



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 [2514 \(2020\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 March 2021 and requested me to report to the Council on the implementation of the Mission's mandate every 90 days. It covers political and security developments between 1 June and 31 August 2020, the humanitarian and human rights situation and progress made in the implementation of the Mission's mandate.

II. Political and economic developments

2. On 17 June, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, and the First Vice-President, Riek Machar, reached a decision on responsibility-sharing ratios for gubernatorial and State positions, ending a three-month impasse on the allocations of States. Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Warrap and Unity were allocated to the incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity; Upper Nile, Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Equatoria were allocated to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO); and Jonglei was allocated to the South Sudan Opposition Alliance. The Other Political Parties coalition was not allocated a State, as envisioned in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, in which the coalition had been guaranteed 8 per cent of the positions.

3. On 29 June, the President appointed governors of 8 of the 10 States and chief administrators of the administrative areas of Abyei, Ruweng and Pibor. On 17 July, the governor of Jonglei was appointed, a decision objected to by the National Democratic Movement (a member of the South Sudan Opposition Alliance), which argued that it had further prevented it from participating in the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity because its nominee had not been considered. The Upper Nile governor position remains vacant owing to disagreement over the nomination of Lieutenant General Johnson Olony, whom the President refused to appoint.

4. Although the Revitalized Agreement requires 35 per cent participation of women in all institutions of governance, only one woman nominated by SPLM/A-IO was appointed as governor. On 2 July, women leaders issued a communiqué addressed to the President, calling on the parties to adhere to the 35 per cent quota.



5. On 10 August, a high-level committee on the formation of State and local governments reported that the parties had agreed on 10 State governors, one of whom was a woman, and their deputies, 10 speakers of State assemblies and their deputies and 79 county commissioner positions. They also agreed on 35 county councils, 17 ministers, 51 members of State assemblies, 5 State advisers, 6 chairpersons, 6 commission deputies and 8 specialized committees in each State. The responsibility for nominating mayors, their deputies and secretaries-general was entrusted to the governors.

6. As a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, political activity remained limited. The First Vice-President and the Vice-President, James Wani Igga, along with other cabinet members who had previously tested positive for COVID-19, resumed their duties. The resumption of duties did not, however, translate into full normalcy in government operations because pandemic-related restrictions prevented sustained engagement among parties, stakeholders and mediators. While efforts were undertaken to employ online modes of interaction, technical and organizational challenges hindered those initiatives.

Implementation of the Revitalized Agreement

7. The Strategic Defence and Security Review Board made no progress towards a broader framework for security sector reform, including with regard to the vision, size, composition and budget of the national army, the security service and other organized forces, as envisioned in the Revitalized Agreement.

8. Limited progress was made towards the implementation of transitional security arrangements, with plans to train, graduate and deploy the necessary unified forces remaining unfulfilled. Training centres and cantonment sites continued to be deserted by forces owing to a lack of food, water, medicine and essential services. Most government forces were not yet part of the unification process and remained in barracks throughout the country, while the opposition parties sent a significant portion of their forces to such centres and sites.

9. On 13 and 14 July, the Joint Defence Board held a workshop on the restructuring of security organs, the army, the police, prisons, the National Security Service, wildlife services and fire services. On 11 August, the Board submitted the harmonized command structures of the necessary unified forces to the National Transitional Committee.

10. The activities of the National Constitutional Amendment Committee continued to be deferred owing to COVID-19-related restrictions. Similarly, delays in the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly impeded the consideration and passing of necessary laws.

Peace process developments

11. On 19 August, the Governance Cluster, chaired by the First Vice-President, deliberated on all outstanding tasks and the impact of the pandemic on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. The cluster decided that all outstanding and scheduled tasks would be extended for a period of six months.

12. The power vacuum at the subnational level, a result of delays in the appointment of State governors, contributed to increased tensions and violent intercommunal clashes, threatening the gains outlined in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition). On 4 June, the Deputy Minister of Interior, Mabior Garang de Mabior, resigned, citing, among other reasons, the deteriorating security situation throughout South Sudan, which he attributed to the failure of the parties to implement the peace agreement.

13. On 23 June, the President appointed a high-level committee to investigate the security situation in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. Headed by the

Vice-President, it was tasked with engaging with community elders and other stakeholders to contain intercommunal violence. The committee is expected to organize a peace conference to achieve an agreement among the concerned communities.

14. On 9 July, the President, in his Independence Day address, expressed concern about a spike in intercommunal and intracommunal violence, adding that the Government would initiate dialogue with the affected communities and undertake full-scale disarmament of the civilian population while ensuring the participation and representation of marginalized groups in the Government.

15. On 14 July, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held its thirty-sixth Extraordinary Assembly of Heads of State and Government online. Regional leaders appealed to the President to dissolve the Transitional National Legislative Assembly by 26 July and reconstitute it within seven days of the dissolution. They also requested the Government to take remedial measures to rectify the alterations made to the constitutional amendment bill and to provide resources to complete unfinished transitional security arrangements. Because the outstanding pre-transitional tasks remained pending after 13 August, the regional leaders resolved that the IGAD Chair should engage directly with the parties to assist in concluding the pending matters.

16. On 16 August, Major General Charles Tai Gituai took over from Lieutenant General (Retired) Augustino Njoroge as Interim Chairperson of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. The Commission has not had a permanent Chairperson since the departure of its former one, Festus Mogae, in September 2018.

17. On 31 August, the President chaired a signing ceremony, held in Juba, for the initial peace agreement between the transitional Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front.

