



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

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE 31<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE RECONSTITUTED JOINT  
MONITORING AND EVALUATION COMMISSION HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2023 AT  
BEIJING JUBA HOTEL, SOUTH SUDAN**

The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) convened its 31<sup>st</sup> meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 in Juba, South Sudan. H.E. Amb. Maj Gen (rtd) Charles Tai Gituai, Interim Chairperson of the RJMEC chaired the meeting and called it to order at 10:21am.

**Agenda**

1. Opening Prayers
2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> 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 of Implementation in 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 (RTGoNU)
2. Hon. Sandra Bona Malwal (SPLM/IO)
3. Hon. Amb. Stephen Par Kuol (SPLM/A –IO)
4. Maj. Gen. Bior Leek Kuareng (FD)
5. Hon. Wilson Lodiong Sebit (OPP)

**For the Other South Sudanese Stakeholders and Adherents:**

1. Sheik Jaralnebi Khamis Mursal (Faith-based Leader)
2. Mr. Akuoch Ajang Nyanhom (CSO Alliance)
3. Dr. Angelina Bazugba (Academia)

4. Prof. Moses Macar Kacuol (Eminent Persons)
5. Mrs. Abuk Jervas Makuak (Business Community)
6. Mrs. Yar Manoa Majok (Business Community)
7. Ms. Eva Christo Simon (Women Coalition)
8. Mrs. Maria Gideon Gakmar (Women's Bloc)
9. Mr. Patrick A. Godi (Youth)
10. Ms. Acayo Nancy Cirino (Youth)

**For the Regional Guarantors:**

1. H.E. Hassan Robleh Mahamoud (Djibouti)
2. Amb. Markos Tekle Rike (Ethiopia)
3. Mr. Gamal Malik Ahmed Goraish (Sudan)
4. Mr. Gervas Ogutu (Kenya)
5. H.E. Brig. Gen. Ronny Balya (Uganda)
6. Mr. Mohamed Abdi Ali (Somalia)
7. Mr. Tukur Marigan (Nigeria)
8. H.E. Adv. Mahlodi S. Muofhe (South Africa)
9. Dr. Aleu Garang (IGAD)
10. Dr. Prosper Addo (AUMISS)

**For International Partners and Friends of South Sudan:**

1. H.E. Ma Qiang (China)
2. Mr. Lars Petter Henie (Norway)
3. H.E. Michael J. Adler (USA)
4. H.E. Guy Warrington (UK)
5. H.E. Timo Olkkinen (EU)
6. H.E. Marjan Schippers (IPF) Netherlands
7. Mr. Julius Egbeeyemi (IPF) Canada
8. Mr. Guang Cong (UNMISS)

**For RJMEC Secretariat:**

1. Amb. Berhanu Kebede, Chief of Staff
2. Dr. Thomson Fontaine, Deputy Chief of Staff - Strategy

**For Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms:**

1. Ustaz Stephen Wiw (Head of Secretariat NTC)
2. Lt. Gen. Rabi Mujung Emmanuel (JDB)
3. Maj. Gen. Jacob Nyier Gatkuoth (Head of JDB Secretariat)
4. Maj. Gen. Charles Machieng (JBD-A/Co-Chair)
5. Madame Angelina Teny (Chairperson SDSR Board)
6. Mr. Angelo Madut (Head of SDSR Board Secretariat)
7. Maj. Gen. Pal Yiech Lam (Deputy Head of JMCC Secretariat)
8. Lt. Gen. Dr. Olaw Adiang (Head of JTSC Secretariat)
9. Hon. Lt. Gen. Ayuen Alier Jongoror (Chairperson DDR Commission)
10. Maj. Gen. Hailu Gonfa Eddosa (Chairperson CTSAMVM)
11. Brig. Gen. Yassir Hassab Alla (Deputy Chairperson CTSAMVM)
12. Justice James Ogoola (Chairperson JRC)
13. Lady Justice Joyce Aluoch (Deputy Chairperson JRC)
14. Justice Ajonye Perpetua Paya (Head of Secretariat JRC)

**Observers:**

1. Mr. Sencer Kagan Senol (Turkiye)
2. Mr Leon Kohl (German)
3. H.E. Tsutsumi Naohiro (Japan)
4. Ms. Lydia Minagano Kape (Switzerland)
5. Mr. Amr Yousry (Egypt)
6. Mr. Brian Vere (Zimbabwe)
7. Mr. George Otoo (UN RCO)
8. Ms. Fenny Hum (UN Women)
9. Ms. Catherine Waliaula (UNDP)
10. Mr. Flavio Foares Da Gama (AFDB)
11. Maj. Patric Nuwagaba (SSM)
12. Lt. Col. Taifa Kuer (Security Supervision Mechanism)

**Min. 01/31/23: Opening Prayers**

1. Sheik Jaralnebi Khamis Mursal led the opening prayers.

**Min. 02/31/23: Chairperson's Opening Remarks**

2. The Interim Chairperson welcomed the RJMEC members to the 31<sup>st</sup> monthly meeting. He thanked members for their attendance and called the meeting to order.

**Min. 03/31/23: Adoption of the Agenda**

3. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

**Min. 04/31/23: Adoption of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

4. The draft minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> RJMEC meeting were revised and adopted without amendment.

