



Security Council

Distr.: General
17 May 2022

Original: English

Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) until 3 June 2022 and requested me to report to it every 90 days on the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The report covers political, security, human rights, rule of law and protection, socioeconomic and humanitarian developments in the Sudan from 22 February to 5 May 2022 and provides an update on the implementation of the Mission's mandate, with gender considerations integrated as a cross-cutting issue throughout.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. The political situation in the Sudan remained deadlocked following the resignation of the Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, covered in my previous report ([S/2022/172](#)). Against this backdrop, domestic and international efforts to facilitate a political process to restore the democratic transition intensified. The United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) commenced joint facilitation efforts with all stakeholders to find a way out of the crisis through a Sudanese-owned and -led process. Several Sudanese stakeholders also developed political initiatives to facilitate a return to constitutional order and civilian governance.

3. Throughout the reporting period, neighbourhood resistance committees continued to organize regular protests across the country, albeit on a smaller scale than during the previous reporting period. Protesters continued, often by blocking roads, to oppose the military rule and denounce the worsening economic conditions. Organizers continued to call for peaceful demonstrations. While most protestors heeded this call, a few engaged in confrontation with the security forces. The latter continued to use tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets and, occasionally, live



ammunition to disperse the protesters. Sudanese authorities often blocked major roads and bridges prior to demonstrations, in particular in Khartoum.

4. In addition to organizing protests, resistance committees in Khartoum and in other states continued their efforts to forge a common position on the way forward for the country. On 27 February, the resistance committees in Khartoum State held a press conference announcing their “Charter for the Establishment of the People’s Authority”, calling for “the continuation of peaceful resistance”, the “toppling down [of] the military coup” and the “drafting [of] a transitional constitution that establishes transitional governance structures for the purpose of achieving the goals of the revolution”.

5. On 28 February, UNITAMS released the summary report of the consultations that it had led since 8 January, in which it identified areas of consensus and divergence between stakeholders on the way forward towards restoring the political transition. The African Union and IGAD Special Envoys for the Sudan, Mohamed El Hacem Lebatt and Ismail Wais, respectively, visited Khartoum several times during the reporting period in support of international and regional efforts to assist Sudanese stakeholders in restoring the political transition. The visit of the Special Envoy of IGAD was conducted subsequent to the release in February of the IGAD report of a fact-finding mission to the Sudan.

6. Following the conclusion of the UNITAMS-facilitated consultations, the African Union, IGAD and the United Nations agreed to work jointly and formed a trilateral cooperation mechanism in support of a Sudanese-led process to end the political crisis and restore a civilian-led transitional government. The three organizations held joint meetings with Sudanese stakeholders across the political and social spectrum aimed at reaching agreement on immediate priority issues, focusing on transitional constitutional arrangements, the selection of the Prime Minister and cabinet, elections, government programmes and a road map on the way forward.

7. A number of domestic initiatives to solve the political crisis also emerged during the reporting period. On 1 March, a group of university Vice-Chancellors announced an initiative to produce a unified charter on the political transition by reaching out to a broad range of actors, including civil society, resistance committees and the Sudanese Professionals Association. This initiative has stalled since the appointment, on 29 March, of new heads of 30 public universities by the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, following a decree dissolving the boards of trustees of the government-run universities. Political coalitions and parties also actively sought to form alliances around common positions on constitutional arrangements for the transitional period. Various eminent national figures put forward draft initiatives to help find common ground on contentious issues, such as civilian-military relations.

8. From 24 to 26 March, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) – except the Justice and Equality Movement – met in El Damazin, Blue Nile State, and proposed the launch of a dialogue initiative in two phases: first, to achieve an agreement between the signatories to the Constitutional Document on the formation of a government for the remaining transitional period, and, second, to address key issues between political forces, namely the system of governance, the constitution and the conduct of elections. SRF affirmed its commitment to the full implementation of all tracks of the Juba Peace Agreement.

9. From 24 to 27 April, the authorities released 19 political detainees affiliated with the Committee to Dismantle the 30 June 1989 Regime and Retrieve Public Funds (Dismantling Committee) on bail in the form of personal guarantees. The work of the Dismantling Committee had been halted since the 25 October military coup, and the detainees charged with alleged misappropriation of public funds. Most of the

19 detainees had been held for about three months. Among those released were the former Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Khalid Omer Yousif, and the former Sovereign Council member, Muhammad Al-Faki.

10. At the same time, authorities took several actions to reverse accountability measures put in place during Mr. Hamdok's premiership. On 7 March, security forces took over the office premises of an independent investigation committee that had been stipulated in the 2019 Constitutional Document and established by Mr. Hamdok when he was Prime Minister to probe into the killing of protestors in Khartoum on 3 June 2019. On 21 March, the Central Bank of the Sudan ordered national banks to unfreeze 646 individual bank accounts and 373 company bank accounts, which the Dismantling Committee had frozen as part of its work to combat corruption and recover assets stolen under the former President, Omer Al-Bashir. Separately, on 7 April, a Sudanese court issued a judicial ruling acquitting the former head of the National Congress Party, Ibrahim Ghandour, and 12 others, reportedly citing lack of evidence. The defendants had been arrested in June 2020 on charges of crimes against the State.

11. Implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement remained uneven. On 9 and 14 March, the authorities in West and South Kordofan, respectively, inaugurated deputy governors affiliated with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction, thereby advancing the establishment of the governance structures outlined under the South Kordofan and Blue Nile (Two Areas) track of the Juba Peace Agreement. Meanwhile, in Eastern Sudan, on 11 April, the Beja High Council announced a decision to reimpose a blockade on Port Sudan, citing a lack of resolution over the Eastern Track of the Juba Peace Agreement, to which they remain opposed. Some progress was made in standing up Darfur security arrangements, as described below.

B. Security situation

12. Sudanese authorities continued to make modest progress in operationalizing agreed security structures in Darfur under the Juba Peace Agreement. However, levels of insecurity, including intercommunal clashes, armed conflict and criminality continued to pose a significant challenge for the authorities during the reporting period. From 22 February to 5 May, 397 security incidents were recorded, compared with 429 during the previous reporting period; however, the scale and intensity of violence was greater, in particular in Darfur, where key hotspots became increasingly volatile. A reported 450 civilians were killed in intercommunal clashes, compared with 209 in the previous reporting period. Intercommunal clashes were largely triggered by disputes over access to natural resources and incidents of criminality, especially in North, South and West Darfur States, as well as South Kordofan and Kassala States.

13. Violence continued in Jebel Moon locality, West Darfur, during the reporting period. From 5 to 15 March, at least 35 civilians were killed as a consequence of clashes between the Misseriya Jebel and Arab communities, including two women and two members of Sudanese Armed Forces personnel. While remaining intercommunal in nature, the violence in Jebel Moon reportedly involved community-level mobilization of individuals affiliated with signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, as well as with the Sudanese security forces. Details of casualties could not be fully verified owing to lack of access for human rights monitors and humanitarian personnel.

14. From 29 to 31 March, clashes between the Fallata and Rizeigat Arab communities in Graidia and Tulus localities of South Darfur resulted in approximately 97 people killed and 87 injured. Tensions escalated after a Rapid Support Forces officer

belonging to the Rizeigat Arab community was killed in Graidia locality in a criminal incident. The Sudanese authorities made efforts to open channels of dialogue with the conflicting parties and instituted a state of emergency to prevent further violence.

15. On 5 April, clashes erupted between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Alliance around Adikong village in West Darfur, following a livestock rustling incident between members of the Arab and Masalit communities. The clashes resulted in a reported five deaths and two injuries, as well as the displacement of all Adikong residents towards the Chadian border. Subsequently, from 22 April to 24 April, large-scale violence erupted in Kreinik locality, following the deaths of two Arab herders during a livestock rustling incident on 21 April. The violence spread to El Geneina town, West Darfur, on 24 April and resulted in further reports of heavy fighting between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Alliance. According to the Ministry of Health, approximately 210 people were killed and at least 100 people were injured, in Kreinik alone, while 11 people were killed in El Geneina. Government forces and several high-level delegations were deployed to address violence in West Darfur; however, tensions remained high at the end of the reporting period.

16. Following a six-month period with no reported incidents between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdel Wahid (SLA-AW), a non-signatory to the Juba Peace Agreement, one armed clash reportedly took place on 17 March. The incident occurred in the Jebel Marra area of Central Darfur, reportedly after elements of SLA-AW ambushed a Sudanese Armed Forces convoy and injured five personnel. Following this incident, the United Nations suspended missions along the affected road from 18 to 22 March.

17. On 4 and 5 April, a part of the former UNAMID logistics base in El Fasher that had been handed over to the University of El Fasher was looted by armed individuals and members of the public. It was the third reported looting of the former UNAMID premises in El Fasher since December 2021.

18. Against the backdrop of increasing insecurity in Darfur, some progress was achieved owing to government efforts in moving forward the transitional security arrangements for Darfur under the Juba Peace Agreement, including the gradual operationalization of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee. The Committee, which is chaired by UNITAMS and comprises the Juba Peace Agreement signatories, engaged to de-escalate tensions following cases of armed violence involving signatory parties, as, for example, in Kutum locality, North Darfur, after three individuals associated with the Sudan Liberation Movement Minni Minnawi faction were killed on 15 March in clashes with alleged members of the Rapid Support Forces. Furthermore, on 25 and 26 April, the Sudanese Alliance and the Rapid Support Forces lodged formal complaints with the Committee in respect of the violence in Kreinik and El Geneina. The Committee launched an investigation into possible ceasefire violations.

