



Integrated Country Strategy

SOUTH SUDAN

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities	1
2. Mission Strategic Framework	3
3. Mission Goals and Objectives	5
4. Management Objectives	16

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The stability of South Sudan is part of the larger U.S. national interest in promoting stability, peace, and prosperity in the Horn of Africa. In South Sudan, the U.S. government has three main priorities: support the emergence of core institutions of democratic governance to counter violent competition for political power; reduce the need for humanitarian assistance; and lay the groundwork for self-reliance that can enable the country's long-term recovery and economic growth. All our diplomatic and development tools will be required to achieve these goals and support the transitional government's full implementation of the provisions in the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

Ongoing tensions, subnational violence, and increasing humanitarian needs continue to feature prominently in South Sudan. Approximately 8.3 million people, or nearly 70 percent of the population, will require humanitarian assistance in 2022. Six million people need food aid to stave off famine or severe food insecurity. Two million people are internally displaced, and another 2.3 million are refugees in surrounding countries.

Ironically, the impetus for independence was Sudan's neglect of its southern citizens. Southerners lacked basic services and access to resources and were denied human rights. Yet, after 11 years of independence from Sudan, South Sudanese citizens find themselves in similar conditions. The government is unable to provide essential services, systemic corruption denies the people access to resources, and human rights protections are ineffective.

South Sudan's education and health-care systems remain weak, and the country suffers from some of the highest mortality and school dropout rates, as well as some of the lowest literacy rates, in the world. These problems are worsened by rampant corruption. Transparency International ranked South Sudan the most corrupt nation in the world in its 2021 Corruptions Perceptions Index report. The Government of South Sudan also lacks institutional protections for human rights. This was evidenced during the civil conflict (2013 to 2018) and the sub-state conflict in Tambura, Western Equatoria State (2021), when widespread gross human rights violations were committed by all sides. Sexual and gender-based violence remains pervasive.

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Available space for civil society, including independent media, continues to shrink. U.S. efforts to protect this space are paramount, especially in the lead up to South Sudan's national elections expected in 2023 under the terms of the R-ARCSS.

South Sudan is at a crossroads, and U.S. assistance must focus resources and assistance efforts where it has the most effect in aiding South Sudan's transition to a stable country with a functioning government. As a longtime partner of South Sudan, the United States will use its influence to help move the South Sudanese government to fully implement the 2018 peace agreement and pave the way for national elections at the end of the transitional period.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: South Sudan addresses drivers of subnational violence, leading to an improved security environment for all communities (Incorporates USAID DO 3 and Special Objective).

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** South Sudanese civil society and community-based institutions strengthen their capacity to prevent or resolve armed conflict at the community level.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** South Sudan establishes mechanisms to investigate alleged perpetrators of violence and ensure accountability.

Mission Goal 2: South Sudan implements the 2018 Peace Agreement, leading to a peaceful transition to a permanent government, and establishes basic institutions and reforms for improved governance. (Incorporates USAID DO 3 and USAID Special Objective)

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** South Sudan conducts free and fair elections in which all citizens may participate in line with the peace agreement.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** South Sudan protects the role of civil society, a free press, and public freedom of expression and assembly and refrains from intimidating and harassing its critics.

Mission Goal 3: South Sudan promotes inclusive economic growth, trade, and investment through sustained public financial management reform, combating corruption across federal and state institutions, and managing national resources transparently, equitably, and in accordance with international standards. (Incorporates USAID Special Objective)

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Improved transparency in economic governance and accountability of corrupt actors will result in an improved investment climate and reduce the siphoning of government revenue.

Mission Goal 4: South Sudan improves its resilience to environmental, conflict-driven, and economic shocks while decreasing its dependence on humanitarian assistance. (Incorporates USAID DO 1 and 2)

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** South Sudan extends equitable access to all communities to government-provided essential services that improve food security through agricultural production, natural resource management, health, education, and nutrition.

Mission Goal 5: Embassy Juba protects and assists U.S. citizens in South Sudan.

- **Mission Objective 5.1:** Embassy Juba expands its capacity to assist U.S. citizens affected by disaster, crises, and emergencies in South Sudan.

