



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

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE 34TH MEETING OF THE RECONSTITUTED JOINT
MONITORING AND EVALUATION COMMISSION HELD ON 8TH FEBRUARY 2024
AT BEIJING JUBA HOTEL, SOUTH SUDAN**

The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) convened its 34th meeting on 8 February 2024 in Juba, South Sudan from 10:40am. 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 33rd 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. Dr. Martin Elia Lomuro (ITGoNU)
2. Hon. Gatwech Lam Puoch (SPLM/A- IO)
3. Hon. Sandra Bona Malwal (SPLM/A-IO)
4. Brig. Gen Samuel Chol Mut (SSOA)
5. Maj. Gen. Bior Leek Kuareng (FD)
6. Hon. Wilson Lodiong Sebit (OPP).

For the Other South Sudanese Stakeholders and Adherents:

1. Retired Bishop Enock Tombe (Faith-based Leader)
2. Sheik Jaralnebi Khamis Mursal (Faith-based Leader)

3. Mr. Taban A. Christopher (CSO Forum)
4. Mr Patrick A. Godi (Youth).
5. Prof. Pauline Riak (Academia)
6. Mrs. Abuk Jervas Makuak (Business Community)
7. Mrs. Yar Manoa Majok (Business Community)
8. Ms. Eva Christo (Women Coalition)
9. Mr. Dabek Mabior Arok (CSO Alliance)

For the Regional Guarantors:

1. Mr. Rabch Mohamed (Djibouti)
2. H.E. Yohannes Tekle Michael (Eritrea).
3. Mr. Somon Mamo (Ethiopia)
4. Mr. Gervas Ogutu (Kenya)
5. Scp. Sakira Moses (Uganda)
6. Mr. Tukur Maigari (Nigeria)
7. Mr Luvuye Mato (South Africa)
8. Prof. Joram M. Biswaro (AUMISS)
9. Mr. Goram Goraish (Sudan)
10. H.E. Ismail Wais (IGAD SE)

For International Partners and Friends of South Sudan:

1. H.E. Guy Warrington (UK)
2. Mr. Andrei M. Cotton (US)
3. Mr. Lars P. Hene (Norway)
4. Mr. Lothar Juschhc (EU)
5. Mr. Hou Xiangyu (China)
6. Mr. Michael Bryant (IPF) Canada
7. Prof. Nicholas Haysom (UNMISS).

For RJMEC Secretariat:

1. Dr Thomson Fontaine, Deputy Chief of Staff – Strategy
2. Mr Oola Stephen, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Advisor
3. Ms Frida Lyaruu (Minutes Secretary).

For Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms:

1. Maj. Gen. Jacob Nyier Gatkuoth (Head of JDB Secretariat)
2. Maj. Gen. Pal Yiech Lam (Deputy Head of JMCC Secretariat)
3. Maj. Gen. Buda John Aban (JMCC)
4. Hon. Ayuen Alier Jongor (DDR Commission)
5. Maj. Gen. Hailu Gonfa Eddosa (Chairperson CTSAMVM)
6. Mr. Arve Lackitzen (CTSAMVM Chief of Staff)
7. Prof. Abednego Akok Kacuol (NEC)
8. Hon. Gabriel Gabriel Deng (NEC)
9. Mr. Ahon Malou Luech (NEC)
10. Hon. Dr. Rieng Yar Zuor (NCRC)
11. Dr. Awak Bior Ajang (NCRC)
12. Hon. Eng. James Akol Zakayo (PPC)
13. Hon. Lona James Ludiyo (PPC)
14. Hon. Dr. Peter James Lado (PPC)

15. Hon. Clement Juma (NCAC)
16. Justice Ajonje Perpetua (JRC)

Observers:

1. H.E Erdem Mutaf (Turkiye)
2. Hilding Lunokvist (Sweden)
3. H.E. Odagiri Toshio (Japan)
4. Mr. Marius Hochsstrasse (Switzerland)
5. H.E. Vishnu Kumar Sharma (India)
6. Mr. Saced Ezzat (Egypt)
7. Ms. Rukaya Mohamed (UNWOMEN)
8. Wendels Margarete (Germany)
9. Ms. Catherine Waliaula (UNDP)
10. Ms. Brenda Engola (UN RCO)
11. Mr. Asapha Chande (Zimbabwe)
12. Col. John Taker Kai (SSM)

