



**Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
(RJMEC)**

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE 33RD MEETING OF THE RECONSTITUTED JOINT
MONITORING AND EVALUATION COMMISSION HELD ON 7TH DECEMBER 2023
AT BEIJING JUBA HOTEL, SOUTH SUDAN**

The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) convened its 33rd meeting on 7 December 2023 in Juba, South Sudan from 10:25am. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Amb. Maj Gen (rtd) Charles Tai Gituai, Interim Chairperson of the RJMEC.

Agenda

1. Opening Prayers
2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 32nd RJMEC Meeting
5. Statement by the RJMEC Interim Chairperson
6. Report from RTGoNU
7. Report from the PFM-OC
8. Report from NTC
9. Briefing from UNMISS SRSG
10. Reports from Mechanisms on progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS
 - a. NCAC
 - b. CTSAMVM
 - c. JDB
 - d. SDSR Board
 - e. JMCC
 - f. DDR Commission
 - g. JRC
11. Discussions
12. Review of the Resolution
13. Date for the Next Meeting
14. A.O.B
15. Chairperson's Closing Remarks
16. Closing Prayers.

Attendance:

For the Parties to the R-ARCSS:

1. Hon. Michael Lueth Makuei (ITGoNU)
2. Hon. Stephen Par Kuol (SPLM/IO)
3. Maj. Gen. Bior Leek Kuareng (FD)
4. Hon. Wilson Lodiong Sebit (OPP)

For the Other South Sudanese Stakeholders and Adherents:

1. Retired Bishop Enock Tombe (Faith-based Leader)
2. Sheikh Jaralnebi Khamis Mursal (Faith-based Leader)
3. Mr. Dabek Mabior Arok (CSO Alliance)
4. Mr Patrick Godi (Youth)

5. Dr. Angelina Bazugba (Academia)
6. Mrs. Abuk Jervas Makuak (Business Community)
7. Mrs. Yar Manoa Majok (Business Community)
8. Nagomoro Bridget (Women's Bloc)
9. Mr. John Gai Yoh (Eminent Personality)
10. Mr. Taban Christopher (CS Forum)

For the Regional Guarantors:

1. Mr. Rabeh Mohamed (Djibouti)
2. Mr. John Nyaga (Kenya)
3. Mr. Tukur Maigari (Nigeria)
4. Mr Iuvuye Mato (South Africa)
5. Dr. Sally Wangamati (AUMISS)
6. Mr. Mustafa A (Sudan)
7. H.E. Yohannes Tekle Michael (Eritrea)

For International Partners and Friends of South Sudan:

1. H.E. Michael j. Adler (US)
2. H.E. Linken Berryman (Norway)
3. H.E. Marjan Schippers (Netherlands)
4. H.E. Timo Olkkonen (EU)
5. H.E. Ma Qiang (China)
6. H.E. Guy Warrington (UK)
7. Mr. Michael Bryant (IPF) Canada
8. Mr. Guang Cong (UNMISS)

For RJMEC Secretariat:

1. Dr Thomson Fontaine, Deputy Chief of Staff – Strategy
2. Mr Oola Stephen, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Advisor
3. Dr Job Akuni, Senior Governance Advisor (Minutes Secretary)

For Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms:

1. Lt. Gen. Rabi Mujung Emmanuel (JDB)
2. Maj. Gen. Jacob Nyier Gatkuoth (Head of JDB Secretariat)
3. Maj. Gen. Pal Yiech Lam (Deputy Head of JMCC Secretariat)
4. Maj. Gen. Buda John Aban (JMCC)
5. Mr. Wilson Lual Lual (DDR Commission)
6. Maj. Gen. Hailu Gonfa Eddosa (Chairperson CTSAMVM)
7. Mr Gichira Kibara (NCAC)
8. Mr Benjamin Ayali Kayongwa (MoFP)

Observers:

1. H.E Erdem Mutaf (Turkiye)
2. Hilding Lunokvist (Sweden)
3. Mr Tomoko Watanabe (Japan)
4. Mr Marius Hochstrasse (Switzerland)
5. H.E. Vishnu Kumar Sharma (India)
6. Mr Saced Ezzat (Egypt)

7. Mr. Peterson Magoola (UNWOMEN)
8. Mr. Leon Kohl (German)

For RJMEC Secretariat:

1. Dr Thomson Fontaine, Deputy Chief of Staff – Strategy
2. Mr Oola Stephen, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Advisor
3. Dr Job Akuni, Senior Governance Advisor (Minutes Secretary)

Min. 01/33/23: Opening Prayers

1. The opening prayers were led by faith-based leaders: Sheik Jaralnabi Khamis Mursal and Prof Angelina Bazugba (Academia).

