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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 [2459 \(2019\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 March 2020 and requested me to report on the implementation of the Mission's mandate every 90 days. It covers political and security developments between 1 December 2019 and 15 February 2020, the humanitarian and human rights situation and progress made in the implementation of the Mission's mandate.

II. Political and economic developments

Key political updates

2. During the reporting period, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, and the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), Riek Machar, held several face-to-face meetings in Juba. The principals deliberated on outstanding pre-transitional tasks, including transitional security arrangements and the issue of states and their boundaries. Although the status of Mr. Machar remains unresolved, he travelled to Juba from 10 to 17 December and from 14 to 26 January, accompanied on both occasions by the Vice-President of the Sovereign Council of the Sudan, Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

3. A key outstanding issue is the determination of the number of states and their boundaries. From 2 to 4 December, the Deputy President and Special Envoy of South Africa to South Sudan, David Mabuza – supported by the Special Envoys of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda – convened deliberations on the matter, but was unable to get the parties to reach a consensus.

4. The IGAD Council of Ministers and Heads of State met on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Addis Ababa on 8 and 9 February. On the matter of states and their boundaries, the summit recognized that the issue was an internal matter and agreed to the President's request to consult with his constituents and report back to the IGAD Chair on 15 February. In a significant development, on 15 February, the President announced his decision to revert to a 10-state arrangement, albeit with the formation of three administrative areas: Abyei, Pibor and Ruweng. The opposition



parties, while appreciating the compromise made, have not yet accepted the new arrangement and have asked the President to reconsider the establishment of the administrative areas, as they do not conform to the original 10-state arrangement that existed upon independence in July 2011.

Implementation of the peace agreement

5. The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan remains behind schedule, while the ceasefire continues to hold, except in areas of Western and Central Equatoria and Upper Nile.

6. On 14 December, the President and Mr. Machar met with the National Pre-Transitional Committee and the security implementation mechanisms: the Joint Defence Board, the Joint Transitional Security Committee and the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission. The meeting assessed the implementation of transitional security arrangements, the disbursement of funds and the situation in Maiwut, Upper Nile. Following the meeting, the Secretary of the National Pre-Transitional Committee and Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Martin Elia Lomuro, stated that the National Pre-Transitional Committee had allocated \$16,295,000 to the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. With concerns mounting regarding the lack of accountability and transparency, the Secretary promised to submit a full account of expenditures and allocated resources, including in-kind contributions. However, to date, no progress has been noted.

7. The reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission met on 18 December and 23 January. The acting interim Chair, Lieutenant General Augustino Njoroge, regretted the slow progress in the implementation of transitional security arrangement tasks and the subsequent formation of the necessary unified forces.

8. On 3 January, the National Pre-Transitional Committee met with the security mechanisms to review the first 50 days of the extended pre-transitional period. While some progress was noted, several challenges were highlighted: the lack of screening and selection of forces before transfer to training centres; the presence of families at training centres; the lack of a complementary disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; and the lack of coordination between the mechanisms.

9. The Joint Defence Board held its 10th and 11th meetings in Juba on 8 January and 7 February, respectively. The Joint Transitional Security Committee and the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission reported on cantonment and the training of forces, highlighting severe resource and logistical constraints, including the lack of food, water, medicine and transport. It was evident that the process was progressing slowly and that significant financial challenges remained.

10. Movement of forces to training sites started in late 2019 and accelerated in 2020. As of 6 February, there were 15,601 government forces and 19,605 opposition forces in 17 centres around the country. However, flaws in the registration and vetting process make it unclear whether the core organized forces are participating. On 16 January, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism reported that the cantonment process remained slow, and 25 civilian centres remained occupied by armed forces (24 by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and 1 by the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO)).

11. On 13 and 15 January, the Transitional National Legislative Assembly passed the "freedom gratuity bill 2020" and the "South Sudan People's Defence Forces pension fund bill". The latter legislation, however, needs to be complemented by an agreement on the strategic models for security services, including details on human

resources, equipment and training, as well as associated financial implications, to ensure an effective response to defence and security priorities and challenges.

12. Mandated to oversee the implementation of critical tasks of the transitional security arrangements, the IGAD guarantors' security supervision mechanism, which had been envisioned in the communiqué of the tripartite summit convened in Entebbe, Uganda, was formed, with representatives from Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda. The mechanism adopted its terms of reference on 5 December and undertook visits throughout the reporting period to evaluate the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. While the mechanism provided regular updates to the IGAD Special Envoy, its midpoint report on the status of the transitional security arrangements is yet to be released.

13. On 7 January, the National Constitution Amendment Committee made a formal request to all parties asking them to submit a list of nominees to be appointed as members of the reconstituted Transitional National Legislative Assembly. On 11 February, the sixth constitutional amendment bill for the incorporation of the Revitalized Agreement into the Transitional Constitution was passed into law.

14. While both the Government and SPLM/A-IO have committed to prioritizing the implementation of the critical outstanding tasks, there is a clear divergence in message. The Government has stated that the revitalized government will be formed on time, while SPLM/A-IO has indicated that it will depend on the resolution of outstanding issues.

Peace process developments

15. From 11 to 14 January, the leaders of the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance, the Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement, and the South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A), under the umbrella of the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance, met with the delegations of the Government, SPLM/A-IO and the National Democratic Movement in Italy. The Community of Sant'Egidio facilitated the meeting to bring the non-signatories of the Revitalized Agreement on board, resulting in the parties signing the "Rome declaration" and committing to the cessation of hostilities.