List of Acronyms

<i>CTSAMVM</i>	<i>Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism</i>
<i>CTC</i>	<i>CTSAMVM Technical Committee</i>
<i>CTRH</i>	<i>Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing</i>
<i>DDR</i>	<i>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</i>
<i>IGAD</i>	<i>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</i>
<i>IDPs</i>	<i>Internally Displaced Persons</i>
<i>ITGoNU</i>	<i>Incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity</i>
<i>JDB</i>	<i>Joint Defence Board</i>
<i>JMCC</i>	<i>Joint Military Ceasefire Commission</i>
<i>JRC</i>	<i>Judicial Reform Committee</i>
<i>JSC</i>	<i>Judicial Services Commission</i>
<i>JTSC</i>	<i>Joint Transitional Security Committee</i>
<i>MoFP</i>	<i>Ministry of Finance and Planning</i>
<i>MoJCA</i>	<i>Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs</i>
<i>NCAC</i>	<i>National Constitutional Amendment Committee</i>
<i>NCC</i>	<i>National Constitutional Conference</i>
<i>NCRC</i>	<i>National Constitutional Review Commission</i>
<i>NEC</i>	<i>National Elections Commission</i>
<i>NTC</i>	<i>National Transitional Committee</i>
<i>NUF</i>	<i>Necessary Unified Forces</i>
<i>PPC</i>	<i>Political Parties Council</i>
<i>PSC</i>	<i>Preparatory Sub-Committee</i>
<i>R-ARCSS</i>	<i>Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan</i>
<i>RJMEC</i>	<i>Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission</i>
<i>RTGoNU</i>	<i>Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity</i>
<i>SDSRB</i>	<i>Strategic Defence and Security Review Board</i>
<i>SRF</i>	<i>Special Reconstruction Fund</i>
<i>SSOA</i>	<i>South Sudan Opposition Alliance</i>
<i>SPLM</i>	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Movement</i>
<i>SPLM-IO</i>	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition</i>
<i>SSPDF</i>	<i>South Sudan People's Defence Force</i>
<i>UN</i>	<i>United Nations</i>
<i>UNMISS</i>	<i>United Nations Mission in South Sudan</i>

Min. 01/34/24: Opening Prayers

1. The opening prayers were led by faith-based leaders: Bishop Enock Tombe and Sheik Jaralnabi Khamis Mursal.

Min. 02/34/24: Chairperson's Opening Remarks

2. The Chairperson wished members a Happy New Year and welcomed them to the 34th meeting of the RJMEC and the first plenary meeting for the year 2024.

Min. 03/34/24: Adoption of the Agenda

3. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

Min. 04/34/24: Adoption of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4. The minutes of the 33rd meeting were reviewed with amendments made to some names of members. The adoption of the minutes of the 33rd RJMEC meeting as a true record of the meeting were proposed by the UK Ambassador, Guy Warrington and seconded by Mrs. Yar Manoa Majok (Business Community).

Min. 05/34/24 Statement by the RJMEC Interim Chairperson

5. The RJMEC Interim Chairperson highlighted the following key issues:
 - 5.1 2024 is a significant and important year for South Sudan, members of the RJMEC, and monitors of the Revitalised Peace Agreement. Expressed that much work needed to be done to create an enabling environment for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections, as per the Agreement and the Roadmap;
 - 5.2 called on the Parties in particular, to redouble efforts to achieve the historic goal smoothly;
 - 5.3 encouraged with the commendable progress made regarding the reconstitution and operationalisation of critical institutions, namely, the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC), the National Elections Commission (NEC), and the Political Parties Council (PPC). However, shared concerns of the delays in their establishment, and the short time left for them to deliver their important mandate;
 - 5.4 highlighted the recurring challenges facing implementation of the Agreement, and steps to mitigate them. The challenges included, among others, lack of sufficient funding, trust deficit, capacity gaps, intercommunal violence, defections, flooding, and influx of returnees and refugees fleeing the conflict in Sudan;
 - 5.5 underscored the critical tasks, which if completed in a timely manner, will enhance political and civic space, sustain the peace, and consolidate the gains made in the implementation of the Agreement as full operationalisation and resourcing of NCRC, NEC and PPC, to enable them to deliver their mandates; completion of unification of forces, and provision of funding for DDR; addressing intercommunal violence through national and state-level dialogue and peacebuilding mechanisms; implementation of the legal and policy frameworks which enhance transparency and accountability in economic and financial sectors; and establishment and operationalisation of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA);

- 5.6 recommended that the RTGoNU undertakes the following actions: i) encourage further dialogue, collegiality, and consensus building among the Parties, their principals, and the stakeholders; ii) provide clarity on the plans and preparations for the conduct of elections as scheduled; iii) avail the requisite resources and logistics to fully operationalise the elections-related reconstituted institutions; iv) operationalise all pieces of legislation enacted by the TNLA; v) complete the training and deployment of the NUF to provide election-related security and security in areas of intercommunal violence; vi) fund and operationalise the process of making a people-led and people-owned constitution; and vii) ensure the participation of women in all political processes, and their representation in mechanisms in accordance with the Agreement at the minimum threshold of 35%; and
- 5.7 urged the RJMEC members, to engage frankly with the RTGoNU and Parties' representatives, to clarify how they intended to deliver a peaceful, free, fair, and credible democratic elections as per the Agreement and Roadmap in the remaining time.

