



NO EXIT, WITHOUT AN ENTRY STRATEGY: TRANSITIONING UNMISS SSR ACTIVITIES

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I. Introduction

When South Sudan relapsed into conflict in 2013, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) ceased its activities supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR)—including police, judiciary, penal, intelligence and military reform—and rule of law, subsequently refocusing its activities on the protection of civilians. Since the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and its 2019 mandate renewal, UNMISS has taken on a new role supporting the peace process. UNMISS' mandate includes supporting the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements (PCTSA) through, among other means, providing strategic advice, technical assistance and institution building, as well as contributing to the protection of civilians through supporting the expansion and reform of the rule of law and justice sector. In the absence of a formal UNMISS SSR mandate, this has provided an important entry point to the SSR field.¹

Critical to R-ARCSS implementation is formation of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF)—which according to the agreement is meant to comprise 83 000 personnel—integrating former opposition forces from the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and the South Sudan Opposition Alliance. Members of the NUF will be assigned—together with the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGONU)'s² security sector, including the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS)—to the national army, national security, the national police service, civil defence, and the wildlife and prison services. Military personnel not selected for the NUF need to be demobilized and reintegrated into society. Following this, the unified forces need to be brought together, 'right-sized' and operationalized. UNMISS' main role in this process is supporting the Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring & Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM)—an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led multilateral peace operation that monitors, verifies and reports on PCTSA implementation—and the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), which monitors and oversees peace process implementation, including the

SUMMARY

• This report looks at the transition of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan's (UNMISS) security sector reform (SSR) activities to international and national actors. Many required SSR activities in South Sudan remain at a very early stage. Four main challenges must be overcome if the SSR process and UNMISS transition are to become sustainable: (a) the political process is weak with no national consensus or genuine interest regarding SSR; (b) the implementation of the cease-fire arrangements and SSR are not yet part of a broader recovery context, including disarmament demobilization and reintegration (DDR); (c) donors are reluctant to funding the South Sudanese SSR and DDR processes; and (d) the principles of good governance and gender-responsiveness are not yet sufficiently embraced.

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 2625, 15 Mar. 2022; and UNMISS official 2a, Interview, online, 13 Jan. 2023.

² Also known as Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement-In Government (SPLM-IG).



work of the CTSAMVM. UNMISS not only supports but actively participates in both these mechanisms.³

With the 2 August 2022 roadmap laying out new timelines for R-ARCSS implementation, effectively extending the transitional period by 24 months, South Sudan once again finds itself beginning an SSR, and eventually DDR, process. Despite still being partly in the design phase of the process in terms of developing legislative documents and laws, the initial stage of implementation has already started with the first phase of NUF training and graduation and establishment of the Unified Command. This will be followed by the second phase, consisting of further NUF cantonment, screening, training, reorganization, unification, graduation and redeployment. UNMISS' mandate on and resources allocated to SSR have, however, been relatively limited thus far.⁴

Meanwhile, relevant UN member states and donors are fatigued, and therefore keen for the mission to close, transitioning its activities to other stakeholders. As such, the latest mandate tasks UNMISS with engaging 'at the earliest possible stage on integrated planning and coordination on transitions with the resident coordinators, UN Country Team (UNCT), and other United Nations agencies, fund and programmes, the host State and other national stakeholders including civil society'.⁵ Important TGONU members are also hoping for an UNMISS drawdown. Other actors, though—particularly the former opposition and civil society—still regard the mission as indispensable despite frustrations over its past record.

The situation in South Sudan remains very instable. Only limited progress on R-ARCSS implementation has been made to date, with success in the peace process dependent on the PCTSA, DDR and SSR processes being completed. Achieving this, and thereby allowing a sustainable UNMISS transition, likely requires greater initial engagement by the mission in DDR and SSR activities. In the absence of the mission assuming this expanded role, it may end up having to return at a later stage, 'running around in circles' as in Haiti or Timor.⁶ Nevertheless, UNMISS finds itself in an environment where it must consider its transition and exit strategy. As a first step, it set up a Transition Task Force in summer 2022 to work towards this end.⁷

This report, which aims to contribute to thinking on UNMISS' transition, is based on desk research and interviews (16 men and 7 women) conducted during fieldwork in November–December 2022 and online until January

³ Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), 12 Sep. 2018, chapter II.

⁴ Republic of South Sudan, Agreement on the Roadmap to a Peaceful Democratic End of the Transitional Period of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), 2 Aug. 2022; James, G. Y., 'What is next after the graduation of the necessary unified forces?', *AfricLaw*, 20 Sep. 2022; Civil society representative 1, Interview, Juba, 30 Nov. 2022; UNMISS official 2, Interview, Juba, 29 Nov. 2022; UNMISS official 6, Interview, Juba, 29 Nov. 2022; and UNMISS official 9, Interview, Juba, 1 Dec. 2022.

⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 2625 (note 1).

⁶ De Vries, H., *Going Around in Circles: The Challenges of Peacekeeping and Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, CRU Report (Clingendael Institute: The Hague, 2015).

⁷ UNMISS official 1, Interview, Juba, 29 Nov. 2022; UNMISS official 5, Interview, Juba, 29 Nov. 2022; UNMISS official 7, Interview, Juba, 1 Dec. 2022; UNMISS official 8, Interview, Juba, 1 Dec. 2022; UNMISS official 9 (note 4); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2, Interview, Juba, 30 Nov. 2022; Civil society representative 3, Interview, Juba, 30 Nov. 2022; and Diplomat 2, Interview, Juba, 2 Dec. 2022.



2023. It offers conclusions on where the process in South Sudan stands, based on 11 factors underlying the transitioning of mission SSR activities to the UN Country Team (UNCT), other international actors, and national actors such as the government and civil society.

II. Factors determining mission transition

The 11 factors below structure the analysis and are generally considered within the literature to determine SSR implementation and transitions.⁸ Some of these factors relate to and may be influenced by UNMISS' roles and activities, including how the mission transitions its activities to other national and international actors. Other factors, meanwhile, are determined by the context in which the mission operates—for example, what other actors, particularly the South Sudanese parties, do.