Other political developments

16. On 8 January, the Government of the United States of America announced sanctions against First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai over claims of his involvement in destabilizing the peace process and his role in the disappearance and killing of a member of SPLM/A-IO, Aggrey Idri, and a human rights lawyer, Dong Samuel Luak, in January 2017.

17. On 10 December, the Government of the United States announced sanctions on five individuals from South Sudan also believed to have perpetrated grave human rights abuses, including the abduction and killing of Aggrey Idri and Dong Samuel Luak. Later, on 16 December, the Government of the United States announced sanctions against the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs, Kuol Manyang Juuk, for allegedly perpetuating the conflict in South Sudan and impeding the peace process.

18. On 21 January, the national dialogue secretariat announced that the national dialogue conference would commence on 16 March.

Economic situation

19. During its recent visit, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) acknowledged steady progress in economic recovery and forecast that South Sudan would experience Africa's fastest economic growth in 2020, at 8.2 per cent.

20. Increasing oil production and favourable global crude prices have improved Government revenue, while the decision to abolish the advanced sale of crude oil and increasing non-oil revenue has expanded the fiscal space. IMF advised the Government to maintain a tight fiscal policy and avoid deficit financing from the central bank in order to prevent the erosion of monetary gains.

21. The South Sudanese pound showed signs of stability against the United States dollar, as the exchange rate was less volatile than in previous years. Sustaining monetary policy reforms and ensuring coordination with fiscal policy will be essential to maintain macroeconomic stability.

III. Security situation

22. In Maiwut and Jikou, Upper Nile, the defection of Major General James Ochan Puot to the Government in early October culminated in a ceasefire violation on 6 December, when fighting broke out between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces aligned under the Major General and SPLA-IO forces in Jikou. In Central and Western Equatoria, clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the National Salvation Front (NAS) continued. Tensions within SPLA-IO also affected their participation in the transitional security arrangements and led to violence. In Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Equatoria, simmering tensions between the local commanders escalated.

23. Economic pressures continued to be reflected in high crime rates and violent disputes for access to revenue collection opportunities. The flooding towards the end of the 2019 rainy season delayed migration in many areas, exacerbating food insecurity and livestock mortality rates. These factors, alongside the political impasse on the number of states and their boundaries, generated localized disputes over access to resources in Jonglei and Unity. United Nations agencies, as well as international and national non-governmental organizations, were also targeted in several robberies.

Greater Equatoria region

24. Government forces and NAS continued to engage in low-intensity skirmishes in Central and Western Equatoria, with 10 incidents, including 7 ambushes and 3 abductions, registered during the reporting period. After targeting four barracks of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces along the Lainya-Yei-Lasu axis in December 2019, NAS activity has largely subsided in the area, moving westwards towards Maridi and Mundri. However, UNMISS and humanitarian partners remain concerned about potential violations of human rights in the Yei area, including restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians and arbitrary arrests and detention. UNMISS continued to face difficulty in accessing the area despite prior notifications to authorities.

25. In Western Equatoria, ethnic tensions between the Azande and Balanda coupled with leadership challenges within SPLA-IO forces led to internal clashes. Major General James Nando detained a group of Balanda soldiers near Yambio. After escaping to areas north of Tambura, the Balanda soldiers have resisted moving to the designated training centre under the Major General's command, accusing him of aggravating ethnic biases and undermining opposition ideals. SPLA-IO mediation to resolve the dispute has calmed immediate tensions.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

26. While inter-communal violence associated with cattle raiding was the dominant source of insecurity, conflict over boundaries also precipitated. The dispute between residents of Lakes and Jonglei over the ownership of Cuetakuet Island is a long-standing issue owing to its strategic importance and its being a tax collection point. On 4 December, clashes between contesting communities erupted, causing fatalities and interrupting commercial activities.

27. The complexity of land, identity, and boundaries issues were also reflected in an incident in December, which left 11 people dead and people from eight villages displaced. The incident was triggered by a dispute between two communities in Tonj North, Warrap over the naming of the Alabek County following its division.

28. In Western Bahr el-Ghazal, long simmering tensions between SPLA-IO commanders accelerated, with the kidnapping of 62 people outside of Wau on 28 January by forces aligned with Major General Abdallah Ujang and the razing of Major General Daniel Dongo's base at Faragullah on 1 February. On 10 February, Major General Daniel Dongo reportedly defected to the Government citing internal leadership challenges in the SPLA-IO.

Greater Upper Nile region

29. The intra-Nuer conflict in Maiwut erupted after South Sudan People's Defence Forces aligned under Major General Ochan Puot seized an SPLA-IO supply barge, triggering a series of offensives around Jikou and the Sobat river in December and January. The situation calmed when Major General Ochan Puot and SPLA-IO Major General Khor Choul were summoned to Juba. However, the situation remains tense as communities compete for access to water and grazing land amid a sub-clan split.

30. Offensives by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces against SPLA-IO forces in Jikou continued throughout December with active hostilities subsiding in early January. Clashes resumed with the arrival of SPLA-IO reinforcements with Major General Ochan Puot's forces retreating to Maiwut.

31. In Unity, parties continued to implement the transitional security arrangements for the cantonment and training process; however, reports indicated that young people, including from the Bentiu protection of civilians site, continued to be mobilized and recruited. UNMISS continues to investigate reports of recruitment.

