



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 22 March 2022 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to forward herewith the observations, comments and reactions of the Government of the Sudan (see annex) to the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan ([S/2022/172](#)).

Having brought this matter to your attention, I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ammar Mohammed M. **Mohammed**  
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 22 March 2022 from the Chargé  
d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the  
United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: Arabic]

**Response to the recent report on the situation in the Sudan and the  
activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance  
Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS)**

**Introduction**

It is unfortunate that although UNITAMS was deployed at the request of the Government of Sudan, the methodology used in its report to collect and present information does not reflect a spirit of cooperation and transparency. No one could dispute that the period covered by the report – 22 November 2021 to 21 February 2022 – saw important political and security developments in the transition process and the building of institutions necessary for transparent and fair elections. However, the report skipped over these essentials and focused mainly on human rights, the rule of law and gender issues. Such issues certainly deserve to be priorities, but that does not mean that they should be focused on to the exclusion of other essential aspects that are at the heart of the UNITAMS mandate. We offer our observations on the report in its entirety below.

**I. Political situation**

1. The report categorically stated that the transition is witnessing setbacks and challenges. The use of that first term by the report was inaccurate. The transition process is indeed facing challenges. There is no disagreement about that. But the term “setback” implies moving backwards and giving up on the goal of a transition that leads the people to the ballot box. There has been no retreat from that goal.
2. The report stated that the political agreement signed on 21 November 2020 was widely condemned by civilian political forces across the Sudan. That is incorrect. There were political forces of considerable weight in Sudanese society that supported the agreement. That was not mentioned in the report.
3. Similarly, when dealing with the draft political declaration issued on 16 December, the report states that that document was rejected by several political forces. In paragraph 7, the report cites unidentified sources – so called “media reports” – to the effect that there were 13 cases of rape and sexual assault against women and girls. It adds that human rights and women’s groups gathered in Khartoum and Omdurman to protest against what the report calls “use of rape against female demonstrators”.
4. In paragraph 9, the report refers to the Prime Minister announcing his resignation on 9 January 2022. However, it only mentions “differences between the military and civilian components” as the reason for the resignation. As it happens, in his resignation letter, the Prime Minister also stressed differences and fragmentation within the civilian component itself. The report uses the word “coup” to describe corrective measures, which is contrary to the truth.
5. The report did not mention the major role played by the Sudanese Government in opening channels of dialogue with all components of Sudanese society (community administrations, Sufi lodges, youth and women) to gauge the political current and come up with effective solutions.

6. The report describes the overall security situation as deteriorating. There is no mention of the Sudanese Government's efforts to maintain security and stability.

7. In its presentation of incidents of violence and murder that took place during the demonstrations, the report got its information from the so-called "Central Committee of Sudan Doctors", an amorphous undefined body. It would have done better to get its information from official and reliable sources that are freely available to UNITAMS. There is some information given without the report even citing a source, as, for example, in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 in the section on the political situation. The report mentions 13 cases of rape attributed to the police, when the Office of the Public Prosecutor has verified only two such cases, one attributed to a certain *alif kha zay*, report 3531, with respect to which legal proceedings have been initiated, and another attributed to a certain *waw ayn shin*, with respect to which the victim has not initiated a report.

8. The section on the security situation consists entirely of paragraphs attributing criminal behaviour to the security services not based on any information. That confirms the Mission's lack of impartiality, which does not help with the country's transition process. The report provides some statistics on human rights violations without citing official sources. The intent in every paragraph is to criminalize and vilify the security services.

9. Reference is made to the Family Support Programme of the World Bank being paused with no mention of efforts by UNITAMS to provide alternatives.

## II. The security situation

10. Under this heading, the report stated in paragraph 12 that the security environment witnessed a continued deterioration throughout the country. It went on to describe the situation as characterized by armed conflict and tribal clashes. While there is no doubt that there are challenges in the security environment, they are not primarily linked to armed conflict. There are no confrontations between the Government and armed movements.

11. In the same paragraph, the report states that the deterioration of security is linked to tribal clashes. However, it is not as if these tribal clashes are taking place everywhere in the Sudan. The report would have done better to note the roots and causes of these tribal clashes, including the role of the international community, and specifically the failure of UNITAMS to mobilise resources to support the implementation of protocols for land and hawakeer holdings and the development of the nomadic and pastoral sectors.

12. There is an imbalance in describing the protests. For example, in paragraph 65, the report speaks of the protests in language that encourages them. That only widens the gulf between the parties and fails to observe neutrality instead of using consensual language.

13. The report does not address the considerable efforts being made to implement the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan, and specifically the security arrangements. The Sudanese Government has made efforts on its own initiative to implement the following:

- The Supreme Council for Security Arrangements in Darfur and the Two Areas was formed. The President and Vice-President of the Transitional Sovereign Council visited Darfur to speed up the process
- Some 1,800 fighters were integrated under the Juba Agreement and are now undergoing military training. An additional 200 are currently being integrated.

