



Security Council

Distr.: General
28 February 2019

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 1 December to 26 February 2019)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2406 \(2018\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 March 2019 and, in accordance with prior resolutions, requested me to report on the implementation of the mandate every 90 days. It covers political and security developments between 1 December 2018 and 26 February 2019, the humanitarian and human rights situation, and progress in the implementation of the Mission mandate. The report also provides recommendations for the renewal of the UNMISS mandate.

II. Political and economic developments

2. During the reporting period, the South Sudanese parties made modest progress in implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The permanent ceasefire was upheld in most parts of the country and confidence-building among the parties continued. Military commanders engaged in local rapprochement efforts, while local authorities and communities held peace celebrations in several locations. Activities to implement the Revitalized Agreement continued to focus, however, only on procedural issues, and timelines to meet the political and security benchmarks of the pre-transition period have slipped.

Implementation of the Revitalized Agreement

3. The pre-transitional period is in its fifth month, with three months remaining before the beginning of the transitional period, according to the Revitalized Agreement. A number of opposition leaders have returned to Juba or visit frequently, including the deputy chair of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Opposition, Henry Odwar; the head of the SPLM/A in Opposition security committee, Angelina Teny; the leader of SPLM "Former Detainees", Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior; the chair of the South Sudan Opposition Alliance, Gabriel Changson Chang; the chair of the National Democratic Movement, Lam Akol Ajawin; the former Secretary-General of the Jieng Council of Elders, Ustaz Lewis Anei Madut; and other opposition officials. To facilitate the return of the opposition



leaders, the National Pre-Transitional Committee arranged for security and accommodation for returning opposition representatives.

4. The opposition leaders have been participating in meetings of the implementation organs for the peace agreement together with representatives of the incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity and other political groups. The President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, members of the Government and several opposition leaders have made statements of commitment to the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement at public events to celebrate the return of peace.

5. Deliberations in the implementation bodies remained focused on meeting procedures, budgetary matters and work planning, with modest progress being made on substantive matters. Discussions concerning incorporation of the Revitalized Agreement into the Transitional Constitution remained overshadowed by disputes over the adoption of a decentralized or devolved system of governance. Following a decision by the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, issued upon a request from the parties that the provision in question should state that the country is governed on the basis of a “decentralized democratic system” and should impose a duty on the Transitional Government to “devolve more powers and resources to the states and lower forms of government as shall be agreed by the parties”, on 24 January the chair of the National Constitutional Amendment Committee submitted a draft constitutional amendment bill containing that provision to the Minister of Justice. On 14 February, the Council of Ministers approved the draft bill and recommended its transmission to the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, but the opposition expressed significant misgivings in respect of these procedures.

6. The Technical Boundary Committee, composed of members appointed by countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the troika and supported by an international expert appointed by the United Nations, convened its first meeting in Juba on 6 December. The Committee is mandated to define, within 60 days, the tribal areas of South Sudan as they stood on 1 January 1956, and report to the IGAD mediation process. The Committee has engaged with stakeholders to solicit their views and has also received submissions from representatives of the various communities. The Independent Boundaries Commission is yet to be formed.

7. Talks on transitional security arrangements and defence and security reform made limited progress, focusing on short-term measures of cantonment and sustainment. The Joint Defence Board agreed to a pilot assembly and training site near Kajo Kaji, Central Equatoria, for a total of 3,000 troops (1,000 each from the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces (SSPDF), SPLM/A in Opposition and the South Sudan Opposition Alliance). On 3 February, the Board agreed to establish 25 cantonments sites. The remaining sites will be established in the second phase, for a total of 40 sites. The schedule and other details of the pilot site remain unconfirmed. The Board also decided to undertake a series of familiarization visits to Yei, Akobo, Yirol, Wau, Bor and Raja. Plans for a professionalized, unified national army and comprehensive security and defence sector reforms are yet to be presented for consideration.

8. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism met regularly to discuss adherence by the parties to the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements. The parties agreed to enhance local trust-building at the field commander level. On 18 December, in a serious violation of the Revitalized Agreement, government officials assaulted, detained and abused members of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism team in Luri, Central Equatoria. The attack was broadly condemned by regional and international partners and the Government has initiated an investigation into the incident.

9. The reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission remains without a permanent chair and continued its work under the leadership of interim chair and deputy chair, Augustino Njoroge. The Commission held its second and third plenary meetings in Juba on 12 December and 23 January, respectively, and discussed general progress, urging parties to accelerate implementation of the pre-transitional tasks. On 19 February, the reconstituted Joint Commission convened an extraordinary plenary meeting to discuss funding and security arrangements, as well as progress in respect of cantonment, training, unification of forces and plans to reconstitute the South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission.

10. A rapprochement between the Government and the opposition at the subnational level in some locations increased confidence between communities. SSPDF and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition in Upper Nile and Western Bahr el-Ghazal signed agreements to increase collaboration. Parties engaged in confidence-building meetings in Wau, Gbudue, Akobo, Yei River, Torit, Southern Liech, Bieh and Fangak, joint peace celebrations, including in Bentiu and Malakal, and exchange visits at all levels. This has resulted in improved commercial activities visible through the increased availability of goods in local markets and increased movement of civilians between UNMISS protection sites and nearby towns and between Government and opposition-controlled areas, which has also facilitated the reopening of roads, including the roads between Wau, Tambura and Yambio, for commercial trucks.

