

**33rd RJMEC Plenary**  
**Statement by Mr. Guang Cong,**  
**OiC UNMISS,**  
**Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General**  
**7 December 2023**  
**[As delivered]**

RJMEC Chair,  
Excellencies and distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
I thank the RJMEC for the opportunity to brief you today.

Let me start by extending congratulations to His Excellency President Kiir and the people of South Sudan for assuming the Chairmanship of the East African Community.

Since we last met, SRSG Haysom briefed the African Union Peace and Security Council on the situation in South Sudan. At the meeting, we encouraged the Government to fully fund and operationalize the elections and constitution-making bodies.

We also called for dialogue amongst all leaders to address pending technical and operational decisions needed for the elections to take place on time.

We also underscored the importance of international partners, in particular the regional organizations, working with a shared purpose in the joint efforts to assist the South Sudan transition.

Excellencies,

We welcome the recent deployment of the unified forces to Upper Nile State, and are encouraged by reports that further deployments are forthcoming. However, we continue to encourage the Government to give Chapter Two the necessary funds and attention to ensure a cohesive, structured security sector that is able to protect civilians and provide a secure environment.

Recently, we have been concerned by reports of violence in the Abyei Administrative Area and Warrap State, as well as the fighting and mobilizations in Leer and Guit in Unity State, which have led to civilian displacements and casualties. We reiterate that military defections threaten and undermine trust between the parties. We also caution

against the temptation towards unilateral actions and that the parties should take measures to de-escalate hostilities, using peaceful means to resolve disputes.

Excellencies,

Last week, the humanitarian community in South Sudan released its 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, appealing for \$1.8 billion to support 6 million South Sudanese with the most acute needs.

With the ongoing conflict in Sudan, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan is expected to deteriorate further in the coming year. As of 3 December, over 420,000 people have crossed the South Sudan border from Sudan, further deepening the protection and humanitarian concerns in receiving communities.

We urge the Government of South Sudan to provide much-needed safety and reintegration support to the returnees, refugees, and stateless persons who have sought refuge within its borders.

Addressing the access impediments and supporting conditions for humanitarians to provide aid and services is also critical.

Excellencies,

While we commend the progress achieved so far, the timelines set out in the Roadmap are behind schedule. With only 12 months left, the options for practical compromises are diminishing, particularly concerning the type and scale of the elections, the constitution-making process and other important pending issues.

Meanwhile, the contrasting statements on election preparedness further underscore the need for dialogue between the parties on a practical way forward. I encourage the Government to enter 2024 with a renewed drive and a sense of urgency to implement the Peace Agreement, including resourcing the Political Parties Council, the National Constitutional Review Commission and the National Elections Commission.

The United Nations will continue to support the Transitional Government and the parties to the Peace Agreement in advancing the peace process.

I wish you a safe and healthy festive season.

Thank you very much.