

**Opening Remarks
Start-of-Year Press Conference
by SRSG and Head of UN in South Sudan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom
13 January 2023, Juba**

I wish to welcome everyone to our first press conference of this new year and greetings to everyone who's tuning in live to Radio Miraya.

I also wish everyone a peaceful and productive and happy New Year, 2023.

Let me begin with some of the key points from my recent briefing to the UN Security Council in New York, and exchange views on the current situation in South Sudan, and I would also like to outline the challenges and priorities facing the country and UNMISS in the upcoming year.

This year is a particularly important year for South Sudan and its people. I know we say that every year, but this year will actually determine whether the transition to peace, outlined in the Roadmap, can actually be achieved. As I told the Security Council, several key milestones were reached in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, but it will be crucial that South Sudan meet all its critical benchmarks, particularly those that are time bound, and this would require a sense of urgency in the coming year.

As I shared with the Security Council, my fear is that slippages in meeting the timeframes will have a domino effect on key benchmarks that will be crucial down the line. Progress needs to be accomplished this year, 2023, not next year, and benchmarks that have been missed need to be recovered.

However, I think it is also necessary to highlight some of the progress that has been made last year. The graduation of the first phase of the Necessary Unified Forces took place. I'd also like to commend the Government of National Unity for the passage of essential bills, such as the Constitution Making Bill, and the ratification of the Roadmap by the national legislature. The 6th Governors Forum in Juba, supported by the United Nations family, was also noteworthy.

As I said before, discernible progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement presents a real opportunity and a compelling reason for the international community to renew its support and assistance to the people of South Sudan at this critical time in the peace process. And as I repeat frequently to our international visitors, this is not time to forget South Sudan.

Let me turn to the challenges that 2023 holds.

Earlier this week, I met with President Kiir to discuss how to fast-track the implementation of the outstanding tasks in the Revitalized Peace Agreement in order to create a conducive atmosphere for the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections in December 2024.

We also deliberated on strategies to end the worrying intercommunal fighting in several parts of the country. This violence and fighting, disturbingly characterized by tribal

undertones in many areas, is particularly damaging. It poses a real threat to the gains achieved so far and could even derail the peace process. Every one of these conflicts leaves behind a legacy of bitterness and division.

We have identified five conflicts or hotspots that require our continuing and continuous attention and that remain as challenges for the country: the Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area; the Upper Nile; the legacy of the conflict in Tambura in Western Equatoria; in Warrap State the conflict between the Twic and Ngok Dinka; and the conflict now being experienced in Central Equatoria as a result of tensions between Bor cattle keepers and host communities, amongst other potential conflicts.

We have taken action, and continue to act, to mitigate and reduce the impact of all these conflicts and their long-term effects. We will share with you the steps we are taking, by referring only to our actions in Jonglei.

The escalating violence in Greater Pibor Administrative Area and Jonglei State that began in late December is of special concern. Shocking has been the number of women and children who were abducted, and those who have faced grave rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence and abuse. While a temporary pause in the cyclical clashes had been observed, as armed youth around the vicinity of Bor returned to their counties of origin, violence was reported only recently in Uror and Nyirol counties, resulting in more deaths, injuries, abductions, and cattle raided. On 11 January, a high-level delegation comprising of UNMISS officials, humanitarians, and development partners, government officials from Juba as well visited Pibor town to assess the humanitarian situation and to identify measures to foster peace and to respond to the humanitarian crisis developing there.

We commend the Jonglei authorities for their efforts, in which we participated, that led to the release of 68 abducted Murle women and children. Protection actors are providing them with interim care and humanitarian services until they can be reunited with their families. We reiterate that the barbaric practice of abductions has to stop. This scourge contributes to continuing insecurity and undermines the very integrity of communities.

This week, WFP and their partners started distributing food to thousands of internally displaced people in Pibor -- with plans to assist 20,000 people who have gathered in that area. It is vital that the access routes are passable and safe to allow for the movement of commodities and humanitarian aid.