Local and national political leadership commitment to SSR

When it comes to implementing the SSR and DDR processes, there is currently limited commitment or consensus among the main South Sudanese powerbrokers, and no national champion capable of shepherding the process forward. Since 2005, attempts at SSR and DDR have failed to address the fact that the formal security sector is arranged according to tribal and patrimonial loyalties. In 2013, in the absence of any real integration of disparate units, and with informal command structures still intact, the national armed forces remained a patchwork of armed groups that could easily be untangled from countrywide structures to fight against each other in the war. The R-ARCSS replicated the unstable power-sharing structure set out in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Khartoum and the main South Sudanese powerbrokers, including President Salva Kiir and First Vice President Riek Machar. In light of their ongoing mutual distrust, Kiir and Machar, as well as other South Sudanese powerbrokers, have been unwilling to turn integration on paper into concrete reality. Both leaders earned their standing and positions during South Sudan's liberation struggle, creating a legacy for the post-independence period. Now, they cling to power to avoid being tried for war crimes. Moreover, their succession may lead to violence, or bring players even more reluctant to pursue integration into office.⁹

The TGONU has little interest in implementing the SSR process, especially in the absence of international funding, with many of its members perceiving SSR to be part of a 'regime change' agenda. The TGONU leadership hopes

⁸ Van der Lijn, J., Steeves, K., Caparini, M. and Gbala, A., *Transitioning Peace Operations' Security Sector Reform Activities: The Cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone* (SIPRI, forthcoming 2023).

⁹ Craze, J., *The Politics of Numbers: On Security Sector Reform in South Sudan, 2005-2020* (London: London School of Economics, Centre for Public Authority and International Development, 2020); Diplomat 1, Interview, Juba, 1 Dec. 2022; UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); UNMISS official 10, Interview, online, 16 Jan. 2023; Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Government official 1, Interview, Juba, 30 Nov. 2022; Civil society representative 4, Interview, Juba, 2 Dec. 2022; civil society representative 5, Interview, online, 15 Jan. 2023; Civil society representative 6, Interview, online, 19 Jan. 2023; and Researcher 1, Interview, online, 31 Dec. 2022.



to instrumentalize the process to fragment and weaken the SPLA-IO in the NUF, while building the National Security Service (NSS)—which is controlled by the Office of the President and essentially outside the SSR process—into the strongest military force in the country. Given that personnel can be transferred from one security service to another, even police officers trained by UNMISS within the SSR process can be posted to the NSS. The opposition, by contrast, has greater interest in the SSR process, with Angelina Teny—a prominent SPLM-IO member—until 4 March 2023 not only minister of defence and veteran affairs, but chair of the Revitalized Strategic Defence and Security Review Board (RSDSRB) in charge of the SSR process. However, the opposition’s championing of SSR is largely down to the opportunity it provides to reconstruct the opposition’s armed elements. Moreover, the R-ARCSS does not address the concerns of non-signatory parties and marginalized groups, creating incentives for them to take up arms.¹⁰

Although some progress has been made on the PCTSA’s SSR process following the 2022 roadmap, including the Joint Command being established and the first batches of soldiers graduating, the new timelines appear overly ambitious. In addition, most of the graduates trained as part of the NUF are reportedly civilians rather than from the core military forces.¹¹

While UNMISS supports the SSR document-drafting process, the resulting RSDSRB documents are not shared with the mission until they are validated by the South Sudanese government and the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA). The mission has invested in strengthening the capacity of and the capabilities and positions of technocrats in South Sudanese governance structures. It has also given SSR participants artificial incentives to continue the process by providing them with allowances to attend SSR process meetings. In light of the current state of the political process, the SSR process is essentially being kept on ‘life support’ by technical assistance.¹²

Mission context awareness, understanding power relations, and political, economic and social obstacles to change

UNMISS has reasonable knowledge—built over the many years of its presence—of South Sudan’s political economy, including who holds power and how such power and decision-making are exercised. The main challenge is that in a highly complex and fragmented country such as South Sudan,

¹⁰ Craze (note 9); Diplomat 1 (note 9); Diplomat 2 (note 7); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 3, Interview, Juba, 29 Nov 2022; UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); UNMISS official 10 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Civil society representative 4 (note 9); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); Government official 1 (note 9); Researcher 1 (note 9); Researcher 2, Interview, Juba, 28 Nov. 2022; and ‘South Sudan president fires defence and interior ministers’, Reuters, 4 Mar. 2023.

¹¹ UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Government official 1 (note 9); Researcher 2 (note 10); Diplomat 1 (note 9); and Diplomat 2 (note 7).

¹² UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).



each locality has different dynamics. It is therefore difficult to determine the capacities of different groups or fully understand political manipulation processes. As a result, South Sudanese actors often claim the international community lacks understanding of the situation on the ground, with some analysts going as far as questioning UNMISS' willingness to establish context awareness. They argue, for instance, that by supporting SSR in a context where the NSS is not included, UNMISS is helping to concentrate power in the hands of the president. Also, while UN Police (UNPOL) takes care to train only vetted police trainees who have not violated human rights, it is not in a position to challenge the SSNPS's institutionalized disrespect for human rights. As a result, trainees have been placed under control of commanders reportedly responsible for gross violations.¹³

According to such analysts, these examples would illustrate UNMISS' limited context awareness, with SSR essentially reduced to a technical 'box-ticking' training exercise in the absence of any concerted attempts to address more structural political problems.¹⁴ However, the mission is required to take a variety of considerations into account, including the sovereignty of South Sudan and ensuring government collaboration on other issues, and so may be forced to weigh these factors differently.¹⁵

Inclusion of good governance and accountability principles

On paper, the SSR and DDR processes are embedded in implementation of Chapter V of the R-ARCSS, which addresses transitional justice accountability, reconciliation and healing. In practise, the broader political context of good governance in South Sudan is grim, while R-ARCSS implementation in relation to the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH), the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) has been limited.¹⁶ This is despite such accountability being crucial for the successful, sustainable reform of South Sudan's security sector. Moreover, any such process requires an attitude change on the part of the unified forces, including their professionalization. Currently, it is the South Sudanese population that serves the military, rather than the other way round. Personnel in the various branches of the South Sudanese security sector have been trained for combat, meaning the SSNPS and other civilian services essentially hold a military mindset incompatible with good governance principles.

Corruption in the security and justice sector arising from socio-economic constraints represents another challenge. Command and control of forces follows the country's patrimonial system. Here, military allegiance is to the commander, who is responsible for pay, rather than the government. This makes military personnel beholden to the decisions and whims of their commander, increasing the likelihood that they will be willing to commit

¹³ Researcher 1 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).