Min. 02/33/23: Chairperson's Opening Remarks

2. The Chairperson welcomed the RJMEC members to the meeting and informed them of the provision under the R-ARCSS that and the RJMEC Rules of Procedure that this meeting would continue normally with or without a quorum given that the previous meeting failed to have it.

Min. 03/33/23: Adoption of the Agenda

3. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

Min. 04/33/23: Adoption of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4. The minutes of the 32nd meeting was reviewed and an amendment was made to paragraph 11.5. on p.18 under Min.11/32/23, to include the National Elections Commission in the list of institutions being supported by the EU. Following this amendment, the minutes of the 33rd RJMEC meeting were proposed by the UK Ambassador, Guy Warrington and seconded by Maj. Gen. Bior Leek Kuareng (FDs) and adopted as the true record of the meeting.

Min. 05/33/23 Statement by the RJMEC Interim Chairperson

5. The RJMEC Interim Chairperson highlighted the following key issues:
 - 5.1 the recently reconstituted Political Parties Council (PPC), the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) and the National Elections Commission (NEC) need operationalisation and resourcing;
 - 5.2 legislative reforms are in progress though the passing of the National Security Service Bill, the National Audit Chamber Bill and the Public Finance Management and Accountability Bill are still pending; the work of the Judicial Reform Committee (JRC) has largely stalled due to lack of funding;
 - 5.3 several armed clashes have been reported in different parts of the country, including Leer, and Guit, Unity State, and in Warrap State and the Abyei Administrative Area;
 - 5.4 defection of Gen Simon Maguek Gai from the SPLA-IO supposedly to the SSPDF resulted in tensions in Unity State and the defectors reportedly attacked the SPLA-IO forces in Kaygaii; SSPDF and NAS clashes continued in Central Equatoria; redeployment of the military component of NUF commenced in November; there is urgency for validation of the defence and security policy documents prepared by the SDSR Board as well as payment of the arrears of the Board members; the draft CTC ToR were reviewed and await endorsement by the CTSAMVM Board on 11 December 2023;
 - 5.5 humanitarian needs are worsening and are projected to rise and there is need to establish the SRF;
 - 5.6 there is need to expedite the passing of legislation which would facilitate reforms to increase transparency and accountability in the economic sector, including the National Audit Chamber Bill, the Public Finance Management and Accountability Bill and the Land Policy;

- 5.7 noted the tabling of the CTRH and CRA Bills before the TNLA; emphasized the need for resourcing the constitution-making institutions i.e., the NCRC and the Preparatory Sub-Committee for the National Constitutional Conference;
- 5.8 concluded by drawing attention to critical pending tasks of the R-ARCSS and recommended the following: (a) RTGoNU to fund and operationalise the elections-related reconstituted institutions; (b) TNLA to enact the Bills currently before them; (c) RTGoNU to address the insecurity in all conflict hotspots; (d) communicate the Phase I NUF deployment plan, and commence Phase II training; (e) establish the Special Reconstruction Fund and Board; and (f) urgently review the Land Act.