UNMISS is accordingly conducting patrols along several key axis routes and in the vicinity of the peacekeeping base in Pibor to ensure a safe environment for internally displaced people and for aid workers responding to their needs. In addition, UN Police have been working side-by-side with the Pibor police.

UNMISS has also been carrying out human rights investigations, to document violations in GPAA and Jonglei. The Mission is considering setting up additional Temporary Operating Bases in the area to project a greater level of security and deter further violence. From the perspective of the Mission, we will be continuing to highlight the prospect of accountability for those who have participated in these acts.

Since the start of the conflict, we have been engaging in regular and frequent political and civic consultations with national and state authorities, faith-based and community

leaders, and representatives of the Murle community. This is occurring on a daily basis, and we will continue to engage so that we can quell tensions and help resolve the situation.

On another but related dimension – on a separate issue - even as we engage in conflict resolution efforts here – and elsewhere – the humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains dire, made worse by conflict, climate shocks and extensive flooding. This year’s projections estimate that over 9 million people will need humanitarian and protection assistance. This is an alarming figure for a country of roughly 12 million people. Aid workers continue to respond to the needs of affected people, despite being stretched and our diminishing resources, due to competition from other emergencies across the globe.

In this difficult context, South Sudan continues to be one of the most dangerous places in the world for these aid workers. Barely two weeks into this year, three South Sudanese aid workers were killed while providing aid to vulnerable people. I join the Humanitarian Coordinator in expressing our condolences to the families and colleagues of the aid workers. We take access to humanitarian aid very seriously and continue to call on the authorities to protect aid workers. It is clear that to make progress in both our conflict resolution and humanitarian ambitions, South Sudan must succeed in implementing the Peace Agreement faithfully, by adhering to the Roadmap timelines. So let me turn to those and indicate the prioritized crucial milestones for 2023, of which I would want to highlight at least three.

First is the drafting of a new constitution where some progress has been made. This “tasking” of the South Sudanese people by the Peace Agreement expresses the hope that South Sudanese can come together to agree on the arrangements by which they can live sustainably together in peace and harmony and create, as it were, a new social contract. This challenge cannot be undertaken by the international community. Only South Sudanese can do this.

In my recent meeting with the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, he pledged to redouble efforts on the implementation of the constitution-making process. He also reported on progress regarding the chapters of the peace agreement on accountability, reconciliation, and healing. I offered the UN’s technical support in this regard and emphasized that the views of all segments of South Sudanese society are vital, both to the constitution and to the reconciliation process, specifically referring to the importance of inclusivity of all sectors of the society, notably women, and reaching all four corners of South Sudan, while also including the refugees who remain outside of the country.

Secondly, UNMISS is engaging with the National Election Commission and other relevant national interlocutors in the preparations for elections. Much work needs to be done, such as, establishing a legal framework and preparing the ground and environment for the conduct of elections. It is important to ensure that the electoral process is transparent and fair, South Sudanese-owned, and that the results will be acceptable to all segments of the population. Additionally, the electoral process must be carried out in a secure environment, free from violence and intimidation. It must be complemented by the necessary political and civic space to allow for open dialogue, debate, and campaigning. This requires dealing with the fault lines and divisions that

have fueled violence over the last decade. Self-evidently, those conditions are not here yet.

Creating the environment where elections can take place requires South Sudanese to engage each other, putting the interests of the country first. And the media has a big role to play in creating that environment by holding stakeholders to account.

This leads to the third milestone, which is the creation and deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces. “Phase two” of the graduation of the forces must receive urgent financial, logistical, and political support from the government, so that they can begin to serve as a truly unified national army under one command. We are hopeful that the outcome of the graduation of the Necessary Unified Forces will increase the capacity to deal with intercommunal violence.

In addition to what I have outlined above, I wanted to highlight certain contributions that the UN family and UNMISS made to peace and stability in 2022, and that we aim to continue in 2023. We have undertaken thousands of violence-detering patrols by land, air and river to difficult areas, and have established and will continue to establish temporary operating bases in all hotspots, thereby curbing deadly violence in many areas.