¹⁴ Researcher 1 (note 9); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

¹⁵ Researcher 1 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).

¹⁶ Amnesty International and Transitional Justice Working Group South Sudan, 'African Union's abandoned commitment to justice in Africa: The case of the hybrid court for south Sudan', Research Briefing, Nov. 2022.



human rights violations and, due to low or delayed salaries, become involved in extortion and looting. Low salaries in the justice sector also obstruct the essential principles of due process and fair trial. In addition, civilian oversight of the South Sudanese security sector is limited.¹⁷

UNMISS' inability to deal with the overarching Juba-based political challenges to peace and security has led it to focus primarily on local low-hanging fruits and technical projects (e.g. training and policy development) that have limited national political buy-in and carry a low risk of doing harm. The mission has, for example, supported rule of law and social contracts at the local level through joint special mobile courts, and has trained SSNPS officers in community policing. Both activities are relatively limited in scope, however, and are not yet scalable enough to assume a broader structural and sustainable role across the country. Moreover, there have been reports of SSNPS trainees being involved in human rights violations.¹⁸ As a result, UNMISS has so far failed to bring about structural change to the essentially tribal and politically partisan character of the police, judiciary and penal systems. Communities, meanwhile, do not perceive these structures as delivering the services required.¹⁹

Nonetheless, there has also been some progress in the good governance field. The fact that security transition documents are shared and advice is asked for indicates increased transparency, while the training and graduation of the NUF units is at least a first step in the SSR process. According to South Sudanese civil society representatives, the perceived improvement in security forces behaviour in Juba may be attributed to training. Moreover, the SSPDF has started to court-martial soldiers for rape and human rights violations.²⁰

Acknowledgement of hybrid and multilevel governance

Particularly since 2013, many South Sudanese communities have relied on ethnically organized community self-defence groups. The R-ARCSS's SSR process does not, however, include these informal militia groups, despite the fact that many are linked to government or opposition power-brokers at the national level. In addition, a number of non-signatory groups (e.g. Gen. Thomas Cirillo's National Salvation Front and Gen. Paul Malong Awan's South Sudan United Front/Army) are not currently part of the SSR process, though they may be integrated into the security sector at some point. Moreover, state-level administrators are demanding greater responsibility in light of the constitution assigning governors several state-level security

¹⁷ Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Civil society representative 4 (note 9); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).

¹⁸ Researcher 1 (note 9); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

¹⁹ Researcher 1 (note 9); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

²⁰ 'Over 25 government soldiers convicted for crimes against civilians in Yei', Radio Tamzuj, 9 Sep. 2020; Amnesty International, *"If You Don't Cooperate, I'll Gun you Down": Conflict-related Sexual Violence and Impunity in South Sudan* (Amnesty International: London, 2022); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); and Civil society representative 5 (note 9).



and police tasks. Among the population the distance between the central Juba government and citizens outside Juba is generally perceived to be too great.²¹

While technical assistance to and capacity building of South Sudanese entities responsible for the rule of law and justice are at the core of UNMISS' mandate, this is limited by the exclusion of informal security providers and non-signatory groups from the SSR process—UNPOL, for example, does not work with them. The mission does, however, attempt to engage informal security providers, such as cattle raiders and youth groups, by other means. It has tried to pull these groups into the peace process by setting up pilot community violence reduction (CVR) projects, which aim to support non-violent alternative livelihoods in the hope of stymieing recruitment into armed groups. The mission views these projects as entry points for increasing its SSR engagement. Like joint special mobile courts and the community policing projects, however, these projects are not yet scalable, and it is only nationwide voluntary civilian disarmament that can structurally address intercommunal violence and insecurity. UNMISS officials hope that as governance becomes more inclusive and legitimate over time, the link between formal and informal security provision will weaken, eventually allowing the SSNPS to deal with banditry and cattle raiding.²²

In the justice sector, informal traditional authorities play an important role as, in accordance with the constitution, community customary law provision is integrated into the broader justice system. UNMISS supports these alternative justice providers as part of its limited number of projects backing the joint special mobile courts. However, the capacity and knowledge of traditional authorities, including on human rights, remains limited.²³

Involvement of civil society in support of local ownership

Although several civil society organizations are part of the RSDSRB, and as such involved in the SSR process, their influence is limited. In general, South Sudanese civil society is divided and often highly politicized, with links to politicians through family ties. In addition, many non-governmental organizations are, for financial reasons, driven by the international donor community's agenda. While organizations allied to the TGONU may have political access, other, more critical, organizations lack the civic space to effectively monitor, lobby, influence or advocate. Moreover, though civil society organizations in Juba may have relatively strong capacity, beyond the capital they are very weak and populations do not feel represented by them. Despite the involvement of civil society organizations in the RSDSRB reflecting on SSR documents, representatives often feel that they cannot

²¹ Craze (note 9); Researcher 2 (note 10); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); Government official 1 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

²² UN Security Council resolution 2625 (note 1); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); Government official 1 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

²³ UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); Government official 1 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).



speak freely and that their suggestions on how laws and documents should be adjusted are ignored. Generally, they have the impression that they are only involved ‘once the food is cooked’—that is, after the relevant decisions have already been settled.²⁴

UNMISS engages with civil society organizations through building capacity, providing resources and involving them in information gathering. Civil society also plays a role in UNMISS’ community policing training of SSNPS officers. While civil society organizations have the potential to be strong partners, the mission does not collaborate with them when it comes to SSR monitoring and advocacy. This is a challenge, as strengthening the social contract is unlikely to succeed if only one side (the state) is reinforced, while the other side (the communities) is left with insufficient buy-in or influence. Consequently, civil society is not yet in a position to ensure security sector accountability, particularly outside Juba.²⁵

Gender-responsiveness

With the SSR process still at an early stage, it remains to be seen whether it will bring about the cultural and institutional changes needed to address the security sector’s predatory and unequal character when it comes to women. A gender-responsive approach to SSR is critical, in part because around a third of SSPDF personnel are women.²⁶

While women constitute 6.4 per cent of UNMISS’ military personnel, 31 per cent of UNPOL and 28 per cent of civilian personnel, they are primarily Juba-based, potentially reducing the mission’s gender-sensitivity in the field.²⁷ UNMISS is focused on increasing the proportion of women personnel in the various South Sudanese security sector institutions, strengthening gender-sensitive approaches across the security sector, and ensuring key legislation and documents are gender-responsive. Another priority is combatting conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), where much remains to be done—for instance, the Gender-based Violence and Juvenile Court has no presence outside Juba. Although the SSPDF can investigate and prosecute soldiers engaged in CRSV and SGBV outside Juba, its capacity and logistics are limited. Finally, UNMISS aims to support women leaders in both the South Sudanese security services and civil society, particularly at the grassroots level outside Juba. It does so through short-term training and capacity building, with UN Women focusing more on long-term capacity building. The mission has supported the Security Sector Women’s Network—which brings together women representatives from across security sector institutions—as well as

²⁴ Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); Researcher 1 (note 9); and Researcher 2 (note 10).