Mission interventions specific to security concerns

32. In response to early warning indicators, UNMISS continued to deploy pre-emptive patrols to project its presence, deter violence and improve situational awareness. In order to better ensure the protection of civilians and improve conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, it instituted long-duration patrols with notable impact. Following clashes in Moppair, Lakes district, between Manuer and Gak sub-clans of Pakam, an UNMISS infantry battalion deployed and maintained a sustained presence for 55 days resulting in a significant reduction in violence. UNMISS also deployed a company to Koch for a period of 17 days to enable a secure environment that facilitated the return of internally displaced persons. Similarly, in response to armed conflict in the greater Equatoria region, long-duration patrols were deployed in conjunction with human rights monitoring and investigation teams.

Intercommunal conflict

33. An upsurge in intercommunal violence was recorded in the Warrap and Lakes regions, where at least 102 people were killed and 137 others injured in the month of

January alone. In Warrap, violence between various Dinka Rek sub-clans was triggered by revenge killing incidents where unresolved land ownership disputes remain a major problem. In Lakes, disputes over access to cattle camps and recurring cattle raids were the main triggers of renewed violence between and among Dinka Agar and Dinka Gok communities. In some of these hotspots, communal conflicts had been contained for several months or years through joint efforts of UNMISS and state authorities; however, unresolved root causes remain a challenge to peaceful coexistence.

34. UNMISS continued to work with communities and local leaders to support conflict mitigation and resolution mechanisms to address intercommunal tensions. The cattle migration from Warrap to Western Bahr el-Ghazal has been peaceful during the current dry season as a result of extensive outreach activities targeting the pastoralists and host communities. Likewise, following a series of peace forums, no major incident has been reported between the Jie and Murle communities in Boma state where scores of people were killed in intercommunal violence during the previous dry season. Influential community leaders and government officials at the levels of the state and the capital were mobilized to de-escalate and mitigate tensions in the Warrap and Lakes regions.

IV. Humanitarian situation

35. Fighting between the parties in Maiwut County, Upper Nile, and in Yei County and Lainya County, Central Equatoria, led to the displacement of more than 19,000 civilians – of these, over 8,000 sought refuge in Ethiopia. Internally displaced persons continued to face harsh living conditions owing to a lack of food and other essential non-food items. Most internally displaced people lost their personal household items during an attack on their villages in Maiwut and some reported being subjected to human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence. Following the fighting in Yei County, civilians reported being intimidated, punished and prevented from accessing their farmlands by South Sudan People's Defence Forces. Clashes between armed youth groups in Mvolo County, Western Equatoria, in late January displaced an estimated 5,000 people. Communal fighting, violent cattle raids, forceful recruitment and forced relocation were reported in Jonglei, Unity and Western Equatoria.

36. Humanitarian access deteriorated in December 2019 compared with November 2019. Similarly, reports of violence against humanitarian personnel and criminality in December nearly doubled compared with November. Consequently, the humanitarian presence decreased in different locations of Upper Nile. Several armed men broke into an international NGO compound in Maban, Upper Nile, assaulting five staff members and stealing their personal items. Following this incident and recurrent compound intrusions in the area, 26 staff were relocated. Several organizations in Maban also reported break-ins and increased military presence, necessitating a reduction of staff and the suspension of activities in refugee camps and host communities. In Maiwut, armed clashes between government and opposition forces delayed humanitarian operations, with aid workers having to relocate. Owing to continued hostilities in Yei and bureaucratic impediments, as well as extortion in Juba by some members of the security institutions, Central Equatoria continued to have the highest concentration of reported incidents.

37. A total of 535 incidents regarding humanitarian access were reported in 2019, compared with 760 in 2018, although many remained underreported. However, the operational environment for humanitarians remained challenging. At least 47 staff

were detained for extended periods and 129 aid workers were relocated owing to insecurity in 2019. A total of 3 aid workers were killed, down from 15 in 2018.

38. According to the latest data released by the International Organization for Migration and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in January 2020, a total of 1.67 million persons remained internally displaced, representing a marginal increase as a result of increased geographic coverage of assessment locations. The increase does not represent an absolute increase in the number of internally displaced persons in the country. In 2019, more than 417,000 internally displaced persons returned. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that 2.2 million people remained displaced in neighbouring countries, a number essentially unchanged compared with that in 2018. More than 99,800 South Sudanese refugees spontaneously returned in 2019, although they have yet to deregister with UNHCR.

39. Although the rains had abated and water levels had dropped, the flood emergency that had started in July 2019 continued to affect communities. The drier weather enabled response activities to be scaled up across the affected locations and, by the end of 2019, nearly 790,000 people had been reached with over 10,300 metric tons of emergency food supplies and \$2.9 million in cash assistance. Overall, more than 683 metric tons of emergency flood response aid – food, health, nutrition, shelter, protection and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All support – had been provided to prioritized flood-affected locations.

40. Humanitarian needs continued to remain high. On 12 December, the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020 was launched, in which \$1.5 billion was requested for 5.6 million of the total 7.5 million people in need of assistance. The 2019 plan was 74 per cent funded, with \$1.12 billion received, which assisted 5.3 million people, 93 per cent of the targeted population. Of the nearly 200 humanitarian organizations contributing towards these achievements, over 55 per cent were South Sudanese non-governmental organizations.