Economic situation

18. The economy of South Sudan continues to face fiscal distress resulting from low oil prices in the global market and COVID-19 response measures that caused a decrease in non-oil revenue. The disease also had a negative impact on small businesses, while intercommunal and intracommunal conflict and flooding in certain areas eroded livelihood opportunities. In addition, the Government's ability to finance the peace process and respond fiscally to the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 were diminished.

III. Security situation

19. The security situation deteriorated at the subnational level, with complex conflicts emerging among ethnic groups operating along with increasingly fractious alliances and targeted security campaigns. Localized conflicts consumed multiple areas of Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal with multifaceted objectives involving civilian and uniformed combatants, along with varied levels of support from national stakeholders.

20. While the appointment of State governors is expected to stem some of the tensions, political and ethnic fractures continue to drive subnational conflict. Disarmament campaigns that are being rolled out in Lakes and Warrap to contain localized violence have generated additional security concerns, with heightened insecurity affecting Tonj East in particular. Likewise, as a result of a lack of progress towards mediation with non-signatories of the Revitalized Agreement, conflict with the National Salvation Front (NAS) has continued in a different geographical location, but with reliance on the same tactics and consistent levels of intensity.

21. The onset of the rainy season has done little to contain localized violence. Frequent spikes are indicative of a volatile security environment and the inability of the centre to negotiate relations with the periphery through non-violent means.

Greater Upper Nile region

22. The situation in greater Jonglei remained of concern, as a series of four interrelated developments dominated the area. First, a group of Dinka Bor and Gawaar Nuer advanced from Bor in the first week of June to quickly overrun Manyabol and Gumuruk. The group remained active, in particular in areas south of Pibor, throughout July and into August. Second, additional Lou Nuer groups mobilized and joined the clashes in late July, which led to a spike in displacement and increasing concerns about a potential attack on Pibor. However, the groups withdrew to Akobo and other parts of northern Jonglei by early August. Third, insecurity in greater Jonglei was affected by a continuation of Murle attacks in Dinka and Nuer areas. Lastly, on about 22 July, more than 1,000 armed Dinka Bor young people arrived in Central Equatoria by barge, then in Eastern Equatoria, from which they threatened displaced Murle communities in the southern part of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. Their arrival and the threats made were well coordinated and allegedly supported by uniformed forces on all sides. By mid-August, most of the groups had withdrawn from the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and were in the process of moving back to their home areas. Further details on the scale and impact of the nearly two-month-long conflict in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area will emerge as the security situation stabilizes and access is enabled.

23. In Unity, cycles of cattle raiding and revenge attacks continued along increasingly precarious political and security fault lines. While raiding by Government-aligned militias from Mayom into surrounding areas subsided following the intervention of the newly appointed governor, Joseph Nguen Monytil, revenge attacks continued, in particular along the Warrap boundary. Similarly, low-intensity clashes continued around central and southern Unity, with tensions developing between SPLM/A-IO uniformed forces and disparate armed youth groups. In several incidents, casualties were recorded when SPLM/A-IO forces clashed with organized youth groups in Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar. In a series of incidents, SPLM/A-IO uniformed forces from Guit allegedly attacked four villages in the Ruweng Administrative Area, leading to a counter-attack by Pariang militias on an SPLM/A-IO position.

24. In Maban, Upper Nile, tensions within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) related to the defection of Major Adam Magazi spilled over into refugee camps, resulting in a marked increase in armed forces activity, which included clashes with Mabanese militia and the occupation of a school by forces of the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction. In early August, those forces retreated to the Sudan, however, concerns that they remain active in the refugee camps persist.

25. The nomination of Lieutenant General Johnson Olony as governor in Upper Nile led to heightened tensions between the Shilluk and the Padang Dinka. A series of localized incidents were observed, ranging from disputes over the renaming of Shilluk villages with Dinka names to violent clashes over fishing areas, including the use of heavy weaponry and the movement of forces. Tensions were also escalated following the killing of the Malakal public prosecutor, a Shilluk and brother of the National Democratic Movement leader Lam Akol.

Greater Equatoria region

26. In June, tensions around the southern portions of Central Equatoria subsided. However, towards the end of July and throughout August, renewed clashes were noted between NAS and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces around the Lobonok gold-mining areas, with a spillover towards Juba and into Eastern Equatoria. NAS

and counter-NAS activity shifted largely to the greater Mundri area in Western Equatoria following a South Sudan People's Defence Forces campaign in late May, which dislodged NAS from areas around Yei, Lainya and Wonduruba, in Central Equatoria. In late July, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces renewed efforts to dislodge NAS from bases near Kedibo, while NAS launched a series of road attacks, disrupting the key link to Juba, and threatened the SPLM/A-IO base in the area.

27. Tensions and clashes in Western Equatoria remained linked to a split within SPLM/A-IO and ethnic divisions. Major General James Nando, who had defected earlier in 2020, was implicated in the recruitment and training of Azande young people, in particular in the Tambura area. On 18 July, a senior Balanda SPLM/A-IO leader, Brigadier General Santo Ali, was killed by Azande militia outside Tambura. Tensions subsided after the Government intervened, with Nando recalled to Juba. However, simmering inter-ethnic animosity, along with personal rivalry between Nando and the newly appointed SPLM/A-IO governor, Lieutenant General Alfred Futiyo, is likely to result in additional insecurity.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

28. The recruitment and deployment of disarmament forces in Lakes and Warrap dominated the security context in the region. An uptick in intercommunal violence was observed ahead of the disarmament process owing to fears of selective and biased disarmament. Linkages between senior security officials and their home areas in the Dinka heartland exacerbated perceptions of manipulation of community dynamics to pursue national political objectives. Those concerns came to the fore in mid-June, when a combination of government security forces and armed young people killed a prominent *gelweng* (Dinka young people organized to protect cattle), entrepreneur and leader of the 7 October Movement, Kerbino Wol. Similarly, on 8 and 9 August, clashes between disarmament forces and armed young people in Romich, Tonj East, resulted in the deaths of more than 140 persons.

