



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

REPORT

BY

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**ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVITALISED
AGREEMENT ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN**

FOR THE PERIOD

1st October to 31st December 2024

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List of Acronyms

AU	<i>African Union</i>
CRA	<i>Compensation and Reparation Authority</i>
CTRH	<i>Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing</i>
CTSAMVM	<i>Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism</i>
DDR	<i>Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration</i>
EAC	<i>East African Community</i>
IDPs	<i>Internally Displaced Persons</i>
IEAT	<i>Integrated Electoral Assistance Team</i>
IGAD	<i>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</i>
JDB	<i>Joint Defense Board</i>
JMCC	<i>Joint Military Ceasefire Commission</i>
JRC	<i>Judicial Reform Committee</i>
JTSC	<i>Joint Transitional Security Committee</i>
MVT	<i>Mobile Verification Teams</i>
NAS	<i>National Salvation Front</i>
NBS	<i>National Bureau of Statistics</i>
NCAC	<i>National Constitutional Amendment Committee</i>
NCRC	<i>National Constitutional Review Commission</i>
NEC	<i>National Elections Commission</i>
NGOs	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
NSS	<i>National Security Service</i>
NUF	<i>Necessary Unified Forces</i>
PFM	<i>Public Finance Management</i>
PPC	<i>Political Parties Council</i>
R-ARCSS	<i>Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan</i>
RJMEC	<i>Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission</i>
RTGoNU	<i>Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity</i>
SDSRB	<i>Strategic Defence and Security Review Board</i>
SPLM -IG	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Government</i>
SPLM-IO	<i>Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition</i>
SSPDF	<i>South Sudan People's Defence Force</i>
TNL	<i>Transitional National Legislature</i>
TNLA	<i>Transitional National Legislative Assembly</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
UNMISS	<i>United Nations Mission in South Sudan</i>
UNHCR	<i>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</i>

Executive Summary

This report covers the status of implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) during the period 1st October – 31st December 2024 and builds on similar previous Reports Nos. 001/19 - 024/24 prepared since the signing of the peace agreement on 12th September 2018. In addition to the status update on implementation, it highlights the activities of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) in the fulfilment of its oversight, monitoring and evaluation mandate within the R-ARCSS and concludes with providing key recommendations.

Following the agreement of the Parties in September 2024 to extend the Transitional Period by a further two years and postpone elections to December 2026, not much progress was reported in this quarter with the work of the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC), Political Parties Council (PPC) and the National Elections Commission (NEC). These key elections-related bodies continue to suffer from a lack of adequate funding and as such, have made slow progress in moving the critical work of preparing the permanent constitution and moving the election process forward.

The Presidency agreed to return the controversially enacted National Security Services (NSS) Amendment Bill back to Cabinet to be re-tabled before the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA) with expectations that the controversial provisions, Sections 54 and 55 of the Act, will be addressed. The President assented to the Public Finance Management and Accountability Act 2024, which paves way for prudent and transparent management of the public finances and promotes accountability. However, the two Petroleum-related laws and the Non-Governmental Authority (NGO) Act 2016 (Amendment) Bill are still pending. In terms of the judicial reforms process, the ad hoc Judicial Reforms Committee (JRC) successfully completed its work having finalised and validated its final report and recommendations on appropriate judicial reforms.

During the period of reporting, the Permanent Ceasefire generally continued to hold but was violated by the shooting incident between Government forces that occurred in Juba on 21 November 2024 at the house of the former Director General of the National Security Service, General Akol Koor Kuc. Also, on 21 December 2024, there were reports of forced entry into some diplomatic compounds in Juba by some elements of government forces. On the Transitional Security Arrangements (TSAs), specifically the completion of the deployment of Phase I and the commencement of Phase II training of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF), there has been very little progress since the deployment of a total of eight military battalions by April 2024, and there has been no further progress on the commissioning of the second command echelon officers from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement /Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA).

During the quarter under review, the majority of people in South Sudan continued to face critical humanitarian conditions due to the persistent crisis resulting from a combination of sporadic armed clashes and intercommunal violence, food insecurity, public health challenges and climatic shocks which severely affected livelihoods and hampered access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and health services. The situation was worsened by the economic crisis, the conflict in neighbouring Sudan and widespread flooding and protection concerns remained high, especially for women and girls.

The Draft South Sudan National Land Policy 2023 was tabled at the TNLA. This Land Policy is a long-term framework for assigning and protecting collective and individual land rights for all South Sudanese. It has been developed through considerable public input and research to identify key land issues and challenges and methods for tackling them. Policymakers, traditional and religious authorities, national and international players, and communities from around South Sudan have all actively participated in the process.

On 11 November 2024, H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit signed into law two critical legislations, namely the *Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing Act* and the *Compensation and Reparation Authority Act*. The operationalization of the Acts is the critical next step which involves the appointment of seven commissioners to the CTRH, four South Sudanese and three non-South Sudanese.

