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**Security Council**

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**Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in South Rengaan****I. Introduction**

1. This report is submitted pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2019 (S/PRST/2019/1945) in which the Council requested me to submit a report on the current situation in South Rengaan.
2. For many years, the Secretary-General, international human rights NGOs and the United Nations Human Rights Council have repeatedly raised concerns about grave and systematic violation of human rights in South Rengaan.
3. More recently, concerns have been raised of a security theme as the country's continuing ethnic conflict; refugee flows into neighbouring countries; illicit trafficking in drugs and people; and maritime piracy problems have seriously endangered regional peace. Recent political unrest in the country has further destabilized the region, intensifying calls to view the situation in South Rengaan not only as a humanitarian challenge, but as an issue of international peace and security.

**II. Background****A. Demography, geography and the economy**

4. South Rengaan is located in Southeast Asia. Its nearest neighbour is North Rengaan. It is a Member State of the United Nations (UN) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) amongst other inter-governmental organisations.
5. South Rengaan has a population of around 32 million people. The military government is dominated by the Rengaa ethnic group, which makes up around 55% of the population. Other major ethnic groups are the Bhahn (who are barred from citizenship), Maren and ethnic Chinese. The Bhahn and Maren ethnic groups mainly reside along the country's border with North Rengaan and in coastal regions to the south. The majority of the country is Buddhist, with a few

Note that the topic is "The Situation in South Rengaan". Discussions may cover the border dispute with North Rengaan and the UNSTAMIR mandate and deployment. However, the focus of debate must be on the impact of instability in South Rengaan on international peace and security.

Any facts in this report should be taken as the "truth" according to the Secretary-General. Facts qualified with words such as "allegedly" or "reportedly" are more open to challenge. However, the Secretary-General has high credibility and he is unlikely to include facts that are wholly inaccurate.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

## South Rengaan & UNSTAMIR

Department of Field Support  
Geospatial Information Service

Christian and Muslim communities predominantly concentrated in urban areas. Its capital, Rengaan City, is located in the centre of the country. The Rengaan peninsula has a tropical, monsoon climate with hot, humid and wet summers and milder, drier winters.

6. South Rengaan is one of the poorest countries in the world. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranks it number 144 on the human development index. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 17% of its population is undernourished and 35% of its children are malnourished.

7. Australia, Canada, the United States and the European Union have employed trade sanctions to urge political change. However, analysts suggest that these have had marginal impact on the economy as Asian markets for its copper, tin, tungsten, iron and natural gas remain open. The country is also a major exporter of heroin and methamphetamines.

## **B. Historical background**

8. The Rengaan peninsula was part of the Belgian empire. Until 1791, coastal regions were run by the Belgian West India company, with the interior ruled by client chieftains. The Belgians favoured the Bhahn and Maren ethnic groups, that had traditionally lived in the north of the peninsula. The establishment of Belgian trading settlements on the coast led to concentrations of Bhahn and Maren communities also developing in the south. The dissolution of the Belgian West India company saw direct rule established from Brussels in 1815.

9. In 1942, the peninsula was invaded by Japan. Rengaan nationalism grew under Japanese rule, particularly amongst the Rengaa ethnic group because former civil servants, who were mainly from the Bhahn and Maren ethnic groups, were interred by the Japanese. Rengaa communists declared independence following Japanese surrender in 1945. After five years of conflict between Belgian forces and various rebel groups, Rengaan became an independent state in 1950.

10. More than a decade of political instability and internal conflict followed independence, as successive democratic governments struggled to control historic rivalries between the multiple ethnic groups that inhabit the peninsula.

11. In 1965, the Rengaa-dominated army declared a national emergency, seized power and began a ruthless military campaign against ethnic minority groups seeking self-determination. Many Bhahn fled to traditional homelands to the north of the country. The following year, the north declared itself an independent country.

12. After five years of fighting between the north and the south, the United Nations mediated a peace settlement between the two sides known as the Richardson Plan. The country was partitioned into what is now modern-day North Rengaan and South Rengaan. Neither State has relinquished its claim to each others territory and desire to govern a united Rengaan.

13. In 2008, a border skirmish led to conflict reopening between North Rengaan and South Rengaan.

14. A ceasefire was agreed in November 2017 and a peace agreement, known as the Treaty of Lisbon (2018), was signed in November 2018. Both sides agreed to return to the borders established by the Richardson Plan and for a demilitarized zone to be established between the two countries monitored by the United Nations.

### C. UNSTAMIR

15. The Security Council established the United Nations Mission for Stabilisation in North and South Rengaan (UNSTAMIR) in resolution S/RES/2500 (see Annex I). UNSTAMIR's mandate is restricted to monitoring the demilitarized zone in the north of the country and observing compliance with the Treaty of Lisbon (2018).

