many needs. This is not the life we chose.”

The resilience of the people of South Sudan is commendable, but that is not enough to turn the tide. The Council's support is needed. I will end with three messages.

First, the international response needs humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts working together to address the root causes of the crisis. Sustainability through national ownership of basic services is needed, and efforts should promote localized leadership and solutions when and where possible. Throughout the process, we must ensure the protection of civilians and accountability for human rights abuses.

Secondly, the safety of aid workers and assets must be ensured. We need the Government and all parties to

the conflict to take action in that regard. Impunity for continuing attacks on humanitarian workers and assets must stop.

Lastly, flexible, unearmarked and early funding at scale is urgently required in order to address the growing humanitarian needs I described here, including to prevent a dangerous deterioration in the food security situation in South Sudan.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Merekaje.

Ms. Merekaje: 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 South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme, but as an activist.

Please allow me to emphasize the importance of this meeting, especially when we the people of South Sudan are faced with many uncertainties and a worsening economic situation, characterized by high prices of basic food commodities, shrinking space for civic engagement, escalating violence and human rights violations. Nevertheless, the country is anticipating conducting elections pursuant to the agreement.

There seems to be insufficient commitment by the parties to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed in 2018. It is important to acknowledge that the validity of the agreement comes to an end in a few months' time, with the parties clearly failing to implement critical elements of a deal they negotiated and signed. The big question is — what is next for the people of South Sudan?

We must increase pressure and urge the guarantors of the peace agreement to support the people of South Sudan in designing a concrete road map for the country when the agreement is no longer valid.

Continued violence and heinous human rights violations in the country continue to exacerbate trauma and elicit insecurity. South Sudan may be one of the most insecure places for anyone. Unfortunately, the unpredictable wave of conflict in the country seems to have a pattern. Even as memories of the violence in Tambura/Yambio, Kitwang and other parts of the country remain vivid, a similar conflict has reared its

head in Kajo Keji, Nimule and other parts of the country. The country is deeply fragmented and bleeding. Following the signing of the agreement, there was hope for the people of South Sudan. And yet paradoxically, the sporadic waves of intercommunal conflict and its intensity continue to puzzle many. Women and girls in particular continue to face the imminent threat of conflict-related sexual violence and sexual and gender-based violence even where there is no active conflict, including in the capital of Juba. The incidence of rape and murder of the victims is rising. While it is important to acknowledge that there are ongoing efforts towards the processes and establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, other important processes, such as that of drafting a constitution, have significantly slowed, and the much-heralded public financial management reform process also seems to be being frustrated. The country is facing immense institutional gaps in terms of setup and institutional culture.

There is no doubt that the people of South Sudan want to be given an opportunity to choose their leaders and participate in the design of a progressive agenda for the country. However, that can be realized only if South Sudan is helped with the necessary technical support, first to enable it to strengthen the capacity of the institutions and personnel required to conduct a credible election; secondly, to create an environment conducive to the operation of free media and civic engagement without intimidation and reprisals; and thirdly, to strengthen the necessary legal framework. Until we achieve that, and based on my engagement with South Sudanese from various walks of life and in a scenario development exercise, for which the report entitled *Scenarios for South Sudan 2025* will be launched on 22 June, there is a clear realization that the country has serious gaps in several aspects of national governance. That has contributed immensely to the turmoil, and a country in the state that South Sudan is currently in cannot hold credible elections without sufficient international support. I therefore strongly recommend and appeal to the Security Council to consider involving the United Nations in the organization and conduct of the anticipated national elections for South Sudan.

Civil-society groups globally have continued to amplify the voices of ordinary citizens and marginalized people and communities. It is a service that each of us has voluntarily chosen to undertake for the sake of humankind. The role of civil society

globally has contributed in many ways to State- and nation-building processes. It is disheartening when the civic space is deliberately stifled. Civil-society groups and organizations are not against the State, but rather complement the roles that the State has neglected. In order to enhance the contribution of civil society, I therefore recommend two points. First, we should establish periodic forums in which civil society can engage with the leadership of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in order to facilitate better in-country interaction and analysis. Secondly, the Security Council should authorize UNMISS to facilitate or host periodic engagement with the Government and civil society or citizens' groups to build confidence and support forward thinking for the country.

As I end my remarks, I would like to express my appreciation to the Council for creating this opportunity to brief it. I urge the Council and all United Nations organs to invest in existing mechanisms for supporting the work of civil society globally and encourage periodic consultation with civil-society groups globally, so as to amplify the voices of citizens who may not get the opportunity to channel their concerns through Government organs or through humanitarian agencies on the ground.

The President: I thank Ms. Merekaje 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 members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Mr. Haysom and Ms. Mudawi for their comprehensive briefings today, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for raising the possibility of a Council visit to Juba, which my delegation will consider. But in the meantime, we look forward to the visit to Juba by the end of the year by the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. I thank Ms. Mudawi for her messages to the Council, to which we will give serious consideration. And I want to thank and appreciate in particular Ms. Merekaje for sharing

her insights and her very important recommendations with the Security Council.

The United States finds itself once again deeply disturbed to hear about another incident of brutal violence affecting civilians in South Sudan, including women and children. We are particularly appalled by the horrific crimes earlier this year in Leer county in Unity state, where, as we have heard, armed youth from Koch and Mayendit Counties, reportedly under orders from County Commissioner Koang Biel and Mayendit County Commissioner Gatluak Nyang, killed 72 civilians, raped more than 60 women and girls and assaulted humanitarian workers. We learned from a 25 April press statement of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) that some civilians were burned alive, while others, including a child, were beheaded. Two survivors of sexual violence recounted being repeatedly raped and gang-raped.