Management Objective 1: Support construction of the New Embassy Compound (NEC) to provide functional and residential space for all sections in an efficient, secure facility.

Management Objective 2: Ensure Post's management and programmatic controls are operating effectively.

Management Objective 3: Right-size Embassy management and security staff based on operational needs and physical platform constraints.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | South Sudan addresses drivers of subnational violence, leading to an improved security environment for all communities.

Description | This is a critical mission goal that supports efforts to foster improved security conditions and reduce ongoing violence in South Sudan. While a formal peace agreement is in place, the government is implementing its provisions at a glacial pace, and subnational violence persists. Brutal violence, especially against helpless community members who are disarmed, women and children, and people with disabilities have destroyed communities. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is also a pervasive phenomenon throughout South Sudan, and rape is used as a weapon of war. This insecurity is toxic not only to prospects for economic growth but also reinforces mistrust and social divisions that undermine national reconciliation and healing. Without a reduction in subnational violence, critical humanitarian aid will not reach all who depend on such assistance for survival.

Objective 1.1 | South Sudanese civil society and community-based institutions strengthen their capacity to prevent or resolve armed conflict at the community level.

- **Justification** | A strong civil society and inclusive community-based institutions are necessary for the cessation of conflict at the local level. Together, they can communicate public grievances, engage, and hold government authorities accountable, and ensure a freer flow of information among citizens.
- **Linkages** | This objective contributes to the State Department's Africa Bureau Strategic Objective 1.4, USAID/South Sudan Strategic Framework Objective 3.3., and E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity.
- **Risks** | Severe annual flooding, deteriorating road conditions, and ongoing conflict inhibit donor efforts to support capacity-building programs in rural communities. There is insufficient donor funding to adequately empower local organizations to resolve conflicts, given the deficit in community resiliency from the long

duration of conflict and insecurity. Political elite malign influence derails locally led conflict resolution efforts as insecurity often aids in illicit natural resource extraction by elites, *e.g.*, logging, and contributes to some efforts to fracture political opposition.

Objective 1.2 | South Sudan establishes mechanisms to investigate alleged perpetrators of violence against all victims and ensure accountability.

- **Justification** | Chapter Five of the R-ARCSS guarantees transitional justice mechanisms, including a hybrid court, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and mechanisms for reparations. Without holding accountable people who incite violence, South Sudan will not be able to overcome its general insecurity, exacerbating the fragility of poorly governed and ungoverned spaces. Applying pressure to transitional and elected government officials to adhere to the peace agreement and other binding commitments will improve the chances of holding accountable those most responsible for South Sudan's violence, corruption, and instability.
- **Linkages** | This objective contributes to the State Department's Africa Bureau Strategic Objective 3.1, and 3.4; USAID/South Sudan's Strategic Framework Objective 3.1; the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity.
- **Risks** | Due to the cost and time horizons associated with many transitional justice regimes, it is easy for a corrupt resource-strapped government that lacks institutional capacity to delay transitional justice implementation.

Mission Goal 2 | South Sudan fully implements R-ARCSS, leading to a peaceful transition to a permanent government, and establishes basic institutions and reforms for improved governance.

Description | Mission Juba's most immediate goal is supporting the effective implementation of the R-ARCSS, and a timely, free, and fair, national election expected in 2023 to establish a permanent government. Without effective and expeditious implementation of R-ARCSS and establishment of a permanent government, the existing ceasefire will become more fragile and may collapse. A failed South Sudan will be a setback to U.S. interests in East Africa and will cause Mission Juba to react to emergent crises rather than support South Sudan's longer-term development progress.

Objective 2.1 | South Sudan conducts free and fair elections as mandated by the peace agreement and improves its capacity to provide essential security, health, and education services.