Min. 06/34/24: Report from the RTGoNU

6. The representative of the RTGoNU reported as follows:
 - 6.1. progress was being made under the provisions of Article 1.19, on the restructuring and reconstitution of Commissions and Independent Institutions, which was a work in progress, while Article 1.20 related to national elections was mutually exclusive and dependent on its provisions;
 - 6.2. the PPC issued an order for the registration of unregistered parties. The status of registration of the parties are as follows: 14 registered parties, 13 yet to register, and 24 with incomplete documents;
 - 6.3. the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) presented its strategy for elections in December 2024, which included: pre-enumeration activities, cartographic preparations and equipment; census enumeration activities and post-enumeration activities;
 - 6.4. the NCRC was reviewing its budget and strategic plan. An induction workshop was conducted, covering internal instruments and rules. The NCRC was preparing a baseline report on preparedness for the constitutional making process and election timeline. The overall budget estimated for the process is SSP 43,794,227,620;
 - 6.5. the Ministry of Finance and Planning allocated SSP 27,734,827,180 for pre-election activities for FY 2023/2024, accounting for 63% of the total budget;
 - 6.6. the NEC, reconstituted on November 3, 2023, was developing a strategic plan, budget, and status report. The NEC conducted an induction workshop for members on principles of good electoral management, NEC vision, mission, and value, and the election cycle;
 - 6.7. in 2023, the RTGoNU requested support from the UN for electoral and constitutional-making processes, and the UN responded positively. A joint Trilateral Taskforce was established, and its scope of work discussed. The Council of Ministers of the RTGoNU endorsed the Taskforce, renaming it Government-Tripartite Taskforce, which included the AU, UN and IGAD. The Taskforce generated ten priority issues for critical political decisions, ensuring South Sudan's readiness for peaceful, democratic, free, fair, and credible elections;
 - 6.8. the ten priority issues include: the legal framework; establishment of electoral bodies; constitutional making process; election security; election type and number; electoral system; electoral delimitation; voter registration; IDPs, returnees and refugees; dispute resolution, and election results and management;

- 6.9. the NEC overall budget is SSP 253,594,678,735 for FY 2023/2024. The Ministry of Finance and Planning committed to cover 15% of this budget through a targeted supplementary budget;
- 6.10. the Parties agreed on a second echelon of unified soldiers for Prisons, Wildlife, Fire Bridge, and National Security on June 9, 2023. However, there are still outstanding agreements on the command structure of the second echelon of the Army and Police. Six battalions of the army have been deployed to Malakal, Maridi, Renk, Wau, Wau, Wau, and Torit, with more soldiers remaining in Cantonment Sites in Panyier and Torit. Teams were being sent for verification and deployment;
- 6.11. the National Police Service's pre-election budget is SSP 58,085,343,750, with the total budget for the entire electoral process around SSP 124,952,940,000. The Ministry of Finance and Planning has committed to cover 63% of the budget through a targeted supplementary Budget. The overall budget for graduated forces is SSP 2,575,120,444, with 100% coverage through a targeted supplementary Budget. The National Transitional Committee's budget is SSP 135,970,000,000, but the Ministry of Finance and Planning has not committed to cover any of the proposed NTC budget due to outstanding budgetary details;
- 6.12. the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management in South Sudan has implemented a comprehensive program to assist in the repatriation of refugees, returnees, IDPs, and host communities. The NGOs Act, 2016, was reviewed and submitted to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs for governance processes and subsequently to the RTNLA for finalisation;
- 6.13. the Special Reconstruction Fund Board is to be established, with consultations from various government institutions, states, international partners, and civil society. The government allocated \$15.3 million for emergency intervention and transportation of returnees from Sudan. 542,199 returnees registered;
- 6.14. the reforms outlined under the resource, economic and financial management were ongoing.
- 6.15. the Ministry of Finance and Planning submitted a supplementary budget for FY 2023/2024, totaling SSP. 224,870,307,544.00, covering budgets for graduated forces, Political Parties Council, National Election Commission, National Bureau of Statistics, National Police Service pre-elections, and revised emoluments and privileges of constitutional post holders;
- 6.16. the bills for the establishment of the CTRH, CRA, and others awaited legislative completion upon RTNLA's resumption of work;
- 6.17. the NCRC was established and restructured, with progress dependent on their work programme, the Council of Ministers' resolution of the federalism conference, and the Ministry of Finance and Planning's budget submission;
- 6.18. the government's budget allocations were insufficient, requiring generous contributions from regional, continental, and international countries, especially considering the high demand for the electoral and constitutional making processes and the current economic crisis in South Sudan;
- 6.19. committed to provide transparent budget sheets to regional, continental, and international countries for consideration in aiding South Sudan's democratic transition in December 2024; and
- 6.20. appealed, on behalf of the President and Government, to the representatives of the region, continent, and international community at the august RJMEC plenary to assist and ensure their success.

