



PRESS RELEASE

22 October 2021

**Statement by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
Mr. Guang Cong
United Nations Day 2021**

[As Delivered]

Honourable Rebecca Nyandeng of Mabior, Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan.

Ambassadors, Heads of Missions, and members of the diplomatic community.

Heads of United Nations Agencies and Non-Governmental-Organizations.

Representatives of civil society and other key stakeholders.

And UN personnel.

Welcome and thank you for being here to celebrate UN Day.

On 24 October in 1945, the UN Charter was signed in the wake of the devastation caused by World War II.

The first line of that Charter – “we the peoples of the United Nations” - united us, not only, as citizens of our respective nations but also as citizens of the world.

The Charter commits us to shared values and a common cause to secure global peace and security, protect human rights, ensure sustainable development, and respect international laws.

The work of the United Nations, both past and present, makes a tangible difference to the lives of millions of people across the world.

Here in South Sudan, we work with the government and communities as an impartial partner in peace, recovery, and development.

We know that, without peace, there cannot be sustainable development.

In that regard, it is important to acknowledge the recent positive developments in the implementation of the peace agreement.

We have witnessed the reconstitution of the Parliament, the historic appointment of the first female Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, the drafting of a bill on the constitution-making process, and steps taken to progress economic reforms.

These actions are commendable.

But we must also be mindful of the challenges continue to impede the peace process, particularly the slow implementation of transitional security arrangements which are critical to every aspect of the agreement, especially the electoral process.

We also remain concerned at the increase in communal violence, some of which has distinct political undertones. While primary responsibility for protecting civilians lies with national and state governments, UNMISS is doing all it can, within its capabilities, to help deter violence, restore security, and build peace – particularly in conflict hotspots such as Tonj and Tambura.

In both of these locations, our peacekeepers responded rapidly to the outbreak of violence by establishing temporary bases and increasing patrols to deter conflicts, protect displaced people, facilitate the safe collection of food and water by local communities, and to promote peacebuilding.

We are engaging with national and state political leaders and encouraging them to use their influence to end the fighting. At the grassroots level, we are helping bring together all stakeholders for reconciliation and peace dialogue, including political and security actors, traditional, community and faith-based leaders, civil society, women, and youth.

The UN is also providing technical support and capacity building to rule of law institutions. We are liaising closely with the Chief Justice on the deployment of judges and mobile courts to areas affected by violence.

UN humanitarian agencies are providing lifesaving support to these communities as well as millions of other vulnerable people across the country.

The humanitarian situation can only be described as dire, with 8.3 million people estimated to be in need due to the cumulative effects of prolonged conflict, the worst flooding in 60 years, high levels of food insecurity and COVID-19.

Providing this assistance is a huge challenge in the face of dwindling resources. The Humanitarian Response plan is seeking \$1.7 billion dollars from generous donors this year to reach at least 6.6 million people with urgent life-saving assistance. Fifty eight percent has been received so far.

Funding is not the only challenge. Four humanitarian workers have lost their lives this year and more than 170 have been forced to relocate due to security threats. Humanitarian aid valued at more than 1 million USD has been looted or destroyed across the country.

We know that people are experiencing severe economic hardship, particularly young people who are missing out on education, training, and jobs. However, that frustration must not be taken out on the very organizations trying to help them.

Recent incidents of youth attacking humanitarian convoys and threatening workers in attempts to secure jobs for themselves are utterly unacceptable and cause immense harm to their own communities who are already suffering.

For example, in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, more than 80 humanitarian workers had to be relocated recently due to threats against them and aid services had to be paused, depriving 100,000 people in desperate need of assistance.

In this regard, we urge all authorities and communities to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian partners and to refrain from violence against aid facilities and workers who are courageously supporting people in need.

Distinguished guests.

A decade ago, South Sudan proudly became a member of the United Nations family.

Today, the United Nations is here with you with one purpose - to support the government and the people of South Sudan on their journey from war to durable peace and prosperity.

I would like to thank all UN personnel for their passionate commitment, hard work and personal sacrifice in carrying out their duties in the face of significant challenges.

And, of course, we could not carry out that work without the collaboration and cooperation of the communities that we serve, and we thank them for their support.

On this special day – United Nations Day - let's seize this opportunity to come together and redouble our efforts to support South Sudanese to rebuild the peaceful and prosperous future they deserve.

Thank you.