Min. 06/33/23: Report from the RTGoNU

6. The representative of the RTGoNU informed that there was no written report to present to the plenary. He conveyed an apology from Dr Martin Lomuro, the focal person of the RTGoNU who is out of the country. However, he provided the following report orally:
 - 6.1. The RTGoNU established the PPC, NCRC and NEC. The PPC took oath of office and started their work, paving the way for the registration of the political parties.
 - 6.2. The NEC, once sworn in, will prepare the electoral roadmap and present to the RTGoNU for adoption. There is need for civic education.
 - 6.3. Phase I of NUF have commenced deployment armed with sticks due to the pressure from the international community and RJMEC Resolutions. RTGoNU continuously called on the members to appeal to the UNSC to lift the arms embargo on South Sudan. Phase II is being prepared.
 - 6.4. Appealed for the best ways of assisting the deployed NUF so that they are able to perform their duties.
 - 6.5. On humanitarian assistance, the RTGoNU is trying its best but the needs are huge. Some of drivers were unforeseen. Commended the partners for providing support to those affected. The RTGoNU response to the humanitarian emergencies is also affecting the implementation of the R-ARCSS.
 - 6.6. The CTRH and CRA Bills are before TNLA awaiting their consideration.
 - 6.7. There have been talks regarding civic and political space. The political parties were allowed to commence their political activities, including conducting meetings and opening offices throughout South Sudan even before the PPC was reconstituted. He noted that there are no political parties prevented from conducting political activities or being denied access to the public media. In addition, there is misleading information that the FVP is not allowed freedom of movement.
 - 6.8. The JRC is functioning, its timeframe was extended previously and the resources for the Committee were endorsed by the RTGoNU Council of Ministers.
 - 6.9. Intercommunal conflict has been a problem for a long time. This requires peace mediation under the auspices of the Ministry of Peacebuilding.
 - 6.10. On the SSPDF and NAS clashes, the RTGoNU has the responsibility to protect the civil population. In spite of the Rome-led talks, NAS still continues to attack the government soldiers and civilians.
 - 6.11. Defectors who come to the SSPDF are not rejected, so that they do not return to cause more rebellion. Also, there are SSPDF defectors to other parties e.g., SPLA-IO. Defections are not of any help since they will all be unified.

- 6.12. The funding of mechanism and institutions of the R-ARCSS has been an outstanding issue.
- 6.13. Commended the resilience of the R-ARCSS whose implementation has surpassed five years mark.
- 6.14. On elections, there has been no unilateral declaration, since the Roadmap provided for elections in 2024. Without elections, the international community and South Sudanese will disown the parties to the R-ARCSS. Also, there are ongoing debates regarding the requirements for conducting elections, and whether elections should be conducted without the making of the permanent constitution or not.
- 6.15. Some members of the international community are responsible for the delays in the implementation of the R-ARCSS e.g., UNSC and its embargos. There is need for pressure to be exerted on the UNSC to lift the arms embargo.
- 6.16. The disarmament of the civil population requires NUF to be better armed.

Min. 07/33/23: Briefing from the NTC

- 7. The Secretary of the NTC regretted to report that the mechanism does not have a written report to be presented to the plenary.

Min. 08/33/23: Briefing from UNMISS SRSG

- 8. The DSRSG briefed as follows:
 - 8.1. commended H.E. President Salva Kiir for assuming the mantle of the EAC leadership;
 - 8.2. reported the UNMISS briefing to the AUPSC in which the SRSG encouraged the RTGoNU to fully fund and operationalise the elections and constitution-making bodies, and called for dialogue among the leaders; it further underscored the importance of regional and international support to the South Sudan peace process;
 - 8.3. welcomed the commencement and ongoing deployment of NUF; appealed for funding for the Transitional Security Arrangements; expressed concerns on the reports of armed violence in Abyei Administrative Area and Warrap State; and the fighting and mobilization in Leer state and Guit County in Unity State;
 - 8.4. condemned military defections as they threaten and undermine trust among the parties; cautioned against temptation towards unilateralism; and urged for interparty dialogue to de-escalate hostilities and for dispute resolution;
 - 8.5. reported the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for supporting 6 million needy South Sudanese. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan is expected to deteriorate in 2024. At least 420,000 people had crossed from Sudan to South Sudan by 3 December 2023. There is need for more support to the returnees, refugees and stateless persons in the country. He appealed for more humanitarian agencies to continue to provide services;
 - 8.6. expressed concern that: (a) the timeline in the Roadmap is behind schedule; (b) practical compromises are diminishing on critical pending issues; (c) there are contrasting statements on elections preparedness which call for dialogue; (d) the year 2024 requires renewed drive and a sense of urgency; and (e) the RTGoNU needs to resource the NCRC, NEC and PPC.
 - 8.7. UNMISS will continue to support the RTGoNU and the parties to the R-ARCSS to advance the South Sudan peace process.