Horribly, such incidents of gender-based violence are all too common and continue to increase in South Sudan with impunity. According to recent UNMISS reports, the incidence of conflict-related sexual violence in the first quarter of this year increased by 125 per cent compared to the same time frame last year. My delegation wants to make it clear that those involved in planning, directing or committing any acts involving sexual and gender-based violence can be subject to United Nations sanctions. The two permanent Member States — China and Russia — that routinely block sanctions nominations, place unwarranted holds or blocks on the reappointment of sanctions experts and generally seek to weaken the Council's ability to effectively wield the sanctions tool should be mindful of the human costs of their actions. In keeping with international law, we join others in calling on the South Sudanese officials and Government to hold to account all those responsible for committing violations and abuses in Unity state, and we stress that it is the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to ensure the protection of its civilians, including women and children. We know that peacekeepers have a critical role to play in that regard as well, and we commend Mr. Haysom and UNMISS for the rapid deployment of peacekeepers. Their swift engagement at the local, state and national level to restore calm in Unity has saved lives.

But as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reminded us, no lasting and just peace will be possible without political progress. In that regard, the

United States shares the Secretary-General's concern about the slow implementation and completion of critical elements of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan before the end of the transitional period in February 2023. And we call on the Government of South Sudan to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement, including finalizing security arrangements, completing an inclusive constitution drafting process, establishing and resourcing transitional institutions, and as we heard from our civil-society speaker, ensuring a free and open civic space for elections.

As we also just heard, South Sudan is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis in its history, and 8.9 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

The United States provides about \$1 billion every year to support life-saving humanitarian assistance to the South Sudanese people. We join others in urging the international community to continue providing support to the people of South Sudan, who depend on the delivery of essential and life-saving humanitarian assistance. Let me join others in categorically condemning attacks on humanitarian workers that provide such life-saving assistance. No humanitarian workers should face threats of violence for simply trying to do their job.

We call on the South Sudanese officials to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers and organizations, and, as Mr. Haysom noted, reduce bureaucratic impediments to delivering humanitarian assistance instead of putting new ones in place.

Finally, although there has been some improvement over the last year, the United States remains concerned about the increase in violations of the status-of-forces agreement over the reporting period. That includes continued obstructions to UNMISS's freedom of movement, the imposition of undue taxes, fees and restrictions on UNMISS and its contractors, and the arrest of two UNMISS personnel, in clear violation of the status-of-forces agreement arrest and detention procedure.

We remind the Government of South Sudan that it has primary responsibility for ensuring the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel and assets and that all violations of the status-of-forces agreement are unacceptable.

More than ever, the people of the Sudan and the team at UNMISS need our unified support on the

Council to move towards peace, justice and free and fair elections.

Mr. Ragutthalli (India): Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Acting Director of Operations, Ms. Ghada Mudawi; and the civil-society representative, Ms. Lorna Merekaje, for their informative briefings.

The positive political and security developments in South Sudan were made evident in the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/468) and have been reinforced further by today's briefing. The completion of the formation of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly; the tabling of important legislation, including the constitution-making process bill; and the agreement on the implementation of the transitional security arrangements that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General elaborated on just now reflect the commitment of leaders to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. We also appreciate the role played by the Sudan in supporting the parties in coming to an agreement on the security arrangements.

There has also been a renewed emphasis on reconciliation, with the launching of a consultative process for the establishment of Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing. Those developments are significant and need to be duly recognized.

Moving forward in the coming months, the South Sudan authorities need to make further progress on the graduation of the forces, the operationalization of the necessary unified forces, and legislation concerning elections and the finalization of electoral calendar. We believe that with support from the countries in the region and the international community, including the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), progress on the holding of elections is possible in the coming months. In that regard, we take note of the trilateral AU-IGAD-United Nations evaluation process held in March.

On the economic front, the situation has remained relatively stable, with the gross domestic product expected to grow positively in 2022. The humanitarian situation, however, remains a matter of concern, with an estimated 8.9 million people requiring humanitarian assistance. The international community, including the

United Nations, needs to step up its efforts in support of the Government.

We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) towards the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need, particularly in flood-affected areas.

The security situation remains tenuous in some regions despite the overall decrease in the number of violent incidents. We hope that the Community of Sant'Egidio mediation efforts will help the non-signatory groups and the Government to reach an understanding soon. We also note the role of UNMISS in protecting civilians at the Malakal site and mitigating the intercommunal conflict.

We welcome the improved communication between the Government and UNMISS. That development is having a positive impact on the facilitation of the Mission's operations, as is evident from the decrease in the number of status-of-forces agreement violations. We also take note of the integrated and cross-Mission approach, including the setting up of temporary operational bases.

We appreciate the Mission's efforts to support rule-of-law and accountability institutions by supporting special courts, mobile courts and the development of a framework for victim and witness protection programmes. The recent creation of the Ministry of Peacebuilding in South Sudan will help achieve a better understanding of peacebuilding needs.

India has been one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UNMISS since its establishment a decade ago. At present we have nearly 2,300 troops serving in the country. Apart from its core mandate of protecting civilians and providing medical services, the Indian contingent is also contributing to sustainable development and the welfare of the people of South Sudan. Over the years, Indian peacekeepers have gone beyond the call of duty by undertaking a variety of engineering assignments, offering health services and organizing educational-awareness camps.