Min. 07/34/24: Briefing from the NTC

7. The NTC submitted a written report which was not to presented verbally to the meeting.

Min. 08/34/24: Briefing from the PFM-OC

8. There was no report to the meeting from the PFM-OC.

Min. 09/34/24: Briefing from UNMISS SRSG

9. The DSRSRG briefed as follows:

- 9.1. highlighted the urgent need for parties to take decisive actions and allocate resources for credible and peaceful elections is highlighted, with less than 11 months remaining for decision-making by Parties to the R-ARCSS;
- 9.2. acknowledged the reconstitution and establishment of the NEC, NCRC and PPC, enabling activities on election management framework, priority tasks, and budgets operationalisation;
- 9.3. took note of the Presidency active engagement with key civil society actors in the peace process and elections preparation, fostering constructive compromises and providing them with necessary information, thereby enhancing their role in shaping inclusive governance in South Sudan;
- 9.4. underscored commendable progress in election institutions being made, however, expressed that a secure environment was crucial. Finalizing Transitional Security Arrangements was crucial for peace. Parties must agree on a middle command structure, advance SDRS, and redeploy the graduated Necessary Unified Forces;
- 9.5. the tensions between SSPDF and SPLA-IO in northern Unity State, along with the Dinka Twic and Ngok Dinka conflicts, hinder open political competition. Commended H.E. Salva Kiir and FVP Dr Machar's meeting on February 5th, as it aimed at ending violence and demonstrating unity in transition management. The high-level meetings are crucial for promoting unity and ensuring a smooth transition;
- 9.6. Civil Society groups and academics expressed enthusiasm for elections, but concerns arise about preparedness of key institutions, state security apparatus, and the lack of resources for electoral and constitution-making commissions to achieve the desired readiness across the country;
- 9.7. UNMISS assisted the NEC and NCRC in induction workshops, developing a Political Parties Code of Conduct, and facilitating a nationwide virtual meeting for the NEC to introduce the new Board of Commissioner and prepare for reconstitution of the state elections committee;
- 9.8. UNMISS, African Union and IGAD were to jointly brief the African Union Peace and Security Council about electoral preparations. Welcomed the recent engagements with South Sudan, including German Foreign Minister, EU, Troika envoys, and African Union Commission;
- 9.9. the ongoing conflict in Sudan is driving thousands of people to South Sudan for refuge, causing transit centers in northern states to be overwhelmed and the Upper Nile's humanitarian needs to be put under pressure by the influx of refugees and returnees;
- 9.10. highlighted UNMISS' recent engagement with South Sudanese and international partners which indicates growing appreciation for their election intentions, but concerns about key commitments and processes remained;
- 9.11. commended government plans to submit a supplementary budget for elections, ensuring transparency about preparedness in electoral, constitutional, and security structures for partners' support;

- 9.12. called for urgent focus to be on advancing Transitional Security Arrangements and prioritizing electoral security, while deciding on a realistic electoral calendar considering operational, logistical, security, and legal considerations; and
- 9.13. reiterated the United Nations commitment to support and work with the South Sudanese parties, the trilateral, regional, international, and bilateral partners to build the foundations for democracy, good governance, peace, and stability.

Comments from the Troika

- 9.14. The representative reiterated that the Troika's support to the South Sudanese people was based on the conviction that they deserve peace, human rights, democracy, and a government accountable to their needs. This required a legitimate, peaceful, credible, safe, and inclusive government. South Sudan's leaders must reject violence and resolve differences peacefully. However, it requires creating political and civic space, politically neutral security forces, and urgent funding for election institutions. This will enable the people to express their views without fear or intimidation.
- 9.15. The UN, African Union, and IGAD have urged political leaders to engage in genuine dialogue to resolve key issues. The transitional government should demonstrate support for peace and human rights by transparently using public revenue to fund public needs and protecting its population from violence. However, the UN warns that South Sudan faces a risk of relapse into violence unless significant resources and confidence-building measures are invested in elections preparations by April 2024.
- 9.16. The representative urged the transitional government to demonstrate their commitment to lasting peace.

IGAD

- 9.17. Highlighted the perspective that 2024 would bring positive progress to South Sudan and its people, as they await the first general election since independence.
- 9.18. Commended H.E. Salva Kiir's New Year message calling for the holdout group to return home for democratic participation and urging H.E. William Ruto to lead talks between South Sudan's government and opposition parties in Nairobi, a new proposal for talks beyond Rome.
- 9.19. Commended H.E. Salva Kiir for swearing in the NCRC and NEC personnel, which are crucial steps towards a possible South Sudanese election. RTGoNU has made significant progress in commissioning the NCRC, a crucial tool in determining election outcomes. South Sudanese political parties are also initiating registration for various parties, to enhance the electoral process.
- 9.20. The CTSAMVM board meeting resumes despite challenges, focusing on monitoring, compliance, and transparency in implementing Chapter 2 of the R-ARCSS. Applauded the African Union support for sending the AU Panel of the Wise and Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security (CPAPS) members to South Sudan for technical support, aiming for the conduct of successful elections.
- 9.21. The government has successfully redeployed the first phase of the NUF, with six battalions stationed across South Sudan. Ensuring security and stability was crucial for a free, fair, and credible general election in December 2024. Addressing intercommunal violence and resolving conflicts in the Abyei Administrative Area was essential for stability and economic growth.

- 9.22. Underscored that half a million Sudanese refugees have sought refuge in South Sudan, adding to the already dire humanitarian situation. Appealed to the international community to support those affected. Emphasized the importance of addressing refugees' needs, including their resettlement, reintegration, and rehabilitation, as they play a crucial role in the upcoming elections.
- 9.23. Urged the RTGoNU to avail the necessary resources meant to execute the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement process, empowering key institutions like the NCRC, NEC and PPC, and coordinate efforts to address election preparation issues, ensuring a credible, free, and fair 2024 election.

IGAD Regional Guarantor/ Special Envoy

- 9.24. Thanked the RJMEC Chair for an opportunity to greet the members. Reiterated IGAD's support to the government and the people of South Sudan and to all the efforts to transition to a democratic country. Thanked partners for their support to the government of South Sudan.

Statement from EU

- 9.25. Welcomed the meeting between President Kiir and the First Vice President Machar on 5 February aimed to create political momentum for joint electoral and constitutional processes. Underlined that the recent High-Level visits, including those of the German Foreign Minister, EU Special Representative Annette Weber, France and Germany, and the African Union, demonstrate increased engagement levels. Underlined that South Sudan's success in the electoral process was crucial for its transition to a stable, democratic, and peaceful country. This requires political will, urgency, leadership, and renewed energy to address pending tasks as outlined by UNMISS, AU, and IGAD. The EU supports an enabling environment for elections, including civic education. While the electoral process was the priority, the EU also supports the constitutional process and welcomes the clear orientation of the Chair of the NCRC in chartering the way forward.
- 9.26. The EU supports the Judicial Reform Committee for an independent, accessible justice system, with its final report due by the end of February. Expressed that CTSAMVM was crucial in verifying ceasefire and transitional security arrangements, with violation reports out. Commended NCAC whose mandate ends on 29 February.

