



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 [2524 \(2020\)](#), in which the Council decided to establish the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and requested that the Secretary-General report to the Council every 90 days on the implementation of the UNITAMS mandate. The report covers the situation in the Sudan related to political, security, socioeconomic and humanitarian developments and to the protection of civilians, human rights and the rule of law during the period from 24 November 2020 to 15 February 2021. It also contains an update on the establishment of the Mission. The 90-day report on the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is included as an annex to the present report, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2559 \(2020\)](#).

II. Significant developments

Political situation

2. On 1 December 2020, the Sovereign Council issued decree No. 511, in which it established the Council of Partners of the Transitional Period (CPTP), which is composed of 29 members, including 6 representatives from the military, the Prime Minister, 13 representatives of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), the 7 signatories of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan and 2 additional seats reserved for unnamed representatives of the eastern track of the Juba peace process. Only one of the 29 members is a woman. The civilian-led transitional Government, FFC and some of the signatories of the Juba Agreement, namely the Sudan Liberation Army/Transitional Council (SLA/TC) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar faction, initially rejected the decree on the basis of fears that CPTP would undermine other transitional institutions, referring to a provision of the decree in which CPTP was granted "any additional powers required ... to implement its mandate and exercise its authority". Notwithstanding those initial rejections and following a quadripartite review by the Sovereign Council, the transitional Government, FFC and the armed group signatories of the Agreement,



CPTP held its inaugural meeting on 16 December 2020. In the first statement by CPTP, it endorsed regulations on it functioning as a “supporting” entity, in line with the role originally envisioned for it to “coordinate between actors and resolve differences” among the various political components. CPTP is expected to issue internal regulations that would not “violate/breach the authorities and prerogatives of transitional institutions” and would “complement” decree No. 511 of the Sovereign Council.

3. Negotiations and consultations were held on the formation of an expanded transitional Government incorporating the signatories of the Juba Agreement. On 4 February 2021, the Sovereign Council issued a constitutional decree expanding its membership to 14 members through the addition of three signatories to the Agreement: Chair of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and head of the SLA/TC faction, El Hadi Idris; head of the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction, Malik Agar; and leader of the Sudan Liberation Force Alliance, Al-Taher Abu Bakr Hagar. Prominent women’s groups continued to campaign for the equal and meaningful representation of women in the transitional legislative and executive branches. That would be in accordance with earlier commitments made by the transitional Government and other signatories to the Juba Agreement to improve gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as relevant provisions in the Constitutional Document, including for women to represent a minimum of 40 per cent of the Transitional Legislative Council. Women’s rights activists from the All Our Rights campaign submitted to FFC, SRF and the office of the Prime Minister a list of proposed female candidates for ministerial posts. On 19 January, in a meeting with a delegation from the All Our Rights campaign, the Prime Minister of the Sudan, Abdalla Hamdok, recognized the critical role that women had played in the revolution and reiterated the transitional Government’s support for their inclusion in the political and public life of the Sudan.

4. On 8 February 2021, the Prime Minister announced the formation of the expanded new Cabinet, which included representatives of FFC, which was allocated 17 ministerial portfolios, and SRF, which was allocated 7 portfolios. The new cabinet comprises 26 Ministries, all of whose Ministers were announced on 8 February, except for the Ministry of Education, the decision on which remains subject to consultations. The Cabinet includes four women, in the positions of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of the Federal Government, Minister of Higher Education and Minister of Labour and Administrative Development. Five Ministers from the previous Cabinet retained their positions, namely, the Ministers of Defence, Justice, Irrigation, Higher Education and Religious Affairs and Endowments. During the announcement of the new Cabinet, the Prime Minister also stated that state governors would be appointed by 15 February and that the Transitional Legislative Council and commissions established as a result of the Juba Agreement would be formed on 25 February. The state governors have yet to be appointed and the Transitional Legislative Council has yet to be formed, despite continued demands from across the Sudanese political spectrum and appeals from the regional and international partners of the Sudan for it to be formed rapidly. The continued postponement is due to ongoing consultations regarding the distribution of seats among Sudanese political forces, including the signatories of the Agreement, leading to a risk of serious delays in the timeline of the political transition.

5. On 19 December 2020, on the second anniversary of the December 2018 revolution, thousands of Sudanese people took to the streets to protest in Khartoum, El Fasher, Gedaref, Kassala, Kadugli, Port Sudan, Atbarah, Dongola and Nyala. The protesters’ demands ranged from appeals for the continued commitment to the democratic transition to calls to topple the transitional authorities. The Sudanese Communist Party and the Khartoum-based Resistance Committees denounced the

performance of the Sovereign Council and the transitional Government, the formation of CPTP and the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. In addition to advocating the revolution's objectives of freedom, peace and justice through a civilian-led democratic State, protesters called for the accountability of governance structures and for the rapid formation of a representative and inclusive Transitional Legislative Council. While FFC supporters took to the streets to celebrate the anniversary, two attempted sit-ins, in front of the Presidential Palace in Khartoum and the parliament building in Omdurman, were dispersed by security forces.

6. Political alignments continued to shift throughout the reporting period. On 25 December 2020, the SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction joined 11 Sudanese political parties, women's groups and movements in a new alliance. The group condemned the encroachment of the Sovereign Council on the prerogatives and mandate of the civilian authorities and reiterated its support for the civilian-led government; the Prime Minister's prerogative to lead the peace process; the joint agreement on principles signed by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu and the Prime Minister in Addis Ababa on 3 September 2020; the swift formation of the Transitional Legislative Council; and the separation of religion and State. On 12 January 2021, SRF and the National Umma Party also announced the formation of an alliance.