**Min. 05/31/23 Statement by the RJMEC Interim Chairperson**

5. The RJMEC Interim Chairperson welcomed members and highlighted the following:
  - 5.1 this meeting marks the first anniversary of the endorsement of the Roadmap by the Parties which outlined a number of priority tasks with timelines that the Parties to the Agreement considered critical for completion, before the conduct of peaceful and democratic elections in December 2024;
  - 5.2 recommended to the RTGoNU key elections-related tasks to be implemented for the remaining time as follows: a) expedite the reconstitution of the Political Parties Council and the National Constitutional Review Commission; b) expedite the enactment of the National Elections Act by the Transitional National Legislature, paving the way for the reconstitution of a credible and impartial National Elections Commission; c) expedite the completion of the unification of forces, and provide adequate resources to the Security Mechanisms; d) provide timely and sufficient resources for the implementation of all the critical pending tasks of the Revitalised Agreement; e) encourage the expansion of political and civic space for all South Sudanese to take part in the conversations surrounding their participation in the political

- process; and f) ensure that women's representation in the political process attains a minimum of 35%, including in the Constitution-making bodies;
- 5.3 urged RJMEC members to reflect on the assessment, and constructively engage the RTGoNU, by identifying areas of requisite support to expedite implementation of the critical pending tasks highlighted; and
  - 5.4 appealed to the Principals of the Parties signatory to the Revitalised Agreement to consider meeting to take stock of implementation since the Roadmap was endorsed in 2022, and dialogue on how to implement the critical pending tasks in the remaining time.

#### **Min. 06/31/23: Report from the RTGoNU**

6. The representative of the RTGoNU reported as follows:

- 6.1. The NCAC's mandate has been extended by six months, allowing the RTGoNU to cover the Chair and Deputy Chair's salaries and local personnel allowances, enabling continued review of outstanding bills until December 2023 or January 2024.
- 6.2. The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs clarified the content of the Political Parties Act, 2022, requiring all nine members of the PPC, including the Chair and Deputy Chair, to be non-partisan and adhere to high integrity and moral values. Some parties and stakeholders had submitted their candidates for consideration.
- 6.3. The National Elections bill was undergoing Parliament's legislative process but is awaiting FY 2023/2024 budget passage. Once enacted, the National Elections Commission (NEC) will be reconstituted to include representatives from all signatory parties. In addition, the National Constitutional Review Commission, National Election Commission, and National Bureau of Statistics presented their operational processes and budgets to the Joint Gov-Trilateral Taskforce on July 27, 2023.
- 6.4. The Joint Gov-Trilateral Taskforce reviewed the budgets of the three institutions, which were then further reviewed by a technical committee comprising of the leadership of the institutions. The reviewed budgets were then submitted to the Minister of Cabinet Affairs and are now ready for discussion by the High-Level Standing Committee (HLSC). The proposals will then be submitted to the Council of Ministers before being re-considered by the Joint Gov-Trilateral Taskforce. The stages of budgetary processing are crucial for partners to view government commitment as a prerequisite for any potential contributions.
- 6.5. The First Vice President confirmed receiving the list of the unified second echelon of Prisons, Wildlife, Fire Brigade, and National Security Services. Army and Police were still outstanding, but should be completed soon. Due to budget delays, SSP 3.6 billion for the supply of items for phase-1 Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) had not been released. However, some food items had been received and were being supplied to various security sector locations.
- 6.6. The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management was finalizing the South Sudan durable solution strategy for refugees, returnees, IDPs, and host communities. The NGO Act was being reviewed to align with the R-ARCSS provisions, and was in the final stages of the legislative process. Consultation was underway on the establishment of the Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF) and Board.
- 6.7. The FY 2023/2024 budget was in its final stage of parliamentary approval, with differences emerging between the Executive and RTNLA over the increase of civil servants and security sector salaries. The Executive prefers a gradual increase, while Parliament advocates a single step increase within the budget ceiling. The Executive recommended a 400% increase, while the RTNLA argued for deductions from budget allocations of Sovereignty Institutions (Contingency, The Presidency, Ministry of Presidential Affairs) and other critical institutions

and programs (Ministry of Finance, Planning, Roads and Peace). The SPLM-IO and SSOA support the Parliament's position, while the SPLM and its allied parties support the position of the Executive. The budget is therefore likely to be determined through democratic voting; until then payments for the Agreement's organs will remain outstanding.

- 6.8. The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs was drafting bills for the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA), which will be approved by the Council of Ministers, ratified by the RTNLA, and assented to by the President.
- 6.9. The National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) is still undergoing reconstitution, with the SSOA, OPP, and other stakeholders having submitted nominees. The I-TGoNU and SPLM/IO are expected to submit their names in mid-August 2023. The list will be presented to the Presidency for consideration, then to the RTNLA for ratification. The President will appoint successful candidates, and the Commission will be operationalized for the making of the Permanent Constitution.