11. The IGAD Special Envoy continued engaging in outreach to non-signatories to the Revitalized Agreement. On 18 December, he met Paul Malong and other members of the South Sudan United Front/Army in Nairobi. The Front/Army issued a statement, co-signed by the Special Envoy, reaffirming commitment to a non-violent resolution to the conflict and requesting the parties to the Agreement to allow the Front/Army to participate in the peace process. The IGAD Special Envoy also met with Thomas Cirillo, leader of the National Salvation Front, and other members of the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance, who equally expressed commitment to the December 2017 cessation of hostilities agreement. While international and regional actors continued attempts to engage Thomas Cirillo, representatives of the Government publicly declared on several occasions that he and his forces were engaged in terrorist activity. The IGAD Special Envoy also met with the South Sudan Opposition Alliance to address an internal dispute over the leadership of the movement.

12. From 1 to 5 December, ambassadors from the members of the African Union High-level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan (Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa), accompanied by the IGAD Special Envoy, visited South Sudan to support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. At its meetings on 20 and 24 December, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union issued a communiqué expressing support for the decision of IGAD to request a review of the composition and role of the UNMISS regional protection force. I received the communiqué under cover of the 18 January 2019 letter from the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security and transmitted it to the Security Council on 7 February (S/2019/110).

Other national political developments

13. The National Dialogue Steering Committee continued to engage with SPLM/A in Opposition to encourage their participation. The latter announced the formation of a committee to consider reports from grassroots consultations and its participation in the national dialogue more generally. Plans to hold regional conferences for the national dialogue remain nascent, particularly with respect to the possible participation of the opposition.

14. From 3 to 6 December, SPLM convened a party retreat in Lobonok, south of Juba, which was attended by the SPLM interim chairs and members of the various party organs. The retreat focused on the reorganization of the SPLM and strategies towards enhancing the prominence of the party.

15. On 19 December, the Parliament began a three-month recess to allow parliamentarians to visit their constituencies to disseminate the Revitalized Agreement and consult on its implementation.

Economic developments

16. Following the signature of the Revitalized Agreement, key macroeconomic indicators signalled a degree of stabilization. On the parallel market, the South Sudanese pound was relatively stable, at some 260 pounds to the United States dollar. The National Bureau of Statistics estimated the annual rate of inflation at 33 per cent for the month of November. Removal of the fuel subsidy had no negative impact on the prices of goods and services. Oil production remained at some 120,000–130,000 barrels per day with prospects that the Unity oilfields could be fully operational at the pre-conflict level in 2019. On 27 November, the Government launched a national development strategy for South Sudan for the period 2018–2021 with support from the United Nations Development Programme.

III. Security situation

17. The ceasefire continued to hold in most of the country and the overall security situation improved. Violence generally declined amid increasing rapprochement between government authorities, SSPDF and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition at the local level. In meetings of its Board and its Technical Committee, the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism recognized the general stability of the ceasefire but reported continued sporadic clashes between SSPDF and non-signatory armed groups. Meanwhile, violence, including sexual violence against women and girls, abduction, attacks and ambushes of civilians, continued at alarming levels alongside intercommunal and intracommunal violence and cattle raiding in Lakes, Jonglei and Warrap.

Greater Upper Nile region

18. The security situation in Unity was characterized by clashes between government and opposition forces, ambushes and attacks by armed men against civilians and SSPDF. Further allegations of conflict-related sexual violence around Bentiu were recorded. Fighting reportedly occurred from 4 to 6 December between Taban Deng-allied SSPDF elements targeting the SPLA in Opposition in Bil, Guit County, resulting in at least 21 casualties.

19. In Upper Nile, the situation remained relatively calm, but former SSPDF, SPLA in Opposition and Taban Deng-allied soldiers living in the UNMISS Malakal protection site reportedly reenlisted into their respective forces. In Jonglei, on 18 December, SSPDF soldiers based in Waat allegedly attacked civilians in Luony and Mantiwiet in Akobo Centre County killing five civilians. On 27 December, armed persons in unidentified uniforms reportedly ambushed a vehicle traveling on the Juba-Pibor highway, killing three civilians and injuring seven. At the end of January, soldiers from the National Salvation Front reportedly attempted to recruit new members in Bor South, but the County Commissioner stopped the recruitment activities and the National Security Service arrested four suspects.

Greater Equatoria region

20. Tensions remained high in Central Equatoria with reports of increased movement and reinforcement of troops and fighting between the Government and forces affiliated with the National Salvation Front. The Government alleged that the Front had burned the Goli bridge near Yei on 5 December and had destroyed the Tore bridge in Yei River on 7 December. SSPDF and the Front reportedly clashed in the Kaperto area in Lobonok County on 16 December, killing two SSPDF soldiers. On 20 December, the Front allegedly ambushed two vehicles travelling from Yei to Kaia abducting all passengers, including one United Nations national staff member. On 24 December, another bridge, at Kogbo in Longu on the Yei-Maridi road, was allegedly destroyed by the Front. On 7 January, the Front reportedly fought pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition forces in Mugwo County resulting in the death of two of the Front's soldiers. On 16 January, SSPDF repulsed an attack allegedly carried out by the Front on their base in Jumbo on the Yei-Morobo road. Furthermore, Front forces reportedly partially destroyed the Kimbe bridge, approximately 27 km from Yei. On 17 and 18 January, fighting between the Front and SSPDF was reported in Mukaya County and Otego County, resulting in civilian displacement towards Yei. On 30 January, fighting was reported between SSPDF and Front forces in Goja near Yei.