The process has been initiated for the integration of 2,212 fighters in Blue Nile and 5,315 in South Kordofan.

- The Civilian Protection Force and the Darfur Protection Force were formed out of all the military organizations. Among their most important tasks is controlling the security situation in Darfur.

14. The report failed to mention the important role being played by the Security and Defence Council in closely monitoring the security situation throughout the Sudan. It has held a number of meetings during the reporting period to diagnose the security situation and come up with fundamental solutions.

15. In paragraph 13 the report mentions protests and sit-ins. However, instead of basing itself on available and known sources, it again refers to media reports. Perhaps the greatest irony is that the account fails to mention the killing of a high-ranking Sudanese police officer, Brigadier General Ali Barimah, and a number of other officers. It fails to refer to the destruction of infrastructure, roads and electricity poles, as well as arson and widespread vandalism of public property and police stations. Neither does it mention the extremely high rates of dead and injured among regular forces – over 1,303 casualties – which shows that the protests were not peaceful. This is contrary to United Nations guidelines and the principle of neutrality.

16. The report does not mention that during the reporting period, criminal complaints decreased. For example, homicides decreased by 14.4 per cent and cases of sexual and gender-based violence decreased by 16.5 per cent, according to the criminal investigation report.

17. The report does not mention the formation of a committee by decision of the President of the Transitional Sovereign Council to investigate the events of 17 January 2022, or the formation of a committee by the decision of the Attorney General to investigate events occurring from 25 October 2021 through the date of the writing of this report.

### **III. The socioeconomic situation**

18. The report notes in the first paragraph that the political crisis has impacted the Sudanese economy. While we acknowledge that the political situation has direct effects on the economic situation, we note that the report suggests that economic deterioration set in after recent political developments. This is not the case. The revolutionary Government inherited a deteriorating economic situation.

19. As is well known, the UNITAMS mandate includes components on peacebuilding and resource mobilisation. The Mission's report should reflect efforts on resource mobilisation and shifting from humanitarian aid to development support to shore up the economy. It failed to address that aspect at all!

20. Paragraphs 22, 23 and 24 list the effects of an increase in demand for United States dollars owing to political uncertainty (according to the report) and the pause in a significant portion of international assistance, including support by the World Bank, the European Union and the United States. The question remains: What was done about it by UNITAMS, which should be fundamentally concerned with supporting the transition and overcoming such challenges? The Mission ought to have provided an overview of its efforts under its mandate to address or mitigate these effects rather than just listing them.

### **IV. The humanitarian situation**

21. In this section, the report relies on statistics from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the effect that 9.8 million people in the country suffer from

a food security gap. In our estimation, that is directly linked to the economic decline we inherited, and also to the inadequacy of the recent response of donors in funding key agencies active in providing humanitarian assistance, including the World Food Programme and the Commission for Refugees.

22. The report makes no mention of a natural factor associated with climate change, namely the decline in rainfall rates in the agricultural production belt in sub-Saharan Africa, which has exacerbated the Sudan's food security gap. At the same time, the UNITAMS report failed to present any efforts by the Mission to act in conjunction with donors and the relevant United Nations agencies to establish rapid-return projects as alternatives for agricultural and pastoral communities that lost their livelihoods in a country that has been undergoing transition-related complications for years.

## **V. Human rights**

23. Even though the country has a Human Rights Office with a headquarters and five field offices established under an agreement signed with the Government of Sudan, the UNITAMS report devotes its longest section to the human rights situation. That properly falls within the mandate of the Human Rights Office, with the role of UNITAMS limited to supporting capacity-building. We acknowledge that United Nations offices, agencies and organizations in the country are under the umbrella of UNITAMS as an integrated mission. However, that does not mean that the roles of United Nations offices, organizations and agencies with specific functions are somehow eliminated.

24. The UNITAMS report should not be focusing on the issue of human rights in this detailed fashion while neglecting key aspects of the UNITAMS mandate, such as peacebuilding support, the Juba Peace Agreement and election preparations, including the Mission's preparations to support the census. All this suggests that UNITAMS has been transformed into a "parallel" office monitoring the human rights situation in Sudan, which is a duplication of the work of United Nations mechanisms in a single country.

25. The country's Human Rights Office drafts and submits reports to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, where they are periodically reviewed. This begs the question: Why is the human rights situation being presented in Geneva by the Human Rights Office and at the same time in the Security Council via the UNITAMS report, which focuses on the issue of human rights as if it were part of the basic mandate of UNITAMS?

26. As is the case in other areas, in its characterization of the human rights situation, the report relies on anonymous sources, namely, either media reports not attributed to a reliable media source or completely random statements and information. Moreover, the accounts of human rights violations in the UNITAMS report are highly contradictory.

27. On the other hand, the UNITAMS report fails to mention the Sudanese Government's efforts to improve the human rights situation and its cooperation with the country's Human Rights Office, which included a visit by the expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan from 20 to 24 February 2022 that required considerable coordination between the Government and the Human Rights Office both prior to and during the visit.

