



Security Council

Seventieth year

7581st meeting

Tuesday, 15 December 2015, 10.20 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Ms. Power (United States of America)

Members:

Angola	Mr. Lucas
Chad	Mr. Amir
Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
China	Mr. Zhao Yong
France	Mr. Delattre
Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Special report of the Secretary-General on the review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (S/2015/899)

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (S/2015/902)

Letter dated 23 November 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/903)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/967, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/899, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and document S/2015/902, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan. I also wish to draw members' attention to document S/2015/903, which contains the text of a letter dated 23 November 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Russian Federation, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President: There were 13 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2252 (2015).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation did not prevent the adoption of resolution 2252 (2015), on the extension of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Our decision was informed by the need to continue active international efforts to find a peaceful settlement to the armed conflict and by our understanding of the important role of the Mission in that process. Nevertheless, we could not vote in favour of that document because, as was the case with resolution 2241 (2015), its sponsors did not take into consideration a number of serious concerns on the part of the Russian delegation and some other Council delegations.

In particular, we believe that the wording formulated as an ultimatum with regard to sanctions against South Sudan is counterproductive. That has no place in this resolution, whose main purpose is to extend the mandate of this peacekeeping Mission and strengthen it with the task of assisting the peace process — and all the more so given the progress made in resolving the conflict, including the overall decrease in the intensity of hostilities, the withdrawal of the Ugandan troops from South Sudan, the withdrawal of Government troops from Juba and the agreement on the est in the capital and other cities of the joint integrated police. Moreover, we reject in principle situations in which some colleagues prefer to arbitrarily use Council sanctions instead of holding a serious political and diplomatic discussion.

Similarly, we cannot agree with the language pertaining to the intention of the Security Council to evaluate the work of the future hybrid court in South Sudan, for, in line with the peace agreement and the decisions of the African Union, the establishment and work of that judicial body is the exclusive purview of the African Union Commission.

Some Council delegations have already warned on a number of occasions of the unacceptability of attempts to deploy unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over the objections of the Government of South Sudan. As we have seen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the added value of using UAVs is in doubt.

Moreover, there are new, problematic provisions in the text, including an arbitrary interpretation of violations of international humanitarian law and the

devaluation of the United Nations guiding principles with regard to emergency humanitarian assistance.

We also have serious questions with regard to the working methods used by some of our colleagues in the Security Council, who abuse the practice of penholding by inconsiderately pushing through their national priorities and neglecting the red lines drawn by other delegations. That undermines Council unity and could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of its work.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its support for the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and acknowledges the valuable contribution of its staff to protect civilians, especially vulnerable groups such as women and children, as well as their role in facilitating access to humanitarian assistance in the country. We categorically condemn attacks against the Mission, its personnel and its facilities, whose inviolability must be respected in line with international law.

On the various occasions that we have discussed in the Council the overall issue of the conflict in South Sudan and the specific role of UNMISS, my country has unequivocally expressed its support for the Mission, especially given the support that the UNMISS is now to provide in the framework of the complex process of implementing the agreement on a resolution to the conflict in South Sudan, which was promoted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union.

Nevertheless, my country abstained in the voting on resolution 2252 (2015), on extending the UNMISS mandate. We did so because the negotiating process did not take into account some concerns of particular importance to Venezuela when it comes to the need to come up with a balanced text that reflects the views of the country concerned. In that connection, I should point out that the resolution includes elements that unnecessarily divert from the crucial goal of extending the UNMISS mandate as part of its role as one of the tools for contributing, from the perspective of its very specific remit, to the implementation of the peace agreement signed by the parties to the conflict. Such elements pertain, first of all, to the inclusion of aspects that could be counterproductive to achieving peace, such as references in the text to sanctions, which we do not believe relevant in this type of resolution.

Moreover, concerns expressed by several countries with regard to unmanned aerial vehicles and systems,

including Venezuela, were also ignored. On more than one occasion, that issue has given rise to opposition on the part of South Sudan owing to the implications for its sovereignty. Once more, the Council is going against the current on an issue that is controversial in and of itself. We reiterate that in no area of its work can a peacekeeping operation act without the consent of the host country — here the Government of South Sudan. For Venezuela this is a principle that cannot be violated. Continuing to press the issue, in an apparent effort to impose rather than to convince, does not seem to us to be the most suitable way of ensuring the goodwill and cooperation of the South Sudanese Government.

