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Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on Sudan and South Sudan

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New York, New York

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Thank you, Madam President and to all of our briefers this morning.

Fifteen years after the world watched the promising beginning of South Sudan, conflict continues to rob its people of long-promised stability.

The first quarter of 2026 saw an alarmingly high rate of civilian casualties, with killings and sexual violence rising sharply amid ongoing armed conflict.

One mother in Western Equatoria State lamented that “our children are dying like flowers falling. We need real peace.”

Her words reflect a broader reality. Between April and July alone, UNMISS documented 418 people killed, 400 injured, 122 people abducted, and more than 420,000 people displaced from their homes.

Days before Independence Day, fighting renewed in Akobo, between the South Sudan People's Defense Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition.

Council members, this is not the South Sudan that the world envisioned.

Leaders who once claimed to end their people's brutal marginalization now impose their own. They use violence as a tool for political competition.

UNMISS remains on the ground protecting civilians, but peacekeepers cannot manufacture political will where none exists.

Between April and July, UNMISS recorded 86 Status of Forces Agreement violations, 84 of which involved government-imposed movement restrictions on UNMISS patrols.

Despite that, UNMISS pressed on. De-escalating violence in Akobo and Leer, protecting humanitarian convoys, and documenting human rights violations.

Imagine what more this mission could achieve if the government cooperated instead of obstructing it.

The onus lies with South Sudan's leaders.

For years, South Sudan's leaders distracted the international community with insincere elections talk to attract donor assistance, while perpetuating the humanitarian, economic, and security crises. This continues today. Vast public resources go unused for public purposes.

Peace is desperately needed in South Sudan. Peace will require direct and genuine dialogue to avert further violence. This dialogue is untenable while the head of the second largest party to the 2018 peace agreement remains under house arrest and on trial.

If elections proceed, our expectations are that leaders ensure peaceful conditions and fund them with South Sudan's own public resources.

The people of South Sudan need leaders who choose peace over power, and accountability over impunity.

We urge South Sudan's leaders to end the violence, to encourage direct dialogue between all signatory parties and to cease all obstructions and non-cooperation with UNMISS.

This Council must insist South Sudan's leaders honor these commitments and choose dialogue for peace

Thank you.

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