CSO representative

- 9.27. Acknowledge the pending tasks that were yet to be implemented and is aware of the critical tasks ahead of the election. Expressed that election was not done in a day, CSO would add their voices to the RTGoNU to prioritise the implementation of the key tasks. Called for harmonisation of the engagement between the citizens and the government.
- 9.28. Called for clarity on the unification of the forces that would create an enabling environment for the upcoming election. Highlighted the need to spearhead the civic space as a way to a democratic election.

AUMISS

- 9.29. Conveyed his condolences to the people of Namibia on the loss of its President. Commended the statement of the RJMEC Chairperson and UNMISS that compliments the need to sustainable peace and success of election. Commend the President and the FVP for their joint

call to curtail sub-national violence; the constitution-making and electoral processes must remain South Sudanese owned and led with partner support.

- 9.30. Shared his concerns on the intercommunal violence in Abyei. He called for the deployment of the NUF to the area. There is the need to interrogate the purpose behind the intercommunal violence and who is behind the conflict.
- 9.31. The AU called on the government of South Sudan to avail resources to fund the NEC, NCRC and PPC.
- 9.32. Informed of the solidarity and needs assessment visits of the AU Panel of the Wise and CPAPS of the African Union Commission; expecting the C5 to equally engage and support preparations towards election. Called on the members of the international communities to come onboard and support the government of South Sudan.

Min. 10/34/24: Reports from Mechanisms on progress in implementation of the R-ARCSS

10. The following are the reports from the Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms.

Report from the National Election Commission (NEC)

- 10.1. The NEC is an independent South Sudanese institution responsible for managing elections and delivering credible results, reconstituted in November 2023, and sworn in January 2024. UNMISS and UNDP organized an orientation workshop for the new NEC members to strengthen their mandates as stipulated in the Elections Act 2012 (Amendment) Act 2023. A virtual meeting with states' High Elections Committees was facilitated by UNMISS. A budget of SSP. 253,594,678,735 (USD 230,540,617) was submitted to the government, approved by Joint Clusters (Governance and Economic) on February 6th, 2024. The Commission presented the electoral timeline to the RTGoNU.
- 10.2. NEC urged the RJMEC to initiate a dialogue with Parties to the R-ARCSS to compromise and allow South Sudanese to practice their democratic rights in December 2024. The Commission plans to form a State High Elections Commission, which will include staff recruitment, drafting the Electoral Code of Conduct, rules, and regulations, developing a civic education module, launching a comprehensive civic education, making key decisions on boundary delimitation, and voter registration.
- 10.3. Challenges were infrastructure, and lack of funding, lack of secretariat and logistical support; transport for all the Commissioners and the election offices in the state; communication and information, technology within all the state for ease communication.

Report from the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC)

- 10.4. Informed members on the three stages of the Constitutional Making-Process. The preparation stage involves the NCRC and CDC developing the first draft constitutional text in collaboration with the general public and South Sudanese society representatives. This stage is also known as the legitimization stage of the Permanent Constitution. The enactment stage involves the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs presenting the final draft to the Constituent Assembly and the President, who has the constitutional function of signing legislative bills into law. This stage is referred to as a legislative stage.
- 10.5. NCRC held a consultative meeting in December 2023 to agree and create the Roadmap which began with an induction in January 2024. The Commission reviewed, revised, and passed drafts of internal instruments such as the Rules of Procedure work plan, which included: budget, organogram, and civic education and public consultations manual. During

the induction workshop, inputs were received to enrich the first versions of these documents, which are now being processed for final drafts. Following the workshop, the Commission intended to conduct a validation workshop for 2 to 3 days. Additionally, they will later launch its first civic education campaign and public consultation to raise awareness on constitutional issues and promote public debate to the people of South Sudan.

Report from the Political Parties Council (PPC)

- 10.6. The PPC chairperson welcomed the invitation of the newly established electoral bodies to brief the plenary. The appointment process for PPC members involved nominations and consultation among registered political parties and stakeholders, as per the Political Parties Act, 2012 (Amendment) Act, 2022. The Council consists of the Chairperson, female Deputy Chairperson, and seven part-time members. Following appointments on 3 November 2023, the members took oaths on 17 November 2023.
- 10.7. Since its reconstitution, the PPC collaborated with the UNDP and UNMISS to acquire and assign electoral experts. It held its first meeting in December 2023, focusing on dispute resolution, transparency, and capacity-building initiatives. In February 2024, registration for unregistered parties began, and an annual work plan was prepared. A pre-election budget of approximately SSP 40 billion was approved, and the PPC developed a website.
- 10.8. The PPC was assigned a regionally hired electoral expert by UNDP for three months, co-chaired a Political Party Forum, and deliberated on a code of conduct. The Council partnered with legal experts, international organizations, and research institutions to stay updated on emerging trends and engage with peace partners.
- 10.9. The PPC plans to end election registration in June 2024, acquire new buildings, install a new registration system, establish offices in states and administrative areas, recruit 450 staff, purchase vehicles and furniture, provide training on the Advance Registration System, and collaborate with partners.