41. While the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease continued in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, no cases were confirmed in South Sudan. The United Nations and partners continued to support the Government of South Sudan in prevention and preparedness efforts. The outbreak and spread of the coronavirus is creating new challenges for the health-care system of South Sudan and, while no cases have been recorded in the country, there have been two alerts as well as a number of suspected cases in neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya, which give cause for concern.

V. Implementation of mandated tasks

A. Protection of civilians

42. UNMISS continued to protect civilians both outside and inside protection of civilian sites. Outside the sites, the main threats to civilians included killing, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, ill-treatment and looting of civilian property. Attacks against civilians occurred predominantly during skirmishes between NAS and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, as well as clashes between Major General Ochan Puot's forces and SPLA-IO in Maiwut. Casualties also resulted from intercommunal conflict and cattle raids.

43. Within the protection of civilians framework, and in addition to UNMISS support for rapprochement activities and interventions to counter intercommunal hotspots, UNMISS conducted 36 workshops, community dialogues and peace campaigns to address local communal conflicts and reconciliation, facilitate civil-

military dialogue and promote the role of women, young people and local leaders in peacebuilding. A total of 10,060 participants (including 4,551 women) were reached through such activities.

44. UNMISS continued to support civil-military engagements at the local level as a preventative measure to protect civilians. In December, UNMISS and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism facilitated a dialogue at the Dingding cantonment site, Northern Liech, bringing together leaders from surrounding communities and military leaders. As a result, an agreement on cooperation between the cantonment site and neighbouring communities was reached, including the conduct of monthly coordination meetings. UNMISS supported civil-military dialogue in Kodok, Fashoda State, helped to improve relations between government and opposition forces and facilitated the signing of a memorandum of understanding between them to advance protection of civilians responsibilities. Similar, civil-military dialogue was also advanced in Pibor, Boma. UNMISS further supported a forum for the peace commission in Boma, bringing together 60 participants from organized forces and local communities to discuss drivers of local conflict. The forum culminated in an agreement to cooperate on issues of age-set violence, child abduction, forced marriage and cattle raiding. UNMISS also supported members of the National Pre-Transitional Committee in engaging over 500 community members in Amadi through rallies and presentations on the Revitalized Agreement.

45. UNMISS continued to project its presence into identified areas of need, with the aim of pre-empting, deterring and mitigating violence and building confidence in areas of return. Its operational posture has continued to evolve to become more mobile, utilizing a “hub and spoke” approach to maximize its presence. UNMISS deployed to identified hotspots to provide increase confidence and assurance for communities at risk and to deter potential violence. The rapid deployment for a patrol in excess of two months to Moppair resulted in a significant decrease in violence in the area. In addition, a ‘hub in Koch supported UNMISS/United Nations country team joint trust fund initiatives through the provision of a secure environment, encouraging the return of internally displaced persons.

46. During the reporting period, a total of 22,455 patrols (short- and long duration, confidence- and trust-building, and dynamic air and foot) were conducted to deter violence and strengthen community engagement in return locations. In addition, United Nations police conducted 1, 246 confidence- and trust-building patrols.

47. UNMISS continued to work closely with humanitarian organizations to support returns and facilitate the movement of internally displaced persons, including by utilizing air assets to support the voluntary return of 40 internally displaced persons from protection of civilians sites in Juba to Malakal in November and December. In addition, between 16 and 24 December, in concert with the South Sudan national government and education cluster as well as protection partners, the Mission provided security to enable 1,223 internally displaced persons (1,000 male and 223 female) from the Juba sites to attend examinations in Juba town.

48. UNMISS also hosted and provided protection to internally displaced persons in the protection of civilian sites. As at 13 February, the total population in the five UNMISS protection of civilian sites was 188,528 internally displaced persons, including 93,103 women and girls: 40,250 aged between 0 and 4 years (including 19,652 girls), 64,395 aged between 5 and 17 years (including 31,461 girls), 74,061 aged between 18 and 59 years (including 36,263 women) and 9,822 aged 60 years and above (including 5,727 women). During the current reporting period the population of the sites increased by 8,162 individuals, from 180,366 to 188,528. Several factors contributed to the increase, including new births; the merging of

households in protection of civilian sites 1 and 3 and the Bor protection of civilian site; the population head count conducted for Wau in December 2019 and Bentiu sites in January 2020; and the biometric registration conducted for the Malakal site in January 2020.

49. The Mission continued to promote the civilian character of the protection of civilian sites through engagement with community leaders and search and seizure operations to halt the smuggling of weapons into the sites. In order to address protection risks within the sites, UNMISS continued its engagement with the community to improve security and enhance cooperation. In addition, UNMISS continued to support national accountability measures for security incidents affecting the sites. During the reporting period, 165 persons suspected of being responsible for serious security incidents within the sites in Juba, Bentiu and Malakal were detained in UNMISS holding facilities. UNMISS referred 40 persons to national authorities for investigation and prosecution. In Bentiu, where justice actors remain limited, UNMISS facilitated missions of state authorities to investigate 28 individuals for crimes committed within the site and 16 additional investigations for serious crimes committed outside the site. A mobile court is currently being organized to complete these trials by 24 February.