21. The 23 November SSPDF killing of a civilian suspected to be an informant for the National Salvation Front in Wonduruba County reportedly led to an offensive by the Front on the SSPDF base on 27 December, killing seven SSPDF soldiers. On 27 December, the Front ambushed a vehicle carrying the Yei River Secretary-General from Yei town to Kaia near Jambo along the Yei-Kaia road, killing one person. On 29 December, SSPDF at Loka Round, Loka West, Kenyi and Limbe, some 50 km from Yei town, were reportedly attacked by the Front with SSPDF later regaining control of these areas. On 3 January, SSPDF alleged that the Front had killed 19 civilians and injured 8 in a village between Gorom and Wonduruba. The Front denied the allegation, accusing the Government of deliberately killing civilians perceived to be supporters of the Front. On 4 February, the Front allegedly attacked National Security Service positions in Lobonok County.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

22. The general situation in Western Bahr el-Ghazal region remained relatively calm, although criminality was in evidence. In Lakes, on 9 December, armed youth suspected to be from Eastern Lakes reportedly abducted four persons in Paloic County and killed one civilian. On 11 December, armed youth suspected to be from Yirol West reportedly ambushed two commercial vehicles travelling from Yirol to Rumbek, injuring three passengers. On 12 January, armed men reportedly ambushed a passenger vehicle in Yirol West County injuring two passengers. Meanwhile, in Warrap, on 27 January, 12 fishermen were allegedly killed in Akop County by armed youth from Bul South.

Intercommunal conflict

23. Intercommunal violence continued with a reported increase in attacks, revenge attacks and cattle raiding since the beginning of the dry season. In Jonglei, tensions continued between the Abii sub-clans of the Dinka Bor over grazing land. In Jebel Boma County, several clashes related to cattle raids were reported between Murle and Jie communities. On 1 January, a dispute over grazing land between the Lango and the Bothonya in Bahaz in Kereka sub-county occurred. On 3 January, armed cattle raiders suspected to be from Boma reportedly looted a significant number of cattle from a cattle camp in Duk Pagak County. Murle youth reportedly attacked the two

opposition-controlled areas of Duachan and Kolabiel in Bieh on 6 January. A raid implicating Murle had reportedly taken place on 6 January, resulting in 47 killed and 48 injured with up to 2,000 cattle stolen in Akobo West and Nyerol Counties. On 7 January, suspected Murle attacked a commercial vehicle in Kolmerek Payam along the Jali-Bor road, killing 40 people and injuring nearly 80.

24. Tensions and violence persisted through December and January between Murle and ethnic groups in bordering states, including Murle attacks on Lou Nuer in Akobo and Bieh on 6 January, leading to the reported deaths of 36 Lou Nuer, including women and children. On 13 January, an attack by Murle in Akobo reportedly resulted in the killing of 47 civilians.

25. Cross-border attacks between Dinka Rek of Warrap and Bul Nuer of Unity led to unverified reports of over 115 people killed and thousands displaced from 14 to 16 January. State authorities are presently coordinating efforts to prevent further violence.

26. On 26 to 27 December, Dinka Pakam of Lakes who had migrated to Tonj reportedly conducted cattle raids against the resident Dinka Rek, leading to six Pakam fatalities. Violence also ensued between Nuer Hah of southern Unity and Dinka Rek from Tonj, in which five Dinka Rek were reportedly killed.

27. In Lakes, tensions between Dinka Pakam who had migrated from Western to Eastern Lakes and local Dinka Ciec have led to violent conflict. Casualties remain unknown; however the fighting led to the displacement of more than 1,000 Dinka Pakam women and children who are camped in Yirol town.

28. Meanwhile, in Eastern Equatoria, on 16 January in Bul East County, a cattle raid on six camps by armed youth from Tonj resulted in 27 civilians killed and 18 injured.

IV. Humanitarian situation

29. By the end of December, a total of 1.87 million women, men and children were internally displaced and 2.27 million were displaced to neighbouring countries. In December, fighting in Yei resumed, resulting in some 4,560 people arriving in Mugwo town with urgent humanitarian needs and 5,000 people in Tokori in need of assistance; many have reportedly fled to Uganda. So far in 2019, some 5.2 million of the 7.1 million people in need of assistance were considered to be severely food insecure.

30. The spread of Ebola virus disease continued in the Democratic Republic of the Congo throughout the reporting period and the risk of the virus spreading in the region, including to South Sudan, remains very high. The Government of South Sudan, the World Health Organization and partners continued preparedness activities and response planning, supported by a regional allocation of \$10 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund, \$2 million of which has been allocated to South Sudan. In December, a 24-bed multi-purpose unit for patients with highly infectious diseases was established in Juba. The establishment of three Ebola virus disease isolation centres in Nimule, Yei and Yambio is ongoing, with six other locations identified for isolation centres. South Sudan received 2,160 doses of Ebola vaccines for front-line health-care workers and immunizations commenced in late January in Yambio. A total of 19 border screening points are operational and by 4 February 2019 over 1.1 million people entering South Sudan had been screened. Humanitarian access to the Equatorias remains limited as insecurity persists, particularly around Yei, which also undermines preparedness efforts. On 29 November, the Ministry of Health also declared a yellow fever outbreak in Sakure, Nzara County, Western Equatoria, placing additional pressure on the national health system, which lacks the capacity to effectively manage the demands of a possible Ebola outbreak. The Ebola contingency

committee meets weekly to coordinate United Nations-wide planning and preparedness.

31. Returns were reported across South Sudan. In Leer, the number of internally displaced persons at the temporary protection area continued to decrease owing to relative calm in the area, with approximately 400 internally displaced persons remaining in the site (compared with 1,400 in the first half of 2018). Some 250 people were voluntarily repatriated to Akobo, Jonglei. Approximately 3,800 people, mainly women and children, returned to southern Unity from Lakes, Jonglei, Juba and the Bentiu protection site, following relative improvement in security in the area.