International relations

7. Tensions escalated between the Sudan and Ethiopia concerning the Fashaqah area on their border. The Sudanese Armed Forces reportedly deployed troops along the non-demarcated border areas with Ethiopia. The pace and scope of operations escalated after militias from Ethiopia allegedly killed three Sudanese soldiers and one officer on 15 December 2020. The Ethiopian forces are also reported to have increased their military presence along that border. On 13 December 2020, the Prime Minister of the Sudan met with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, in Addis Ababa. They met again on 20 December, on the margins of the Extraordinary Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Heads of State and Government, to discuss, inter alia, bilateral issues, including the border tensions. The Ethiopia-Sudan joint political committee for the demarcation of boundaries subsequently met in Khartoum on 22 and 23 December. On 12 January 2021, the Sudan accused militias from Ethiopia of killing five women and one child. The Sudan also alleged that its airspace had been breached on the following day by an Ethiopian military aircraft, causing the Sudanese authorities to declare a no-fly zone over the area. On 13 January, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan and the Sudan National Boundary Commission of the Sovereign Council gave a presentation to the diplomatic community, detailing the history of border negotiations with Ethiopia and calling for political re-engagement and full commitment to a peaceful resolution of the border dispute, in accordance with the original 1903 demarcation of the eastern border. Since then, both countries have reiterated their commitment to a peaceful resolution of their differences regarding the demarcation of the border. Djibouti, South Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have offered to provide mediation.

8. On 14 December 2020, the United States of America rescinded the designation of the Sudan as a State sponsor of terrorism. The decision is a major achievement for the transitional Government as it stands to gain access to much-needed financial and economic assistance at an important juncture in the political transition of the Sudan. On the same day, in a press conference to welcome the decision, the Prime Minister expressed optimism that the removal of the country from the list of State sponsors of terrorism would improve its socioeconomic conditions. On 21 December, United States lawmakers approved an act on the resolution of claims in the Sudan, which restores the country's sovereign immunity with regard to the United States, with the exception of legal claims related to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

9. On 6 January 2021, Minister of Justice of the Sudan, Nasredeem Abdulbari, and then United States Secretary of the Treasury, Steve Mnuchin, signed an agreement on the normalization of relations with Israel. There continue to be diverging views in the political realm and within Sudanese society.

10. The Friends of Sudan group has continued to play an important role in providing political and economic support for the country during its historic period of transition. On 28 January 2021, in a virtual meeting hosted by Germany, the group was provided with an update by the transitional Government on recent political, peace and economic developments. The members of the group acknowledged the progress made in the political and peace processes and encouraged the signatories of the Juba Agreement to ensure its swift implementation and avoid further delays in the establishment of the transitional bodies and in preparations for the upcoming constitutional conference. They also acknowledged the significant progress made by the transitional Government in advancing its economic reform agenda and welcomed its commitment to the swift implementation of additional reforms to promote business and encourage investment in the Sudan. Members of the group stressed the urgent need to tackle exchange rate reform in order to ensure that the performance of the Sudan in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff-monitored programme remained on track and to enable the country to fully benefit from the support offered by partners and the international financial institutions through the Sudan Family Support Programme. The transitional Government confirmed its commitment to exchange rate reform but stressed its view that foreign currency reserves needed to be held in the Central Bank. During the meeting, the members of the group welcomed ongoing preparations by multilateral institutions and other partners to provide debt relief, indicated that resources were still needed for macroeconomic reform and expressed their readiness to assist the Sudan in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. As a prerequisite for the assessment of the eligibility of the Sudan in the debt relief process of the Initiative, and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Anti-Corruption Act has been finalized and submitted to the Joint Council meeting for adoption.

Security situation

11. The security situation was characterized by major armed clashes in some areas of Darfur. In the Jebel Marra area, armed clashes were recorded between factions of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) elements, which had resulted in the deaths of several fighters and civilians in the area. The leaders of the two factions, Saleh Borsa and Mubarak Aldouk, reportedly have divergent positions on the peace process. The former is opposed to the peace process and remains a proponent of the mainstream SLA/AW position on negotiations, while the latter supports the peace process. The infighting also triggered the displacement of over 13,000 people across 30 villages in the Golo locality. Villages were attacked at night, with civilians apprehended, beaten or killed on suspicion of belonging to the other faction. At least 4 of the 30 villages (Nimra, Koma, Sabi and Dowo) were reported to have been completely destroyed. In the Jebel Marra area, two attacks were reported to have been carried out by the Sudanese Armed Forces on SLA/AW positions at Sabanga on 24 and 31 January 2021. The attacks resulted in 14 people being killed, 10 wounded and the displacement of an estimated 22,000 people. The incidents did not, however, result in a further escalation of violence or in reprisal attacks.

12. On 6 February 2021, the SPLM-N Al-Hilu faction announced a five-month extension, until 30 June, of the unilateral cessation of hostilities in areas under its control, reportedly as a gesture of goodwill for a peaceful resolution of the Sudanese conflict and to give peace an opportunity for success.

13. As the mandate of UNAMID ended on 31 December 2020, institutional and security sector reforms, including the establishment of a force for the protection of civilians in Darfur, are a major challenge faced by the transitional Government. Evidence of critical gaps in the protection of civilians is the increased tensions and violence in many parts of the Sudan, including in the Darfur region. Intercommunal violence continues to threaten the lives of civilians, with a rise in the number of incidents in January 2021 leading to the death or injury of hundreds of civilians, including a humanitarian worker.

14. Intercommunal violence broke out on 15 January 2021 between the Masalit and Mahameed tribes in El Geneina and in the Krinding camp for internally displaced persons, in West Darfur, which resulted in 162 deaths, the displacement of over 100,000 people and injuries to 300 people. A national staff member of an international non-governmental organization (NGO) was killed during the violence. On 17 January, the transitional Government convened a National Security Committee meeting and dispatched additional forces to the area to help to restore calm. The Minister of Cabinet Affairs travelled to the area on 18 January and engaged with the communities. On the same date, a Government delegation, led by the Attorney General and including representatives of the judiciary, the military and security institutions, was also sent there to assess and help to resolve the situation, as well as to help to restore law and order. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on 19 January condemning the events and emphasizing the Government's responsibility to continue to provide protection. On the same day, in a speech to a graduating class of the Rapid Support Forces, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, described the events in El Geneina as the work of instigators using social media to spread chaos. He called for the Rapid Support Forces deployed in Darfur to operate impartially, respect the law and follow the guidance provided by the police and the judiciary.