19. The Sudanese authorities also made progress in standing up the joint security-keeping force in Darfur. During the reporting period, approximately 2,000 signatory armed movement personnel assembled in a designated centre, to be trained by the Sudanese Armed Forces. On 8 March, the Government held a meeting of the Joint High Council for Security Arrangements, chaired by Lieutenant General Al-Burhan. The Council emphasized the need to address the return and demobilization of armed movement combatants from Libya. However, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission has yet to be reconstituted as required by the Juba Peace Agreement.

20. Reports were received of intercommunal violence in other areas of the Sudan. In Kassala State, Eastern Sudan, tensions between the Bani Amir and the Sebderat communities, rooted in a dispute over natural resources, escalated on 29 March, resulting in the reported killing of one person and injuries to four people. Law

enforcement authorities arrested eight people in connection with the incident. Following further clashes on 1 April, which resulted in one death, the Bani Amir and Sebderat communities in Kassala State signed a local agreement to end the violence.

21. Tensions between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction were reported in some areas of South Kordofan State. On 16 March, members of this non-signatory armed movement abducted a Ministry of Health vaccination team in Abu Kershola locality. Further insecurity was reported on 9 April, when armed clashes between members of the Kawahla and the Al-Bedaria communities and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction took place in Rashad locality, an area known for gold mining.

C. Human rights, rule of law and protection situation

22. Throughout the reporting period, human rights violations continued, and abuses against civilians were reported across the country, including in Khartoum and resulting from intercommunal clashes in Darfur. Security forces continued to use excessive force against protesters, including firing live ammunition, stun grenades and tear gas, reportedly resulting in 13 civilian deaths, all of whom were men (8) and boys (5), and 1,708 injuries. In addition, reports were received of 186 arbitrary arrests and the ongoing detention of approximately 138 resistance committee leaders, political protesters and civil society activists. Forty-eight individuals were released during this period.

23. On 24 February, the United Nations Expert on the human rights situation in the Sudan, Adama Dieng, concluded a five-day visit in Khartoum during which he held meetings with senior government officials, including Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, as well as civil society representatives, human rights defenders and family members of victims of human rights violations. Mr. Dieng also visited Soba Prison in Khartoum, where he met with several detainees, including former members of the Dismantling Committee. In his end-of-mission statement, Mr. Dieng reiterated his concerns over the use of excessive force, the impact of the extension of law enforcement powers to the general security forces and their immunity from prosecution. He called on the authorities to put an end to the use of excessive force against protesters, lift the state of emergency and ensure prompt and impartial investigations into allegations of human rights violations. Mr. Dieng also stressed that any political settlement must be grounded in respect of human rights and accountability for human rights violations. On a positive note, during his visit, at least 114 protesters were released from detention.

24. During the reporting period, UNITAMS documented a total of 105 alleged incidents of human rights violations and abuses involving 931 victims, including 61 children. Violations of the right to life accounted for 527 victims (460 men, 27 women and 40 children), violations of physical integrity accounted for 354 victims (324 men, 24 women and 6 children) and sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, accounted for 25 victims (15 women and 10 girls), while abduction accounted for 25 victims (11 men, 9 women and 5 girls). Of the 105 documented incidents of alleged human rights violations and abuses, 16 were reportedly attributed to government security forces and 73 to alleged non-State actors, including armed movements and militia groups, while unknown or unidentified individuals were responsible for 16 incidents.

25. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict, co-chaired by UNITAMS and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), verified 33 grave violations against 28 children (16 boys and 12 girls) during the first quarter of 2022. Of these, 13 boys and 5 girls were killed,

3 boys and 5 girls were maimed and 2 girls were subjected to sexual violence. There were 4 attacks on schools and 2 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including an alleged abduction of Ministry of Health workers in South Kordofan. The violations were reportedly attributed to the Sudanese Police Force (2), the Rapid Support Forces (2), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (Abdul Aziz al-Hilu faction) (1), the Central Reserve Police (1) and unidentified perpetrators (27). Violations were verified in East Darfur (1), North Darfur (3), South Darfur (22), West Darfur (5) and South Kordofan (2). This represents at least a 40 per cent increase in the total number of children affected by grave violations as compared with the fourth quarter in 2021. Children in Darfur continued to remain the most affected by grave violations against children in the Sudan.

D. Socioeconomic situation

26. The economy of the Sudan declined rapidly during the reporting period. The domestic political crisis coupled with global geopolitical factors continued to affect markets and business operations, resulting in dramatic price increases for, inter alia, bread, fuel, electricity, medicine, health care and public transport, and supply shortages of basic goods, including wheat and fuel. Combined, the increases in prices and constrained supply led to reduced purchasing power and increased food insecurity, further deepening the vulnerability of the population. Although humanitarian programmes continued, the temporary suspension of a significant portion of international donor assistance, together with the pause in engagement by International financial institutions, severely impacted the inflows of overseas development assistance.