The RJMEC leadership held discussions with H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of South Sudan and other members of the Presidency on the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS and specific actions being undertaken by the RTGoNU to further the prospects for lasting peace in South Sudan. They all reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of the R-ARCSS and pledged that there would be no further extensions of the Transitional Period. The leadership also met and held discussions with Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary and made several recommendations on how IGAD as guarantor to the Revitalized Peace Agreement can better assist the process going forward including for the IGAD Council of Ministers to undertake a joint Ministerial visit to South Sudan to review the current status of the R-ARCSS, or to arrange bilateral visits.

There are only two years left to the holding of elections and a much shorter time period in which to complete the critical pending tasks required to pave the way for its successful conclusion. Such tasks include the unification of forces, Permanent Constitution making, and implementing the election processes such as voter registration. In addition, urgent, predictable and sufficient funding is required to enable institutions such as the NCRC and NEC to carry out their mandates uninterrupted. It is only with requisite political will and the availability of funding that these outstanding tasks can be satisfactorily tackled.

The recommendations that follow, if acted upon, including to the Parties to the Agreement, RTGoNU, TNL, IGAD, the African Union, and the International Partners, are geared towards encouraging a faster pace of implementation of the R-ARCSS and will better prepare the country for elections.

a. To the Parties to the Agreement and Relevant Stakeholders:

- continue to engage in constructive dialogue during this critical period of the extension with a view to creating an inclusive environment for the implementation of the critical pending tasks.

b. To the RTGoNU:

- provide a strategy with a clear, coherent and overarching action plan, budget and timeline for the implementation of the priority tasks for the extended transitional period to build confidence, and aid resource mobilisation and support;
- conduct an expeditious review and amendment of the Judiciary Act and reconstitution of the JSC to implement the recommended judicial reforms following the RTGoNU's endorsement of the JRC report;

- fully fund the Agreement institutions and mechanisms to allow them to complete their mandates thus facilitating implementation of the R-ARCSS; and
- establish and operationalise the CTRH and CRA.

c. To the TNLA:

- expedite the enactment of all pending amendment bills, including the Petroleum Management and Petroleum Revenue Management bills.

d. To IGAD:

- continue to strengthen IGAD member states' oversight engagement in the South Sudan peace process, meet regularly to take stock and pronounce themselves on the progress being made in the implementation of the R-ARCSS;
- the IGAD Council of Ministers to undertake a joint Ministerial visit to South Sudan to review the current status of the R-ARCSS, or to arrange bilateral visits; and
- mobilize regional and international in-kind and financial support for RJMEC, CTSAMVM and the overall Peace Agreement.

e. To the African Union:

- continue to play an active role in ensuring the success of the Agreement and in helping to maintain lasting peace and stability in South Sudan;
- encourage the AU C5 to continuously engage with the RTGoNU through regular country visits; and
- provide support to the permanent constitution-making and election processes, including considering direct funding of some of the critical mechanisms, civic education, and providing capacity building.

f. International Partners:

- consider providing in-kind or financial support to the key elections-related mechanisms, especially the NEC and the NCRC.

The pace of implementation needs to be increased for the RTGoNU to meet the new extended deadline for the holding of elections in December 2026. The NCRC, for example, is ready to begin public consultations and do the necessary groundwork to draft the Permanent Constitution, forming the basis on which elections will be held. Efforts should therefore continue to be focused on securing the necessary financial resources in order to quickly implement the critical pending tasks, which also includes the unification of forces. Going forward, the RTGoNU needs to demonstrate political will and commitment to overcoming the many challenges, and laying the groundwork for lasting and sustainable peace in South Sudan.

I. Introduction

1. This report covers the status of implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) during the period 1st October to 31st December 2024 and builds on similar previous Reports Nos. 001/19 - 024/24¹ prepared since the signing of the R-ARCSS on 12th September 2018. In addition to the status update on implementation, it highlights the activities of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) in the fulfilment of its oversight, monitoring and evaluation mandate within the R-ARCSS; and concludes with providing key recommendations.
2. During the quarter, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) reported that it focused attention on developing a detailed plan of action in order to prioritize activities of the National Elections Commission (NEC), the Political Parties Council (PPC) and the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) pursuant to the extended transitional period of the R-ARCSS. This course of action followed the decision taken by the Parties to the Agreement to extend the Transitional Period from February 2025 to February 2027, a decision that was subsequently endorsed by the RJMEC and ratified by the Transitional National Legislature (TNL).
3. The TNL continued to meet on a regular basis and enacted most of the laws previously reviewed by the National Constitutional Amendment Committee (NCAC). However, one such law which was controversially enacted, the National Security Services (NSS) Bill, was returned to the Council of Ministers by the Presidency to be re-tabled before the TNL for reconsideration.
4. During the period of reporting, the Permanent Ceasefire largely held. However, there was a shooting incident between Government forces that occurred in Juba on 21 November 2024 at the house of General Akol Koor Kuc, former Director General of NSS. On 20 December, a number of diplomatic premises in Juba were searched against the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961. With regard to humanitarian affairs, according to UN data, the majority of people in South Sudan continued to face a persistent crisis resulting from a combination of intercommunal violence, food insecurity, public health challenges and climatic shocks.
5. The RTGoNU undertook efforts along with the Government of Sudan to resume oil flow through the main pipeline. Further, the Draft South Sudan National Land Policy 2023 was tabled before the TNLA. Regarding transitional justice, the bills for the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) were assented to by H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, the President of the Republic of South Sudan on 11 November.
6. With the recent extension of the Transitional Period of the Agreement by a further 24 months, the RJMEC leadership has been in regular communication with H.E. the President of South Sudan, members of the Presidency, and RTGoNU ministers to convey the urgent need to keep implementation of the Agreement on track. The leadership also

