



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

Provisional

9639th

meeting

Thursday, 30 May 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
Guyana	Ms. Benn
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mr. Camilleri
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hyunwoo Cho
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Dix
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

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.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/415, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstentions:

Algeria, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone

The President: The draft resolution received 9 votes in favour, none against and 6 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2731 (2024).

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States thanks Council members for their constructive engagement on this resolution (resolution 2731 (2024)).

We welcome the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan and the renewal of the arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze measures for an additional 12 months. The measures outlined in this resolution continue to play a critical role in promoting peace and stability in South Sudan and the broader region. Extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts

underscores the importance of the Panel's independent reporting, which informs the United Nations and Member States as to how best to allocate resources for South Sudan.

In addition, the United Nations arms embargo remains necessary to stem the unfettered flow of weapons into a region awash with guns. Too many people, especially women and children, have borne the brunt of that ongoing violence. The explosion of an ammunition depot in Juba in February only reinforced the need to reduce weapons in South Sudan and put in place proper protocols to store and safeguard them.

The United States also welcomes the continued support for the listing criteria, which include actions that impede the conduct or legitimacy of free and fair elections, including pre-election preparatory activities. Maintaining that criterion enhances the international community's ability to support democratic aspirations of the South Sudanese people.

Once again, the United States is committed to the people of South Sudan and will work closely with the transitional Government, fellow Council members and all stakeholders to facilitate peace, security and prosperity for the country and the region.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I have the honour to deliver this explanation of vote on behalf of the three African members of the Council — Algeria, Mozambique and Sierra Leone — as well as Guyana (A3+).

Sanctions are very important and powerful tool of the Security Council. They were conceived as temporary measures to induce positive changes where and when they are enforced. Cognizant of the impact and importance of sanctions, they should be used with caution in order to prevent unintended negative effects. Indeed, mitigating the unintended negative impact of sanctions requires the Council and the wider international community to continue reviewing the way relevant sanctions are designed and implemented.

In the case of South Sudan, it is clear that the current sanctions regime, and the arms embargo in particular, is no longer serving the purposes for which it was established. In fact, it is having negative effects, as it hinders the ability of the transitional Government to create the necessary capacity to fully implement the outstanding transitional tasks. They include effectively equipping the necessary unified forces, which is an important component of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

The A3+ abstained in the voting on today's adoption of this resolution (resolution 2731 (2024)) based on its conviction that the time has come for the Security Council to make the necessary adjustments to the South Sudan sanctions regime to effectively support the efforts of the South Sudanese authorities to consolidate their State and protect civilians. Guided by that vision, the A3+ engaged constructively during the negotiations and expressed its readiness to consider multiple scenarios and options to reach a fair outcome for all Council members. Unfortunately, this text does not reflect the spirit of compromise that guided our deliberations.

The A3+ is of the view that the complexity of the challenges faced by South Sudan calls for more robust and structured support from the international community in critical areas such as weapons and ammunition management. That could lead to better outcomes than the continued enforcement of the arms embargo itself.

Anchored by the African Union's principled position, Guyana, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Algeria reiterate the imperative of impartiality and clear criteria for the imposition, adjustment and lifting of Security Council sanctions. Furthermore, we reject any attempt to use sanctions to exercise political pressure on African States.

In conclusion, the A3+ stands ready to continuously engage with the members of the Security Council to shape a harmonized vision on how to better support the people and the Government of South Sudan at this critical moment in their history.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on the resolution prepared by the United States on the extension of the sanctions regime against South Sudan (resolution 2731 (2024)). We believe that the sanctions relief provided for in the document is insufficient. We regret that the American authors continued to focus entirely on the sanctions regime against South Sudan, which they present as a sort of panacea for all of the country's problems. At the time, the introduction of the restrictive sanctions regime was a consequence of the intense internal conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. However, the situation has not stood still. In recent years, the authorities of that young nation have managed to traverse difficult path towards a relative stabilization of the situation. However, throughout all this time, the sanctions regime has hardly undergone any changes. It appears that the United States penholders of the South Sudanese files are repeatedly proposing that we ignore all of Juba's positive developments and rubber-stamp

yet another decision that is burdensome for the country. We have no doubt that Washington is simply using the Security Council to maintain leverage over the South Sudanese authorities in order to achieve its own goals. A consumerist approach towards the Security Council and its mechanisms is clearly being taken here. I would not want to think that the other Council members who voted in favour of the resolution are also attempting to make life more difficult for the Government of the Republic of South Sudan through sanctions, but, unfortunately, that is the scenario they are endorsing. I recall that there had been a proposal on the table to ease, if not lift, sanctions on Juba. However, that too was firmly rejected.