The outstanding contributions of Indian peacekeepers has been consistently acknowledged, including by the United Nations. The most recent such example was in April this year, when more than 1,100 Indian peacekeepers serving in Upper Nile state were honoured with United Nations medals for their outstanding and multifaceted work. That includes women

peacekeepers from India, who have been championing the cause of disease prevention and integrating a gender perspective into peacekeeping activities through awareness campaigns and livelihood training.

We believe that at this transformative phase, South Sudan requires the wholehearted support of the international community, including from IGAD, the AU and the United Nations. The international community, including the Council, needs to make every effort to address the concerns repeatedly raised by South Sudan regarding the sanctions, including on the arms embargo and targeted measures.

In conclusion, India is fully cognizant of the challenges faced by South Sudan in its pursuit of peace and stability. India supplied life-saving essential medicines in 2020 and again in 2021 during the coronavirus disease pandemic. Food grain assistance was also provided to flood-affected people, and an artificial-limbs fitment camp has been organized in Juba that will benefit more than 500 amputees. We have also recently concluded a special course for capacity-building of diplomats from South Sudan.

On our part, we will continue to support South Sudan and its people in their journey towards securing sustainable peace and a prosperous future.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): First, let me thank both Nicholas Haysom and Ghada Mudawi for their very frank assessments of the situation. I wish also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his suggestion of a Council visit, and we would very much welcome the Council's consideration of that. I wish also to commend and thank our civil-society briefer, Ms. Lorna Merekaje, for her insights. It is good to see her in the Council again, and we very much share the concerns that she has expressed today.

I want to acknowledge the progress made in this quarter, particularly the recent agreement on the command-and-control structure of the necessary unified forces. It is a significant step forward that we wholly welcome.

Reaching agreement is one thing, and implementation is another, so it is regrettable that the timeline for the graduation of the necessary unified forces has not been met. We await the urgent action called for by the Secretary-General to fully implement transitional security arrangements. It is imperative that any momentum gained from the recent agreement on

unified forces continue in order to give the transitional period the urgency that it deserves.

Security remains a key concern given the continued violence across the country between Government and opposition-aligned forces. That should prompt all of us to question the parties' genuine commitment to the ceasefire.

Likewise, urgent protection for humanitarian workers and assets is crucial; we heard that very clearly from Ms. Mudawi this morning. As the country's citizens face a period of extreme food insecurity, the ability of humanitarian workers to safely carry out their duties is the minimum that we should be able to expect.

It is deplorable that during this reporting period alone, as mentioned by Ms. Mudawi, four humanitarian workers were killed. Recent attacks highlight the need for enhanced efforts on that front. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in that regard, but it cannot be expected to shoulder that burden alone.

We remain deeply concerned about the continued stifling of civic space reported by the Secretary-General. If the Government of South Sudan is serious about holding elections, then the freedom of speech, assembly and expression must not only be protected but also actively nourished and encouraged, as part of the suite of basic benchmarks for ensuring a legitimate election process that does not degenerate into violence.

Such action would empower civil society groups that are seeking a more peaceful and inclusive South Sudan, as we heard from Lorna Merekaje, and would help instil much-needed hope in its young population. In Ireland's view, the future of the young State can better be gauged by the status and participation of women in public life and the welfare of children and young people than by an increased flow of arms into the country.

We are appalled by the reported grave violations of human rights, including against children, as well as the harrowing rate of conflict-related sexual violence, and we call on the Government of South Sudan to hold offenders accountable, support survivors and take measures to prevent future incidents. In that regard, I would like to welcome the support for victims referred to by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his briefing.

I commend the work of UNMISS in a challenging space and recall that the Mission needs the support of the

Government to fulfil its mandate. The recent increase in reported status-of-forces agreement violations, following the encouraging downward trend of such violations, risks damaging hard-built trust. We hope to see improvements in those rates in the next report.

Much can progress in the remaining eight months of the transitional period, and the implementation of the transitional security arrangements is central to that. Security forces need leadership, guidance, unity and intent. The lifting of the arms embargo will not alleviate the lack of those principles. Furthermore, South Sudanese women's organizations and women peacebuilders in particular are key to building lasting peace in the country and responding to crises as they emerge. They must be supported by the Government and protected from threats and reprisals.

As always, we remain ready to assist, but leadership and initiative must come from within. Capacity-rebuilding alone will not suffice. Change requires the will and tenacity to take the urgent action needed for the sake of the country's well-being, security and progress.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom; the Acting Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Mudawi; and Ms. Lorna Merekaje for their briefings this morning. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan.

My delegation notes the recent developments in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, including the swearing-in of members of state assemblies, the progress made thanks to the 3 April agreement with regard to the unified force command structures and the progress made with regard to the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing. We also acknowledge the positive cooperation dynamics among regional partners in the peace process. It is important for developments to continue in that direction with supportive efforts.

However, the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement remains significantly behind schedule. We urge all parties to make progress on outstanding issues, especially in the area of security, and to develop a road map to complete the transition process. It is time to focus on the South Sudanese people and abandon continuous political confrontation. We emphasize the legislative

frameworks related to the constitution-making process and elections. In that regard, Mexico reiterates the call for compliance with the 35 per cent quota for women's participation in the institutions established by the agreement.

In parallel to political issues, my delegation is concerned about the continuing tensions at the subnational level that have led to displacement and the exacerbation of the humanitarian situation. The significant increase in gender-based violence, including conflict-related incidents of sexual violence, is deplorable. The South Sudanese authorities have a responsibility to protect civilians and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

Moreover, the adverse effects of climate change continue to pose a threat to the livelihoods of a large majority of the already vulnerable population. The consequences have been undeniable in terms of food insecurity and the increased likelihood of intercommunal tensions. It is therefore imperative to integrate climate-related security risks into early-warning, prevention, mitigation and preparation efforts.

