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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#), is the first 90-day report on the implementation of the mandate related to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). The report covers political, security, socioeconomic, human rights and humanitarian developments in the Sudan from 3 June to 8 September 2020 and contains an update on the planning process for the establishment of the Mission. The suggested structure and geographical deployment of the Mission and the 90-day report on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) are included as annexes to the present report.

II. Significant developments

Political situation

2. During the reporting period, the transitional Government continued to pursue ambitious political reforms, make progress in the peace process and tackle the rapidly deteriorating economic situation, while faced with rising pressure from the Sudanese population to meet its demands rapidly. The transitional Government largely implemented key transition benchmarks laid out in the August 2019 Constitutional Document, despite competing priorities and the added challenge of responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Its achievements included amendments to the penal code, which will improve the protection of fundamental rights, the appointment of interim civilian governors in all 18 states and reaching a comprehensive peace agreement with some armed groups in Darfur and the Two Areas.

3. Amid continuing tensions between the military and civilian components of the Government, deepening divisions also emerged within the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) and the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), further fracturing the political landscape. SPA, the trade union umbrella organization prominent throughout the protests and during the country's ongoing transition, split from FFC in June and has itself divided into factions. For FFC, the inability to reach a consensus has affected its influence and ability to make decisions. The resistance committees,



which had initially struggled to turn their public support into political influence, emerged as a key political actor as demonstrations reignited across the country.

4. Marking the start of a period of increased protests, on 3 June, hundreds of people demonstrated in Khartoum on the first anniversary of the violent raid against peaceful protesters at the sit-in site outside the military headquarters. Protesters were critical of the body investigating the events of 3 June 2019 because of its repeated delays in releasing the findings. On 29 June, on the eve of mass protests, former National Congress Party leaders, including Ibrahim Ghandour, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, were arrested. On 30 June, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated throughout the Sudan demanding faster reforms and greater civilian rule in the country's transition towards democracy. While protesters' demands varied in different areas of the country, they all renewed their calls for the transitional Government to speed up the implementation of the key political benchmarks of the Constitutional Declaration.

5. The demonstrations of 30 June were led by resistance committees, grass-roots-level neighbourhood groups linked through a national network, which have come to the fore as a new brand of political organization beyond traditional political parties. The main demands included the completion of the formation of the transitional Government, the appointment of civilian governors, the designation of the members of the legislative council and independent commissions, the conclusion of an agreement on a comprehensive peace, the conduct of defence and security sector reform, the carrying out of transitional justice and economic reforms that bring equality and justice, and the development of a roadmap for recovery and pro-poor development. On 9 July, in response to popular demands and following a performance assessment, the Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, asked seven members of his cabinet to resign. Acting ministers were immediately appointed to serve until the appointment of new ministers, which was slated to happen after the signature of the peace agreement, scheduled for 2 October.

6. On 22 July, the Prime Minister appointed interim civilian governors for all 18 states, including two women, pending full appointments, which were expected to take place after the signing of the peace agreement in October. The interim appointments of several governors were contested including in Kassala, Gedaref, East Darfur and Northern Kordofan states. While the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) had initially agreed to the appointment of interim governors, it later criticized the appointment process, which, it stated, would lead to divisions and communal tension.

7. On 17 August, the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Constitutional Declaration, the resistance committees launched a new campaign of demonstrations in Khartoum with similar demands to those voiced at the protests of 30 June. The protesters clashed with police, which used tear gas and reportedly arrested 77 people. The protests themselves marked a more visible approach on the part of the resistance committees to voicing their dissatisfaction with the pace of the transition. Since 17 August, protests and daily marches have continued across the Sudan. In a speech delivered on his first anniversary in office, 21 August, the Prime Minister acknowledged that there were difficulties regarding the transition, including differences between the civilian and military components of the governing institutions on key reforms, particularly with regard to security sector reform, measures to deal with the economic crisis and the transfer of military-owned businesses to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

8. On 29 August, a peace agreement was reached between the transitional Government, the SRF alliance and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Minni Minawi faction, concluding nearly a year of negotiations mediated by the Government of South Sudan. Signatories under the SRF umbrella included the Justice and Equality

Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement/Transitional Council and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar faction. The agreement includes a number of protocols and covers key issues related to security arrangements and the integration of combatants into the Sudanese army, land ownership, transitional justice, power-sharing and the return of displaced persons. The SLA-Abdul Wahid al-Nur faction did not participate in the Juba-based negotiations and has rejected the agreement.