16. Both North Rengaan and South Rengaan agreed to the establishment and operation of the peacekeeping mission under the Treaty of Lisbon (2018) and in the UNSTAMIR Status of Mission Agreement of 31 July 2019. Resolution S/RES/2500 does not give UNSTAMIR any authority to operate outside the demilitarized zone. The UN mission has no mandate to become involved in other security or non-security problems in the country.

17. Under resolution S/RES/2500, UNSTAMIR personnel are only authorised to use force under certain circumstances. Military force may be used to protect UN facilities and personnel from attack. The use of force is also authorized to protect civilian populations living in the demilitarized zone and under imminent threat of physical violence.

18. UNSTAMIR consists of five lightly-armed infantry battalions supported by contingents of headquarters staff, engineers, military police, medical services and medium lift helicopters. As of November 2019, the mission consisted of troops from Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, Poland and Sweden.

## III. Political Situation

### A. Government structure

19. South Rengaan's government remains under army control. The country is a one-party state ruled by a committee of senior army commanders known as the Rengaan People's Army Council (RPAC). The RPAC's *Plan for National Peace and Prosperity*, which acts as the country's constitution, states that the military is holding power in "custodianship" for the South Rengaan people until there is an end to the national emergency declared by the army in 1965. After fifty-three years of army rule, there seems little likelihood of the state of emergency coming to an end and the country returning to civilian rule.

20. The country's president is selected from the ranks of the Army Council. The President has considerable executive power, including the right to enact legislation, convene and dissolve parliament, amend the *Plan for National Peace and Prosperity* constitutional document and act as commander-in-chief of the army. The President appoints the members of a national parliament every six years, which may amend drafts of legislation proposed by the RPAC, but cannot propose new law itself. Only army officers are allowed to become Members of Parliament, serve as government officials or sit on the RPAC.

21. Public officials are believed to engage in corruption on a large scale. The anti-corruption NGO, World Clarity Forum, identifies South Rengaan as one of the world's most corrupt countries. There are no financial disclosure laws for members of the government and anti-corruption laws are rarely enforced. Most government information, even routine statistics or the identities of senior officials, is classified and not subject to public access. The country has yet to sign or ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) or the UN Convention Against Corruption (2003).

**B. Political unrest**

22. In February 2019, anti-government demonstrations broke out in Rengaan City. The protests were initially small scale and had mainly economic grievances following a doubling of fuel prices. However, a confrontation between security forces and a small group of Buddhist monks on 23 March triggered the involvement of the country's large and respected monastic community. Thousands of monks participated in protest marches in South Rengaan's largest cities, joined by anti-government and pro-democracy activists. One estimate suggests that a pro-democracy demonstration on 26 March attracted 120,000 people. The protestors adopted a political agenda, calling for the release of political prisoners and talks regarding a return to civilian rule.

23. Political unrest was accompanied by an escalation in ethnic violence by anti-government forces, in particular the Bhahn Freedom Front (BSF) and the Maren Alliance Army (MRG). A number of army outposts and convoys have been attacked in communities along the southern coastline. The Military Governor of the 3rd (Southeastern) District was assassinated on 3 April in an ambush on his convoy by the MRG. On 12 April, 64 people were reportedly killed in a bomb attack on an army recreation centre and cinema. The attack was blamed on a faction loyal to the BSF. Twenty-two government soldiers and fifteen civilians were reportedly killed in a BSF raid on a natural gas processing plant on 4 May.

24. As political unrest spreads, the government has reacted severely, reportedly using excessive force to suppress demonstrations and arbitrarily detaining thousands of protestors. Meetings of more than five people have been banned and a national curfew introduced. Reports suggest that the prison population has more than doubled, with many sentenced to lengthy prison terms following closed judicial proceedings. Opposition groups allege that many have been detained without fair trial.

25. On 6 May, the army opened fire on a demonstration march in Rengaan City. While the government claims ten people were killed, other sources suggest there were more than 300 fatalities. The human rights NGO, the International Freedom Council, estimates that last year more than 1,100 people died in political violence in South Rengaan.

**C. Government reforms**

26. In response to rising domestic and international pressure, the South Rengaan government announced in June that it would convene a national convention, consisting of both army officers and civilians, to draft a new constitution. On 20 July 2019, after only three weeks of discussions, the new constitution was announced. It proposed opening half of parliamentary seats to non-military personnel elected from parties on an approved list. Places on the RPAC and the Presidency would also be opened to civilians, but the draft constitution stipulates that candidates for the roles must have "extensive experience safeguarding national security": a requirement that some observers have suggested is likely to retain military hold on the senior offices of government. Those with criminal records or who have been out of the country for longer than five years are also prohibited from running for any government position. This requirement bars most leading opposition spokespeople from entering parliament, because most have spent some time in military custody on political charges, as well as barring campaigners who have spent long periods in enforced exile abroad.

