

**Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South
Sudan and
Head of UNMISS, Nicholas Haysom
Briefing to the Security Council**

16 September 2022

Madame President,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to brief this Council on the situation in South Sudan.
2. Since 2018, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has provided the framework to consolidate South Sudan's transition from conflict to peace. The fundamentals of the Agreement remain valid. A ceasefire among the parties has largely held, despite continued outbreaks of intercommunal violence.
3. With the end of the transitional period approaching, however, it became increasingly clear that the parties were not able to conclude the implementation of the key provisions of the Agreement by February 2023- the original deadline for transition.
4. With that window closing, on 4 August the signatory parties agreed on a Roadmap for completing the remaining tasks of the country's transition. The Roadmap contains a set of revised benchmarks and timelines and extends the transitional period by 24 months. It envisages elections in December 2024. I note that these steps were taken in accordance with Article 8.4 of the peace agreement.
5. The Roadmap is a welcome development as it represents consensus among the key signatories on the way forward, through a South Sudan-owned process. It also recommits the parties to the objectives and goals set out in the peace agreement.
6. With that said, the extension of the transitional period has been met with mixed reactions by many South Sudanese who had hoped that by now, they would be preparing to cast their votes in a democratic electoral process. Peace partners, non-signatory parties, some civil society actors and other stakeholders raised concerns about the inclusivity of the process and have also called for greater clarity around the government's commitment to implement the agreement on time.
7. However, there is no alternative to the implementation of the peace agreement. This was reflected in the affirmative vote of 37 of the 43 members (a two-thirds majority) of the

Revitalized Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission in approving the extension. The next step is its ratification by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly.

8. Let me underscore that the Roadmap is a way point, not an end point, in South Sudan's journey on the path to democratic transition. I emphasized this when I met with President Kiir and First Vice President Machar and I encouraged the parties to display tangible results – by keeping to the strict deadlines of the Roadmap's calendar - and to drive implementation in a manner that brings on board the other stakeholders and gains the confidence of the population. It is therefore critical that the international community and the Council remains closely seized of the process.
9. One of the most important pending issues are the constitution-making process and preparations for elections. I underscore the importance of an inclusive political process and the opening of civic space as essential conditions for a robust and competitive electoral process to mark the completion of the transition.

Madame President,

10. Against this backdrop, I can report some steps taken by the parties since our last briefing to this Council.
11. The President and the First Vice-President agreed to resolve the parliamentary impasse, which now enables the Transitional National Legislature to continue underwriting critical aspects of the peace agreement. I can report that key bills are now being considered by parliament. These bills will enable the creation or reform of electoral, constitution making and judicial institutions.
12. I commend the recent graduation of the first batch of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) from the Greater Equatoria region. These graduates are a symbol of unity for the people in South Sudan, and in that regard, they are expected to play a critical role in contributing to the democratic transition of the country.
13. More immediately, graduation should open the possibility of their deployment to help curtail subnational and inter-communal violence. The capacity of the Government to exercise its preeminent responsibility for the protection of civilians will further expand with the reform of the security sector.
14. In that regard, I have warned the graduation is just a first step in a broader process of security sector transformation. Adequate provision of the budgetary resources necessary for the graduated forces, their integration and deployment remain vital to create a unified army. Failure to address these critical issues, however, has the potential to reverse the gains made in this area.