In an extremely complex environment, humanitarian operations continue to be obstructed in various parts of the country, whether as a result of fighting, bureaucratic requirements or checkpoint restrictions that impede their movement. The rising trend in deliberate attacks against humanitarian workers and the pilfering of their supplies is concerning. We call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and the status of humanitarian personnel and their property.

Similarly, we urge the authorities to guarantee the protection of humanitarian personnel and allow them to do their work. In that regard, we echo the Secretary-General's call for the Government to reverse the recent decision of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management to require the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to provide additional documents, which unjustifiably obstructs the work of the organizations. We call on all parties to guarantee the security and freedom of movement of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

In conclusion, I once again call attention to the challenge posed to both South Sudan and the region by arms trafficking. Any revision to the arms embargo must result from the situation on the ground and the authorities' ability to control unrestricted arms flows. As long as arms are widely available, some actors will

prefer the path of violence to political dialogue and will continue to pose a risk to humanitarian operations and UNMISS itself.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing. We listened carefully to the briefing by Ms. Ghada Mudawi, Acting Director of the Operations and Advocacy Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and South Sudanese civil society representative Lorna Merekaje. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, Mr. Akuei Bona Malwal, at today's meeting. We take note of the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/468) on the country and the work of United Nations peacekeepers there.

The Russian Federation supports international efforts to stabilize the situation in South Sudan and strengthen peace and security in that country. The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan continues to work, and the ceasefire is largely being maintained. We believe that the agreement signed in early April by President Salva Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar on establishing a unified command of the armed forces to be a significant contribution to resolving those issues. We believe it is particularly important to speed up the process of forming a unified army.

The gradual implementation of all the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan is essential. We welcome the particular attention that Juba has given to the reconciliation process. We note that a transitional Parliament has now been established and has begun working on key bills, including the preparation of a permanent constitution. We support the intention of South Sudan's leadership to hold the first elections in the history of the State in 2023. Like the Secretary-General, we hope that the Sudanese parties will soon be able to agree on an election timeline and a clear road map for completing the transitional period.

The security situation in the various regions remains challenging. We are concerned about the outbreaks of violence in Upper Nile and Unity states. At the same time, we note the general decrease in the number of intercommunal clashes and the readiness of an increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their permanent homes.

We strongly condemn any violations of the Revitalized Agreement and acts of violence against civilians, including humanitarian personnel working in South Sudan. In our view, the main objective of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan should be to stabilize the security situation and assist the South Sudanese authorities in implementing the Revitalized Agreement. The primary responsibility for addressing issues related to the protection of human rights lies with Juba.

We firmly believe that the new realities demand that the sanctions regime on South Sudan be updated, including by easing the arms embargo in order to assist in training the armed forces and National Security Service personnel. We believe that the introduction of a notification regime to simplify the delivery of non-lethal military equipment to the country in support of the implementation of the peace agreement, in accordance with resolution 2633 (2022), adopted on 27 May, was an important step in that regard. However, it will not be enough to meet Juba's legitimate aspirations, which are fully supported by its African neighbours. The international community should place greater emphasis on assisting the authorities in implementing the Revitalized Agreement and building their capacity to resolve local conflicts.

In conclusion, and separately, I would like to welcome South Sudan's establishment of a National Human Rights Council. We hope that its efforts will be aimed at protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of the South Sudanese people, while strengthening relevant values and improving legislation, as well as communicating reliable information to the international community about the human rights situation in South Sudan. I believe it is important to emphasize that point in the light of the statement by the representative of the United States, who once again condescendingly lectured South Sudan, which is just as much a sovereign State as the United States. We see no justification for demonstrating that sort of superiority.

The Security Council should help the youthful State of South Sudan overcome its problems, including those related to violence, and achieve real results. However, we must bear in mind every aspect of the country's situation. The Russian Federation will continue to work based on the premise that United Nations mechanisms must act impartially and on a basis of verified information.

Ms. Jacobs (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom, Ms. Mudawi and Ms. Merekaje for their helpful briefings, and we very much welcome the participation of the representative of South Sudan in today's meeting. The United Kingdom applauds the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for their continued efforts to build durable peace, protect civilians and support election planning. Today I will focus on the humanitarian and human rights situations, as well as on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

The humanitarian situation, as outlined by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is alarming, with 8.9 million people now estimated to be in need of assistance and almost two thirds of the population facing crisis levels of food insecurity or worse. We urge the Government of South Sudan to reduce the physical and bureaucratic obstructions and meet its obligations under the peace agreement to allow unhindered humanitarian access. The human rights situation also continues to be of deep concern, evidenced by harrowing reports of violence, killings and widespread sexual violence, as our briefers described today. That includes in Leer county, where more than 25,000 civilians have been displaced. We call on the Government of South Sudan to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Since the Council's last meeting, in March (see S/PV.8987), the United Kingdom has joined others in welcoming some recent progress made on the peace deal, including the unified command structure. We are also encouraged by the integration of the peace agreement into the transitional Constitution and by the fact that legislation has been presented to Parliament. However, it is regrettable that overall progress remains too slow and limited, and that critical benchmarks have not been met. Mr. Haysom has rightly highlighted the scale of the challenge of delivering the remaining tasks in the peace agreement on the current timelines. The South Sudanese people have already waited too long for peace. It is clear that the parties have to demonstrate leadership and engage in an honest discussion about priorities and timelines.