27. After maintaining a stable exchange rate against the United States dollar since mid-2021, pressure on the Sudanese pound increased as demand for United States dollars rose amid political uncertainty and declining exports. On 7 March, the Central Bank of the Sudan announced a decision to float the currency, following which the Sudanese pound exchange rate against the United States dollar plunged by more than 35 per cent as compared with the previous month. Year-on-year inflation reached 264 per cent in the month of March. In April, staple food prices increased, on average, by 10 per cent to 15 per cent as compared with March and remained 200 per cent to 250 per cent higher than respective prices last year. The cost of electricity, fuel and transportation also increased significantly during this period.

28. Farmers and activists in Northern State reportedly suspended their blockade of the main roads in the state, including the vital links to the Egyptian border, following an agreement with the authorities in mid-February about temporarily exempting the agricultural sector from the raised electricity tariff until the end of the winter season. Protests also took place in El Damazin, Blue Nile State, over scarcity of water in the area, resulting in a temporary blockade of the road between Khartoum and El Damazin.

E. Humanitarian situation

29. In March, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that the combined effects of conflict, economic crisis and poor harvests were significantly affecting people's access to food and would likely double the number of people facing acute hunger in the Sudan to more than 18 million people by September 2022. The deteriorating economy, prolonged dry spells and erratic rainfall in the 2021 rainy season significantly reduced crop and livestock production by up to 50 per cent in 14 states across the Sudan. According to

preliminary reports, the total production of main cereal crops in 2021 and 2022 is 30 per cent lower compared with the five-year average.

30. The total number of internally displaced persons in the Sudan rose to over 3.1 million, with over 75,000 newly displaced in North, South and West Darfur, as well as South Kordofan, since January 2022. The majority of internally displaced persons were displaced as a result of intercommunal conflict. Conflict in Jebel Moon locality, West Darfur, resulted in the internal displacement of more than 12,671 people, as well as significant loss of life and destruction of property. Additionally, in late March, clashes between Fallata and Rizeigat Arab communities in Graidia and Tulus localities, South Darfur, resulted in over 3,500 people being displaced. Displaced women and girls faced greater challenges in securing livelihoods and accessing services and were at higher risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Moreover, in 2022, violence in Darfur has resulted in the reported displacement of over 11,000 individuals into Chad.

31. In March, the Sudan received approximately 5,678 new refugees from neighbouring countries, mainly South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Ethiopian refugees from Tigray, and to a lesser extent from other regions of Ethiopia, continued to arrive in Eastern Sudan, as well as Blue Nile State. As at 31 March, the numbers had reached 58,400. From the beginning of 2022 to 31 March, 9,913 refugees from South Sudan arrived in the Sudan, bringing the total number of all refugees in the country to over 1.1 million people. In another development, Sudanese refugee returns were also reported. As at 1 May, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded more than 3,000 Sudanese refugees who returned to Kurmuk locality in Blue Nile State from the Binishangul-Gumuz region in Ethiopia.

32. Since January, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported 303 cases of kala-azar, a parasite that attacks the immune system in Gedaref State, including eight associated deaths. Kala-azar is endemic in Gedaref, with 2,098 cases reported in 2019, 2,136 in 2020 and 2,973 in 2021. The number of confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases continued to rise in the Sudan. Since the start of the pandemic, 61,849 people have tested positive for COVID-19, with 4,898 recorded deaths. Only 7 per cent of the country's 46 million people are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The United Nations country team and partners continue to support the Federal Ministry of Health with vaccines and logistics for vaccination.

33. During the reporting period, access to health-care services in the Sudan was negatively impacted by the economic deterioration, especially since over 72 per cent of health financing is out of pocket. Addressing the needs of women and girls of reproductive age remained particularly challenging, given the limited availability and coverage of lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services. Moreover, in the first half of 2022, some 105,000 pregnant women were estimated to be in need of access to antenatal care, support for safe births and postnatal care services.

34. From 22 February to 5 May, 51 security incidents impacting the United Nations and humanitarian partners were reported in the Sudan. Despite constraints, during the first quarter of 2022, humanitarian partners reached 5.1 million people throughout the Sudan with assistance, including 3.9 million people with food and livelihoods assistance, 1.1 million people with access to water and sanitation services and 686,000 refugees with various forms of support. Following the violence in Kreinik and El Geneina, West Darfur, from 21 to 25 April, the United Nations recalibrated its presence in West Darfur to prioritize support to critical humanitarian operations in view of the acute needs.

III. Role of the United Nations in the Sudan and implementation of resolution 2579 (2021)

Objective 1: assist the political transition, democratic governance, the protection and promotion of human rights and sustainable peace

35. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative enhanced his engagement to identify Sudanese-led solutions to the political crisis facing the country following the military coup of 25 October. He engaged extensively with a broad range of political and civil society figures, including leading Sudanese academics and women's and youth groups, as well as the representatives of the military, political parties and international partners, seeking their views on means to address the political crisis in the Sudan and facilitate a credible path towards democracy.