- To date, we’ve cleared 4,792 kilometres of roads and 1,300 square kilometres of land mines and other explosive remnants of war, protecting civilians, and enabling the UN and partners to deliver life-saving aid. This includes, of course, communities involved in agricultural production, schoolchildren attending school and communities going about their everyday business.
- Our peacekeeping engineers are building and improving over 3,000 kilometers of significant roads.
- They are also constructing and repairing dykes to keep flood waters at bay – even as we prepare for the forthcoming rains of 2023.
- This year, the Mission is investing in 60 Quick Impact Projects, building clinics, courts, police stations, and prisons.
- We are building hospitals and providing healthcare for internally displaced people, such as those in Pibor.
- We will also be continuing our support to strengthen judicial accountability by rolling out our mobile courts and by providing training for police and prosecutors.
- We are conducting patrols specifically aligned with the delivery of food and non-food aid across the country which will reach tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people.
- We have increased our efforts to promote human rights and ensure the protection of children.

Importantly and additionally, we will continue to host national-level political dialogues, constitution-making and electoral workshops, and continue our engagements at the grassroots level, by leading conflict resolution activities among communities that have resulted so far in many local peace agreements.

I believe that all these efforts have contributed to the overall reduction in the number of civilian casualties in 2022, although that overall reduction will need to be looked at once the account is taken of the most recent violence.

In 2023, UNMISS will continue to enhance its tools and methodologies to prioritize what we call protection of civilians and appropriately respond to the most serious protection concerns based on our response capabilities. Improving our efficacy and speed of action remains our priority. We will continue to strategically place peacekeepers in positions to best protect civilians, especially IDPs and the most vulnerable, which is our most important purpose. However, it must be recognized that the Mission has finite resources and does not have the capacity to respond to all physical threats to civilians across the vast geographical expanse of the country.

This is why effective use of partnerships continues to underpin our overall strategy in 2023 — particularly with the Government of National Unity, with multilateral institutions in the region. UNMISS will continue to work closely with the AU, IGAD and the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) through the Trilateral Task Force, in addition to other partners in Juba, such as the Troika and the European Union, in good offices and conflict prevention efforts.

The critical challenge facing South Sudan is to build an understanding that South Sudanese share a common destiny, one that can only be achieved if they put aside sectional interests. This is key to the way forward - the determination of the South Sudanese to build a peaceful and prosperous future and establish a true sense of nationhood, recognizing that there is more that unites them than that which divides them.

Thank you for listening and I am ready to take any questions you may have.

Media Q&A

Q: I'm interested in this area of the release of children and women who were abducted in GPPA. You say that UNMISS actually contributed to the release of these children. So, what was the process? Was it based on mere negotiations or were the abductors actually paid to release the children? There are some allegations that UNMISS partners and the state government actually paid money for the abductors to release these women and children.

You also talked about accountability. In the past, people didn't use to know who the abductors are. Now we know them, we have met them, the partners and government negotiated with them to release their children. But their cattle were not also released, and they were not held accountable for people they have killed. So how are you going to do that?

Q: Four weeks ago, during the presentation to Security Council, you said, "credible election can't take place under violent environment." Do you still believe the electoral process should go on when the government seems to be doing very little to end the violence across the country?

You also mentioned the killing of aid workers. How much are you worried about these people? Is there a need for protection for them? Because what I know is you're not going to withdraw them out because of the critical work that they are doing for the people.

Q: *You've mentioned those hot spots which are labelled subnational violence, but we know that they also have a political dimension and that struggle for power can also be one of the factors behind those conflicts. As UNMISS how are you planning this year to work with the South Sudanese leaders at the national and local levels to prevent those conflicts from continuing in this year?*

SRSB: On the release of children, as far as I know the UN will not pay for the release of children. I think we would be deeply apprehensive that paying for the release of children would be to create a market for the exchange of children and woman. Our own engagement has been extensive, but particularly in relation to logistical support for the movement of the children back to Pibor, to the proper care that they receive upon return, to family tracing which has to accompany these efforts, and the general rendition of humanitarian support to those who've been abducted.