With less than a year left of the transitional period, we encourage the Government of South Sudan to set out in detail the concrete steps it needs to take in order to deliver on the Revitalized Agreement, particularly

on constitution-making and elections, as well as how the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the wider international community can support it. We also encourage the Government of South Sudan to make full use of the available United Nations support. In that regard, we look forward to the first meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on South Sudan in the near future.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom reiterates its calls on South Sudan's leaders to demonstrate to the world that they understand the severity of their people's plight, take responsibility and act in partnership with donor communities and the United Nations to solve the crisis.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I thank the briefers for their insights and for providing the Council with a much-needed reality check regarding the current situation in South Sudan. I would particularly like to thank Ms. Merekaje for her concrete and constructive recommendations.

With only eight months left of the transitional period, the people of South Sudan need to see a fundamental shift in the parties' approach to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. They need national leadership, in deeds as well as words. Delivering on three immediate priorities would demonstrate political will and the parties' commitment to fully implementing the Revitalized Agreement.

First, the necessary unified forces must be graduated and deployed, and sufficient resources must be allocated to their operations. That is essential to stabilizing the country and breaking the cycle of subnational and intercommunal violence. As we have seen in Jonglei, armed groups have been fighting one another for years in a series of revenge attacks, including again this spring. The presence of the necessary unified forces could help reduce tension among those groups by filling the current vacuum in national forces.

Secondly, the Government has long promised a clear road map for the end of the transitional period, aimed at an inclusive constitution-making process and ensuring that free and fair elections are possible. The process of creating that road map should be broad-based and inclusive, with an outcome that is realistic but nonetheless ambitious, and it should start now. South Sudan cannot afford to lose any more time.

Thirdly, the Government should provide the necessary funds without delay to implement the peace agreement, in particular with regard to security arrangements, which are key to progress on the constitutional process and elections. Blaming the slow implementation of the peace agreement on a lack of resources is not convincing. South Sudan's oil revenues are increasing. Eliminating avenues for corruption and increasing transparency and accountability will allow the Government to give higher priority to the implementation of the peace agreement.

Following the slow pace of that implementation, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan has gone from bad to worse. While humanitarian actors are working tirelessly to respond, dependence on humanitarian actors to deliver almost all basic services is not sustainable. Eleven years after independence, increased engagement and investment from the Government's side are still much needed to address the root causes of the protracted humanitarian crisis. Improved capacity within the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations country team to coordinate triple-nexus efforts will also be necessary.

We condemn the killing of humanitarian workers and the widespread looting and destruction of humanitarian aid. Negative political signals from the Government towards non-governmental organizations trickle down to the local level and manifest in local officials' efforts to impede critical operations. We commend UNMISS and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their principled stance on those issues, and we call on the Government of South Sudan to fully respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and the Revitalized Agreement.

We are also deeply concerned by the reported levels of conflict-related sexual violence. We urge the Government to investigate allegations and hold perpetrators accountable. We also underline the importance of ensuring that survivors have access to holistic care.

We acknowledge the Government's efforts to establish the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, and we stress the ongoing need to implement the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and the Compensation and Reparation Authority. Protecting civilians, fighting impunity and promoting human rights are essential elements for building trust between the people and the

authorities, as well as building a sustainable peace, and will also provide the necessary political space and freedom for elections to be free, fair and credible.

In conclusion, Norway calls on the Government to provide a clear road map for the end of the transitional period and to demonstrate national ownership and leadership, including by investing increased oil revenues in peace implementation, service delivery and long-term development.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I wish to start by thanking Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Ms. Ghada Mudawi and Ms. Lorna Merekaje for their briefings. I also welcome the delegation of South Sudan to this meeting.

Brazil takes this opportunity to thank the women and men of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for their valiant service. I would also like to thank the troop- and police-contributing countries and civilian experts who are part of UNMISS and the United Nations country team for their unwavering efforts. I will comment on three issues.

First, regarding security, we are concerned at the increasing cattle-related violence in Eastern Equatoria, Unity and Jonglei. On the one hand, we regret the significant civilian casualties that those persistent attacks and raids have caused. On the other hand, we acknowledge and commend UNMISS's efforts to spread its personnel throughout South Sudan and enhance the Mission's mobility, thereby improving its cornerstone goal of providing protection for civilians.

The second issue is the humanitarian situation. The current levels of food insecurity and displacement in South Sudan are our overriding concern. That is the reason that we pay tribute to the essential work being done by humanitarian agencies. Aside from reiterating how crucial the humanitarian response plan for 2022 is, we underline the fact that improved humanitarian access is indispensable to address the urgent needs of millions of South Sudanese citizens.

The third issue is the peace process. We welcome both the agreement on the command structure of the necessary unified forces and the formation of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly. We also commend in particular the institutional steps taken to establish the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing.

As the Secretary-General advocates in his latest report (S/2022/468), South Sudan should use the proper

implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan as its most powerful tool to mitigate persistent intercommunal violence. In that regard, we fully appreciate the firm support provided by the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its members.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, and Ms. Ghada Mudawi for their comprehensive briefings. We also listened carefully to Ms. Lorna Merekaje's briefing. I welcome the participation of the representative of South Sudan in today's meeting.

With regard to the recent positive developments in South Sudan, we believe that they contribute to advancing the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. We appreciate all efforts to that end, including the completion of the re-established Transitional National Legislative Assembly, the introduction of a bill on the constitutional drafting process and the launching of a consultative process to establish the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing.