15. On 18 January 2021, there were violent clashes between the Falatta and Rizeigat tribes in Tawil village in South Darfur, resulting in the displacement of close to 20,000 people. The Governor of South Darfur State condemned the incident and issued directives to restore law and order, strengthen security forces and prevent confrontations from spreading to other areas. Subsequently, joint security forces comprising the Sudanese Armed Forces, the police and the Rapid Support Forces were deployed and established security buffer zones between the two communities. Although joint forces were deployed to respond to the recent violence in West Darfur and South Darfur States, their presence has not been observed in the other states of Darfur. The joint security-keeping force envisioned in the Juba Agreement, which is supposed to comprise government forces and signatory armed movements, has not yet been formed. On 21 January, during an emergency closed session of the Security Council, the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, briefed the Council on the clashes in Darfur.

16. From 8 to 10 February 2021, there were reports of violent protests, including riots, vandalism, arson and looting, in Western Kordofan, Northern Kordofan, South Darfur, North Darfur and East Darfur. The violent protests led Governors to declare a state of emergency and impose curfews in the affected states. While it was reported that the civil unrest may have been fuelled by increasing economic hardships, a number of Sudanese officials have accused elements of the former regime of instigating the violence, given the coordinated timing of the violent outbursts and the traditionally peaceful nature of the Sudanese protest movement.

Socioeconomic situation

17. The economic situation continued to deteriorate. The transitional Government lifted fuel subsidies as part of the IMF staff-monitored programme. The resulting

increase in the fuel price has exacerbated the spike in the inflation rate, which reached 304 per cent in January, as reflected by sharp increases in the price of bread and vegetables, transport and clothing.

18. The transitional Government is working towards economic recovery, while facing massive budget and trade deficits and amid widespread shortages of essential goods. The trade deficit, which stood at approximately \$3.2 billion in the third quarter of 2020, along with reductions in foreign direct investment, has driven the persistent devaluation of the Sudanese pound, leading to a rate on the parallel market of 340 Sudanese pounds to the United States dollar as at 1 February 2021, compared with the official exchange rate of 55 Sudanese pounds to the United States dollar.

19. On 19 January 2021, the Sovereign Council and the Council of Ministers approved the State budget for 2021. The budget, estimated at approximately 1 trillion Sudanese pounds, or \$18 billion at the official exchange rate of 55 Sudanese pounds to 1 United States dollar, is based on the transitional Government's national priorities, which includes the implementation of the Juba Agreement. The transitional Government aims to reduce inflation from over 250 per cent to 95 per cent by the end of 2021. The 2021 budget is also reportedly the first budget of the Sudan in which the 12.5 per cent allocation for education (137 billion Sudanese pounds, a 170 per cent increase compared with 2020) exceeds military expenditure, to which 12.4 per cent (136.99 billion Sudanese pounds) have been allocated. The transitional Government has allocated 28.5 per cent of the budget to social protection and salaries (313.22 billion Sudanese pounds), 9 per cent to health services (99.01 billion Sudanese pounds) and 5 per cent (54.1 billion Sudanese pounds) to the implementation of the Agreement. On 9 January, the economic committee of FFC criticized the lack of transparency in the budget preparation process and noted that allocations to defence and security institutions had increased significantly.

20. On 6 January 2021, the United States and the Sudan signed a memorandum of understanding to provide the Sudan with a bridge loan that will enable the clearing of approximately \$1.2 billion in arrears to the World Bank once the conditions agreed upon with the Bank have been met. On 21 January, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland visited the Sudan for meetings with the Prime Minister, the acting Foreign Minister, Omer Gamareldin Ismail, and the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah Burhan. The visit led to confirmation that the United Kingdom would provide £40 million in funding to the Sudan Family Support Programme and would offer, as part of a coordinated international package, a bridge loan of £330 million to clear arrears to the African Development Bank (ADB). The support of the United Kingdom is contingent on the Sudan staying the course with regard to the economic reforms agreed upon with IMF, and on the Executive Board of IMF and the Board of Directors of the World Bank approving similar packages on the clearing of arrears. The clearing of arrears with the World Bank and ADB will enable the Sudan to receive more than \$1 billion annually from the World Bank for the first time in 27 years. However, the Sudan remains in arrears to IMF, thereby barring it from receiving fresh funds from IMF until it has cleared those debts.

21. On 9 December 2020, the acting Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, together with the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Animal Resources, announced the start date of the population and housing census and the comprehensive agricultural census, which will be conducted from 15 to 30 April 2022. The acting Minister of Finance and Economic Planning affirmed the transitional Government's full commitment to carrying out the censuses during the transitional period. She also announced that the transitional Government was committed to paying 53 per cent of the total cost for its conduct, which is estimated at \$305 million, and that international development partners had committed to provide the remaining funds.

Protection of civilians, human rights and the rule of law

22. The transitional Government continued its efforts to carry out institutional and legal reforms, strengthening the framework for the promotion and protection of human rights and for delivering justice to victims through nationally led processes. The recruitment and appointment of a new cadre of justice sector professionals is pending, following the termination of 209 advisers of the Ministry of Justice by the national committee on the dismantling of the former regime. With the support of UNDP, the Ministry of Justice has made advances in the reform of the justice sector and finalized a national strategy on institutional reform for the judiciary and the Ministry of Justice, which includes a restructuring plan and a human resources strategy for justice sector professionals.