We've also been placing pressure on the States and other authorities to ensure the release of our abductees, particularly before the youth return to the counties from which they originated, because I think this is a particular opportunity. We have to secure the release, which will diminish, will take a long time if the abductees are taken to different parts of the country in the interim.

At the moment, the figures we have for abductees just as we know is 68 - 69 were released yesterday, but we believe there are more scheduled for release, but we don't know if that's the full number. Our view is that the number is much higher, and we will continue to do what we can to secure their release.

But we need to lift our voice against the practice. The country cannot be locked into this particular practice as a way of resolving the issues and tensions between communities. We have to put this practice behind us if we are to progress. And if we are to create the environment in which elections can be held in the country.

I think we would want to recognize, and we will certainly be engaging with the authorities over the broader question of accountability. Of course, engaging in the question of accountability also means building the institutions through which that accountability can be exercised, that perhaps at the start in identifying and engaging with those who have been responsible for the violence and in assisting all the stakeholders to come together to find ways of resolving... My own staff say to me: what are we doing this year that is going to work that didn't work last year? Because last year we did all of these things as well. And so, we need to also look at how we can do it differently to have a greater impact in reducing and taking on this practice.

Then there was a general question about whether the environment is present for elections to take place. I have been having a pretty wide range of discussions with significant government leaders, and I think there's an understanding that the country needs to work on creating the environment in which elections can take place.

In other words, some understanding that we still have some way to go before we can have free, fair and credible elections in an environment in which people can engage in

robust political debate. And we will be certainly focusing on that, we'll certainly be focusing on technical questions about how to manage effectively and elections so that there's no fraud. And so on. But we realize that the bigger question is creating the political environment in which people can compete and engage, and engage in the question of the direction that the country needs to go in.

On the killing of aid workers, we have been seized with this issue for some time and we are engaging with the government at the highest level at the level of the infrastructure cluster to see ways in which our engagement with communities can properly highlight and prioritize the need for guarantees and respect for aid workers, in respect to the work that they are doing. Without aid workers, then literally the impact of the violence on the people would be much worse because it would come together with the deprivation of food, the destruction of pre-positioned food stores, the inability to respond to the hotspots as you call them because they would become inaccessible.

So, we work generally with everyone to ensure that there is respect for the work that aid workers do, but also in respect of the logistical arrangements that are followed when they conduct their work. The question was asked: how are we going to deal with the underlying political dynamics which inform the conflict? And I think we recognize that there are underlying political factors. And that as we get closer to the election, or as we begin to engage in the electoral cycle, it may be that that tension and that factor is going to increase.

That's going to require of us that we engage with all of the stakeholders both at the highest level, the Juba level, but also at the state level. We wouldn't want to ignore the engagement of community leaders and suggest it can be resolved in Juba alone, or vice versa. We are currently working with government on the possibility of a conference in Jonglei which would bring all the communities together, but specifically the political leaders. We need all the political leaders to speak with one voice on how South Sudanese should treat the conflict, the continuous waves of intercommunal conflict and the relations between each other. Let me hold it there.

So, when I said that 2023 is going to be a difficult year but a most challenging year, it's precisely because it's going to be a more politically contested year. And it's going to be a year in which the stakes will get higher, and so it's a year in which we are going to expect more from the leadership of South Sudan. In respect of dealing with intercommunal violence amongst others, it's not the only issue that requires to be dealt with. But we have raised, and I did raise it in the Security Council, that intercommunal violence is destructive.

Of the capacity to hold free and fair electorates, that it will not be possible to hold truly hold free and fair elections if the country is manifesting violent intercommunal violence from north to South and from east to west.