Mr. President,

15. A survey of the conflict landscape in South Sudan is a reminder that this is not the time to give up on a sense of urgency to implement the peace agreement. Subnational violence—marked by cycles of cattle raiding, abductions, revenge killings—continues to devastate communities and drive humanitarian needs.
16. The fighting between SPLM/A-IO opposition forces and the Kitgwang and Agwelek factions in Upper Nile is concerning. Clashes have displaced thousands of people within Upper Nile, to Jonglei, Unity states, and Sudan. We've received reports of people fleeing to the Malakal Protection of Civilians (POC) site, exacerbating the already crowded conditions there. We are currently working with the government to meet the urgent needs of the displaced civilians.
17. We also strongly condemn recent violence in Mayom, Unity, and the clashes in Rualbet, Warrap, both of which have caused devastating casualties, including reports of extrajudicial killings. I note steps taken by the government to condemn extra-judicial killings, establish investigative committees and examine root causes of those conflicts. I continue to urge respect for due process of the law.
18. Incidents of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) are increasing. But it could be effectively addressed if all concerned parties and relevant authorities put a stop to the use of sexual violence as a weapon of choice. UNMISS continues to support national ownership of the CRSV prevention and response agenda, national legal and policy frameworks, and sustainable implementation capacities.
19. More broadly, the Mission is strengthening its support to the justice chain in each state by supporting accountability, through the implementation of mobile circuit courts and courts martial, targeted training and mentoring focusing on criminal investigations, and enhanced capacity to address crimes that risk destabilizing the peace, including those involving gender-based violence.

Excellencies,

20. As guided by the three-year strategic vision of the Security Council in our mandate, the Mission has largely managed to accomplish a “double pivot” in our focus and operations.
21. The first has been to orient our efforts towards a greater facilitation of the political process, engaging the political parties and other stakeholders, including non-signatories and the civil society. The Roadmap provides a fresh opportunity to align these efforts, and to sharpen our engagement with key actors, as well as institutions and partners.
22. The second pivot is a transition from a Mission anchored in static protection role to one that emphasizes proactive deployment to violent hotspots. We are focusing on mobility to meet protection needs where they are greatest throughout the country. We are leveraging

our integrated civilian and military teams to ensure that security gains are consolidated with local-level political and reconciliation initiatives, which can be followed-up by programming from the UN Country Team.

23. This Mission is confident that our expanded protection presence has made a difference. There has been a modest decrease in the number of civilians affected by violence; and a significant decrease in the overall number of incidents, as compared to the previous year.
24. Still, the biggest adversaries to our goal of an integrated, all-season Mission are often terrain and weather. This requires greater mobility and innovation in our equipment and demands exit strategies so that we avoid becoming stuck—quite literally—in the mud. The ongoing UNMISS temporary operating base in Tambura, Western Equatoria, is a case study in trying to balance these requirements.

Excellencies,

25. Allow me to share a word on the humanitarian situation. Food security continues to deteriorate in South Sudan with an estimated 8.3 million people in need. These trends are being driven by climatic shocks including floods and droughts, by the conflict itself, the economic downturn, protracted displacement and disrupted livelihoods. Based on ongoing humanitarian assessment, flooding and heavy rains have impacted hundreds of thousands of people to date. Access to the people in affected locations remains challenging due to impassable roads, flooded airstrips, and insecurity.
26. Overall, humanitarian needs continue to outstrip available funding, requiring the re-programming of resources to respond to the most urgent crises. I therefore encourage donors to continue responding generously to the Humanitarian Response Plan, which is only 44.6 per cent funded.

Excellencies,

27. South Sudan has tremendous potential, although it may be currently difficult to imagine it fully blossoming. But from our conversations with the government, donors, and UN partners, we know that if properly developed livestock, agriculture, and wildlife could become engines of livelihood creation for generations to come. These natural endowments can be a source of conflict or cooperation, and it is always political will that can make a difference.

Excellencies,

28. Please allow me to share some additional thoughts in conclusion. The next few months will be a litmus test for the parties in demonstrating their commitment to the implementation of the Roadmap. Delays and setbacks so far have come at a cost, notably,

the withdrawal of major donor funding to the monitoring mechanism of CTSAMVM and RJMEC. I urge partners to reconsider their support to these mechanisms, which are critical for this renewed phase of the peace process. Similarly, I urge the government to ensure sufficient and transparent allocation of national resources towards the tasks outlined in the Roadmap.

29. I acknowledge the contribution of the Government of Sudan, particularly in support of the transitional security arrangements. I also welcome this Mission's ongoing partnership with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union, as well as the Troika and European Union.
30. With that, let me reaffirm that the support of the international community continues to matter in this process. Our collective task now is to support the parties in fulfilling their obligations to the people of South Sudan as per the timing of the Roadmap. I therefore express my gratitude to this Council for its continued attention and interest.

Thank you.