29. Tensions related to the deployment of disarmament forces were recorded in Western Bahr el-Ghazal as a result of a failed attempt by SPLM/A-IO to ambush the convoy of the head of the disarmament forces, Lieutenant General Rin Tueny. An SPLM/A-IO commander, Brigadier General Gabriel Bol Wek, and 11 soldiers were subsequently detained by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces. In retaliation, SPLM/A-IO kidnapped nine civilians. On 19 August, interventions by the Government, with support from the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and UNMISS, enabled the exchange of hostages and ended the stand-off.

Intercommunal conflict

30. Intercommunal violence deepened throughout the country, in particular in greater Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal. The conflict dynamics in greater Jonglei between joint Lou Nuer-Dinka attacks on Murle communities in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and subsequent reprisal attacks by Murle on Lou Nuer areas left scores of persons dead and thousands displaced. In Tonj, Warrap, armed confrontation between two Dinka subsections led to the deployment of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces to prevent further violence.

IV. Humanitarian situation

31. Persistent intercommunal violence, the pandemic and seasonal floods continued to drive humanitarian needs in South Sudan. In Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, more than 150,000 persons were displaced internally as a result

of clashes between armed youth groups, with 7,000 displaced persons provided with physical protection at the UNMISS base adjacent area in Pibor. Armed conflict in Central and Western Equatoria and Warrap also displaced thousands of civilians.

32. In an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report issued in February 2020, hunger was projected to affect nearly 6.5 million persons in South Sudan from May to July 2020. Approximately 1.75 million persons in 33 counties were estimated to be in emergency food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 4), more than a quarter of them in Jonglei and affected also by intercommunal violence. In addition, 4.7 million persons in 37 counties were at risk of crisis food insecurity (phase 3). The presence of desert locusts in several counties in Eastern Equatoria further compounded existing threats.

33. More than 1.6 million persons remained displaced internally, while 2.2 million sought refuge in five neighbouring countries. The number of internally displaced persons decreased slightly as a result of the return of those displaced to their homes and owing to the closure of some displacement sites. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in June, more than 11,000 refugees returned spontaneously, bringing the number of returnees in 2020 to more than 65,000.

34. Widespread insecurity hindered humanitarian assessment and response, and in some instances led to a reduced footprint or a suspension of operations. COVID-19-related travel restrictions, including border closures, quarantine policies and visa restrictions, continued to affect the mobility of aid workers and their overall response. With the onset of the rainy season, flooding in Unity and Jonglei affected more than 500,000 persons, while inaccessible roads posed significant operational challenges for humanitarian workers. The looting of supplies during subnational violence remained a significant impediment to the humanitarian response. A total of 10 looting incidents was recorded, compared with 1 during the same period in 2019. In Eastern Equatoria, humanitarian personnel were subjected to frequent robbery and violence along major roads. In early August, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) convoy comprising two vehicles was ambushed by an unknown armed group on the Yei-Lasu road in Central Equatoria.

35. The number of humanitarian access incidents reported increased. A total of 87 incidents was recorded in June and July in 2020, compared with 86 during the same period in 2019. In June, subnational violence in Jonglei resulted in the relocation of 66 humanitarian staff members. On 28 June, a clearly marked ambulance transporting an injured person to a hospital was shot at in Lakes, killing the driver, a national staff member of an international NGO. On 13 July, two aid workers providing health-care and nutrition services to community members in Pajut town, Jonglei, were killed when an unknown armed group attacked the town, bringing to 122 the number of humanitarian workers killed in South Sudan since the conflict began, in 2013.

36. Through the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020, at the end of June, some 5.1 million persons were provided with life-saving assistance and protection services, which represented 69 per cent of the 7.4 million persons targeted, including those who were provided with assistance through COVID-19 response activities. As at 21 August, according to the Financial Tracking Service, \$617 million was secured against the \$1.9 billion requested in the plan. The appeal was revised in June to reflect emerging needs. In the COVID-19 addendum to the plan, an additional \$390 million was requested, increasing the overall humanitarian appeal from \$1.5 billion to \$1.9 billion.

37. As at 30 August, 2,527 persons tested positive for COVID-19, from which 1,293 recovered and 47 died, according to the Ministry of Health of South Sudan. The United Nations and partners continued to support nationally led COVID-19 prevention and preparedness efforts, in particular in the areas of surveillance, case management, infection prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, and

water, sanitation and hygiene services at the national, State and community levels. As at early August, 2.24 million persons were provided with improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene services; 4.1 million persons were assisted with food and/or livelihoods and cash transfers; 1.1 million persons were assisted through medical consultations; more than 800,000 persons were provided with protection services, such as child protection and gender-based violence support; and more than 600,000 persons were provided with emergency shelter and non-food items.

V. Implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks

A. Protection of civilians

38. UNMISS continued to protect civilians both outside and inside protection of civilians sites. The primary threats comprised killings, abductions, sexual violence and the looting of civilian property, among other violations. Those violations were perpetrated predominantly during intercommunal clashes between armed groups of young people in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. Using an integrated approach, UNMISS responded to the threats at several levels. The Mission leadership continued to exercise its good offices, carrying out sustained engagement with senior government officials in Juba.

39. At the subnational level, UNMISS supported the South Sudan Council of Churches, civil society, women leaders and local authorities in fostering dialogue with Dinka, Lou Nuer, Gawaar Nuer, and Murle community leaders to address intercommunal violence. The dialogue in reduced tensions among various leaders, increased information-sharing on youth mobilization and the development of strategies to dissuade young people from further violence.

40. In parallel, the UNMISS force established several temporary operating bases; conducted confidence-building patrols to key violence-affected areas, such as Manyabol, Likuangole and Gumuruk; and, together with United Nations police, reinforced its presence in Pibor to provide physical protection to 7,000 displaced civilians seeking protection in the UNMISS base adjacent area. Through the provision of air assets to an international NGO, UNMISS provided critical life-saving support for the evacuation of 17 seriously wounded civilians from Pieri to a hospital in Bentiu.

41. In Warrap, UNMISS supported the implementation of the revitalized Marial Bai agreement, which sets out norms for cattle migration from Warrap to Western Bahr el-Ghazal. The Mission organized awareness campaigns in eight border areas between the two States and obtained commitments to refraining from actions that could undermine the agreement. Concurrently, the UNMISS force established a temporary operating base in Tonj, projecting a robust and proactive posture to build confidence, deter intercommunal violence and protect civilians. In greater Equatoria, the Mission conducted short- and long-distance integrated patrols in areas affected by clashes between NAS and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces.

42. Within the protection of civilians framework, and in support of the implementation of the peace process at the grass-roots level, UNMISS conducted six workshops, community dialogues and peace campaigns. The Mission focused on capacity-building activities for traditional authorities, women and young people and disseminated copies of local and national peace agreements, reaching a total of 692 participants. The scale of the engagements remained limited owing to COVID-19-related restrictions.

43. In view of changes in the operational context, UNMISS conducted security risk assessments for the Bor and Wau protection of civilians sites. No external threats to internally displaced persons living at the sites were identified through the

assessments. Consequently, the Mission made arrangements to change the designation of the camps and hand over camp administration responsibilities, including policing and security, to the Government, in line with chapter III of the Revitalized Agreement. The changes have allowed the Mission to enhance efficiencies and increase its protection footprint beyond the protection of civilians sites by redeploying forces.

44. Gradual changes in posture resulted in a significant reduction in the deployment of formed police units of the UNMISS force and United Nations police for static duties around the Wau and Bor protection of civilians sites. The UNMISS force continues to maintain patrols around the external perimeter of the sites with a readily deployable quick reaction force. Community watch groups currently manage pedestrian access control and crime watch within the sites, communicating any concerns to United Nations police for follow-up action, including the deployment of formed police units, if necessary. The Mission has maintained its security provision with regard to humanitarian activities in the protection of civilians sites.

45. In anticipation of the change in designation of the protection of civilians sites, which continue to house nearly 170,000 persons, the Mission undertook joint planning with humanitarian actors in the Bor and Wau protection of civilians sites and prepared an enabling strategy to support continued security and protection for the camps. The actions included making transition arrangements, such as for the co-location of United Nations police, and, where necessary, supporting capacity improvement for the South Sudan National Police Service in law enforcement and justice administration.

46. United Nations police continued to expand its outward protection posture and footprint beyond protection of civilians sites as a prioritized operational intervention initiative, focusing on deterring and mitigating violence against civilians, improving confidence and security and fostering a secure environment. A total of 113 confidence- and trust-building patrols, 32 short-duration patrols, 11 long-duration patrols, 15 dynamic air patrols and 238 high-visibility patrols were conducted.

47. The UNMISS force conducted 27,030 patrols, including 784 short-duration patrols, 99 long-duration patrols, 139 dynamic air patrols and 13 riverine patrols.

Rule of law and accountability

48. UNMISS continued its support for national accountability measures with regard to security incidents affecting protection of civilians sites. A total of 13 persons suspected of being responsible for serious security incidents within the sites in Juba, Bentiu and Malakal were detained at UNMISS holding facilities. UNMISS referred eight persons to national authorities for investigation and prosecution.

49. UNMISS continued to support justice actors at the national and State levels in alleviating crowding in prisons and places of detention to advance critical COVID-19 prevention and response measures through the development of a coordination and advocacy tool. The Mission funded and initiated a sewing project at Juba Central Prison to manufacture 10,000 non-surgical face masks for prisoners and staff. UNMISS is seeking to bolster the COVID-19 preparedness of security service hospitals through the provision of basic personal protective equipment, thereby leveraging those institutions to reduce the strain on and augment civilian response efforts. A basic needs assessment of five service hospitals (three of the South Sudan National Police Service, one of the National Prison Service of South Sudan and one of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces) has been undertaken. Avenues of possible funding are being assessed.

50. To mitigate migration-related violence in Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazel, UNMISS, in coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration and World Vision, launched a two-year project funded by the reconciliation, stabilization and resilience trust fund.

In response to the community's calls for accountability, as outlined in a communiqué of 18 June, the UNMISS-led component will be focused on the promotion of accountability for serious migration-related crime, including supporting the establishment of a mobile special court, a mechanism found in national law through which traditional leaders serve as advisers to statutory judges, and enabling it to deploy as a rapid response mechanism at the onset of violence.