28. In that connection, one might have expected the UNITAMS report to note that the Government of Sudan opened its doors to the United Nations expert during his visit, in the course of which he met with such senior officials as Transitional Sovereignty Council member Salma Abdul-Jabbar, the Attorney General and

prosecutors, the Minister of Justice and deputies from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice and the Interior. He visited prisons and met with the Governor of Khartoum State in the presence of the State Security Committee.

## **VI. The role of the United Nations and the implementation status of the UNITAMS mandate**

29. Here we stress that the UNITAMS mandate has four clear strategic priorities as stated in the request of the Government of Sudan dated 27 February 2020 and in Security Council resolutions [2524 \(2020\)](#) and [2579 \(2021\)](#). These are as follows:

- Support the political transition, democratic governance and sustainable peace;
- Support implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements;
- Support Sudanese-led peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas;
- Mobilise economic and development assistance and coordinate humanitarian assistance.

30. In the light of the four above-mentioned strategic objectives, the UNITAMS report is itself documentary proof that the Mission has confined all its efforts to implementing the part of its mandate related to the first strategic objective, namely, the transition process. It has completely ignored the other three strategic objectives within the mandate. The report proves that UNITAMS has made little effort, even at the theoretical level on paper, to devise plans to support the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and the protocols attached thereto, in particular the protocols on security arrangements (demobilisation and reintegration), displaced persons and refugees, land and hawakeer holdings, and development of the pastoralist and nomadic sectors.

31. On the third strategic objective in the Mission's mandate, the UNITAMS report does not record any concrete steps in providing logistical and material support for implementation of the National Plan for Civilian Protection, except for the initial steps requested by the Government to begin preparations for a joint workshop with UNITAMS in this regard.

32. On the fourth strategic objective of mobilising economic and development resources and coordinating humanitarian assistance, the UNITAMS report does not record any steps or achievements in mobilising resources or acting in conjunction with international donor agencies and financial institutions in that regard. As for the humanitarian side, as contained in the fourth strategic objective above, UNITAMS was supposed to take practical steps at the level of supporting the shift from humanitarian aid to development support.

## **VII. Observations and recommendations**

33. There is a clear flaw in the methodology of the UNITAMS report. The approach used to prepare the report is one of observation and monitoring. That makes UNITAMS appear to be an observation and monitoring mechanism rather than an integrated mission supporting the transition process in the country in accordance with its mandate. So first of all, the report preparation methodology must be corrected.

34. The Mission's reliance on anonymous or unnamed sources to gather information does not accord with the fact that the Chief and members of the Mission enjoy full freedom of movement. They are free to meet with any officials in the capital or the states and visit all the ministries and institutions that are in possession of accurate and documented information. That means that the principle of neutrality is in question,

given the way in which this recent report in particular was prepared. UNITAMS must adhere to the principles of neutrality and objectivity when dealing with sources of information.

35. There is clear duplication in the Mission's handling of human rights in its report. There is a Human Rights Office in the country, with field offices in the states, that submits reports to the Human Rights Council. This duplication must be acknowledged. The place for human rights reports is the Human Rights Council in Geneva and not the Security Council. What is happening now is also contrary to operative paragraph 3 (d) of Security Council Resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), which provides that the role of UNITAMS in this regard is to support improvement in the human rights situation.

36. In keeping with its desire to cooperate and interact with UNITAMS, the Government of the Sudan has formed an executive committee consisting of various ministries and agencies to ensure professional and transparent coordination and cooperation with UNITAMS. The various sections of the UNITAMS periodic report should be reviewed at a joint meeting between UNITAMS and that committee before it is submitted in final form to the Security Council.

37. Steps have been taken at the level of the National Plan for Civilian Protection, especially with regard to protection in the field. Part of the joint forces have been formed and deployed. However, there have been delays in implementing certain aspects having to do with the protection environment, particularly with regard to the renovation of services facilities in voluntary return areas and displaced person camps, including education, water and health facilities. UNITAMS must act on its mandate in that connection and urge the organizations and agencies under its umbrella – such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, and others – to allocate urgent resources to these aspects.

38. With regard to UNITAMS acting on the political component, we recognize that political consensus is the cornerstone of stability in political and economic life. We appreciate the Mission Chief's efforts and communications as a facilitator. However, success in this process requires national ownership and leadership of any efforts to build Sudanese-Sudanese consensus, with support from the United Nations and the African Union.

39. As is well known, the 2022 UNITAMS budget came to \$45,596,700. However, there were no allocations in the budget for peacebuilding projects. The Mission must prepare an urgent plan to act with donors to mobilise resources to support the transition and implement the Juba Peace Agreement.

40. The report covers the period from 22 November to 21 February. Some positive developments have occurred since that last date. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General will have an opportunity to include aspects not covered by the written report in his statement to the Security Council at the briefing scheduled for 28 March where the report will be reviewed.