9. On 3 September, the transitional Government and SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction signed a joint agreement on, inter alia, principles for maintaining the cessation of hostilities throughout the peace process until security arrangements were agreed. In the agreement, the parties also affirmed that the future constitution should be based on the principle of separation of religion and State, in the absence of which the right to self-determination in the Two Areas must be respected. Mr. Al-Hilu himself has made it clear he remains committed to the Juba process as set out in the agreement on negotiation issues of 18 October 2019.

Security situation

10. During the reporting period, the security situation was marked by increased intercommunal tensions including in the east, west and south of the country. In the western region of Darfur, several incidents occurred between nomadic and farmer communities in the context of seasonal migration and harvesting, compounded by the unresolved issues of land ownership and access to natural resources. In Western Kordofan, clashes between members of the Misseriya and Nuba communities occurred in June in Lagawa, reportedly leading to several deaths. Following the violence, representatives of both communities signed a cessation of hostilities agreement. Tribal clashes also occurred in Sennar state. In Gedaref, the threat of conflict persisted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and armed "Shifita" militias from Ethiopia, starting in May and ending in June. On 24 June, the Sudan and Ethiopia formed a joint ministerial committee to look at the issue of border tensions. In Eastern Sudan, intercommunal clashes between members of the Bani Amir and Nuba communities as well as between the Bani Amir and Hadanduwah resulted in more than 30 people being killed and over 100 injured. On 13 July, Bani Amir and Nuba communities signed an agreement in the presence of Sovereign Council, FFC and state government representatives.

11. Following the finalization of the transitional Government's civilian protection strategy, the Prime Minister announced the formation of a joint army and police force to be deployed in areas of increased volatility. The decision was backed by the Security and Defence Council. Meanwhile, security forces have been deployed and the transitional Government has intervened in response to protection-related incidents throughout the country. Following clashes, a curfew was imposed in Port Sudan and the Rapid Support Forces was deployed in response to the violence. In Kassala, a reconciliation agreement between the Bani Amir and Nuba communities was renewed to forestall intercommunal conflict. Localized peace processes in Darfur are an avenue for increasing stability; they are being replicated throughout the country.

Socioeconomic situation

12. The socioeconomic situation, which remained dire and was compounded by the pandemic, continued to fuel instability. Currency depreciation and sharp reductions in bread and fuel subsidies continued to create inflation in excess of 140 per cent in July. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects the gross domestic product to decline by 8 per cent in 2020, with a concomitant increase in poverty levels.

13. Budgetary pressures have been exacerbated by a lockdown and other pandemic-related restrictions, resulting in a growing public deficit and a drop in revenues by 39 per cent since mid-April at a time of increasing public expenditures. Given the need for structural adjustment, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning prepared an amended 2020 budget in August to reflect the removal of fuel subsidies while maintaining support for cooking gas and wheat. A floating exchange rate regime was adopted and is to be implemented in a phased manner over two years. The 2020 budget amendments were strongly contested by FFC.

14. Women, children and elderly people in low-income households, as well as refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons have been disproportionately affected by the socioeconomic crisis. Despite the existence of a direct cash transfer scheme under the Sudan Family Support Programme, the country's social protection schemes are still scattered, which increases the need to assess the existing social security schemes and safety nets and lay the foundations for an equitable and integrated social protection system that includes minimum social protection.

