



Security Council

Distr.: General
13 June 2023

Original: English

Situation in South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2677 \(2023\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 March 2024 and requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the Mission's mandate every 90 days. The report covers political and security developments, the humanitarian and human rights situation and progress towards the implementation of the Mission's mandate between 16 February and 31 May 2023.

II. Major political developments

2. On 22 February, the end of the original timeline of the three-year transitional period as per the 2018 Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan ("Revitalized Agreement") was marked, as was the start of the 24-month extended transitional period, to end on 22 February 2025, as agreed by the parties under the road map.

3. On 23 February, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity requested the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to assist in establishing a joint taskforce for advancing the constitution-making and electoral processes. On 28 April, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the taskforce, and the inaugural meeting was held on 1 June.

4. The opening session of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly was held on 27 March, during which the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, acknowledged the support given to the constitutional and electoral processes by UNMISS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

5. On 3 March, the President removed the Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs, Angelina Teny, an appointee of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO), and the Minister of the Interior, Mahmoud Solomon, and subsequently appointed a representative of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to the Ministry of Defence and a representative of SPLM-IO to the Ministry of the Interior. The reshuffle created a political impasse, with tensions escalating on 29 March following the appointment of General Chol Thon Balok as the new Minister



for Defence and Veteran Affairs. In response, on 30 March SPLM-IO requested IGAD to intervene and resolve the dispute. The removal of the Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs and the swapping of the portfolios was determined to be a violation of the Revitalized Agreement by the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

6. To address the political impasse, UNMISS, the African Union Mission in South Sudan, the Office of the Special Envoy for South Sudan of IGAD and the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, exercising its good offices, encouraged SPLM and SPLM-IO leadership to reach a settlement. The members of the quartet held a series of engagements with the First Vice-President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, as well as Vice-Presidents Hussein Abdelbagi, Wani Igga and Taban Deng, and cabinet ministers. In addition, regional efforts were also undertaken, but the issue has yet to be resolved.

7. Internal mediation on the same impasse led by Vice-President Hussein Abdelbagi, the Presidential Advisor on Security Affairs, Tut Gatluak, and the Minister for Presidential Affairs, Barnaba Marial Benjamin, among others, did not yield a breakthrough either. However, those efforts appeared to have resulted in an agreement on the sharing ratios of the necessary unified forces – 60 per cent for SPLM, 30 per cent for SPLM-IO and 10 per cent for the South Sudan Opposition Alliance.

8. Subsequently, on 14 March, the National Transitional Committee directed the security mechanisms to present deployment plans for the necessary unified forces. On 24 March, the Committee announced the allocation of the middle-ranking echelon positions for the parties. On 12 May, the Council of Ministers approved the budget for the deployment of the first batch of the necessary unified forces. However, the deployment of this first batch under phase I and the commencement of phase II remained pending.

9. From 21 to 23 March, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity met with the Non-Signatory South Sudanese Opposition Group in Rome, under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio. As an agreement could not be reached on the agenda, the talks were adjourned until 8 May. To date, the parties have not met.

10. On 14 April, the Council of Ministers approved the national elections act 2012 (amendment) bill 2023, and submitted it to parliament on 29 May. On 8 May, the amended national security service bill 2023, the public financial management and accountability bill 2023, the Bank of South Sudan bill 2023 and the banking bill 2023 were all tabled.

11. On 6 April, the National Bureau of Statistics released a report on the population estimation survey conducted between May and June 2021 in all 10 states and the three administrative areas. In the report, the population of South Sudan was estimated to be 12.4 million people (52.9 per cent women), including internally displaced persons. On 10 March, the Council of Ministers, while endorsing the report, affirmed that the findings contained therein would not be used for electoral-related purposes, which was echoed by the National Bureau of Statistics on 6 April. However, the report generated debate in South Sudan, owing to the significant variances in the population estimates of some states in comparison with the 2008 census figures (8.26 million) and the views of the opposition that the new data would be unfavourable to them if used for elections.

Regional engagements and developments

12. The outbreak of hostilities in the Sudan on 15 April had direct political, social and economic consequences for South Sudan. As at 31 May, more than 89,010 people (including 46,907 women), mostly comprising South Sudanese returnees (93 per cent)

but also Sudanese refugees and third-country nationals, had entered South Sudan. The influx of returnees and refugees raised the risks of increased competition over limited resources as well as an increase in tensions between the new arrivals and South Sudanese communities, often with a tribal undertone. The reduction in the flow of goods and fuel from the Sudan further exacerbated the economic plight of the South Sudanese, already under tremendous pressure due to inflation. Fears concerning the ability to maintain consistent oil pipeline operations from South Sudan to Port Sudan in the Sudan added to the uncertainty around South Sudanese crude oil exports, although the Government continued to insist that oil production had not yet been affected.

13. Following his virtual meeting with the IGAD Heads of State and Government on 16 April on the conflict in the Sudan, the President continued to engage with regional leaders to resolve the conflict. The President stated that he continued to engage with Generals Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo to agree to face-to-face peace talks in Juba.

14. On May 11, the African Union and IGAD launched a post-conflict needs assessment for South Sudan. The exercise aimed to assist in the formulation of a comprehensive needs assessment matrix and opportunities for support, including modalities for the establishment of a reconstruction fund as provided by the Revitalized Agreement.

Economic situation

15. The South Sudanese pound (SSP) continued to depreciate against the United States dollar. As at 31 May, the pound had depreciated by 40 per cent since the beginning of 2023 owing to insufficient central bank reserves. The Bank of South Sudan continued to auction dollars and restricted borrowing by the Government. The continued conflict in the Sudan had reduced imports, leading to higher market prices.