27. The new constitution also protects a number of fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, association and assembly. However, these

freedoms are only provided for Rengaa citizens and the Bhahn ethnic group remains barred from citizenship. Legal exercise of these rights must also be “compatible with community peace, stability, morality and the public dignity of the country’s leaders”. Analysts believe that the military government intends these restrictions to hinder most political discussion.

28. At the same time, the government announced the release of 195 political prisoners, who were granted conditional pardons by the RPAC. The names of over 1,000 political activists were also removed from a list of people banned from international travel.

29. The South Rengaan government has hailed the reforms as a significant compromise towards meeting the demands of opposition activists. However, other observers suggest that the draft constitution does little to challenge the military’s hold on government.

30. A national referendum was held on 1 August 2019 to formally adopt the new constitution. The referendum took place against a background of continuing political and ethnic violence. Several activist groups boycotted the referendum, claiming that the new constitution contained little practical change. The South Rengaan government rejected a UN proposal to invite international observers to monitor the referendum process, claiming that organising elections and referendums is a matter of national sovereignty. There have been reports of irregularities in the referendum process, with a number of anti-constitution radio broadcasts banned by the government for “immoral content” and suspected intimidation of voters at polling stations.

31. The new constitution was adopted at the end of April, having secured 98% of votes in favour. As of 20 November 2019, the government has yet to call elections for the new parliament established by the constitution. It claims that it would be too dangerous to hold a general election while political unrest continues. A report by the Freedom Council accuses the RPAC of deliberately delaying elections until prominent activist groups have been broken up by the security forces and opposition leaders have been detained.

## **IV. Security situation**

### **A. Ethnic conflict**

32. Since independence in 1950, South Rengaan has struggled to maintain national unity due to tensions between the majority Rengaa and the country’s ethnic minorities, which constitute about 45% of the total population.

33. The Rengaa-dominated military government has pursued discriminatory policies against the Bhahn and Maren ethnic groups since gaining power in 1965. There are reports of the army subjecting members of ethnic minorities to killings, arbitrary detention, beatings, torture, forced labour, forced relocations and sexual violence.

34. The Bhahn are barred from holding citizenship and a series of purges have removed most ethnic minorities from senior and middle-ranking positions in the army and the government. Ethnic minorities make up the majority of an estimated 400,000 internally displaced people in South Rengaan and over 175,000 refugees who have escaped to North Rengaan or by sea to Indonesia and Thailand.



**B. Opposition forces and conflict-related human rights abuse**

35. Ethnic minorities in the southern coastal areas have been fighting an armed campaign for self-determination since independence. Both the Bhahn and the Maren ethnic groups aim to achieve statehood for areas they identify as their homelands in the south of the peninsula.

36. There are around twenty armed rebel factions operating in the south. Since 2010, the government has sought to end conflict with ethnic rebel groups in order to redirect military resources to the war with North Rengaan. It has negotiated ceasefires with a number of the smaller armed groups. In many cases, these smaller groups have discontinued armed attacks against the government in return for tolerance of their involvement in illicit drug trafficking, people trafficking and piracy. Nevertheless, occasional skirmishes are still fought between the army and those groups that have agreed to ceasefires.

37. The largest rebel groups are the Bhahn Salvation Front (BSF), with an armed strength of around 5,000, and the Maren Resistance Guard (MRG), numbering around 4,000 combatants. Neither group has agreed to a ceasefire with the government. The BSF and MRG are organised into semi-autonomous regional commands, each containing a number of small groups of irregular fighters mainly armed with small arms and light weapons. They move mainly by river using motorised skiffs and dhows, which are also used along the coast for piracy and for trafficking people and illicit drugs. The rebels tend to live alongside the civilian population in remote rural villages.

38. The rebels employ mainly guerilla tactics, launching hit and run raids on army outposts and police stations or ambushing military convoys and river patrols. They have also made use of improvised explosive devices and mines to disrupt the army's freedom of movement. A number of high profile government officials and army officers have been assassinated in bombings and raids on government compounds. Rebel groups have also launched a number of bomb attacks against government offices, natural gas production facilities, the railway system and police stations. According to government reports, 54 people, including 19 children, were killed in a bomb attack on an army coastguard station on 28 November 2019.

39. Many members of the army and security forces have allegedly been abducted and/or maltreated while detained by rebel fighters. The government claims that more than 600 government officials, soldiers and policemen have been abducted by the BSF or the MRG since the beginning of the year. Those held by the rebels are allegedly often subject to torture, mutilation, mock trials and summary execution. There are also reports of captured members of the security forces being denied medical treatment.

40. The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict reported in S/2019/465 that the BSF and MRG recruit children for military service, to act as soldiers, messengers, informers and sex workers. My Special Representative has documented 684 cases of the recruitment and use of children by rebel groups. She has also verified 34 cases of boys being detained by the government for alleged membership of terrorist groups. The BSF and MRG deny any involvement in the recruitment of child soldiers, and the Government of South Rengaan denies that it has detained minors.