**Min. 07/31/23: Briefing from the PFM-OC**

7. No report was either received or presented as the PFM-OC Chairperson did not attend the plenary.

**Min. 08/31/23: Briefing from the NTC**

8. The NTC was working on securing funding for Security Mechanisms' operating costs and emergency food items for graduated Unified Forces in Training Centres for Phase II.
  - 8.1 NTC facilitated Transitional Security Arrangements activities for August 2023 including: a meeting with the Security Mechanisms held on 8/8/2023, where it was agreed that the Security Mechanisms should develop a timeframe for Phase II commencement and deployment. The NTC will receive food for the graduated National Unified Forces and forces in the cantonment sites. It was following up on the approved budget of SSP 3,671,588,100 by the Council of Ministers to cover for the cost of food items for Phase I deployment. Military uniforms and equipment were still at the port of Mombasa, Kenya, due to unreleased funds from the Ministry of Finance and Planning.
  - 8.2 The Ministry of Finance had not released the requested SSP 2.5 billion for Security Mechanisms' operating costs, posing a significant challenge for NTC to implement the security arrangements. Ex-combatants and graduated Unified Forces continued to reside in training centres due to inadequate facilities outside these centres. Appealed to the friends of South Sudan, Guarantors, the African Union, and the UN to support the NTC to expedite implementation of the pending Transitional Security Arrangements tasks.

**Min. 09/31/23: Briefing from UNMISS SRSG**

9. The DSRSG underscored President Kiir's emphasis that the country is in a critical phase of peace consolidation and urged the Parties to work together to complete the Transitional Period, without further extension to the Revitalised Peace Agreement, by holding elections in 2024. The multi-party discussions on the draft national budget, including the election budget, are acknowledged. Also, aware that the National Police is putting in place contingency plans for electoral security. The Government-Trilateral Joint Task Force for the Implementation of the Constitution-Making and Electoral Processes has presented priority issues related to elections for immediate consideration and decision by the Parties.

- 9.1. South Sudan faces challenges in holding elections due to the lack of progress in key electoral and constitutional benchmarks, despite increasing calls for elections. The passage of the National Elections Bill and the reconstitution of both the National Constitutional Review Commission and the Political Parties Council are urgently needed. As such, all parties to the Peace Agreement must demonstrate their political will by expediting the implementation of key benchmarks. The Transitional Security Arrangements were behind schedule, and the Presidency's call for immediate deployment of Unified Forces and Phase II was a welcome development. Encouraged the Transitional Government to implement its commitments and provide necessary funding.
- 9.2. Commended South Sudan for embracing its role in welcoming refugees and returnees from the Sudan conflict, but the crisis was ongoing, with over 213,000 arrivals. The humanitarian community needs \$26.4 million for transportation until the end of the year for tens of thousands of returnees. The congestion and competition over scarce resources could exacerbate tensions between returnees and host communities. UNMISS has intensified patrols and reinforced its presence in Renk to deter violence. Acknowledged effective cooperation with the Government of Upper Nile, South Sudan People's Defense Forces, National Police Service, and National Security Service. Called for national and international funding to ensure support for those fleeing the conflict.
- 9.3. The Sudan conflict had significantly impacted the local economy, leading to increased inflation and depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound, resulting in a growing vulnerable population, and increased financial requirements for humanitarian responses. The Roadmap, adopted a year ago, emphasizes the urgency to finalize outstanding tasks and build a foundation for free, fair, and credible elections by December 2024. UNMISS was ready to collaborate with the government, RJMEC, AU, IGAD, and other international partners to advance the peace process in South Sudan.

**Min. 10/31/23: 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 NCAC**

- 10.1. No report was submitted to the plenary.

**Report from the CTSAMVM**

- 10.2. CTSAMVM, including National Monitors, was actively working in the field, and investigating alleged clashes at Wunkur in northern Unity State and tensions in south-eastern Upper Nile State following an attack at Mathiang in late June. It had further received reports of incidents involving NAS in Central Equatoria State, mainly in the Yei area and Paya Hills. Regular visits to cantonment sites and training centres revealed commanders reporting lack of logistic support, information about Phase II training and deployment of Unified Forces. Since January 2023, CTC and CTSAMVM Board meetings had not been held due to issues raised by CTC Senior National Representatives. The issues are being addressed at the political level by IGAD, RJMEC, and the Principals. CTSAMVM has five outstanding reports, one of which concerns SGBV, with others under preparation.

**Report from the JDB**

- 10.3. The Head of the JDB Secretariat informed the meeting that the JDB reached an agreement on unifying the second tier of command of NUF but is awaiting appointment of officers to various



command positions. The JDB made deployment arrangement plans in collaboration with the SSPDF, the South Sudan National Police Service, the National Security Service, the National Prisons Service, the National Civil Defence Service, and the National Wildlife Service. The training centres and assembly areas ran out of logistics, especially food and medicines, and JDB stores are completely empty. Also, their offices at the South Sudan Hotel are closed. The officers deployed to the R-ARCSS security mechanisms have not received remuneration since 2019. Phase II NUF arrangements have not yet commenced.

#### **Report from the SDSR Board**

- 10.4. The Chairperson of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) Board informed the meeting that the Board deliberated and decided to resolve a number of issues including replacement of the members who had persistently been absent from its meetings and activities. The Chairperson wrote to the Heads of the Parties requesting their changes to be forwarded officially to IGAD and copied to RJMEC. Underscored the need to have a retreat with all members present for the reading of the final documents produced by the Board. Thanked UNMISS and RJMEC for the support to conduct a one-day workshop for technical validation of the documents produced by the Board. Appealed to NTC and the RTGoNU to avail funding to the Board to finalise its planned activities.