32. Access challenges, including conflict and bureaucratic impediments, continue to constrain the delivery of assistance. Violence against humanitarian workers and assets continued throughout the reporting period. In 2018, 15 humanitarian workers were killed, bringing the total since the start of the conflict in 2013 to at least 112. At least 576 aid workers were relocated in 2018 because of insecurity, disrupting for prolonged periods the provision of life-saving assistance and protection services to people in need; in addition, at least 117 aid workers were detained in 21 separate incidents. In December 2018, numerous humanitarian convoys were ambushed on the Yei-Juba road, one of which resulted in the abduction of 24 civilians, among whom was a United Nations staff member who was held for nine days. In January 2019, 37 incidents related to humanitarian access were reported, of which some 46 per cent involved violence against personnel and assets, including the detention of three staff and relocation of over 30 staff from Ulang in Upper Nile owing to insecurity. There was a persistent deterioration in security in Central Equatoria as a result of heavy fighting into January, which continues to have an impact on humanitarian movement and Ebola preparedness.

33. The presidential order issued on 18 December to reinforce customs excise and duties on imported goods provided exemption for humanitarian relief items. However, humanitarian partners have been experiencing delays and challenges because of the subjectivity involved in determining what constitutes humanitarian items at border entry points (see also para. 75 below).

34. Following the reports in November 2018 of multiple cases of rape around Bentiu in Unity, state civilian and security authorities have begun to interfere with partners working on health, protection and gender-based violence matters. This includes the restriction of staff movement and new requirements to obtain approvals before implementing any related activities. Despite the November issuance of a directive by Riek Machar to put on hold previous requirements on humanitarian workers and organizations in areas controlled by the opposition, operational interference, bureaucratic impediments, harassment and detention of staff continue. In Western Equatoria, humanitarian access has improved as movement restrictions have been lifted on the Yambio-Tambura road.

35. By the end of November 2018, humanitarian agencies had delivered assistance and protection services to 5 million people, representing 83 per cent of the 6 million targeted for assistance in 2018. This included food assistance and emergency livelihood support (4.4 million), improved water sources (more than 1.1 million), emergency shelter and essential non-food items (approximately 718,000), emergency nutritional assistance (over 798,300 children and pregnant and lactating mothers) and access to education in emergencies (nearly 685,700 children). More than 2.2 million people benefited from inter-agency emergency health kits and some 3.39 million people accessed protection services.

36. On 13 December, the humanitarian response plan was launched for 2019, requesting \$1.5 billion to reach 5.7 million people, of 7.1 million in need. The 2018 plan was 68 per cent funded, with \$1.17 billion received.

V. Implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks

A. Protection of civilians

37. The most common threats to civilians across South Sudan during the reporting period were violence and attacks by armed actors resulting in killing and wounding, sexual violence, looting and destruction of property and extortion. Areas requiring particular attention in respect of protection of civilians were in Unity, Upper Nile and Central Equatoria. Major obstacles to the Mission's implementation of its mandate to protect civilians included denial of access by both State and opposition actors, hindering the Mission's situational awareness and ability to act to address threats to civilians. Inaccessibility and lack of air assets also negatively affected the Mission's protection activities.

38. Under tier one, protection through engagement and dialogue, UNMISS facilitated trust- and confidence-building activities between the State armed forces and opposition armed groups across the country. UNMISS conducted 29 workshops, forums and community dialogues to facilitate conflict management, social cohesion, reconciliation and civil-military cooperation and to promote the roles of women, youth and traditional leaders in peacebuilding. A total of 5,216 people (including 1,320 women) were reached from all parts of the population.

39. Under tier two, protection from physical violence, UNMISS provided physical protection to civilians within and outside its protection sites. As at 14 February, UNMISS was hosting a total of 192,528 internally displaced persons (96,616 male and 95,912 female) in its protection of civilians sites, as follows: Juba 32,451 (16,722 male and 15,679 female), Bor 2,164 (1,035 male and 1,129 female), Bentiu 113,695 (57,026 male and 56,669 female), Malakal 29,190 (14,293 male and 14,897 female) and Wau 15,028 (7,490 male and 7,538 female). Of the total population in UNMISS protection sites, 60,998 were aged 0–4 years, 95,724 were aged 5–17 years, 32,749 were aged 18–59 years and 3,059 were aged over 60 years. In and around its protection sites, UNMISS conducted patrols for firewood collection and, within capacity, was present at community events. UNMISS continued to ensure the civilian character of the protection sites by emphasizing the responsibility of community leaders in curbing criminality within the sites. During the reporting period, a total of 287 crimes and security incidents were recorded in the protection sites at Wau (86), Bentiu (78), Juba (50), Malakal (28) and Bor (18). The most commonly reported offences were assault, theft, robbery, domestic violence, other forms of gender-based violence, fighting and damage to United Nations property. UNMISS continued to conduct regular cordon, search and seizure operations, confiscating items such as weapons, ammunition, illicit drugs and stolen United Nations property. The Mine Action Service supported UNMISS in weapons searches of protection sites in Bentiu, Juba, Malakal and Wau. A total of 162 persons suspected of involvement in serious security incidents were detained at UNMISS holding facilities in Bentiu, Juba and Malakal. UNMISS referred 70 cases to the national authorities for investigation and prosecution. From 11 to 20 December and from 21 to 31 January, UNMISS provided logistical and technical support to the national authorities to establish a mobile court to prosecute 27 individuals accused of committing serious crimes in the Bentiu protection site. A total of 14 of the accused individuals were convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 5 months to 22 years. From 18 to 22 February, UNMISS provided logistical and technical support to national authorities to establish a mobile court to prosecute four individuals accused of committing serious crimes in the Malakal protection site.

40. Beyond the protection sites, UNMISS continued to focus on deterring and mitigating violence against civilians across the territory. During the reporting period,

a total of 10,470 patrols (short and long duration and dynamic air, riverine and foot) were planned or conducted, including 135 patrols to support the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

41. Under tier three, establishing a protective environment, the Mission continued to advocate for the primary responsibility of the national authorities of South Sudan to protect civilians. Major obstacles to the State's fulfilment of its obligations remain weak government and rule of law institutions, lack of accountability for human rights violations and a proliferation of firearms exacerbated by prolonged conflict and contributing to high rates of criminality. UNMISS supported confidence- and trust-building activities through community visits, meetings and regular interactions with local communities. The Mission conducted workshops targeting 2,289 community members (1,228 men, 829 women and 232 children) and 473 representatives of law enforcement agencies (338 men and 135 women) on community policing, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, human rights and general security awareness.