We also recognize that the signing in April of an agreement on transitional security arrangements, which was facilitated by the Republic of the Sudan, is an important step towards the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. We urge South Sudan to continue building on those gains in order to achieve the desired security and prosperity.

We underline the importance of ensuring the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in all phases of peacebuilding. It is also important to continue cooperation with regional and international organizations, such as the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations. Such cooperation could be facilitated through efforts such as the tripartite assessment process in order to determine South Sudan's needs in relation to elections and the constitutional drafting process. We also appreciate the mediation efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio to support South Sudan on its path to achieving stability.

With regard to the disturbing security situation in South Sudan, there is a need to redouble efforts to address the current challenges, especially the significant increase in sexual and gender-based violence, including

by advancing the implementation of the joint action plan for the armed forces on conflict-related sexual violence in South Sudan.

There is also a need to address the root causes of violence, including the consequences of climate change, which have further increased competition for natural resources, escalated intercommunal violence and exacerbated the already fragile humanitarian and security conditions. That issue should be a priority in view of the approaching rainy season, which is often accompanied by floods in South Sudan. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to provide the necessary support to mitigate the impact of floods.

We also look forward to the Mission's assessment of the risks related to climate change pursuant to resolution 2625 (2022), in coordination with the United Nations country team in South Sudan, because developing a clearer picture of the environmental risks will contribute to addressing them more effectively.

As we heard today, South Sudan continues to witness a deteriorating humanitarian crisis. More than two thirds of the country's population is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and the situation has been further exacerbated by the global food crisis. According to the World Food Programme, food insecurity in South Sudan has reached the highest levels since 2011.

There is a need for the international community to enhance cooperation to meet the humanitarian needs of the people of South Sudan. In that regard, I note the World Bank's announcement of a \$70 million grant for funding social and economic empowerment programmes related to women and girls in South Sudan, including survivors of gender-based violence. Such efforts are essential for building stable and prosperous communities.

We also appreciate the efforts of UNMISS to support the delivery of aid relief to those in need and ensure protection to humanitarian workers, since we are concerned about the attacks launched against them.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates stresses its commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at achieving unity, peace and stability in South Sudan.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I have the honour to read out this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Gabon, Kenya and Ghana (A3).

At the outset, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2022/468). We also thank the Secretary-General's Special Representative to South Sudan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his very insightful comments on the situation in South Sudan.

The A3 furthermore welcomes the additional briefings delivered by the Acting Director of Operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Ghada Mudawi, and Ms. Lorna Merekaje, from South Sudan. We also welcome our brother the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to this meeting.

The A3's statement on this agenda item will focus on three issues, namely, the political, security and humanitarian situations in South Sudan. I will then conclude by highlighting some important issues for the consideration of the members of the Council.

First, in respect of the political situation in South Sudan, the A3 commends the efforts and achievements of the South Sudanese Government in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, notably, the implementation of phase one of the process of forming the necessary unified forces, with approximately 50,000 trainees, the agreement on the command-and-control structure of the army, the opening of humanitarian corridors, which has facilitated a gradual voluntary return of about half a million refugees and internally displaced persons, and the development of an action plan for the commencement of public consultations on the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, among other things.

The A3 would like to further commend the recent visit by the African Union (AU) High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan from 1 to 4 June 2022. The visit paved the way for some open discussions with the presidency, the legislative leadership, political parties, the National Elections Commission, the National Constitutional Review Commission, the African and international diplomatic communities, the United Nations, the European Union, the troika — the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway — and civil society. To the A3, the visit was significant, as it sets the ground for South Sudan to consolidate peace and democracy, flowing from the open discussions that brought to the fore the successes and challenges facing the Revitalized Agreement.

We continue to urge all parties to remain committed to the Revitalized Agreement and commend President Salva Kiir Mayardit and First Vice-President Riek Machar for the consistent reiteration of their positions that the country will not return to conflict. We call on all other parties that have not signed the agreement to demonstrate their commitment to peace and reiterate our call to the parties to urgently resume peace talks under the facilitation of the Community of Sant'Egidio.

The A3 calls the Council's attention to the challenges confronting the implementation of the remaining benchmarks of the peace agreement, especially during the few remaining months of the transition. We call on the Government and all political leaders to place the overall interests of the people of South Sudan at the heart of their discussions and decisions. We urge the parties to hold an inclusive dialogue and forge consensus on a road map for the remainder of the transition period, including the conduct of elections. Since its economy has been affected by prolonged flooding and the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, South Sudan will need international financial support in order to be able to implement the agreement's mechanism.

We call on the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations and other bilateral and multilateral partners, including the troika countries, China and the IGAD Partners Forum, to not relent and to continue to extend the necessary assistance, while supporting the activities of the implementation oversight mechanisms. We encourage the parties to make progress on the aspects lagging behind.

On the security situation in South Sudan, the A3 notes with concern the surge in communal violence. We call on all the parties to those conflicts to desist from any action that will disturb the peace. We urge the Government of South Sudan and leaders at all levels to institute measures to address those intercommunal conflicts, including through peace dialogues, in order to address grievances between communities.

We commend the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its role in the protection of civilians and in conducting key leadership engagements in Jonglei, the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and Juba, including facilitating the visit of a delegation of influential Juba-based Dinka Bor leaders to Gadiang, in Jonglei state, from 25 to 28 March. We believe that such engagements help to build trust between

communities at the grass-roots level, which is vital for the peace process.