Rule of law and accountability

50. In partnership with UNDP, UNMISS continued to engage with national justice sector officials and civil society organizations to coordinate support for mobile courts comprised of national judicial officials and investigators, expanding access to justice in regions where it remained limited. As part of these efforts, UNMISS and UNDP facilitated a month-long deployment of national justice officials to Yambio. The Yambio mobile court tried 51 individuals for serious crimes, including murder, rape and theft. A total of 32 individuals were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment terms ranging from three months to life imprisonment. Ten accused were tried and convicted of offenses related to sexual and gender-based violence. A UNDP-supported mobile court deployed to Tonj on 3 February for a month to prosecute pending criminal cases there.

51. From 3 to 5 December, UNMISS facilitated a leadership conference for the South Sudan Prison Service in Juba, which brought together state directors of prisons and directors of national Prison Service headquarters to discuss the strategic direction of the Service and identify challenges to effectively carry out its critical functions. Among other resolutions, the prison leadership agreed to develop a comprehensive five-year plan, including a strategy for the integration of over 8,000 former combatants into the Service pursuant to the Revitalized Agreement.

52. On 5 December, UNMISS held the final session of its programme for the Military Justice Directorate of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces on promoting accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. In recognition of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign, the session included practice-based exercises and discussions on the importance of holding perpetrators of sexual violence accountable, identification at the national and international levels of crimes related to sexual and gender-based violence, and ways to protect survivors of sexual violence. Following the discussions, judge advocates developed messages to assist military personnel of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces in this regard.

53. On the security sector front, UNMISS is providing technical support to the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board to help with the implementation of the mandated tasks of the Revitalized Agreement, notably the development of a national vision for the building of security sector.

B. Monitoring and investigating human rights violations

54. UNMISS documented a total of 156 incidents that had a negative impact on the human rights and protection situation, 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. These incidents resulted in 449 civilian casualties (220 killed and 229 wounded), including 17 women and 10 children. Of these incidents, 63 were attributed to community-based militias and armed elements; 39 to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces; 19 to the pro-Machar SPLA-IO; 11 to NAS; 11 to the National Security Service; 5 to the South Sudan National Police Service; and 2 jointly to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and National Security Service. Attribution remained under verification for the six remaining incidents.

55. As was the trend throughout 2019, the majority of civilians killed and injured during the reporting period was attributed to community-based militias and armed elements (182 killed and 185 injured). A lack of accountability for these and other serious human rights violations and abuses continued to characterize the human rights situation in South Sudan.

56. The movement and assembly of forces at cantonment and training sites continued to pose protection risks to civilians. UNMISS documented a surge in the forced military recruitment of civilians and alleged former fighters by the major warring parties and their allies. At least 18 such incidents were documented, the majority of which occurred in Unity, as commanders sought to bring greater numbers of forces to training sites in exchange for higher military ranks in the unified forces. While ostensibly targeting alleged "deserters", many civilians, including minors and some humanitarian personnel, were abducted in the context of these operations. UNMISS engaged with military and civilian authorities to ensure the timely release of civilians in this context.

57. Intermittent clashes in parts of Central Equatoria continued to place civilians at risk. During the reporting period, UNMISS documented 41 incidents involving human rights violations and abuses, including unlawful killing, wounding, sexual violence, and looting and destruction of civilian property.

58. Civilians also bore the brunt of violence in Maiwut, Upper Nile, involving a splinter faction of SPLA-IO forces loyal to Major-General Ochan Puot, which defected to the Government. This latest round of violence surged in late December and early January, following a period of relative calm. At least 10 civilians were killed, bringing the cumulative total of civilian casualties to at least 34 killed and 8 injured, as well as 24 confirmed cases of conflict-related sexual violence, since the start of the clashes in late July 2019.

59. UNMISS continued to receive reports of censorship, harassment and the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists, activists and other civilians expressing critical or dissenting views of the Government, at the hands of the National Security Service and at the state level. The pardon and release of Peter Biar Ajak on 1 January was a welcome development, in particular since he had never been charged in connection with his initial arrest in July 2018. However, concerns remained about the lack of civic space in South Sudan, notably the arbitrary arrest and detention of a radio journalist by National Security Service personnel on 10 January in Torit, shortly after broadcasting a report on the issuance of sanctions by the United States Department of Treasury against First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai. Following sustained engagement by UNMISS, the journalist was released from National Security Service detention on 16 January.

60. UNMISS continued to advocate for measures to preclude the application of the death penalty, including through de facto and de jure moratoriums, and supported legal aid providers representing juveniles and other defendants on death row.

61. During the reporting period, the Mission increased the support it provided to the cantonment and training process. UNMISS carried out 17 human rights due diligence policy risk assessments of assistance to non-United Nations security forces, 53 per cent of which were aimed at facilitating the implementation of the peace agreement.

62. The denial of access by State authorities continued to hinder human rights monitoring and investigations, with 11 such incidents documented in Central Equatoria (8), Lakes (1), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (1) and Upper Nile (1). However, in a positive development, following sustained advocacy with the Government and after nearly one year of access denials, UNMISS human rights monitors were granted access to Juba Central Prison, including to 200 death row inmates.

Children and armed conflict

63. My Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, witnessed the signature by the Government of a comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children. The issue of children affected by armed conflict remains a concern despite a decline in documented cases, from 44 to 23 children, compared with the previous reporting period. The decline can be, in part, attributed to the continued observance of the ceasefire and the peace process.

64. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict verified 23 grave violations committed against 23 children (19 boys and 4 girls), including 11 boys affected by recruitment and use in 11 violations, 10 child casualties (9 boys and 1 girl) caused by killing (2 children: 1 boy and 1 girl) and maiming (8 children: 7 boys and 1 girl) in 10 violations, and 2 girls as survivors of rape. The children affected were in the greater Equatoria (18 children: 16 boys and 2 girls), and greater Bahr el-Ghazal regions (3 boys) and greater Upper Nile (2 children: 1 boy and 1 girl).

65. SPLA-IO forces perpetrated 12 violations affecting 12 children, including 11 boys as victims of recruitment and use and 1 girl as a survivor of rape. A total of 7 boys and 1 girl were casualties of explosive remnants of war. Two violations affecting 2 children (1 boy and 1 girl) were attributable to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including one case each of rape and killing; 1 violation of maiming affecting 1 girl was attributed to NAS.

66. In addition, UNMISS delivered child protection capacity-building trainings to 439 government security forces (389 male and 50 female), 291 pro-Machar SPLA-IO forces (267 male and 24 female), 7 members of SSOA (all male), 291 community members (101 male and 190 female), and 18 government officials (all male).

Conflict-related sexual violence

67. Despite an overall decrease in political violence, conflict-related sexual violence continued to be perpetrated. UNMISS verified eight incidents involving 11 victims, all women. Survivors were subjected to incidents of such violence, including gang rape (2), rape (7), attempted rape (1) and threats of rape (1) attributed to the pro-Machar SPLA-IO (1); the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (5), and forces loyal to Major General Ochan Puot (allied to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces) (1), while the perpetrators' affiliation in one case had not been conclusively determined at the time of writing.

68. UNMISS documented 20 additional incidents of conflict-related sexual violence that had occurred prior to the reporting period and had affected 22 survivors,

(15 women, 4 girls and 3 men). Thirteen incidents were attributed to Major General Ochan Puot's forces allied with the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, 3 incidents to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, 1 incident to the pro-Machar SPLA-IO and 1 to the South Sudan National Police Service, while the affiliation of the perpetrators in two cases remained under verification.

69. UNMISS continued to engage with the parties to the conflict, including NAS, on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. On 31 December, NAS released 23 civilians, including 14 women, who had been held by the group following military operations against bases of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces in Central Equatoria between September and December 2019. On 5 February, the NAS Commander-in-Chief issued a command order forming a three-member committee tasked to lead the group's work on addressing conflict-related sexual violence, including the development of policies to prevent and respond to such violence and awareness-raising initiatives among forces.

70. On 26 December, Riek Machar issued a command order instructing sector commanders to hand over women and girls held on SPLA-IO bases in Western Equatoria to a non-governmental partner. On 30 January officials of SPLA-IO released 47 women and 26 children (14 boys and 12 girls), who had been held at the group's base in Lirangu. The release was facilitated by UNMISS.

C. Creating the conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance

71. UNMISS continued to support humanitarian partners in implementing their activities. During the reporting period, UNMISS conducted 958 long-duration and 3,815 short-duration patrols to government- and SPLA-IO controlled areas across the country to support the delivery of assistance or the protection of humanitarian workers, including through the establishment of hub and spoke models.

72. UNMISS provided force protection to 539 integrated missions, enabling access to high-risk areas. It further conducted 3,467 force protection patrols supporting convoys, including non-governmental organizations, as well as Operation Lifeline – a logistical effort that also benefits humanitarian partners.

73. The Mine Action Service surveyed and cleared two proposed sites to facilitate the establishment of humanitarian hubs in Kodok, Upper Nile, Leer and Unity, and is in the process of completing a third in Kajo Kaji, Central Equatoria, as requested by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It also conducted an assessment of six primary health-care centres and primary schools in Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, as requested by the Mission. The Service deployed 25 teams, which surveyed and released 304,777 m² of land and removed and destroyed a further 5,008 explosive items and 422,841 rounds of small arms ammunition.

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

74. UNMISS continued its good offices with the parties, partners and stakeholders, including at several meetings between my Special Representative and the President of South Sudan and Riek Machar, at which both principals reiterated their commitment to fully implementing the Revitalized Agreement. My Special Representative also engaged regional envoys, and the representatives of the security supervision mechanism. In the reporting period, my Special Representative also briefed the African Union Peace and Security Council on the situation in South Sudan.

75. UNMISS continued to support and participate in implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement, including ongoing logistical support to the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism to enable it to fulfil its ceasefire monitoring and verification mandate. UNMISS also actively participated in meetings of the reconstituted Board and the Technical Committee of the Mechanism as well as in the monthly plenary sessions of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

76. UNMISS continued its series of grass-roots forums designed to raise a platform for the voices of local-level stakeholders and bring them into dialogue with national leaders. The fourth forum, held from 11 to 13 February, focused on civic and political space, and the role of civil society in advancing peace in the country.

Women and peace and security

77. UNMISS conducted 28 workshops with women leaders of civil society organizations at the subnational level to discuss how to enhance women's meaningful participation in the peace process and in public decision-making, including strategies to operationalize the quota for women and ensure that the parties fulfil the gender provisions of the Revitalized Agreement.

78. The Mission also supported the regular convening of the women and peace and security monitoring and advocacy group comprising qualified South Sudanese women drawn from political parties, civil society organizations and academia to review the status of the implementation of women and peace and security agendas within the context of the Revitalized Agreement.