41. Although officially working in an alliance against the government, units of the BSF and MRG regularly clash violently. Local disputes tend to develop over the allegiances of individual villages, or disruption of rival trafficking and

piracy activities.

42. Fighters are known to punish communities that support either the opposing rebel groups or government forces by raiding livestock; beating or murdering local leaders; or subjecting female villagers to sexual violence. One report suggests that the BSF burned a village in April 2019 for providing food to a unit of the MRG.

43. The government estimates that over 3,200 people have died so far this year in violence connected to the BSF and MRG.

### **C. Illicit drug and people trafficking**

44. Conflict and instability in South Rengaan is fuelled by transnational organised crime, in particular the production and trafficking of illicit drugs and people trafficking. A recent report by Protection International, the international human rights NGO, found that “organised criminal activities severely undermine hopes of achieving peace and stability in the country, and has caused severe suffering to the civilian population through the systematic abuse of human rights”.

45. South Rengaan is currently the world’s third-largest producer of opium and a dominant producer of methamphetamines. The country earns between \$1 billion and \$2 billion each year from exports of illegal drugs, amounting to around 2% of GDP. Most of the heroin and methamphetamines produced in South Rengaan are smuggled into other Asian countries.

46. The BSF and MRG are heavily engaged in the illicit drugs trade, using their profits to fund their war against the South Rengaan government. The BSF’s annual sales of heroin and methamphetamine pills are thought to be around \$200 million, while the MRG’s earnings from the drugs trade are estimated at \$500 million per year.

47. Several human rights abuses have been reported in connection with the BSF and MRG’s drug operations. NGOs report that whole villages have been cleared and burned to make way for poppy cultivation; the intimidation and murder of village leaders who refuse to participate in drug production; and the use of forced labour in processing facilities for heroin and methamphetamines.

48. A recent report by the International Freedom Council found that the illicit trade in drugs was the most significant factor fuelling continued ethnic violence in South Rengaan. It suggested that BSF and MRG commanders were more concerned with protecting their considerable profits from drug smuggling and fighting rival groups than succeeding in their armed struggle for the Bhahn and Maren homelands.

49. People trafficking is also a lucrative activity pursued by the BSF and MRG. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) estimates that up to 50,000 migrant workers are trafficked into North Rengaan, Thailand and Indonesia every year from South Rengaan. Most then attempt to travel by sea to Australia. The journey across the Indian Ocean can be dangerous in small smuggling boats and hundreds of migrants are thought to have drowned in the attempt. Once they reach North Rengaan, Thailand and Indonesia, many are exploited in low paid jobs or forced to become sex workers.

50. Government officials are known to take a considerable share of earnings from the illicit trade in drugs and people. The army allegedly raises higher taxes from drug traffickers, charges for security protection, demands fees for escorting convoys and takes bribes for ignoring drugs operations. A crackdown



on corruption and military participation in the illicit drugs trade in 2017 led to the arrest and execution of several army officers, including the Southwest Military District's Chief of Intelligence. Senior members of the government are not thought to be personally involved in the drugs trade. However, a range of activities used to launder drug profits, including casinos, precious stone trading, production of counterfeit electronics and banking, are tolerated and encouraged by the government.

#### **D. Maritime piracy**

51. The waters around the Rengaan peninsula are amongst the most prone to maritime piracy in the world, with 74 incidents recorded in the area by the World Maritime Committee in 2018. Their report for the final quarter of 2019 found “pirates based in North Rengaan and South Rengaan continue to provide a major impediment to free and safe transit in a significant international shipping corridor. The actions of Rengaan pirates have had a significant negative affect on world trade”. A number of rebel groups based along the south coast use piracy as means of funding their military activities.

52. Skiffs fitted with powerful motors are used to chase and board shipping travelling close to the South Rengaan coastline. The MRG have also been known to use dhows as “mother ships” to extend the range of their piracy activities to hundreds of miles. The Peruvian merchant ship *MV Ayacucho* and her 23 crew remain in MRG custody after being boarded by pirates on 14 November 2019. Negotiations continue regarding her release.

53. A consortium of national coastguards and navies in the region known as the Southeast Asian Ocean Patrol (SAOP) exists to monitor pirate movements, patrol waters around the Indian Ocean and coordinate action. However, the South Rengaan navy and coastguard have refused to join the scheme. Their counter-piracy operations seem to be minimal. There are reports that the commander of the South Rengaan Navy was recently detained on charges of corruption in relation to anti-piracy operations.

