



# Security Council

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## 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 [2636 \(2022\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) until 3 June 2023 and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on its implementation. The report covers developments in the Sudan from 21 August to 20 November 2022 and contains an update on the implementation of the Mission's mandate, with gender considerations integrated throughout as a cross-cutting issue.

#### II. Significant developments

##### A. Political situation

2. More than a year since the military coup of 25 October 2021, some indications of a potential breakthrough to end the political crisis in the Sudan have been observed. National, regional and international efforts aimed at facilitating a political solution to restore a civilian-led transitional Government continued, amid pressing humanitarian, social and security needs.

3. The trilateral mechanism, consisting of the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), continued its efforts to support Sudanese stakeholders in fostering a political agreement. Several local political initiatives focused on arrangements for a possible future transitional period were put forward by political and civilian forces. On 10 September, the Sudanese Bar Association presented its draft constitution to the mechanism. The draft was developed by a committee composed of various political party groupings, civil society organizations and prominent academics. It was signed by the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC)-Central Council, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)-Original, the Popular Congress Party and Ansar al-Sunna, among other groups, as well as a range of civil society organizations, women's groups and professional associations.

4. In subsequent weeks, the signatories of the Sudanese Bar Association draft constitution continued their efforts to broaden their support base, build consensus and



address the remaining issues in the text with a view to setting the stage for negotiations with the military. In parallel, bilateral negotiations between some signatories of the draft constitution and the military resulted in a preliminary understanding on key issues between them. On 24 October, the trilateral mechanism received comments from the military based on that preliminary understanding and was asked by the military to launch a structured political process to facilitate negotiations on the remaining differences. Subsequently, the mechanism engaged intensively with the stakeholders to facilitate political talks aimed at reaching a broad-based civilian and military agreement. On 6 November, in a speech to soldiers and officers at Hattab military base in Khartoum, the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and the Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, in the presence of the Chief of Staff and Heads of Units, confirmed that understandings had been reached with the civilian component, underscoring that the military was not aligned with any political group, and warned the National Congress Party, the Islamist Movement and others that they would not be allowed to return through the armed forces. On 13 November, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan spoke at the Markhiyat operational base reiterating similar messaging.

5. The Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council and the Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces, both signatories of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan, participated in the work of the Sudanese Bar Association. Meanwhile, non-signatories reiterated their refusal to participate. The Sudan Liberation Movement-Abdel Wahid (SLM/AW) faction rejected dialogue with the military. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction criticized the document for its failure to address the root causes of the conflict. Peace talks between the latter faction and the Government of the Sudan have not yet resumed, pending the restoration of a civilian Government and a return to constitutional order.

6. Other civilian forces also presented alternative visions for the transitional period. On 28 September, the resistance committees of Khartoum published a document, entitled The Revolutionary Charter to Establish People's Power, which was signed by some committees from 18 states across the Sudan. The Charter was intended to unify the resistance committees around a broad political vision that included a revolutionary legislative council, formed through a grass-roots process, that would serve as the supreme authority and through which the Prime Minister would be selected. On 8 October, FFC-National Consensus (which includes some signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement), FFC-National Forces, DUP-Original and other parties signed a political declaration that included a proposal for amending the 2019 Constitutional Document.

7. Throughout the reporting period, resistance committees and activists continued to organize protests to denounce military rule and call for an end to the military coup and a return to a civilian Government. While the protests remained largely peaceful, security forces in some cases continued to respond with excessive and disproportionate use of force, resulting in the injury of at least 415 people, mainly from live ammunition, stun grenades and tear gas. As the country marked one year since the coup on 25 October 2021, protests were held across the country by resistance committees and activists on 21, 22 and 23 October. An 18-year-old protester was shot and killed by security forces on 23 October. On 25 October, thousands of people participated in mass protests in major towns across the Sudan. One protester was killed in Khartoum after he was reportedly shot by security forces, bringing the total number of people killed in protests since 25 October 2021 to 119, including at least 21 children and one woman. In a statement issued after 25 October 2022, the Sudanese Police Force reported incidents of targeted violence against the police by organized groups that were unaffiliated with the protest. The United Nations cannot

independently verify that information. The police continued to carry out mass arrests during large protests, usually releasing protesters within 48 hours, after charging them with public order offences. During the reporting period, protesters reportedly affiliated with the former regime staged three demonstrations in front of UNITAMS, accusing the Mission of foreign interference in the country's internal affairs.

8. In Darfur, the situation remained relatively stable, with a reduction in large-scale violence compared with the previous reporting period. The local reconciliation agreements concluded in June and July 2022 in West and South Darfur helped to improve stability in the area. On 4 October, the Governor of the Darfur region, Minni Arko Minawi, convened a meeting of the five Darfur state Governors and the native administration in El Fasher to discuss security challenges. A regional native administration body was established to reconcile communities.

9. Significant intercommunal clashes took place in Blue Nile and West Kordofan States. The fighting in Blue Nile has increased in scope and has expanded to new areas, with many people killed, injured and displaced. The situation escalated, with protesters from the Funj tribe holding demonstrations in front of the Governor's office in the state capital, El Damazin, on 20 and 21 October. The protesters demanded the Governor's resignation, the cancellation of the Juba Peace Agreement and the withdrawal of certain security forces from the region. The Government's subsequent deployment of additional security forces helped to curb violence. A delegation from the Blue Nile State native administration and leaders from the Hausa community held separate meetings with government officials and UNITAMS to discuss the causes of the conflict and ways forward.

