



Security Council

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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) to 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 1 December and 15 February 2024.

II. Political and economic developments

2. With only nine months remaining before elections in December 2024, very limited progress was made on achieving the “critical mass” of implementing key benchmarks set out in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan to satisfy the requirement for an appropriate environment and conditions in which credible and peaceful elections can be held.

3. The President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, swore in members of the National Constitutional Review Commission on 20 December. On 8 January, all members of the National Elections Commission took their oath of office. The delay in swearing in members of the National Elections Commission followed a disagreement regarding the appointment of a civil servant as Chief Electoral Officer instead of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) nominee. The parties resolved the issue by substituting the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) nominee for Deputy Chairperson of the Commission with the SPLM-IO nominee. The women members of the three bodies vis-à-vis the 35 per cent requirement are as follows: 2 women out of 9 members in the National Elections Commission (22 per cent); 5 women out of 10 members in the Political Parties Council (50 per cent); and 19 women out of 58 members in the National Constitutional Review Commission (33 per cent).

4. Separately, Mr. Kiir engaged with the Chairpersons of the Political Parties Council, the National Constitutional Review Commission and the National Elections Commission and provided assurances for the provision of adequate funding. The three



bodies have yet to be funded and resourced to become fully functional and operational.

5. Transitional security arrangements continue to remain behind schedule with the deployment of the second batch of the Necessary Unified Forces yet to begin. However, gradual deployment of the first batch continued. On 20 December, 600 military personnel were deployed to Torit, Eastern Equatoria. On 21 December, a battalion from Upper Nile was transported to Western Bahr el-Ghazal. On 5 January, about 300 troops were reportedly deployed to Western Equatoria to provide security. To date, approximately 4,000 forces have been deployed, according to the report of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism of 7 February. Reportedly, the deployments proceeded without sufficient logistics, including food, water, medicine and shelter. While Necessary Unified Forces elements from the South Sudan People's Defence Forces were deployed with weapons and salaries, opposition troops were not.

6. Little progress has been made on some of the critical issues and decisions crucial for conducting the elections in December 2024, which remain pending since July 2023. While it is possible for the parties to amend the Revitalized Agreement in accordance with established procedures and adjust deadlines so as to complete these preparations in advance of the elections, no such understanding has been reached so far.

7. UNMISS enhanced dialogue and supported capacity-building of the Political Parties Council, the National Constitutional Review Commission and the National Elections Commission. On 11 January, UNMISS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) facilitated the inaugural meeting with the Political Parties Council and National Elections Commission leadership alongside prominent leaders from across the political spectrum to review a draft code of conduct for political parties for national elections and beyond, to govern their behaviour and that of other stakeholders. From 22 to 26 January, UNMISS supported induction workshops for the new members of the National Elections Commission and the National Constitutional Review Commission to help to orient them in their work and begin to plan and prepare for the implementation of their mandated tasks. On 29 January, UNMISS supported a nationwide virtual meeting of the National Elections Commission through its field offices, serving as an opportunity to introduce the new commissioners and hear challenges from the state election officials.

8. The opposition and civil society continued to cast doubt on the transparency of the Government and its adherence to the rule of law and access to justice before elections. On 6 December, the SPLM-IO parliamentary caucus raised multiple concerns, among them the constraints on political and civic space, including the continuation of the restriction on the freedom of movement of the First Vice-President, Riek Machar.

9. On 7 December, the interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Major General Charles Tai Gituai, highlighted the need to advance progress in implementing the Revitalized Agreement across all chapters. Noting the lack of funding for all institutions and mechanisms of the Agreement as one of the key impediments to progress, he called upon the parties to the Agreement to cooperate and demonstrate commitment to the elections by funding them and the newly reconstituted constitution- and elections-related institutions, as well as completing the unification of forces. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism held a board meeting on 25 January, during which it presented a number of reports of ceasefire violations by parties to the Revitalized Agreement.

10. On 6 February, the National Elections Commission, the Political Parties Council, the National Constitutional Review Commission, the National Bureau of Statistics and the National Police Service submitted their proposed budgets to the Ministry of Finance and Planning for approval by the Council of Ministers. The overall budgets for these key institutions to complete their work were: 253,594,678,735 South Sudan pounds for the National Elections Commission; 40,000,000,000 South Sudan pounds for the Political Parties Council; 43,794,227,620 South Sudan pounds for the National Constitutional Review Commission; and 58,085,343,750 South Sudan pounds for the National Police Service. On 8 February, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs disclosed that the Council of Ministers had allocated approximately 731 billion South Sudan pounds, of which a supplementary budget of 107 billion South Sudan pounds was approved for all five institutions to cover pre-election activities until June. Of that amount, 27 billion South Sudan pounds was allocated to the National Elections Commission and 22 billion South Sudan pounds to the National Constitutional Review Commission. The budget has been sent to the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly for approval.

Other political developments

11. On 4 December, the seventh Governors' Forum concluded in Juba, with governors and chief administrators committing to 32 resolutions and 50 recommendations. These centred on coordination between state and national-level governments and on addressing the lack of resources to implement state-level priorities, including paying civil servants' salaries and preparing for elections. Mr. Kiir expressed concern that some states were being governed with disregard to the Constitution and the Revitalized Agreement, with instances of officials being dismissed on the basis of political affiliation, among other factors, causing disputes among the parties. He therefore called for the establishment of dispute resolution mechanisms. The Minister of the Interior, Angelina Teny, gave a presentation on a draft security policy on policing to safeguard elections. Members of civil society noted ongoing challenges to the implementation of resolutions from the previous Governors' Forum.

12. The President continued to reshuffle key positions in the country. On 4 January, he appointed several new ministers in Unity State, including the Ministers of Youth and Sport, Roads and Bridges, Finance and Planning, and Parliamentary and Legal Affairs; parliamentarians, including the Deputy Speaker of the Unity State Parliament; and a county commissioner. In another decree, he appointed Deng Luol Wol Director General for Petroleum Exploration and Production Authority in the Ministry of Petroleum. All reshuffles were within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). On 1 February, Mr. Kiir separated the powers of the Minister of Petroleum, the Undersecretary of the Ministry and the Managing Director of the National Petroleum Authority, expanding the Undersecretary's powers and curbing those of the incumbent Minister, who belongs to the opposition SPLM-IO.