#### **E. Government forces and conflict-related human rights abuse**

54. Government forces reportedly engage in widespread and systematic abuse of the civilian population in ethnic minority regions in the south coastal regions. Some observers suggest that the army has used force disproportionately and indiscriminately in its war against rebel groups. Artillery and air power are regularly used against areas thought to hold rebel fighters. It is difficult to independently verify the extent of such tactics or the number of non-combatant casualties. BSF sources suggest that a village of 120 people was destroyed by an artillery bombardment in June 2019 after a military convoy was ambushed nearby.

55. The forced eviction of rural, ethnic minority communities is also a feature of government tactics. Villages have also been burned and inhabitants forcefully relocated to “Stability Towns”: centralised urban communities under the control of an army garrison. Large areas of land have also reportedly been confiscated to make way for military outposts.

56. The army regularly uses land mines to protect military bases and critical infrastructure such as natural gas production facilities, dams and bridges in the south of the country. Many minefields are unmarked. The NGO-produced Annual Land Mine Assessment identified 293 casualties caused by land mines in South Rengaan in 2019 (up to 20 November).

57. Some observers suggest that sexual violence is systematically used by the army as a means of threatening and controlling rural ethnic minority communities. There are reports of Bhahn and Maren women being subjected to gang rapes. These claims have been strongly denied by the South Rengaan government.

58. BSF and MRG sources suggest that ethnic minority non-combatants have been subject to beatings; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture; extra-judicial killings and disappearances. Reports suggest captured guerilla fighters are subject to humiliating public displays, indefinite detention or summary execution. The BSF claims that 62 fighters captured by the army were found dead in July 2019 with their hands tied behind their backs and evidence of torture on their bodies.

59. The government claims that reports of human rights violations are the product of foreign propaganda encouraged by the rebels. Pointing to the ruthlessness of the BSF and MRG campaign and rebel involvement in organised crime, the army suggests that its tactics are necessary to minimise loss of life.

## **F. Refugees**

60. According to the UNHCR, there are around 400,000 internally displaced persons in South Rengaan. It is difficult to access the numbers and needs of the refugee population due to a lack of access to affected areas. Most refugees are members of the Bhahn and Maren ethnic minorities. Many have been forcefully evicted from their homes under the government's Stability Towns programme or have lost their homes in fighting.

61. Many internally displaced families are unable to find suitable shelter, clean water, sanitation and health and education services. A further 175,000 refugees have fled South Rengaan to camps in North Rengaan, Indonesia and Thailand. Tens of thousands of refugees from South Rengaan have also settled in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Singapore.

62. There have been outbreaks of violence between Bhahn and Maren refugees living in camps in North Rengaan. The North Rengaan border guard has had to intervene on a number of occasions to restore order.

## **V. Human rights situation**

### **A. Overview**

63. Numerous reports have detailed extensive abuse of human rights perpetrated by the South Rengaan government and military, including extra-judicial killings, torture, rape, arbitrary arrests, use of child soldiers, forced labour and forced evictions. Tight restrictions also exist on freedom of expression, assembly and the press. On 15 September 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Council strongly condemned "the systematic violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of South Rengaan". The Freedom Council rates South Rengaan as one of the least free countries in the world, finding: "nearly all basic human freedoms are violated with impunity by the military junta".

### **B. Extra judicial killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and maltreatment in detention**

64. There have been some reports of extra-judicial killings by the security forces, including lethal police beatings for relatively minor crimes. A number of human activists have been reportedly subject to beatings by men dressed in

civilian clothes thought to be members of the security forces. There have been many reports of summary executions carried out on irregular fighters taken prisoner, including members of the BSF and MRG. Government opponents claim that 23 protestors were shot while in army detention after a pro-democracy march on 6 May 2019. Reports suggest that a number of leading pro-democracy campaigners have disappeared, including a prominent lawyer who represented many activists brought to trial for their suspected involvement in anti-government protests.

65. It is not known how many political prisoners are currently in government custody. Human rights NGOs estimate that between 1,800 and 2,400 people are currently in detention for political crimes, including those arrested for participation in the recent pro-democracy demonstrations. Amongst those detained are academics, community leaders, journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders and the family members of suspected activists. Many have been given lengthy prison sentences in closed judicial proceedings. In cases involving state security, defendants do not have the right to a fair trial, to trial by jury or to consult a lawyer. The right to appeal court decisions is rarely granted. There are reports of activists being arbitrarily detained without trial and sentences being arbitrarily extended beyond those given by the courts. The law permits the army to detain indefinitely without trial any person who has committed an offence against the security of the state.

66. There are many reports of abuse and torture while in detention. Activists have allegedly been subject to severe beatings; sexual violence; and deprivation of food, water and sleep. Prison food, clothing, bedding and medical supplies are scarce and of poor quality. Former detainees have described cells infested with rodents and mould, and a high prevalence of disease including tuberculosis, malaria and cholera. HIV/AIDS infection rates are high in prisons as a result of sexual abuse by inmates and prison staff. Allegations of maltreatment are rarely investigated. The International Committee of the Red Cross' inspection access to detention facilities was withdrawn in 2017.