Commissions

23. The transitional Government continued to make efforts to establish the justice and accountability mechanisms enshrined in the Constitutional Document and the Juba Agreement. In November 2020, the Ministry of Justice, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, concluded a series of consultations with civil society organizations on the draft law of the Transitional Justice Commission. The draft law, reviewed by the parties to the Agreement, was submitted to the Joint Council for adoption. The Ministry of Justice also finalized the first draft of the law on the National Human Rights Commission, which would be subject to consultations with civil society and other relevant stakeholders, including regarding the process for selecting the Commission's members, in order to bring it into line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. The draft law on the National Anti-Corruption Commission has been submitted to the Joint Council for adoption, following public consultations led by the Ministry of Justice and with the support of UNDP. On 12 January 2021, the judiciary of the Sudan decided to revise the appeals mechanism for decisions issued by the national committee on the dismantling of the former regime, replacing it with a new court chamber composed of three Supreme Court judges. This mechanism is designed to provide people affected by the committee's decisions with concrete judicial guarantees.

Legislation

24. Within the framework of the legal reforms, the United Nations extended its technical support to the transitional Government for the development of the first draft of a law on combating violence against women. The transitional Government also took steps to review the Personal Status Law for Muslims of 1991, in compliance with the Constitutional Document and the international obligations of the Sudan.

Human rights situation

25. The human rights situation was characterized by a continuation of protests around the date of the second anniversary of the 2018 revolution and a surge in violence, especially in the Darfur region. Popular protests calling on the transitional Government to expedite investigations into gross violations and to hold alleged perpetrators accountable intensified following the alleged torture and killing of Sudanese activist Bahaa el-Din Nouri in a detention centre of the Rapid Support Forces on 21 December 2020. Mr. Nouri's death prompted calls for protests by the Sudanese Professionals Association and other civil society groups on 11 January 2021, coupled with demands for the restructuring of security institutions, the integration of eligible members of the Rapid Support Forces into the Sudanese Armed Forces and the closure of detention centres of the Rapid Support Forces. In parallel,

the Sudanese Professionals Association launched a campaign to raise awareness about torture and illegal detention and called for the lifting of the immunity of alleged perpetrators and for transparency in the investigation which is currently under way.

26. Although few cases relating to the killing of protesters have reached the courts, broad immunity from prosecution for the security forces continues to hamper the expeditious and effective investigation of serious crimes and violations. The investigation of the independent national commission of inquiry, established by the Prime Minister in September 2019 to examine the killing of more than 100 demonstrators during the violent dispersal of peaceful sit-in protests in Khartoum on 3 June 2019, continued to advance, including the collection of testimonies of witnesses and the questioning of high-ranking government officials, including military members of the Sovereign Council. The investigation by the Office of the Attorney General into the illegal burial and the mass graves of alleged victims of the violent dispersal of protesters is also ongoing.

27. Incidents of sexual violence against women and girls, in which internally displaced people were mostly targeted, continued to be reported and at least nine incidents of sexual and gender-based violence had been perpetrated in West Darfur, North Darfur and Central Darfur by members of the Sudanese Armed Forces or other armed actors. On 11 January 2021, the Sudanese Women's Revolution Initiative held a vigil in front of the Ministry of Justice in Khartoum to protest against rape, sexual harassment and discrimination against women. On the same day, a vigil was also held in front of the El Fasher court in North Darfur to protest against gender-based violence. The Sudanese Women's Revolution Initiative, in cooperation with the KAFA women's association protested against continued attacks against women and girls in Darfur by armed groups and security entities. The group reportedly delivered a memorandum to the Ministry of Justice in which it called for the amendment of the 1991 law on harassment and rape.

Children and armed conflict

28. Concerning the six grave violations against children, between 24 November and 31 December 2020, UNAMID and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) received reports of the mass recruitment of children in Kabkabiyah, North Darfur, and Nertiti, Central Darfur, by armed groups that are signatories to the Juba Agreement, ostensibly to gain leverage through strength in numbers. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 10 boys by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Transitional Council (2 in Central Darfur and 8 in North Darfur). In addition, the rapes of two girls were verified: a 15-year-old girl from a camp for internally displaced persons in Central Darfur was gang-raped by five unknown armed elements, and a 17-year-old girl was raped in El Geneina, West Darfur, by an element of the Sudanese Armed Forces. Furthermore, the country task force on monitoring and reporting also verified the killing of three boys and the maiming of two boys, all by the Rapid Support Forces, in Kass, South Darfur, on 28 December 2020. It has been reported that two of the children who were killed were between 14 and 16 years of age and that they were robbed, shot and then killed while on their way to school. No accountability actions are known to have been taken in these cases.

Humanitarian situation

29. Humanitarian needs remained high because of the economic crisis, which was characterized by high inflation rates and shortages of fuel and medicine, along with intercommunal conflict, the arrival of refugees from Ethiopia and protracted internal displacement. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification indicates that during the fourth quarter of 2020, food insecurity remained widespread, mainly owing to the economic conditions in the country. In November and December 2020, the retail price

of sorghum and millet remained, on average, between 240 and 300 per cent higher than in 2019 and seven times above the five-year average. It is estimated that 7.1 million people (16 per cent of the population) were food-insecure in December, an increase of about 700,000 compared with an estimate in June of 6.4 million people. In urban centres, poor families are likely to have below-average food access until May 2021 because high food prices will limit household purchasing power. The situation is expected to worsen if the Sudanese pound weakens.

30. Intercommunal tension and violence in parts of Darfur have heightened concerns about protection. In West Darfur, approximately 149,000 people were displaced across El Geneina and surrounding villages, following the outbreak of violence on 15 January 2021. That includes over 84,000 people displaced within El Geneina town and an estimated 64,000 people to sites outside that town. The intercommunal clashes have also triggered the displacement of 3,500 people to Chad. In South Darfur, it is estimated that 19,300 people were displaced by intercommunal fighting near Graidia on 18 January and need humanitarian assistance. Graidia hosts one of the biggest camps for internally displaced persons in the Sudan. Humanitarian organizations are providing support to internally displaced persons in Graidia town and adjoining camps and new internally displaced persons in Nyala and Tulus have access to humanitarian services, including health care, nutrition and water. In addition, over 7,800 people were displaced to Katur village, following intercommunal fighting in late January 2021 in several villages in the East Jebel Marra locality in South Darfur.