79. During the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign, UNMISS delivered over 100 campaign-related activities and reached over 20,000 campaign participants across the country under the theme "Join hands, stand against rape". At the launch, the Mission also held an event in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and five civil society organizations to end violence against women.

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

80. On 11 February, the number of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2676, comprising 884 international staff members (242 women, or 27 per cent), 1,392 national staff members (195 women, or 14 per cent) and 400 United Nations Volunteers (157 women, or 39 per cent).

81. The police strength stood at 1,888 (of an authorized 2,101 officers), comprising 645 individual police officers (193 women, or 29 per cent), 1,166 personnel in formed police units (220 women, or 18 per cent) and 77 corrections officers (18 women, or 23 per cent).

82. Of the authorized 17,000 troops, UNMISS troop strength stood at 14,911 military personnel: 215 military liaison officers (39 women, or 18 per cent), 418 military staff officers (63 women, or 15 per cent) and 14,278 military contingent personnel (569 women, or 4 per cent).

83. UNMISS efforts to address possible misconduct by its personnel focused on prevention, enforcement and remedial actions. During the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign, the Mission integrated messages on the United Nations zero tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse. The

campaign encompassed outreach activities across South Sudan, reaching more than 3,000 people.

84. As at 15 February, drawing upon the cooperation of relevant United Nations entities and the national task force on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, the community-based complaints mechanisms and the conduct and discipline focal points worked with 1,841 local community members to raise awareness about sexual exploitation and abuse and reporting mechanisms.

85. As at 15 February, a total of 7,523 UNMISS and affiliated staff were trained on United Nations standards of conduct and the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. The Mission adopted a standard operating procedure aimed at enhancing and streamlining training efforts and ensuring maximum compliance with mandatory courses on conduct and discipline and related topics.

86. Between 1 December 2019 and 31 January 2020, UNMISS recorded two allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as seven other allegations not related to sexual exploitation and abuse. All allegations are being handled in line with applicable procedures.

VII. Violations of the status-of-forces agreement

87. UNMISS recorded 64 incidents constituting violations of the status-of-forces agreement, compared with 74 in the previous reporting period.

88. UNMISS recorded 46 incidents of movement restrictions attributed to the Government that impeded the Mission's ability to implement its mandate, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians and to monitoring and investigating human rights. Of particular concern is the increase in access denials of UNMISS patrols in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, in the wake of armed clashes since August 2019, when the South Sudan People's Defence Forces launched military operations against the South Sudan United Front/Army. The authorities of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces directed officers of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism not to sign United Nations standard waiver of liability documents that would have enabled them to board UNMISS vehicles to accompany patrols to areas in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. They subsequently instructed all South Sudan People's Defence Forces checkpoint commanders to deny access to UNMISS patrols that were not accompanied by at least one Defence Forces officer from the Monitoring Mechanism officer. Owing to the access denial incidents, UNMISS was forced to cancel 14 planned patrols to different parts of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal in December 2019.

89. Violations to the facilitating of entry of UNMISS and associated personnel into South Sudan, without delay or hindrance, continued. Deployed military officers in particular experienced lengthy delays in securing entry visas into South Sudan, owing to cumbersome processes imposed by the Government that significantly impeded the Mission's ability to efficiently implement its mandate. In addition to the stringent immigration processes already imposed on UNMISS, the Government added an additional visa requirement on 68 UNMISS international uniformed personnel. However, following UNMISS engagement the issue was resolved.

90. 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, despite regular requests. UNMISS documented 11 new cases of arrest and detention of UNMISS personnel by the Government, involving 8 national and one international staff – one national staff member was

arrested and detained twice in Aweil, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, within the space of two days. All have since been released.

91. There were two reported incidents of interference with the implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks by the SPLA-IO during the reporting period, involving denial of access to two different UNMISS patrols to Faragullah in greater Baggari in Western Bahr el-Ghazal and to an SPLA-IO detention facility in Dingding (Pakure Payam, Rubkona county), respectively.

92. The Mission continues to notify the Government of the violations through notes verbales and regular engagements. A monthly matrix of the incidents prepared for the Security Council is also shared with the Government.

VIII. Performance evaluation of the uniformed components

93. During the reporting period, 12 units were evaluated. The evaluations covered mandate comprehension and support, command and control, training and discipline, sustainment and health. The units evaluated included 2 infantry battalions and 10 force enablers (medium utility helicopter, military police, level II hospital, engineering and force marine units). A total of 11 units were assessed to have performed satisfactorily. Three engineering companies were rated as "excellent" across all rated categories. One of the units was praised for having performed every task with diligence and beyond expectations. One enabler was rated as below satisfactory in the area of sustainment, and the evaluations identified the area for needed improvement. Several of the units were found to be lacking in the field of weapon-firing skills, weapons and ammunition storage facilities, standard operating procedures and night flying training. To further enhance UNMISS efficiency in mandate implementation, each unit received specific recommendations.