Report from the Judicial Reform Committee (JRC)

- 10.10. The JRC reviewed and deliberated on the draft JRC report, consulting with senior government leaders in December 2023 and January 2024. The task was nearing completion, with activities remaining to engage with Justice and Constitutional, and Cabinet Affairs Ministers, Infrastructure Vice Presidents, and the President of South Sudan, hold a validation workshop, and submit the report of recommendations. The JRC leadership requested a two-month extension which was approved, effective 27th January 2024. The extension will allow for the conduct of an in-depth validation workshop and submission of a quality report to the government. Administrative arrangements are being made for the Chair and Deputy Chair to return to Juba. The exact dates of the workshop and report submission are yet to be determined.

Report from the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC)

- 10.11. NCAC held a stakeholders' meeting from 14-15 December 2023 and reviewed amendment proposals for the Pension Fund Act, 2012. The meeting included representatives from various ministries, including mining, investment, trade, and environment. The proposed changes include a Defined Contributions scheme, separation of the Regulator from the Fund, clear membership scope definition, strengthened governance, prohibition of risky investments, and better accountability provisions. The bill was revised, finalized, and adopted for submission to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

- 10.12. It commenced review of the Transport Act, 2008 to ensure it aligns with the Agreement. The committee had conducted consultations, literature reviews, and comparative analyses of transport laws in the EAC region. An expert meeting on 31 January 2024 discussed the scope and issues to be addressed, including the Civil Aviation Act, South Sudan Roads Authority Bill, Axle Load Bill, Traffic Act, and Fuel Levy Act. Issues included clear definition of sector institution roles, funding mechanisms for infrastructure development, traffic control, and good governance.
- 10.13. Commenced review of the telecommunications law. A consultation meeting with the Minister for Information, Communication, Technology and Postal Services revealed that the Telecommunications and Postal Services Act, 2010 did not exist. The Minister identified sections of the National Communications Act, 2012 that need to be amended. An experts' meeting on 31 January 2024 discussed the scope of the reforms, aiming to make the NCA Act relevant, harmonize it with other sector laws, and incorporate best practices.
- 10.14. The Committee faces challenges in reviewing and amending critical legislation, including delays in response from parties and stakeholders. The Committee needs to finalize its work before its mandate ends. Financial support remains a challenge, with the Cabinet resolution of May 2023, directing payment of national members allowances not yet implemented. Urged parties and stakeholders to continue supporting its work to strengthen the legal foundation for the implementation of the Agreement.

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

- 10.15. CTSAMVM Technical Committee (CTC) and Board meetings met and discussed nine outstanding reports and formally submitted to IGAD and RJMEC. Shared concerns on the tensions in Unity State since Lieutenant General Simon Maguck's defection. CTSAMVM was investigating a fatal incident in Rubkona County and urged parties to avoid further accusations to prevent further violence. There were no serious ceasefire incidents, but allegations of civilian harassment by military forces were ongoing.
- 10.16. Maintained monitoring NUF redeployment, with some units redeployed, but fewer than expected. Phase 1 redeployment of the army NUF completed, but only 4,000 out of 25,000 graduates were redeployed. Other security services graduates remained in the Training Centres, and no orders were issued for Phase II training and redeployment.
- 10.17. The 9 CTSAMVM reports highlighted the issue of fatal shootings by the SSPDF, highlighting the need for discipline and training among soldiers. The report recommends the SSPDF to enforce clear rules of engagement. Although there has been a reduction in reported SGBV cases, the report also highlights the serious concern of senior military commanders changing allegiance, which can heighten tensions and create negative feelings.
- 10.18. The Parties needs to avoid provocative actions, as seen in the July 2023 incident at Wunkur. CTSAMVM faces resource challenges, requiring a reduction in Monitoring and Verification

teams. However, with support from the CTC and CTSAMVM Board, the Mission can fulfill its mandate and provide necessary reports and information.

Report from the Joint Defence Board (JDB)

10.19. The South Sudan Peoples' Defence Forces (SSPDF) began deploying its forces from Training Centres in the Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal. Forces from Panyier, Torit, and Maridi Training Centres have been transported to join forces in Upper Nile State. Some unified forces from Muom Training Centre in Bentiu have been transported to Bahr el Ghazal via Juba. The SSPDF is financially facilitating these deployments, while the NTC distributed limited food items to deployed NUFs in Greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr el Ghazal. The JDB will provide reports to the RJMEC Plenary on the redeployment of other forces.

10.20. Despite having submitted the JDB budget in March 2023, to date it had not received funds for the redeployment of NUF, and the SSPDF headquarters was facilitating redeployment attempts. Training Centres and assembly areas were running out of medicines and food items. Transitional Security Arrangements activities are struggling due to the closure of Security Mechanisms offices at the South Sudan Hotel and lack of alternative solutions. Officers and instructors in R-ARCSS security mechanisms have not received remuneration since 2019. This calls for an urgent remedy.

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

10.21. Informed that SDSR could not submit a written statement as the Board had not met. The Board members were protesting on the funding challenges which was reported to the NTC and the President. The SDSR Board leadership further was engaging the NTC Chairperson with the hope that funding would be released by the Minister of Finance by mid- February 2023 to allow finalization and validation of the documents. Expressed concerns on the reported challenges facing the deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces. The reported information that the challenges of redeployment weren't to do with the big number of the officers as stated. The issues will be resolved soon.