### **C. Restrictions on freedom of expression, of assembly and of the press**

67. Reports suggest that many people are frightened of speaking openly about politically sensitive subjects due to monitoring and harassment by the police. The army has arrested and detained a number of people for expressing political opinions critical of the government on charges of endangering state security. The *Protection of the State Law No. 3* (1965) prohibits speeches that might cause "excessive fear or disturbance to the mind". The government has employed the act on several occasions to ban anti-government rallies. The government also has the power to prohibit assemblies of more than five people if there is a risk of serious public disorder. Reports suggest that a network of police informers is used to gather information about potential troublemakers.

68. There have been reports of people being intimidated into attending pro-government rallies. Some business owners claim they have been fined for not compelling their workforce to participate in such political meetings.

69. The news media are heavily restricted and journalists report intimidation and harassment by the security forces. Although the wealthy can access foreign broadcasts through satellite receivers, most people only have access to government controlled television channels. There are a number of newspapers, magazines and radio stations in private ownership, but they require government licences to operate and all stories must be submitted for government approval before

release. Journalists are unable to write stories overly critical of the government or the army. Two major newspapers and a radio station had their licenses revoked in May 2019 for their coverage of pro-democracy demonstrations in Rengaan City. The international press freedom NGO, the Free News Council, ranks South Rengaan 158th out of 159 countries reviewed for freedom of the press. The Free News Council believes that there are 23 journalists currently in government detention.

70. News outlets are prohibited from reporting on military manoeuvres. On the whole, reporters do not venture near conflict affected areas in the south for safety reasons. Most western news corporations are reporting events in South Rengaan from neighbouring countries. International reporters are required to travel with government observers, who control their movements and access to government opponents.

#### **D. Government investigation of abuse**

71. The government has been accused of responding to reports of human rights violations with disregard or indifference. However, the RPAC claims that accusations of human rights abuse are investigated thoroughly. In November 2019, it established the South Rengaan Human Rights Committee to allow citizens to file reports of alleged violations. The committee is currently investigating 209 cases but, to date, there have been no charges brought against military or government personnel for human rights abuse.

### **VI. Access by UN agencies and international NGOs**

#### **A. UN operations in South Rengaan**

72. The UNHCR is the UN's lead agency in South Rengaan, coordinating all operations by UN bodies in the country outside of UNSTAMIR's area of operations.

73. The UN provides some humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and other vulnerable communities. However, the government restricts international access to areas nominally under rebel control. While around 23,000 people are supported by the UNHCR in government-dominated areas, the army has only granted the movement of sufficient UN personnel and supplies to support around 10,000 people in BSF and MRG-controlled areas. This has led to accusations that the government is using aid as a military tool. The army claims it cannot ensure the security of increased aid shipments to rebel-held territory.

74. The government has imposed considerable bureaucratic obstacles to the efficient operation of UN agencies in South Rengaan, including lengthy customs delays for supplies and equipment. UN personnel have also experienced prolonged waits for visas to enter the country. UN staff are required to be accompanied by government officials as they travel around the country and the government must approve all hiring of local staff.

#### **B. Prohibition on international NGOs**

75. Foreign NGOs are banned in South Rengaan and are unable to provide direct protection or assistance to those in humanitarian need. Some international NGOs provide funding, advice and support to domestic organisations, but their operations are severely limited, particularly as there are long delays in processing visas for foreign aid workers to enter the country. The humanitarian

NGO, Aidfast, has stated that: “The prohibition on the involvement of foreign NGOs in South Rengaan has drastically retarded the country’s development. Opening the borders to humanitarian and development specialists from abroad would alleviate widespread poverty and human suffering, and allow major steps to be taken in encouraging economic development”.

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## Annex I

### **Resolution 2500 (2018)**

#### **Adopted by the Security Council**

*The Security Council,*

*Reaffirming* its strong commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of both North Rengaan and South Rengaan,

*Noting with deep concern* the loss of life, including civilians, during the years of conflict between North Rengaan and South Rengaan,

*Further reaffirming* its commitment to the basic principles of peacekeeping including the consent of all parties, impartiality, neutrality and the non-use of force,

*Confirming* its belief that the responsibility for finding a solution to the conflict in the Rengaan peninsula lies with the Rengaan people and reaffirming the role of the United Nations in assisting parties to the conflict to reach and maintain a sustainable peace,

*Welcoming* the commitments set out in the Treaty of Lisbon (2017) to establish a durable and sustainable peace in the Rengaan peninsula and the recognition by all parties to the conflict of the border established by the Richardson Plan,

*Determining* that the situation in the Rengaan peninsula constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

