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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

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**REPORT**

**FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO THE REPUBLIC  
OF SOUTH SUDAN, CONDUCTED FROM 23 TO 25 APRIL 2026**

## REPORT OF THE FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN, CONDUCTED FROM 23 TO 25 APRIL 2026

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. From 23 to 25 April 2026, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), led by the Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Hirut Zemene, as the PSC Chairperson for April 2026, conducted a field mission to South Sudan, within the overall context of the PSC mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. The main aim of the field mission was to enable the PSC to gather first-hand information regarding the state of progress in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the ongoing transition process in the country, with a view to ascertaining the decisions of the PSC on next steps required to more effectively support the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) and the people of South Sudan to successfully complete the transition within the stipulated timelines.

2. The field mission was undertaken in line with Council's decisions and those of the AU Assembly in relation to the situation in South Sudan.

### II. COMPOSITION OF THE PSC DELEGATION

3. The Delegation of the PSC comprised the representatives of the following PSC Members, namely: Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Lesotho, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa and Uganda. The Delegation was accompanied by the Head of the PSC Secretariat and support staff from the AU Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security. In line with the established practice of the PSC, a representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Sudan to the AU was also part of the PSC Delegation. The delegation was also supported by AUMISS.

### III. MAIN OBJECTIVES

4. Essentially, the field mission aimed at providing an opportunity for the PSC to gather first-hand information on the prevailing political, security, economic, and humanitarian situation in the country; to gauge the status of progress achieved in the implementation of the R-ARCSS since the last PSC field mission conducted in August 2025, in general and, in particular, to gauge the progress in the preparations for the elections to be organized in December 2026 to mark the end of the transition, including the challenges to be urgently addressed, as well as the support needed by the RTGoNU.

5. In addition, the field mission was also undertaken to express the AU solidarity with the Government and people of South Sudan in their aspirations to restore durable peace, security, stability and prosperity in their country. It was also a reaffirmation of the unwavering commitment and determination of the AU to continue supporting the efforts of the people of South Sudan to successfully complete the Transition.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

6. To achieve the objectives of the mission, on arrival in Juba, on 23 April 2026, the PSC Delegation first received a comprehensive briefing from the AU Mission in South Sudan, on the status of progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, covering political, security, economic and

humanitarian situation, the state of readiness for the elections planned to be held in December 2026, including the challenges to be urgently addressed.

7. This was followed by extensive consultations with the South Sudanese authorities (RTGoNU), including H.E. Hussein Abdelbagi, Vice President responsible for the Services Delivery Cluster; H.E. Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabior, Vice President responsible for the Gender and Youth Cluster; Dr. Martin Elia Lomuro, the Minister in Charge of Cabinet Affairs and H.E. Ambassador Monday Semaya Kumba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation who were accompanied by H.E. Stephen Par Kuor, the Interim Chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Opposition (SPLM-IO); H.E. Michael Makuei Lueth, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; H.E. Onyoti Adigo Nyikech, Minister of Livestock; H.E. Denay Jock Chagor, Minister of Wildlife and Conservation; H.E. Albino Akol Atak Mayom, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs other senior RTGoNU officials and the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretariat;

8. The Delegation also held consultations with the Reconstituted Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC); the National Elections Commission (NEC), the Political Parties Council (PPC); the African Diplomatic Community (ADC); the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the European Union (EU); the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); the Troika; the IGAD Partners Forum; Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); Faith-Based Organizations; Think Tanks and Research Institutions.

## **V. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

9. From the extensive consultations, the key findings regarding the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation, as well as the state of progress in preparations for the organization of elections in December 2026, were as follows:

### **a) Political Situation**

10. The PSC Delegation noted that South Sudan is at a crossroads because, since its last field visit in August 2025, progress in the implementation of the remaining aspects of the R-ARCSS has been stalled due to many challenges. These include the political tension and growing mistrust resulting from the continued house arrest of the First Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar, whose prosecution is still ongoing, notwithstanding the decision by the PSC to have him released, and also the arrest of some senior officials from the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) allegedly linked to the armed clashes in Upper Nile State, which started in February 2025, when the White Army, a Nuer community militia in Nasir County, launched attacks against units of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) resulting in many casualties.