15. On 25 June, a high-level partnership conference was hosted online by Germany and co-hosted by the United Nations, the European Union and the Government of the Sudan, that was attended by 40 countries and 15 international organizations. The aim of the conference was to secure political and financial support for the transition in the Sudan. Participating delegations pledged a total of \$1.8 billion for, in particular, economic reforms and for mitigating the social impact of reform measures. Of that amount, close to \$500 million was pledged in support of the Sudan Family Support Programme, designed by the World Bank, to mitigate the impact on the majority of the population that the removal of fuel subsidies has had. While the conference was focused on both political and financial support to the transition, the financial pledges were primarily aimed at enabling economic reforms that hinge on the concurrent launch of the Sudan Family Support Programme and the IMF staff-monitored programme. These two programmes are, in turn, aimed at reviving the country's economy and pave the way for much-needed debt relief. The Sudan Family Support Programme is currently at the pilot stage, with a launch anticipated in October. The Government and IMF agreed on a staff-monitored programme, the implementation of which will accelerate during the final quarter of 2020 and beyond. The Friends of Sudan group, comprising a number of Member States and multilateral organizations, provided support to the partnership conference and continued its regular meetings in support of the transition in the country. Their latest meeting was held on 12 August and was hosted online by Saudi Arabia.

16. During the reporting period, a population census was announced for April 2022. It will be carried out together with an agricultural census and a household budget census. The budget census is expected to shed light on the levels of poverty and inequality within the country. Since the Sudan is moving from a paper-based to a digital census process, the United Nations Population Fund and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have begun work with the Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics to plan, implement and manage the new process.

Human rights situation

17. Since 3 June, the human rights situation in the Sudan has been marked by communal clashes in Eastern Sudan and increased popular demands for the reform and restructuring of government institutions. Reports indicate that in Khartoum, the Sudan Police Force may have used excessive force on 18 August to disperse rallies and protests at which demands were voiced for reform and for accountability for gross human rights violations under the former regime and for the killing of civilian protesters on 3 June 2019. Following the upsurge in protests, the transitional

Government took positive steps towards meeting the demands of the Sudanese population and improving the protection of fundamental rights, including by amending some controversial and discriminatory laws and taking several steps to strengthen democracy and the rule of law and to promote human rights.

18. In upholding its commitment to improving the justice system and reforming national laws in compliance with international standards, the Joint Council – the current transitional legislative body in the Sudan – in July adopted several amendments to the penal code of 1991. The adoption constituted significant progress towards achieving the goals of the transition until a new penal code could be adopted as indicated in the Constitutional Declaration. The latest amendments improved the legal protection for the most vulnerable categories of people, including by contributing to the eradication of harmful cultural practices against women and girls by prohibiting female genital mutilation, abolishing the death penalty for children below 18 years of age, combating discrimination and promoting respect for the freedom of religion and belief by decriminalising apostasy. Although amendments were made to the cybercrime prevention act, including the abolition of corporal punishment, the Joint Council doubled the custodial penalties for certain online activities by journalists and media workers, thereby impinging on the civic space and the protections of the freedom of expression, the right to access information, the right to privacy, and due process, all of which are crucial to a democratic transition. Policies that eased freedom of movement for Sudanese citizens were also enacted by revoking the need for exit permits and eliminating the requirement for women travelling with children to obtain the permission of a guardian.

19. On 23 August, the national committee on the dismantling of the former regime, the countering of corruption and the recovery of looted funds issued a decision to reshuffle the board of commissioners of the National Human Rights Commission of the Sudan and requested that the Government appoint new commissioners. Commissioners appointed by former President Al-Bashir were dismissed. The Constitutional Declaration provides for the formation of a new independent national human rights commission in conformity with the Paris Principles as one of 12 independent thematic commissions.

20. In related developments, the International Criminal Court announced on 9 June that Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, an alleged leader of the Janjaweed militias during the conflict in Darfur, had voluntarily surrendered in the Central African Republic and had been placed in the custody of the Court. Arrest warrants issued by the Court against four other Sudanese individuals, including former President Al-Bashir, are outstanding. The transitional Government has expressed its readiness to cooperate with the Court.

Humanitarian situation

21. The global COVID-19 pandemic has compounded deep-rooted poverty, the ongoing economic crisis and climate shocks and has generated rising humanitarian needs in the Sudan. Hunger has increased across the country and over 9.6 million people are severely food-insecure, an increase of 65 per cent compared with the same period in 2019.