10. In West Kordofan State, clashes erupted between the Misseriya and Hamar tribes in Abu Zabad town on 12 September, when tensions between the communities regarding land ownership in the locality escalated. Three people were reportedly killed, and four injured. A cessation of hostilities agreement was brokered through local mediation efforts and signed by tribal representatives on 19 September. Members of the Hamar community also organized two road blockades, one starting on 24 August and one starting on 1 October, to demand secession from West Kordofan and the formation of a new state of "Central Kordofan".

11. On 18 August, two leaders of the SPLM-N Sudanese Revolutionary Front, Malik Agar and Yasir Arman, announced an amicable split. Consequently, on 21 August, 33 individuals, including a former federal government minister, Buthaina Dinar, established the SPLM Democratic Revolutionary Movement, headed by Yasir Arman.

12. Nine individuals from the Misseriya community who had been in custody of the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction in South Kordofan since August were released and taken to Juba on 11 October, following mediation by the President of South Sudan. On 27 October, UNITAMS was able to secure the release of two women health-care workers in the custody of that faction and evacuate them from the area under the faction's control. The operation was supported by members of the United Nations country team.

13. In the eastern part of the Sudan, tensions among communities persisted, in particular within the Beja High Council, which remained divided. On 1 October, Mohamed Taher Aila, who had previously served as Prime Minister in the former Government of Omer Al-Bashir, as Governor of Red Sea State and as a prominent member of the dissolved National Congress Party, returned to Port Sudan from Egypt. On 26 October, Nazir Tirik, the leader of one faction of the Beja High Council, rejected the talks conducted between the military and civilians in Khartoum and called for self-determination for the East if Eastern demands were not met. On 9 November, a rival faction of the Beja High Council claimed sovereign authority for the Beja in the East.

## B. Security situation

14. General insecurity, including intercommunal clashes, armed conflict and criminality, continued to pose a significant challenge. From 21 August to 17 November, 524 security incidents were recorded, compared with 569 during the previous reporting period. At the same time, more than 300 civilians were reportedly killed in intercommunal clashes over 18 incidents, compared with 261 killed in 46 incidents during the previous reporting period.

15. Significant intercommunal clashes took place in Blue Nile State, despite the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement on 3 August. On 1 and 2 September, violence erupted between the Hamaj community and allied groups and the Hausa community in the Rusayris and Wad al-Mahi localities, when displaced members of the Hausa community attempted to return to their original home locations. At least 21 people, including 2 children, were killed, and 40 people, including 10 children, were injured. On 13 and 14 October, additional clashes were reported between the Hausa and Jabalaween communities in Wad al-Mahi locality. Fourteen individuals were allegedly killed, and members of the Hausa community have been displaced. Tensions escalated into another significant episode of violence on 19 October, when the members of the Hausa community launched an attack against the Hamaj, Funj, Berti and Gumuz communities in the Wad al-Mahi locality, leaving more than 257 dead and 570 injured in Wad al-Mahi, Rusayris and El Damazin. The Governor of Blue Nile State declared a state of emergency across the region on 21 October, giving full authority to security organs to restore order and initiating an investigation into the violence. Security forces from outside the state contributed to a reduction of violence and ensured a tenuous degree of stability. On 23 October, demonstrators partially burned and looted the Governor's office in El Damazin and the administrative office in the Kurmuk locality in protest against the Government's alleged failure to protect civilians. Further clashes took place in villages of the Wad al-Mahi locality, from 23 to 26 October and on 12 November. On 7 November, the Governor issued two emergency laws to further enforce state authority.

16. Intercommunal violence also occurred in West Kordofan State on 14 and 15 October. In the Lagawa locality, the Misseriya tribe engaged in armed clashes over land ownership with the Nuba and Dajo tribes, leaving at least 19 dead and 34 injured and leading to the displacement of about 65,000 people. On 18 October, several mortars were launched into Lagawa town from the Tolishi mountain area. On 9 November, the All Nuba Council organized a large protest in Khartoum and handed a memorandum to the Sovereign Council, in which they demanded an investigation by an independent central government committee, the withdrawal of certain government security forces from the area and the resignation of the Governor of West Kordofan.

17. Security incidents rooted in disagreements over land ownership and cultivation occurred in Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile States. The destruction of farms is a recurrent challenge during the rainy season. Clashes took place on 20 September between Awlad Gabosh nomads and Kawaleeb farmers in Rashad locality, South Kordofan State, allegedly owing to issues related to grazing and land ownership. Five tribesmen were injured. In North Darfur, beginning on 21 September, members of the Arab Shatiyah community reportedly destroyed farms in five locations east of Tawilah. Government joint forces intervened in the Kuraynik locality in West Darfur on 3 November, to arrest camel herders who were illegally entering farmland belonging to local farmers. In Blue Nile State, on 5 September, clashes over agricultural land erupted between the Fallata and Ragareeg communities in the Geisan and Wad al-Mahi localities, resulting in four deaths and two people injured. On 9 November, intercommunal violence between the Misseriya and Awlad Rasheed

communities took place in the Bindisi locality, reportedly following the armed robbery of a Misseriya youth, leading to at least 20 persons being killed and 15 injured. On 13 November, the authorities declared a one-month state of emergency in Central Darfur and imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the Wadi Salih, Mukjar, Bindisi and Um Dukhun localities.