42. UNMISS provided child protection capacity-building and awareness-raising activities to 1,689 participants (859 male and 830 female), including 235 members of government security forces (209 male and 26 female), local child protection actors and community members, and child protection mainstreaming activities to 275 UNMISS personnel (232 male and 43 female). UNMISS continued to provide technical assistance to the State to address prolonged and arbitrary detention. A task force constituted in Juba Central Prison to expedite resolution of priority cases, especially involving juveniles and persons in extended pre-trial detention, resulted in the release of 47 persons between October and November.

43. The Mission continued to work with partners to foster return and reintegration across the country. In Upper Nile, UNMISS initiated its Malakal return strategy, which included facilitating a "go-and-see" visit by internally displaced persons to Tonga to assess conditions for return, and establishing a working group to deal with housing, land and property issues. UNMISS supported local authorities in producing action plans for internally displaced person returns to various parts of Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Central Equatoria. UNMISS assisted the Government to launch a cleaning campaign in return areas so as to engage communities. The Mission has also started to implement programmatic activities across the country to sensitize internally displaced persons, host communities, armed actors, state authorities and traditional leaders on their responsibilities to ensure sustainability of return and reintegration of internally displaced persons. For instance, UNMISS and its partners facilitated the voluntary return of 47 internally displaced persons from the Bor protection of civilians site to New Fangak. In Western Equatoria State, UNMISS worked closely with the United Nations country team to coordinate the launch of the partnership for resilience and recovery to ensure the sustainability of the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons.

44. The Mine Action Service investigated reports of six accidents from explosive hazards in Jonglei and Unity, cleared a minefield and removed over 400 anti-personnel mines near a school in Lobonok, Central Equatoria. At the request of the Mission, the Service surveyed and cleared roads from Wau to Bisellia and Mboro, the airstrips in Bor and Pibor and the temporary operating base site in Kodok.

B. Monitoring and investigating human rights violations

45. During the reporting period, UNMISS documented 131 conflict-related incidents that had a negative impact on human rights and protection, resulting in the death of at least 355 individuals and the injury of 299 others. These incidents included the killing and injuring of civilians, abduction, conflict-related sexual violence,

forced displacement, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment and the looting and destruction of civilian property. Of these incidents, 39 were attributed to SSPDF, 8 to the National Salvation Front, 7 to the pro-Machar SPLM/A in Opposition, 5 to the National Security Service, 4 to the pro-Taban Deng SPLM/A in Opposition, 2 to the South Sudan National Movement for Change and 79 to other armed groups, including community-based militias.

46. Violence involving community-based militias sharply increased in December. A series of attacks in Warrap and Unity between 15 and 19 January reportedly left more than 150 individuals dead, many of them women and children. Overall, UNMISS documented 44 incidents of violence involving community-based militias, resulting in a collective total of 543 casualties (303 deaths and 240 people injured). These incidents occurred in Jonglei, Lakes, Unity and Warrap, and accounted for more than 80 per cent of deaths and injuries verified during the reporting period.

47. Escalating tensions between government and non-signatory forces such as the National Salvation Front and the South Sudan National Movement for Change in Central Equatoria were of concern. UNMISS documented 34 incidents involving at least 105 victims (28 killed, 13 wounded, 50 abducted and 14 victims of sexual violence) in the context of military operations between government forces and these groups.

48. Access restrictions continued to impair the Mission's ability to monitor and investigate alleged human rights violations and abuses; human rights teams were denied access in eight cases in Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, attributable to SSPDF, the South Sudan National Police Service and the National Prison Service, preventing investigations into a significant number of human rights violations.

49. UNMISS continued advocacy efforts regarding abuses reportedly committed by SPLA in Opposition in Western Equatoria, as documented in an October 2018 joint UNMISS/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) public report. On 13 December, UNMISS met with the SPLM/A in Opposition leadership to advocate for the release of nearly 900 abducted civilians. SPLM/A in Opposition denied any involvement in these abductions but reiterated its intention to open an investigation into the allegations contained in the report. On 3 February, SPLM/A in Opposition issued an order prohibiting its forces from committing acts of sexual violence and outlining the responsibility of commanders in the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. The order also indicated that perpetrators would be held accountable for their actions.

50. UNMISS continued to monitor the exercise of fundamental freedoms not directly linked to the conflict. The shrinking space for freedom of expression remained of concern, with reports from civil society and media actors of intimidation and interference by State officials in Lakes, Unity, Central Equatoria and Western Bahr el-Ghazal. On 31 December, a special general court martial established to try members of the security forces accused of murder and armed robbery was opened.

51. UNMISS documented the execution of six men in Juba between 8 and 14 February, representing a notable increase. Official figures provided by the Government indicated that, as at 4 January, there were 387 inmates on death row, including 8 women and at least 2 juveniles. South Sudan's use of capital punishment remained of serious concern, considering the limited capacity of the national justice system to fully comply with minimum standards of due process and fair trial. UNMISS continued to advocate for a moratorium on the death penalty.

52. The human rights due diligence policy task force reviewed eight risk assessments for quick impact projects aimed at the construction and/or rehabilitation

of detention facilities for the National Police Service, the National Prison Service and SSPDF.