13. Following Mr. Kiir's request to the President of Kenya, William Ruto, to revive the peace talks between the Government of South Sudan and non-signatory groups in Nairobi, Mr. Ruto held discussions with the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome on 30 January. In a statement on 1 February, the National Salvation Front (NAS) said that the non-signatory groups had not been consulted on the change of venue to Nairobi and advocated for Rome to remain as the venue due to its perceived safety. On 8 February, NAS issued another statement refuting recent unconfirmed reports regarding the dismissal of Thomas Cirillo as the leader of NAS and reiterating his leadership. In that statement, NAS added that the rumours were being spread by former NAS elements who had recently been dismissed from the movement for allegedly conspiring with government officials against NAS and accused Mr. Kiir and

the National Security Service of attempting to divide and splinter opposition groups instead of negotiating with them through peace talks.

Regional engagements and developments

14. The conflict in the Sudan continues to have an impact on South Sudan, shift political relations in the region and cause refugee and returnee inflows. On 11 January, Mr. Kiir ordered a crackdown on illicit activities along his country's border with the Sudan, citing national security concerns. He expressed concerns that weapons crossing from the Sudan into South Sudan could exacerbate ongoing intercommunal conflicts in Abyei, Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal. On 20 January, Mr. Kiir met the leader of the Rapid Support Forces, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, on the sidelines of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) summit in Uganda. On 29 January, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement refuting the findings of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan supporting the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#) concerning the Sudan that fuel was moving through South Sudanese territory and being delivered to the Rapid Support Forces in the Sudan. The Ministry emphasized the neutrality of South Sudan in the ongoing conflict in the Sudan.

Economic situation

15. On 19 December, the International Monetary Fund finalized its consultations and review of the staff-monitored programme in South Sudan, enumerating multiple challenges faced by South Sudanese authorities, including the need to finance the elections planned for December 2024.

16. On 16 January, the Bank of South Sudan increased the weekly auction of foreign currency to commercial banks and foreign exchange bureaux from \$3 million to \$10 million. On 31 January, it auctioned an additional 10 billion South Sudan pounds (equivalent to \$9 million) to eligible commercial banks through a term deposit facility. The measures are aimed at reducing the nominal depreciation of the South Sudan pound and stabilizing inflation.

17. On 22 January, the Ministry of Finance and Planning organized a workshop on the budget plan preparation programme for the fiscal year 2024/25, during which the ministries, departments and agencies presented progress and priorities under their respective sectors. It was agreed to extend the South Sudan Revised National Development Strategy by one year, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, subject to the approval of the Cabinet and the Presidency.

III. Security situation

18. Continued fighting in the Sudan and an increasing number of civilians crossing into South Sudan have exacerbated the security and humanitarian situations in the country. With the onset of the dry season, cattle keepers initiated their annual migration across the country, leading to tensions with host communities. Tensions between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) were observed in some parts of the country.

Greater Upper Nile region

19. Increased tensions between SPLM/A-IO and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces were observed in Unity State, following the defection of two senior military officers in October. Reports of more defections among SPLM/A-IO officers,

mobilization and related arrests by both sides in the Bentiu internally displaced persons camp and other areas in southern Unity also contributed to the friction. The presence in Unity State of General Simon Maguek, one of the defectors, and the movement of his forces in the state increased tensions and displaced communities from Leer, Guit, Mayom and Rubkona Counties. The fighting between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and SPLM-IO began in Leer County in October, spilled over to Guit County in early December and continued in Rubkona County in late January, exacerbating the challenging humanitarian situation.

20. In Jonglei, intercommunal tensions between the Nuer, Dinka and Murle communities escalated as Murle and Nuer elements conducted cattle raids and criminal activities in Duk, Bor, Nyerol, Twic and Akobo Counties. Following the killing of a Gadiang chief (Dinka) on 29 December 2023, armed Murle elements killed at least 35 people and raided thousands of cattle during an attack on 4 January in Poktap, Duk County. The attack received widespread condemnation, including from UNMISS, amid concerns regarding the mobilization of the Dinka to attack the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. On 9 January, Gawaar Nuer from Ayod reportedly raided 700 cattle from a cattle camp in Nyerol County. Amid the growing risk of increased violence in the region, UNMISS continued engagements at the state and national levels to de-escalate tensions, engaging young people to refrain from mobilizing, and facilitated a number of communal peace dialogues.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

21. Intercommunal violence between the Dinka Ngok and Dinka Twic communities persisted in the contested areas along the border between Warrap State and the Abyei region, despite various national- and state-level efforts, including a presidential order issued on 16 January, to reduce tensions and achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The killing of the Juba-appointed Deputy Chief Administrator in southern Abyei Area on 31 December exacerbated the conflict, culminating in intercommunal violence in Abyei Area involving Dinka Ngok, Dinka Twic and Nuer elements on 27 and 28 January and 4 February, respectively.

22. Along the Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal borders, intercommunal violence continued between the Dinka Apuk and Marial Bai communities, and Dinka Kuac and Dinka Aguok. The drivers of these localized conflicts, including land disputes, contestation over grazing areas and cyclical revenge attacks and killings, remain unresolved, with an increased likelihood of violence persisting. UNMISS continues to engage relevant stakeholders at all levels, in addition to regular patrols of the contested areas, to mitigate further violence. Cyclical violence persisted between Luanyjang from Tonj East (Warrap) and Pakam from Rumbek North (Lakes). On 31 January, clashes in Makuac payam, Tonj East County, resulted in 48 people killed and 40 injured in three separate attacks. Reports of mobilization between the two communities have continued.