36. On 28 February, UNITAMS published its summary report on the five-week process of consultations that it led, and included over 110 meetings attended by over 800 Sudanese, one third of whom were women, from various parts of the Sudan, as well as analysis of over 80 written proposals. In the summary report, UNITAMS identified consensus on many issues, including the urgent need for an end to the violence, the importance of creating conducive conditions for credible elections and the formation of a technocratic government to allow for the completion of the key goals and tasks of the transition.

37. Partnership between IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations was central to continued efforts to facilitate a Sudanese-owned solution to the political crisis in the reporting period. Following the conclusion of the consultations phase, UNITAMS worked intensively with the African Union and IGAD to jointly facilitate a Sudanese-owned, Sudanese-led political process to restore the transition.

38. To promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the political process, UNITAMS facilitated consultations with women's groups and gender experts from across the Sudan. This resulted in the formation of a women's rights body composed of Sudanese women from all regions of the Sudan, with additional attention placed on youth representation and the inclusion of women with disabilities, to participate in the political talks and to bring women's perspectives to all priority agenda items under discussion.

39. Other areas of cooperation with respect to transition issues, however, remained stalled given the political stalemate. For example, technical assistance on the constitution-making process paused following the coup. On 7 March, a Sudan-wide conference to identify and develop reform priorities of the Attorney-General's Office, which was to be conducted with the support of the United Nations, was cancelled the evening before by the Attorney-General's Office. In addition, planned round-table discussions on the prosecution's oversight function over the use of force in protests were put on hold by the Attorney-General's Office.

40. The Mission enhanced its advocacy on the protection and promotion of human rights given growing insecurity for civilians during the reporting period. The Mission conducted visits to El Geneina, from 16 to 23 March and from 30 March to 4 April, to verify reports of human rights violations in Jebel Moon and engage the authorities and other local leaders on concrete measures to resolve the conflict.

41. Advocacy at the local, state and federal levels also continued, including to facilitate mediation between affected communities and enhance accountability for the victims of violence. From 27 to 31 March, UNITAMS conducted a mission to Kassala State to raise awareness about the UNITAMS human rights and protection mandate.

Constructive engagements were held with state authorities, civil society groups and local communities, including the refugee communities.

Objective 2: support peace processes and implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements

42. While support for implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement remained stalled in many respects pending a solution to the political crisis in Khartoum, UNITAMS continued efforts to strengthen the day-to-day functioning of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and to support its activities in Darfur. UNITAMS, as Chair of the Committee, supported expansion of the Committee structures to three Darfur states through the establishment of the sectoral committees in El Fasher, El Geneina and Nyala, with UNITAMS personnel deployed to serve as Chairpersons. UNITAMS also supported the establishment of Committee Sector offices in El Fasher, El Geneina and Nyala. Two further sectoral committees are still to be established in Ed Daein and Zalingei.

43. Following Lieutenant General Al-Burhan's order of 3 February for all armed movements to relocate outside of El Fasher town, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee attended relocation ceremonies on the outskirts of El Fasher on 3 March, as a show of good faith in the peace process by the signatory armed movements. Thereafter, the Committee, through its consultations with relevant stakeholders, was able to facilitate the identification of assembly areas by armed movements. The Committee Chair conducted a two-day technical workshop on assembly areas, on 9 and 10 March, to deliberate on guidelines for the assembly process and ensure a common understanding of the Committee's role. An initial six assembly areas across North Darfur State have been suggested by the parties. On 22 March, the Committee conducted its first verification visit to two assembly areas belonging to the Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces and the Sudanese Alliance forces in Mellit, North Darfur, and on 30 March visited the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council assembly area in Korma, North Darfur.

44. Meanwhile, throughout the period, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee continued to play a pivotal role in de-escalating potential crisis situations between armed movements which could otherwise have turned violent. For example, the Committee resolved a disagreement resulting from an alleged ceasefire violation that occurred in February in Kabkabiyah, North Darfur, before it resulted in violent clashes between parties. The Committee also set up a team to investigate another alleged ceasefire violation that occurred in March in Kutum, North Darfur, which determined that the incident had not been a ceasefire violation but a criminal act. Perpetrators were eventually arrested by the Rapid Support Forces and handed over to local authorities. The Committee's efforts in this regard continued to underscore the Committee's role as a conflict resolution mechanism in accordance with its mandate.

45. The Permanent Ceasefire Committee visited the Sudanese Armed Forces 6th Division training centre at Gadeed el-Sayl, North Darfur, where a first batch of cadres from the armed movements had been gathered for integration into the joint security-keeping force for Darfur. As at the time of reporting, the number of cadres from armed movements was reported to have risen from 400 in early February to 2,000 in April.