²⁵ Researcher 1 (note 9); Researcher 2 (note 10); Government official 1 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); and UNMISS official 8 (note 7).

²⁶ UNMISS official 6 (note 4); and UNMISS official 7 (note 7).

²⁷ Pfeifer Cruz, C., ‘Women in multilateral peace operations in 2022: What is the state of play?’, SIPRI, Oct. 2022; and UNMISS official 7 (note 7).



women's networks in each security service. The hope is that these networks will empower women, showcasing them as role models.²⁸

External actor, donor and partner commitment to SSR and DDR processes

Following the 2005 CPA, South Sudan became a donor darling. The United Kingdom and the United States in particular invested heavily in SSR for the country. Despite high expectations, funds were mostly absorbed by a kleptocratic system, with any remaining hopes shattered by the start of the civil war in 2013. Subsequently, slow and patchy implementation of the R-ARCSS has led to mounting frustration among the main donors, who—not wishing to have their fingers burnt again—remain unconvinced about funding future DDR and SSR processes.²⁹ In summer 2022, the USA—the largest donor—citing a ‘lack of sustained progress on the part of South Sudan’s leaders’, ended its support to the RJMEC and CTSAMVM, thereby affecting SSR, DDR and the peace process generally.³⁰ The 2022 roadmap has yet to convince the main donor governments, including the troika (Norway, the UK and the USA), that the peace process is sufficiently on track to build on the progress made before 2013. Instead, they are described as adopting a ‘wait and see modus’, adopting a ‘damage control posture’, and focusing on ‘low hanging fruits that do no harm, but show engagement’.³¹

Hope still remains that countries from the region, such as Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, may step forward as champions for SSR in South Sudan, inspiring and politically assisting the country. According to interviewees, this could include setting up an SSR troika, supporting the signatory parties’ commitment to the SSR process, sharing SSR experiences, involving a wider range of political leaders in South Sudan in order to strengthen the long-term political support base, and supporting security sector accountability by implementing Chapter V of the R-ARCSS, particularly regarding establishment of the HCSS. Most South Sudanese interviewees continue to place their hopes on sustained UN involvement, as they have more faith in UNMISS than CTSAMVM regarding monitoring and civilian disarmament. Perception surveys suggest this is a widely shared sentiment among communities in general.

Some interviewees also envisage an enlarged IGAD or African Union (AU) role in support of the SSR process. Although IGAD has been involved in the SSR process through the RJMEC and CTSAMVM, its efforts are not regarded as having been particularly successful. Meanwhile, the AU, despite signalling international ambitions, has not stepped up when it comes to SSR or the wider peace process in South Sudan. Both organizations also lack finances and have limited political space, being tied, through the concept

²⁸ UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); and Civil society representative 5 (note 9).

²⁹ Researcher 2 (note 10); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); and Diplomat 2 (note 7).

³⁰ Price, N., Department Spokesperson, US Embassy Juba, ‘The United States stands with the people of South Sudan and calls for urgent progress from South Sudan’s leaders’, Press statement, 15 July 2022; and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).

³¹ UNMISS official 2a (note 1); and Researcher 1 (note 9).



of sovereignty, to the government. Moreover, much has changed since 2013. Afghanistan is widely regarded as a failure of SSR, while international attention has more recently turned to Ukraine and other conflicts. It is therefore unlikely that a new SSR process in South Sudan will generate previously seen interest or funding.³²

Sustainable security sector funding and national institutional anchoring of the SSR process

The size of the South Sudanese security sector—particularly the SSPDF, which in 2021 was estimated as having 185 000 personnel—is disproportionate.³³ South Sudan’s military expenditure as a percentage of general government expenditure has fallen steadily from 29 per cent in 2011 to 4.7 per cent in 2021.³⁴ UNMISS estimates the SSNPS has some 71 408 police officers, though this figure is probably inflated.³⁵ The estimated 44 000 staff working in a corrections system that holds some 10 000 inmates is similarly unmanageable and unsustainable.³⁶

DDR in the traditional manner failed in South Sudan after the 2005 CPA, with combatants resisting demobilization in the absence of continued payment. Retirement may draw more support, but political elites will struggle to fund pensions while keeping relevant armed groups and powerbrokers ‘inside the tent’. The SPLA-IO, for instance, has promised wages and rank inflation that the process is unlikely to deliver. Moreover, the broader SSPDF, including its leadership, is underpaid and underfed. By contrast, the militias and other forces of the powerbrokers, and particularly the NSS, are much better off, but kept outside the SSR process. Renewed and further fragmentation is therefore a distinct possibility.³⁷

Right-sizing and retiring excess staff is essential to ensure sustainable funding for the South Sudanese security sector. Oil revenue and international donors provided considerable funds for DDR and SSR under the 2005 CPA. Since then, however, donors have lost their appetite and oil revenues have decreased.³⁸ Currently, UNMISS officials can only point to a prospective ‘peace dividend’ and a future tax system as potential funding avenues for the South Sudanese security sector and a continued SSR process. However, it is unclear what these would look like, and whether they would be sufficient to cover costs.³⁹ While UNMISS is pushing the government to consider how it

³² Researcher 2 (note 10); UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); UNMISS official 10 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 4 (note 9); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

³³ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance*, vol. 121, no. 1 (2021), p. 491.

³⁴ World Bank, ‘Military expenditure (% of general government expenditure)’.

³⁵ UNMISS official 5 (note 7).

³⁶ UNMISS official 4, Interview, Juba, 29 Nov. 2022; and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).

³⁷ Craze (note 9); Diplomat 1 (note 9); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).