Q: You expressed fear about parties to the agreement meeting the implementation of the benchmarks in the agreement on time. So far, if I'm not correct, somebody can correct me, there are about 30 or more activities that are supposed to be fully implemented in 2020 in the Roadmap, and they are still pending with others on progress and some completely not touched. You also attributed communal conflict, posing a threat to implementing the peace agreement. Do you think the government will meet the timeline they set in the Roadmap in terms of implementing the agreement?

You also mentioned that it is time that the international community needs to come in to support the government of South Sudan to start the process of election. Last year, we witnessed that a delegation of UN who came from headquarters to meet with the government officials here. And there is this question of arms embargo when it comes to deploying the unified forces to help in restoring peace and security in the country. When you were briefing UN Security, did you present the issue of arms embargo because the government officials are complaining that they cannot deploy the forces without arms. And what did those delegation from UN offer to the government? Was it part of the lobby for international support for the implementation of the peace process?

Q: *So, the two questions from the field are: does UNMISS plan to support the government in the disarmament process and on the elimination of gender-based violence? And then the second question is that the bride price is the biggest cause of cattle raids and killings in the country. How does UNMISS plan to tackle this issue?*

SRSB: What I would want to say is that we have been saying to the government there is no option. If you've missed some of the benchmarks and timelines, you have to recover them because at the end of the year we have to be prepared for the elections. Don't wait until 2024. It will be too late. You have to have made steady progress on crafting of a new constitution. I don't want to get too locked into the individuals of March or April that they should do this or that this law should be passed. I think we can have a sense generally of whether they're going forward or not, and in my view, they need to make progress, at least in the establishment of some critical national commissions - the National Commission on Political Parties and the National Commission on the Elections. And once those are established - and they can't be established until the legislation has cleared the process, cleared the way for them to be established - then we can begin to make progress.

In regard to the question of the arms embargo, we've always pointed out it's not an UNMISS issue. It's an issue taken by the Member States, and we are not at liberty to say it's a good thing or to say it's a bad thing. We don't advise the Security Council on whether there should be an arms embargo. But I would note that in regard to the question of the arms embargo, the Security Council have done two things: they have made a provision to be exempted from the arms embargo if the purpose of the exemption is to support peace. There have been a number of exemptions already granted - to Turkey to China to the United Arab Emirates - to supply uniforms, vehicles, and other issues which are necessary for the National Unified Forces. So that is the first issue we've drawn the attention of the government to, that they can be exempted. All they have to do is to make the case that it's important for peace.

Secondly the arms embargo itself says that it will be lifted if five benchmarks are met. One of those benchmarks is the graduation of unified forces. One of them relates to establishment of the procedure to make sure that all weapons are properly safeguarded and held in custody by the authorities. These are issues which the government has made progress on in at least four of the five benchmarks. In one of those benchmarks, very little progress has been made. We would encourage the government also to consider meeting those benchmarks so that they can put aside their arms embargo instead of only complaining about the need for disarmament.

On the question of disarmament, it's a very complex question. When I first arrived in the country, I travelled to all 10 states and if there was one common demand from every governor or from every leader it was, 'we have to disarm civilians the level at which civilians are in possession of firearms is destructive of peace in my area'. But most of them would say but don't disarm us, because if you disarm us, the neighbouring community will steal our cattle and we will have no means of protecting ourselves. Which suggests that the process of disarmament has to be national, comprehensive not leaving out any community, and needs to have community support. And I think in my discussions with government officials they recognize this, and they recognise the need to properly lay the foundations for a disarmament process.

On the question of bride price, I think the phenomenon of stock theft, cattle theft, cattle raiding is a much more complex one. It involves a number of things: the structure of the agricultural sector, the place of cattle in the culture of people's and communities' lives. It relates to the capacity of the authorities to ensure accountability and to have the police and the judicial structures necessary to prevent and ensure accountability for stock theft.

It is with that in mind that we co-convened last year a national conference on stock theft. Most of you attended, I am sure. It was attended by all of the governors and all of the national authorities and ministries, and they sat together, and they developed a set of proposals around how to go about reducing the practice of stock theft and in treating it. Those proposals are still on the table. We would want to see them implemented or discussed and engaged.