46. On 31 March, UNITAMS, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, held a consultation workshop in El Fasher with members of the signatory armed movements to assess and support the training needs of the planned joint security-keeping force. The assessment was aimed at identifying training gaps and mobilizing support from the United Nations and international partners to strengthen the civilian protection and human rights responsibilities of the joint security-keeping force, as

provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement. The consultation underlined the importance of finalizing the training and accelerating the deployment of the force, especially considering continued threats to civilians and protection challenges in Darfur.

47. Progress in the negotiations between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (Abdul Aziz al-Hilu faction) remained stalled owing to the uncertain political situation. On 8 March, my Special Representative visited Kadugli as part of the International Women's Day celebrations and discussed the challenges of the peace process, as well as ways to resume negotiations with the acting Wali of South Kordofan.

Objective 3: assist Sudanese-led peacebuilding, civilian protection and rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas

48. The Mission, together with the United Nations country team, continued efforts to support entities responsible for the protection of civilians and identify ways to support implementation of the National Plan for Civilian Protection and the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights. Progress on peacebuilding activities remained slow during the reporting period owing to the uncertain political environment, which in some instances left a vacuum of national interlocutors with whom to engage for the implementation of activities. Nevertheless, the United Nations country team made a concerted effort to provide support with programming.

49. The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund continued to support critical and underfunded peacebuilding needs at the community level. To address conflict factors rooted in unresolved issues, such as access to and ownership of land, the United Nations country team and its partners continued to implement the final stages of the Peacebuilding Fund-supported programme in eight target localities across Darfur, totalling \$20 million, to support durable solutions for displaced populations and affected communities, strengthen locality and village-level rule of law institutions, and enhance local-level conflict resolution mechanisms. This included responding with flexibility to continued crises in the target localities of Tawila, Graida and Jebel Moon.

50. In addition, the Peacebuilding Fund transferred funds for five new projects to support data collection and analysis for durable solutions in Darfur and Eastern Chad, provide adequate housing for conflict-affected communities in West Darfur and empower youth in civic spaces and in accessing mental health and psychosocial support. To further enhance the capacities of the United Nations and its partners, the Peacebuilding Fund also continued the development of an online peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity course focused on the Sudan.

51. On 14 March, UNITAMS and UNHCR met with members of the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians. The meeting highlighted growing concerns over protection gaps in the absence of the deployment of the joint security-keeping force for Darfur and the need for the reactivation of activities and programmes of the National Plan on the Protection of Civilians, which were largely suspended following 25 October 2021. Representatives of the National Mechanism reiterated that the Sudanese authorities remained committed to working with the United Nations to move the protection agenda forward. Meanwhile, on 24 February, UNITAMS organized a needs assessment workshop in El Fasher for civil society groups to enhance collaboration on the protection of civilians. In the context of engagement by the United Nations on 14 March, the Sudanese authorities informed UNITAMS and UNHCR that a decree defining the new modalities on the protection of civilians would be issued soon.

52. During the reporting period, UNITAMS, together with the United Nations country team and partners, increased engagement with and provided technical support

to the Sudanese Police Force to strengthen their protection of civilians capabilities, including through specialized training and advisory support. This included joint capacity-building with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partners for 185 Sudanese Police Force officers, including 9 women, in Darfur on community-oriented policing, gender equality and enhancing prevention and effective policing response capacities to address sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. UNITAMS also provided capacity-building support through advisory and training sessions during the basic training of 577 Sudanese Police Force recruits, including 170 women, in Nyala, South Darfur. Notably, through collaboration with the Sudanese Police Force and partners, a gender desk was established and operationalized in Nertiti, Central Darfur. On 7 March, UNITAMS and the Sudanese Police Force organized a workshop in Khartoum that brought together representative Sudanese women police officers of all ranks. The aim of the workshop was to identify gaps and to determine the way forward in promoting gender equality in policing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

53. Meanwhile, from 1 to 10 March, UNITAMS, UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights hosted a technical-level visit of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which included meetings in El Fasher, Darfur and Khartoum with civil society, police, prosecutors, judges, other authorities and internally displaced persons. As a result of the findings from the visit, UNITAMS commenced the development of a programme to enhance accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. In February and March, UNITAMS and UNDP hosted discussions with civil society organizations in El Fasher and Zalingei on the implementation of accountability provisions in the Darfur track of the Juba Peace Agreement, during which civil society actors called for the accelerated implementation of the provisions.

54. UNITAMS and six United Nations agencies, funds and programmes continued the implementation of a joint project in South Kordofan, financed by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. The project provides an integrated response to addressing challenges faced by communities in Dalami and Abu Kershola localities, including clearing land contaminated with explosive hazards, improving socioeconomic assistance and access to livelihoods, enhancing access to basic services, including clean water and health care, and increasing investigation and response capacity for disease surveillance and outbreak alert.