The United States penholders of the South Sudanese file have taken into account a number of our requests. However, they simply could not avoid doing so, since the absurdity of the situation raised questions even among partners who traditionally support Washington. Unfortunately, they have once again demonstrated that they hear only what they want to hear and what serves their purposes.

The fundamental issue is not just that many of our amendments were ignored, but that the collective call of the three African members of the Council to respond to the approach endorsed by the African Union regarding the harmfulness of the Security Council sanctions regime has been ignored once again. Moreover, the South Sudanese authorities themselves have been advocating for lifting or at least easing the sanctions, which would enhance Juba's effectiveness in addressing security challenges, including in the run-up to the national elections, and in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

It is clear that, at this stage, many of the Security Council sanctions regimes, including that of South Sudan, are outdated and need to be reviewed. Further evidence of their ineffectiveness is the imposition by certain States of additional unilateral, and therefore illegal, restrictive measures, which further aggravates the socioeconomic situation of many African States, including South Sudan.

Our country, which has historically stood at the origin of the struggle of the peoples of the African continent to gain independence and statehood, cannot remain indifferent in the face of such disregard for the interests of Africans. We reaffirm our position of principle that Western members of the Security Council, in particular those that have taken on the role of penholders, should

take into account the views of the countries on the agenda rather than imposing their own vision of political and economic development. Today we see that such an approach does not have broad support in the Security Council, and it harms the reputation of both the Council and the United Nations as a whole.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China abstained in the voting on resolution 2731 (2024) on South Sudan sanctions, which was just put to a vote.

I would like to provide the following explanations.

The arms embargo imposed by the Council on South Sudan, which has been in effect for many years, has constrained South Sudan's security capacity-building, seriously impeding the efforts of the Government of South Sudan to ensure the safety of civilians, strengthen border control and maintain social stability.

The lifting of sanctions has always been the aspiration of the people and the Government of South Sudan. Over the years, the Government has made unremitting efforts to that end and has demonstrated political will and made much progress in implementing the sanctions-related benchmarks.

The Security Council should progressively ease the arms embargo on South Sudan in the light of the actual situation. However, in recent years, the penholder has insisted on maintaining the sanctions against South Sudan, despite the strong demands of the country in question, the reasonable views of the countries in the region and the collective voices of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African Community and other regional organizations.

During the consultations, many Council members, including countries in the region, called for prioritizing the lifting of the arms embargo and expressed their willingness to continue full consultations. However, the penholder refused to show flexibility on core issues and put the draft resolution straight to a vote when there were still major differences among members. That practice undermines the efforts of member States to seek consensus. It jeopardizes the unity and cooperation of the Security Council and ultimately is going to undermine the Security Council's authority.

The present situation on the ground calls for providing more assistance and support to the Government of South Sudan rather than imposing sanctions and placing pressure on it. In the past two decades, there has been a pattern of expansion of the Council's sanctions regimes.

The reasonable demands of many African countries calling strongly for the easing or lifting of sanctions have been ignored.

China has always advocated a prudent and responsible approach towards sanctions in the Council. We hope the Council will heed the strong call of African countries, taking into account the legitimate concerns, and promptly adjust and lift sanctions that are not compatible with the situation on the ground.

It is only normal for Council members to have differences of opinions. An important responsibility of the penholder is to promote the Council's unity and cooperation and help the Council to bridge differences. The penholder should effectively take up that responsibility, accommodate the concerns of the country in question, give equal attention to the views of all Council members, respect the recommendations of regional organizations and countries, and avoid placing country-specific positions above collective positions and avoid making penholdership a privilege and a tool for exerting pressure.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mrs. Adeng (South Sudan): The Government of South Sudan acknowledges the concerns and positions expressed by various members of the Security Council. Once again, South Sudan is committed to the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the road map of the extension of the transitional period.