11. The representatives of the RTGoNU welcomed the field visit by the PSC which they said was testimony of the continued solidarity of the AU with the people of South Sudan, for which, they commended the AU. They also welcomed the visit by the AU Ad-hoc High-Level Committee on South Sudan (C5) in January 2026, the appointment of H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania as the AU High Representative/Special Envoy for South Sudan, to support the implementation of the 2018 R-ARCSS, including his visit to Juba, from 8 to 9 April 2026, in implementation of paragraph 11 of the C5 Declaration of 15 February 2026. They reassured the PSC Delegation of the commitment of the Government to ensure full implementation of the R-ARCSS.

12. However, the PSC Delegation noted the slow progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS which the RTGoNU attributed to a number of challenges including lack of necessary financial, material and technical resources; as well as the ongoing fighting between the South Sudan People's Defence

Forces (SSPDF) with forces loyal to the First Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar. The representatives of the RTGoNU also informed the PSC Delegation that the RTGoNU will not be seeking another extension, adding that the focus of the Government was now on preparations for the organization of elections in December 2026 using the 2008 population census results and the 2010 constituency boundaries. They further informed the Delegation that since the Permanent Constitution Making Process was unlikely to be completed before December 2026 election deadlines, the Government had proposed some amendment to the R-ARCSS, namely, Articles 1.2.5. and 1.2.14. to delink constitution making and national census processes from the December 2026 elections. However, the proposal also includes amending Article 8.2, that is meant to delink the R-ARCSS from the TCRSS, and amending Article 8.3 that aims to repeal the supremacy of the R-ARCSS, which has raised serious concerns amongst stakeholders.

13. The PSC Delegation also noted that there is no progress in the implementation of the report of the Judicial Reform Committee, because the Judicial Services Committee itself has not yet been reconstituted.

14. The National Elections Commission (NEC) informed the PSC that whilst it was preparing for the organization of elections in December, the Commission lacked necessary financial and technical resources. On its part, the Political Parties Council (PPC) informed the PSC Delegation that the process of registration of political parties was ongoing adding that there were now over 32 political parties in the country; that no political party will be registered if it does not comply with the 35% women's quota stipulation; and that the Council had also acquired a sophisticated political parties registration, data preservation systems to guard against floor crossing and it has also developed an Elections Code of Conduct. In addition, the Council has developed some regulations on political parties funding. The Council underscored the need to discourage the fragmentation of political parties and, instead, to encourage the merging of political parties. Finally, NEC warned that if elections are not organized by December 2026, there may be a serious constitutional crisis in South Sudan, which must be avoided. The RtGoNU made an undertaking that the Government would set aside finances towards the national elections and would communicate this before submitting its request to the AU, regional and international partners.

15. Furthermore, the RTGoNU representatives informed the PSC Delegation that some of the outstanding transition tasks would be implemented by the elected government such as drafting the new Constitution for the country citing the precedent case of South Africa, where the new constitution was drafted by the elected government following the 1994 elections in that country. The representatives of the RTGoNU expressed dismay over the steps taken by the R-JMEC with regards to handling the request presented to amend some parts of the R-ARCSS and explained that the RTGoNU has requested permission to bypass the processes of the RJMEC and to directly table the amendments to Parliament for consideration. The R-JMEC representatives in turn explained the steps they took was not block the process, but rather to build consensus with the RTGoNU on the appropriate procedures, and to limit the amendments to only provision necessary for the timely conduct of elections, without undermining the integrity of the R-ARCSS and its due process.

16. However, on their part, the Troika, the EU, IGAD Partners Forum, CSOs, Faith Based Organizations, Research Institutions and the Academia, expressed serious concerns over the lack of progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS and the escalation of tension between the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO, which they said, was largely due to the continued house arrest of the First Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar, and the continued detention of other senior SPLM-IO officials as well as unilateral decisions by the SPLM- in Government (IG) on replacements of RTGoNU Cabinet portfolios. They all castigated the Government of alleged unilateral decisions in blatant violation of the provisions

of the R-ARCSS, specifically, Chapter 8.4, including the proposed amendments to Articles 8.2 and 8.3 of the R-ARCSS.