³⁸ UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 4 (note 36); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).

³⁹ UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 4 (note 36); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).



might fund its security sector and continue the DDR and SSR processes after transition, there is thus far no implementing body.⁴⁰

Besides implementing the PCTSA, considerably more needs to be done to strengthen the security sector beyond the armed forces. The SSNPS currently has little presence, structures or capabilities outside Juba. As such, in addition to training and capacity building of the SSNPS, UNPOL is supporting establishment of a police structure and infrastructure outside the capital, including a police education system capable of integrating and training new police officers. Justice reform and judicial capacity building, particularly at the local level, is also required as, in the absence of judges, prisons are congested with pre-trial cases and the mentally ill. Despite this, correctional facilities have thus far received minimal attention. Moreover, justice and prison reform has not been sufficiently linked to the broader SSR process, including by UNMISS, with fears of corruption deterring international donors from going beyond knowledge transfers.⁴¹

Oversight is another key factor in securing good governance of and reduced abuses by the security sector. Currently, both internal (e.g. the SSPDF Inspector General and internal auditing instruments) and external (e.g. the TNLA) oversight mechanisms, as well as the judiciary, are weak and lack capacity. In addition, the TNLA is dominated by TGONU representatives, potentially impeding accountability and critical checks and balances oversight. Security and justice sector positions are filled by presidential decrees, with appointees not vetted by the TNLA or other national institutions. While UNMISS has provided support to the Committee on Defence and Veteran Affairs, UNPOL is yet to assist the Committee on Internal Security and Public Order. Civil society would in theory appear an obvious means of holding the security sector to account and advocating for reform, thereby increasing popular ownership and legitimacy of the process. Given its previously mentioned weakness and the limited civic space available, however, it is not in a position to do so.⁴²

Links between the SSR process and other related processes

To be successful, any transition of SSR activities must be aligned with the political dialogue, as well as relevant security, economic and development processes—especially DDR, given the well-known nexus between the two. SSR and DDR are on paper part of South Sudan's political and security processes (the R-ARCSS and PCTSA), as well as its economic and development programming (the Revised National Development Strategy, R-NDS).⁴³ The R-NDS, for instance, lists the 'High proliferation of illegal arms and delay in the implementation of security sector reform and the disarmament,

⁴⁰ UNMISS official 6 (note 4).

⁴¹ UNMISS official 4 (note 36); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).

⁴² Kuol, D. K., 'Confronting the challenges of South Sudan's security sector: A Practitioner's perspective', Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 29 May 2018; Kuol, L. and Ajak, P. B., 'National security strategy development: South Sudan case study', Working Paper, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Sept. 2022; Civil society representative 1 (note 4), Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); Civil society representative 4 (note 9); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); and UNMISS official 8 (note 7).

⁴³ UNMISS official 2a (note 1).



demobilization and reintegration programme' as one of the 'key issues' in the governance cluster, and views the peace agreement's SSR arrangements as vital for consolidating peace.⁴⁴

In practise, implementation of the R-ARCSS and PCTSA is behind schedule. Although the DDR commission has been reconstituted, an absence of accountability over how funds are spent, along with pessimism over its prospects, has prompted donors to hold back from supporting the DDR–SSR process under the PCTSA, as well as the justice and security sectors as described in the R-NDS. South Sudan remains mired in a situation of systemic poverty, lack of education and insecurity, creating an environment in which it is relatively easy to recruit combatants. Moreover, in the absence of rule of law and given the abundance of weapons, communities find themselves having to rely on self-defence to ensure their security.⁴⁵

What is often described as necessary from a liberal peace and technical perspective is perhaps unrealistic for South Sudan. Beyond a complete and holistic reform of the security sector, a DDR and right-sizing process requires providing ex-combatants with alternative livelihoods, reintegration, retirement or pension packages in order to ensure they can properly integrate into civilian society—one-off payments and vocational training are insufficient in this regard. Moreover, a civilian disarmament process is needed to deal with community violence and general insecurity nationwide. This would have to be voluntary and requires that rule of law be established across the country. In the absence of these conditions, such disarmament and CVR could lead to armed resistance, make disarmed communities vulnerable to violence from other groups, or create resentment among communities not included in the disarmament processes.⁴⁶

In the absence of a holistic SSR process and with the necessary political processes in a state of paralysis, UNMISS is confined to carrying out largely technical SSR activities. These activities have only limited links to other processes, and despite what might be stated on paper, do not form part of a coherent strategy addressing the root causes of conflict. UNMISS hopes that piloting CVR can serve as a precursor to real DDR and civilian disarmament processes, fostering sustainable recovery and peacebuilding initiatives throughout the country. It is argued that without payment ex-combatants and vulnerable youths are likely to pick up arms. CVR projects, which provide them with training and skills to establish alternative livelihoods, may therefore create a multiplier effect on broader communities, alleviate potential conflicts, and help bridge the gap between donors and the government.⁴⁷ CVR is, however, a long-term process and by no means a silver bullet solution. Moreover, if badly implemented it risks doing harm, with

⁴⁴ Republic of South Sudan, *Revised South Sudan National Development Strategy 2021–2024: Consolidate Peace and Stabilize the Economy* (Republic of South Sudan and UNDP: Juba, 2021).

⁴⁵ James (note 4); Diplomat 1 (note 9); Researcher 2 (note 10); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); Government official 1 (note 9); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).

⁴⁶ James (note 4); Researcher 2 (note 10); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); UNMISS official 10 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); Civil society representative 5 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); Diplomat 1 (note 9); and Government official 1 (note 9).