Children and armed conflict

53. During the reporting period, the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting on children in armed conflict verified 54 incidents of grave violations against children, affecting at least 84 children (56 boys and 28 girls), including 13 incidents of recruitment and use affecting 33 children (32 boys and 1 girl), 11 incidents of killing and maiming affecting 25 children (19 boys and 6 girls), 6 incidents of abduction affecting 6 children (4 boys and 2 girls) and 19 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence affecting 20 children (1 boy and 19 girls). In addition, 3 incidents of attacks on schools and 2 incidents of attacks on hospitals affecting an estimated 321 children (166 boys and 155 girls) were verified. The task force also verified 2 incidents of military use of schools affecting an estimated 642 children (332 boys and 310 girls).

54. A total of 27 verified incidents affecting 30 children (12 boys and 18 girls) were attributed to State agencies, including SSPDF (21), the National Police Service (4) and one each to pro-Taban Deng SPLA in Opposition and the National Security Service. A total of 11 incidents affecting 26 children (25 boys and 1 girl) were attributed to the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition, 4 incidents affecting 8 children (3 boys and 5 girls) were attributed to the National Salvation Front, 14 children (13 boys and 1 girl) were killed and maimed by unexploded ordnances in 5 verified incidents, 3 children (2 boys and 1 girl) were killed in crossfire between SSPDF and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition in 2 incidents, 2 incidents affecting 2 girls were attributed to unknown armed persons, and 1 incident affecting 1 boy was attributed to the National Democratic Movement.

55. On 31 January, UNMISS, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission supported the release of 106 children (79 boys and 27 girls) in Yambio. Of the 106 children, 87 children (66 boys and 21 girls) were released from the South Sudan National Liberation Movement and 19 children (13 boys and 6 girls) from the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition.

56. UNMISS trained 507 United Nations personnel (425 male and 82 female) through child protection mainstreaming activities. Training was also delivered to 228 (including 25 female) government security forces members and 50 (4 female) members of the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition, while 1,935 community members (612 male and 1,323 female) were engaged in activities aimed at sensitizing the community to child protection matters.

Conflict-related sexual violence

57. During the reporting period, 44 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence were reported, involving 93 victims (including 34 children), primarily in northern Unity. Several factors contributed to the attacks against women and girls in northern Unity, namely the presence of both community-based militias and combatants on "standby" mode awaiting implementation of transitional security arrangements and widespread impunity for past conflict-related sexual violence. On 15 February, UNMISS and OHCHR released a report on conflict-related sexual violence in Northern Unity during the period September-December 2018, documenting cases of sexual violence against 134 women and girls in and around Bentiu by various parties to the armed conflict.

58. On 15 December, the Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare led a visit to Bentiu by a national-level committee to investigate the allegations, and on

19 December, she presented findings to the Government concluding that the allegations of sexual violence contained in a press release from Médecins sans frontières of 30 November were “unfounded.” On the same day, the President established another committee with increased powers to investigate, comprised of representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs, the National Security Service and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. The committee has reportedly concluded its investigation but has not yet published its findings.

59. In December and January, UNMISS, alongside SSPDF commanding officers, provided joint training to 84 senior SSPDF commanders in Bentiu and Renk to raise awareness on conflict-related sexual violence. At the end of the training, the commanders signed a written undertaking to combat conflict-related sexual violence within their ranks.

C. Creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance

60. UNMISS continued to facilitate humanitarian activities in areas affected by conflict and instability. During the reporting period, UNMISS conducted humanitarian patrols to both government- and SPLA in Opposition-controlled areas in Upper Nile, Unity, Jonglei, greater Equatoria, greater Bahr el-Ghazal, Lakes and Warrap to support delivery of assistance or protect humanitarian workers. UNMISS provided force protection to 336 integrated missions, enabling access to high-risk areas; 10 force protection convoys for 6 non-governmental organizations; and 18,804 patrols in protection sites and weapons-free zones and to escort communities fetching firewood and water. UNMISS also provided force protection to 7 completed and 7 ongoing of 18 planned main supply route maintenance works.

61. The Mine Action Service surveyed and cleared an airstrip in Jonglei and a food distribution site in Unity at the request of the World Food Programme and commenced operations in Pagak, Unity, at the request of humanitarian actors. The Service deployed 26 teams during the reporting period, which surveyed and released 5,690,819 m² of land and removed and destroyed a further 3,393 explosive items and 139,402 rounds of small arms ammunition.

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

62. My Special Representative continued exercising his good offices in support of the peace process and met with senior government and opposition officials to advocate adherence to the permanent ceasefire and to maintain momentum in the peace process. UNMISS also met with State and local authorities and civil society representatives, as well as community representatives at protection sites, to keep them apprised of developments in the peace process. In regular engagements with the diplomatic community in Juba, UNMISS promoted coordination of messaging and support for the peace process.

63. UNMISS has actively participated in meetings of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and continued to provide logistical assistance to the Mechanism, including force protection, air support and accommodation, office space and life support services in UNMISS bases.

64. With observer status in the various implementation mechanisms, UNMISS offered its good offices and technical expertise to the parties, in coordination with

IGAD. My Special Representative and his deputies engaged with the oversight mechanisms, the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and encouraged the parties to demonstrate commitment through tangible progress and to adhere to the time frames of the Revitalized Agreement.

65. UNMISS provided technical advice and assistance to the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and oversight bodies that are identified in the Revitalized Agreement for reform, such as the South Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Audit Chamber. The Mission also supported dissemination of information about the Agreement. UNMISS continues to use multimedia communications, including Radio Miraya, to deliver updates on the peace process.

E. Women and peace and security

66. UNMISS engaged with women in political parties and parliament through consultative meetings at the national level and conducted women's peace forums in Kuacjok, Jonglei, Juba, Malakal and Wau with civil society leaders. The forums provided platforms for women to discuss challenges and opportunities related to their participation in the peace processes and implementation of gender-related provisions of the Revitalized Agreement. Women remain either not represented or seriously underrepresented in the implementation bodies, particularly in the security-related mechanisms, despite the 35 per cent quota specified in the Agreement.