16. On 1 March, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund approved a disbursement of 86.1 million special drawing rights (about \$114.8 million) to South Sudan under the “food shock window” of the Rapid Credit Facility to address food insecurity.

17. On 3 March, the National Revenue Authority confirmed the collection of SSP 95 billion (\$110 million) in non-oil revenues in the fiscal year 2022/23. The collection had increased by SSP 51.4 billion (\$60 million) from the previous fiscal year owing to public financial management reforms and the digitalization of revenue collections.

18. On 31 March, the Council of Ministers approved the national budget for 2023/24 of approximately \$2.94 billion. The budget had a shortfall of about \$970 million and awaited deliberation in parliament. The Government planned to finance the deficit by prioritizing domestic non-oil revenue mobilization and borrowing.

III. Security situation

19. Clashes between communities and cattle-related communal violence continued to affect the security situation. As a result of the spike in civilian casualties resulting from the conflict in Upper Nile and Jonglei States at the end of 2022 and early in 2023, a large-scale mobilization of armed Nuer young people was observed, leading to contingency planning by UNMISS. The mission was now considering adjustments to its response and capabilities in the light of the successive crises in Upper Nile and Jonglei States, aiming to recalibrate the peacemaking approach of the Mission and address gaps, if any, in view of potential concurrent multiple crises affecting civilians.

20. During the reporting period, in Jonglei State, a reduction in the number of clashes was observed between the Lou Nuer and Murle communities. However, the risk of retaliatory attacks remained. In Western Equatoria State, the Tambura peace conference had been postponed indefinitely.

Greater Upper Nile region

21. The greater Jonglei area saw a decrease in clashes between the Lou Nuer and Murle communities. However, sporadic incidents, particularly the raids led by the Murle in northern Jonglei, continued to perpetuate the threat of renewed mobilizations of the Lou Nuer community during the current dry season. Over the reporting period, the two groups instigated 70 incidents, resulting in 103 people killed (including 82 men, 15 women, 5 boys and 1 girl), 53 injured (46 men, 5 women, 1 boy and 1 girl) and 133 abducted (65 women, 55 boys and 13 girls), as well as one case (a woman) of conflict-related sexual violence. On 4 April, UNMISS supported a visit by the Chief Administrator of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area to the Nanaam area, a strategic location between the border of Jonglei State and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, where the two communities usually mobilize.

Greater Equatoria region

22. The security situation in Central Equatoria State remained fragile owing to the movement of Dinka cattle herders from Bor, which had damaged local farmland and exacerbated criminality along the Yei-Juba-Bor road. This included an attack on 9 March on a convoy of the Governor of Central Equatoria State south of Mangalla. Reports that some cattle herders had settled in the Mundari East and Mundari West counties of Western Equatoria State and in Awerial County of Lakes State had raised uncertainty over their return to Jonglei owing to the persistence of last year's flood water in the greater Jonglei area.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

23. Cyclical violence between the Luanyjang community of Warrap State and the Pakam community of Lakes State escalated, despite interventions by state governments and UNMISS, including increased patrols and local-level good offices. On 21 February, individuals from the Pakam community attacked the Luanyjang community in the Maper area of Rumbek North, following the movement of Luanyjang cattle into the area in search of pasture. Neighbouring communities in Rumbek North and Greater Tonj joined the Pakam community's attack, which resulted in an estimated 143 people killed and 91 injured, cumulatively. This was followed by retaliatory attacks by the Luanyjang against the Pakam on 18 April that resulted in 76 deaths and 34 injured. These cyclical revenge attacks and the potential cross-state involvement of other communities continued to be a serious security threat.

24. Tensions between the Dinka Ngok from the Abyei Administrative Area and the Dinka Twic of Twic County, Warrap State, persisted and were further complicated by reported Nuer involvement. In response to an increase in reported incidents that involved Nuer elements from Unity State in Twic County, the South Sudan United Front/Army issued press statements on 10 and 14 April, disclaiming its presence in the Abyei Area and affiliation with such Nuer elements. During the reporting period, 14 incidents were recorded between the Dinka Ngok and Dinka Twic that resulted in 62 persons killed (including 12 women, 3 girls and 3 boys) and 27 injured (including 4 women).

IV. Humanitarian situation

25. On 6 March, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme released the findings of the Mission's 2022 report on crop and food security in South Sudan. The overall cereal deficit between January and December 2023 was estimated at about 485,400 tons, that is, 10.2 per cent below the deficit estimated for 2022 and 2 per cent below the average for the period 2018–2022. An estimated 130,000 hectares of cultivated land were damaged by floods, with an estimated loss of 65,000 tons of cereals.

26. On 7 March, the Ministry of Health declared a cholera outbreak in Malakal County, Upper Nile State. As at 16 April, 1,027 cumulative cases and two deaths had been recorded. A vaccination campaign, initiated on 16 March, had reached 54,538 people in Malakal town and the protection of civilians site, achieving 83 per cent coverage.

27. From 3 to 5 April, an inter-agency mission was conducted to Gabbat Atodigi, Babodi and Madebe Centre in Ibba County, Western Equatoria State, following an armed attack by Ambororo cattle herders that killed three people and injured several others. The same mission estimated that 13,524 people had been displaced from their homes. Homes were burned and properties looted during the attack.