⁴⁷ James (note 4); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).



projects potentially provoking resentment if they are not community based or rolled out uniformly across the country. Finally, current local projects are negligible compared to what is needed nationwide.⁴⁸

Level of SSR process embeddedness in broader recovery frameworks

Within the context of the PCTSA, SSR activities have been distributed to UNMISS, the CTSAMVM and the RJMEC. As such, cooperation and coordination between the mechanisms is required. At present, this is mostly limited to information sharing and UNMISS providing logistical support and security provision to the CTSAMVM and RJMEC, particularly following the USA's decision to end its support to them. Both UNMISS and the CTSAMVM have monitoring mandates they could more actively coordinate on, while UNMISS could share more of its expertise on constitution making and transitional justice with the RJMEC.⁴⁹

On paper, UNMISS and the UNCT have largely aligned their strategies with the R-NDS. In practise, coordination on broader SSR activities is mostly piecemeal and personality based. The approach taken has been to build on the comparative advantages of the various organizations involved, but this has led to siloed and incoherent efforts. Although UNMISS and the UNCT coordinate their activities, pull each other's personnel into their activities, and have joint partners, they do not strategize or operate in an integrated manner. As such, they lack a joint process—including conflict analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation—that operates according to a single workplan, theory of change, and single set of donor and procurement regulations. Discussions between UNMISS and the UNCT often revolve around whether the former is sufficiently supporting the latter's capacity, or whether the UNCT is adequately sustaining the mission's gains. Upon transition, the UNCT would benefit from some form of continued political clout, convening power, nationwide deployment and institutional memory—all of which UNMISS currently brings to the table.⁵⁰ Even internally, UNMISS is not as integrated as it should be, with the efforts of the mission's force, UNPOL and civilian sections often falling short of the coordination required. Moreover, lack of awareness around efforts and capacities has led to insufficiently joint strategy and duplication.⁵¹

In contrast to the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law, which is said to be mired in political conflicts, the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) is often seen by international actors as a potential tool for further integrating the efforts of UNMISS and the UNCT. Both UNMISS and the UNCT, together with civil society organizations, act as implementers of this interagency pooled fund for projects aimed at

⁴⁸ Civil society representative 5 (note 9); Civil society representative 6 (note 9); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); UNMISS official 10 (note 9); and Researcher 1 (note 9).

⁴⁹ IGAD (note 3), chapter II; Price (note 29); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 2a (note 1); UNMISS official 10 (note 9); Civil society representative 1 (note 4); and Civil society representative 6 (note 9).

⁵⁰ Researcher 1 (note 9); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 4 (note 36); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 7 (note 7); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); and UNMISS official 9 (note 4).

⁵¹ UNMISS official 4 (note 36); and UNMISS official 5 (note 7).



supporting South Sudanese communities in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.⁵²

Nature and timing of the transition mandate

Since 2018 the SSR efforts of UNMISS, the CTSAMVM and the RJMEC have been based on implementation of the R-ARCSS. It is, however, questionable whether the 2022 roadmap's timeline for implementation is realistic given the many delays already encountered and the formidable challenges South Sudan faces in justice and security provision. If UNMISS' goal were to holistically address them all, it would beg the question of where it should start. Moreover, it is unrealistic to expect that the international community will have the stamina to continue funding and implementing DDR and SSR processes for the coming 20 years or more. UNMISS' current SSR mandate is limited, prompting the mission's leadership—which is aware of the need to enlarge it—to take a limited, incremental approach, slowly building trust between the government and its citizens, as well as between the government and the donor community. While such limited goals may be more realistic, there is a risk that successes turn out to be merely drops in the ocean, with unaddressed challenges ultimately leading to achievements being undone.⁵³

Calls by government officials for UNMISS to draw down, as well as increasing donor fatigue, risk a situation whereby UNMISS' transition is primarily politically—and potentially externally—driven. Some TGONU officials are annoyed by criticism coming from UNMISS and are resistant to further transformation of the security sector, viewing the mission as an infringement on South Sudanese sovereignty. The political process remains highly unstable, while implementation of the PCTSA and SSR processes remain at a very early stage. On top of this, the size and shape of the DDR and right-sizing processes still need to be discussed. As such, UNMISS officials generally argue that even in the most optimistic scenario the earliest possible date for a realistic and sustainable benchmarked drawdown and transition is after 2027—that is, two years to the national elections followed by two to three more years to stabilize the country afterwards and complete a phased drawdown. Any target date earlier than this, even in the most optimistic scenario, would mean ignoring local conditions and risk the rollback of potential SSR gains made, potentially leading to UNMISS having to return at a later stage. Although parts of the SSR and DDR processes could be assisted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), perhaps complemented by a UN Special Political Mission, this would require sufficient political consensus, interest, leadership, trust, and confidence among the parties. In the absence of this, UNMISS remains important as a trust-building mechanism. As such, discussions surrounding the future transition are more political than benchmark based.⁵⁴

⁵² United Nations MPTF Office Partners Gateway, 'South Sudan RSRTF'; UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 4 (note 36); and UNDP representative, Interview, online, 24 Jan. 2023.

⁵³ UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).

⁵⁴ UNMISS official 1 (note 7); UNMISS official 2 (note 4); UNMISS official 3 (note 10); UNMISS official 5 (note 7); UNMISS official 6 (note 4); UNMISS official 8 (note 7); UNMISS official 9 (note 4); Civil society representative 2 (note 7); Civil society representative 3 (note 7); and Civil society representative 4 (note 9).



III. Conclusions

The urgency of thinking about UNMISS' transition is illustrated by the following two quotes given by interviewees for this research project: 'If UNMISS leaves, perhaps Jesus Christ will help'; and 'If we don't prepare for transition now, it will come as a tidal wave soon, and then we are unprepared for a real transition.'⁵⁵

Based on the 11 factors determining mission transition outlined above, the analysis presented in this report does not inspire confidence in a potential UNMISS transition in the near future, particularly as many of the required SSR and DDR activities in South Sudan remain at a very early stage. Four main challenges must be overcome if the SSR process and UNMISS transition are to become sustainable.

First, rather than merely being a technical exercise, SSR is in essence highly political, and therefore requires a political process supporting it. There is currently no national consensus or genuine interest regarding SSR among the South Sudanese signatory parties, and implementation of the 2022 roadmap is behind schedule. The current R-ARCSS process, as in the past, patches militias and tribal armies together while failing to break down existing militia structures and integrate them into truly national security structures. The parties hedge against renewed conflict by ensuring that important units are kept outside the SSR process, or that if required they can untangle and control their own forces. At a minimum, any sustainable transition of UNMISS requires that the parties have faith and sincerely invest in a meaningful SSR process—as such, strengthening the political process should be the first priority.

Second, implementation of the PCTSA and its attendant SSR activities is only sustainable as part of a broader recovery context in which the South Sudanese security sector is significantly reduced in size, and alternative livelihoods and sustainable funding are made available. As such, a DDR process, retirement and pensions should be placed firmly on the agenda, which in turn requires that SSR and CVR be unequivocally embedded in R-NDS implementation. While completion of this process is likely to be a long-term effort, UNMISS' leadership is aware that increased SSR efforts are required for the peace process to succeed. This entails UNMISS stepping up its SSR efforts in the context of PCTSA implementation, ensuring genuine integration has taken place before longer-term activities are transitioned to other actors.