17. They also informed the PSC Delegation that, if the RTGoNU proceeds unilaterally to organize the December 2026 elections, there was a high risk of plunging the country back to a full-blown civil war arguing that there was no evidence of the country's readiness to organize inclusive, democratic, transparent and credible elections. They cited the insecurity prevailing in parts of the country which are not accessible; the lack of financial resources commitment by the RTGoNU to the National Elections Commission (NEC); lack of mutual understanding on the nature of elections to be organized (whether general, legislative or presidential); lack of an updated voter's roll and updated constituency boundaries; as well as lack of voter/ civic education. There is also lack of election security measures. They categorically indicated that for as long as the First Vice President remained under house arrest; and that for as long as the RTGoNU continues to adopt unilateral decisions and not making substantive financial contributions towards the organization of the December 2026 elections, they would not provide any financial support to the RTGoNU. They strongly urged the South Sudanese authorities to desist from all actions that contribute towards the escalation of tensions by demonstrating the required leadership, ceasing unilateralism. Furthermore, they emphasized the need for enhanced progress, demonstrable RTGoNU commitment to promote transparency and accountability, as well as to ensure inclusiveness in its conduct; unconditionally releasing all political detainees, embracing genuine national dialogue and returning to inclusive implementation of the R-ARCSS towards the path to stability and prosperity in the country, as necessary preconditions for continued international financial and technical assistance in the implementation of the outstanding aspects of the R-ARCSS.

18. All interlocutors of the PSC Delegation emphasized the importance of enhanced political commitment, adequate funding, and sustained support from the AU, IGAD and the UN, as guarantors of the R-ARCSS and also from other partners to ensure the successful implementation of the outstanding Transition tasks. They also stressed the need for the parties to the Peace Agreement to return to the negotiating table and engage in constructive dialogue and the de-escalation of tension.

19. The PSC Delegation further noted that there is slow progress in implementing Chapter 5 of R-ARCSS, including the establishment of the Hybrid Court and related transitional justice and accountability mechanisms.

#### **b) Security Situation**

20. The PSC Delegation were briefed that, due to the escalating tension and trust deficits between the SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO, no tangible progress has been registered in the implementation of Chapter 2 of the R-ARCSS, which relates to a Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements. The security situation in the country has continued to deteriorate with escalation of the fight between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the South Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLM-IO). In this context, there have been many reports of violations of the Permanent Ceasefire by both sides and their allied militia groups, particularly in Greater Equatoria, Greater Bhar el Ghazal and Upper Nile, with the highest reports of violations having been noted in Jonglei State, especially in Ayod, Pigi, Nyirol and Akobo Counties.

21. The fighting has gone on unabated allegedly because of the attempts by the Government to re-establish its control in areas of clashes with the youth militia called White Army, who allegedly killed 257 soldiers and overrun a military garrison in Nasir in Malakal, Upper Nile State. As a result of the worsening political tension, mutual mistrust and suspicions, coupled with lack of necessary funding, there is no progress in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR) programmes. In addition, the cantonment sites and training centres have collapsed, and the

Phase2 reunification of forces and deployment of necessary unified forces (NUFs) has been halted except for the integration of opposition elements who defected or surrendered to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF). Furthermore, the NUFs who had been deployed between 2023 and 2024 no longer exist as the independent forces they were meant to be.

22. All representatives of South Sudanese Civil Society representatives stressed that there can be no viable military solution to the ongoing political differences in the country, and emphasized the urgent need for the belligerents to immediately cease hostilities, recommit to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, and to urgently engage in national dialogue as the only viable path towards an amicable solution and durable peace, security and stability in the country. They also emphasized the urgent need for the resumption of the implementation of the R-ARCSS. They further appealed to the authorities to immediately release all political prisoners as a mutual confidence and trust building measure. They also urged all parties to avoid unilateral decisions and highlighted the need for full cooperation from all parties to facilitate the investigation by the Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM) into violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and R-ARCSS. Last but not least, they requested the PSC to play a more active role in de-escalating the tensions and in mediating between the concerned parties. Despite this there was an overwhelming interest not to delay the democratic transition and conduct the national election as slated for December 2026.

23. The SPLM-IG also noted that the difficulties with a ceasefire because some of the groups currently fighting are not signatories to the Agreement. They highlighted the issue of the holdout groups who would be engaged – however there was focus towards the Interparty Dialogue to prepare for elections after which hold-out groups would be engaged.

24. Members of Civil Society highlighted the issue of IDPs (documentation) and ensuring that they are able to vote. They highlighted the challenges of using the old census and requested that these be addressed with the Government.