18. Clashes were reported on 16 September between factions of the non-signatory armed group Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) in the Jebel Marra area of Central Darfur. The incident was reportedly triggered by the killing of an element of the SLA/AW Mubarak Aldouk faction by unknown perpetrators. In retaliation, elements of the SLA/AW Mubarak Aldouk faction exchanged gunfire with elements of the SLA/AW Salih Borsa faction at Torora village. As a result, two people were reportedly killed, and seven others injured, from both sides. Livestock belonging to locals in the area was looted. In addition, on 3 October, tensions between Rapid Support Forces and SLA/AW close to the Sortony internally displaced persons camp led to about 5,000 internally displaced persons fleeing to nearby mountains. Several clashes took place near Rockero village in Central Darfur between SLA/AW elements and security forces personnel composed of elements of the Hassabo signatory armed group (a splinter group of the SLA/AW movement), likely around control of territory. On 18 October, 12 Hassabo elements were reportedly killed, and 2 injured. On 21 October, nine Hassabo elements were reportedly killed. Clashes also took place on 1 November, leaving 10 unidentified elements dead.

19. Criminality targeting State security forces took place in Darfur. On 6 September, personnel of the Sudanese Armed Forces were allegedly ambushed by unidentified armed men near Kolgi, North Darfur. One soldier was allegedly killed, and four others injured. On 22 September, unidentified armed perpetrators shot at an armed forces vehicle in Central Darfur, killing the driver. This was the seventh recorded incident involving the ambush of government forces since 21 August. In addition to bandits, non-signatory armed movements are suspected of engaging in various criminal activities, including robberies and cattle rustling, owing to resource constraints they face.

20. Tensions increased along the border with Chad on 29 August, when six Chadian customs officers were reportedly killed in the Bindisi locality, Central Darfur, following a cattle-smuggling incident. Hundreds of families were reportedly displaced. The incident in Bindisi follows cross-border violence in the Bir Saliba area of the Sirba locality, West Darfur, in early August, which resulted in a reported 18 deaths and the displacement of more than 3,000 people. Although cross-border incidents over livestock are common, in particular between the Arab and Zaghawa communities, the number of fatalities in those recent incidents and the corresponding mobilization were significant.

### **C. Human rights, rule of law and protection situation**

21. The human rights situation in the Sudan remained concerning. In Darfur, although some areas have seen a noticeable reduction in incidents, civilians remained exposed to violence and harassment. At the Zamzam internally displaced persons camp on the outskirts of El Fasher, North Darfur, displaced persons staged a sit-in on the El Fasher highway that lasted two weeks, from 20 August to 5 September 2022. The protest served to highlight protection challenges, including attacks against internally displaced persons, the lack of accountability for these attacks and inadequate basic social services. State authorities continued to engage with the displaced persons to find solutions to their concerns, including through the issuance of a decree by the Governor of North Darfur on 19 September 2022, by which he

authorized the formation of committees to address concerns regarding the dire humanitarian conditions in the camp.

22. During the reporting period, UNITAMS documented a total of 102 alleged incidents of human rights violations and abuses involving 967 victims, including 30 children. Of the 102 documented incidents, 81 were verified. Violations of the right to life accounted for 411 victims (402 men, 2 women and 7 children), violations of physical integrity accounted for 497 victims (482 men, 3 women and 12 children), and sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, accounted for 9 victims (5 women and 4 girls), while abduction accounted for 21 victims (20 men and 1 child). Physical assault accounted for 29 victims (7 men, 16 women and 6 children). Of the 102 documented incidents of alleged human rights violations and abuses, 12 were reportedly attributed to government security forces, resulting in 41 victims, and 86 to alleged non-State actors, including armed movements and militia groups, resulting in 915 victims, while unknown or unidentified individuals were responsible for 4 incidents and 11 victims.

23. On 28 August, the Attorney General issued a decision to bury the 3,000 unidentified bodies in the overcrowded morgues in Khartoum and Omdurman, some of which are believed to be from the violent dispersal of a sit-in on 3 June 2019. The burials of unidentified bodies were expected to begin on 25 September, but were put on hold to await the agreement of the victims' families. The authorities have, to date, been unable to obtain consensus from the victims' families for burial without prior identification of remains or the collection of evidence of crimes that could be used for future criminal proceedings.

24. There was limited progress made on justice reforms during the reporting period, while legal proceedings against political opponents continued. On 26 September, the Attorney General initiated preliminary criminal proceedings against members of the steering committee of the Sudanese Bar Association over numerous allegations regarding its legal basis, internal vetting procedures and corruption. The proceedings have been appealed. On 12 October, the Supreme Court acquitted a low-ranking officer of crimes linked to the 3 June 2019 violence against protesters. The same day, Wajdi Saleh, the spokesperson of the former Committee to Dismantle the 30 June 1989 Regime and Retrieve Public Funds (Dismantling Committee) and a prominent leader of FFC-Central Council, was detained for the third time since 25 October 2021, on charges related to his prior work on the Dismantling Committee. On 28 October 2022, the Sovereign Council Appeals Committee quashed the Dismantling Committee's decision of 27 December 2019 to dissolve the Al-Bashir-era Sudanese Bar Association. The Appeals Committee ordered the reinstatement of the previous Sudanese Bar Association and dissolved the steering committee of the current Sudanese Bar Association. The current Sudanese Bar Association has appealed the decision and the organization's present legal status remains unclear. Former Al-Bashir regime supporters stormed the premises of the Sudanese Bar Association on 1 November. On 11 November, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan dismissed the head of the Dismantling Committee Appeals Committee and appointed Sovereign Council member Eltahir Hajar in his place.