Third, donor engagement is essential to such meaningful SSR, DDR and broader recovery frameworks. With oil revenues having dried up, donors must overcome their reluctance to funding the South Sudanese SSR and DDR processes. Limited progress in the peace process has meant donors are currently reluctant to fund the South Sudanese peace process, with the US going as far as ending its support to RJMEC and CTSAMVM. In the absence of donor support for confidence-building measures, however, the political process will inevitably face further challenges. In the short term, donor funding is required for the RJMEC and CTSAMVM, and PCTSA implementation. Moreover, ensuring the UNMISS transition is sustainable

⁵⁵ Civil society representative 1 (note 4); and UNMISS official 10 (note 9).



in the long run requires putting the necessary funding in place and the envisaged post-transition division of labour securely on track.

Fourth, a genuine, sustainable and successful SSR process must actively embrace the principles of good governance (accountability, subordination to civilian authority, efficiency, professionalism) and gender-responsiveness beyond what is merely written on paper in the R-ARCSS. As such, the process needs to be responsive to communities' security needs, with civil society and parliament empowered to ensure security sector accountability. Only once these processes and institutional frameworks ensuring the principles of good governance and gender-responsiveness are put in place can the transition from UNMISS be securely and sustainably undertaken.

These are massive tasks that cannot be achieved by the South Sudanese parties, RJMEC and CTSAMVM alone. In the short run especially, increased UNMISS support to the PCTSA, SSR and DDR processes is necessary. Only thereafter is a transition likely to be sustainable as, even assuming the most optimistic scenario, transitioning before 2027 would represent a political rather than benchmark-based decision.

In 2001 the UN Secretary-General published the 'No exit without strategy' report.⁵⁶ This is the moment to put the idea into practice, which means that UNMISS must first develop an entry strategy on SSR, while at the same time developing an exit strategy and division of labour for the subsequent transition process. In line with the independent review of UN support to SSR in peace operations, this will require: understanding mission exit as a transition point for, rather than the end state of, SSR work; taking a long-term perspective on support to SSR regardless of the fact the mission itself will not be around to see out support; and the mission and agencies working together on SSR from the outset.⁵⁷ Any transition must be gradual, while follow-up mechanisms (e.g. a UN Special Political Mission, an AU or IGAD mechanism, the UNCT) will continue to require political clout when pushing for R-ARCSS implementation, including the SSR and DDR processes.

IV. Recommendations

The success of an SSR entry strategy that deals with the four challenges set out above will depend not only on UNMISS itself, but the concerted efforts of a variety of actors. The clock is ticking on UNMISS, and as such the mission needs to pursue two parallel tracks.

First, UNMISS could prevent as much violence as possible in the near term by expanding adequately funded and resourced SSR efforts aimed at short-term impact (e.g. supporting police and defence sector reform, and election security).

Second, the mission could design a 'strategic framework for the transition process', thereby putting in place prior to its transition a holistic SSR process for the long run that ensures all conditions and requirements have been

⁵⁶ United Nations, Security Council, 'No exit without strategy: Security Council decision-making and the closure or transition of United Nations peacekeeping operations: Report of the Secretary-General', S/2001/394, 20 Apr. 2001.

⁵⁷ Independent Review Team, 'Towards better security governance: Learning from the road travelled. An independent review of United Nations support to security sector reform in peace operations, 2014–2020', 21 Dec. 2021.



set; partners have been identified and empowered; and funds have been allocated for the post-transition continuation of SSR, DDR, broader rule of law and CVR. As such, UNMISS could give early thought to questions such as: What needs continued attention from partners, why, and who should provide this attention? What will the post-transition division of labour look like, and which tasks should be handed over to whom as part of the broader ‘strategic framework’?

Transition should be expected when it comes and UNMISS and its partners should not be unprepared. Succession has to be planned, with the second track in particular requiring further integration of efforts, as well as intensified collaboration with partners scheduled to take over activities and responsibilities. In the absence of such a ‘strategic framework’, the mission risks being overwhelmed by a tidal wave of necessary actions—including handing over activities and responsibilities, and sharing information with partners—at a time when its personnel have already mentally or physically checked out. Should this happen, a coordinated transition is unlikely.

The actor-specific recommendations below are important elements in ensuring such a two-tracked strategy can succeed when it comes to addressing the four main challenges identified:

The South Sudanese signatory parties

Strengthen political attention, national consensus and interest regarding continuation of a genuine SSR process. Any successful transition of SSR activities requires a national vision. For this purpose, consider:

- establishing a national SSR coordination mechanism (e.g. an SSR commission or coordination forum, and a presidential advisor on SSR, or expanding the role of the presidential advisor on security);
- making the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs the lead actor on the SSR process;
- empowering a neutral, depoliticized champion of SSR in South Sudan (e.g. religious leaders and the South Sudan Council of Churches, or the Governors’ Forum).

Right-size the South Sudanese security sector based on a near-to-long-term threat assessment that analyses both internal and external sources of insecurity and instability. Human resource management of the unified forces—particularly retirement, pensions and a DDR process—should be the starting point for a sustainable SSR process and a professional and affordable security sector. This requires alignment with CVR and implementation of the R-NDS.

- Expand the SSR process to make it more inclusive, holistic and sustainable. For this purpose:
- integrate informal groups into the broader SSR process, either by integrating them into the unified forces or demobilizing them as part of CVR, without granting them legitimacy;



- restore the NSS to its original purpose—an intelligence service—and transfer personnel to other security services, and ensure the primacy of the police;
- give greater attention to justice and penal reform, including strengthening the traditional customary justice system.

Strengthen civilian oversight and good governance of the security sector in order to make SSR efforts more sustainable and less vulnerable to violent disruption. For this purpose:

- empower parliamentary committees to scrutinize security sector budgets, policies and operations;
- open civic space to allow civil society organizations to engage on SSR issues in an inclusive manner and play their role in advising, advocacy and monitoring, both inside and outside the RSDSRB;
- implement Chapter V of the R-ARCSS, including establishment of the CTRH, HCSS and CRA.