25. Members of civil society called for the role of women in the mediation processes in South Sudan

### **c) Humanitarian Situation**

26. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan has remained dire due to a combination of factors, including, the renewed and ongoing fighting in parts of the country especially between some signatories to the R-ARCSS, their allies, forced displacements, intercommunal violence, economic shocks linked to rising inflation which is currently pegged at 15% and climate shocks, destruction of public facilities such as schools, clinics and water supplies, the influx of Sudanese refugees and dwindling humanitarian funding by partners. As such, there has been massive population displacements, both, as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and as refugees. In addition, there is widespread food insecurity with an estimated 650,000 children under the age of 5 years, risking severe malnutrition, and lack of access to basic services such as healthcare and safe drinking water. Furthermore, the conflict, coupled with funding shortfalls, has severely disrupted humanitarian operations.

27. The PSC was briefed by Civil Society actors on the cases of GBV faced by women in South Sudan.

28. UNMISS, which has been playing a critical role in civilian protection, is drawing down /reducing its presence in South Sudan due to a number of challenges including reduced funding and

reiterated its dedication to safeguarding civilians, enabling humanitarian assistance, backing the peace agreement, and overseeing human rights, even while facing operational challenges. UNMISS also reaffirmed its continued close partnership and coordination with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) through its Trilateral Coordination Mechanism, emphasizing its active engagement with all parties to address the challenges facing South Sudan and advance the peace process.

## VI. CONCLUSION

29. Through the field mission, the PSC delegation obtained credible first-hand information on the prevailing political, security, socio-economic and humanitarian situation in South Sudan. The Delegation also had a glimpse of the objective realities regarding the status of progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, the state of readiness for the organization of the December 2026 elections, the outstanding transition tasks and the challenges to be urgently addressed as well as the expected additional support required by the people of South Sudan. The first-hand information collected is very critical in informing and shaping the next steps that are required in supporting the people of South Sudanese people to expeditiously conclude the transition and restore durable peace, security and stability in their country, which will tremendously benefit the entire region and Africa as a whole.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

30. In view of the detailed first-hand information gathered during the field mission, Council may wish to:

- a) **Adopt** the Report of the Field Mission conducted by the Council to the Republic of South Sudan together with its recommendations and **request** the Chairperson of the AU Commission and all those concerned, to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report;
- b) **Welcome** the efforts made in in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, in particularly difficult circumstances and, in this regard, **commend** the RTGoNU, under the leadership of H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, for the commitment to redouble efforts towards the implementation of all outstanding Transition tasks within the remaining time frame and, in this context, **express** the unwavering support of the AU to this end;
- c) **Reaffirm** the unwavering commitment of the AU to respect the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of South Sudan, as well as the AU unwavering commitment to continue support South Sudan to end the conflict and ensure a successful completion of the transition period;
- d) **Note with deep concern** the mutual trust and respect deficits as well as the growing tension within the leadership of the RTGoNU, which is stalling the implementation of the R-ARCSS and in this respect, **strongly urge** the South Sudanese leadership to set aside their personal and group differences and parochial interests, place the supreme interests of the people of South Sudan above all else and to commit to expedite the implementation of the remaining Transition tasks;
- e) **Urge** the R-TGoNU to ensure that any amendments to be undertaken on the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan should follow the due process stipulated in the R-ARCSS; in this regard, **request** the R-JMEC to coordinate with IGAD

Secretariat to facilitate the convening of an extraordinary IGAD ministerial meeting with a view to find a solution on this matter;