It was only in, was it October, that we had the conference, so it is still fresh, but it recognized that South Sudan is not the only country which has to engage with this practice. They have to do it in Kenya, in Uganda and around in the neighbourhood, and they have experiences and policies, successes and failures which South Sudan could look at if it wanted to treat this issue as a national issue involving national policies and national mechanisms, including the establishment of the appropriate security forces to properly police it. Although I understand where people come from when they say the real problem is the bride price and people can't get married unless they steal cattle, I think it's a more complex phenomenon than that.

Q: How does UNMISS plan to support the government in the disarmament process and also on the elimination of gender-based violence?

SRSB: Well, I think with gender-based violence we have put considerable efforts into assisting the uniformed branches of the security - being both the police and the military - in undertaking the necessary education and training to both be aware of the phenomenon and to police it and protect it and prevent it. We've also been engaged in working with those agencies in establishing kind of community-based groups that can assist communities to protect themselves.

Is that enough? No, this is a problem which is going to require South Sudanese also to take a lead in dealing with it. We have, as a result of our engagement with the SSPDF, established a Call to Action which SSPDF have signed and which they have implemented, which requires them to train all their troops in an awareness of the

phenomenon and of the importance of countering it. We will continue with all those efforts.

Q: I'm asking background information. My question is regarding the ongoing conflict in Jonglei and Pibor. I'm asking what really triggered this violence? It's very difficult to get a correct answer from the people about what triggered the violence in Pibor and Jonglei?

Does the Mission have figures regarding the casualties – the dead and injured – from Pibor and Jonglei? We are getting conflicting figures. What really do you have for us? Finally, I would like to ask a question that people sometimes don't like to ask. Where do the civilians in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Pibor get the weapons they use for causing insecurity in this country? There is an arms embargo, the country cannot acquire weapons from outside the country and the country doesn't manufacture weapons.

Q: This is just a follow up about the elections. I wanted to know what UNMISS will do before, during and after the elections, in case the elections take place. When you are briefing the Security Council, you say that you hope the Pope's visit will consolidate peace and understanding in South Sudan. I would like you to elaborate more on the Pope's visit to South Sudan.

SRSG: On the Pope's visit, we see it as an opportunity to focus attention on South Sudan, particularly in a time in which South Sudan gets less attention because of crises in the region and across the world. That it's important for the Pope to focus attention on the needs of South Sudan which are considerable and require both international and national effort. He's also in a unique capacity to, I think, engage with the leadership of the country and what is required for the country to experience lasting peace. So that's on the Pope.

What will the mission do before, during, and after elections? I think it depends on the role that UNMISS plays. But let me look broadly at the responsibilities of an election management body, which we would hope to support. I think before elections, you have to ensure that the procedures are in place to have an election that will be demonstrably fair. People will not come and vote if they think their votes will be stolen. So, you have to have civic education and you have to have in place the preparation, the distribution of ballot boxes, the physical procedures for the physical collection and counting of votes which would satisfy the people.

On Election Day, you have the particular responsibility of ensuring that there is no violence and that the elections can take place freely and that all of the parties with an interest in the outcome can transparently or see the transparent working of the electoral system. They will participate and monitor what happens in the voting booths and in voting and counting stations. And after the elections, the responsibility of the election management bodies is to ensure that all the disputes are properly heard and treated through an appeal procedure or judicial procedure through which people can have recourse when they believe their votes were stolen or there was ballot box stuffing or any one of the other ways in which ... Just recognizing that in this context, it's particularly important that people have faith in the electoral management and in the absence of any sense of corruption in the collection and counting of the votes.