31. In 2020, half of the 40 incidents of intercommunal violence recorded in Darfur were in West Darfur. Following the latest escalation, the main roads into El Geneina were blocked by a sit-in by members of the Arab community, which caused flights to be suspended and the town to be cut off from the rest of the region. The protesters demanded greater levels of humanitarian and development assistance, the dismissal of the Governor, the removal of camps for displaced persons from the town and the restructuring of the El Geneina police force. Following a visit by a delegation of transitional Government representatives, the blockade was lifted on 7 February 2021 allowing the movement of humanitarian supplies and personnel. The in-town humanitarian response in town has reached affected people, who received a one-month food package, water and non-food items, as well as protection services. The Federal Humanitarian Aid Commission also dispatched relief items from Khartoum to El Geneina and the Ministry of Health evacuated critically injured people to Khartoum.

32. Since 9 November 2020, more than 61,000 refugees from the Tigray region of Ethiopia have fled to Eastern Sudan, arriving in three locations: Hamdayet, in Kassala State; Ludgi and Abderafi, in Gedaref State; and, to a lesser extent, in the Wad al-Mahi locality in Blue Nile State. The Sudan has kept its borders open to the refugees and host communities are sharing their resources with them. On 22 December, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and partners launched the Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan for the Ethiopia Situation (Tigray). The \$157 million plan covers the period from November 2020 to June 2021. In the plan, it is estimated that 100,000 refugees and 17,500 people from host communities will require assistance in the Sudan.

33. According to the Ministry of Health, as at 15 February 2021, 29,933 people in the Sudan had contracted coronavirus disease (COVID-19), there had been 1,849 associated deaths and the case fatality rate stood at 6.2 per cent. In addition, 3,438 positive cases of COVID-19 had been reported by private laboratories that are not reflected in the overall figure. Khartoum State accounted for most of the reported cases in the country. Since the start of the pandemic, 78 per cent of tested health-care

staff throughout the Sudan had tested positive for COVID-19. That is globally one of the highest rates for health-care staff.

34. In 2021, an estimated 13.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance. The United Nations and humanitarian partners aim to support 8.9 million of the most vulnerable people in the Sudan, which will require \$1.9 billion in funding. Humanitarian partners plan to take advantage of improvements in the access to areas under the control of armed groups in Darfur, Southern Kordofan State and Blue Nile State, as well as of the increasing presence of international humanitarian NGOs, with 17 new organizations having started operations in the Sudan in 2020.

III. Update on the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan

35. UNITAMS has reached its initial operational capacity, with 5 national staff and 32 international staff onboarded or onboarding as at 15 February 2021. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Volker Perthes, arrived in Khartoum on 2 February. On 14 February, he held an introductory meeting with the Prime Minister. The Deputy Special Representative for the Sudan, who would also be serving as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, has been appointed and is being onboarded. The recruitment of national and international staff for priority positions in UNITAMS in 2021 has begun, and every effort is being made to achieve both geographical diversity and a gender balance in the Mission's first year of operations.

36. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#), UNITAMS has started to develop a full set of clear and measurable core and contextual benchmarks and indicators to track its progress in achieving its strategic objectives and priorities. Discussions will be held with the United Nations country team and the transitional Government, with a view to finalizing the benchmarks and indicators and to including them in the next report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of UNITAMS.

37. UNITAMS continued to conduct outreach activities with a wide range of interlocutors, including government officials, political party and civil society representatives, military officials and representatives of armed movements. It also conducted its first official mission to Central and North Darfur States from 25 to 28 January 2021, with the support of UNAMID. The delegation, led by the Officer-in-Charge of UNITAMS, met with government officials, local communities, representatives of internally displaced persons and their camps, civil society organizations, activists and women's groups. The introductory visit allowed UNITAMS to engage directly with those groups regarding the Mission's mandate and to hear first-hand accounts of local priorities and concerns. In El Fasher, the delegation met with the government spokesperson, in his capacity as representative of the Governor of North Darfur. He expressed the importance of United Nations support for a range of humanitarian and development needs, including helping internally displaced persons to return to their homes and assisting South Sudanese refugees. He expressed his support for the mandate of UNITAMS and for the Mission's presence in North Darfur.

38. Internally displaced persons and other civilians in Zalingei, Golo, Sortony and El Fasher reported severe protection and security concerns to UNITAMS, including fears of continued conflict-related sexual violence. These interlocutors cited the withdrawal of UNAMID from the area of operation, the absence of accountability for previous war crimes, armed militias and recent violence in West Darfur and South

Darfur as factors contributing to local communities' lack of confidence in national efforts to ensure the protection of civilians.

39. Representatives of various political movements, civil society organizations, women's groups and representatives of camps for internally displaced persons in Central Darfur conveyed their perception that, to date, they had been excluded from the peace process and that the absence of tangible peace dividends from the Juba Agreement, such as the delivery of basic services and support for livelihoods. Women in both El Fasher and Zalingei, representing the Darfur Women's Platform and other groups, stressed the importance of women's participation in the new government, the larger political transition, future peace talks, and implementation bodies and commissions. They also requested the support of UNITAMS in facilitating linkages between women's groups throughout the Sudan and ensuring that the voices of women living in the periphery were heard in political discussions in Khartoum.

40. From 2 to 5 February 2021, UNITAMS held meetings in Juba with the SPLM-N Al-Hilu faction, which remains outside the Juba peace agreement, to explain the mandate of UNITAMS and answer questions on the Mission's role, including its good offices in support of peace talks.

41. Having been granted access following the conclusion of the Juba Agreement, the Mine Action Service has started operations under the mandate of UNITAMS. In Blue Nile State, two mine action teams surveyed 33.62 km of road and undertook 11 explosive ordnance disposal spot tasks, clearing a total of 423,238 square metres of land and destroying 80 hazardous items, including one anti-personnel mine and one anti-tank mine. The teams surveyed and cleared approximately 70 per cent of the Ullu airstrip, creating space for a helicopter landing site, and marked for further surveying and clearance segments of road that were suspected to be contaminated.