We recognize that some members of the Council believe that sanctions, particularly the arms embargo, are necessary tools to maintain pressure for the peace process. However, we must highlight the significant strides made towards achieving the benchmarks outlined by the Council. The formation of a unified command structure for the necessary unified forces and the joint progress made demonstrate our dedication to peace and stability.

Despite those advancements, the continued imposition of sanctions, particularly the arms embargo, hinders the efforts to build robust security institutions capable of maintaining stability and protecting our citizens, as noted by numerous Council members who shared their perspective, noting the negative impacts of sanctions on our capacity-building initiatives.

We echo the sentiments of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in their calls for the lifting of punitive measures. Those regional bodies understand

the detrimental effects of prolonged sanctions on the political and security landscapes of South Sudan and advocate their removal to support its progress.

The assessment report (S/2024/309) transmitted by the Secretary-General acknowledges our progress and identifies areas needing further improvement. We are committed to enhancing our efforts in completing the strategic defence and security review; the establishment and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; and managing arms and ammunition stockpiles effectively. We submitted our report to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, outlining our progress on the benchmarks, demonstrating transparency and accountability in our endeavours.

We urge the Security Council to consider the advancements made and the adverse impact of the sanctions on our nation's development. Lifting the arms embargo and other sanctions will empower us to further implement the Agreement, enhance security and build sustainable peace.

South Sudan remains dedicated to cooperating with the international community and its regional partners to achieve lasting peace and stability. We appeal to the Security Council to support efforts by re-evaluating and lifting the sanctions that impede our progress.

The Government of South Sudan acknowledges the efforts of the Security Council in addressing the complexities in the evolving situations in our country. We appreciate the Council's recognition of the progress we have made in implementing the key benchmarks outlined in resolution 2577 (2021) and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

However, we express concern about resolutions that seek to renew the sanctions regime, including the arms embargo. While we understand the intentions behind maintaining pressure to achieve further progress, it is essential to acknowledge the significant advancements we have made.

The continued imposition of sanctions, particularly the arms embargo, poses substantial challenges to our capacity-building efforts. The support and positions of the A3+ members — China and Russia — which have called for the lifting of the arms embargo, underscore the need for a reassessment of those measures. These members recognize that lifting the arms embargo will enable us

to build the robust security institutions necessary for maintaining peace and protecting our citizens.

We note with concern that proposals to amend draft resolution S/2024/415 in order to allow the supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel, and to provide assistance, advice and training to South Sudanese authorities were not included in the draft submitted draft. Those proposals were intended to enhance our ability to effectively manage and control arms, similar to measures adopted in resolution 2714 (2023) for Somalia. The exclusion of those proposals fails to consider our progress and the constructive role that international support can play in furthering our capacity.

We appreciate the constructive proposals by France to increase technical assistance and capacity-building for ammunition storage and armoury control. However, the deletion of that language due to reservations from some members reflects a missed opportunity to provide much-needed support for our security sector reform.

The additions to the preambular paragraphs, including the emphasis on fair procedures for delisting individuals and entities, the importance of preparations for peaceful elections and the recognition of Kenya's role in facilitating dialogue, are positive steps. We are committed to ensuring that upcoming elections are conducted peacefully and inclusively, with the full participation of all stakeholders, including women. The different ongoing peace processes in South Sudan have always been the call of the President, who understands the price we must pay and have been paying to keep peace in South Sudan.

In the light of that, we urge the Security Council to reconsider the renewal of the arms embargo and other sanctions. We call for a more balanced approach that acknowledges our progress and provides the necessary support to continue our journey towards lasting peace and stability. The lifting of the arms embargo, coupled with coordinated international support for weapons and ammunition management, will significantly enhance our capacity to maintain security and fully implement the peace agreement.

South Sudan remains dedicated to working with the international community and our regional partners to achieve a peaceful and prosperous future for all South Sudanese citizens. We appeal to the Security Council to support our efforts by adopting measures that facilitate, rather than hinder, our progress.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.