51. In the context of providing support for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, on 23 June, UNMISS supported the Joint Transitional Security Committee through the provision of pedagogical materials to instructors of the army, the police, the prison service, the wildlife service and the fire brigade. The Mission also provided technical advice on oversight reforms envisaged in the Revitalized Agreement. In June, UNMISS utilized its chairing of the regular meeting of a working group on public finance management to convene development partners and representatives of the diplomatic community to discuss potential support for the oversight and technical committees established by the Ministry of Finance. UNMISS reviewed and provided inputs to the terms of reference for the committees to encourage the increased participation of civil society and ensure that public financial management reforms (including the institutional strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Audit Chamber) are aligned with chapter IV of the Revitalized Agreement and International Monetary Fund recommendations. The Mission continued to support the Financial Intelligence Unit by initiating a gap analysis of the national anti-money-laundering legal framework.

52. To advance critical reforms related to the peace process, UNMISS is undertaking a review of the South Sudan criminal law framework and offering technical advice, including on compliance with international and regional standards and best practices and the harmonization of national criminal laws. A review of the Interpretation of Laws and General Provisions Act is aimed at ensuring that legislation is interpreted and applied clearly and consistently. In coordination with the United Nations Development Programme, the Mission is providing technical advice to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare on developing a draft family law for South Sudan.

B. Monitoring and investigating human rights violations

53. UNMISS documented a total of 264 incidents, including arbitrary killings, abductions, conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detention (including proxy detention), torture and ill-treatment, forced military recruitment and the looting and destruction of civilian property. The incidents resulted in at least 870 civilian casualties (529 persons killed and 341 wounded), including of at least 50 women and 34 children. Of those incidents, 184 were attributed to community-based militias and civil defence groups; 28 to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces; 20 to NAS; 15 to SPLM/A-IO; 6 to the National Security Service; 3 to elements loyal to South Sudan People's Defence Forces-affiliated Major General James Nando; 1 each to the Rapid Support Forces of the Sudan and the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction; and 1 to clashes between government forces and SPLM/A-IO elements loyal to Brigadier General Santo Ali. Attribution for two other incidents remained pending.

54. As a result of the pervasive involvement of heavily armed community-based militias or civil defence groups, supported in some circumstances by organized forces, intercommunal violence continued to have devastating consequences on local populations, resulting in at least 488 persons killed and 312 injured. In Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, protracted violence between members of the Murle community on the one hand and allied Dinka Bor and Gawaar and Lou Nuer on the other accounted for 30 per cent (132 persons killed and 125 injured) of civilian casualties.

55. On 12 June, the President issued an executive order for the reassignment and promotion of 12 senior South Sudan People's Defence Forces commanders to the military high command in Juba, including those of six individuals who had previously been identified in UNMISS Human Rights Division investigations as having been involved in serious human rights violations. Two of the individuals are included on the United Nations sanctions list. In July, at least two individuals allegedly involved in serious human rights violations were appointed as governors. The appointments indicated a considerable lack of political will to hold to account alleged perpetrators of human rights violations, in particular those with reported command responsibility.

56. In the context of COVID-19, the right to health continued to be constrained, with multiple reports of persons suffering from a variety of illnesses, including COVID-19, and being denied medical treatment owing to stigmatization and fears of infection on the part of health-care workers in the absence of adequate personal protective equipment.

57. UNMISS continued to receive reports of censorship, harassment and arbitrary arrest and detention by the National Security Service of journalists, activists and other civilians expressing critical or dissenting views from those of the Government. In June, for example, National Security Service personnel arbitrarily arrested and detained a civil society activist for several days in connection with a public awareness campaign in which transparency and accountability in government spending were demanded.

58. UNMISS welcomed a decision by the South Sudan Court of Appeals to quash the death sentence of a juvenile convicted in November 2017 for a murder committed when the defendant was 15 years of age. However, two inmates at Juba Central Prison were executed in July, and the Supreme Court decided suddenly and without explanation to condemn an inmate sentenced by a trial court to life imprisonment without an opportunity to appeal the decision.

59. Despite an overall climate of impunity, UNMISS documented four court decisions in which seven members of the security forces were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for serious crimes, including sexual violence.

60. UNMISS carried out nine human rights due diligence policy risk assessments before travel and material assistance were provided to non-United Nations security forces in support of the implementation of the peace process.

Child protection

61. The number of children affected by grave violations increased, from 32 in the previous reporting period to 55 (46 boys and 9 girls). The increase was attributed mainly to late verification of the number of children affected by recruitment and use during incidents that had occurred in 2018 and 2019.

62. A total of 37 boys were verified as victims of recruitment and use, 7 girls were verified as survivors of rape in seven violations, 4 children (3 boys and 1 girl) were abducted, 3 children (2 boys and 1 girl) were killed and 2 boys were injured. In addition, two attacks on health-care facilities and one incident involving denial of humanitarian access were verified. Children were affected in Central Equatoria (25 boys and 1 girl), Western Equatoria (4 boys and 6 girls), Upper Nile (14 boys and 1 girl), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (2 boys and 1 girl) and Unity (1 boy).

63. SPLM/A-IO perpetrated violations that affected 43 children (37 boys and 6 girls), the South Sudan People's Defence Forces perpetrated violations that affected 2 girls and NAS perpetrated violations that affected 8 children (7 boys and 1 girl). Violations against 2 boys were unattributed because they had been injured by explosive remnants of war. The two attacks on health-care facilities were attributed to NAS, while the incident involving denial of humanitarian access remains unattributed.