25. In meetings with national authorities during his visit to the Sudan from 13 to 16 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed the importance of building trust between the authorities and the people of the Sudan, given the country's history and the events of the past year, and insisted that human rights and accountability must be at the heart of any new transitional framework, if it was to succeed. He stressed that a broad spectrum of civil society representatives had stated that they would not accept a return to the past. All stakeholders he met with in Darfur insisted on the urgency of implementing the Juba Peace Agreement to address long-standing grievances, protect civilians and facilitate the voluntary return of

internally displaced persons. The support shown by the Sudanese authorities during the High Commissioner's visit was greatly appreciated.

26. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting, co-chaired by UNITAMS and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), verified 51 grave violations against 45 children (9 boys, 21 girls, 15 gender unknown) during the reporting period. This represents an 18 per cent increase in the number of children subjected to grave violations compared with the previous reporting period. Of the 45 children affected, 16 were killed (4 boys, 7 girls, 5 gender unknown) and 16 were maimed (3 boys, 3 girls, 10 gender unknown). Eight children (6 killed, 2 maimed) were affected by explosive remnants of war in North Darfur. Ten girls were subjected to sexual violence, and two boys and one girl were abducted. There was one attack on a school and two incidents of denial of humanitarian access. One violation was attributed to the Rapid Support Forces and 50 to unidentified perpetrators in North Darfur (19), West Darfur (11), Blue Nile (20) and Central Darfur (1).

#### **D. Socioeconomic situation**

27. Although the country's economy grew by an estimated 0.5 per cent in 2021, it is expected to contract by 0.3 per cent in 2022, owing to increased global food and oil prices, suspended international financial assistance, civil unrest, floods and disrupted economic activity constraining growth. Projections for near-term economic growth remain subdued, with low investment and consumption, owing to limited purchasing power, hyperinflation, chronic unemployment and unsustainable foreign debt.

28. A substantial decline in imports in the first half of 2022 compared with the same period in 2021 (with machinery and equipment dropping by 35 per cent and petroleum products by 24 per cent) also points to reduced economic activity. Nonetheless, the year-on-year value of exports increased by 29 per cent in the first half of 2022, driven mostly by a 37 per cent increase in gold exports.

29. The Sudan continued to experience triple-digit inflation during 2022, albeit at a decelerating rate (averaging 188 per cent during the period from January to September, compared with 359 per cent in 2021). The resulting price increases for essential consumables such as bread, fuel, electricity, medicine, health care and public transport affect vulnerable groups the most, leaving many families overstretched at a critical time. Following the 35 per cent plunge in the value of the Sudanese pound against the United States dollar in March 2022, the exchange rate has stabilized. Central Bank interventions and a more restrictive monetary policy, allowing for only a 36 per cent increase in the money supply between January and September 2022, compared with a 128 per cent increase during the same period in 2021, as well as the contracting economic activity, contributed to the stabilization of the exchange rate.

30. The reporting period witnessed widespread strikes by workers and trade unions in several sectors across the Sudan to protest rising prices, increased taxes imposed by the Ministry of Finance and unpaid salaries.

#### **E. Humanitarian situation**

31. The humanitarian situation in the Sudan remains dire. Pursuant to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis for the Sudan, it was projected that up to 7.7 million people were expected to be food insecure from October 2022 to February 2023. The Sudan has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world. Currently, more than 600,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

The economic situation in the country and the global food crisis have pushed the prices of staples out of reach for many already vulnerable Sudanese. Prices of sorghum and millet rose by 10 to 35 per cent in August, reaching new record highs. The 2022 harvested area and yields are likely to be affected by the below-average early-season rains, localized losses due to floods and soaring prices of agricultural inputs, including fuel. Approximately 6.9 million girls and boys, or one in three school-aged children, do not go to school in the Sudan. Girls are especially vulnerable in that regard.

32. To date, 63,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been recorded since the start of the pandemic. As at the time of writing the present report, 12 per cent of the population had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and 20 per cent had received at least one dose. Another vaccination campaign is ongoing, targeting 6 million people across the Sudan.

33. The number of people affected by seasonal rains and flash floods across the Sudan remained constant, at 349,000 since 26 September. Rains and floods have destroyed at least 24,860 homes and damaged a further 48,250 homes in 16 of the 18 states. The National Council for Civil Defence reported that 146 people had died and 122 people had been injured since the beginning of the rainy season in June. The most affected states were South Darfur, Gedaref, Central Darfur, White Nile and Kassala.