Statement by the Eminent Personality

- 8.8. The representative noted that five years of the R-ARCSS is a long time which provides for reflection on what was achieved, noting that challenges have continued to be many. He observed that if there were any lessons to be learnt, they would be that problems do not solve themselves as they tend to multiply. The tools for conflict resolution are not static either. A few years ago, things were different, while today, we deal with completely new things. The Roadmap suggests that timelines require new rather than conventional thinking.
- 8.9. Three critical issues were highlighting: (a) food; (b) unification of the security forces; and (c) elections. Next year the world will experience a food crisis. We therefore need to be careful with money. Regarding unification of forces and elections, both require funding. The end game needs not to be perfect. Whereas elections are the end game, South Sudan needs to move on. We should also avoid thinking in a linear manner. Reaching this far means that there are some good things which were achieved over the past five years.

Statement by the AUMISS

- 8.10. The AUMISS representative congratulated President Salva Kiir Mayardit upon his assumption of the chairmanship of the East African Community on 23rd November 2023. The AUMISS representative appreciated the statements made by the RJMEC Interim Chairperson and the recommendations contained therein, and the briefings from the UNMISS, RTGoNU, Ambassadors, civil society representative. The AUMISS representative concluded by encouraging the RTGoNU to expedite implementation of the outstanding critical tasks of the R-ARCSS.

Statement by the EU

- 8.11. The EU representative raised two issues on civic space and political space which needed to go beyond political parties to include a wider perspective how citizen can engage in debates. Examples provided included arrests in the country; closing of a newspaper, which was raised by the Union of Journalists. Given the nature of elections and the running of the constitution-making process, and short timeframe left, it was incumbent upon the political leaders to provide the NEC and NCRC with the support they require to deliver on their mandates.

Statement by the IPF

- 8.12. The IPF representative took note of the reconstitution of the elections and constitution-making related institutions. The members of the NCRC and NEC are yet to be sworn in to take up their respective mandates, the delivery of which includes resourcing them. The month of December was key for elections. If the RTGoNU misses the 15 December timeline for supplementary budget, then it would leave the December 2024 elections in limbo.
- 8.13. The member commended the commencement of the NUF redeployment and urged for commencement of Phase II. In addition, appealed to the TNLA to expedite the passing of the National Security Service Bill.
- 8.14. Further commended the successful conduct of the 7th Governors' Forum which provided space for discussions on the issues at level of the states and Administrative Areas. Political and civic space is limited.
- 8.15. The ongoing COP28 provided an opportunity for South Sudan to mobilise support for addressing climate change issues in the country. There is also need for support to all the Agreement institutions and mechanisms. Finally, the representative commended President Salva Kiir Mayardit for being entrusted with the leadership of the East African Community.

Statement by the TROIKA

- 8.16. The Troika representative reported that last month, there was no quorum for the RJMEC meeting. With only 12 months left to elections, time was running out. The same issues raised in the last meeting remained unresolved. There was therefore need for compromises between the parties and resolving their differences.
- 8.17. Public revenues need to be used transparently. In the regard, the RTGoNU needs to pay salaries. South Sudan has resources for addressing humanitarian needs, providing services and for implementation of the R-ARCSS.
- 8.18. The member urged for respect for human rights, as highlighted by the campaign on the 16 days of activism. RTGoNU to hold perpetrators of SGBV accountable.
- 8.19. On the issue of the arms embargo, there are five benchmarks which the UNSC considers critical to be implemented so as to inform its review. Political space remains a challenge. Political and civic space exists when individuals can express views without bullying.

Statement by the Ambassador of China

- 8.20. Commended RJMEC for supervising the implementation of the R-ARCSS. There has been positive progress in legislative reforms, unification of process, and reconstitution of the three institutions. RTGoNU is preparing for elections and should expedite the implementation of the R-ARCSS. Further, the parties and institutions need to look for all options for seeking compromises without resorting to violence. He recognised the sovereignty of South Sudan in resolving their own issues. Finally, the member pledged China's commitment in working together with the international community in supporting the South Sudan peace process.

Statement by IGAD Ambassador

- 8.21. The IGAD Ambassador appreciated progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, and commended President Salva Kiir Mayardit for assuming the EAC chairmanship;
- 8.22. informed that the AUPSC convened a meeting on the situation in South Sudan; commended the reconstitution of the three critical institutions for the holding of elections and making of the permanent constitution;
- 8.23. commended the redeployment of the first phase of NUF and called on the international community to reconsider the sanctions imposed on South Sudan and appealed to the RTGoNU to embark on Phase II of NUF; and
- 8.24. further informed that many refugees are in the country and this requires partners to support them and the returnees. In that regard, he appealed to the RTGoNU to avail resources to implement the peace process and operationalisation of reconstituted institutions.