64. Notwithstanding COVID-19-related challenges, UNMISS delivered 13 awareness-raising sessions on child protection to 202 members of the security forces, including 107 members of SPLM/A-IO, 79 members of government security forces, 13 necessary unified forces officers and 3 South Sudan Opposition Alliance officers. In addition, 97 community members (94 men and 3 women) and 37 government officials (33 men and 4 women) benefited from awareness-raising activities.

65. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on violations against children and armed conflict began to support the establishment of high-level ministerial and national-level technical committees as key oversight structures responsible for the implementation of the recently signed action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children perpetrated by armed forces and groups in South Sudan.

Conflict-related sexual violence

66. Notwithstanding an overall decrease in political violence, conflict-related sexual violence remained prevalent and was perpetrated by parties to the conflict, community-based militias and other armed elements, exploiting protracted insecurity and a lack of protection by the authorities. UNMISS verified 21 incidents of such violence, involving 29 survivors, including 7 girls and 2 men. The victims were subjected to rape (11), gang rape (8), forced marriage (5), forced nudity (2), sexual slavery (1) and attempted rape (2). Among the victims were girls as young as 10 years of age, as well as 3 pregnant or lactating women and 1 mentally incapacitated minor. At least 20 of the survivors received medical support. The incidents were attributed to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (8), SPLM/A-IO (4), community-based militias (3), the National Security Service (2), NAS (1) and the forces under Major General Daniel Dongo (1). The perpetrators' affiliation in two incidents had not been determined conclusively at the time of reporting.

67. UNMISS documented eight additional incidents of conflict-related sexual violence that had occurred prior to the reporting period, involving eight survivors, including three girls. The incidents were attributed to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (5), the National Security Service (1) and community-based militias (1), with 1 incident pending attribution.

68. An SPLM/A-IO commander allegedly involved in widespread conflict-related sexual violence, including sexual slavery, which was documented in a joint 2018 public report by UNMISS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, was appointed as Governor of Western Equatoria State. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict continues to advocate the release of the abducted women and girls.

69. On 19 June, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the South Sudan Council of Churches issued a statement urging parties to the conflict and community-based militias to end conflict-related sexual violence. In addition, the council expressed concern about the use of conflict-related sexual violence by militia groups as a means of settling disputes through the abduction of women and children, forced marriage and rape in States such as Jonglei and Warrap. Church leaders appealed for the release of abducted women and girls, as well as for comprehensive, stigma-free services for all survivors. The Mission and partners discussed issues related to advocacy and accountability for conflict-related sexual violence through radio programmes throughout South Sudan.

70. In a positive step towards accountability, in June, civilian courts in Kuacjok, Warrap and Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, convicted a South Sudan People's Defence Forces soldier and a South Sudan National Police Service officer, respectively, of conflict-related sexual violence against children, sentencing them to prison terms

ranging from 5 to 10 years and ordering them to pay financial damages to the survivors' families. In July, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces established a court martial in Yei to try soldiers accused of conflict-related sexual violence and other serious human rights violations. At least 13 alleged perpetrators of nine rapes and two gang rapes, involving 11 survivors, were prosecuted by the tribunal in ongoing trials. However, domestic law provides that civilian courts exercise jurisdiction over offences perpetrated against civilians.

C. Creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance

71. In continued support for humanitarian partners, UNMISS conducted 99 long-duration patrols and 784 short-duration patrols across the country to support the delivery of assistance or the protection of humanitarian workers, including through the establishment of temporary operating bases.

72. UNMISS provided force protection to 169 integrated missions, enabling access to high-risk areas. In addition, it conducted 967 force protection patrols supporting convoys and humanitarian partners, including NGOs.

73. The Mine Action Service responded to requests from humanitarian organizations in Central Equatoria, Upper Nile and Western Bahr el-Ghazal to survey and remove explosive ordnance. At the request of authorities in Malakal, Upper Nile, an assessment was conducted of a potential cemetery and an access road in preparation for COVID-19-related deaths.

74. The Mine Action Service deployed 20 teams, which surveyed and released 586,683 m² of land, including civilian infrastructures, to local communities for productive use and destroyed 8,402 explosive items and 304,589 rounds of small arms ammunition.

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

75. My Special Representative and Deputy Special Representatives continued to exercise good offices to support the peace process, including the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, through sustained engagements with senior government officials, opposition leaders and regional partners. UNMISS supported the launch of a programme for the Political Parties Forum to enhance representatives' skills in organizational policy development.

76. UNMISS expanded previous initiatives to implement innovative approaches to collaborate with partners and stakeholders. The Mission hosted several political round-table discussions on Radio Miraya, facilitating dialogue and bridging the gap between the public and political leaders. Such discussions allowed the Mission to disseminate coherent messaging while applying sustained pressure in support of the implementation of the peace agreement, including the need to address outstanding tasks and for robust intervention in response to increasing intercommunal violence, which can reverse peace dividends.

77. My Special Representatives participated in the thirty-sixth Extraordinary Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government, at which consistent United Nations support for South Sudan and for the efforts of IGAD to address the challenges posed by the pandemic was extended.