- **Justification** | The conduct of free and fair elections upholds U.S. interests in South Sudan. A free and fair election will provide South Sudan's permanent government popular legitimacy, provides constituents incentives to hold elected officials accountable, and fulfills the desire of the South Sudanese people for a representative government.
- **Linkages** | This objective contributes to AF/AFR Joint Strategy (JRS) Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 3.3, and 3.4 and USAID/South Sudan Strategic Framework Objective 2.3, and E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity.
- **Risks** | There is a risk that government political elites in power will use the national elections required in 2023 by R-ARCSS for personal gain and try to subvert the democratic process, and that inadequate security will contribute to widespread election-related violence. Mission Juba will continue its public and private human rights outreach efforts to constrain nefarious actors and promote free and fair elections.

Objective 2.2 | South Sudan protects the role of civil society, a free press, and public freedom of expression and assembly and refrains from intimidating and harassing its critics.

- **Justification** | A strong civil society capable of effectively advocating for quality government basic services, transparent and accountable governance, and an independent and free media is critical to South Sudan's development. However, the majority of South Sudan's civil society and media organizations are underdeveloped and not able to reach their full potential as advocates for South Sudanese citizens for a variety of factors, including government harassment and intimidation. As a result, citizens do not have a sufficient channel for expressing their views on how to address long-standing grievances that resulted in violent intra-communal and ethnic conflicts.
- **Linkages** | This objective contributes to the State Department's Africa Bureau Strategic Objectives 1.1 and 3.2, the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Objective 3.2, and USAID/South Sudan's Strategic Framework Objective 3.3.
- **Risks** | If the government continues to harass and intimidate journalists and deny free speech, it will stifle opposing opinions, suppress political discourse during expected elections, and undermine government accountability. Continued violent conflict, widespread poverty, and illiteracy will decrease meaningful civic engagement in rural areas.

Mission Goal 3 | South Sudan promotes inclusive economic growth, trade, and investment through sustained public financial management reform, combating corruption across national and subnational institutions, and managing national resources transparently, equitably, and in accordance with international standards.

Description | South Sudan has significant natural resources, notably oil, but its citizens do not benefit from these resources. Political elites plunder the wealth of South Sudan through systemic corruption and outright theft. In response, the United States imposed oil export restrictions on South Sudan and sanctioned several South Sudanese leaders. Embassy Juba will expand its engagement, in coordination with like-minded partners, to encourage South Sudan to implement sustained public financial management, create incentives to increase oil revenue transparency, and break the cycle of systemic corruption, conflict, and poverty. Mission Juba will encourage South Sudanese leaders to implement international economic policy best practices so that oil revenues are reinvested for the public good and used in accordance with budgetary expenditure rules and accepted accounting standards.

Objective 3.1 | Improved economic governance transparency and greater accountability of corrupt actors improve South Sudan's investment climate and promote broad-based economic growth.

- **Justification** | South Sudan needs strong, sustainable public financial management institutions. Current public financial management is extremely weak. This is not a coincidence as it largely serves to enrich those who are in power. Strong public financial management will reduce graft and enable the allocation of much-needed resources for the delivery of critical basic services such as health, education, and infrastructure to the people of South Sudan. Mission Juba will leverage its relationship with the Government of South Sudan and its large development program to advocate for better governance and increased checks and balances. Mission Juba will support local and regional actors to uncover networks that underpin corruption and will invest in

tools such as political economy analyses to understand South Sudan's power and resource dynamics. This will better inform where Mission Juba can effectively intervene [alt: engage] to counter corruption.

- **Linkages** | This goal contributes to the Department's Africa Bureau Strategic Objectives 2.1 and 3.1; USAID/South Sudan's Strategic Framework Objective 3.1; AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Objective 3.1; the U.S. Strategy on Fighting Corruption; and E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity.
- **Risks** | Without public financial management reform, systemic corruption and kleptocratic tendencies will prevail, further undermining the existence of the state. Absent U.S. economic engagement, Chinese firms are likely to dominate the key sectors of South Sudan's economy.

Mission Goal 4 | South Sudan improves its resilience to environmental, societal, and economic shocks while decreasing its dependence on humanitarian aid.