Statement by Civil Society

- 8.25. The CSO representative expressed concerns on the insecurity in the country which needed a sustainable solution. In addition, the member demanded for a credible constitution-making process. He expressed deep concern regarding the lack of significant progress on the pillars for elections.

- 8.26. The member observed the progress made in transitional justice and pledged to engage with the TNLA on matters related to the draft CTRH and CTA Bills. The member urged the RTGoNU to expand and protect political and space.

Min. 09/33/23: Reports from Mechanisms on progress in implementation of the R-ARCSS:

9. The following are the reports from the Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms:

Report from the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC)

- 9.1. The NCAC held a stakeholders' forum for the review of the Mining Act, incorporating the views of the stakeholders. A final marked-up version of the Act was developed and used to prepare a draft Amendment Bill, which was being considered by the Committee and to be submitted to the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs later in the month.
- 9.2. In addition, the NCAC conducted consultations with experts assisting in the review of the pension law on the nature and scope of the review as required by the Revitalised Agreement. The Committee planned to conduct a two-day stakeholders' meeting on the review of the Pension Fund Act, 2012 from 14-15 December 2023.
- 9.3. Furthermore, the Committee continued to experience challenges including delays by the parties and stakeholders in responding to NCAC requests for submissions or information necessary for its work.
- 9.4. Despite a Cabinet Resolution in May 2023 directing payment of the national members allowances, both the arrears and current payment, no payment was made to the members. The chairperson of NCRC therefore urged the RTGoNU to expedite the payment of national members allowances to facilitate the work of the Committee.

Report from the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM)

- 9.5. The CTSAMVM chairperson reported on its activities since the last plenary, including ongoing daily monitoring operations, current situation and deployment of NUF. In addition, he reported on the tense situation in Unity State occasioned by the defection of Lt Gen Simon Maguck from SPLM/A-IO to SSPDF and subsequent arrest of SPLM/A-IO personnel in Koch.
- 9.6. CTSAMVM is investigating the 28 November 2023 clashes near Leer and in Guit County, and attack by Agwelek forces in Tonga on 22 October 2023. Further, the Chairperson wanted to know the status of the Agwelek forces. There is an ongoing SSPDF operation against NAS in Ombasi in Yei River County.
- 9.7. The deployment of the NUF to various locations was ongoing although without weapons. CTSAMVM requested the NUF deployment plan from the JDB for monitoring and verification purposes and the plan for Phase II NUF training.
- 9.8. So far, nine CTSAMVM violation reports awaited review, endorsement and publication. The CTC draft terms of reference reviewed by a joint technical team would be endorsed by the Board on 11 December. There was also a plan for the CTC to meet and discuss the outstanding violation reports before 15 December 2023.

Report from the Joint Defence Board (JDB)

- 9.9. The JDB representative congratulated RJMEC for the five-year progress report on the implementation of the R-ARCSS. He informed members that the co-chairs were in Malakal to launch the redeployment of two battalions of NUF. The JDB continued to be reassured by the Principals that the disagreement on the mid-level echelons of the NUF would be resolved by the concerned parties. They are rendering the necessary support for the appointment of this level.
- 9.10. The member highlighted the challenges including that most of the food and medicine distributed to the training centres was exhausted, their offices at the South Sudan Hotel closed and that there were shift in allegiance among some forces which resulted in the loss of lives.

Report from the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) Board

- 9.11. There was no report received from the SDSR.

Report from the Joint Transitional Security Committee (JTSC)

- 9.12. The JTSC submitted a written report but there was no member to present it verbally to the meeting.

Report from the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission (JMCC)

- 9.13. The JMCC reported that it prepared an action plan and drafted the budget for Phase II training of NUF. However, the Commission had not received any funding for its activities, running its offices or incentives for staff, including accommodation. In addition, JMCC needed facilitation to visit the training centres before the end of 2023. Also, the food items meant for Upper Nile cantonment sites and barracks were not delivered. There was also need for food supplies to be procured for Phase II NUF. He also informed that on 28th November, SPLA-IO soldiers led by Gen Simon Maguek which defected to SSPDF, clashed with SPLA-IO in cantonment site in Leer County, Unity State.
- 9.14. The JMCC recommended: (a) expeditious deployment of NUF; (b) facilitation to visit assembly points this year; (c) NTC to deliver food to the barracks and training centres ahead of commencement of Phase II training; (d) NTC to address the welfare needs of JMCC members; (e) JDB to de-escalate the tensions in Unity State and (f) CTSAMVM to continue to investigate, verify and report on violations.