Greater Equatoria region

23. With the onset of the dry season and the earlier-than-expected annual cattle migration, tensions increased in greater Equatoria. Dinka Atuot herders from Lakes State entered Mvolo County, while the Ambororo nomadic community entered Tambura and Nagero Counties of Western Equatoria, leading to sporadic violence triggered by the destruction of farmlands of the host communities. In Central Equatoria, the arrival in Yei River County of the Dinka cattle keepers from Bor and Mundari cattle herders from Maridi escalated tensions with local farmers. Increased migration and competition over grazing lands and water resources will likely increase violence in the coming months.

24. Protection of civilians concerns intensified in Central Equatoria following allegations of misconduct by government security forces conducting disarmament operations. In Gondokoro payam, joint security forces reportedly harassed and arbitrarily arrested civilians, triggering displacements. On 10 January, a fact-finding committee established by the Governor of Central Equatoria alleged that security forces perpetrated human rights violations. These operations in Gondokoro fuelled tensions in the Bari community, which perceived the operations as targeted and a threat to its land ownership. Nevertheless, following engagements by the Mission, a subsequent disarmament exercise in Mogiri payam was reportedly conducted peacefully.

25. On 10 January, residents of Kapoeta South County in Eastern Equatoria expressed concerns over the recent deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces. The deployment had reportedly caused fear among residents, exacerbated by some soldiers loitering and harassing residents in Kapoeta town.

IV. Humanitarian situation

26. An estimated 5.78 million people are projected to be at risk of experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 3 or above), including 25,000 people at risk of catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC phase 5) and 1.71 million people likely to be at emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC phase 4) between December 2023 and March 2024.

27. On 8 December, Leer County authorities reported over 35,000 people displaced to the surrounding areas following heavy fighting between armed factions in Leer in December. On 2 December, fighting between armed elements in Guit County, Unity State, displaced over 2,000 people. Seven humanitarian staff self-relocated from Guit to Bentiu town.

28. On 27 January and 4 February, armed attacks in different parts of the Abyei Administrative Area resulted in 83 people killed, including 4 off-duty humanitarian staff, several injured and houses and properties destroyed. During the reporting period, more than 2,200 people were displaced in Abyei, mostly women and children seeking refuge in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) compound in Rumajak near Abyei town, while others fled to neighbouring locations. Humanitarian partners provided food and shelter materials to the displaced, despite major access and logistical challenges.

29. As at 15 February, 564,716 people had crossed into South Sudan since mid-April 2023, when the conflict erupted in the Sudan. Of those, 163,500 people arrived between 1 December 2023 and 15 February 2024. South Sudanese returnees continue to form the bulk of arrivals at 79 per cent, Sudanese refugees make up 20 per cent, and the remaining 1 per cent are third-country asylum-seekers.

30. On 25 December, the Ministry of Health declared an outbreak of yellow fever in Western Equatoria. As at 3 February, there were 50 suspected cases, including 2 confirmed cases and 6 deaths, reported in Yambio, Nzara, Tambura, Ibba, Ezo and Maridi Counties. Response activities were scaled up to contain the spread of the disease. Concurrently, there is an ongoing outbreak of measles in Western Equatoria, and one novel case of vaccine-derived polio has been confirmed. On 7 December, the Ministry of Health confirmed an imported case of cholera from the Sudan at the Renk transit centre, in Upper Nile.

31. Between 1 December and 15 February, 64 incidents related to humanitarian access restrictions were reported, of which 19 involved violence against humanitarian personnel and assets. Six incidents of looting and theft of humanitarian assets were

reported. Twenty humanitarian staff were relocated due to active hostilities and fear of armed clashes between armed groups. Two attacks on convoys and commercially contracted vehicles took place between 1 December and 15 February in Bor, Jonglei, and Mayom, Unity. Since the beginning of 2023, four humanitarian workers have been killed in the line of service.

V. Implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks

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

32. On 6 and 7 December, UNMISS, together with partners, organized a youth symposium on the permanent constitution-making and electoral processes under the theme "One youth, one voice". The symposium raised the awareness of 137 participants (52 women), advocated for inclusion and documented the participants' views in a position paper.

33. On 11 and 12 December, UNMISS supported the national civil society platform on security sector reform, in coordination with UNDP, to organize its third capacity-building workshop. The objective of the initiative was to review and adopt its terms of reference and the 2024 workplan together with 45 civil society participants (24 women).

34. Also on 11 and 12 December, UNMISS, in partnership with the African Union, IGAD and the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, a local civil society organization, facilitated a round table to raise awareness and build consensus on elections. The round table brought together key national stakeholders including political parties and civil society and resulted in the signing by representatives of the parties to the Revitalized Agreement of a 17-point resolution committing to urgently address some of the key issues affecting the conduct of elections by December 2024, including the funding and operationalization of the key election management bodies.

35. On 13 and 14 December, UNMISS, in partnership with the African Union and IGAD, conducted two political parties forums on the code of conduct and elections in Juba for 169 leaders and representatives of political parties (76 women). The second forum focused on women leaders and was attended by the Vice-President Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior. At the political parties forum on 24 January, attended by 73 leaders and representatives of 65 political parties (5 women), the code of conduct was further reviewed. The final draft is to be validated by the Political Parties Council, shared with political parties and independent candidates for final review and endorsement and disseminated in several South Sudanese languages across the country.

36. On 22 December, UNMISS held its first meeting with the Elections Security Committee, established by the National Police Service, to discuss areas of collaboration and cooperation on security for the elections. At the meeting, it was agreed that UNMISS should provide advisory support to the Committee, establish relevant technical working groups, conduct a needs assessment to inform training and planning packages for the National Police Service, and consult key stakeholders such as the National Elections Commission and other law enforcement agencies in the Committee, among others. It is not yet clear what roles and responsibilities other security agencies will play. In addition, stakeholders have yet to reach a shared understanding of the possible implications if elections are held under the current security framework and structures. From 29 January to 8 February, the Secretariat carried out a needs assessment mission to inform planning on United Nations support to the elections.