42. A new peacebuilding and stabilization window of the multi-partner trust fund, the Sudan financing platform, was established in December 2020. The programmatic framework for the window will be in the Sudan Peacebuilding and Stabilization Programme, which is currently under development. The Programme articulates a coordinated and coherent United Nations strategy for peacebuilding and stabilization in support of the implementation of the UNITAMS mandate and is a vehicle for much-needed peace dividends and durable solutions in conflict-affected areas, in support of the implementation of the Juba Agreement. As a next step, the terms of reference of the fund will be adapted to reflect the programmatic framework of the new window and the governance and decision-making mechanisms under that window.

43. The Mission is working closely with the transitional Government's National Committee for Coordination and held its first meeting with the full Committee on 19 January. In the meeting, the Chair reiterated that the Committee had been formed to streamline and facilitate work between UNITAMS and the relevant ministries of the transitional Government.

44. A draft status-of-mission agreement was shared with the transitional Government on 1 July 2020 by the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations in New York. The transitional Government's suggested changes to the draft agreement were transmitted by the Permanent Mission on 7 January 2021. Additional consultations will be held in the near future, to finalize the draft agreement as soon as possible in order to facilitate the operations of the new Mission.

45. The existing capacity of UNAMID was leveraged in 2020 to support the initial logistical requirements of UNITAMS, allowing time for the Mission's own logistical and administrative capacity to be built. Accordingly, assets provided by UNAMID, such as engineering materials, communications equipment and vehicles, are being transferred to UNITAMS. The interim headquarters of UNITAMS in Khartoum is

fully operational and arrangements for the deployment of UNITAMS staff in the regional offices in El Fasher, Kassala and Kadugli have been concluded. Efforts are also being made to co-locate UNITAMS staff with those of the United Nations agencies resident in Zalingei, Nyala, Kauda, El Damazin and Port Sudan.

46. UNITAMS has established service level agreements with the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, the Global Procurement Support Section and the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the provision of non-location-dependent transactional services, to minimize costs and the staffing complement on the ground in the Sudan. Joint support services have been established with lead agencies for the delivery of a wide range of services, enabling UNITAMS to maintain a light footprint so that it can scale down or up operations without the need for undue administrative and support efforts.

IV. Observations

47. Despite the acute challenges faced by the Sudan, the country continues to make progress in its political transition. The formation of the new transitional Government and the expanded Sovereign Council mark milestones in the implementation of the Juba Agreement. I encourage the parties to ensure the swift formation of the Transitional Legislative Council and the commissions established as a result of the Agreement in order to further advance the transition, in line with the Constitutional Document.

48. I welcome the continued efforts made by the Sudanese to implement the Juba Agreement. Significant challenges lie ahead to meet the ambitious implementation timelines of the Agreement and secure the financial resources needed for its implementation. I call on the transitional Government to clearly articulate the financial and technical support that it will require from partners and urge partners of the Sudan to provide the necessary assistance for the implementation of the Agreement through the Ministry of Finance. The United Nations, through UNITAMS, stands ready to support implementation, in line with the Mission's mandate and as requested by the signatories to the Agreement.

49. The second anniversary of the December 2018 revolution was marked by the continuation of a vibrant Sudanese protest movement that remains unrepresented within transitional institutions, but that nevertheless persistently seeks to achieve the demands, articulated since the start of the revolution, for civilian-led democratic governance. Sudanese women's rights leaders continue mobilization for women's meaningful participation in the transitional decision-making bodies and for the fulfilment of other gender equality commitments set out in the Constitutional Document and the Juba Agreement.

50. The rapid escalation of violent clashes in Darfur in January 2021 demonstrates the complex challenges that the transitional Government faces in carrying out its responsibilities and fulfilling its commitment to protect civilians and provide State authority throughout the Sudan. Peace in the Sudan will not be complete until all conflicts come to an end. I call on those armed movements that remain outside the peace process to commit to negotiations that will lead to a fully inclusive and sustainable peace in the Sudan.

51. Important steps have been taken at the national level to advance the Sudanese women's rights agenda, as stipulated in the Constitutional Document and the Juba Agreement. However, concerns remain that Sudanese women could lose the gains made in key transitional milestones, including by falling short of achieving the minimum of 40 per cent representation of women in the Transitional Legislative

Council and, more broadly, gender equality in the Cabinet, the Government and other decision-making structures, including peace implementation bodies. The situation of women's protection and security in Darfur, including the continued risks that women face in terms of sexual and gender-based violence, are of deep concern. International support for the transitional Government to fulfil its national commitments to the women and peace and security agenda, as stipulated in the country's national action plan on that theme, will prove essential to enhancing women's full and meaningful participation in all aspects of the transition and strengthening mechanisms for the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected areas.

52. I take note of the transitional Government's continued efforts towards institutional reforms and accountability processes. I urge the transitional Government to take an inclusive and participatory approach to justice and legal reforms in the Sudan, include victims and civil society in ongoing transitional justice processes in a meaningful way and prioritize the building of trust between State authorities and communities.

53. The restoration of relations with the international financial institutions represents an achievement for the transitional Government and an important step in the country's path to achieving debt relief and securing grants to finance major infrastructure and other development projects. The country today has accumulated more than \$60 billion in foreign debt, and debt relief and access to foreign loans are widely seen as its gateway to economic recovery. I call on partners of the Sudan to inject fresh international funding through the Ministry of Finance. Such assistance would provide central support for economic stability, in conjunction with reforms implemented by the transitional Government. The reforms will address structural distortions in the economy, promote growth, encourage investment and help to build a prosperous economy for all Sudanese, in particular young people, women and communities affected by war and marginalization. Meanwhile, the socioeconomic situation, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to impose significant hardship on the population and increases the risk of instability. I therefore encourage the transitional Government to continue its critical economic reform, including exchange rate unification, which will enable the Sudan to fully benefit from the support offered by its partners and the international financial institutions through the Sudan Family Support Programme.