Report from the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission

- 9.15. The representative of the DDR Commission stated that as they did not have funding, their activities stalled, some ex-combatants were at the Training Centres while others wet to their respective homes. The Community Violence Reduction initiative launched recently in Wau continued to be implemented. Looking ahead, the DDR Commission would require support from stakeholders to implement its programmes.

Report from the Judicial Reform Committee (JRC)

- 9.16. No report was submitted as the JRC did not attend the meeting.

Min. 10/33/23: Discussions on Statements and Reports

10. Members welcomed the statement of the RJMEC Chairperson and reports from the RTGoNU, the DSRSG, and the Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms. In addition, the following issues were raised and discussed:

- 10.1. **SPLM/A-IO:** The function of the RJMEC is to monitor and evaluate implementation of the R-ARCSS and to raise issues to the RTGoNU. Clarified that the Roadmap is a guiding document for implementing outstanding tasks of the R-ARCSS so as to resolve the conflict, and not all about elections. He cautioned that very few elections in Africa resolve conflict and that most of them instead result in conflict. The RJMEC's focus should be on what has been implemented, what has not implemented and analysis of the reasons for the delays.
- 10.2. Regarding defections, when they are from SPLA-IO, the ceasefire is violated. Defections are incentivised. For instance, when Gen. Simon Maguck defected, he was received at the SPLM Headquarters. Those people who received him should be held responsible for the violations. RJMEC should hold the violators responsible.
- 10.3. The member clarified that the responsibilities of the NTC end at the point of redeployment of the NUF and the Ministry concerned takes over their responsibility.
- 10.4. **Civil Society:** Expressed concerns regarding selective implementation of the R-ARCSS. Elections talks are clouding systematic implementation of the R-ARCSS. In the circumstances, he wondered whether elections are a priority to South Sudan. The member also wanted to know the status of the NUF, particularly those who are not yet deployed. The member also asked whether resources were available for implementation for the R-ARCSS and urged for transparency and accountability. In addition, the member wanted to know where the weapons which were used during the war by belligerents are found.
- 10.5. **Business Community:** Commended the members for being patient for the last 5 years of implementation of the R-ARCSS which has provided for comprehensive reforms. However, there is no progress in the unification of forces which was a pre-transitional period task. Economic reforms are critical for the business community yet there is no progress as it was reported during the last meeting by the Ministry of Finance. The RTGoNU should implement the R-ARCSS in letter and spirit as per the implementation schedule. The member wondered who deployed the security personnel conducting operations against the Juba gangs, including to harass women ladies with dreadlocks and in miniskirts. Such operations should stay clear of the market areas.
- 10.6. **US:** Asked for clarification on the number of Phase I NUF already deployed.
- 10.7. **OPP:** Congratulated the President for being entrusted with the leadership of the East African Community. The member expressed disappointment with the lack of a report from the NTC. On elections, its conduct requires a conducive environment: economic, political, security, etc. In that regard, he appealed for coordination and consensus among the parties in the R-ARCSS on elections.
- 10.8. **Civil Society:** Appreciated the progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS and the relative peace and trust among the parties. The member appealed for the NEC to be inclusive and for funding of the R-ARCSS from the RTGoNU and international partners.
- 10.9. **ITGoNU:** Appreciated the comments regarding the appointment of H.E. the President for assuming the EAC leadership. On the civic and political space, the closure of the newspaper referenced earlier by a member was because it violated the R-ARCSS and the law against hate speech. He added that freedoms are not absolute because they have limitations. Public gatherings are approved to allow for protection of the organizers.
- 10.10. On elections, the member informed that the NEC will determine the electoral calendar, including the elections-related activities to be undertaken. In addition, that the parties were at crossroads, noting that they do not go for elections, they will be stoned, and if we do go for elections, they will also be stoned. Therefore, it would be better to go for elections and be stoned.