34. From January to October 2022, more than 265,000 people were displaced, owing to intercommunal conflicts and armed attacks. Since mid-July, almost 100,000 people have reportedly been displaced within Blue Nile State and into neighbouring localities and states owing to intercommunal conflict. Due to the relapse in conflict and violence since 13 October, more than 34,000 people were displaced to El Damazin and Rusayris towns and were sheltering in 10 schools. An unconfirmed number of people have been displaced within Wad al-Mahi, and some have been displaced to Sennar and other states. An inter-agency humanitarian assessment mission was carried out on 27 October to the schools in El Damazin and Rusayris. Since 28 October, the security situation has improved, and no incidents have been reported. Violence in the Al Lagowa locality of West Kordofan State in October led to the displacement of more than 36,000 people into other parts of that state and South Kordofan State. Humanitarian organizations have carried out assessment missions to support those displaced.

35. The Sudan continued to receive new refugees from neighbouring countries, mainly Eritrea, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Since the start of 2022, more than 38,100 refugees from South Sudan have arrived in the Sudan, mainly in White Nile, East Darfur, West Kordofan and South Kordofan States. Ethiopian refugees continued to arrive in eastern Sudan and the Blue Nile region, although in lower numbers. About 62,000 people have crossed into the Sudan since the start of the crisis in northern Ethiopia in November 2020, with 52,000 taking refuge in eastern Sudan and 10,000 in Blue Nile State.

36. Between 21 August and 6 November, 46 security incidents affecting the United Nations and non-governmental organizations were reported in the Sudan, including armed attacks, bodily assault, break-ins, robberies and verbal harassment.



### **III. Role of the United Nations in the Sudan and implementation of resolution 2636 (2022)**

#### **A. Objective 1: assist in the political transition, progress towards democratic governance, the protection and promotion of human rights and sustainable peace**

37. UNITAMS intensified its engagement towards a Sudanese-led and -owned agreement to restore a credible civilian democratic transition in the Sudan. The Mission engaged extensively with a broad range of Sudanese stakeholders, including political parties, women's groups, academics, youth groups, resistance committees and the military. It also coordinated closely with regional and international partners.

38. The partnership within the framework of the United Nations-African Union-IGAD trilateral mechanism remained central to those efforts. The mechanism continued to engage with and support Sudanese stakeholders, with a view to convening a viable political process. After a preliminary understanding was reached between the military and some civilian forces, the mechanism shuttled between civilian and military actors to help to narrow differences and to provide support, including technical advice, in order to facilitate consensus. On 17 November, the mechanism visited Kassala to engage Eastern stakeholders on the political process and priorities for the East.

39. On 8, 9, 14 and 15 September, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNITAMS facilitated meetings with 55 Sudanese women from political parties, armed movements, civil society, academia and the Women's Rights Group. The women came together around a common agenda of key principles and provisions from a women's rights perspective to discuss gender-related priorities for any future constitutional document or negotiations on the basis of such principles. The women continued to meet with the trilateral mechanism and members of the diplomatic community.

40. UNITAMS also continued to engage and support the Women's Rights Group as a stand-alone delegation of women from across the Sudan. On 5 and 6 September, UNITAMS convened a meeting with the Group in Khartoum to analyse the political landscape and support the development of an action plan to strengthen the outreach and influence of the Group, both in the regions and in Khartoum.

41. UNITAMS field offices in Darfur, South Kordofan and Red Sea States engaged with local stakeholders on the political process to enable the inclusion of their views, in particular those of women, internally displaced persons and young people. The United Nations continued to provide expert advice to relevant stakeholders on electoral issues. Other areas of cooperation with respect to transition issues, however, remained stalled, pending a political agreement and the formation of a civilian-led Government.

42. During the reporting period, projects across the Sudan supported by the Peacebuilding Fund promoted the meaningful participation of young people in peacebuilding. Projects supported by the Fund contributed to tangible results across all three priority areas of the United Nations common approach. In addition, members of the United Nations country team are engaging in stabilization-related activities, in particular to support durable solutions for host communities and internally displaced persons. The construction by UNDP of solar-fitted water yards in South Darfur and South Kordofan and of a girls' primary school and a community centre in South Darfur, and its support for rain-fed agriculture activities in White Nile, are examples of those activities.

43. UNITAMS continued to promote human rights and protection of civilians. From 3 to 5 October, UNITAMS held a three-day workshop on enhanced engagement with civil society groups working in South and West Kordofan. The workshop was attended by 33 civil society representatives from several localities in Kordofan and was focused on human rights, child protection and protection of civilians. Recommendations are being consolidated into a framework that would lead to a workplan for civil society groups. Engagements were made with the federal Humanitarian Aid Commission and the Governor of South Kordofan State to highlight some of the issues that emerged from the workshop.

## **B. Objective 2: support peace processes and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements**

44. The peace process with the SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction that had begun in Juba in 2021, mediated by the Government of South Sudan and facilitated by UNITAMS, remains stalled. UNITAMS remains in contact with the Government of South Sudan and SPLM-N on this issue.

45. The implementation of transitional security arrangements for Darfur continued to advance in accordance with the Juba Peace Agreement. The Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, chaired by UNITAMS, was central to this effort. The Committee continued to actively monitor, verify and investigate ceasefire violations in Darfur. The arrival of additional UNITAMS staff allowed the Committee to strengthen the operationalization of its five sectoral committees. Following the deployment of representatives of the United Nations, the Government of the Sudan and armed movements, the five sectoral committees are now able to meet and conduct joint activities. However, physical offices for the committees have yet to be established, and field teams have not yet been deployed to any of the locations. In view of the initial start-up challenges in terms of inadequate staffing and the need for logistical support for the Committee to effectively carry out its tasks, UNITAMS continues to provide support to the Committee. Efforts are under way to provide office space for the sectoral committees in all five Darfur States. The national office of the Committee in El Fasher became operational during the reporting period.