37. During the reporting period, UNMISS and UNDP continued to provide technical support to the National Elections Commission and the Political Parties Council in such areas as organizational design, budget preparation, operational planning, and review and drafting of relevant procedures, rules and regulations. As a result, the two government institutions were able to submit and defend their draft budget to the Ministries of Cabinet Affairs and Finance and Planning. The Political Parties Council was also able to launch the process of registering political parties on 23 January.

38. In Upper Nile, from 14 to 16 December, UNMISS, the State Ministry of Local Government and Law Enforcement, and the South Sudan Council of Churches held a forum for 46 payam administrators, paramount chiefs and executive directors (12 women) from Renk, Manyo, Melut and Maban Counties of Upper Nile State. The forum enhanced knowledge of the Revitalized Agreement and promoted political cooperation.

39. In Eastern Equatoria, on 23 and 24 January, UNMISS facilitated the greater Kapoeta political leaders dialogue to discuss challenges in implementing the Revitalized Agreement and enhance space for political dialogue in preparation for the upcoming national elections.

B. Protection of civilians and mitigating intercommunal conflict

40. UNMISS continued to promote inclusive dialogue, peaceful coexistence, reconciliation and social cohesion at the national and subnational levels to enhance the protection of civilians. As part of its mandated responsibility to enhance its protection footprint across the country, the Mission prioritized a mobile, agile and nimble approach, pre-positioning troops ahead of the rainy season. To increase operational reach, deter attacks against civilians and secure main supply routes, the UNMISS force maintained four extended-duration temporary operating bases in Koch, Tambura, Maridi and Jamjang.

41. As at 12 February, the UNMISS force had conducted 10,346 patrols, including 471 integrated patrols, comprising United Nations police and civilian personnel for protection of civilians purposes. Women peacekeepers participated in 8 per cent of those patrols.

42. UNMISS delivered three capacity enhancement sessions for 100 community leaders and security personnel (33 women) in Western Equatoria aimed at strengthening the Government's ability to protect civilians.

43. UNMISS advocated with stakeholders, including the state-level task forces, on solutions to ensure the safe, informed, voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons in the former protection of civilians sites in Jonglei, Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Equatoria. On 3 January, the return of 1,313 internally displaced persons from the Hai Masna site began in Western Bahr el-Ghazal.

44. As at 13 February, the Mine Action Service had responded to all 186 requests received from the Mission for identification, removal and disposal of suspected landmines and explosive ordnance. This included the survey and clearance of four police stations in Malakal and of several other areas in Western Bahr el-Ghazal in support of 10 quick-impact projects implemented by UNMISS. The overall activities contributed to preventing injury and loss of life from explosive ordnance and enabled the communities' access to 34 agricultural areas, 5 hospitals and 9 water sources. The responses resulted in a total of 448 pieces of explosive ordnance disposed of and 1,470,621 m² of land released during the period. The Mine Action Service also provided explosive ordnance risk education to civilians across the country in order to enhance their knowledge of safe behaviour and thereby prevent accidents caused by

explosive ordnance. There were 78,591 beneficiaries in total (13,976 men, 16,026 women, 26,070 boys and 22,519 girls), including 12,351 people fleeing the conflict in the Sudan.

45. As at 13 February, United Nations police had completed 1,655 police-only patrols and 256 integrated patrols. Of the total 1,911 patrols, 1,233 included women. Eight quick-response teams were on active standby to respond to security incidents in support of the National Police Service in Juba, Malakal and Bentiu. United Nations police delivered five workshops to 70 National Police Service officers on gender awareness and sexual and gender-based violence, and four training workshops related to human rights to 147 National Police Service officers.

46. The standing police capacity team from Brindisi, Italy, was deployed on 5 December to enhance the advisory role of United Nations police in United Nations electoral assistance, specifically on electoral security. A United Nations police electoral unit has been established as part of the integrated electoral assistance team, and two individual police officers from each field office have been identified to serve as liaison officers.

47. Following violence between the Anyuak community and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces in the previous reporting period, on 18 December UNMISS implemented a civil-military dialogue in Pochala as part of efforts to improve their relations.

48. UNMISS implemented a peace dialogue in Lekuangole, Greater Pibor Administrative Area, from 10 to 12 December for 50 Lou Nuer and Murle youth to de-escalate tensions and promote peaceful coexistence. Following a cattle raid incident by Murle in Poktap, Duk County, Jonglei, on 4 January, which resulted in several civilian casualties, UNMISS facilitated a meeting of greater Bor and Murle political and community leaders in Juba from 6 to 8 January to de-escalate tensions.

49. In Eastern Equatoria, from 5 to 10 January, UNMISS supported a joint peace mission led by the Governor of Eastern Equatoria and the Chief Administrator of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area to Kuron, Jabal Boma and Maruwo Counties to conduct peace dialogues between the Toposa and Murle communities.

50. Following continuous attacks between Dinka Twic and Dinka Ngoc, on 10 January UNMISS coordinated a meeting between UNISFA and the Dinka Twic political and community leaders in Juba to discuss the underlying issues and find ways to de-escalate the violence. The meeting was attended by the UNISFA Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, General Benjamin Olufemi Sawyerr.

Climate, peace and security

51. The reporting period was characterized by an unusually lengthy rainy season stretching into December. As a result, over 524,400 people were exposed to floods, with floodwater extending to 28,505 km², as reported by United Nations Satellite Centre flood monitoring for the period between 15 and 19 December, with Ayod, Guit, Gogrial, Bor South, Terekeka, Fashoda, Leer, Kapoeta East and North and Uror as the most affected districts. According to the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre drought watch, drought is also affecting Aweil and Rumbek. The prolonged effects of climate shocks continue to disrupt food production, especially worsening food security outcomes, with IPC phases 3 (crisis) and 4 (emergency) in eastern and northern South Sudan, and causing the early onset and late return of pastoral migratory patterns that coincide with cropping cycles due to seasonal shifts, resulting in conflict, as observed for instance in Tonj East County.