Report from the Joint Transitional Security Committee (JTSC)

10.22. The JTSC neither submitted a written report nor attended the plenary.

Report from the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission (JMCC)

10.23. Informed that JMCC submitted a budget to the NTC with the possible preparation of commencing the activities since 2023. The Commission further appealed to the NTC to disburse funding to all the Mechanisms.

10.24. Appealed to the NTC, RJMEC, CTSAMVM and UNMISS leadership to facilitate their members to visit all assembly points as planned and recommended the following: NTC to deliver food to the barracks and Training Centres ahead of commencement of Phase II training; and to address the welfare needs of the JMCC members.

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

- 10.25. Highlighted that to-date the DDR Commission had not been funded since its inception and was only implementing activities funded by the partners. The team of the DDR Commission would travel to Rwanda for a study tour for six days from 11 February 2024 which was facilitated by JICA. Implementation of the Community Violence Reduction Project was ongoing in Wau and facilitated by the French Embassy. The Commission still faces funding challenges. There are concerns on the fate of the ex-combatant once NUF are redeployed and Phase II commences. Partners need to support the DDR Commission. The Commission intends to engage the stakeholders for the implementation of its programmes.

Min. 11/34/24: Discussions on Statements and Reports

- 11 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:
- 11.1 **CSO Forum:** Commended the progress made by the RTGoNU and the activities so far made by the election-related institutions such as the PPC and requested the latter to engage the CSOs to plan further engagements. Asked for clarity with regards to registration of the Political Parties. Shared his concerns on the Transitional Security Arrangement which is key for the safety of the people. He gave an example of the unpaid civil servants and soldiers still not redeployed could disrupt the peace of the country. Appealed to the government to provide funding to the Security Mechanisms.
- 11.2 **CSO Alliance:** Welcomed the statements of the RJMEC Chairperson and RTGoNU. acknowledged progress in the implementation Agreement and called for government efforts to address inter-communal violence in Ngok and Twic communities. Emphasized the importance of civil society's commitment to creating awareness and civic education for the electoral process in South Sudan. Encouraged Parties to taste political space and start activities, registering, and conducting rallies and campaigning for elections. He emphasised the importance of empowering and funding the NEC and electoral institutions for free and fair elections.
- 11.3 **Business Community:** Raised a concern as to why the members of the international community left the meeting instead of participation in full to the end of the meeting. Underscored that South Sudan had critical issue of intercommunal violence that needed to be addressed giving an e.g. of the violence in Warrap between Apuk and Terkem; Twic and Ngok; Aguok and Kwech; Jur – Wau people caused by change of the name of the bridge from River Jur to Clement Mboro; and the violence in Upper Nile and Equatoria. Wondered if the election would take place with the current ongoing insecurities in the country.
- 11.4 **Business Community:** Questioned the PPC if the Commission would use the same NEC voter registration system with the Commissions since it wasn't clear if there would be censors. Further, would the PPC register only the 500 people coming with the parties and how will it prevent more than one person registering in more than one party. Questioned if the PPC would meet the deadline of registering all the parties before elections in December 2024, since the movements with army wings were not yet registered. Asked NEC on the election calendar with pending activities to date, further asked if the Commission intended to push the election further.
- 11.5 **Academia:** Requested RJMEC members to focus on the positive side of what was achieved especially by the RTGoNU. Expressed that the RTGoNU was working under extremely difficult circumstances as a nation that involved 50 political parties that push them to come to a decision. Urged the government to prioritise funding. Wondered if the JRC and the CSOs could work on pro-bono basis then the rest should follow suit. Urged

the members to see how much they could pull as a country and move forward. Urged the members of the international community to support South Sudan.

- 11.6 **Youth:** Commended the reconstitution institutions present and for their reports to the plenary. Underscored that these critical institutions will play an important role to enable South Sudan to transition and in terms of conflict prevention in the country. Encouraged the institutions to diligently deliver on their mandates and explore opportunities of working with CSOs, youth and women to increase accountability and transparency in the course of their work.
- 11.7 **Faith-Based Leaders:** Asked NEC for clarity on the number of MPs to be 332, with 50% from geographical constituencies, 35% from the women list and 15% from others, whom he wanted to be informed how they would be elected. Further asked NEC on its plan for refugees and returnees' participation in elections and whether the refugees would vote in their respective refugee camps (e.g., in Kenya or Uganda). He asked the JDB and the DDR Commission on the number of ex-combatants that would be left in the Cantonment Sites and Training Centres and if there was a plan to train them on different sectors such as farming or carpentry to become self-sufficient etc. He cited an example of the Anyanya I, which had 18,000 forces and only 6,000 forces were taken while 12,000 forces remained and were trained on farming etc.
- 11.8 **PPC Deputy:** Commended the Chair for his statement and expressed that 2024 was the year for election which would bring the R-ARCSS to an end. Congratulated the RTGoNU for reconstituting the PPC which was 40% (4) females and 60% (6) males respectively. The 35% of women participation in the reconstituted electoral institutions as well as the political parties was a demand and requirement. The political parties that intend to register must adhere to have 35% of women in all their structures in their executive management and members. Women have a stake in the electoral process hence the need to be part and parcel of the process. Women must be given opportunities in higher positions of leadership in the country.
- 11.9 **FD:** Reiterated the FDs' support for the upcoming election. The SDSR Board is an important mechanism which needs to be supported. The army redeployed unified forces who are to be governed by the policy documents that are to be verified by the Board. The RTGoNU therefore needs to support and fast track the funding to avoid any fighting. The 4,000 forces were redeployed under the SSPDF divisions which raises concerns as they wouldn't be independent for their actions and in that regard, it needs to be resolved.
- 11.10 **OPP:** Commended the report of the RJMEC and the RTGoNU especially the recommendations made by the RJMEC which, if followed South Sudan would have conducted election. Underscored the need to have a dialogue of all the political parties to agree on the way forward. Questioned how the country would conduct elections without funding all the institutions and mechanisms. Further, he wanted to know who oversees the cattle keepers heavily armed and causing intercommunal conflict in the country and government should address the issue.
- 11.11 **PPC:** The registration system of political parties doesn't allow duplication of data; however, it provides the best and reliable way of capturing data for members of the parties. The law stipulates that for a person to register a party, it must draw members from 2/3 of the 10 states and three Administrative Areas capturing the party, state, country, and gender. Requested RJMEC to give more opportunities to the electoral bodies to interact with the civil societies, the public and media to have a credible election for a peaceful post-election. Appealed to all members and South Sudanese to push for election. He further highlighted that for a political party to participate in elections it must be registered 180 days prior to election i.e., six (6) months prior to elections. To be fully registered a party need six (6)