¹ Article 7.9 of the R-ARCSS mandates the RJMEC to prepare and submit Quarterly Reports to the RTGoNU, the TNL, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations (UN) and UN Security Council.

engaged the TNL, and further held separate consultative meetings with the RJMEC members.

7. Section I of the report provides an overview, followed by Section II, with an analysis of the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS, Section III proposes key observations and makes recommendations to the RTGoNU, TNL, Parties, Stakeholders to the R-ARCSS, and the International Partners and Friends of South Sudan; Section IV is the conclusion.

II. Status of Implementation of the Transitional Tasks of the R-ARCSS

Chapter 1: Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity

Decision to Postpone Elections and Extend the Transitional Period

8. Following the agreement of the Parties in September 2024 to extend the Transitional Period by a further two years and postpone elections to December 2026, not much progress was reported in this quarter with the work of the NCRC, PPC and the NEC. These key elections-related bodies continue to suffer from a lack of adequate funding and as such, have made slow progress in moving the critical work of preparing the permanent constitution and moving the election process forward.

National Elections

9. In preparation for democratic elections, the PPC has continued to receive applications from new political parties for registration. It has also continued with strategic discussions with a number of partners to support capacity building and institutional strengthening, including with the UN's Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (IEAT) to follow up on recommendations regarding women recruitment in political parties. During the quarter, the PPC had several engagements, including with the delegation comprising the Chairperson of Political Affairs of the East African Community, Electoral Law Governance Institute for Africa, and the Kenya South Sudan Liaison Office, among others. Looking ahead, the PPC plans to undertake the following priority tasks: i) establish its branch offices in all the states and Administrative Areas; ii) recruit its personnel, including administrators and inspectors in the states and the Administrative Areas; iii) continue with capacity building enhancement of the Council, Secretariat staff and political parties; iv) ensure 35% affirmative action for women representation in political parties and other special interest groups; v) undertake learning visits to neighbouring countries and the region; and vi) enhance partnership.
10. The NEC has continued to enhance its institutional capacity and readiness in preparation for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections rescheduled for December 2026. In December 2024, NEC launched its website. The NEC held its operational planning retreat from 3-5 December 2024 in Entebbe, Uganda, where it reviewed: i) the R-ARCSS extension timelines, identified key political decisions required for the NEC to deliver the 2026 elections; ii) discussed NEC strategies and priorities; iii) operational plan; iv) voter registration and boundary delimitation processes; v) civic and voter education plans; and vi) the NEC budget. Furthermore, the NEC held stakeholder engagements where it: i) underscored the outcomes of its retreat; ii) presented two regulations on observers, media and party agents and election campaigning, which were adopted by the Commission; iii) presented the adopted NEC Code of Conduct; iv) presented its civic and voter education strategy; and v) detailed the refurbishment of a new State High Election Committee office.

Legislative and Judicial Reforms

11. In terms of the NCAC amended laws, some progress was registered during this reporting period. The Presidency agreed to return the controversially enacted National Security Services (NSS) Amendment Bill back to Cabinet to be re-tabled before the TNLA with expectations that the controversial provisions, Sections 54 and 55 of the Act, will be addressed.² The President assented to the Public Finance Management and Accountability Act 2024, which paves way for prudent and transparent management of the public finances and promotes accountability. However, the two Petroleum-related laws and the Non-Governmental Authority (NGO) Act 2016 (Amendment) Bill are still pending. The Petroleum Bills seek to better manage and regulate the oil sector, while the NGO Bill introduces new regulations to govern the affairs of NGOs in the country. The subsequent step is for the Bills to be presented to the TNLA for its consideration.
12. In terms of the judicial reforms process, the ad hoc Judicial Reforms Committee (JRC) successfully completed its work during this reporting period. It finalised and validated its final report and recommendations on appropriate judicial reforms. In October 2024, the JRC final report was duly handed over to the RTGoNU and officially presented to the RTGoNU Presidency. Subsequently, the report was endorsed by H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, on 20 December 2024. Immediate next steps in the implementation of the JRC report require the review and amendment of the Judiciary Act and the reconstitution of the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) to implement the requisite judicial reforms.