46. Through its sectoral committees, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee has continued its to reach out to civil society organizations and communities in order to develop its communication and warning networks on alleged ceasefire violations. A total of 33 outreach activities took place at all levels, reaching more than 350 people, including internally displaced persons, state security committees, native administrators, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the signatory armed movements across the region. The Committee also worked with the United Nations country team and other partners to support humanitarian efforts.

47. During the reporting period, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee responded to four alleged ceasefire violations and related complaints in North Darfur, and two in South Darfur, including through the mediation and resolution, by its North Darfur sectoral committee, of a complaint on the alleged deployment of forces contrary to guidelines in the Juba Peace Agreement. Working in coordination with the state security committee of North Darfur, the Committee contributed to the de-escalation of tensions in the Zamzam internally displaced persons camp during demonstrations and the sit-in that blocked the El Fasher-Nyala road in August and September.

48. The Permanent Ceasefire Committee conducted several capacity-building activities, including initial training for sectoral committees and workshops on the Committee's standard operating procedures in North, West and South Darfur States. Those activities enhanced the common understanding of the Committee's mandate,

built trust among sectoral committee members and enabled the Committee to conduct its activities effectively as a team.

### **C. Objective 3: assist in peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas**

49. Working with the United Nations country team, UNITAMS continued its efforts to support and promote the protection of civilians and to identify ways to support and accelerate the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians.

50. UNITAMS, UNDP, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of Counter Terrorism, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Population Fund, in collaboration with the team of experts on the rule of law and sexual violence in conflict, have finalized a multi-year joint rule of law programme. The programme is tailored to respond to the political situation and covers all of the Sudan, with a focus on Darfur, the East and the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Initial integrated United Nations activities have been focused on assessments related to rule of law institutions and criminal justice chain actors, such as the prosecution and police, and human rights compliance.

51. UNITAMS and UNICEF are working with local authorities to ensure the protection of civilians in West Darfur. The project is aimed at reaching an estimated 50,000 people through integrated basic service provision, strengthened community-based early warning systems and mediation support, while promoting a culture of peaceful coexistence.

52. UNITAMS, OHCHR and UNDP jointly implemented several activities regarding criminal justice and accountability. Those activities included two round tables, one held in El Geneina on 27 September and one held in Kadugli on 12 October, with civil society representatives to discuss the implementation of accountability provisions in the Juba Peace Agreement. Round tables were held in El Fasher on 6 September and in Nyala on 18 October to discuss the development of defence strategies in sensitive detention cases with the Bar Association. In addition, three discussions on interim constitutional arrangements related to justice and human rights topics were held during the reporting period. On 16 November, UNITAMS and UNDP held the first of a series of discussions on the reform of the rural court system with the Supreme Court and 46 rural court judges. In October and November, UNITAMS, UNDP and OHCHR continued the policy discussion on compliance with international standards and norms in policing peaceful assemblies with prosecutors in Port Sudan, El Obeid, Wad Medani and Nyala.

53. The UNITAMS Police Advisory Unit continued to engage with the Sudanese Police Force, prosecutors and communities. The Unit delivered capacity-building activities for national counterparts in collaboration with UNDP and other United Nations country team members. The Unit contributed to promoting dialogue, building trust and furthering cooperation between State authorities and communities. The Unit supported the Sudanese Police Force, prosecutors and community members through the provision of 2 training-of-trainer sessions, 7 specialized training sessions, 4 workshops, 32 advisory sessions and 3 community outreach programmes. A total of 716 police personnel (141 women and 575 men), 759 community members (594 women and 165 men) and 2 prosecutors (1 woman and 1 man) benefited from those capacity-building activities. Of the total 1,477 beneficiaries, 736 were women and 741 were men.

54. The two training-of-trainer sessions and the two specialized training sessions were focused on community-oriented policing and the prevention and investigation of sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. They were organized jointly with UNDP in Khartoum and held between 18 September and 10 November. The sessions increased the training capacity of the Sudanese Police Force and are expected to strengthen policing responses on protection of civilians issues. Between August and November, the Police Advisory Unit also conducted four training sessions on protection of civilians for police officers in South Darfur and conducted community policing training sessions in Zalingei, Central Darfur, from 5 to 8 September.

55. From 14 to 17 November, the Police Advisory Unit, jointly with UNDP and the Sudanese Police Force, organized a workshop to support the Police Force establish and operationalize community-oriented policing based on international best practices. To promote dialogue and problem-solving between the police and communities, the Police Advisory Unit organized a two-day workshop on the protection of civilians in El Fasher, North Darfur, on 20 and 21 August, and a joint Sudanese Police Force and community leadership workshop on the community policing partnership in Zalingei, Central Darfur, on 19 September. In addition, UNDP and UNITAMS organized two human rights capacity-building workshops: one in Port Sudan on 28 and 29 August and one in Kassala on 11 and 12 September.

56. From 2 to 6 October, the UNITAMS peacebuilding unit led an assessment in Kassala, meeting with local government officials and representatives of youth, women, civil society and the native administration. The aim of the assessment was to create a shared understanding among United Nations entities about the conflict dynamics, peacebuilding opportunities and challenges in the East.