28. In Western Equatoria State, fighting in mid-March in the Central African Republic between the Azande and the ex-Séléka elements for the control of Bambouti in the eastern part of the country displaced 3,000 persons, including returnees, to Tambura County and Raja County of Western Bahr el-Ghazal State. On 4 April, an inter-agency team was deployed to Source Yubu, Tambura County, which registered 628 refugees. As at 14 April, an estimated 659 people had been displaced from Bambouti to Deimziber Payam in Raja County, including 59 South Sudanese returnees, 100 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 100 refugees from the Central African Republic and 400 refugees from the Sudan. On 25 April, a humanitarian mission to deliver assistance to the refugees in Source Yubu Payam was postponed owing to renewed fighting between armed factions in Bambouti. As at 16 May, Source Yubu town remained deserted after residents fled to the neighbouring villages of Ngoko and Bariguna.

29. On 8 April, owing to fighting in Kuerkeem, Maiwut County, Upper Nile State, an estimated 450 people were reported to have fled to Pagak, Merdiet and Zarzar bomas in Maiwut County, while others had crossed over to Ethiopia.

30. A spike in criminality and road ambushes targeting humanitarian and commercial convoys was observed along the Bor-Pibor and Bor-Gadiang roads in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and Jonglei State, respectively, with 16 incidents reported during the reporting period. A total of 462,720 people were affected. On 17 March and 6 April, respectively, a humanitarian convoy of more than 100 trucks transporting food and humanitarian assistance, and commercial vehicles, came under attack in Jonglei. Two contracted drivers were shot, one fatally. Another person died in a road traffic accident as a direct result of the incident on 17 March. The increase in security incidents triggered the movement of people from northern Jonglei (Nyirrol, Urur and Akobo) to Malakal town.

31. Between 1 March and 31 May, 106 incidents related to humanitarian-access restrictions were reported, of which 49 involved violence against humanitarian personnel and assets. Eight incidents of looting and theft of humanitarian assets were reported. In total, 21 attacks on convoys and commercially contracted vehicles took place in Jonglei (14) Upper Nile (2), Western Equatoria (2), Lakes (1), Central

Equatoria (1) and Unity (1) States. Since the beginning of 2023, three humanitarian workers had been killed while on duty.

V. Implementation of the Mission's mandate

A. Supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the peace process

32. UNMISS leadership continued to provide good offices through engagements with the parties, stakeholders, Member States, potential donors and other partners, including the representatives of Egypt, South Africa, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and IGAD. In consideration of the constitutional and electoral assistance needs of South Sudan, UNMISS facilitated the establishment of coordination mechanisms, both intra-United Nations and external, to provide common understanding, promote consistency of delivery and avoid the duplication of efforts.

33. On 8 and 13 February, the Special Representative visited Djibouti and Kenya to meet with senior government officials, as well as IGAD, to discuss the South Sudan peace process and explore modalities to enhance cooperation and coordination. As part of his efforts to coalesce the influence of other key regional actors, on 23 May, the Special Representative engaged with the Deputy President of South Africa, Paul Mashatile, via a virtual platform to explore enhanced support of the African Union High-level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan for implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.

34. On 4 May, UNMISS led a joint delegation of the African Union, IGAD and the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission to the Greater Pibor Administrative Area to engage the leadership and community members on issues related to abductions, cattle raiding and sustainable peace and development. The delegation urged the local authorities to resolve recurrent tensions and violence through dialogue and called upon national authorities to bring perpetrators to justice.

35. On 22 and 23 February, upon invitation by the National Constitutional Amendment Committee, UNMISS and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) participated in a two-day stakeholders' validation meeting on the proposed amendment to the Non-Governmental Organizations Act of 2016, and provided technical assistance to incorporate best practices and international standards into the draft bill.

36. From 28 February to 1 March, UNMISS facilitated sessions of the Western Equatoria State Legislative Assembly to empower women members drawn from the different political parties. During the sessions, 38 women deliberated on the robust participation of women in the transitional process and upcoming elections.

37. During the reporting period, UNMISS, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN-Women, UNDP and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, launched consultations on constitution-making and electoral processes in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, Magwi, Mangala, Torit and Yei, attended by 547 participants (including 187 women), including internally displaced persons and returnees.

38. On 2 April, UNMISS organized a workshop with the participation of 80 people (including 60 women) in Juba to inform South Sudanese young people about the Revitalized Agreement and road map, and the constitution-making process, and to enhance awareness on youth participation in the peace processes. Similarly, on 8 and 9 May in Central Equatoria State, and on 16 and 17 May in Juba, UNMISS convened

a meeting on the role of women in political processes and democratic transitions, which was attended by 175 participants (including 95 women) from political parties and civil society organizations.

39. From 23 to 25 May, UNMISS, UNDP, the Max Planck Foundation, the Embassy of Switzerland in Juba and the University of New South Wales supported the University of Juba in organizing a seminar on building constitutional governance in South Sudan under the theme “Post-conflict constitution-making: dilemmas and options for South Sudan”. The seminar was attended by 200 participants (70 women), including representatives from government ministries, academics, policymakers and representatives of diplomatic missions in South Sudan. The participants’ recommendations included proposals for a gender-focused constitution that would reinforce the 35 per cent quota for women, as prescribed by the Revitalized Agreement.

40. From 17 to 19 May in Juba, UNMISS brought together senior members from the signatory parties to the Agreement and key stakeholders (civil society representatives, women, young people and faith-based leaders) to identify ways to ensure the effective implementation of the road map. The 81 party representatives (including 22 women) raised concerns over the delays in the implementation of the road map and identified key policy matters that required urgent attention, including the need for a common understanding regarding the constitution-making process and elections.