C. Rule of law and accountability

52. To enhance the capacity of national justice actors across South Sudan to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate serious crimes, in particular sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, UNMISS supported rule of law actors in South Sudan in conducting specialized training and deploying mobile courts.

53. From 14 to 18 December, UNMISS supported investigations training in Unity State led by national rule of law facilitators for 27 National Police Service officers (3 women) to enhance their recording and investigation skills, particularly for sexual and gender-based violence-related offences, in Panyijar, Mayendit, Koch and Leer Counties.

54. To promote the humane treatment of prisoners in line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), on 12 December UNMISS and World Relief supported the handover of the Koch County Prison, built through the South Sudan reconciliation, stabilization and resilience trust fund, to national authorities. The prison can hold 49 inmates and includes two designated cells for juveniles and women.

55. Between 10 and 24 January, a circuit court deployed to Morobo County, Central Equatoria, and adjudicated four cases, including two rape cases. All four cases resulted in the conviction of five persons for various offences, including rape, adultery and theft. Sentences included up to six months of imprisonment and compensation of up to 150,000 South Sudan pounds. Since 31 January, a mobile court deployed to Koch County, Unity State, has resulted in the investigation and adjudication of criminal cases in the physical presence of a judge for the very first time in the history of the County. So far, the court has handed down strong sentences of 10 years and 13 years, respectively, in two convictions of rape, one of which was a high-profile case in which the court convicted the son of a former local government official. These verdicts have sent out a strong message to the Koch County community that impunity for sexual violence will not be tolerated.

56. Since 12 February, UNMISS has supported four judge advocates (one woman) of the Military Justice Directorate of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces in deploying to Maridi, Western Equatoria, as part of an assessment mission that is slated to conclude on 21 February. The assessment mission will investigate and prepare case files for prosecution and adjudication before a general court martial planned for deployment in March.

57. UNMISS provided targeted support for judicial authorities to review cases in Aweil, Bor and Juba central prisons, leading to the release of 159 inmates (12 women and 13 juveniles) who had committed minor offences.

58. Between 9 and 11 February, UNMISS held consultations with chiefs and women and youth leaders of the Murle community, and representatives of justice and local government institutions. Discussions centred on the deployment of a traditional leaders circuit court to address intercommunal violence, including cattle raiding, abductions and revenge killings, as envisaged under the Pieri Action Plan for Peace, the result of an engagement between the three communities in conflict in Jonglei.

D. Creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance

59. As at 12 February, the UNMISS force had conducted 1,285 long-duration patrols, 1,180 short-duration patrols and 823 force protection tasks to create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and/or in support of the delivery of humanitarian assistance to ensure the protection of humanitarian workers.

60. UNMISS responded to 18 requests for force protection and logistics support from humanitarian partners and to 425 protection requests for nine United Nations Humanitarian Air Service airfield sites.

61. On 4 January, UNMISS facilitated the airlift of humanitarian personnel and about 1,000 kg of non-food items for approximately 5,000 refugees in Boro Medina, Western Bahr el-Ghazal.

62. As at 13 February, United Nations police had provided security during eight humanitarian assistance delivery assignments and 41 security escorts of engineers and others. United Nations police continued its deployment to temporary operating bases in Tambura, Yei, Kodok, Akobo and Pibor, which were used for confidence-building, key leadership engagements, capacity-building for the National Police Service and service delivery for communities.

63. As at 13 February, the Mine Action Service had verified and cleared 434 km of road as prioritized by the Mission and escorted 2,015 km of the Mission's patrols, ensuring the mobility of peacekeepers and that humanitarian partners were free from the threat of explosive ordnance. The Mine Action Service also continued clearance for the establishment of a refugee camp in Wedweil and reintegration sites for internally displaced persons from Hai Masna and Naivasha camps, in Northern and Western Bahr el-Ghazal States, respectively, following requests from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

E. Monitoring and investigating human rights violations

64. UNMISS documented and verified 174 incidents of violence, which affected 777 civilians, including 75 women and 55 children (38 boys and 17 girls): 381 civilians killed (24 women, 10 boys and 2 girls), 249 injured (27 women, 4 boys and 2 girls), 57 abducted (21 women, 24 boys and 11 girls), 90 victims of arbitrary arrest and detention (3 women and 2 girls) and 1 victim of unlawful detention and ill-treatment. Compared with the previous reporting period, this represents a 20 per cent decrease in the number of incidents and a 7 per cent decrease in the number of victims. Eighty per cent of the incidents were attributed to community-based militias and/or civil defence groups, while 16 per cent were attributed to government security forces and other armed groups and 4 per cent to unidentified armed elements.

65. The suppression of civil society voices and restrictions on the media continue to shrink the already limited civic and political space, undermining citizens' participation in the ongoing political processes, especially in the run-up to the upcoming elections. UNMISS documented six incidents of infringements on civic and political space: three cases of arbitrary arrest and detention of civil society activists affecting three men and four women, four of whom (two women) were released on 26 January as a result of advocacy conducted by UNMISS, while three individuals (two women) remain in police custody; one case of harassment and intimidation of a male civil society activist by the National Security Service; and one case of issuance

of a ministerial order restricting freedom of expression and freedom of media by the Ministry of Information and Communications of Jonglei State limiting all public and private announcements on the media in Jonglei and requesting approval of the Ministry for publication, which was subsequently rescinded on 11 January following UNMISS advocacy. On 14 January, one civil society activist sought safety abroad, following multiple threats from security forces related to his criticism of the clampdown on freedom of expression and citizens' meaningful participation in public affairs.