E. Women and peace and security

78. UNMISS continued to advocate the adherence to the minimum quota for women across governance institutions, as part of the Mission's strategy on gender and women and peace and security. Taking advantage of the gubernatorial appointment process, the Mission actively engaged with women peacebuilders in support of efforts to advocate the appointment of women to local government offices. The Mission provided technical support to develop State-level directories of women leaders aspiring to occupy public decision-making positions.

79. UNMISS continued to provide State-level task forces with technical assistance and advisory services to address the concerns of women at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. In response to an increase in the number of cases of sexual and gender-based violence, UNMISS collaborated with the Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster to identify high-risk areas in which to deploy patrols and integrated field missions to ensure a safe environment.

80. Owing to COVID-19-related restrictions, opportunities for direct engagement with women peacebuilders and leaders remained limited. Nevertheless, the Mission organized an online series of key leadership engagements with women's civil society organizations.

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

81. On 20 August, the number of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2,649, comprising 874 international staff members (242 women, or 27 per cent), 1,385 national staff members (197 women, or 14 per cent) and 390 United Nations Volunteers (154 women, or 39 per cent).

82. The police strength stood at 1,824 of an authorized 2,101 officers, comprising 611 individual police officers (184 women, or 31 per cent), 1,143 personnel in formed police units (216 women, or 18 per cent) and 70 corrections officers (16 women, or 22 per cent).

83. Of the authorized 17,000 troops, UNMISS troop strength stood at 14,528 military personnel: 192 military liaison officers (31 women, or 16 per cent), 363 military staff officers (62 women, or 17 per cent) and 13,973 military contingent personnel (665 women, or 4 per cent).

84. COVID-19-related measures affected the Mission's efforts to implement the three-pronged strategy (prevention, enforcement and remedial action) to address possible misconduct. The reduction in the number of newly onboarded civilian personnel, as well as the temporary suspension of military and police component rotations, resulted in diminished training requirements. Nevertheless, the Mission focused on improving the compliance rate of mandatory online training on United Nations Standards of Conduct, including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the Mission provided direct and indirect online training to 4,407 uniformed personnel.

85. UNMISS continued to maintain contact with community-based complaint mechanism gatekeepers and the Conduct and Discipline Focal Points in field locations and ensured the provision of outreach materials. Online engagement with heads of field offices, field staff unions and national staff associations was organized regarding a wide range of conduct and discipline issues. The Mission continued to engage actively with the national task force on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

86. In accordance with the applicable policy, all information on misconduct was processed in a timely manner. From 1 June to 31 August, 10 allegations were recorded in the Misconduct Tracking System, including one allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. All identified victims of sexual exploitation and abuse continued to receive support from the Mission's Senior Victims' Rights Officer in South Sudan.

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

87. As at 31 August, UNMISS recorded 36 Status of Forces Agreement violations, compared with 64 in the previous reporting period. Of those, 23 violations involved movement restrictions by the Government, impeding the Mission's ability to implement its mandate.

88. The Government imposed restrictions on UNMISS imported goods and equipment, including rations and fuel. At the end of July, 46 UNMISS-contracted trucks were prevented from entering the country. Following negotiations, the trucks were allowed to enter; however, in August, UNMISS faced similar delays. The Government continued to delay clearances unduly to import critical equipment, including arms and ammunition, notwithstanding advance notification.

89. The Mission continued to experience access denial to patrols throughout the country. Notably, on 19 July, South Sudan People's Defence Forces and National Security Service personnel present at the Jur River checkpoint on the outskirts of Wau blocked an UNMISS quick reaction force that was mobilized to rescue the two International Organization for Migration personnel who had been ambushed by unknown gunmen.

90. The whereabouts of two national staff members arrested in 2014 remain unknown. The Government has neither granted UNMISS access to them nor provided information on their condition, notwithstanding regular requests. UNMISS recorded two new arrests and detentions of Mission personnel by the Government, involving two national staff members. Both were released after being detained for periods lasting from a few hours to a few days.

91. The Government continued to impose stringent conditions on entry visas into South Sudan for newly deployed UNMISS uniformed personnel. While progress has recently been made towards the approval of the backlog of visas for UNMISS Individual Uniformed Personnel, earlier delays and stringent conditions imposed by the Government had a negative impact on UNMISS activities.

92. UNMISS recorded two incidents of interference with the implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks. On 16 June, armed young people from Jonglei imposed a no-fly zone over the Greater Pibor Administrative Area with immediate effect until further notice. The restriction applied to all United Nations relief, commercial and military aircraft flying in and out of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. On 18 June, a group of Murle young people in Gumuruk threatened to shoot down any UNMISS flight over the Greater Pibor Administrative Area owing to rumours that the Mission was supplying weapons and ammunition to the Dinka and Gawaar Nuer.

93. UNMISS continues to notify the Government of the violations through notes verbales and regular engagement. A monthly matrix of the incidents prepared for the Security Council is also shared with the Government.

VIII. Performance evaluation of the uniformed components

94. Two infantry battalions were evaluated, including with regard to mandate comprehension and support, command and control, training and discipline, sustainment and health. One was rated as “excellent” across all dimensions and the other as “above average” overall. It was recommended that one of the units improve its language capacity. Owing to the pandemic, several units were not evaluated as planned.

95. Five formed police units were evaluated, covering, among others, mandate comprehension, command and control, protection of civilians, sustainment, training, conduct and discipline and health. Although all units were rated satisfactory overall, four were identified as having deficiencies in sustainment. A performance improvement plan was put in place for each unit, and progress is monitored through the quarterly evaluation process.