UN Security Council

Expand UNMISS' mandate on SSR and right-sizing the South Sudanese security sector, thereby enabling an environment conducive to the protection of civilians in which ex-combatants do not pose a risk to the population. In particular, UNMISS requires that the mandate:

- provides logistical and possibly monitoring and verification support to PCTSA implementation, including SSR as part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (e.g. setting up retirement schemes and a DDR process);
- supports weapon registration and storage to avoid further proliferation, potentially in collaboration with UNMAS;
- supports police and military academies and their curricula in order to establish and strengthen sustainable security sector training and education facilities.

Add a role vis-à-vis strengthening the unified force to UNMISS' mandate. By the end of NUF training phase two, some 83 000 personnel will have graduated. Training in non-military skills and human rights will be required to further their professionalization, and their behaviour will need to be monitored upon deployment.

Facilitate coordination between UNMISS and UNDP by limiting UNMISS' mandate to short-term rule of law capacity building, thereby reducing overlap with UNDP's long-term capacity-building mandate.



UNMISS and the UNCT

Strengthen trilateral cooperation between the AU, IGAD and UN in order to facilitate the transition. Organize discussions at the highest level, including national powerbrokers, on defining needs and coordinating external support to the peace process after transition, including around SSR.

Strengthen the people-centred approach by focusing more on the needs of local communities, thereby ensuring support for the social contract is not focused primarily on the government. For this purpose:

- include local communities in the planning and implementation of activities, which to ensure lasting positive impact should be conducted with, rather than for, communities. Consultations could be set up to determine how communities prefer to manage and regulate intercommunal violence, potentially empowering community members to raise their concerns. The assumption that the government and other signatory parties are legitimate actors throughout South Sudan has proven to be incorrect and, within the context of the protection of civilians, is potentially harmful.
- measure impact based on security perception surveys among communities (i.e. the beneficiaries);
- inform communities on their rights and obligations by developing a communication strategy and strengthening civic education;
- develop a communication strategy on the transition process that builds a DDR–SSR narrative towards peace, thereby avoiding potential panic among parts of the population.

Intensify collaboration between UNMISS and the UNCT, including further integration of their SSR and rule of law activities. Various modalities could be pursued towards this end, including:

- co-location in an integrated office;
- joint strategizing, planning, implementation and evaluation to complement each other's efforts;
- using the same procurement system and financial regulations to simplify collaboration;
- employing a cluster approach to SSR.

Early capacitate organizations to which SSR activities and roles will be handed over, such as:

- AU and IGAD to possibly establish follow-up mechanisms for the training and mentoring of security sector personnel;
- the UNCT to continue nationwide UNMISS efforts beyond Juba;



- civil society organizations, particularly outside Juba, to monitor and advocate for SSR process implementation. UNMISS could start by more actively involving civil society organizations in the mission's current efforts;
- the TNLA—with support provided by UNPOL to the Committee on Internal Security and Public Order—to strengthen civilian oversight and ensure good governance of the security sector after transition.

Put sustainable human rights, good governance and the rule of law in SSR up front by:

- making support to the SSNPS and the judiciary conditional on monitoring mechanisms that ensure accountability and impartiality;
- firming up UNMISS' human rights due diligence policy. Vetting and training of personnel should be complemented by the vetting of command structures to avoid trained security personnel being ordered to violate human rights.

AU, IGAD and countries in the region

Support strengthening the signatory parties' commitment to a genuine SSR process, convincing them of the importance of SSR for sustainable peace after the transition of UNMISS (e.g. inviting them to a high-level meeting, potentially led by a former president from the region, to share SSR experiences).

Take on the role of external champion for continuation of the SSR process by setting up an SSR troika (consisting of, for example, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda or Uganda) that can support South Sudan through sharing experiences around, among other issues, election security architecture, synergy and readiness.

Involve a wider range of South Sudan's political leaders, thereby strengthening the long-term political support base for SSR.

Support security sector accountability by implementing Chapter V of the R-ARCSS, particularly establishment of the HCSS and assistance to the CTRH process.

Donors

Adequately fund the DDR and SSR processes, and increase support to:

- the CTSAMVM and RJMEC, allowing them to implement their tasks and build confidence in an ongoing SSR process. The USA in particular should reconsider its decision to end support to the two mechanisms, while the EU could potentially step in;



- right-sizing the South Sudanese security sector, including retirement and DDR, by establishing an appropriate funding mechanism;
- expanding UNMISS' CVR and civilian policing projects, making them nationwide and increasing their sustainability by focusing more on train-the-trainer skills and women;
- the rule of law, particularly prison and penal reform.

As part of a 'strategic framework for the transition process' to be developed, strengthen South Sudanese institutional capacity for the continued SSR process, including:

- helping establish an SSR coordination mechanism or supporting a neutral depoliticized champion that can strengthen the country's political attention, national consensus and interest, as well assist the DDR commission in convening implementing partners regarding future DDR activities. If CVR projects are regarded as a first step towards DDR and SSR, then consider having the DDR commission monitor these activities and build up its capacities;
- the Ministry for Peacebuilding, as it will have to take over tasks from UNMISS and will be an important partner for UNDP.

Within the context of a 'strategic framework for the transition process', strengthen coordination by:

- using the RSRTF as a pooled fund—in effect, a carrot to improve SSR collaboration between UNMISS, UNDP and other agencies;
- restarting the donor working groups process, particularly between the various SSR donors and civil society;
- increasing programmatic funding to the UNCT in a phased manner, in line with the activities transitioned from UNMISS.



Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRA	Compensation and Reparation Authority
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence
CTRH	Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing
CTSAMVM	Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring & Verification Mechanism
CVR	Community violence reduction
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
HCSS	Hybrid Court for South Sudan
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NSS	National Security Service
NUF	Necessary Unified Forces
PCTSA	Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
RJMEC	Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission
RSDSRB	Revitalized Strategic Defence and Security Review Board
RSRTF	Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SPLM/A-IO	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition
SSNPS	South Sudan National Police Service
SSPDF	South Sudan People's Defence Forces
SSR	Security sector reform
TGONU	Transitional Government of National Unity
TNLA	Transitional National Legislative Assembly
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNPOL	United Nations Police



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NO EXIT, WITHOUT AN ENTRY STRATEGY: TRANSITIONING UNMISS SSR ACTIVITIES

JAÏR VAN DER LIJN

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