- 10.11. On the number of NUF deployed, they include the army and the other organized forces. The deployment of security, particularly the army, is a confidential security matter to be respected. On SGBV, the member argued that the RTGoNU should not be held accountable for offences committed by individuals.
- 10.12. Regarding the concerns raised by a member regarding bank accounts of some CSO activists which are frozen by the Government, the member informed that some of the affected bank accounts belong to rebels and they cannot be unfrozen.
- 10.13. On allegations of clashes, the member advised CTSAMVM to investigate, verify, discuss and then get the reports duly signed by the parties.
- 10.14. In addition, the member asserted that Phase I NUF was rushed as the forces were not properly screened as the opposition went to cantonment sites without arms. It was difficult for RTGoNU to deploy the SSPDF component of NUF with arms when their counterparts, the opposition, are without arms. However, Phase II would be different. Besides, the ex-combatants are in the training centres and the DDR Commission are not ready to receive them. Such challenges shall be avoided in Phase II and forces without rifles will not be received.
- 10.15. **JDB:** Six battalions of the NUF have been deployed so far. A detailed written report will be provided to the RJMEC Chairperson. It is not good to provide details of the deployment of the NUF because of security concerns. On the deployment plan, this will be provided by the CDF. Some of the NUF who were not soldiers but civilians. The deployed soldiers are not getting monthly salaries/allowances. The SSPDF are also not getting their monthly salaries on time.

Min. 11/33/23: Review of the Resolution

11. The resolution was reviewed and the final version to be shared with the members.

Min. 12/33/23: Date for the Next Meeting

12. It was agreed that date for the 34th RJMEC monthly meeting will be communicated to the members after Christmas break by the Secretariat.

Min. 13/33/23: A.O.B.

13. There was no A.O.B raised at the meeting.

Min. 14/33/23: Chairperson's Closing Remarks

14. The Chairperson thanked members for their participation in the meeting given that it is the last meeting of the year. RJMEC expects to receive reports from the mechanisms. Appealed to the parties to show commitment by attending all RJMEC meetings. Next year, other agreement institutions and mechanisms which will be invited to brief the RJMEC plenary pursuant to article 7.9 of the R-ARCSS. Wished all a merry Christmas and Happy New Year, ready to reconvene in the new year energised.

Min.15/33/23: Closing Prayers

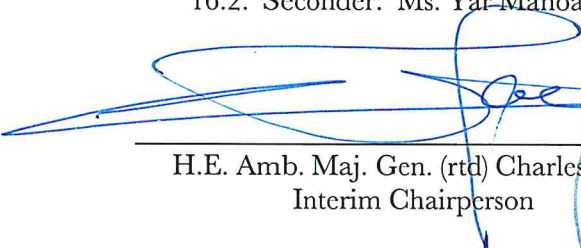
15. Bishop Enock Tombe and Sheik Jaralncbi, the faith-based leaders, led the closing prayer. There being no other business, the 33rd RJMEC monthly meeting was adjourned at 14:45 hours.

Min.16/33/23: Adoption of the Minutes

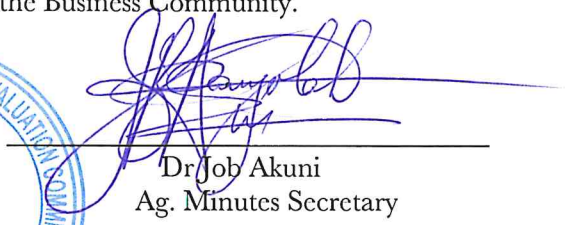
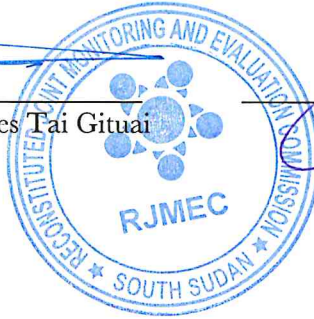
16. The minutes of the 33rd RJMEC meeting were proposed, seconded and adopted as the true record of the meeting as follows:

16.1. Proposer: H.E. Guy Warrington, UK Ambassador

16.2. Seconder: Ms. Yar Manoa, representative of the Business Community.



H.E. Amb. Maj. Gen. (rtd) Charles Tai Gituai
Interim Chairperson



Dr. Job Akuni
Ag. Minutes Secretary