months before a party is fully registered. All the political parties need to register this February 2024 to be eligible to participate in the next coming elections in December 2024.

- 11.12 **RTGoNU:** Expressed that South Sudan was not unique to conduct election in the current conditions. The government may need to evaluate the conditions in place and make a political decision on some of the areas where citizens may be uncomfortable with. The Government engaged UNMISS and formed a Government-Trilateral Joint Taskforce. Ten critical priority areas were drafted which require political parties to make decisions. Among which are, the question of the legal framework and the establishment of the electoral and Constitution Making-Bodies; constitution making process, however, if parties cannot make the constitution within the time available, they could look for alternatives. Underscored that the RTGoNU has an existing constitution which had been tested in the referendum and 2010. Parties may need to engage and agree to use the current constitution; the type of election to be used. Expressed that on voter registration it wasn't necessary to conduct census before election. The question of boundary delimitation of the constituencies could be done on time. The 10 priority areas were shared with the principals and heads of all political parties who must internalise, discuss, and come with their views. Parties will then engage to discuss and agree on the way forward and areas to compromise if they were ready to embark on election.
- 11.13 **On IDPs:** The IDPs could vote from wherever they were. Appealed not to instigate the citizens to fear election. On TSA, he informed members that an Election Security Unity was established by the Ministry of Interior and had developed framework and identified 50,000 police to be trained to manage elections. The few redeployed forces and the NUF are to be redeployed to secure the country from the external forces. The country was not aware of the number of police, army it should have as they await the SDSR Board to finalise the security document.
- 11.14 Underscored that the intercommunal violence was not the responsibility of the government alone but rather the responsibility of the leaders of the area to engage their citizen and conduct dialogue at local level. Further there is need to educate the communities on the importance of elections. The ongoing violence and inter-communal violence could be addressed and stopped. The government was planning a disarmament exercise to end civilians carrying guns.
- 11.15 **On NTC:** The NTC needs to prepare their budget and submit to the RTGoNU Council of Ministers (CoMs) for approval.
- 11.16 Called on the members, CSOs, citizens, and everyone to register positivity on what was so far achieved by the RTGoNU since the signing of the R-ARCSS.

Min. 12/34/24: Review of the Resolution

- 12 The resolution was reviewed, and the final version is to be shared with the members.

Min. 13/34/24: Date for the Next Meeting

- 13 It was agreed that date for the 35th RJMEC monthly meeting will be communicated to the Secretariat.

Min. 14/34/24: A.O.B.

- 14 Informed members that the issue of constituency still needed clarity and decision of the Council of Ministers of the RTGoNU since the number did not tally.

Min. 15/34/24: Chairperson's Closing Remarks

- 15 The Chairperson thanked members for their participation in the meeting. Appealed to members to remain vigilant and positive on the achieved milestones. He thanked H.E. Ismail Wais, IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan for attending the plenary. Reminded the RJMEC Working Committee members to be active and participate in the RJWC meetings and urged members to attend the next plenary to the end.

Min.16/34/24: Closing Prayers

- 16 Bishop Enock Tombe and Sheik Jaralnebi, faith-based leaders, led the closing prayers. There being no other business, the 34th RJMEC monthly meeting was adjourned at 15:18 hours.

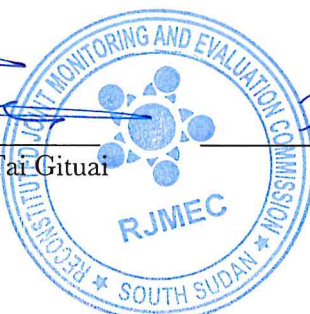
Min.17/34/24: Adoption of the Minutes

- 17 The minutes of the 34th RJMEC meeting are proposed, seconded, and adopted as the true record of the meeting as follows:

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

17.2. Seconder: Mrs. Yar Manoa Majok, representative of the Business Community


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


Frida Lyaruu
Secretary to the Plenary