1. *Acting* under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations;
2. *Commends* the efforts of all parties to the conflict between North Rengaan and South Rengaan to find political solutions to their differences and identify means of achieving a durable and sustainable peace;
3. *Endorses* the terms of the peace agreement between North Rengaan and South Rengaan set out in the Treaty of Lisbon (2018);
4. *Decides* to establish the United Nations Mission for Stabilisation in North and South Rengaan (UNSTAMIR) with authority to operate only within the demilitarized zone defined by the Treaty of Lisbon (2018) and with a mandate to:
  - (a) Protect United Nations personnel, installations and equipment and ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel;

- (b) Protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, as within its capacities, areas of deployment and without prejudice to the authorities of North Rengaan or South Rengaan;
  - (c) Assist in ensuring humanitarian access to civilian populations in its area of deployment;
  - (d) Assist the armed forces of North Rengaan and South Rengaan in maintaining a zone established by the Treaty of Lisbon (2018) free from any armed personnel or weapons other than those deployed by UNSTAMIR;
  - (e) Observe and monitor implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon (2018), take feasible measures other than the use of force to encourage its implementation, and report to the Council any abuses or violations of the peace agreement;
5. *Invites* the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for Rengaan and Head of Mission of UNSTAMIR, who shall assume overall authority on the ground for the coordination of all the activities of the United Nations, and its agencies, funds and programmes, in North Rengaan and South Rengaan, coordinating efforts of the international community in order to support the implementation of UNSTAMIR's mandate;
6. *Calls upon* Member States to contribute personnel, equipment and other resources to SHFSR and invites the Secretary-General to establish a maximum number of military officers and supporting civilian personnel appropriate to its mandate;
7. *Authorizes* UNSTAMIR to use all necessary means, within the limits of its capacities and areas of deployment, to carry out its mandate;
8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure full compliance of UNSTAMIR with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuses and to keep the Council fully informed if such cases of misconduct occur;
9. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.
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# BLOC POSITIONS ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTH RENGaan

## The USA

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Successive administrations in the **United States** have been strongly critical of **South Rengaan** and sought to pressure change through the use of economic sanctions. The aims of American policy are to achieve a democratic transition, achieve the release of political prisoners and end grave human rights abuse. The current administration has been attempting to convince other countries to adopt similar policies. The Rengaan migrant community is politically important in the **United States** and has makes significant financial contributions to political campaigns.

The **United States** maintains the most stringent sanctions against **South Rengaan**, banning nearly all economic relations with the country. All imports are prohibited from **South Rengaan** into the **United States**, financial assets of **South Rengaan** nationals have been frozen and a travel ban exists on all members of the government.

The **United States** sponsored a Security

Council resolution in November 2019 on the situation in **South Rengaan**, which was vetoed by **China** and the **Russian Federation**. The resolution called for the release of political prisoners and a “democratic transition” in the country. An attempt led by the **United States** to impose United Nations (UN) sanctions also failed.

The **United States** has been highly critical of the military government’s response to the recent political unrest. The Secretary of State dismissed the new constitution as “fundamentally undemocratic, deeply flawed and unlikely to bring genuine change to the people of **South Rengaan**”.

The **United States** government provided US\$32 million in assistance to **South Rengaan** in 2019, to offer humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people and refugees; to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and to support primary education programmes.

## The European Union

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The European Union’s (EU’s) aims in **South Rengaan** are similar to the **United States**’. They seek the establishment of democratic institutions, an end to military rule and restored respect for human rights.

European sanctions are more limited than those imposed by the **United States**. The EU has imposed a travel ban on Rengaan officials, an arms embargo and a freeze on financial assets held in EU countries. EU countries have also agreed to suspend high level visits. Sanctions fall short of terminating all trade and investment in **South Rengaan**.

The EU relaxed some sanctions in 2019

following the implementation of the new constitution: removing 13 officials from the list of persons subject to travel bans, including the **South Rengaan** foreign minister. Critics of EU policy suggest that the constitution has achieved little in reality, identifying the prolonged delay in holding new elections as evidence of a lack of change. EU officials claim the policy shows flexibility and the willingness to respond to positive changes in government policy. President Trump heavily criticised the relaxing of EU sanctions in a widely-reported tweet, describing the EU as “weak appeasers”.

**Belgium**, the former colonial power, has led

efforts at the Security Council to urge a political transition in **South Rengaan** from military rule. Its foreign minister has called for the drafting of another new constitution that provides greater protection for political rights. **Sweden** has similarly led the campaign to open **South Rengaan** up to international media and non-governmental organisations, particularly by relaxing visa requirements. **Poland** has been a particularly verbal critic of the South Rengaan government's "Stability Towns" counter insurgency tactic.

Available figures suggest that the **United Kingdom** is the fourth largest foreign investor

in **South Rengaan**, with investments just below US\$1 billion. In 2014, the EU provided US\$30 million in aid to **South Rengaan** for developing its education and healthcare services.