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

67. On 19 February, the number of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2,672, comprising 901 international staff members (245 women, or 27 per cent), 1,378 national staff members (195 women, or 14 per cent) and 393 United Nations Volunteers (143 women, or 36 per cent).

68. The police strength stood at 1,870 (of an authorized 2,101 officers), comprising 639 individual police officers (194 women, or 30 per cent) and 1,165 personnel in formed police units (231 women, or 20 per cent). The corrections personnel strength stood at 66 officers (14 women, or 21 per cent).

69. Of the authorized 17,000 troops, including up to 4,000 troops for the regional protection force, UNMISS troop strength stood at 14,900 military personnel: 214 military liaison officers (24 women, or 11 per cent), 408 military staff officers (59 women, or 14 per cent) and 14,278 military contingent personnel (492 women, or 3 per cent). A total of 2,210 of the regional protection force personnel has been inducted to date, including 32 out of the 38-person headquarters element. Full complements of the engineering units from Bangladesh and Thailand, the high-readiness company from Nepal, the infantry battalions from Ethiopia and Rwanda and the level II hospital from Viet Nam have been deployed.

70. UNMISS worked in collaboration with the United Nations country team task force on the prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; UNMISS and its partners operationalized community-based complaint mechanisms in 11 locations, with a further 7 to be established, supported by focal points in United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. UNMISS and the country team hosted an event (sexual exploitation and abuse stand down day) in Juba during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, which were attended by over 2,500 participants, including from the government, religious leaders and women and

youth groups. UNMISS provided training to 77 training officers and 36 national investigations officers from the UNMISS uniformed components. The training officers have subsequently transmitted the training to a further 3,977 individuals. A comprehensive, system-wide sexual exploitation and abuse risk management review is ongoing.

71. The joint military and police capability study conducted in April 2018 recommended a series of measures to increase the effectiveness of the uniformed components in support of the implementation of the UNMISS protection mandate. These included increasing the projection capability of the military component, improving the perimeter defences at protection sites, handing over static security duties to police units at the Wau protection site and increasing the use of technology to improve the security of United Nations bases and protection sites. Most of these recommendations are in the process of implementation.

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

72. During the reporting period, UNMISS recorded 20 incidents constituting violations of the status-of-forces agreement, compared with 51 in the previous reporting period. Of particular concern was the interpretation by government officials that the presidential order issued on 18 December preventing tax exemptions for commercial imports applies to all UNMISS shipments and the stopping of the approval of tax exemptions related to UNMISS shipment and cargo with the exception of rations. Consequently, necessary supplies for the Mission, as well as contingent- and United Nations-owned equipment, were prevented from entering the country at the Nimule border post. As a result, the Mission is now drawing on its strategic reserves of fuel. Discussions are ongoing with the Government to resolve the situation.

73. UNMISS recorded four incidents of movement restrictions affecting UNMISS operations attributed to the Government. On 1 December, an UNMISS patrol travelling from Juba to Yei was blocked at an SSPDF-manned checkpoint approximately 17 km from Juba. On 31 December, an UNMISS patrol travelling from Yei to the so-called Al Jazeera camp was blocked at an SSPDF-manned checkpoint 4 km from Yei town. On 8 January, an UNMISS patrol from Juba to the Gorom area was denied access by the National Security Service and SSPDF soldiers at the Luri bridge checkpoint 21 km from Juba. On 11 January, another UNMISS patrol from Juba to Bungu was blocked by SSPDF at a check point 6 km from Juba on the Juba-Lainya road.

74. UNMISS documented three new cases of arrest and detention of UNMISS personnel by government agents, which the Government did not formally notify UNMISS about or inform the Mission of any legal process instituted against the personnel. The whereabouts of two staff members arrested in 2014 remains unknown. The Government has neither granted UNMISS access to the staff members nor provided information about their condition, notwithstanding regular requests.

75. Violations of the obligation to facilitate entry of UNMISS and associated personnel into South Sudan continued. Military officers deployed to UNMISS continue to experience lengthy delays in securing entry visas into South Sudan owing to cumbersome processes imposed by the Government on UNMISS military personnel, which negatively affects the release, rotation and timely deployment of military personnel.

76. On 14 December, an incident of interference by the National Salvation Front with UNMISS activities was recorded in Central Equatoria, disrupting an UNMISS patrol. On 16 January, in Upper Nile, SPLA in Opposition forces stopped granting flight safety assurances for UNMISS patrols and flights to Maiwut, ostensibly in reaction to the handover of the former Nassir logistics base by UNMISS to the Government. Consequently, UNMISS was forced to cancel all planned flights and patrols to the affected area because of the risks associated with travelling to the area by air without flight safety assurances.

77. UNMISS continued to strengthen implementation of safety and security measures for United Nations personnel, premises and assets, emphasizing the criticality of adhering to the security risk management processes approved by the United Nations security management system.

VIII. Financial aspects

78. The General Assembly, by its resolution [72/300](#), appropriated the amount of \$1,124,960,400 for the maintenance of UNMISS for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

79. As at 1 February 2019, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNMISS special account amounted to \$363.4 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to \$3,688.1 million.

80. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 30 September 2018, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 June 2018, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations and recommendations

81. Over halfway into the pre-transitional period, the implementation of tasks continues to face delays, while timelines and benchmarks provided in the Revitalized Agreement remain largely unmet. However, some positive momentum was generated with the return to Juba of senior opposition leaders to participate in the various institutions and mechanisms established under the Agreement, which was essential to generate trust. I applaud the parties for the initiation of trust and confidence-building measures and their commitment to working collaboratively.