41. As part of the efforts to support transparency, accountability and enhanced civic space, on 28 and 29 March, UNMISS supported the organization of a workshop on the applicable legal framework and transparency rules governing the administration and oversight of public resources. The event was attended by senior government officials and civil society organizations totalling 56 participants (including 22 women).

42. On 30 March, through the Saving Lives Entity fund, within the Peacebuilding Fund, UNDP and UNMISS supported the South Sudan National Police Service senior leadership dialogue on the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and the voluntary civilian disarmament strategy, attended by 24 participants (including 1 woman). A follow-up training course for the South Sudan National Police Service on laws and processes related to firearms registration and stockpile management, held from 4 to 8 April, was attended by 18 participants (including 4 women).

43. On 13 and 14 April, as part of efforts to strengthen civilian oversight of the defence sector, UNMISS supported the Specialized Committee on Defence and Veterans Affairs of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly in holding a workshop on defence budgeting and financial oversight, attended by 68 participants (including 12 women) that resulted in the development of recommendations for the Committee’s consideration.

44. On 17 April, the principals of the trilateral task force (the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD), in collaboration with the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, discussed assistance to the parties to resolve outstanding issues in the constitution-making and electoral processes.

45. From 24 to 28 April, UNMISS supported the South Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission in holding a workshop in Wau, to sensitize the specialized committees in the Western Bahr el-Ghazal State Legislative Assembly on their oversight function. The workshop was attended by 46 participants (16 women), including local chiefs, government officials, representatives of the judiciary, state anti-corruption officers and representatives of civil society.

46. To enhance inclusive public engagement in the security sector transformation and to improve civil-military relations, UNMISS supported technical workshops on security sector reform for civil society organizations (8–9 May) and the media (25–26 May) attended by 39 and 42 participants (including 18 and 12 women), respectively.

47. To widen civic and political space and public debates, and to inform the public on the progress of the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, UNMISS conducted eight round-table discussions on Radio Miraya involving ministers, members of parliament, representatives of civil society organizations and eminent personalities. In addition, on 24 May, UNMISS convened the quarterly meeting between representatives of civil society organizations and the Special Representative on the theme “defining civic and political space”. In total, 163 representatives (including 58 women) explored the importance of opening civic and political space in political transitions, as well as the constitution-making process.

B. Protection of civilians and mitigating intercommunal conflict

48. UNMISS continued to address the imperative to protect civilians using a whole-of-mission approach, prioritizing the protection of civilians as a mission-wide, cross-cutting responsibility. The protection of civilians remains the overwhelming focus of the Mission’s activities. The Mission further implemented its protection responsibilities through early warning and prompt reaction, in accordance with the Mission’s early response mechanism.

49. The Mission continued to leverage political engagements, which brought together national and state-level authorities to fulfil their responsibility to protect civilians, mitigate violence and support peace dialogues. The Mission also continued to engage local and traditional leaders to de-escalate tensions and facilitate conflict resolution. The Mission further implemented its protection-of-civilians strategy and is enhancing its protection-of-civilians advisory capacity at its headquarters.

50. UNMISS also took into consideration the outcomes of its perception survey, conducted independently from 30 January to 7 March, which outlines the trust of the South Sudanese in UNMISS with the Mission’s stabilizing presence. The fact that communities seek the deployment of temporary operating bases near their communities, or the continued deployment of those bases beyond the prescribed 30-day limit, indicates the confidence of the communities in the peacekeeping approach. The survey also highlights the call from the population for elections to be held without further delays and concerns on hunger and disease.

51. UNMISS continued to provide physical protection to approximately 37,032 internally displaced persons, including 19,428 women (52 per cent) in the Malakal protection of civilians site. Ongoing tensions and conflict between SPLA-IO Kitgwang and Agwelek factions in Upper Nile and northern Jonglei States continued to cause displacement towards and congestion at the Malakal site.

52. UNMISS provided technical advice and support in internally displaced persons camps hosting a total of 144,627 persons in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity and Western Bahr el-Ghazal States, through integrated protection approaches and engagements, advocacy and planning. It also responded to alleged breaches of security and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence in internally displaced persons camps in Bentiu and Wau.

53. UNMISS strengthened the Government’s capacity to fulfil its responsibility to protect civilians through 45 capacity-enhancement workshops for 2,537 people (including 750 women), representing local authorities, community leaders and

approximately 689 security personnel across 10 states. In total, 10 outreach events to promote reconciliation and social cohesion were conducted for 12,149 people (including 3,922 women) in Central, Eastern, Western Equatoria, Lakes, Unity, Upper Nile, Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal States, and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

54. In support of local peace efforts to address cyclical intercommunal violence in Jonglei State, UNMISS and UNDP partnered in support of the Jonglei State government and local authorities to convene an intra-Lou Nuer dialogue in Juba from 2 to 4 March for 748 participants (including 91 women), an intra-Gawar Nuer dialogue on 6 and 7 May in Bor for 61 participants (including 21 women) and an intra-Murle dialogue on 27 to 28 May for 63 participants (including 10 women). The dialogues provided key community leaders with a common platform to agree jointly on efforts to sustain peace and improve intercommunal relations in the greater Jonglei area.