#### **Report from the Joint Transitional Security Committee (JTSC)**

- 10.5. The JTSC Head of the Secretariat did not present a written report to the plenary. Informed members that all had been reported by NTC and JDB. Highlighted that the situation in the Training Centres remained dire with most of the forces having deserted the centres due to the lack of logistical support and medical supplies. The Committee held a meeting for preparations of Phase II and receiving the forces that had left the Training Centres to prepare them for redeployment. The process was expected to be completed in two weeks once the food was received, following which the JTSC will embark on assessment of the Training Centres for Phase II because some of them had been rendered not suitable for training due to floods. The Committee agreed on new criteria for the Training Centres to be designated in areas that are more accessible along the Nile. However, he reiterated that the main challenge was the DDR Commission which had neither prepared nor allocated facilities for the relocation of the ex-combatants for Phase II. The JTSC expects Phase II to be bigger than Phase I, being the final phase before election. Appealed to the NTC and RTGoNU to avail funding for early preparations for Phase II, and for the training to be shorter to avoid all the unnecessary challenges faced in Phase I.

#### **Report from the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission (JMCC)**

- 10.6. The Deputy Head of Secretariat of the JMCC informed members that the budget for Phase II was submitted [to the NTC] to facilitate all activities for preparations of the forces and sites. However, no funds were released to cover activities reported in the 30<sup>th</sup> RJMEC plenary. There is need for partners to support JMCC's field visits to assembly points before the rainy season, the delivery of food and non-food items including medicine, and release of incentives for members and accommodation payments. Appealed to NTC to provide funding support for the implementation of all remaining activities to lessen the pain and suffering of the armed forces in all cantonments, barracks, and training centres.

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

- 10.7. The Chairperson of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission informed members that its report and funding challenges remained unchanged since the last meeting, as it lacked prioritization from the Principals. Expressed that the ex-combatants remained in the training centres, and there were no facilities to accommodate them once Phase I forces are redeployed. However, appealed to the RTGoNU to allocate the cantonment sites and training centres to the DDR Commission to maintain keeping the ex-combatants in these areas until they are moved to transitional facilities. Moreover, the Commission with the support of the Embassy of France through the UNDP, continues preparing for the implementation of a Community Violence Reduction (CVR) pilot project in Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal State, which was yet to commence. Thanked the RJMEC Interim Chairperson and the former Minister of Defence for their continued support and advocacy for the prioritization of the DDR process.

### **Report from the Judicial Reform Committee (JRC)**

- 10.8. The Judicial Reform Committee (JRC) reported on the key findings of Phase I of the public and stakeholder consultations held on judicial reforms in Upper Nile, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Western Equatoria States, and in Pibor Administrative Area. The findings included; i) an overwhelming number of members of the public and stakeholders supported the need for reform of the judiciary; ii) public and stakeholders had low levels of confidence and trust in the judiciary; iii) continuous and widespread interference in the independence of the judiciary by some members of state executive bodies; iv) customary law courts were more effective and trustworthy in dispensing justice than the courts of judicature in the states; v) need for robust and continuous training of judges, customary law court chiefs and law enforcement agencies, especially, the police and prison warders who were singled as requiring professional training; vi) welfare of judges, clerks and other judicial officers needed to be improved; vii) delays in hearing of cases due to insufficient number of judges having the powers of a high court judge, thus obstructing appeals; viii) widespread support for the establishment of federal courts in South Sudan; ix) need for more women justices and judges in the judiciary; x) call for the establishment of specialized courts such as commercial, family, land and labour courts, and; xi) enhancing and institutionalizing alternative dispute resolution within the current judicial system. Underscored that JRC may not accomplish its tasks unless RTGoNU or another donor/partner comes onboard to financially support the Chair and Deputy Chair.

### **Min. 11/31/23: Discussions on Statements and Reports**

- 11 Members welcomed the statement of the RJMEC Chairperson and reports from the RTGoNU, the DSRSG, Agreement Institutions and Mechanisms. In addition, they deliberated as follows:
- 11.1 **Troika:** expressed that over a year ago, the transitional government extended the Transitional Period by 24 months, citing clear timelines for free and fair elections and renewed political will. This extension was justified by the government's priorities in delivering elections as outlined in their 'Roadmap.' Despite significant progress and political will, deadlines have been missed, leading to unpassed laws, unformed commissions, and unfunded implementation bodies. The Troika expressed its continued support to the ongoing efforts of RJMEC under the leadership of the Interim Chair. However, over the past 12 months, the leadership of South Sudan have shown no sign of the commitment and willingness to make these meetings an effective forum for discussion and unlocking progress. Welcomed the comments of the DSRSG of UNMISS on the need for greater urgency on elections process.
- 11.2 With less than 18 months left to elections, parties to the agreement must demonstrate the political will needed to overcome differences and reach compromises that will ultimately



unlock progress. As failure to do so could result in a failed mandate to deliver a better future through peaceful, free, fair, and credible elections for the South Sudanese people.