82. Still, much remains to be done. Key benchmarks from the Revitalized Agreement to be achieved before the end of the pre-transitional period include: (a) silencing the guns, reaching an agreement on a future vision for the security sector and establishing transitional security arrangements to create confidence among the parties, and enabling the opposition to return to Juba; (b) adoption of the constitutional amendment bill incorporating the Agreement into the Transitional Constitution; (c) formation of a transitional Government that meets the agreed women's and opposition representation quotas; and (d) conclusion of the work of the Independent Boundaries Commission. It is incumbent upon the parties to enhance their engagement to comprehensively address outstanding questions in good faith and to ensure that the process is inclusive. I commend IGAD for supporting the parties in taking these initial steps and urge that a new chair of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission be appointed to shepherd critical preparations for the transition.

83. I am encouraged that the permanent ceasefire has been largely upheld and that violence among the signatory parties has decreased. However, sporadic clashes

continue, which indicate that the situation remains fragile. Concerted efforts are needed at all levels to promote awareness and acceptance of the Revitalized Agreement by local communities. Violence involving the parties and non-signatory groups, intercommunal violence and criminality continue to affect the civilian population in general, and particularly women and girls. I remain deeply concerned about the unacceptable levels of conflict-related sexual violence, of which the recent rape cases in the Bentiu area are a stark reminder. I call on the Government to spare no effort in bringing to justice those found to be responsible for these crimes, and to take enhanced action to protect civilians and decisively reduce the levels of intercommunal violence and human rights violations, including grave and targeted attacks against women and girls.

84. The humanitarian situation in the country remains of serious concern and is a direct consequence of the conflict. The gains under the Revitalized Agreement have yet to translate into improvements in the humanitarian situation. As noted above, a total of 1.87 million people remain internally displaced and 2.27 million are displaced to neighbouring countries. About 4.4 million people remain severely food insecure. Attacks on humanitarian workers, the dangers posed to them and the impediments created by the parties to the conflict are unacceptable. It is incumbent upon all parties, especially the Government, to ensure a safer and more conducive environment for humanitarian workers, who strive tirelessly to deliver assistance to the most vulnerable.

85. The responsibility to sustain the momentum in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement lies solely with the South Sudanese parties. I encourage all stakeholders to define a long-term, sustainable vision for security sector reform and to reach an agreement on transitional security arrangements. As the implementation of the Agreement unfolds, the United Nations stands ready to provide continued technical advisory expertise, as requested by the parties and mandated by the Security Council.

86. UNMISS is also ready to further deepen its engagement with the implementation and oversight mechanisms, such as the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission's security working group and the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board, to support the implementation of key processes. UNMISS assistance to local rapprochement mechanisms and community violence reduction activities, including outreach to non-signatory armed groups, in coordination with the United Nations country team and using in-house dedicated capacity, will help to create the conditions necessary for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. UNMISS also seeks to extend its outreach peacebuilding activities to communities living in the opposition-controlled areas to facilitate peace dividends and voluntary return and reintegration. Continued focus on the monitoring and investigation of human rights violations, efforts to hold perpetrators accountable and support for truth and reconciliation efforts and the dissemination of peace messages will be equally important.

87. I believe that the Revitalized Agreement is currently the best and only option for a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan. In this regard, dialogue, truth and reconciliation efforts and accountability to break the cycle of violence are necessary elements to make peace sustainable. The national dialogue could complement implementation of the Agreement if it succeeds in engaging opposition groups in an inclusive and meaningful manner. The United Nations will continue to support these efforts, in close cooperation with IGAD, the African Union and international partners.

88. I strongly encourage the parties to urgently address the lack of women's participation in the implementation bodies of the Revitalized Agreement. Women's

meaningful inclusion in peace processes is proven to lead to longer-lasting peace and stability. While the South Sudanese bear the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Agreement, it is incumbent on the international community to take stock of the situation and consider measures to encourage the parties to maintain focus on making progress to mitigate reversals.

89. The Security Council has to consider the renewal of the mandate of UNMISS in March. While the four pillars of the mandate remain valid, I propose that the mandate be renewed for one year and be strengthened to allow the Mission to support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the peace process in a nimble and flexible manner, including through the provision of technical assistance for peacebuilding priorities. With regard to the request of IGAD, endorsed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, to revise the mandate and composition of the UNMISS regional protection force, I commend, once again, the countries of the region for their efforts and the progress made in implementing the Revitalized Agreement. I stand ready to submit to the Security Council an assessment of requirements and appropriate recommendations regarding possible adjustments of the UNMISS mandate, once a security arrangement has been reached, thus allowing a precise definition of the tasks that UNMISS could perform to support its implementation, subject to the consent of the parties.

90. These additional tasks would have to be considered against existing Mission capabilities and with due consideration to the absolute requirement to sustain the Mission's protection functions, which remain essential in the prevailing environment. Troop-contributing countries would then be requested to contribute the required capabilities if necessary, consistent with the peacekeeping best practices of human rights vetting, political impartiality and adequate preparedness and training. Furthermore, to respond to the positive growing trend of returns across South Sudan, I propose to amend the UNMISS mandate to allow the Mission to better support such returns, beyond those currently living in UNMISS protection sites, in a voluntary and dignified manner and to help make returns safe and sustainable.

91. In conclusion, I convey my sincere appreciation to the UNMISS military, police and civilian personnel, who, under the leadership of my Special Representative, David Shearer, work courageously to protect civilians in vulnerable situations, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, safeguard human rights and support the peace process. I particularly thank the countries providing troops and police and corrections personnel which have provided much-needed uniformed personnel and assets to the Mission. I further commend the United Nations country team and non-governmental organization partners for their tremendous courage and sacrifice in providing vital humanitarian assistance to the population, in arduous and often dangerous conditions. Lastly, I wish to highlight the steadfast efforts of the IGAD Heads of State and Government, IGAD Special Envoy Ismail Wais, and the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, in steering the peace implementation process forward.