Likewise, we regret that no clarification has been included when it comes to the UNMISS mandate and the protection of civilians. That important, priority role should never be limited; rather, further focus should be placed on it, and it should be highlighted throughout the activities of the Mission, in accordance with the directives of the United Nations on peacekeeping operations.

Also, references to the hybrid tribunal for South Sudan could lead to confusion when it comes to the agreement promoted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union.

As on previous occasions, we participated actively in the discussions and negotiations on this resolution and expressed a constructive spirit and willingness to follow consensus. But the rejection we encountered on issues of principle, such as those to which I referred, led us to not support the adoption of this resolution as it was proposed. That in no way reflects a position against the Mission, or a deviation from our position on the need for African solutions for African countries, or a contradiction when it comes to the needs and interests of the men, women and children in need in South Sudan, who so greatly value the protection of UNMISS and its support in addressing the humanitarian crisis affecting so many parts of the country as a result of the conflict.

In conclusion, we are convinced that our African brothers and sisters, in particular in South Sudan, understand our position. While we regret that once again the spirit of unity that should mark the work of the Security Council has not been within reach due to the preference for a text that is vulnerable to potential controversy, we also hope that future discussions will bear in mind these concerns so as to arrive at a balanced text that serves as an effective tool in the work being done by UNMISS.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States of America.

Today's resolution 2252 (2015) affirms the Council's support for the peace agreement signed by South Sudanese parties in August and mandates certain additional tasks so that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) can better support the implementation of the agreement. We thank Council members for their support for the resolution. It retains UNMISS's core mandate to protect civilians, monitor and investigate human rights abuses and violations, and create conditions in which humanitarian assistance can reach people in need. It also answers the Secretary-General's call for increasing the number of troops and police assigned to UNMISS, and thereby strengthens the Mission's ability to protect civilians. That increase will further enable UNMISS to support ceasefire monitoring and provide technical assistance to the joint integrated police, which will be important for maintaining security in cities throughout the country.

The resolution also anticipates the return of nearly 3,000 members of the opposition to Juba. A return of such large numbers of opposition figures could change the dynamics in Juba, which is why we have asked the Secretary-General to undertake planning for UNMISS to ensure that it has a dedicated capacity to deter and respond to incidents in Juba so as to avoid any deterioration in security there. While the Council agreed on the necessary troop and police increases, we regret, as others have, that we could not reach full consensus on all elements of the resolution. Many of the main concerns raised remain the same as those at our last adoption, and I would like to briefly respond to them.

First, today's resolution expresses our continued commitment to using sanctions as a tool for peace. They are essential, as a tool in the toolbox, to marginalizing those who wish to derail an important agreement. The African Union (AU) has spoken forcefully about this issue on multiple occasions. In a 26 September communiqué of its Peace and Security Council, the AU expressed its determination "to impose measures against all those who would impede this agreement". Today's resolution takes the same position.

Secondly, like its predecessor, today's resolution recognizes the Council's responsibility to ensure that UNMISS peacekeepers have the tools and

technological capabilities they need to safely and fully fulfill their mission. We heard an extensive briefing from the Secretariat during our meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries (see S/PV.7569) on the important role that unarmed and unmanned aerial systems and helicopters can play in helping missions fulfil their difficult mandates. We owe it to the troops and police on the ground to provide them with those lifesaving tools. They are asking for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) so they can know what is going on around them, so that they are less at risk and so they can better fulfil their mandates. We are listening to the troop contributors. This issue should not and need not be politicized. As a matter of fact, we wonder if the countries that abstained in the voting on this resolution, citing UAVs, would do so if they had battalions of peacekeepers on the ground.

Finally, today's resolution reflects the fact that ensuring accountability for crimes and abuses, and providing access to justice for victims, represents a central part of building peace, not an obstacle to maintaining it. The hybrid court proposed in the peace agreement could play an important role in that effort, and the resolution reaffirms the Security Council's commitment to staying involved in the development of that institution. This is really important. It is important because impunity must end if peace and security are to take hold and to endure. There cannot be collective guilt, and justice is a critical means for ending collective guilt.

South Sudan has an opportunity to close the door on conflict and reclaim the promise we all saw at its birth as a nation four years ago. Today's resolution will help them to do so, and I thank the Council for its work. If holding partners to their commitments to implementing the agreement, providing access to justice for victims and supplying troop contributors with the tools they need to do their jobs safely leads to abstentions, that is very unfortunate for a Council that has agreed on such issues in many other contexts in the past. We seek unity, for sure, but today's strong vote reinforces our determination to ensure that UNMISS can respond to a very real crisis, which persists, and the very real needs in South Sudan.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.