With regard to the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, the A3 expresses grave concern about the decision of the World Food Programme (WFP) to partially suspend food aid to South Sudan due to a funding shortage. The suspension of food aid will lead to a third of the 6.2 million people in South Sudan who were to receive assistance this year being denied food aid. Climate change is also exacerbating the humanitarian situation, with South Sudan facing severe flooding, localized drought and conflict effects that have left a large population food insecure.

The situation in South Sudan has been summed up by the WFP's Acting Country Director in South Sudan, Adeyinka Badejo-Sanogo, who said:

"South Sudan is facing its hungriest year since independence. We are already in a crisis, but we are trying to avert the situation from becoming more explosive".

The international community should not allow this young nation to face an explosive situation that could break its core. Accordingly, the A3 calls on one and all to support the people of South Sudan in overcoming this humanitarian crisis through adequate funding of its appeal.

Beyond the immediate provision of food aid, it is important for the international community to increase its development assistance to the country. The much-needed reforms to help diversify the country's economy, promote agriculture and food security and develop infrastructure will require significant international resource support. We further urge South Sudan to take advantage of this opportunity to start engaging with the Peacebuilding Commission.

The A3 would like to conclude by highlighting the following three points for the attention of Council members and other Member States.

First, if we are to enable the Government to follow through with the graduation of the necessary unified forces, it is important that the international community provide the needed financial and technical assistance in order to equip the necessary unified forces to enhance civilian protection.

Secondly, we urge the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the IGAD Special Envoy for South

Sudan, the head of the AU Mission in South Sudan and the interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to continue to offer their good offices in order to encourage the parties to draft a mutually acceptable road map towards the next elections.

Thirdly, because some such conflicts start at the grassroots level, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, the head of the AU Mission in South Sudan and the Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission should continue their efforts to engage the South Sudanese authorities and all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and women organizations, in order to address the surge in intercommunal violence.

Finally, we would like to join the Secretary-General in conveying our deep appreciation to the troop- and police-contributing countries, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and the uniformed and civilian personnel of UNMISS for continuing to work tirelessly towards peace in South Sudan.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Ms. Ghada Mudawi, Acting Director of Operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings. We welcome the presence of the representative of South Sudan in this meeting. I listened attentively to the statement made by Ms. Lorna Merekaje. We are pleased to see continued progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

On 3 April, the parties in South Sudan reached an agreement on transitional security arrangements. President Kiir Mayardit set up the command structure of the necessary unified forces. South Sudan has also completed the formation of the reconstituted transitional national legislative assembly, launched the process for establishing the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing and formally presented the constitution-making process bill. China welcomes those important developments and appreciates the mediation efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and relevant countries of the region, the Sudan in particular.

The transitional period in South Sudan will come to an end next year. It is hoped that all parties in South

Sudan will sustain the current positive momentum and proceed in a steady and orderly manner to achieve the objectives established for the transitional political structure, security arrangements and economic reform.

With regard to the unique challenges facing the country in implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, the international community should maintain the necessary patience and provide constructive assistance, instead of exerting excessive pressure, criticizing and imposing sanctions.

I should point out that, while an important part of the political transition, elections cannot resolve every issue. The key lies in all parties in South Sudan achieving reconciliation and reaching consensus on various agendas to advance the political transition in a concerted manner with a view to balancing national stability and development.

The overall security situation in South Sudan has been stable recently, yet interfactional and intercommunal conflicts have occurred from time to time, which calls for a tailored and integrated approach. It is necessary to expedite the implementation of transitional security arrangements and the formation of necessary unified forces. The international community should provide sufficient financial and material support for those efforts. The Council should respond to the appeal of the African Union by lifting the arms embargo on South Sudan as soon as possible.

The United States continues to impose unilateral sanctions on other countries, inflicting tremendous harm on the people of those countries. Sanctions should not be used as a tool for political ends. Double standards should be abandoned. An increasing number of Council members does not support the current sanctions regime on South Sudan.

The intercommunal conflicts in South Sudan have a long history and should be addressed by multiple means, such as prevention, mediation, dialogue and development. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/468) indicates that those conflicts are rooted in competition over resources. The international community should help South Sudan grow its economy, improve people's livelihoods and eliminate the root causes of conflicts.

South Sudan's economic reforms have achieved some results. Its microeconomic situation remained

relatively stable. Nevertheless, the shortfall in humanitarian resources remains large, and food insecurity is acute, affecting an estimated 7.7 million South Sudanese this year.

We call on the international community to maintain and increase assistance to South Sudan and scale up contributions to United Nations humanitarian and development agencies. At the same time, the international community should also focus on helping South Sudan strengthen its own development and capacity-building; fully respect its ownership in economic development; unleash its potential in agriculture, energy, infrastructure and other fields; and help the people of South Sudan achieve self-reliance at an early date.

China always stands with the people of South Sudan. A number of major Chinese aid projects, such as the Jur River bridge in Wau, the Juba Teaching Hospital and radio and television broadcasting facilities, have been under way or have been completed in succession. China has also provided emergency food aid to South Sudan, sent medical expert teams and provided supplies and equipment to contain the pandemic. Together with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), we launched a pilot project in Eastern Equatoria state to build the capacities of young persons and women engaged in ecological agriculture, helping South Sudan's economic recovery and improving people's livelihoods.

UNMISS has done a great deal of work to help implement the Revitalized Agreement and protect civilians. China encourages UNMISS and the Government of South Sudan to strengthen their coordination and increase their communication and, of course, supports aligning the mandate of UNMISS with the national priorities and strategies of South Sudan, so as to form synergy.