55. Against a backdrop of persisting tensions between the Dinka Ngok of the Abyei Administrative Area and the Dinka Twic of Warrap State over land, UNMISS, UNDP, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and other partners continued to coordinate their response. From 18 to 21 March, the President visited the greater Warrap area, held meetings with representatives from both communities and appealed for peace. He reiterated the call for the cessation of hostilities and announced the creation of a buffer zone and the deployment of South Sudan People's Defence Forces. In support of those efforts, from 3 to 6 April, UNMISS, UNDP, the International Organization for Migration and UNISFA assisted civil society organizations, led by the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, to convene a peace dialogue in Wau between the two communities. In total, 86 representatives (including 10 women) from both communities, as well as the Governor of Warrap State and the Chief Administrator of Abyei Administrative Area, participated in the event. Twic and Ngok communities agreed on responding to calls to cease hostilities, allow the Nuers from Unity to return to their communities and remove road blockades. However, they disagreed on proposals to establish a buffer zone and deploy the South Sudan People's Defence Force in the Abyei Administrative Area.

56. As part of the reconciliation, stabilization and resilience trust fund project in the greater Tonj area, Warrap State, UNMISS facilitated five community dialogues in greater Tonj between February and April, attended by a total of 500 invited participants (including 184 women) and over 4,500 additional community members, aimed at identifying the root causes of conflict and jointly developing interventions. From 8 to 12 May, the engagement phase of the project concluded with a greater Tonj conference, which saw 212 invited participants (including 95 women) and over 1,350 additional attendees, and resulted in the promulgation of a joint implementation plan.

57. As at 31 May, the United Nations police had completed 1,335 confidence- and trust-building patrols, 1,412 high-visibility patrols and 220 integrated patrols (116 short-duration patrols, 77 long-duration patrols and 27 dynamic air patrols). Of those 2,967 patrols, 1,758 included women police officers. Furthermore, Quick Response Teams responded to 276 security incidents in support of the South Sudan National Police Service in Juba, Malakal and Bentiu. The United Nations police continued to deploy officers to two temporary operating bases (Bentiu/Koch and Yambio/Tambura) used for confidence-building, key leadership engagement, support to rule of law and capacity-building of the South Sudan National Police Service.

58. As at 31 May, 575 United Nations police officers, including 200 women (34.8 per cent) were co-located with the South Sudan National Police Service at police

stations close to the internally displaced persons sites in all 10 states. These operational activities contributed to improved physical safety and security at the sites.

59. During the reporting period, 14 workshops on sexual and gender-based violence were conducted for 865 South Sudan National Police Service personnel (including 475 women). In addition, 15 workshops on human rights were held for 990 participants (520 women), and 4 workshops on protection of civilians were delivered for 240 participants (including 115 women).

60. As at 31 May, the UNMISS force had conducted 11,329 patrols, including 1,594 short-duration patrols, 859 long-duration patrols, 105 dynamic air patrols, 45 riverine patrols, 866 force protection patrols, 3,044 airport/river port patrols, 1,985 city patrols and 2,831 night patrols for protection-of-civilian purposes. Of those, 224 short-duration patrols, 237 long-duration patrols, 31 dynamic air patrols and 24 riverine patrols were integrated patrols, which also included United Nations police and civilian personnel. A total of 1,792 patrols were conducted specifically in and around the Malakal protection of civilians site and internally displaced persons sites, and 8 per cent included uniformed women peacekeepers. The force also conducted several all-terrain patrols in and around Pibor following the crisis in Jonglei State.

61. The UNMISS force maintained six extended-duration temporary operating bases in Koch, Tambura, Jamjang Turalei, Sopo and Yangiri to increase operational reach for military components. The temporary operating bases helped to secure main supply routes and control hotspots to deter attacks against civilians.

62. The Mine Action Service responded to all 848 requests received from the Mission and local communities for identification, removal and disposal of suspected landmines and explosive ordnance. The responses resulted in the disposal of 9,547 items of explosive ordnance and 1,950,384 square metres of land released during the period. The overall activities contributed to preventing injury and loss of life by landmine and explosive ordnance, and enabled the communities' access to 86 agricultural areas, 13 hospitals and 21 natural water sources. The Mine Action Service cleared an anti-tank minefield in Bunj Town in Maban County, Upper Nile State, comprising approximately 80,000 people. The Service provided explosive ordnance risk education to civilians across the country, totalling 144,066 people (20,276 men, 26,871 women, 50,170 boys and 46,749 girls).

Climate, peace and security

63. Following four years of incessant rainfall, parts of South Sudan continued to remain submerged with floodwater, indicating that even under normal or marginal rainfall during the current rainy season, flooding will persist in large areas. In preparing for the ongoing rainy season, UNMISS further enhanced dykes in Bentiu to protect the Bentiu internally displaced persons camp from damage. The Mission was also closely monitoring access to water in areas where migratory cattle herders were present. As the Sudan conflict continued, there was a possibility that some cattle herders may not return to the Sudan, and the resulting competition over dwindling waters supply and other resources may lead to conflict. The Mission was undertaking initiatives to promote dialogue between communities and cattle herders on the sharing of resources.

C. Rule of law and accountability

64. To facilitate the creation of a protective environment for civilians, UNMISS continued to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to rule-of-law and justice actors at the national and subnational levels.

65. On 24 February, the joint special mobile court for Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal States, established to address crimes committed in the context of the annual cattle seasonal movement, concluded its fourth deployment in Warbet, Western Bahr el-Ghazal State. The court addressed 21 cases, including the conviction of two male defendants for sexual and gender-based-violence-related crimes. The deployment contributed to peace and stability and the return of those displaced by the conflict in the border areas, and built trust in the formal justice system with SPLA-IO.