Description | Despite overwhelming humanitarian needs and insecurity in South Sudan, Mission Juba seeks to adopt a different approach compared to past interventions by building community capacities to absorb, adapt, and transform in response to conflict and environment-driven shocks. Large humanitarian outlays worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year are not sustainable, and donor resources are limited. The United States will continue to support South Sudan with an eye towards addressing the underlying sources of these crises, to gradually reduce the need for continued humanitarian assistance and shift the burden of responding to such needs from the international community to South Sudan's government.

Mission Juba will collaborate and coordinate with effective government actors to improve the development of and community access to basic services such as clean water, health care facilities, education, and income-generating opportunities. It will work with implementing partners and the donor community to coordinate assistance efforts effectively, avoid duplication, and maximize development progress in strategic locations throughout South Sudan. Mission engagement will focus on neglected counties to support communities especially vulnerable to humanitarian crisis. The key is strengthening South Sudan's self-reliance to withstand shocks and reduce the country's total reliance on foreign assistance.

Objective 4.1 | Deliver essential and conflict-sensitive emergency services to communities in crisis to save lives and alleviate suffering.

- **Justification** | The protracted humanitarian response is a result of continuous national, tribal, and intercommunal violent conflict, political instability, limited economic opportunities, and the effects of climate change. These issues have changed the physical and demographic landscape of South Sudan and undermined its communities' ability to quickly adapt in times of crisis. To address these challenges and ensure the most vulnerable populations are supported, humanitarian assistance is programmed across multiple sectors in coordination with multilateral systems/donors

and implemented by local and international partners. Without these interventions, millions of South Sudanese are at risk of acute food insecurity or worse, potential famine. Humanitarian assistance is a necessary but insufficient tool to nudge South Sudan towards self-reliance. Crises must be managed to avoid not only further loss of life and suffering, but also a return to civil war.

- **Linkages** | This objective aligns with State Department’s Africa Bureau Strategic Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. The objective links to AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Objectives 4.3 and 4.4 and to USAID/South Sudan’s Strategic Framework Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, and E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity.
- **Risks** | Resource constraints severely limit activities supported with IDA and Title II funding, and the United States needs to make critical decisions that can impact the expanded delivery of lifesaving interventions to the most vulnerable. Continued security risks, threats, and attacks hamper humanitarian assistance delivery to vulnerable populations. The South Sudanese government’s lack of political will, weak security capacity, and failure to respond to conflict, environmental, or other crises, coupled with refugee returns without sustainable solutions, both exacerbate and extend the scale and duration of humanitarian needs, deeply challenging donor resources and capacities.

Objective 4.2 | South Sudan increases community access to essential services that improve food security, health, education, nutrition, agricultural production, and natural resource management.

- **Justification** | The establishment of government-provided basic services is essential for saving lives and improving overall resilience. The needs for essential services are vast given the weak capacity of South Sudan’s government institutions and pervasive corruption. South Sudan’s civil wars destroyed already underdeveloped education and health infrastructure across the country. As a result, South Sudan has some of the world’s worst health and education conditions, including the highest maternal mortality rate and proportion of children out of school. Less than 15 percent of the population

has access to improved sanitation, and only 41 percent to safe water – key factors in maintaining health and ensuring proper nutrition. This objective will support the delivery of these basic and essential services while investing in agricultural development and natural resource management to increase the quantity, diversity, and quality of nutritious foods available to vulnerable households. The objective supports South Sudanese households by developing entrepreneurial skills that can help them become more economically productive.

- **Linkages** | This objective aligns with Africa Bureau’s Strategic Framework Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. and links to the AF/AFR JRS Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. This objective contributes to USAID/South Sudan’s Strategic Framework Objectives 1.1, 1.2, and 2.3. and E.O. 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity.
- **Risks** | Violent conflict is one of the most harmful risks for achieving this objective. Without security, it will be difficult for Mission Juba to implement a coordinated development program that can help reduce the over-reliance on international humanitarian assistance over the long-term. In addition to violent conflict, climate change and natural disasters also destroy agricultural yields and intensify food insecurity.

Mission Goal 5 | Protect and assist U.S. citizens in South Sudan.