- 11.3 **SDSR Board:** Raised concerns and requested clarifications on the report of the NTC which stated that the SSP 3.6 billion initially allocated for completion of Phase I, was reallocated for activities of Phase II. Commended the leadership of the country for working hard to ensure that elections would be held in December 2024. However, highlighted that citizens in the States were confused, and are wondering if elections would take place as planned. Reiterated that it was the duty of the leadership to make sure all citizens are aware of the progression of the electoral preparations, since this is a matter that will ultimately affect their livelihoods. Asked the RTGoNU members why the current budget 2023/2024 did not include an allocation for election preparations, and other critical tasks such as disarmament, or a strategy for the participation in elections of refugees and IDPs in camps.
- 11.4 **EU:** Aligned himself with the RJMEC, UNMISS and Troika statements regarding expediting the implementation process. Underscored the one-year anniversary of the extended RARCSS Roadmap and the timelines that had been missed. Highlighted the recent Freedom Foundation publication on political decisions that need to be taken regarding the kind of election South Sudan should undertake. The publication spells out the complexity and the need for important political decisions on election, including the format the election, setting up the institutional framework for the election and the constitutional making processes. Encouraged the government and stakeholders to decide on the way forward with regards to elections-related security, a critical component of the process. Registered his disappointment and concern on the lack of discussions on the CTSAMVM reports despite the good work CTSAMVM is doing. Reiterated that the mechanism's report was significant as it raised important discussions on South Sudan within various fora such as the UN Security Council on the status of the ceasefire, and hope that the challenges faced and hindering CTSAMVM reporting would be resolved to allow it to fulfil its mandate.
- 11.5 **IGAD - Djibouti:** Acknowledged the positive progress made in the implementation of the R-ARCSS and encouraged the government of South Sudan to expedite the pending tasks which allow the country to conduct elections, such as the establishment of the National Commissions and operationalisation of the Political Parties Council, as well as the enactment of the Permanent Constitution. Called on the humanitarian agencies to advocate for more support that would help the vulnerable people in South Sudan and refugees returning from Sudan. Applauded the visit of the Vatican Secretary of State who visited South Sudan to show solidarity with the people and government of South Sudan in early August. Commended the announcement of the redeployment of the unified forces and commencement of Phase II. Called on the international partners to redouble their efforts to support the implementation of the Agreement and hold a fair and credible election, and to stop criticizing the government since they are partners to the R-ARCSS. Appealed for the CTSAMVM issue to be resolved to allow the mechanisms to revive its CTC and Board meetings.
- 11.6 **CSO Alliance:** Raised concerns on the low representation of the ITGoNU members, apart from the Minister for Cabinet Affairs, and further asked him to clarify why other members of the ITGoNU were not present, therefore a display of a lack of political will. The legitimacy of the RTGoNU was in question. It was expected that the RTGoNU would implement the extended R-ARCSS without failing and on time. However, the RTGoNU failed to fulfil its promise. Asked the Parties to take responsibility on the failure to implement and asked them to stick to the timeline. Commended CTSAMVM investigation of the violence that happened in Wunkur after having received a letter from the Commissioner of Wunkur. Encouraged them to clearly state the parties that committed the violence, since

there was allegation that the SPLM/A-IO forces loyal to the First Vice President were the culprits.

- 11.7 **RTGoNU:** Sympathised with the views of the members of the CSO on the delayed and missed deadlines of the Roadmap, which was a creation of the Parties to the RTGoNU. Expressed that it wasn't easy to achieve the allotted tasks since the R-ARCSS was a political agreement in which it took the RTGoNU eight months to establish the government in an inclusive manner, and the same thing was now happening in establishing the Commissions. Requested the CSOs to appreciate the peace dividends, and that the government was working hard to implement the R-ARCSS as per the Roadmap timelines. Further, to follow the example of Ethiopia, which was sanctioned yet, despite the criticism closed its ears and made commendable steps by implementing the government strategy which had improved its GDP to 6.1%, tarmacked roads and was progressing. In that regard, the government of South Sudan would not listen to negative criticism but rather will implement its own strategy in its own way. Kenya, on the other hand, was fortunate because they have a unified army, which South Sudan was working hard to have in place. However, Uganda had rebels and an ongoing conflict while Central African Republic was going through a conflict. Asked the CSOs to appreciate the efforts of the SPLM which in the past was being opposed by the whole Arab world, but in the end South Sudan achieved independence. Reiterated that the government was conscious of the principles governing elections in Africa and thus established a Government-Trilateral (UNMISS, IGAD and AUMISS) Joint Taskforce for the implementation of the Constitution-making and electoral processes.
- 11.8 **IPF:** Aligned to the statement that full implementation would take place if the Transitional Security Arrangements are completed. Underscored that it would be fair to reach an agreement on redeployment. Thanked the Chair for meeting the women groups to discuss their issues. Reminded the RTGoNU that there was no short cut to elections, but rather it should follow the steps underlined by the R-ARCSS to have a free, fair, and credible election. Commended the upcoming economic conference which would help the government to align its economic strategy. Underscored that adoption of the Land Policy should be a priority for South Sudan to reach its intended political goals. Welcomed the government's removal of illegal check points to allow the returnees and refugees to come back to the country and smooth delivery for humanitarian assistance. Thanked Mr. Julius Egbeyemi, the Canadian *Charge de Affairs* whose tenure had ended.
- 11.9 **Canada – Julius Egbeyemi:** Thanked all the members for the time shared. He cited the UN 2023 theme for the International Day for Indigenous People, namely "Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for self-determination", and compared this with the people of South Sudan, empowering all, including women, youth, the disabled, and marginalized groups, to determine their own destiny. Underscored that, since 2021, he has had the opportunity to visit South Sudan and meet diverse groups, including midwives providing quality healthcare, artists healing emotional wounds, former child soldiers finding strength in new lives, and students who came to Canada as youth to pursue their dreams. Their efforts had been instrumental in ensuring no one suffered the same hardships. He urged those supporting peace in South Sudan to maintain the spirit of idealism and pragmatism that guided the country's independence struggles to think beyond the walls of the plenary, and consider the story they wanted to tell the world about South Sudan in 2024 as they embark on their journey towards democratic elections. Reiterated South Sudan's immense potential for democracy building, with its unspoiled nature and rich cultural heritage that makes it a valuable resource for the region.
- 11.10 **RJMEC:** Thanked Mr Egbeyemi for his time and participation in the RJMEC meetings and in supporting South Sudan, and wished him success in his future endeavours.