66. From 28 February to 2 March, UNMISS conducted an integrated training session for 30 participants (including 1 woman) in Kuajok, Warrap State, from the judiciary, public prosecution, police, the National Prison Service as well as customary authorities, to improve collaboration along the criminal justice chain. In this connection, during the reporting period, UNMISS conducted several training courses on prison records and file management, inmates' affairs, the management of juveniles in detention and human rights, with an emphasis on the application of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) to a total of 203 corrections officers (including 73 women) in Aweil, Rumbek, Wau, Kuajok and Juba.

67. To strengthen the rule of law in areas of return, from 4 to 12 March, UNMISS supported the deployment of a circuit court to Raja, Western Bahr el-Ghazal State. The court heard four cases, including three related to rapes, which resulted in the convictions of three defendants (two juveniles). All survivors were underage girls. On 6 and 7 March, UNMISS also conducted training for 30 participants (including 11 women) from the South Sudan National Police, the National Prison Service and customary courts in Raja to strengthen capacity across the justice sector.

68. From 11 to 25 March, UNMISS supported four judge advocates (including 1 woman) of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces Military Justice Directorate to deploy to Yei, Central Equatoria, for an assessment mission. A total of 28 cases were investigated, including 6 murder cases and 4 rape cases. Victims and witnesses were provided with access to civilian victims' counsel, psychosocial support, interpretation services, food, water and transportation. Cases past the investigative stage were being tried by a general court martial, which commenced on 22 May.

69. To enhance the capacity of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces Military Justice Directorate to promote accountability for serious crimes committed by South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel, UNMISS facilitated a five-day workshop for 38 judge-advocates (including 4 women) from 24 to 28 April, aimed at strengthening their capacity to address crimes against children, build their trial advocacy skills and exchange best practices with civilian justice actors.

D. Creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance

70. Efforts by UNMISS to facilitate access to and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in particular for the pre-positioning of food during the dry season, continued to be a priority. The Mission had honoured all requests for support from humanitarian partners (noting that such escorts were not required for all convoys). UNMISS had sought to enhance its collaboration with the United Nations country team, in particular the World Food Programme, to ensure that its escorts effectively deterred the predatory attacks by armed militias. Mission assets also enabled humanitarian actors to deliver supplies from Adok-Port in Leer County to Rubkuay in Mayendit County. From 16 February to 31 May, the United Nations police provided security during 72 humanitarian assistance delivery assignments and 85 security escorts of engineers and others.

71. As at 31 May, the UNMISS force had conducted 174 long-duration patrols and 489 short-duration patrols to support the delivery of assistance and ensure the protection of humanitarian workers. UNMISS had completed 22 requests for force protection and logistic support from humanitarian partners and had responded to protection requests for nine United Nations Humanitarian Air Service airfield sites.

E. Monitoring and investigating human rights violations

72. UNMISS documented and verified 236 incidents of violence that had a negative impact on the human rights and protection situation, comprising 144 incidents of killing, 40 incidents resulting in injuries, 16 abductions, 13 cases of sexual violence, 18 incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention and 5 cases of unlawful detention and ill-treatment, as well as the looting and destruction of civilian property. The incidents affected 992 civilians (448 killed, 217 injured, 178 abducted, 27 subjected to sexual violence, 112 arbitrarily arrested and detained and 10 detained unlawfully and subjected to ill-treatment), including 190 women and 171 children (132 boys and 39 girls). Of the 448 civilians killed, 110 were women and children. Compared with the previous reporting period, this represented a 36 per cent increase in the number of incidents (174 compared with 236) and a 15 per cent increase in the number of victims (from 863 compared with 992). In total, 179 incidents were attributed to community-based militias and/or civil defence groups, 39 to government security forces, 6 to the National Salvation Front and 6 to SPLA-IO and splinter groups. Six incidents involving unidentified elements were pending verification.

73. The pervasive practice of extrajudicial executions by state authorities as a response to localized violence persisted, despite sustained advocacy with government authorities on the need for adherence to the rule of law. UNMISS received reports of extrajudicial executions of 19 civilians (14, including 1 woman, in Warrap State and 5 in Lakes State). The individuals were accused by the state authorities of involvement in intercommunal violence and other criminal activities and were executed without due process or having their sentences determined by courts of law.

74. Severe restrictions by security forces of freedoms of opinion, expression, the right of peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association, including through censorship, harassment, arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists and individuals, further limited the civic space and public participation in governance processes. During the reporting period, nine male civilians were affected by such incidents. UNMISS continued to advocate for accountability for human rights violations committed against human rights defenders, journalists and media practitioners.

75. UNMISS continued to provide technical support to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs on the establishment of the transitional justice mechanisms, including advocacy on the drafting of the commission for truth, reconciliation and healing bill, and support for the upcoming consultations on the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing with South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda. Technical support was also provided for the development of a website for the Ministry of Justice to keep the public updated on the status of implementation of various legislative reforms.

76. On 15 May, the President opened a conference in Juba on transitional justice mechanisms, which aimed to establish the Commission of Truth, Reconciliation and Healing. The conference, which lasted until 18 May, was attended by the First Vice-President, state governors, chief administrators, county commissioners and other government officials, as well as representatives of the African Union, IGAD, UNMISS and UNDP, members of diplomatic corps, regional and international legal and transitional justice experts, policymakers, academics and representatives of think

tanks drawn from the African continent and Europe. During the conference, the President stated that the Government was not shying away from the establishment of the hybrid court for South Sudan, which would be established when the time was right.