My colleague from the BBC had some important questions. What's responsible for the violence? Well, I don't want to venture into that; there's quite a lot of speculation. Broadly we can accept that the violence is a communal response to another community's actions. But that doesn't properly explain it because one would need to ask the question who is mobilizing... who is providing arms for the mobilization? We're not in a position to answer those questions now or to go into a finger pointing exercise. I think our initial concern is going to be to bring people together - there will be finger pointing when you bring people together; we know that the Murle community will blame the Lou-Nuer and the Lou-Nuer will blame the Murle community - that we have a way of going beyond the blaming towards the construction of an enduring framework which will prevent the reoccurrence of this phenomenon. The challenge, as I mentioned earlier, I think maybe before you came in, is to find a better way of doing that, because this is what we did last year and the year before, and that we have to do it in a new way or with more effect and impact than has happened before.

On the figures, figures are being weaponized so I would be loath to give my guesstimates. The only figure which I have and I'm relatively confident of is the number of abductees as confirmed by our Human Rights Department. The number of people who've been killed depends from what dates you take that; I would be unable to comment on. I can give you the figures I've heard but I don't want to just repeat what ... But I think this is an exercise which has to take place. We have to find out what is the nature and scale of the damage. And this is taking place and people are starting to do the count. But it depends on who you're talking to in regard to what figures you will get. I have no doubt we will be giving our best estimate based on reliable methods of counting and assessing the damage in due course.

Q: I want to ask you about the national Constitution making process. Now that the bills have been passed and signed by the President, what are the next steps? I understand it's supposed to be a countrywide process, so what is the plan now? Given the situation with a lot of displacement, how are you going to ensure with the government that South Sudanese are allowed to participate and to really be part of that constitution making process?

SRSG: We are working with both the ministry to drive as it were the process of standing up - I get lost with the acronyms, particularly in the constitution making process, there are so many bodies - but the body that will now be responsible for setting in motion the constitution making process, including establishing a multi-party committee to do that. In all of these processes, multi-party committees are required to be established and we expect that will take a little bit of jostling and jockeying before we will see real progress on those issues. What we're saying is there's no time for delays, there's no time for lengthy recesses. There has to be in the first instance the establishment of these commissions also with the Electoral Commission before we can make further progress. But I do want to answer the second part of the question because it's particularly important. I think the idea that a constitution represents a kind of new social contract in which people find new ways of living together really puts a premium on ownership of the constitutional text agreement by the people of South Sudan and it accordingly puts a premium on their participation in the process. We have pledged to do whatever we can

to strengthen the outreach of the process and to ensure that all groups whether politically marginalized, geographically marginalized, marginalised by virtue of status are able to participate in those debates and have their voice heard. If that doesn't happen, then then it will mean low levels of ownership. And low levels of ownership means that people won't respect the Constitution because they don't feel they made it or that they participated in the making of it.

Q: What fear do you have in case the implementation of the peace agreement is not met before elections?

In December, we heard violent attack in Mangala just next door to Juba. What is your human right division doing in regard to investigating the incident? We have a blame game between the community of Bari and the SSPDF that says they fought with NAS rebels while the communities are saying the conflict was between cattle herders and farmers.

SRSB: I think we recognise the kind of a variety of approaches and emphasis. The first is to determine what's happened, so we need to have human rights monitors go out and record who did what to whom. That's important, particularly in the conflict around Mangala, when there's some dispute as to who is responsible? Secondly, we have to engage the leaders in those areas. During the Governors' Conference, I met separately with the governors of the Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei to say how are we going to resolve this issue. We need to put pressure on the leaders to respond, and to recognise that steps have to be taken.

Quite frankly, I share with you that in those meetings the governor said we need the assistance of central government to deal with this issue, either whether it's security protection for those who feared attacks by the Murle community or whether it's logistical support for the movement of people back to their communities or whatever they said, they needed national government support. We will continue to lobby as it were, for people to respond to their responsibilities to engage in this conflict and resolve it. Then we need to also ensure that our own patrols go out as wide as we can in Eastern Equatoria and the Central Equatoria to discourage violence against communities. And we have noted that where our we are effectively patrolling, there is a reduction of violence. But we can't protect the whole country simultaneously.

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