57. Support is being provided to the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator) through funding by the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility for a joint project between the UNITAMS peacebuilding team and the World Bank. The project is intended to enhance a shared research agenda on the drivers of conflict and sources of resilience that will inform interventions on political, economic and humanitarian issues, as well as on conflict prevention. Capitalizing on the respective strengths and comparative advantages of the World Bank and the United Nations, the project will explore how to generate better quality data in the Sudan, including at the local level.

58. During the reporting period, work was started by the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations multi-partner trust fund to finalize a joint strategic results framework exercise aimed at informing further investments by the two funding mechanisms in the Sudan as part of efforts to consolidate a framework on peacebuilding. Through that work, the United Nations in the Sudan is pursuing improved coherence and complementarity in programming with increased impact and better coordination, lower overheads and more efficient use of funding. The strategic results framework is also aimed at strengthening the strategic contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund to peacebuilding in the Sudan through a focus on stabilizing hotspots and strengthening the infrastructure for peace. The findings of the seven peacebuilding assessments currently under way will inform work carried out under the framework.

59. UNITAMS cleared 101,636 m<sup>2</sup> of explosive ordnance-contaminated land in Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur States and destroyed 4,385 items of explosive hazards, including 3,921 rounds of small arms ammunition and 464 pieces of unexploded ordnance. Risk education and awareness was provided to 7,226 people (1,486 men, 2,188 women, 1,900 boys and 1,652 girls), and 225 volunteers were

trained in community-based explosive ordnance risk education. UNITAMS facilitated safe access for the humanitarian community, increased the amount of land available for productive use and restored the security of individuals and communities. UNITAMS also conducted three assessments in Darfur in response to explosive ordnance accidents: one in response to an ammunition store explosion in Zalingei, Central Darfur, one in response to an explosive ordnance accident in Dorum, North Darfur, and one to improve coordination with humanitarian actors across the Darfur region.

#### **D. Objective 4: support the mobilization of economic and development assistance and the coordination of humanitarian and peacebuilding assistance**

60. Working in the current context of political challenges and the pause in international development assistance after the coup of 25 October 2021, United Nations entities continued to deliver jointly in the Sudan, through priorities identified in its common approach. For example, UNICEF and the World Food Programme are delivering a programme on strengthening resilience and social cohesion in Darfur, with multi-year action in South, Central and North Darfur directly targeting an estimated 300,000 people. The programme is aimed at strengthening self-reliance, resilience and social cohesion across vulnerable population groups.

61. UNICEF and the World Health Organization are working jointly to strengthen the health-care system in the Sudan, conduct behaviour-change communication activities and provide life-saving health-care services to minimize the effects of epidemics and support children suffering from malnutrition. The agencies work particularly closely on immunization and have succeeded in declaring the Sudan polio-free and supported the inoculation of millions of people against COVID-19.

62. On 20 September, UNITAMS organized a meeting of the Friends of Sudan group with representatives of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, international donors and the UNITAMS Permanent Ceasefire Committee Chair, in order to support the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the security arrangements set out in the Darfur track of the Juba Peace Agreement, including the Permanent Ceasefire Committee. Representatives of the Joint High Military Committee gave a briefing on the progress made and challenges involved in implementing the security arrangements under the Agreement and funding needs.

#### **E. Mission operational and planning issues**

63. During the reporting period, the Mission continued to be operationally reinforced, including at its seven field offices, for more effective mandate delivery. UNITAMS locations across Darfur, as well as in Kadugli, El Damazin, Kassala and Port Sudan, were being expanded to accommodate the approved increase in personnel. As at 16 October 2022, Mission staffing stood at 215 civilian staff, 17 police personnel and 17 military observers. Consistent with the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity, over half of senior civilian appointments (at the D-1 level and higher) were held by women.

64. To bolster the strategic planning efforts of the United Nations country team, UNITAMS and the country team have been working on a joint results framework for the United Nations common approach. In preparation for future joint planning efforts, work on the interim cooperation framework for 2024–2025 has also commenced, through updates to the common country analysis. The interim cooperation framework, which is an integrated plan between UNITAMS and the United Nations country team,

will inform and support the country programme documents of the agencies, funds and programmes. Under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative, the pooled funding architecture has been adjusted to ensure that it supports the delivery of the United Nations common approach. A joint strategic results framework is being finalized for the Sudan financing platform and the Peacebuilding Fund, in which the comparative advantages of the two funds are clearly articulated, as is a joint programmatic approach against a set of expected results and indicators. The intention is to focus United Nations peacebuilding interventions on areas that are most prone to conflict.

#### **IV. Observations**

65. More than a year after the military coup of 25 October 2021, popular resistance to military rule continues, and the country remains without a civilian-led Government. The economy is struggling. Intercommunal clashes and other acts of armed violence have increased. Civilians are paying a heavy price, with many lives lost, thousands of people forcibly displaced and homes destroyed in Darfur and the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States.