77. UNMISS conducted 147 human rights capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for stakeholders, including government officials, organized forces, necessary unified forces and civil society organizations. Such activities reached 5,651 individuals (including 1,712 women) with a view to strengthening their capacities to contribute to a protective environment in South Sudan.

Children and armed conflict

78. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 39 grave violations against 35 children (21 boys, 14 girls): the killing (9) and maiming (8) of 17 children (10 boys, 7 girls); the recruitment and use of 10 boys; the abduction of 7 children (1 boy, 6 girls) and rape of 1 girl. Four children (3 boys, 1 girl) suffered multiple violations, including recruitment and use, rape and abduction. One incident of denial of humanitarian assistance was verified, and two boys were released by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (1) and the South Sudan National Police Service (1). Children were most affected in Upper Nile (14), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (11), Unity (7), Warrap (3), Western Equatoria (2), Central Equatoria (1), Jonglei (1) and Eastern Equatoria (1) States.

79. In total, 17 violations were unattributable as they were a result of explosive remnants of war. Violations were also attributed to SPLA-IO Kitgwang (9), SPLA-IO (8) and South Sudan People's Defence Forces (5).

80. UNMISS delivered 113 child protection awareness-raising sessions to 5,224 people (1,886 women), including 2,943 community members (1,271 women), 1,439 government security forces (374 women), 600 necessary unified forces (198 women), 108 government officials (23 women), 106 SPLA-IO officers (12 women) and 28 protection partners (8 women). UNMISS delivered 12 child protection training sessions to 504 participants (121 women), including 230 community members (80 women), 198 government security forces (28 women), 40 government officials (9 women), 35 SPLA-IO (1 woman) and 1 South Sudan Opposition Alliance officer (a man).

81. Seven incidents involving explosive hazards were reported, with nine children killed (including 4 boys and 5 girls) and nine children injured (including 4 boys and 5 girls). Children represented 69 per cent of all explosive ordnance victims.

Conflict-related sexual violence

82. UNMISS documented and verified a total of 20 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 38 survivors, including 20 women, 2 men and 16 girls. Survivors' ages ranged from 10 to 40 years old. These incidents occurred in Warrap, Jonglei, Unity, Central Equatoria, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria and Upper Nile States and were attributed to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (7), SPLM/A-IO (2), NAS (2), armed Nuer young people (1) and armed elements loyal to SPLA-IO Kitgwang faction of General Simon Gatwech (1) and armed militias (7).

83. UNMISS continued to employ a range of instruments to address conflict-related sexual violence, including directly engaging with national security personnel. UNMISS conducted 29 capacity-building activities related to conflict-related sexual violence across the country, targeting security forces (South Sudan National Police Service, South Sudan People's Defence Force, SPLA-IO and prisons services), local authorities, members of parliament, health-care service providers, community leaders, women and youth groups, civil society organizations and conflict-related sexual

violence survivors. Reaching 896 stakeholders (including 258 women), these activities underscored the need for accountability and for the protection and rehabilitation of survivors.

84. From 13 to 15 March, UNMISS organized a training course for 30 focal points (including 10 women) of the Joint Implementation Committee, and members of the South Sudan National Police Service from the 10 states and three administrative areas. The training aimed to strengthen the capacity of the police on national and international legal frameworks prohibiting sexual violence in conflict and defining strategies to combat conflict-related sexual violence among South Sudan National Police Services ranks. With the support of the Joint Implementation Committee on the Joint Action Plan for the Armed Forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence in South Sudan, UNMISS organized a similar workshop from 3 to 5 April, for 30 military officers (10 women) from Central Equatoria State, to strengthen their capacity on sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence.

F. Women and peace and security

85. On 23 March, UNMISS facilitated a round-table discussion with 45 women officers from the South Sudan National Police Service and the National Prison Service, in Bentiu. The discussion led to the formation of a women's network for police and prison officers in Unity State aimed at strengthening the role of women in the two uniformed services. UNMISS also supported the South Sudan National Prison Service in conducting gender needs assessments in Wau and Rumbek from 15 to 25 May.

86. From 25 to 27 April, UNMISS supported civil society organizations in training members of the South Sudan's security sector women's networks to enhance their abilities to advocate for their rights and needs.

87. From 2 March to 25 May, within the scope of its 2023 strategy on sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, UNMISS organized seven subnational stakeholders' consultative forums reaching 377 beneficiaries (including 212 women) in Aweil, Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, Kuajok, Rumbek and Torit. The forums – organized by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, the United Nations and women's civil society organizations – included discussions on trends, gaps, challenges and a way forward to guide priority actions to support victims and strengthen accountability.

VI. Mission staffing, the status of deployments, and conduct and discipline

88. As at 31 May, the number of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2,665, comprising 862 international staff members, including 259 women (30 per cent); 1,402 national staff members, of whom 227 were women (16.2 per cent); and 401 United Nations Volunteers, of whom 172 were women (42.9 per cent).

89. The police strength stood at 1,472 (of an authorized 2,101 personnel), comprising 581 individual police officers, including 203 women (34.49 per cent); 846 personnel in formed police units, of whom 220 were women (26.0 per cent); and 45 justice and corrections advisors, 21 of whom were women (46.7 per cent).

90. Of the authorized 17,000 troops, UNMISS troop strength stood at 13,902 military personnel: 230 military liaison officers, including 72 women (31.3 per cent); 425 military staff officers, including 80 women (18.8 per cent); and 13,247 military contingent personnel, including 883 women (6.7 per cent).