The safety and security of UNMISS peacekeepers is essential for the Mission's effective mandate delivery. All the parties concerned should take practical measures to contribute to the safety and security of the peacekeepers and improve peacekeeping performance.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Ms. Ghada Mudawi and Ms. Lorna Merekaje for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the representative of South Sudan at today's meeting.

I would like to underscore three points. My colleagues have already spoken about them, so I will try to be brief.

First, we also welcome the agreement of 3 April on the command structure of the necessary unified forces. We note the positive role played by the Sudan in achieving that agreement. We call on the Sudanese authorities to allocate the necessary resources for its implementation. The entire peace process depends on security arrangements, in particular the holding of elections, as well as the revision of the arms embargo.

Secondly, we call on all parties to agree on the date of the elections and to begin their preparation without delay. We welcome the establishment of an electoral assistance team, as requested by the Security Council. That team can only support the process, and it is primarily up to the parties to agree on the date and the next steps. In that regard, we regret the lack of progress in adopting the constitutional and legal framework for the elections and in establishing the National Elections Commission. The adoption of a legal framework for political parties is also essential. It is up to the authorities to create the right conditions by guaranteeing respect for fundamental freedoms.

Thirdly, the authorities must protect civilians and humanitarian workers. Violence continues at an alarming level and affects women and children in particular. It is too often the result of local rivalries between communities that are too often fuelled by national political dynamics. In particular, we condemn the violence committed in Leer county in April, including atrocities that were attributed to the security forces themselves. All the perpetrators must be brought to justice, and the Security Council must adopt the necessary sanctions.

We are concerned about the increase in restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. We call for greater cooperation by the South Sudanese authorities.

Finally, in response to the emergency, the European Union has increased its humanitarian assistance to South Sudan from €42 million to €72 million in 2022. That support will continue. At the same time, the authorities must do more to protect humanitarian workers.

We also condemn attacks on humanitarian workers and administrative harassment of United Nations and

non-governmental organizations' staff, at a time when humanitarian needs are greater than ever.

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

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Ms. Ghada Mudawi for briefing the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan. My special appreciation goes to Ms. Lorna Merekaje for her insightful remarks and her clear recommendations today on how to move forward with the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan and how to help strengthen civil society.

We also welcome the presence of the representative of South Sudan at this meeting.

I would like to focus my statement on four points.

First, we remain deeply concerned about the grave human rights and security situation in South Sudan. Particularly shocking is the significant increase in gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence incidents, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/468). Impunity is the norm. What the country and its people need is the opposite — strengthened and effective justice and accountability. It needs real political will and the resolve to move ahead. Therefore, we call on all leaders, political actors and commanders to make fighting sexual violence a priority.

Secondly, the people in South Sudan continue to suffer from severe food insecurity and hunger, violence, displacement and a lack of opportunities, as we also heard from Ms. Mudawi. Climate change and its affects have severe impacts on South Sudan. Creating resilience will be key to improve the situation in the future. At the same time, the humanitarian situation is aggravated by violence and the global food crisis.

We express concern over the trend of increased attacks on humanitarian workers and assets, including the death of four humanitarian workers this year and the looting of hundreds of tons of food and life-saving supplies.

We call on the Government of South Sudan and all other actors and leaders to ensure that humanitarian aid can reach all people in need. We regret the fact that the Government is creating bureaucratic hurdles and

adding preconditions for humanitarian actors to carry out their work. That must end immediately.

Thirdly, we commend the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and urge the Government to ensure the free movement of the Mission in order to allow for the implementation of its mandate, and we call on the Government fully to respect the status-of-forces agreement.

Fourthly, while some progress has been made on implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, the overall implementation remains slow. The Secretary-General's benchmark report reflected the limited progress, and the Panel of Experts summarized it in clear and very sobering words.

We remain concerned about the delays in implementing the agreement, the ongoing intercommunal violence, the high levels of sexual violence and the economic and humanitarian crises. We call on all the parties to accelerate the implementation of the agreement, particularly in relation to transitional security arrangements and in the light of the end of the transitional period, in February 2023.

In conclusion, it is difficult to see a way out of the political gridlock. We therefore call on all actors to step up their political will and agree on a date for the elections, and keep in mind that the United Nations stands ready to provide the necessary support to the process should the Government request such assistance. We express our strong support for regional efforts as well as those of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to find a way forward to bring peace back to South Sudan.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would like to once again 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 now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): I have a very short statement.

First, I extend my congratulations to you, Madam, and to your delegation on assuming the presidency of the Council. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom — Professor Haysom, as he is known in South Sudan; Ms. Ghada Mudawi; and our sister Ms. Lorna Merekaje for their presentations. I wish also to thank the members of the Council for their kind, welcoming words to my delegation.

We take note of the quarterly report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/468). Eight months from now, the interim period and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan will come to an end.

We agree with the Secretary-General that no party should take any unilateral decision that may affect the future of stability in South Sudan at the end of the interim period. The appeal for no unilateral decision-taking ought to include the international community as well. We hope that the next eight months will be spent in close consultations by all parties to the agreement, including the international community. In

that regard, if the Council so decides, South Sudan will welcome it to visit Juba and other places, as it has been invited by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom.

Two weeks ago, a list of names of some senior officials and individuals from South Sudan was circulated on social media, purportedly compiled by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. The news of that list indeed raised some concerns in South Sudan. But we are thankful to have been assured by some individuals from the Sanctions Committee itself and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan that that list was fake. We are happy that it is actually fake and not a serious consideration by the Council at this time.

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

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

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.