- 11.11 **Women's Bloc:** Appealed to the RTGoNU to implement the R-ARCSS in preparation for elections. Expressed that women were worried about what was happening with youth who are joining gangs in Juba. Asked the RTGoNU if elections would happen as planned. Thanked the partners and appealed to them to support the RTGoNU so that it may be able to implement the R-ARCSS and embark on elections as per the timeline.
- 11.12 **Women's Coalition:** Reiterated that Transitional Security Arrangements was the backbone of the country, however, there was still intercommunal violence and cattle raiding that featured SGBV cases as well. Expressed that the cutting down of food rations was affecting IDPs and returnees. Urged the parties to the R-ARCSS to redouble their efforts and deploy the unified forces which would reduce insecurities and intercommunal violence in the country.
- 11.13 **Academia:** Thanked the RTGoNU Minister for Cabinet Affairs for reassuring the members that elections would happen as planned. Encouraged on the need for the government to communicate with the people and the public on its strategy and plans. Underscored the need to avail political and civic space to all in preparations for elections. Asked the Minister to unpack the statement "embarking on election our way". Shared concerns on the insecurity of the Nimule Road and urged CTSAMVM to investigate the root causes of insecurity that could potentially destabilise the civic education process in the area. Commended the revitalisation of some political parties, who have been meeting and reviving membership, and asked for clarifications from the RTGoNU, if what was seen should be construed as campaigning. Regrettably, the SPLM was using government resources while other parties did not have the same leverage, opportunity, resources, political and civic space to do so. Called on the government to declare to the citizens if campaigning had started or not.
- 11.14 **South Africa:** Noticed a lot of improvement in the implementation of the R-ARCSS since his arrival to South Sudan during which he observed various violations, killing and intercommunal violence. He commended the RTGoNU for the reduction in violence and the compliance with the ongoing ceasefire. Commended the South Sudan basketball team for their recent success in matches and for representing the whole of Africa. He also commended the improvements to infrastructure, allowing people to travel by road from Juba to Jonglei. The Government of South Africa extended an invitation to the President of South Sudan to attend the BRICS summit in Johannesburg. Commended the statement by H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit that there would be no extension of the R-ARCSS once it expires, and urged members to support this vision. This shows that the government of South Sudan was ready for a democratic election in December 2024. He stressed that it should be in the interest of the members to work towards achieving that goal and experiencing a democratically elected government. Underscored the need for the Cabinet Minister to look on the issues raised by the RJMEC Interim Chairperson in his statement and other reports, that required attention of the RTGoNU on how they could be addressed as the country prepares for election. Additionally, there was need to also address questions raised by the SDSR Board Chairperson on funding disbursements to the board and other mechanisms. Urged CTSAMVM to give concise reports for the reader to have a clear understanding of what was being reported, because what it presented was vague.
- 11.15 **Business Community:** Urged the RTGoNU to expedite the formation of the commissions and all pending institutions not yet reconstituted, and hold the Donors Pledging Conference to allow the friends of South Sudan to raise funds for the implementations of the R-ARCSS. Appealed for the Judicial Reform Committee (JRC) that was doing public consultation to also engage those in the business community, especially women in business and people with disabilities.