91. In accordance with the applicable policy, information on possible unsatisfactory conduct and/or misconduct was processed in a timely fashion. Between 1 February and 31 May, 49 allegations of misconduct were recorded in the case management tracking system. No allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded. All identified victims of previously reported allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse continued to receive support from the Senior Victims' Rights Officer in South Sudan.

VII. Violations of the status-of-forces agreement, international humanitarian law and security of United Nations personnel

92. As at 31 May, UNMISS recorded 63 violations of the status-of-forces agreement (compared with 8 violations during the previous reporting period) as a result of the delayed acknowledgement by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism of UNMISS sharing of information documents. UNMISS was engaging the Mechanism to address the delays. In total, 51 of the violations involved movement restrictions imposed by government authorities, affecting UNMISS patrols in Central Equatoria, Warrap, Upper Nile, Unity, Northern El Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Equatoria States.

93. The status-of-forces agreement violations also included the imposition of undue taxes, fees and restrictions on UNMISS and its contractors for importing consignments for the Mission's exclusive use. On 22 February, the South Sudan Civil Aviation Authority office in Malakal issued a letter demanding a fee for the issuance of identity cards, vehicle stickers and provisional permits for UNMISS vehicles gaining access to the Malakal airport. On 27 February, in Unity State, the Department of Criminal Investigation and Crimes Prevention notified the UNMISS international rations contractor, ESKO, to pay a fee for the issuance of an "annual security operation permit". UNMISS transmitted the démarches to the Government to protest the imposition of the undue taxes and fees and continued to engage with the Government to exempt UNMISS and its contractors from payment of the imposed fees.

94. United Nations personnel and operations continued to be targets for criminal actors, as well as victims of harassment by government security forces. During the reporting period, 135 criminal incidents against United Nations and non-governmental organizations, and 1 incident of assault of United Nations staff by National Security Service personnel, were recorded.

VIII. Performance of uniformed components

95. Four formed police units were evaluated in Juba, Malakal and Bentiu. Their overall performance was satisfactory. Performance improvement plans were given to each unit, with recommendations for improvements on training and administration.

96. UNMISS force evaluated 15 military units, including 1 sector headquarters, 5 infantry battalions, 1 special forces unit and 8 enabling units. The units were found to be well trained and operationally ready according to United Nations standards. In total, 14 units exceeded the set military unit evaluation tool standard, and one unit was under review.

IX. Observations and recommendations

97. I note with concern the slow implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the significant delays in meeting the benchmarks agreed under the road map adopted

in August 2022. If not urgently addressed, the slippages may bring the parties to a point where no remedial actions would prove effective. I call upon the parties to expedite completion of outstanding tasks required prior to the end of the transitional period, as envisioned in the Revitalized Agreement.

98. I urge the Government to pass and enact the National Elections Act without further delays, followed by the reconstitution of the Political Parties Council and National Elections Commission. I also urge the prompt and adequate allocation of resources to these institutions, to enable them to commence with electoral preparations immediately. At the same time, I am extremely concerned about the shrinking political and civic space in South Sudan, and urge its leaders to take concrete steps to create the conditions that will allow for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections.

99. I remain concerned over the continued political impasse between SPLM and SPLM-IO over the removal of the Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs and the Minister of the Interior, and the reallocation of their portfolios without consensus. While reaffirming that the Revitalized Agreement remains the primary guiding document, I encourage the parties to honour their commitments as envisaged in the Agreement. I am also grateful to the IGAD members for their efforts to resolve the impasse.

100. While there was a reduction in incidences of intercommunal violence at the subnational level, conflict fragility and vulnerability to violence persist in Upper Nile, Jonglei, Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and Western Equatoria States and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. In addition, with the onset of the rainy season, flooding and climate shocks will continue to cause severe disruptions of livelihoods and protracted displacement of communities, amplifying human insecurity, especially with the convergence of cattle herders in the same area. I strongly urge the Government to scale up its conflict prevention interventions and invest in sustainable development that leaves no one behind, in addition to upholding its commitments to stem subnational violence, address impunity and enable inclusive dialogue towards lasting solutions.

101. The proactive measures taken by UNMISS, including pre-emptive force deployment, support the Government's primary responsibility to prevent violence and protect civilians. In this regard, UNMISS will continue to expand its technical assistance and support to accountability mechanisms and to strengthen the criminal justice chain through an integrated approach, aligning accountability support with dialogue and reconciliation processes across South Sudan.

102. I am appalled to learn of the attacks on humanitarian convoys and request the Government to uphold its responsibility to protect, and in parallel investigate these attacks, and hold the perpetrators accountable. I continue to urge respect for international humanitarian law and call for unimpeded access for humanitarian actors as they carry out their life-saving activities.

103. The already dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan has been further exacerbated by the arrival of South Sudanese returnees and refugees from the Sudan, which, combined with increasing commodity prices, places further stress on vulnerable communities and available resources. I commend the Government and humanitarian partners for their expedient response to unfolding developments and request the international community to support their efforts, which remain severely underfunded. I also take this opportunity to thank UNMISS and the United Nations country team in South Sudan for carrying out their respective mandates efficiently under difficult circumstances. I also commend the collaboration among UNMISS, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and humanitarian partners in evacuating United Nations personnel from the Sudan.

104. I express my deep appreciation to the troop- and police-contributing countries and commend the efforts of IGAD, the African Union and the Community of Sant'Egidio. I thank my Special Representative for South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, for his continuous efforts to bring together the parties, partners and stakeholders toward peace in South Sudan, despite the challenges.

Map