National Census

13. Regarding progress on the National Population and Housing Census which is to be conducted before the end of the Transitional Period as provided for in the R-ARCSS, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) – the official government entity responsible for the production of official statistics in the Republic of South Sudan – reported that it prepared its workplan and budget. The budget was submitted to and approved by the Council of Ministers and the TNLA. In order to commence its preparatory work on putting the necessary mechanisms in place for operation, the NBS requested for advance payment from the RTGoNU. Although the Ministry of Finance and Planning reportedly agreed to disburse 25% of the budget, at the time of compiling this report it was yet to do so. Meanwhile, the NBS appointed coordinators for the Population and Housing Census and awaited resources for them to commence their work. The NBS further awaits a declaration of the National Population and Housing Census Day by the RTGoNU.

Tumaini Initiative

14. The High-Level Mediation for South Sudan (Tumaini Initiative), facilitated by the Government of the Republic of Kenya, has been ongoing in Nairobi since May 2024. The negotiations, involving the RTGoNU and South Sudanese Non-Signatory / Opposition groups resumed on 4 December 2024 after stalling in mid-July 2024. This followed a meeting between H.E. President Salva Kiir and H.E. President William Ruto of Kenya in November in Juba. The RTGoNU reconstituted its delegation and appointed Gen. Kuol Manyang Juk as the new head. Following a short break during the festive season, the talks are expected to resume in January 2025.

² Sections 54 and 55 of the NSS Bill passed previously concerned the power of arrest of the Security services and was viewed as being widely controversial because of its direct bearing on civic and political space in the country.

Gender Considerations

15. During the quarter, RJMEC continued to underscore that whenever a female incumbent is to be replaced, the Parties to the Agreement should pay due consideration to the requirement of a 35% minimum threshold of women's representation in the Executive and other decision-making bodies, as stipulated in the Revitalised Agreement.
16. Recognising that the extended period offers an opportunity for continued efforts towards ensuring women's meaningful participation in ongoing transitional justice, constitution making, electoral processes and elections at the end of the transitional period, the youth and women strongly appealed for more involvement in the implementation of the peace process and decision making and called for the passing of and operationalisation of laws and policies that will enhance this participation. This includes the Women and Youth Empowerment Bills, the Women Enterprise Development Bill, the Family Bill, and the GBV Bill among others. This appeal was reflected in the resolutions of the 3rd Extraordinary Plenary, reflected once again in the resolutions of the 38th Plenary in October, as well as the critical recommendations to the Parties and RTGoNU alongside the need for funding, adherence to the 35% women quota, political will and completion of the security arrangements which were highlighted for the RTGoNU's attention during the extended period.

Chapter 2: Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements

17. During the period of reporting, the Permanent Ceasefire generally continued to hold but was violated by the shooting incident between Government forces that occurred in Juba on 21 November 2024 at the house of the former Director General of the National Security Service, General Akol Koor Kuc. The RTGoNU appointed an investigative committee to determine the cause of the shooting. At the time of reporting, the report of the investigation committee had not yet been released. Also, on 20 December 2024, there were reports of forced entry into some diplomatic compounds in Juba by some elements of government forces. The issue was expeditiously handled through diplomatic channels.
18. Sporadic clashes between the SSPDF and the National Salvation Front (NAS) of Gen. Thomas Cirillo Swaka were reported in some parts of Central Equatoria State. As previously reported, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM) could not fully investigate and report on SSPDF and NAS clashes, because NAS does not have representation in CTSAMVM and there is no communication between the two.
19. On the Transitional Security Arrangements (TSAs), specifically the completion of the deployment of Phase I and the commencement of Phase II training of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF), the status of implementation remains the same as per the last Quarterly Report. There has been very little progress since the deployment of a total of eight military battalions in April 2024, and there has been no further progress on the commissioning of the second command echelon officers from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement /Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA).
20. There was some progress on the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) process. Following a three-day 'Security Sector Reform Conference', the SDSR Board completed the validation of the five strategic documents on 7 December 2024. The conference was opened and closed by H.E. Dr. Riek Machar Teny, First Vice President of the Republic of

South Sudan and the Chairperson of the RTGoNU Governance Cluster. In attendance were State Governors, TNLA representatives, senior representatives of all security sector institutions and agencies, civil society representatives, and observers that included representatives from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), African Union (AU), United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and RJMEC.

21. During the validation process, the SDSR Board presented the following documents; the *Security Policy Framework*, the *Revised Defence Policy*, and the *White Paper on Defence and Security* for review by all participants. The *Strategic Security Assessment* and the *Security Sector Transformation Roadmap* were not presented for review because the SDSR Board deemed it unnecessary to do so. The next stage is to present all the five documents to the Presidency for consideration, after which they will be submitted to the Cabinet and the TNLA for approval.
22. On the status of Security Mechanisms, they continue to suffer from lack of funding for the implementation of their mandated tasks as well as for the sustenance of the members of the mechanisms. Consequently, Cantonment Sites and Training Centres remain unfunded and personnel lack food, medicines, clean water and adequate shelter. Despite inadequate funding, CTSAMVM has throughout the reporting period managed to perform some of its tasks that include monitoring, verification, and reporting, as well as the regular holding of CTSAMVM Technical Committee and Board meetings.