IX. Observations and recommendations

96. I am deeply concerned about the escalating intercommunal violence throughout South Sudan, in particular in Jonglei, Lakes, Warrap, Unity and Western Bahr el-Ghazal. Readily available weapons and the increased involvement of armed uniformed personnel have intensified the nature and scale of erstwhile local conflicts. Such violence can no longer be viewed parochially as intercommunal. It is imperative to end the cycle of violence and impunity, which continues to fuel serious human rights violations, of which civilians, in particular women and children, often bear the brunt. In this regard, the decision of the President to appoint a high-level committee to address the situation in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area is a step in the right direction, and I assure him of the support of UNMISS and United Nations partners to facilitate the work of the committee. I am also concerned by reports of increasing numbers of sexual and gender-based violence cases and related impunity, and I hope for the speedy reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and the consideration of the draft anti-gender-based violence bill. Although the Government’s efforts to ensure accountability for serious crimes are to be welcomed, the Government is encouraged to put in place measures to preclude the execution of death sentences in all circumstances, including through a moratorium and commutations.

97. The confluence of persistent intercommunal violence, the pandemic and seasonal floods for the second consecutive year in some areas has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation. The unprecedented levels of violence in the greater Jonglei area, for example, have left hundreds of persons dead and tens of thousands displaced. I therefore urge the Government and international partners to continue to support relief efforts and address underlying causes of the conflict to alleviate the suffering of the people of South Sudan.

98. I am alarmed by the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces civilian disarmament efforts in Tonj that have resulted in violence against civilians, including deaths, displacement and the looting of the essential public and economic infrastructure. I therefore urge the Government to substantively implement the Revitalized Agreement, including its security sector reform provisions.

99. I note that the ceasefire among the parties to the Revitalized Agreement continues to hold. The parties must, however, guard against the risk of widespread intercommunal violence quickly unravelling progress. In the same vein, the continuing tension between the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces and SPLM/A-IO forces on the one hand and NAS on the other remains worrisome. I urge

the parties to abide by the Rome Declaration on the Peace Process in South Sudan and take concrete steps towards building confidence.

100. While I welcome the progress made by the parties towards the allocation of States and the appointment of nine governors, the impasse regarding the reconstitution of the transitional national assembly, the appointment of the Upper Nile State governor and the formation of the remaining State government institutions is regrettable. The Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity has to act in a unified way to resolve outstanding issues to ensure deliberate and substantive progress towards the full implementation of the Agreement, including the 35 per cent quota for women's participation and representation in government.

101. More than 1.6 million South Sudanese are displaced internally, 2.2 million have sought refuge in neighbouring countries and approximately 6.5 million are food insecure. The support of international partners remains vital to stabilize the situation through the Humanitarian Response Plan. As at 21 August, \$617 million was secured against the \$1.9 billion requested for the plan. I urge the donor community to continue to contribute generously to close the existing gap.

102. I strongly condemn the attacks that peacekeepers and humanitarian workers continue to face while serving the people of South Sudan. The attack on, and killing of, a humanitarian worker in Lakes, who was in a clearly marked ambulance, and the killing of two aid workers, who were providing health-care and nutrition services to community members in Pajut town, Jonglei, are unacceptable. I call upon the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to investigate those incidents expeditiously and bring the perpetrators to justice.

103. I also urge the authorities to urgently remove entry and access restrictions and other operational impediments placed on the Mission and humanitarian partners. Those delays have a negative impact on UNMISS operations and capabilities, as well as on the mobility of aid workers and their overall response to urgent life-saving needs.

104. COVID-19 response measures continue to exacerbate inequalities and pose a challenge to the national infrastructure, in particular health systems. UNMISS is supporting South Sudan in responding to the global pandemic while simultaneously supporting national and State authorities in upgrading medical capabilities to reduce mortality rates from preventable diseases. The United Nations will continue to stand with South Sudan in these trying times.

105. I reiterate my acknowledgement of the critical role and influence of regional partners who, while beset by their own challenges related to the pandemic, remain steadfast in their commitment to supporting South Sudan on its path to durable peace. In this regard, I welcome the recent meeting of IGAD Heads of State and Government, at which regional leaders reinvigorated the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. I express my appreciation to the IGAD Heads of State and Government, and I urge the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to harness this regional support to accelerate the implementation of the agreement. I also renew my call for an expeditious appointment of a reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission Chairperson.

106. I endorse the efforts of UNMISS to adjust its force posture gradually in view of changes in the operating context, as confirmed by Security Risk Assessments for the Bor and Wau protection of civilians sites, in which it was indicated that external threats of physical harm to the internally displaced persons therein no longer exist. The gradual shift, which should culminate in the redesignation of those sites, has allowed the Mission to enhance efficiencies and increase its protection footprint beyond the protection of civilians sites by redeploying forces and expanding the area and depth of its patrols through a more mobile and nimble posture. UNMISS will

continue the initiative in concert with representatives of internally displaced persons, humanitarian partners and State authorities.

107. Lastly, I convey my appreciation to the uniformed and civilian personnel of UNMISS and to my Special Representative, David Shearer, who, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, continue to implement the United Nations mandate for South Sudan tirelessly. I also thank the troop- and police-contributing countries. I am grateful to the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners for providing vital assistance throughout the country, often in an insecure environment. Lastly, I acknowledge the indispensable efforts of the IGAD Heads of State and Government; the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat; the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Workneh Gebeyehu; the Special Envoy of IGAD, Ismail Wais; and the Community of Sant'Egidio towards ensuring peace in South Sudan.