- f) **Reiterate deep concern** over the continued house arrest of the First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar , **while noting** the ongoing litigation process, and underscore the imperative for all stakeholders to embrace dialogue, uphold the spirit and letter of the R-ARCSS, which remains the cornerstone for sustainable peace, stability, and national reconciliation; and in this regard, and while respecting the need for allowing justice to take its full course, **calls** for reconciliation and pardoning to prevail with regards to all political detainees, as mutual confidence and trust building gesture for the sake of peace, unity and stability of the country and also in adherence to the Declaration of the C5 Ministerial meeting of 15 February 2026;
- g) **Categorically underline** that there can be no viable and sustainable military solution to any differences that the signatories of the R-ARCSS may have; **call** for an immediate and unconditional permanent ceasefire across the entire territory of South Sudan; **emphasize** that only through genuine, inclusive dialogue can a consensual and sustainable solution be found; and in this regard, **strongly urge** the parties to the R-ARCSS to embrace mediation and dialogue in partnership with the AU High Representative, and with the support of the IGAD, AU C5 and all regional and international partners;
- h) **Also emphasize** that full implementation of the R-ARCSS remains the key to a viable path towards comprehensively and holistically addressing the plethora of challenges that South Sudan faces and, in this regard, **underscore the importance** of ensuring the full implementation of the Peace Agreement in its letter and spirit;
- i) **Also underscore the need** to ensure an inclusive, fair and just process in place that includes all signatories of the R-ARCSS in the decision to organize national elections in December 2026 and in the same context, **reiterates the call** for ensuring all necessary preparations and the establishment of conducive conditions for the organization of such elections with a view to conducting a credible election that genuinely reflects the general will of the people of South Sudan; and in order to contribute towards consolidating the Transition and prevent any relapse;
- j) **Also express deep concern** over the deteriorating humanitarian crisis resulting from a combination of factors including the worsening insecurity in parts of the country resulting from the ongoing fighting between the South Sudan Defence Forces and the forces loyal to Dr. Riek Machar, which has displaced large numbers of the population both as IDPs and as refugees into the neighboring countries such as Ethiopia; the influx of refugees from the ongoing conflict in Sudan; intercommunal violence, compounded by economic shocks and negative effects of climate change, particularly floods, pests and crop failure leading to food insecurity; and in this respect, **underline the need** for further strengthening civilian protection and the need for facilitating humanitarian corridors, including protection of humanitarian agencies and their workers and **appeal** to all partners for continued humanitarian support in South Sudan;
- k) **Encourage** the R-TGoNU to find lasting solutions for the sporadic cases of intercommunal violence, and, in this context, **urge** the responsible authorities in all parts of the country affected by the scourge to work earnestly towards an inclusive process of holistically addressing the structural root causes and factors that drive and fuel it, with a view to promoting durable peace, security and stability in the affected communities;

- l) **Commend** the efforts being deployed by the AU Ad-Hoc High-Level Committee for South Sudan (C-5) including for the visit conducted to South Sudan in January 2026; and **welcome and fully endorse** the C5 Declaration of 15 February 2026 and encourage the signatories of the R-ARCSS to fully cooperate with the C5;
- m) **Welcome** the appointment of, and **congratulate** H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the AU High Representative/Special Envoy for South Sudan; **commend him** for his efforts including his recent visit to Juba, from 8 to 9 April 2026, and **assure him** of the support of Council in his endeavours;
- n) **Also commend** IGAD, UNMISS, RJMEC, the Troika, the IGAD Partners Forum, all other international partners and Friends of South Sudan for working with the RTGoNU and the people of South Sudan in implementing the R-ARCSS, including in exploring the required consensus regarding the organization of, and mobilization of required resources for the elections scheduled for December 2026;
- o) **Express** AU support for the renewal of the UNMISS Mission mandate, mindful of the critical role the Mission is playing in facilitating the implementation of the R-ARCSS and in the protection of civilians;
- p) **Underscore the important role** of women and youth in the South Sudan peace process, including in reconciliation, economic development and transitional justice efforts;
- q) **Reiterate the request** for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to expedite the deployment of a multidimensional technical needs assessment Team to South Sudan and to continue to provide technical support, as well as to coordinate resource mobilization efforts to support RTGoNU in preparation for the December 2026 elections;
- r) **Reiterate the appeal** to all Member States in a position to do so, to also contribute technical, material and financial assistance for organization of elections scheduled for 2026; in this regard, **request** the AU Commission to develop an AU-led technical plan transitional elections which identifies how technical competencies of Member States could be harnessed to achieve the goals of the agreement;
- s) **Express gratitude** to the South Sudanese authorities for facilitating the field mission and for finding time to interact with the PSC Delegation as well as for facilitating the consultations of the PSC with other key stakeholders during the field mission;
- t) **Also express gratitude** to the AU Mission in South Sudan for effectively representing the AU on the ground and, more specifically, for facilitating the successful conduct of the field mission; **note with concern** the institutional capacity challenges still facing the Mission and **reiterate the request** for the Chairperson of the Commission to avail the resources that will enable the Mission to more effectively discharge its mandate; and
- u) **Decide** to remain actively seized of the matter.