Chapter 3: Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction

23. During the quarter under review, the majority of people in South Sudan continued to face critical humanitarian conditions due to the persistent crisis resulting from a combination of sporadic armed clashes and intercommunal violence, food insecurity, public health challenges and climatic shocks which severely affected livelihoods and hampered access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and health services. The situation was worsened by the economic crisis, the conflict in neighbouring Sudan and widespread flooding and protection concerns remained high, especially for women and girls.

Floods and Cholera

24. The effects of the floods continued to intensify towards the end of the year. Many communities remained highly vulnerable to the prolonged impacts of flooding, which devastated basic services and infrastructure. Floods increased the vulnerabilities of communities which were already affected by multiple public health crises, and challenges including inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation and natural disasters, a fragile public health system dependent on humanitarian aid, and low government funding for health. According to UNOCHA, as of 29 November 2024, the number of people who remained affected by floods stood at 1.4 million across 4 states and Abyei and 379,000 people were flood-displaced across 22 counties and Abyei, the majority of whom were those already facing high levels of vulnerability due to previous flooding, conflict and the impact of the Sudan crisis.
25. Following the declaration of a cholera outbreak in October by the Ministry of Health, cases rapidly escalated. By the end of December, UNOCHA reported that over 13,735 cases and 202 deaths were recorded in 29 counties across the country, with the most affected state being Unity State, followed by Central Equatoria, Upper Nile and Northern Bahr El Ghazal States. In response to the outbreak, in December, the Humanitarian Coordinator for South

Sudan, released US\$8 million from the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund to support the multisectoral response to the cholera outbreak in six priority locations across the country to mitigate the impact of cholera. This emergency highlights the overall urgent need for strengthened health systems, improved WASH services, and enhanced humanitarian support to address overlapping emergencies and protect the most at-risk populations.

Food Insecurity

26. Compounded by floods, food insecurity continued to worsen among populations across the country with an estimated 6.1 million people (45 per cent of the population) classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above with 31,000 people experiencing catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 5) the majority of whom were South Sudanese returnees from Sudan.
27. Following a country-wide needs assessment, in response to existing needs in South Sudan, the Humanitarian Community launched the 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2025 which prioritizes counties with the highest severity of needs. Whereas the plan focuses on life-saving humanitarian needs, the humanitarian community will collaborate with the government and international partners to leverage additional resources to strengthen longer-term resilience. The plan calls for government commitment to longer-term resilience, service provision and productive social protection as a critical part of the humanitarian response strategy in 2025. Unhindered access and removal of bureaucratic impediments were also highlighted as critical enablers for the timely provision of assistance to people in need. The HRP targets 5.4 million people out of the estimated 9.3 million in need in South Sudan at a cost of US \$1.7 billion.
28. During the quarter, the South Sudan Action Plan on Return Reintegration and Recovery: Achieving Durable Solutions 2024 - 2028 was launched. This national policy aims to provide a framework for long-term solutions for displaced populations, including refugees, returnees and host communities with priority actions including, creating a secure and safe environment for the provision of durable solutions, provision of basic services, support integration of refugees, returnees and host communities to improve livelihoods and strengthening government institutional capacity, and coordination mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of interventions. Recognising the timeliness of this intervention, given the current and growing humanitarian needs, RJMEC urged the RTGoNU to expeditiously operationalise this action plan in order to deliver peace dividends to the citizens of South Sudan as envisaged in chapter III of the Agreement.

Humanitarian Access

29. Although the number of reported incidents reduced during the quarter, humanitarian operations in South Sudan continued to face significant challenges due to escalating violence, threats against personnel and assets, bureaucratic impediments, unauthorised taxes and logistical constraints. Access impediments increased administrative hurdles while physical access issues delayed the delivery of essential services to communities across the country. Targeted attacks on humanitarian assets continued, adding to operational risks while intercommunal violence, led to fatalities, injuries, displacement and looting of food supplies from the humanitarian warehouses, leading to delayed assistance for displaced communities. Flooding and heavy rains rendered critical routes impassable in Upper Nile, Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, forcing organizations to rely on costly air and river transport and limiting service capacity.

Return, Resettlement, and Reintegration

30. According to UNOCHA, by the end of December 2024, more than 969,219 returnees and refugees, the majority of whom were women and children, arrived from Sudan since the crisis started in April 2023. Of those 32,367 and 33,131 arrived in October and November respectively, while 100,000 arrived in December alone. Most of these individuals arrived in dire need of immediate lifesaving humanitarian support and continued to stay in the main transit centres and nearby towns increasing pressure on local economies and basic services. In high-return areas, the need for a major scale-up of services remained critical, especially for healthcare and education, to support host communities already absorbing internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. To prevent prolonged dependency on humanitarian aid, enhanced livelihood programmes and addressing housing, land and property issues remain essential to help returnees achieve self-sufficiency upon arrival.
31. Protection concerns remained particularly high for women and girls, especially those fleeing Sudan, as many arrived in poor physical and psychological conditions, having been exposed to gender-based violence (GBV) and abuse. With projections estimating an additional 337,000 arrivals in 2025, urgent life-saving assistance remains critical, including food, nutrition, shelter and WASH services, health and vulnerability screening, vaccinations for children, and mental health and psychosocial support. There is also an urgent need to decongest transit centres in order to decrease protection, GBV and health risks.