- 11.16 **Youth:** He underlined the statement by the UNMISS on the spill over of the Sudan crisis which could potentially affect the situation in South Sudan, and the region. Welcomed the statement of the RTGoNU Cabinet Minister on the final process of passing the South Sudan durable resolution strategy and action plan for refugees, returnees and IDPs in the host community. If the strategy is well implemented, it would eventually address emerging issues in all parts of the country. Urged the RTGoNU to consolidate peace and security by engaging in the Rome Peace process in order to achieve an inclusive peace in the country, which will eventually contribute to a conducive environment for the upcoming election. Raised concerns on the lack of financing of the Agreement that crippled the implementation of the critical tasks. However, there was a need to address the issue of corruption that continues to put a hole in the government funds. Echoed the statement by the outgoing Canadian *Charge de Affairs* on the situation of the young people in South Sudan. He further called upon the government to prioritise youth development strategy through passing of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, the Youth National Development policy acts, as the two are critical in determining the future of South Sudan.
- 11.17 **Youth:** Shared her concerns on the economy, preparations for elections, campaigning, and the status of the infrastructure in the country. Highlighted that the roads to some areas for example Kajo Keji, forces travelers to pass through Uganda in order to reach Kajo Keji town. Underscored that Kajo Keji was a food basket for South Sudan, yet the food has to first be sold to Uganda, and later returned to the country which in return makes it overpriced. The same scenario also happens to those travelling to Eastern Equatoria, where the road from Abara leading to Pajok through Owinykibul, which also hosts cantonment sites, is in bad condition. She urged the government to fix the infrastructure of all neglected areas. In addition, she questioned how the political parties would be able to move around to campaigns during election if infrastructure is not developed.
- 11.18 **RJMEC:** Informed members that the CTSAMVM report was purely an outline report since the violation reports were yet to be discussed by the CTC and the CTSAMVM Board. Posed a question to the RTGoNU as to whether free and fair election could be completed as per the timeline since the focus was implementation of the R-ARCSS in letter and spirit and embarking on election at the end of the Transitional Period. Asked RTGoNU representative to elaborate on his statement that “it was better for citizens to be in peace than in crisis.”
- 11.19 **NTC:** Informed the SDSR Board Head of Secretariat that the budget SSP 2.5 billion was operating costs for three years and not for Phase II whose budget was SSP 3.6 billion. Both budgetary amounts had not been released based on the workplan and structural establishment of the NTC to operate such as coordinating the logistics of Phase I and Phase II. Expressed that the intercommunal violence was the responsibility of the Ministry of Peacebuilding which had a workplan for the intercommunal dialogues supported by the partners. The Ministry had planned a conference “Traditional Leadership Authority Conference” to restore the power of the traditional leadership authorities that had been eroded by tribal wars. Further, will also discuss the implementation and enforcement of the Local Government Act, build capacities for the local government and traditional leaders’ authority, to address some of the intracommunal conflicts. The inter- and intra-communal violence needed to be resolved before the elections because the communities were armed against one another. The Ministry further had a policy called bottom-up peacebuilding. He expressed that if healing was not happening in the country there wouldn’t be elections. Stability in the rural areas of South Sudan was paramount.
- 11.20 He called on all Parties to the Agreement and stakeholders to work with the Ministry of Peacebuilding. Commended the contribution made by the Academia representative on peace dissemination, as per Article 1.4.3.1, where the R-ARCSS stipulates clearly that the RTGoNU has a responsibility to disseminate the Peace Agreement for the people of South



Sudan to be informed. However, South Sudan had been geopolitically divided, and enclaves were created by the conflict with areas controlled by different parties who need to break these barriers. Reported that the work plan of the Ministry of Peacebuilding had been tabled twice before the Council of Ministers for endorsement, calling on both the Executive, Members of Parliament, and other stakeholders to go to the people to mobilise them for peace and stability of the country. Expressed that some people had started to confuse the R-ARCSS with the Roadmap, while the latter was the plan designed to help the parties to implement the timelines that had been missed. Reiterated the need to expedite transitional justice, and establish the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, which is critical because healing comes through dialogue. Additionally, the Agreement was a covenant that legitimised the RTGoNU as per Article 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 to implement the R-ARCSS. And even if the country was in peace, non-implementation of the R-ARCSS would create a legitimacy crisis by itself. And in that regard, at the end of the Transitional Period, the key critical tasks of the R-ARCSS must be implemented.

- 11.21 Highlighted that Transitional Security Arrangements were also key tasks to be implemented to avoid political violence during elections. The issue in question was not electing a legitimate government, but how South Sudan would be after the election. Advised members to read the R-ARCSS which clearly stipulates the way forward and the key activities to be implemented to be able to embark on a free, fair, and credible election. To date, there are communities which were still well armed and associated with intercommunal violence. There are also the unified forces, trained and graduated together, yet stranded in the Training Centres.
- 11.22 **FDs:** Assured a member of the Women's Bloc that there will be no war in South Sudan. Highlighted that the opposition forces in towns were no longer armed. However, urged the Parties to expedite the redeployment of the trained Unified Forces, which has the key objective of protecting the people especially during elections. Asked the Government to come up with a strategy on how to disarm the community, most of whom are armed and not listening to the directives of the commander, nor loyal to the leaders.
- 11.23 **RTGoNU:** Underscored the legitimate concern raised on elections which would allow people to elect a legitimate government. Highlighted the key prerequisite for a free, fair, and credible election as security and stability. However, the main challenge faced by the Government has been achieving one security sector under one Commander-in-Chief. Currently there are different forces controlled by different Commanders-in-Chief including government, holdout groups fighting the government, and civilians who are armed. The Government needs to deploy forces to oversee towns, capitals, centres at the level of payams and bomas. In that regard, government was trying to unify all the forces to a national army not affiliated to any political leaders which later would be used to disarm and protect civilians. In that regard, rebels would be faced by a unified army. He gave the example of Tonj in Warrap State, where the Governor used a method of disarmament agreed by the community. However, such a method can only be used as an emergency response and not as a national strategy which must be synchronised across the country. Highlighted that forces from the opposition and the SSPDF were reluctant to participate in the war because they had realised that had been used by the political leaders and hence needed to reinforce themselves. Nonetheless, NAS forces were not unknown to the people, and some had joined their colleagues in the unification of forces. However, it takes time to have such an integration of the forces.
- 11.24 Underscored that in the past South Sudan did not either have a political system nor political party. However, currently there are 34 parties in the current government, giving the example of ITGoNU with affiliate parties that include SPLM, the Agenda with 14 parties affiliated to it, and SPLM/A-IO (in ITGoNU) led by Gen. Taban Deng; while other parties such as SSOA had 9 parties, and Other Political Parties were over 20 parties. Stated that



