



## Security Council Briefing on UNMISS, 14 August 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms. Francesca Gatt

Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, President, and thanks SRSO Haysom, OCHA Director Wosornu and Major General Tai Gituai for your briefings. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of South Sudan.

Malta reaffirms its support to South Sudan and its people, as they embark on a historic journey towards the first-ever elections in the country in December. We urge the South Sudanese authorities to continue working on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, particularly the conditions for the peaceful conduct of free, fair and credible elections.

We call on the parties to engage, in mutual respect and trust, on the procedures required and to ensure that key stakeholders on the electoral process are consulted. We welcome recent funding disbursed to the operationalisation of the National Elections Commission and encourage further progress in identifying adequate infrastructure and facilities for elections.



It is in this vein that we urge all political parties to ensure the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women in constitutional, legislative, judicial, and electoral processes. Women's participation and leadership must be recognised, facilitated and empowered as candidates, voters and observers.

An inclusive civic and political space, free from arrests and detentions without warrants, is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. We welcome capacity-building workshops, supported by UNMISS, targeting a wide range of stakeholders – from women leaders and civil society organisation representatives to senior officials serving under the National Elections Commission.

We also acknowledge the support offered by the Trilateral AU-IGAD-UNMISS configuration, as well as regional and partner countries. The EU is also assisting, in partnership with UNDP, an enabling environment for elections.

These political developments should be complemented by progress in the consolidation of the Necessary Unified Forces. We underline their timely and inclusive deployment prior to the electoral period.



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President

Malta is deeply concerned by intercommunal violence in South Sudan, further complicated by the impacts from Sudan's conflict, and high levels of acute food insecurity affecting close to 57% of the population. Malnutrition among returnee and refugee children has spiked above the emergency threshold.

With flooding expected to be the worst in 60 years, and with 3.3 million people projected to be impacted, climate-related security risks cannot be more severe. Malta continues to support UNMISS' mandate in integrating gender-responsive climate security analysis in its responses and preparedness plans.

We condemn the stark increase in incidents of violence against humanitarian personnel in a context of increasing humanitarian needs. Humanitarian workers must never be a target, and accountability must be upheld to all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law.



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President

We are seriously alarmed by the increasing number of grave violations committed against children, especially the recruitment and use of children, and incidents of conflict-related sexual- and gender-based violence. We strongly deplore these heinous crimes.

The military use of schools is also unacceptable. We welcome the vacation of two schools in Lakes and in Western Equatoria, following intense advocacy by UNMISS. The work of child protection advisers remains integral to these and other efforts.

We urge that perpetrators of sexual- and gender- based violence be held accountable. We call for the operationalisation of the Joint Implementation Committee in support of the Action Plan for the Armed Forces on addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

On a positive note, we commend the work carried out by the mobile court in Mayom Country, with all seven cases resulting in convictions. This marked the first time, since 2011, that the formal justice system has adjudicated criminal cases in South Sudan.



We also welcome that free legal representation and psycho-social support was provided to the survivors.

To conclude, President, Malta reiterates its support to the important work carried out by UNMISS throughout the country. While acknowledging the reversal of taxes and fees on select operations, we call for continued cooperation from South Sudan in upholding the SoFA, and other obligations. We stand together in the country's collective pursuit to peace and security.

I thank you.