Chapter 4: Resource Economic and Financial Management

32. The South Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission continued its sensitization on its role in all ten states and Administrative Areas within the country. The Commission currently lacks the capacity to deliver on its primary mandate of protecting public property and investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. There is therefore an urgent need for adequate financial and human resources, the provision of a suitable working environment and the relevant security for staff during and after working hours.
33. Furthermore, though the laws governing the oversight institutions of the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Audit Chamber have been legislated the heads of these institutions are yet to be appointed according to the Agreement, Article 4.5.4, which states that, within the Transitional Period, the President shall in consultation and agreement with the First Vice President, and the Vice Presidents nominate a National Auditor-General, for the approval by the TNLA. The head of the Anti-Corruption Commission is to be appointed in the same way, as per Article 4.4.1.7.

Land Policy

34. The Draft South Sudan National Land Policy 2023 was tabled at the TNLA. This Land Policy is a long-term framework for assigning and protecting collective and individual land rights for all South Sudanese. It has been developed through considerable public input and research to identify key land issues and challenges and methods for tackling them. Policymakers, traditional and religious authorities, national and international players, and communities from around South Sudan have all actively participated in the process. The policy addresses the following challenges:
 - lack of consensus on who owns the land;
 - weak land administration and management;
 - displacement resulting from conflicts and disasters;

- gender bias and discrimination;
 - agriculture and sustainable management of land-based resources;
 - land use planning, land management and environmental conservation;
 - informal settlements in cities and towns;
 - managing interactions between pastoralism, farming and other land uses;
 - land grabbing and illegal land occupations;
 - disputes over internal boundaries and international borders; and
 - climate change and natural disasters.
35. The policy articulates options and strategies, establishes the institutional framework, and defines roles, responsibilities, and interactions to promote tenure security for improved land productivity and sustainable development. It further mandates reviewing the Land Act 2009 to define the three land tenure classifications—community, public, and private—and how they shall be governed. Secure access to IDPs and returnees will be guaranteed, access to women granted, and land planning and environmental sustainability assured. It also requires peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and farmers and domesticating the IGAD Protocol on Transhumance to secure and manage seasonal migration routes which will ensure peace and stability. It is also expected to resolve disputes over internal boundaries and international borders and address land markets and investment. The policy as well as the R-ARCSS mandates the establishment of the independent land registry which is to be created at all levels of government.

PFM Oversight Committee

36. The Public Financial Management Oversight Committee (PFMOC) has remained functional since its creation in 2021 to reform South Sudan's existing economic and public sector financial management institutions, to ensure that public financial management of oil and non-oil revenues, the exchange rate, budgetary processes, procurement, management of payroll, public concessions, borrowing, debt and regulatory agencies are effective, transparent and accountable, free from corruption, compliant with international best practices and the laws of South Sudan.³
37. In addition, the Oversight Committee monitored and supported incremental growth in revenue mobilization month on month with an average of SSP 38.9 billion (US \$10 million) per month, amidst a remarkable decline in oil production due to the conflict in Sudan. South Sudan lost its main oil pipeline to transfer DAR petroleum to Port Sudan, thereby losing about 60 percent of its revenue.
38. The Committee has also supported several capacity-building workshops and training for the public accounting officers, PFM working groups and change agents through the resources provided by Development Partners and the Government to enhance revenue mobilization, budgeting and expenditure. The PFMOC deliberated on inflation and how to control and contain its rapid rise and its impact on the economy. In a presentation by the Bank of South Sudan (BOSS), the institution responsible for formulating monetary policy, and promoting price stability, the Committee was informed that the lack of Foreign Reserves which is primarily sought from oil export, is the main cause of inflation.

³ The PFMOC is composed as follows: RTGoNU, the Ambassadors from UK, USA and Norway, the World Bank, the IMF, the AfDB, and South Sudan Civil Society representatives.

39. During the reporting period, the Bank could not intervene in the market through the Foreign Exchange auctions as it was in short supply of foreign currency. BOSS resorted to focusing on alternative monetary policies to implement price stability and curb extreme fluctuations. These include promoting digitization of the economy to curb excessive money supply, fiscal discipline, prudent public spending, revenue diversification and investing in agricultural development, modernizing the food supply chain, and implementing targeted policies to support farmers, which can help stabilize food prices and reduce volatility.