94. Since June 2019, the police component has also implemented a performance evaluation system based on objective criteria for formed police units, with a view to assessing their capacity to implement mandated tasks in respect of protecting civilians. During the reporting period, UNMISS completed the evaluation of five formed police units from three police-contributing countries. The evaluations covered such areas as mandate comprehension, policy and guidance compliance, command and control, protection of civilians, administration, sustainment, logistics and compliance with memorandums of understanding, training, conduct and discipline, and health and welfare. The evaluations concluded that the units were performing in a satisfactory manner overall and in accordance with the Mission's requirements. The deployment of a police component comprising more than 30 per cent women, in addition to the deployment of a formed police unit comprising 50 per cent women, was assessed positively in terms of the units' protection of civilians and community engagement efforts and was welcomed by the internally displaced persons community. The interaction by the units with the population has been evaluated as satisfactory or above for all units, and their United Nations predeployment training was rated as "excellent" across the board. Good practices included command and control for internal discipline for two formed police units, as well as their performance at the protection of civilian sites, in terms of working well with partners. Four units have been identified as having significant shortfalls in sustainment, receiving ratings of "needs improvement". All five units were placed on a performance improvement plan, with three having made insufficient progress since the previous evaluation on their assigned improvement plan.

IX. Financial aspects

95. The General Assembly, by its resolution [73/323](#) and decision [73/555](#), appropriated the amount of \$1,183,447,300 for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

96. As at 10 February 2020, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNMISS amounted to \$275.9 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to \$2,937.0 million.

97. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs, as well as for contingent-owned equipment, have been made for the period up to 30 September 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

X. Observations and recommendations

98. I am encouraged by the communiqué of the thirty-fourth extraordinary summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government, held on the margins of the African Union summit, at which the Heads of State and Government of IGAD noted that a further extension was neither desirable nor feasible at the current stage of the peace process and underscored the need to form an all-inclusive revitalized transitional government.

99. I note the face-to-face meetings held between President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, and the leader of SPLM/A-IO, Riek Machar, to consider and resolve the outstanding issues. While the parties took some concrete steps in implementing the provisions of the transitional security arrangements, substantive progress remains slow. With regard to the issue of the states and their boundaries, I welcome the decision of the President to revert to a 10-state arrangement with three administrative areas in the interest of peace. I understand the opposition parties have expressed reservations on the establishment of the administrative areas. I urge the parties to resolve this issue as a matter of priority and move on to the establishment of the transitional government.

100. I am encouraged that the ceasefire continues to be held broadly across the country. Its consolidation is critical to sustain peace. I therefore note the worrisome situation in Maiwut and Jikou in Upper Nile and urge the Government and SPLA-IO to refrain from acts that threaten peace. Of equal concern are the clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and NAS in parts of Central and Western Equatoria.

101. As the 22 February deadline approaches, I remain concerned that the parties have yet to make meaningful progress on other outstanding issues of the pre-transitional period. I strongly urge the South Sudanese leaders to make the necessary compromises to resolve those issues in order to begin the process of alleviating the suffering of their people from this human-made conflict.

102. While the implementation of the agreement remains behind schedule, political will can create tangible solutions. I note some positive developments during the reporting period, including the release of political prisoners and the provision of additional funds for the implementation of the peace agreement. I also urge the Government and SPLM/A-IO to further undertake measures that build trust and confidence, such as vacating all civilian public infrastructure occupied by their forces, especially schools and clinics, so that these vital assets can be returned to civilian public use.

103. I welcome the efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio, which led to the parties to the Revitalized Agreement and non-signatories signing the Rome declaration and

committing to adhere to the cessation of hostilities agreement. I encourage the Government and the non-signatories to continue their dialogue and to reach common ground with regard to the revitalized peace agreement.

104. I remain concerned that 1.5 million people remain internally displaced and that 2.2 million are displaced in neighbouring countries. Humanitarian needs remain high, despite a period of relative stability since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement. The cumulative effects of years of conflict, food insecurity, climate-related issues, chronic vulnerabilities, a weak economy and inadequate basic services have diminished coping mechanisms.

105. Civilians, particularly women and children, continue to bear the brunt of violence and insecurity, including as victims of conflict-related sexual violence. I take note of the release of some women and children by SPLM/A-IO. I welcome the signing by SPLM/A-IO of the comprehensive action plan to end all the six grave violation perpetrated against children. I call upon the South Sudanese leaders to redouble their efforts to stop acts of conflict-related sexual violence by forces affiliated with them and to put in place effective assistance mechanisms for the victims. The perpetrators of such violence must realize that the international community is watching and that, one day, they will face justice for the crimes committed.

106. The imperative for peace is highlighted in the continuing dire humanitarian plight of the population that has been exacerbated by floods. In December, the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020 was launched, in which \$1.5 billion was requested to meet the life-saving needs of 5.6 million people. I once again call upon donors to generously contribute to this appeal.

107. The operational evolution of UNMISS, which has adopted a hub and spoke approach, has enabled it to better sustain the effect of deterring and mitigating violence. The approach has, in turn, allowed UNMISS to maximize its resources in order to maintain a more enduring presence, thereby increasing confidence within communities. I encourage the Security Council to support this operational evolution with the requisite resources.

108. In conclusion, I convey my deep appreciation to the uniformed and civilian personnel of UNMISS and to my Special Representative, David Shearer, for their tireless efforts to implement the mandate given for South Sudan. I thank the troop- and police-contributing countries for their contributions. I am also grateful to the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners for providing vital assistance across the country, often in insecure environments. Last, I acknowledge the indispensable efforts of the Heads of State and Government of IGAD, the President of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union, Cyril Ramaphosa, the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Special Envoy of IGAD, Ismail Wais, towards ensuring peace in South Sudan.