66. UNMISS provided technical and financial support to civil society organizations to facilitate inclusive civil society participation in the political process. UNMISS, in collaboration with the Forum for Policy Dialogue, conducted a workshop on promoting civic space to create an enabling environment for the participation of youth in democratic transitional processes in South Sudan for 42 youth representatives, university students, women human rights defenders and civil society representatives. UNMISS, in collaboration with the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, also conducted a national round table on the theme "Promotion, protection and consultative claiming of civic and political space for democratic and peaceful elections" with government authorities and civil society. The outcomes included requests from the National Security Service to facilitate an orientation workshop for senior officers on civic and political space, a call for more training involving security organs, civil society and journalists to enhance open space for civic and political rights during the election cycle and the roll-out of tools for reporting on civic and political space.

1. Children and armed conflict

67. The United Nations verified 33 grave violations against 34 children (32 boys and 2 girls): the killing (4) and maiming (5) of 9 children (7 boys and 2 girls); the recruitment and use of 20 boys for military purposes; and the abduction of 3 boys. Six boys suffered multiple violations of both recruitment and use and abduction. Six boys were released by SPLM/A-IO, following advocacy by the United Nations. Violations occurred in Western Equatoria (11), Unity (10), Northern Bahr el-Ghazal (9), Jonglei (4), Eastern Equatoria (3), Upper Nile (2) and Western Bahr el-Ghazal (1).

68. Violations were attributable to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (23), SPLM/A-IO (14), the South Sudan Civil Defence Service (2) and the National Wildlife Service (3). Seven violations were unattributed, as they occurred due to explosive remnants of war.

69. UNMISS delivered 27 child protection awareness-raising sessions to 1,930 participants (802 women), including 1,524 community members (610 women), 168 government officials (142 women), 149 government security forces (41 women), 77 SPLA-IO officers (7 women) and 12 protection partners (2 women). UNMISS delivered eight child protection training sessions to 338 participants (82 women), including 247 members of government security forces (50 women), 37 community members (27 women), 34 SPLA-IO members (all men) and 20 government officials (5 women).

70. From 23 January to 7 February, the United Nations supported the National Technical Committee, which includes the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs, to conduct two regional refresher workshops for child protection focal points from the parties to the conflict in the greater Equatoria and greater Bahr el-Ghazal regions. The purpose of the workshops was to build the capacity of child protection focal points in South Sudan and equip them with the necessary knowledge to effectively implement

the action plan, foster a culture of child protection and accountability and ensure a functional focal point system ahead of the upcoming elections.

2. Conflict-related sexual violence

71. UNMISS documented and verified 39 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 54 survivors (32 women, 17 girls, 3 boys and 2 men). Survivors' ages ranged from 12 to 45 years old. Seventeen survivors received medical assistance, and 19 sought legal action. These incidents occurred in Central Equatoria (15), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (7), Jonglei (6), Warrap (3), Western Equatoria (3), Eastern Equatoria (2), Lakes (2) and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal (1) and were attributed to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (14), the National Police Service (5) and the National Security Service (3), jointly to the National Prison Service and National Wildlife Service (1), and to SPLM/A-IO (3), community-based militias (7) and unidentified armed elements (6).

72. Five outreach and capacity-building programmes on conflict-related sexual violence were conducted across the country and targeted 209 beneficiaries (87 women), including law enforcement authorities, local authorities, religious and traditional leaders, and women and youth groups. On 1 December, UNMISS organized its quarterly meeting on conflict-related sexual violence, composed of civil society organizations and aimed at enhancing data collection and analysis of conflict-related sexual violations trends and patterns, as well as identifying strategic areas of intervention to provide support to victims and survivors.

3. Women and peace and security

73. Between 4 and 7 December, UNMISS supported the Women in Local Government Association in organizing a workshop in Juba involving 50 association members (2 men) from across the country. It focused on enhancing participants' understanding of gender concepts, gender mainstreaming and women and peace and security priorities, including measures and tools to ensure meaningful participation by women during the entire cycle of the elections.

74. Between 11 and 14 December, the women parliamentary caucus conducted a training of trainers for 30 women parliamentarians of the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly on gender-responsive legislation. The training equipped participants with knowledge and skills for strategic and substantive engagement in the upcoming elections and constitution-making processes.

75. On 15 December, UNMISS facilitated a bilateral engagement with representatives from the United States Department of State for seven women representing five civil society organizations. The purpose was to gather perspectives and gain a better understanding of the current situation regarding women and peace and security in South Sudan.

76. On 15 December, UNMISS and the United Nations Population Fund provided women National Police Service officers with 100 dignity kits as part of a comprehensive response to needs identified by the women.

77. From 7 to 9 December, UNMISS, in collaboration with humanitarian partners, organized several events to raise awareness on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence in Kuacjok, Torit, Rumbek, Yambio and Aweil. In Juba, the event was attended by over 1,500 people and was organized in partnership with the Nyakuron East Indigenous Youths Association and the Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

78. From 11 to 14 December, UNMISS hosted a delegation of nine members of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. The purpose of the visit was to receive information on the situation of women and girls in the current political context and the implementation of the gender-related provisions of the peace agreement. The visit also provided an opportunity for members of the Informal Expert Group to understand the tangible implications on the ground of the women and peace and security language in the UNMISS mandate and the resolutions on South Sudan adopted by the Security Council.

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

79. As at 13 February, the number of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2,710, comprising 890 international staff members, including 270 women (30 per cent), 1,399 national staff members, including 234 women (17 per cent), and 421 United Nations Volunteers, including 168 women (40 per cent).

80. The police strength stood at 1,573 (of an authorized 2,101 personnel), comprising 675 individual police officers (229 women, or 34 per cent), 850 personnel in formed police units (226 women, or 27 per cent) and 48 justice and corrections officers (23 women, or 48 per cent).

81. Of the authorized 17,000 troops, UNMISS troop strength stood at 13,898 military personnel: 218 military liaison officers (68 women, or 31 per cent), 411 military staff officers (87 women, or 21 per cent) and 13,269 military contingent personnel (981 women, or 7 per cent).

