

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN STATEMENT IN 2021 INTERSESIONAL MEETING.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen allow me first to express my sincere gratitude for inviting me for this important APMBC intercessional meeting and for permitting me this opportunity to update you on the significant progress that South Sudan has made with regards to its obligation on Article 5 and effort to clear the country of these weapons (devices).

Under the leadership of National Mine Action Authority, South Sudan made significant progress in the last seventeen months, not only in clearing the hazards, but also in developing an accurate picture of the remaining contamination.

In 2020 we worked closely with all operators and the staff of the United Nation Mine Action Services to undertake a review of all hazard reports, which led to the cancelation of 4,906,612 square meters of land which was classed to be contaminated with AP mines.

I am also pleased to report that 18 tasks were completed to date and 255 AP mines were destroyed for a total clearance of 934,954 square meters.

All of these movements have resulted in the remaining contamination now standing at 113 tasks which covers an area of 7,156,621square meters. A total of 5,841,566 square meters were released to communities across South Sudan.

I would also like to emphasize to the audience that all these hazards or tasks mentioned below dated to the war of Independence and that there has been no use of anti-personnel mines in South Sudan in the recent years.

The Remaining Contamination as of 30 May 2021

State	CHA		SHA		Total AP Mines	Total Area(Sqm)
	Number of AP Mines	Area(Sqm)	Number of AP Mines	Area(Sqm)		
Central Equatoria	39	1,396,347	28	233,986	67	1,630,333
Eastern Equatoria	15	745,547	6	41,836	21	787,383
Jonglei	5	214,626	8	3,596,842	13	3,811,468
Northern Bahr El Ghazal			1	113,193	1	113,193
Upper Nile	1	66,246			1	66,246
Warrap			1	40,000	1	40,000
Western Bahr El Ghazal	1	201,738			1	201,738
Western Equatoria	1	95,450	7	410,810	8	506,260
Total	62	2,719,954	51	4,436,667	113	7,156,621

The Table above shows the remaining contamination and as you can clearly see the strong concentration of the remaining minefields is in the greater Equatorial region of our country. 80% of the remaining tasks are in this region and it is considered to be the most surveyed region with very reliable estimates.

It is also worth pointing out that currently the opponents to our peace agreement are continuing to mount attacks in this region which is hindering our effort to clear mines. Recently our operators were instructed to withdraw their teams by the government citing insecurity in the region and to-date the teams have not received approval to redeploy to those respective locations and hence it is impacting negatively on the progress of clearance.

Efforts made to ensure a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined area discovered following completion are as follows:

Concerted coordination for support to establish and enhance the Government of South Sudan's efforts for a sustainable national capacity continue to be implemented by the United Nations Mine Action Service and international non-governmental organizations responsible for mine action in the country.

This support has been expanding over the past couple of years, primarily through on-the-job training and mentorship of individual NMAA personnel, both on operational and technical capacities, including training of two NMAA staff on an international EOD-3 course; additional training for NMAA administration personnel on project management, resource mobilization, and a training of trainers in EORE were conducted. Embedding or seconding NMAA personnel with the INGO's mine action teams, nationalization of leadership positions within those teams, and joint visits to conduct internal and external quality assurance have and are continuing to be implemented by UNMAS and the INGOs. Future support planning includes embedding international experts on capacity building of institutions and mine action operations, respectively, within the NMAA.

Currently, UNMAS is facilitating the training, mobilization, and deployment of a national mine action team to be coordinated, tasked, monitored, and evaluated by the NMAA; it will also establish an operational office within the NMAA staffed by personnel previously trained on operational processes and technical standards.

Concurrently, with and on behalf of the NMAA, UNMAS and the international mine action organizations remain steadfast in their advocacy to donors that South Sudan's need for a national mine action capacity to respond to contamination post-completion and, specifically after July 2026, is vital to current and future endeavors to achieve a mine-free South Sudan. A strong national capacity is equally required and in need of support and should not be forgotten with a narrow focus on a residual mine action capacity.

I will close by outlining the challenges that we face on Article 5 implementation:

- Insecurity remains a challenge to the peace process; completion will not be possible until the guns are silent. This insecurity constrains the ability of demining teams to deploy safely.
- **COVID 19 is also taking its toll.** There is no doubt that the Coronavirus will have a significant effect upon South Sudan, and it is not clear what form the impact will be upon our mine clearance activities. However, we have developed national standard that will enable us to continue our clearance and risk education activities in a safe manner.
- I should also note that we are still to establish a long-term capacity building to address whatever contamination that will arise in the future and would request international support to help us to do so.
- We continue to be hindered by the poor infrastructure and the impact of the annual rains which at times result in heavy flooding further reducing the demining season to eight months.
- The Government has competing demands and priorities to attend to, hence neglecting the NMAA in terms of funding its programmes. Therefore, in order to complete our obligations South Sudan will still continue to depend on international support for which we remain most grateful. The operators in our country will be requesting additional funds to scale up their capacity and the capacity of National Mine Action Authority personnel for more efficient clearance.

Thank you once again for the opportunity given to address the room.

Hon. Jurkuch Barach Jurkuch.

Chairperson,

National Mine Action Authority-Republic of South Sudan