66. Against this backdrop, the recent momentum towards a political breakthrough is an opportunity that must be urgently seized. The understandings reached between the military and some civilian forces on the basis of the draft constitution developed through the Sudanese Bar Association initiative are a welcome development and, along with inputs from other Sudanese stakeholders, transform the draft constitution into an inclusive basis for reaching a political agreement. I commend the efforts of the civilians seeking to build consensus and I encourage the military leaders to translate into reality their commitments of July 2022 to withdraw from the political scene and transfer power to the civilians. I urge the civilian forces to build on those understandings and reach an agreement with the military under the auspices of the trilateral mechanism. The robust engagement and involvement of women, young people and the resistance committees in the process is important. I further encourage the international community to continue to support efforts by the mechanism to facilitate a political agreement that will restore the political transition and stability in the country.

67. Only an inclusive Sudanese-owned and -led political process can offer a viable path towards an agreement among the parties on their respective roles and functions during the transitional period. This will help in addressing the most contentious issues at the core of the current crisis, including the reform of the security sector, achieving justice for the victims and their families and implementing the Juba Peace Agreement. The international community must be prepared to swiftly mobilize political and financial support for the transitional Government to enable it to address the daunting challenges the country is facing.

68. The United Nations remains steadfast in its support for the equal and meaningful participation of women in all areas of public life in the Sudan, including in the political process and any negotiated settlement, as well as in the future electoral process. I commend Sudanese women for their commitment to peace and sustainable development in the country, grounded in human rights, and welcome their contributions to the Sudanese-to-Sudanese discussions for women's participation in the political process. Those efforts notwithstanding, women remain underrepresented in political institutions and processes. The proposal of a minimum 40 per cent quota for women in the negotiating delegations and the decision-making bodies is therefore a much-needed and welcome development.

69. It is critical that the authorities create a credible and conducive environment for the political process by immediately halting the excessive use of force and the arrests and detention of protesters and that they ensure freedom of expression and the protection of the right of peaceful assembly. In this regard, I urge the authorities to investigate, effectively, impartially and in a timely manner, any allegation or reasonable suspicion of unlawful use of force or other violations by members of the security forces.

70. The ability of professional associations to operate freely remains critical to the efforts made towards the democratic transition in the Sudan. In that regard, I am concerned by recent administrative and judicial decisions on the legal status of some of the country's professional associations. In particular, the decisions to dissolve the Sudanese Consumer Protection Society and the steering committee of the Sudanese Bar Association have triggered legal uncertainties and disrupted the work of those entities.

71. The rise in intercommunal violence in various states is particularly alarming. I am deeply concerned about the renewal of large-scale violence in Blue Nile State, as well as armed clashes in West Kordofan. The continued political crisis compounds marginalization and political grievances, as well as unresolved conflicts over land ownership. It is incumbent upon the authorities to address the political and security causes of violence, prevent future conflicts, protect civilians and hold perpetrators to account. They must accelerate the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and advance efforts to promote community reconciliation.

72. More than two years since the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in October 2020, the most conflict-affected populations in Darfur and the Two Areas have yet to benefit from it. Despite some progress made in the implementation of security arrangements in Darfur, disaffection among the public has grown. The gains will not be sustainable unless the root causes of the conflict are effectively addressed, including land rights, the return of internally displaced persons and justice issues. The establishment of a land commission under the Darfur track of the Agreement is critical to resolving land ownership disputes. In addition, the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms to end impunity for crimes and human rights violations committed in Darfur and the Two Areas is long overdue. Effective and transparent monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement is needed. The participation of the communities, civil society groups, internally displaced persons and women is essential for implementing the Agreement in a manner that improves the lives of people.

73. The reduction in large-scale intercommunal violence in the Darfur region, owing to the measures taken by the Government, including in response to the calls by internally displaced persons from the Zamzam camp in El Fasher, North Darfur, for increased protection and for access to their farms, is encouraging. However, the continued individual attacks on vulnerable populations, including farmers and internally displaced persons, as well as clashes among SLA/AW factions and with the Rapid Support Forces, are concerning. The authorities and the non-signatory armed movements must cease hostilities urgently. It is incumbent upon the Government to do more to protect civilians and to expedite the deployment of the Joint Security-Keeping Force.

74. Humanitarian needs continue to grow as a result of conflict, the political and economic crisis, increased insecurity, localized violence and protracted internal displacement, coupled with dry spells, floods and outbreaks of disease. Some 14.3 million Sudanese are currently in need, and this is projected to grow to 15.8 million – about a third of the population – in 2023. Humanitarian partners have appealed for more than \$1.9 billion to provide assistance and protection in the Sudan

in 2022. Currently, the appeal is 38 per cent funded. Humanitarian partners appreciate the support received from donors so far, but are appealing for more, to reach the most vulnerable populations with much-needed life-saving assistance. Recent violence in Blue Nile and West Kordofan States has displaced almost 100,000 people. I call on the authorities to provide unhindered humanitarian access for humanitarian organizations to conduct assessments and provide assistance, while ensuring the safety of humanitarian workers and assets.

75. Programmatic support for peace dividends, resilience and programming across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to reduce needs in the long-term is crucial for the stability of the Sudan. The Organization continues to be guided by the United Nations common approach, through which it has articulated the areas where it can make a meaningful difference in the lives and livelihoods of the people of the Sudan. This includes investments in local peacebuilding, community stabilization, critical infrastructure, basic services and livelihoods. To ensure that this critical work can continue, voluntary donor contributions are fundamental. I urge international partners to continue to support the efforts of the integrated United Nations team in the Sudan and underscore the importance of providing timely support for the next civilian-led transitional Government.

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

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