82. In accordance with the applicable policy, information on possible unsatisfactory conduct and/or misconduct was processed in a timely fashion. Between 1 December and 31 January, 22 allegations of unsatisfactory conduct and/or misconduct were recorded in the case management tracking system. One allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse was 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

83. As at 31 January, UNMISS had recorded 43 violations of the status-of-forces agreement, representing little change compared with the 44 violations recorded during the previous reporting period. Thirty-five violations involved movement restrictions imposed by government authorities, affecting UNMISS patrols in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Western, Central and Eastern Equatoria States. UNMISS dynamic air patrols and ground patrols to Achong Chong, Manyang, Wau, Rumbek, Baggari, Marial Bai, Thar Kueng, Ngo Halima, Tambura, Mundri, Lakamadi, Kuron, Pajok, Yei, Bor, Gadiang, Koch, Leer, Deim Zubeir, Raja, Kapoeta, Torit, Gangua-Nabiapai, Fanyok, Timsaha and Sopo Bridge were cancelled due to non-acknowledgement of UNMISS sharing of information and flight safety assurance documents by the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism headquarters in Juba. On 27 December, an UNMISS integrated patrol from Malakal to Gel Achel was denied access by South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel at a checkpoint around 72 km south-east of Malakal. This was despite the fact that the UNMISS team possessed a sharing of information document acknowledged by the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism headquarters.

84. On 9 December, in Torit town, a member of the United Nations police was assaulted by National Security Service personnel, while South Sudan People's Defence Forces soldiers present also threatened to shoot at the patrol team if it did not leave the area immediately. On 13 December, a United Nations driver was assaulted by South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel at the Juba bridge checkpoint for unspecified reasons. On 18 December, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the National Security Service confiscated a United Nations TETRA radio from an UNMISS national staff member at his residence during their joint security operations in the Gudele area, in Juba.

85. Status-of-forces agreement violations also included the imposition of undue taxes on UNMISS and its contractors for importing consignments for the Mission's exclusive use. On 13 December, the National Revenue Authority demanded that UNMISS international contractor ES-KO International pay 10 million South Sudan pounds (\$10,000) for an import licence as a precondition for the release of 500 tons of frozen food items by customs. UNMISS continued to engage with the Government on the issue.

86. Eighteen incidents of harassment and two incidents of access denial against United Nations country team staff and operations by government security forces were recorded. Most of the incidents were demands by the National Police Service or the South Sudan People's Defence Forces for alleged driving violations or incorrect documentation upon entry into South Sudan at Juba International Airport.

87. On 12 January, an individual wearing a South Sudan People's Defence Forces uniform entered the UNMISS Topping camp and shot indiscriminately near a watchtower. United Nations peacekeepers on duty responded and shot the intruder, who later died of injuries. No United Nations personnel were harmed, and UNMISS and the National Police Service are conducting a joint investigation into the incident.

VIII. Performance of uniformed components

88. United Nations police conducted a quarterly inspection of performance assessment and evaluation in all four formed police units during the reporting period. The overall assessment was satisfactory. However, one formed police unit had a shortfall of company-owned equipment regarding the replacement of expired 10 per cent tear gas grenades (hand and projectiles), and the other three formed police units were placed on a performance improvement plan regarding health, training aspects and welfare.

89. The United Nations police internal evaluation unit visited and evaluated field offices in Rumbek, Yambio and Kuacjok, including individual police officers' performance and compliance with UNMISS regulations.

90. The UNMISS force evaluated eight units, including five infantry battalions and three engineer units. No evaluations were conducted on marine units, aviation units or medical units. The units were found to be well trained and operationally ready according to United Nations standards. Three units exceeded the set military unit evaluation tool standards, and one unit successfully met the set standards. Evaluation reports on the remaining four units are pending.

IX. Financial aspects

91. The General Assembly, by its resolution [77/292](#) B of 30 June 2023, appropriated the amount of \$1,148,836,500 for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Subsequently, on 12 December 2023, the Advisory

Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding \$15,451,500 gross (\$15,346,500 net) for the 2022/23 period. The commitment authority was sought to cover additional resource requirements for the expanded mandate with respect to the protection of civilians and electoral support. As at 14 February 2024, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNMISS amounted to \$299.2 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$2,735.7 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs, as well as for contingent-owned equipment, has been made for the period up to 30 September 2023, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

X. Observations and recommendations

92. As noted in my previous report in December 2023 (S/2023/976), the implementation of critical benchmarks in the Revitalized Agreement continues to remain behind schedule, and an assessment as to whether a critical mass of compliance has been achieved will be made in April 2024. However, if the political parties come together with sufficient political will and focus, this critical mass can be achieved.

93. I am concerned that the constitution-making process, the type and number of elections, voter registration modalities, decisions associated with the inclusion of displaced people, an integrated elections security plan, an election dispute resolution mechanism and an election timeline still remain to be determined, among others. These pending issues are fundamental to the holding of credible and peaceful elections by December 2024. I encourage the parties to engage in constructive dialogue and reach a consensus on the way forward.

94. I am encouraged by the reconstitution of the National Elections Commission, the Political Parties Council and the National Constitutional Review Commission. However, these institutions urgently need to be operationalized and adequately resourced to enable them to begin to establish a plan and effectively carry out their mandated tasks. I urge the Government to do so as a matter of priority. I also urge the political parties to agree on a code of conduct that ensures the full and meaningful participation of all electoral stakeholders and sets the parameters of peaceful political activity.

95. A unified national security force that is adequately resourced and appropriately trained is fundamental to providing a secure environment for free political and civic discourse. I urge the Government of South Sudan to expedite the deployment of adequately resourced Necessary Unified Forces, as stipulated in the road map and the peace agreement.

96. The critical benchmarks are not an externally imposed set of conditionalities, as they were agreed to by the parties to the peace agreement. Failure to implement these benchmarks, or their unilateral implementation, undermines the peace agreement, with potentially grave consequences.

97. Regional countries and international partners should provide the necessary political support to the parties in overcoming the current political challenges. In this regard, I look forward to the deliberations of the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting on South Sudan scheduled to take place in late February 2024. The joint briefing to the African Union Peace and Security Council by the trilateral mechanism of the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD on the preparations for elections and constitution-making processes similarly deserves attention for a wider assessment of the electoral environment in South Sudan.