55. During the reporting period, UNITAMS cleared 442,935 square metres of land contaminated with explosive hazards in Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur. The land was then released for use by local communities. As part of its activities in the Two Areas, UNITAMS facilitated the exchange of information on explosive hazard contamination between the authorities and local opposition groups, thereby facilitating the use of the road from Kauda to Toro, in South Kordofan, while also building trust and improving coordination. Moreover, a team of 21 former combatants of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction, trained by UNITAMS in basic humanitarian demining capabilities, cleared 27.75 km of road and disposed of 645 items of unexploded ordnance in Ulu, Blue Nile. The team worked in cooperation with Sudanese mine action non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as part of confidence-building efforts in support of the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement.

Objective 4: support the mobilization of economic and development assistance and the coordination of humanitarian and peacebuilding assistance

56. Throughout the reporting period, much international development assistance and all engagement by international financial institutions remained paused; while life-

saving humanitarian assistance continued to be funded, albeit with more donor restrictions on engagement with the Sudanese authorities. The Sudan Partnership Forum, established in September 2021, remained suspended, depriving the country of the planned government-led coordination mechanism at both the strategic and operational levels.

57. As it was not possible given the political context to complete a new integrated framework for the United Nations in the Sudan, the 2018–2022 United Nations Development Assistance Framework remained the overarching document formally underpinning United Nations engagement in the country. A decision was made to extend the Framework until the end of 2023, in alignment with country programme documents of United Nations entities.

58. In the context of growing needs, and while prioritizing needs and actions outlined in the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan, the United Nations in the Sudan agreed on a common approach for 2022 to respond to the changed environment on the ground. The common approach sets out collective United Nations priorities across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, focusing on three areas: (a) basic services, community stabilization and resilience; (b) protection of civilians, rule of law and human rights; and (c) implementation of ceasefires, peace agreements and conflict prevention. The United Nations established a regular dialogue with the donor community and with international NGOs around the approach identified, with the objective of fostering open exchange and joint reflection on key elements of the priorities and engagement modalities in the current operational environment.

59. UNITAMS and its partners in the United Nations country team continued a series of state-level peacebuilding assessments in six states of the Sudan (North and South Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Red Sea and Kassala), intended to assist in prioritizing and sequencing international support. In a seventh state, West Darfur, plans were put in place to update a peacebuilding assessment carried out in 2021. These in-depth conflict analyses and peacebuilding assessments are expected to deepen understanding of local conflict and political dynamics and to identify peacebuilding opportunities and entry points for programmatic activities.

Mission operational and planning issues

60. During the reporting period, UNITAMS continued to roll out its field presence in order to facilitate effective mandate delivery. In addition to expanding its Permanent Ceasefire Committee component to sectoral level in Nyala and El Geneina, the Mission commenced the opening of two new UNITAMS offices, one in El Geneina, West Darfur State, and another in Port Sudan, Red Sea State, bringing its total number of field offices to seven. Recruitment continued, with a view to bringing the Mission up to its full mandated strength. As at 5 May, the Mission staffing stood at 192 civilian staff and 20 police personnel. Consistent with the Secretary-General's Gender Parity Strategy, over half of senior civilian appointments (Chiefs of service and above) are held by women.

61. The Mission completed a review of its strategic planning for 2022 to align available resources to priorities in the light of the current circumstances in the country, consistent with the agreed common approach of the United Nations in the Sudan and applicable guidance of the Security Council. The Mission leadership also reviewed plans for implementation of projects received through the multi-partner trust fund and enhanced internal mechanisms for integrated programme management. The reporting period saw progress in strengthening capacities for information, analysis and reporting. Under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator), the Mission continued to deepen its collaboration with the United Nations country team through

the structures of the integrated country team, participating actively in dialogue with other United Nations entities and donors on programme priorities.

IV. Observations

62. More than three years since the start of the revolution in the Sudan, the promised transition to civilian rule and democracy is at risk of being derailed. The country has been without a functioning, civilian-led government for over six months and remains under a state of emergency. The population faces a confluence of political, economic and security risks that threaten overall stability at the national level and in the wider region. There is a shrinking window of opportunity for Sudanese stakeholders to resolve the political crisis and return to a constitutionally legitimate transitional path that enjoys broad-based support among the Sudanese.

63. The return to a transitional path can be achieved only through an inclusive, Sudanese-owned and -led political dialogue. The process launched jointly under the auspices of IGAD, the African Union, and the United Nations is aimed at urgently creating an inclusive framework for such a dialogue among the Sudanese stakeholders. For this process to succeed, I call upon all actors from across the political spectrum to play their part in facilitating a conducive environment for talks. I also urge the military and security forces to cease all acts of violence, release political detainees, end arbitrary arrests, lift the state of emergency and avoid any acts that might jeopardize the dialogue. The region and the international community stand ready to lend their support. In this regard, I welcome the release of former Cabinet Minister, Khalid Omer Yousif, former Sovereign Council member, Muhammad Al-Faki, and Dismantling Committee members Babikir Faisal, Wajdi Salih, Taha Osman and others.