54. I reiterate my heartfelt condolences to the family members of the victims of the recent violence in Darfur and wish a full recovery to all those who were injured. In the light of the recent disturbing developments in Darfur and the end of the mandate of UNAMID at the end of 2020, I urge the transitional Government to accelerate implementation of its national strategy for the protection of civilians and to rapidly deploy the joint security-keeping force composed of Government forces and signatory armed movements, in order to protect the civilian population throughout Darfur. Addressing the root causes of these conflicts is the ultimate goal, so that protection forces will be unnecessary. I urge the new transitional Government, the Sovereign Council and the Transitional Legislative Council, once it has been formed, to assume their responsibilities in that regard. The United Nations, through UNITAMS, remains ready to support the transitional Government to fulfil that responsibility and I call upon the newly established transitional Government to quickly formulate its protection priorities and articulate the support that it will require from the United Nations and the international community.

55. I also remain concerned about the escalation in tensions between the Sudan and Ethiopia regarding the Fashaqah area along their border. I urge the leaders of Ethiopia and the Sudan to de-escalate the situation, ensure the safety of those living in the area and work towards a common solution. I will continue to explore opportunities to encourage de-escalation and a peaceful resolution.

56. I thank the transitional Government for the ongoing support that it has provided to UNITAMS while the Mission continues to build up its presence in the Sudan. I urge the transitional Government to finalize the agreement on the status of the Mission as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the effective operation of the new Mission. Lastly, I would like to express my support for the new Special Representative for the Sudan as he takes up his responsibilities and for all United Nations personnel who continue to support the Sudan.

Annex

Report on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur pursuant to Security Council resolution 2559 (2020)

I. Introduction

1. The present annex is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2559 (2020), by which the Council requested that it be kept regularly informed by the Secretary-General about all relevant developments in relation to the drawdown and withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) as an annex to the regular report on the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). The present annex provides an update on the context and the progress made in the drawdown for the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021.

II. Update on the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

A. Closure of team sites and facilities

2. The sequence for the closure of the team sites and facilities is dictated by security considerations and logistical feasibility. In the current drawdown plan, it is envisaged that the 14 team sites in Darfur close in five phases. Phase I includes the closure of Saraf Umrah (21 January) and Kutum (3 February). Phase II will see the closure of Khor Abeche (15 February), Menawashei (25 February), Kalma (11 March) and Nyala II (13 March). Phase III comprises the closure of Sortony (28 March), Golo (11 April) and Nertiti (22 April). Phase IV includes the closure of Kass (5 May), Tawilah (11 May) and Zalingei (27 May). Lastly, phase V will complete the process, with the closure of Shangil Tobaya (5 June) and Kabkabiyah (16 June). The logistics base in El Fasher, North Darfur, will be closed during the liquidation period, along with offices in Khartoum and Port Sudan. The team sites will be closed at a rate of approximately one site every two weeks or less, depending on the size and complexity of each. To date, phase I has been completed. Civilian staff will be separated once their functional tasks end, with staff members separated when the team sites where they are located close and only those kept on board who are required to support the drawdown and liquidation processes. The Joint Special Representative for UNAMID and the Deputy Joint Special Representative for UNAMID left their roles on 31 January 2021, along with the Force Commander and the Police Commissioner. The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Sudan ad interim, M'Baye Babacar Cissé, will act as officer-in-charge for the Operation ad interim, while the Deputy Force Commander and Deputy Police Commissioner will exercise overall command and control over uniformed personnel during the drawdown period.

Coordination with the Government and local community

3. In resolution 2559 (2020), the Security Council called upon the Government of the Sudan to cooperate fully with the United Nations and the African Union during the drawdown and liquidation of UNAMID in order to ensure the orderly and safe withdrawal of the Mission.

4. Coordination with the Government at the federal and at the Darfur state levels is ongoing. On 18 January 2021, a high-level meeting was held with the federal Government

to discuss the modalities for cooperation and coordination, with government representatives reiterating their commitment to facilitating the drawdown. Agreement was reached on information-sharing for related activities and the issuance of visas for UNAMID personnel. At the Darfur state level, UNAMID is engaging with the state technical committees for North, South and Central Darfur to coordinate all drawdown activities.

5. Nevertheless, UNAMID has faced challenges in the movement of its convoys. On 11 December 2020, a convoy carrying supplies for UNITAMS was detained en route from El Fasher to Khartoum and delayed for several days by customs officials. On 18 December, military intelligence authorities prevented a UNAMID convoy from leaving the Kutum team site in North Darfur to go to El Fasher. The convoy was unable to move until 31 December, following the completion of negotiations with federal and North Darfur State authorities. Again, on 15 January 2021, a UNAMID-contracted convoy on its way to the Khor Abeche team site in South Darfur was stopped by the Sudan Police Force and instructed to return to El Fasher. On 21 January, a consignment of contingent-owned equipment and assets being transferred to UNITAMS was seized by North Darfur State customs authorities for several days. Such incidents have resulted in financial losses for the Operation and delays in the conduct of critical drawdown activities.

6. In some instances local communities and local authorities have resisted efforts to remove assets or equipment from the sites, insisting that they should be left for their use. The sale of scrap and other commodities to local contractors, which is required under the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, has also been opposed by some local communities and local authorities.

Civilian end-use of sites

7. In resolution [2559 \(2020\)](#), the Security Council called upon UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan to swiftly finalize a revised framework agreement that ensures, inter alia, the principle of civilian end-use of the handed-over UNAMID sites and assets. The Government has officially committed itself to the use of handed-over sites and facilities for health care, education and other social services, and discussions regarding the draft framework agreement are ongoing. The proposed uses of the team sites range from educational facilities to health and humanitarian hubs, locations for vocational training for women and young people, and centres for the delivery of veterinary services. It will remain largely the responsibility of the Darfur state governments to ensure that the proposals are fully realized. The Saraf Umrah facilities will be used as a vocational centre, while the Kutum team site will be shared by the University of El Fasher and community centres delivering veterinary services and training for women and young people.