98. Despite ongoing local mediation efforts, I am concerned at the upsurge of intercommunal violence as witnessed in areas along the Warrap State and Abyei region border, and parts of Jonglei. Tensions and violence in Unity State following clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and SPLA-IO are also disturbing. I urge the parties to exercise restraint and urge the Government to address the local drivers of conflict, including by ensuring the implementation of the transitional security arrangements and delivering on peace dividends.

99. I am deeply troubled by the intensifying conflict in the Sudan and its impact on neighbouring States, in particular South Sudan, which has witnessed an influx of over 500,000 returnees and refugees and asylum-seekers, exacerbating the strain on local communities already grappling with diminishing resources. The prevalent situation has created conditions that could trigger conflict among communities as they vie for access to essentials, dwindling humanitarian aid, and scarce resources.

100. I appeal to the international community to amplify its support for the most vulnerable groups in response to the escalating needs precipitated by a surge in arrivals from the Sudan. This situation is compounded by displacement, climate shocks and a rise in acute food insecurity in South Sudan. It is therefore imperative that the Government also provide the necessary aid and resources to those most affected.

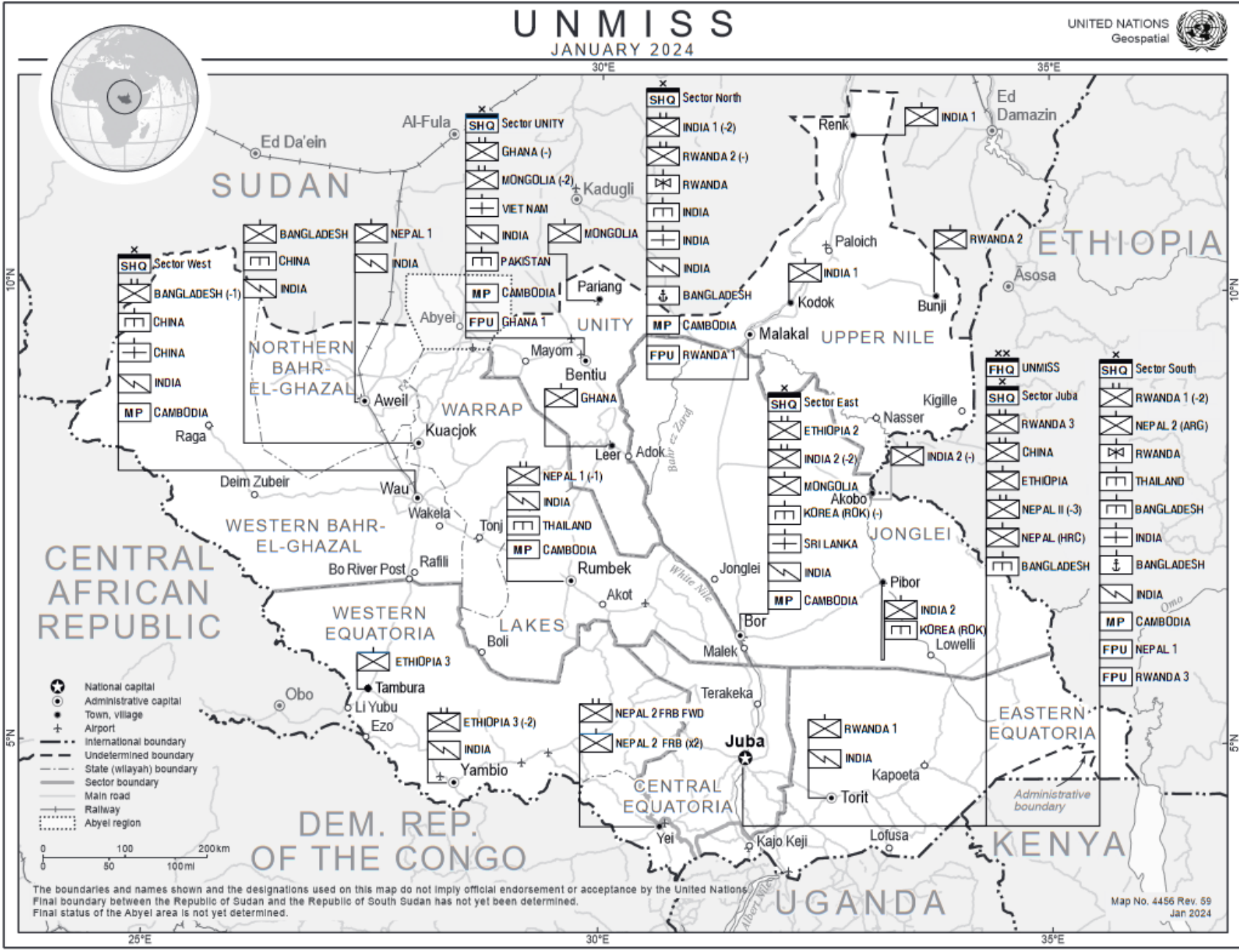
101. I commend the Community of Sant'Egidio for its long-standing efforts to mediate between the transitional Government and the non-signatories. I also welcome the decision of the Government of Kenya to support those efforts in concert with the Community of Sant'Egidio. I hope that all parties to this process will engage constructively and consolidate peace in South Sudan.

102. I express my deep appreciation to the troop- and police-contributing countries and convey my appreciation to IGAD and the African Union for their sustained engagement in fostering peace in South Sudan. I thank my Special Representative for South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, the staff of UNMISS, the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners for their untiring service under challenging circumstances

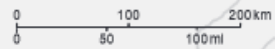
UNMISS

JANUARY 2024

UNITED NATIONS
Geospatial



- National capital
- Administrative capital
- Town, village
- Airport
- International boundary
- Undetermined boundary
- State (wilayah) boundary
- Sector boundary
- Main road
- Railway
- Abyei region



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.
Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

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