Chapter 5: Transitional Justice Accountability Reconciliation and Healing

40. On 11 November 2024, H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit signed into law two critical legislations, namely the *Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing Act* and the *Compensation and Reparation Authority Act*. The operationalization of the Acts is the critical next step which involves the appointment of seven commissioners to the CTRH, four South Sudanese and three non-South Sudanese.
41. For the recruitment process of the South Sudanese commissioners, a selection panel constituted by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MoJCA) with the support of stakeholders is to undertake the process. The selection panel composed of nine stakeholder representatives is expected to transparently and competitively recruit four (4) suitable South Sudanese nationals to be commissioners of the CTRH. For the recruitment of the non-South Sudanese commissioners, the Chair of the African Union Commission (AUC) in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the United Nations (based on guidance from the RTGoNU) are to select three suitable candidates for the position of commissioners of the CTRH.
42. All candidates that eventually get nominated for appointment are to be vetted by the TNLA. There should be at the minimum three women out of the seven. On the operationalization of the CRA, the RTGoNU is also required to appoint into office suitable persons to serve as members of the Board of the CRA. This appointment would be following nomination of seventeen (17) members drawn from Parties to the Agreement (7), civil society organizations (2), women groups (2), faith-based groups (2), youth (1), business community (1), traditional leaders (1) and persons with disability (1).
43. On the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission has formally communicated to the RTGoNU of its intention to draft the necessary guidelines towards the establishment of the Hybrid Court.

Chapter 6: Parameters of Permanent Constitution

44. During this reporting period, the reconstituted NCRC continued its internal preparation to ready itself for the constitution-making process once funding is availed to the Commission. It has upgraded its secretariat, and conducted capacity-building workshops for its members, with the support of various partners including IGAD, UNDP, Max Planck Foundation and UNMISS. The Commission has developed a detailed 18 months action plan with a budget to complete the constitution-making process, including civic education public consultations and convening of the national constitutional conference. Key pending tasks include recruitment of the Constitutional Drafting Committee, commencement of countrywide civic education and public consultations, and the swearing-in of ten new members.

Chapter 7: Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission

45. The RJMEC leadership held discussions with H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of South Sudan, on the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS and specific actions being undertaken by the RTGoNU to further the prospects for lasting peace in South Sudan. The President reiterated the RTGoNU's commitment to funding the Revitalised Peace Agreement. In addition, the President reiterated his commitment to the full implementation of the R-ARCSS and pledged that there would be no further extensions of the Transitional Period of the R-ARCSS.
46. Discussions were also held with the First Vice President H.E. Dr Riek Machar and Vice Presidents H.E. Dr James Wani Igga and H.E. Hussein Abdelbagi. These important engagements focused on issues related to the implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement, and in particular efforts at restarting the unification of forces, operationalising the transitional justice mechanisms and commencing the work of the NCRC and NEC.
47. On 20 November 2024, the leadership of RJMEC formerly presented its Quarterly Report for the third quarter of 2024 before a full seating of the TNL. The briefing, which was presented pursuant to Article 7.9 of the R-ARCSS focused on the status of implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement, including the constitution-making and election processes, the continuing challenges facing implementation, and recommendations. The RJMEC Leadership also encouraged the TNLA to enhance its effectiveness in discharging its oversight responsibility and to prevail on the RTGoNU to adhere to the agreed implementation schedule, provide funding and ensure accountable and transparent utilisation of allocated resources.
48. RJMEC held its 38th regular ordinary monthly meeting on 31st October 2024 during which an assessment was provided on the critical pending implementation tasks of the Revitalized Peace Agreement and the urgency required to complete them in a timely manner following the decision to extend the Transitional Period from 22 February 2025 to 22 February 2027 with elections scheduled for December 2026. The plenary noted that throughout the implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement, progress has been slowed down by recurring challenges such as insufficient political will, trust deficit, lack of sufficient, dedicated and predictable funding, and capacity gaps. In this regard, the plenary highlighted the unprecedented need to do things differently to overcome the aforementioned challenges.
49. Additionally, several recommendations were addressed to the RTGoNU aimed at improving the pace of implementation, including: (i) provide a strategy with a clear, coherent and overarching action plan, budget and timeline for the implementation of the priority tasks for the extended transitional period to build confidence, and aid resource mobilisation and support; (ii) coordinate the Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms so that their workplans are aligned, coherent, and collaborative to ensure effective and efficient implementation; (iii) mobilise and dedicate adequate and predictable funding to the Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms; (iv) increase women's representation in the executive and legislative appointments up to and beyond the 35% minimum threshold given their centrality of the roles of women in achieving lasting peace and security in South Sudan; and (v) address questions of how South Sudanese refugees and IDPs will participate in the constitution-making and electoral processes now and throughout the extended Transitional Period.

50. The leadership also met and held discussions with Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary and made several recommendations on how IGAD as guarantor to the Revitalized Peace Agreement can better assist the process going forward including: (i) engage the leadership of IGAD member states to revitalise their oversight engagement in the South Sudan peace process, meet regularly to take stock and pronounce themselves on the progress being made in the implementation of the R-ARCSS; (ii) the IGAD Council of Ministers to undertake a joint Ministerial visit to South Sudan to review the current status of the R-ARCSS, or to arrange bilateral visits; (iii) need to mobilize and avail in-kind and financial support for RJMEC, CTSAMVM and the overall Peace Agreement; and (iv) need to hold regular council meetings and summits, in order to galvanise regional, continental and international support to the RTGoNU in its efforts to implement the R-ARCSS.