64. Sudanese women continue to mobilize for political change in the country and raise their voices in calling for their rightful place in civic and political life. Nevertheless, the deteriorating environment deters their active participation in the political process. I commend the initiative led by Sudanese women to form a women's rights group with the support of UNITAMS to participate on an equal footing in the African Union-IGAD-United Nations facilitated dialogue. I call upon all stakeholders to commit to women's representation in the process.

65. Meanwhile, the rapid deterioration of the economic situation is alarming. I am concerned that the effects of political instability, economic crisis and the poor 2021 harvests – combined with the global supply shocks – will have a disastrous impact on inflation, and especially on affordability of food for the vulnerable. According to United Nations estimates, some 18 million people, or 39 per cent of the population, will be food insecure by September, while the existing Humanitarian Response Plan is only 10 per cent funded. In a year of many global crises, the humanitarian situation is deteriorating and needs to be addressed urgently. Exceptional modalities may be required to support vulnerable communities and protect human and social capital for the future of the Sudan. I encourage Member States to explore all possible options in this regard, including through leveraging United Nations-international financial institutions partnerships.

66. I am deeply concerned by the escalating violence in Darfur, which has resulted in a growing number of fatalities and significant new forced displacement. In this regard, I urge the national authorities to follow through on their commitment to reactivate the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians, which was established to help protect civilians following the departure of UNAMID. I call for the national authorities and signatory armed movements to fulfil their commitments under the Juba Peace Agreement and expedite the implementation of the transitional

security arrangements. In this regard, I welcome efforts by the authorities to stand up the joint security-keeping force in Darfur. The Force's full establishment, training and deployment must be carried out in a timely and sustainable manner to protect civilians and help restore stability in the region.

67. The continued operationalization of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee offers a welcome channel for lowering tensions in Darfur. Nevertheless, the dearth of logistical support from the Sudanese authorities remains a major concern and constrains the Committee's ability to fulfil its mandate, including to investigate ceasefire violations and oversee the assembly of forces, in line with the Juba Peace Agreement. Adequate logistical support for the operationalization of the assembly areas would be a critical signal of commitment to integrate signatory armed movements into the security services and create the conditions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. It is therefore essential that the Sudanese authorities reconstitute the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to prevent operational gaps throughout the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. As suggested in my previous report (S/2022/172), coordinated support from bilateral partners could play a valuable role.

68. To be sustainable, advances in the security arrangements must be matched by progress in implementing other aspects of the Juba Peace Agreement. It is unlikely that any gains will be sustained without progress on key protocols that address the root causes of conflict, in particular land rights, and provide durable solutions for displaced persons. Further advancement is also needed in the adoption and establishment of transitional justice mechanisms to provide remedies and accountability for acts of violence committed in Darfur and the Two Areas. In addition, the political impasse in Khartoum remains an obstacle to expanding the peace process to engage non-signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement.

69. I remain deeply concerned by continued serious abuses of human rights, in particular in the context of recent anti-coup protests. I condemn the excessive use of force by security forces against civilians, as well as continued arbitrary arrests and detention of opposition leaders and activists. Sudanese authorities must respect the right of protesters to peaceful assembly and association, in keeping with their international obligations. The lack of accountability for serious human rights violations, including the cases of death and injury of protestors as a result of the disproportionate use of force, coupled with prolonged pretrial detentions of activists and opposition leaders, continue to erode public trust in justice institutions. Separately, I am encouraged by the start of the trial before the International Criminal Court, on 5 April, of Abd-Al-Rahman (Ali Kushayb), who is charged with 31 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed from August 2003 to at least April 2004 in Darfur, which is a positive signal to victims and communities that justice will be pursued.

70. I wish to recall to the Council that implementation of the Mission's mandate is heavily reliant on the complementary role of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, which rely on voluntary contributions from donors to facilitate programmatic support across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. I encourage Member States to consider how they can provide concurrent donor support to the Common Approach priority programmes identified by the United Nations in the Sudan, detailed in paragraph 56 of the present report. Notwithstanding the political crisis in Khartoum, there remain opportunities for the international community to make a meaningful difference through investments in local peacebuilding, community stabilization, critical infrastructure and basic services and livelihoods, which help to mitigate conflict drivers. Shoring up livelihoods and communities, creating resilience against future shocks and advancing sustainable and

durable solutions for the country's 3.1 million internally displaced persons remain imperative.

71. I thank my Special Representative, Volker Perthes, and all United Nations personnel in the Sudan, as well as our partners in the African Union and IGAD, for their continued dedication and efforts in support of the country and its people. The United Nations remains fully committed to supporting the Sudanese people during these challenging times.