government had been trying to chart a good course in developing South Sudan's political system. Emphasised that no political party was supposed to be campaigning but better to first establish the Political Parties Council for all parties to be registered. He underscored that civic space is not well understood by many, and most had not read the Political Parties Act. In that regard, there was a need for the NCAC to embark on the revision of the pending laws, and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MoJCA) to support and implement the revised laws by channelling them to the right organs such as cluster meetings, Council of Ministers and RTNLA for the Bills to be passed. South Sudan has also been working on the Permanent Constitution which had a draft completed in 2012, which needs to be pushed simultaneously with the establishment of the security sector and political parties' institutions. There is also a need to push for the registration of political parties, and in the same spirit, building their capacity on campaigning strategy that addresses key issues rather than hate speech.

11.25 On the Economic Conference, he stated that South Sudan economy was facing security challenges. However, expressed optimism that it would not remain the same. The stability of the country was paramount, as it reassures investors to have confidence in the nation. Stability is important as it also allows them to move freely in the country and undertake investment in the different sectors, such as mining, agriculture, or livestock and fisheries. The strategy for elections was clear, with the priority being to establish the security sector, pass the laws, and reconstitute the Political Parties Council. Clarified to members that the politicians in government will not be allowed to use government resources for election campaigns, including cars. He informed members on the Government-Trilateral (African Union, IGAD, United Nations) Joint Taskforce for the implementation of the constitutional making electoral processes that was working on: i) discussions for processes for the National Elections Commission and initial constitutional making process to follow up and variable statistics important for population census; ii) research on types of elections worldwide using an existing constitution and its challenges in case needed; iii) needs assessment before elections; and iv) if the Government could use the previous census for projections. The fear was if the country was not prepared for a free, fair, and credible election, it would go back to war.

11.26 Informed the members that the negotiation and mediation of the R-ARCSS was not easy. However, they were all given orders to bring peace to South Sudan which in the end bloated the government and made it more expensive. However, corruption was another setback that needed to be dealt with, in managing the revenues lost in different sectors. Urged members to be patient with what the Government was trying to achieve.

#### **Min. 12/31/23: Review of the Resolution**

12 The draft Resolution of the 31<sup>st</sup> RJMEC Plenary was jointly reviewed and adopted. The RJMEC Secretariat was tasked to circulate the final version to all the members after its finalisation.

#### **Min. 13/31/23: Date for the Next Meeting**

13 It was agreed that date for the 32<sup>nd</sup> RJMEC monthly meeting would be communicated by the Secretariat.

#### **Min. 14/31/23: A.O.B.**

14 There was no A.O.B.

**Min. 15/31/23: Chairperson's Closing Remarks**

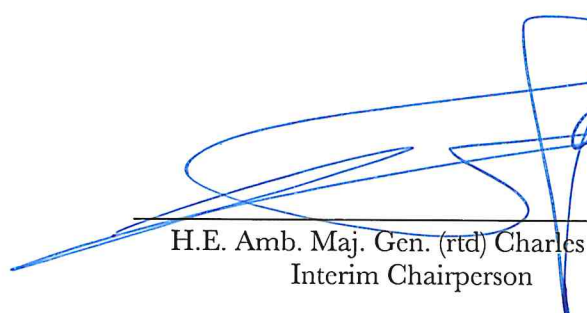
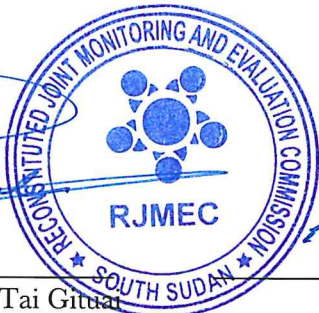

- 15 The Chairperson thanked members for their attendance and urged them to redouble efforts. Urged the RTGoNU to disseminate information to the public as planned.

**Min.16/31/23: Closing Prayers**

- 16 The representatives of the faith-based organizations led the closing prayer. There being no other business, the 31<sup>st</sup> RJMEC monthly meeting was adjourned at 14:25 hours.

**Min.17/31/23: Adoption of the Minutes**

- 17 The minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> RJMEC meeting are adopted as follows:
- 17.1. Proposer: Hon. Sandra Bona Malwal, SPLM/A- IO
- 17.2. Seconder: Mr. Angelo Madut, SDSR Board
- 18 The minutes are hereby proposed, seconded, and adopted by the undermentioned as the true record of the meeting.

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H.E. Amb. Maj. Gen. (rtd) Charles Tai Gituut      Frida Lyaruu  
Interim Chairperson      Secretary to the Plenary