III. Key Observations and Recommendations

Observations

51. There are only two years left to the holding of elections and a much shorter time period in which to complete the critical pending tasks required to pave the way for its successful conclusion. Such tasks include the unification of forces, Permanent Constitution making, and implementing the election processes such as voter registration. In addition, urgent, predictable and sufficient funding is required to enable institutions such as the NCRC and NEC to carry out their mandates uninterrupted. It is only with requisite political will and the availability of funding that these outstanding tasks can be satisfactorily tackled.
52. The humanitarian crisis facing the country continues to be a source of grave concern given the sheer scale of the problem and compounding issues such as dwindling funding and the ongoing conflict in Sudan that keeps fueling the unplanned return of refugees. The recurring challenges faced by the government and humanitarian agencies significantly affected the ability to provide timely and effective aid to vulnerable populations in many areas. This, therefore, underscores the urgent need for improved security measures and streamlined access for humanitarian efforts. It is hoped that the NGO Bill currently before the TNLA, once passed, will provide a framework for improving the environment for humanitarian workers and access to vulnerable groups.
53. With the passage of the *Commission for Truth Reconciliation and Healing Act* and the *Compensation and Reparation Authority Act*, every effort must be made to appoint the commissioners in accordance with the R-ARCSS. The operationalisation of the Acts is the critical next step which involves appointment of the Commissioners and beginning the work of Transitional Justice in South Sudan. As it relates to the Constitution-making process, it is important that the work of the NCRC begins in earnest given the time remaining to the holding of elections and the need to have a completed Constitution before the country goes to the polls. In that regard, the planned NCRC partners' forum is a welcome step in securing much needed funding for the Constitution-making process.

Recommendations

54. The recommendations that follow, if acted upon, including to the Parties to the Agreement, RTGoNU, TNL, IGAD, the African Union, and the International Partners, are geared towards encouraging a faster pace of implementation of the R-ARCSS and will better prepare the country for elections.

a. To the Parties to the Agreement and Relevant Stakeholders:

- 54.1. continue to engage in constructive dialogue during this critical period of the extension with a view to creating an inclusive environment for the implementation of the critical pending tasks.

b. To the RTGoNU:

- 54.2. provide a strategy with a clear, coherent and overarching action plan, budget and timeline for the implementation of the priority tasks for the extended transitional period to build confidence, and aid resource mobilisation and support;
- 54.3. conduct an expeditious review and amendment of the Judiciary Act and reconstitution of the JSC to implement the recommended judicial reforms following the RTGoNU's endorsement of the JRC report;
- 54.4. fully fund the Agreement institutions and mechanisms to allow them to complete their mandates thus facilitating implementation of the R-ARCSS; and
- 54.5. establish and operationalise the CTRH and CRA.

c. To the TNLA:

- 54.6. expedite the enactment of all pending amendment bills, including the Petroleum Management and Petroleum Revenue Management bills.

d. To IGAD

- 54.7. continue to strengthen IGAD member states' oversight engagement in the South Sudan peace process, meet regularly to take stock and pronounce themselves on the progress being made in the implementation of the R-ARCSS;
- 54.8. the IGAD Council of Ministers to undertake a joint Ministerial visit to South Sudan to review the current status of the R-ARCSS, or to arrange bilateral visits; and
- 54.9. mobilize regional and international in-kind and financial support for RJMEC, CTSAMVM and the overall Peace Agreement.

e. To the African Union

- 54.10. continue to play an active role in ensuring the success of the Agreement and in helping to maintain lasting peace and stability in South Sudan;
- 54.11. encourage the AU C5 to continuously engage with the RTGoNU through regular country visits; and
- 54.12. provide support to the permanent constitution-making and election processes, including considering direct funding of some of the critical mechanisms, civic education, and providing capacity building.

f. International Partners

- 54.13. consider providing in-kind or financial support to the key elections-related mechanisms, especially the NEC and the NCRC.

Conclusion

55. The pace of implementation needs to be increased for the RTGoNU to meet the new extended deadline for the holding of elections in December 2026. The NCRC, for example, is ready to begin public consultations and do the necessary groundwork to draft the Permanent Constitution, forming the basis on which elections will be held. Efforts should therefore continue to be focused on securing the necessary financial resources in order to quickly implement the critical pending tasks, which also includes the unification of forces. Going forward, the RTGoNU needs to demonstrate political will and commitment to overcoming the many challenges, and laying the groundwork for lasting and sustainable peace in South Sudan.
56. On its part and pursuant to its mandate as provided for in Chapter 7 of the R-ARCSS, RJMEC will continue to monitor, evaluate, and report on the status of implementation of the R-ARCSS, and as circumstances may demand, intervene to break any deadlock that may emerge in the course of implementation. RJMEC will regularly provide reports and briefings to the RTGoNU, the reconstituted TNLA, the Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and to the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Security Council of the United Nations.

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