Description | Protecting U.S. citizens is our primary goal, and one that affects our subsequent policy goals in numerous ways. In 2013 and 2016, Embassy Juba conducted two significant evacuations of U.S. citizens, to include dangerous personnel recovery missions to rescue isolated American Citizens. The Government of South Sudan's security-centric response to civil unrest, or threat of unrest, has prompted them to conduct arbitrary detentions and arrests, to include of American Citizens. This threatens the safety and security of Americans in the future. The government's willingness to restrict or entirely disable internet or cellular communications in times of crisis impedes our ability to support American citizens who visit, live, and work in South Sudan. Most U.S. citizens in the country are dual citizens, including a significant number of children present without an American citizen parent, and humanitarian aid and religious workers, most of whom live under constant threat of regional violence, even outside times of significant crisis. Embassy Juba has had repeated difficulties securing consular notification and access to U.S. citizens detained by South Sudanese authorities. Dual citizen civil society actors have had to flee the country due to threats of violence against their lives. U.S. businesses and business travelers often determine that they will not invest in South Sudan due to an inability to protect their interests, including that of the safety of their U.S. citizen employees. Assisting U.S. citizens with routine services and increasing crisis response capabilities in the event of a crisis will help protect the continuation of the work of programs and organizations that address the other listed reform and development goals.

Objective 5.1 | Embassy Juba expands its capacity to lend assistance to U.S. citizens who are affected by disaster, crises, and other emergencies in South Sudan.

- **Justification |** As part of our key responsibility to safeguard American citizens, Embassy Juba will protect U.S. citizens in South Sudan by providing quick and efficient services, including the dissemination of timely and accurate information to both inform citizens and keep them safe.

- **Linkages** | This objective supports Presidential Proclamation 9645, Executive Orders 13768 and 13780, and is reflected in Consular Affairs' Functional Bureau Strategy for FY 2018-2022.
- **Risks** | Undocumented children of American citizens pose a significant challenge and potential risk in the case of a large-scale evacuation, as undocumented minor children may need to travel with an alien parent. A large-scale crisis will quickly overwhelm the Embassy's limited consular capacity and office space. Proactive outreach to the American community in South Sudan will be an essential component to mitigating the severity of a potential crisis' early phases.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Construct a NEC to provide functional and residential space for all sections in an efficient, secure facility.

- **Justification** | The separate chancery and residential compounds require numerous Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations waivers to allow for continued operations. A NEC is an essential requirement to successfully pursue U.S. foreign policy and security interests over the long-term.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports JSP Strategic Objective 4.4, Strengthen security and safety of workforce and physical assets.
- **Risks** | Mission Juba risks interruption of operations due to deteriorating infrastructure and physical security weaknesses. Mitigation investments, many of which are capital intensive, may not be justified based on projected NEC schedule, but failure to make these investments if significant NEC delays occur may impair continued operations in existing facilities.

Management Objective 2 | Ensure Post's management and programmatic controls are operating effectively.

- **Justification** | Short tours, limited staffing, and less experienced officers create challenges to establishing and maintaining accurate reporting, effective and efficient operations, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- **Linkages:** The objective supports JSP Strategic Objective 4.3, Enhance workforce performance, leadership, engagement, and accountability to execute the U.S. Embassy's mission efficiently and effectively.
- **Risks** | Failure to ensure adequate management controls risks the Mission's ability to fully execute U.S. foreign policy and development objectives. To mitigate this risk, successive COM's have requested a joint USAID and State Office of Inspector General inspection as soon as possible.

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Management Objective 3 | Right-size Embassy management and security staff based on operational needs and physical platform constraints.

- **Justification |** As Mission Juba maintains operations at the legacy Embassy and Residential Compounds, it must begin the transition to the NEC. Security, ICASS, and USAID ASP services must adjust accordingly to optimize support for mission goals.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports JSP Strategic Objective 4.3, Enhance workforce performance, leadership, engagement, and accountability to execute the U.S. Embassy's mission efficiently and effectively.
- **Risks |** Failure to right-size management and security staff will further limit Mission Juba's ability to fulfill its programmatic and operational requirements, yet optimal staffing will likely be constrained by inadequate physical facilities. The Mission can mitigate the risk associated with not achieving the objective by rationing services to only priority programs.