**France**, the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands**, **Poland** and **Sweden** supported the failed Security Council resolution drafted by the **United States** in 2019 on the situation in **South Rengaan**.

**Belgium** has contributed a company of military engineers and **Poland** has an infantry battalion and military police company deployed with UNSTAMIR.

## China

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**China** maintains a close relationship with **South Rengaan**. They have repeatedly blocked American and EU attempts to impose multilateral UN sanctions. **China** believes that such steps are likely to lead to isolation, and discourage engagement and dialogue. They also contend that the situation in **South Rengaan** does not constitute a threat to international peace and security, and so lies outside the responsibilities of the Security Council.

**China** has made repeated calls for restraint and reconciliation between all sides in **South Rengaan** and has urged progress "in a democratic process appropriate to the unique historic and cultural background of the country". However, **China** views the political situation as an internal matter for the **South Rengaan** government. **China** has refused calls from ASEAN to use its influence to encourage the release of political prisoners.

**China** gives substantial economic and military aid to **South Rengaan**. The Chinese are

thought to be the largest foreign investors in **South Rengaan**. Over US\$80 million in military assistance is provided annually, together with US\$200 million a year in economic aid. The Chinese have also invested heavily in **South Rengaan's** industry, particularly in natural gas production.

Recently, there have been signs that the relationship between Beijing has become strained and **China** is less willing to give unquestioning support to the junta. Chinese diplomatic defence of **South Rengaan** was relatively muted following the regime's use of force against demonstrators earlier this year. There may also be some shift in Chinese reluctance to identify the situation in **South Rengaan** as a security problem, although this has yet to be reflected in the public statements of diplomats at the UN in New York.

UNSTAMIR includes a Chinese army helicopter unit.

## Other Member States

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Outside of the Southeast Asian region, **South Rengaan** is diplomatically isolated. The policy of most Member States towards the state differs little from their approach to similar unstable areas of the world.

**Ethiopia** has contributed four infantry battalions to UNSTAMIR, numbering around 900 troops. **Côte d'Ivoire** has an infantry battalion accompanying the mission and **India** has a medical unit running a small field hospital.

**Ethiopia** and **Côte d'Ivoire** have called for greater protection of children caught up in the conflict with rebel groups and for all parties to end the use of landmines and begin the process of mine clearance.

The **Russian Federation** and **Equatorial Guinea** have joined China in questioning whether the situation in South Rengaan is a matter for the Security Council, since it does not threaten international peace and

security. They have also emphasized the importance of respecting South Rengaan's political independence and sovereignty.

**Equatorial Guinea** believes that international condemnation has been too focused on the government and should be redirected towards

abuse by the BSF and MRG rebel groups.

The capture of the *MV Ayacucho* has led **Peru** to push for greater control of piracy in the Rengaan peninsula, urging for a Security Council mandate for an international maritime force to protect shipping.

## South Rengaan

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**South Rengaan** contends that the problems it faces are an internal matter outside the responsibilities of the Security Council and the UN. It believes its territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty would be undermined if the international community intervened. It also questions whether the problems it faces really qualify as a threat to international peace and security and therefore under the Security Council's responsibilities.

The government argues that it is facing a national emergency. The terrorist activities of the BSF and MDG threaten the survival of the country. The government claims its enemies are ruthlessly violating the human rights of the Rengaan people and funding their violence through organised crime.

The **South Rengaan** government says it is investigating claims of human rights abuse by the security forces thoroughly, but claims most reports are the product of foreign and opposition propaganda. Robust measures are required to combat international terrorism and organised crime, but human rights are respected by the army.

The government claims that it made major concessions towards the demands of its political critics in the new constitution, which it says will become operational once the security situation is stabilised.

**South Rengaan** fully supports the deployment of UNSTAMIR and the demilitarized zone it monitors on the border with **North Rengaan**.

## North Rengaan

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**North Rengaan** ended fighting with its southerly neighbour in 2017 and agreed to respect the Richardson Plan border. Public statements have stressed the desire to find a sustainable peace through peaceful negotiations supported by UNSTAMIR's deployment. However, despite recent steps to seek political solutions to its differences with **South Rengaan**, it still maintains its territorial claims over the whole Rengaan peninsula.

A politically unstable **South Rengaan** suits the government of **North Rengaan**. Any foreign involvement may lead to a stronger **South Rengaan**, and so the north has emphasized the country's sovereignty. That said, the **North Rengaan** government is likely to take whatever approach that is most likely to embarrass its southern rival on the world stage.

**North Rengaan** is a parliamentary democracy and has a developing economy. It suffers from some of the problems that affect **South Rengaan** including organised crime and corruption by government officials. Some international NGOs accuse the **North Rengaan** government of restricting political rights including freedom of expression and assembly. This has added to the country's reluctance to criticise its southern neighbour's record on human rights.