B. Security context for drawdown

Current developments

8. The overall security environment for the drawdown of UNAMID remains uncertain. Since 7 December 2020, largely peaceful demonstrations against the exit of UNAMID have been held in front of several team sites and petitions have been received from various communities, including internally displaced persons, worried about their security after the withdrawal. This has included a four-week-long demonstration at Kalma camp in South Darfur and at team sites in Kabkabiyah and Shangil Tobaya in North Darfur, Kass in South Darfur, and Nertiti and Zalingei in Central Darfur.

9. Protests were also held by former UNAMID national staff members and contractors regarding the payment of benefits and entitlements, including a prolonged sit-in at the logistics base in El Fasher and a demonstration by former UNAMID

individual contractors in front of the Shangil Tobaya team site. The Operation is dealing with these issues on a case-by-case basis, while monitoring their security implications and impact on UNAMID operations, given that the demonstrators have on occasion blocked the gates to UNAMID premises, causing disruptions to normal activities.

10. Since 31 December 2020, the Government of the Sudan has responded to the need to protect UNAMID premises and assets by deploying joint forces. Within the Operation, the remaining UNAMID uniformed components are now focused on the protection of UNAMID facilities and assets until their repatriation date.

Incidents involving United Nations personnel and installations

11. Criminal incidents targeting UNAMID personnel and premises have escalated during the drawdown period. These have included incidents of armed robbery, carjacking, intrusion on premises and theft. On 20 December 2020, armed individuals highjacked a UNAMID vehicle at gunpoint in El Fasher, North Darfur, and on 22 December 2020, two United Nations staff members were robbed and a United Nations vehicle was stolen in Kabkabiyah, North Darfur. On 6 January 2021, a power cable to the perimeter security lights of the UNAMID super camp in Zalingei was cut and the perimeter fence was damaged in an attempted intrusion. On 3 February, another attempt at forceful entry into the super camp was made by people claiming compensation for road traffic accidents involving UNAMID vehicles. Two days later, a group of 150 people blocked the movement of a logistics convoy with similar demands.

12. Concerns remain that such incidents could increase further as the withdrawal progresses. In some cases, where the removal of assets from the closure of team sites has been opposed by local communities or authorities, mutual agreements between local communities, state authorities and UNAMID may be necessary in order to ensure a smooth handover.

Guard unit

13. The Security Council, in its resolution [2559 \(2020\)](#), authorized, for the duration of the drawdown and liquidation of UNAMID, the retention of a guard unit from within the Operation's existing footprint. During much of the drawdown period up to 30 June 2021, security responsibilities for the personnel, facilities and assets will continue to be assumed by the uniformed contingents at each site. The major task of the guard unit will be to protect personnel, facilities and assets concentrated at the El Fasher logistics hub, as well as to provide escorts, where necessary. Details concerning the size and operations of the guard force are currently being developed, bearing in mind that the primary responsibility of the Government of the Sudan is to protect UNAMID personnel, premises and assets.

C. Transition of tasks to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan

14. The Security Council, in its resolution [2559 \(2020\)](#), reiterated its request to ensure that the transition from UNAMID to UNITAMS was phased, sequenced and efficient. The Operation has continued to coordinate closely with UNITAMS, including through weekly working-level coordination meetings, to ensure synchronization with the scaling up of UNITAMS. A joint framework has been adopted for identifying priority activities that need to be transferred from UNAMID to UNITAMS in three main workstreams: political support for the Sudan in respect of its quest for a long-lasting political settlement, peacebuilding issues and protection concerns. An online platform has been developed to allow UNAMID to upload related information for use

by UNITAMS and the United Nations country team. An integrated team comprising representatives of UNAMID, UNITAMS and the United Nations country team has been established to assist the country team in its oversight of the completion of residual activities, including projects supported by the State liaison function, and to support knowledge transfer to UNITAMS.

III. Financial aspects

15. The General Assembly, in its resolutions [74/261 C](#) and decision [74/571](#), as well as in its resolution [75/251](#), authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the Operation for amounts not exceeding \$240.2 million for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2020, and \$198.8 million for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2021.

16. As at 9 February 2021, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMID amounted to \$308.4 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$3,173.5 million. The reimbursement of troop and formed police costs was made for the period up to 31 March 2020, as well as the reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IV. Observations

17. As we continue with the withdrawal of UNAMID, the task before us is significant. The size of the Operation, both in terms of its personnel and assets, coupled with its geographical footprint and related logistical hurdles, present a complex picture for drawdown and liquidation. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic adds an additional layer of risk.

18. In its work to date, the Operation has demonstrated its ability to undertake this task within the set time frame. It has been well served by planning early, in anticipation of the final decision by the Security Council to end the mandate, and I commend the Operation's efforts in that regard.

19. Cooperation with the Sudanese authorities during the remainder of the process will be critical and I am grateful to the transitional Government for its commitment to facilitating a safe and orderly withdrawal. Nevertheless, I remain concerned about resistance faced at the local level, including in some cases from state authorities. I encourage UNAMID and the transitional Government to finalize the framework agreement expeditiously and I call upon the Government to use its influence at every level to ensure that the drawdown can proceed on time and in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations.

20. UNAMID and UNITAMS will continue to coordinate and cooperate closely to preserve the knowledge and experience that UNAMID has built up over the past 13 years in support of the people of the Sudan.

21. With its mandate successfully ended and drawdown under way, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Acting Joint Special Representative for Darfur, Jeremiah Mamabolo, for his unwavering leadership, as well as to the rest of the UNAMID leadership and staff for the tireless work they have performed in support of peace in Darfur. I also want to convey my sincerest gratitude to the United Nations country team and our partners, the African Union, the troop- and police-contributing countries and the humanitarian community for their invaluable support towards our common objectives.