22. As at 3 September, over 13,100 people had tested positive for the coronavirus and more than 820 had died. The increasing number of transmissions has put pressure on the country's fragile health-care system at a time when the Sudan is facing its first polio outbreak in more than a decade, affecting nine states across the country. The federal Ministry of Health, with the support of United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme, is currently preparing a mass vaccination campaign to reach every child under the age of 5 – nearly 9 million

children – and to resume or cover gaps in the routine vaccination compromised during the COVID-19 pandemic.

23. Heavy rains and flooding have affected nearly 400,000 people since the start of the rainy season in July. By the end of August, more than 37,000 homes had been destroyed, and 34 schools and more than 2,600 health facilities had been damaged. The flooding has further compromised food security and affected access to clean water. The Government, United Nations system agencies and their partners had prepositioned supplies to respond to the needs of 250,000 people before the rains started, but stocks are rapidly being depleted and additional resources will be required.

24. Pockets of violence in Southern Kordofan, Kassala and Red Sea states in July and August led to displacements, loss of life and damages to houses, markets and other key infrastructure, increasing humanitarian needs.

25. Nearly 5.4 million people received life-saving assistance in 179 of the country's 189 localities between April and June – an increase from 2.3 million in the first quarter of 2020. The scale-up of the response was especially visible for the food security and livelihoods, and water, sanitation and hygiene sectors. However, the implementation of education and protection activities, including services related to violence against children and gender-based violence, have been indirectly affected by COVID-19 containment measures. Only 120,000 people have been reached with support related to gender-based violence between April and June, 100,000 fewer than in the first quarter of the year, while the pandemic and the worsened economic situation may have exacerbated the risk of gender-based violence for women and girls.

III. Planning process for the establishment of the Mission

26. Given the stated intention of the Security Council to establish a follow-on presence to UNAMID in its resolutions [2495 \(2019\)](#) and [2517 \(2020\)](#) and its request, in resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#) that I swiftly initiate the planning for and establishment of UNITAMS, a team of Secretariat staff was constituted in April 2020 under the guidance of my Special Adviser on the Sudan, Nicholas Haysom. The team advanced the planning by means of an inclusive and consultative process. Owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related mitigation measures, online means were used to convene relevant entities from across the United Nations system, including the United Nations country team and UNAMID, as well as the World Bank. External partners, in particular the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the European Union, were also actively consulted. The critical importance of both gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth were kept at the centre of the planning process.

27. On 5 July, the transitional Government established the Executive Committee for Coordination with UNITAMS. The Committee includes 16 members of the transitional authorities, security institutions and civil society. It is mandated with, inter alia, direct coordination at the federal and state levels between the transitional Government and UNITAMS on the Mission's areas of work and with negotiating the draft status-of-mission agreement and following up on its implementation.

28. The planning team visited the Sudan from 26 July to 11 August. In Khartoum, the team met with many Sudanese stakeholders, including government and security officials, women's and other civil society organizations and political groups. In Kassala, Kadugli, El Fasher, Nyala and Zalingei, the team also met with the newly appointed civilian governors or their representatives and visited four camps for

internally displaced persons, including the Kalma camp. The team also met with the diplomatic community, including the Khartoum-based Friends of Sudan group and ambassadors of African countries. The planning team worked closely with the United Nations country team, given the integrated nature of UNITAMS, as well as with UNAMID given the importance of coordination in Darfur between the two missions.

29. The planning team finalized a Mission concept for UNITAMS, which translated the four strategic objectives outlined in the Mission mandate into the following nine strategic priorities to be pursued during the Mission's expected lifespan: (a) support political stability; (b) support the constitution-making, electoral and census processes; (c) support institutional reforms and the promotion and protection of human rights; (d) support the conclusion of an inclusive peace process; (e) support the implementation of the peace agreement or agreements; (f) support the strengthening of the protective environment, in particular in conflict and post-conflict areas; (g) support the achievement of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation between communities; (h) support international resource mobilization and national socio-economic reforms; and (i) support the establishment of a national architecture for development planning and aid effectiveness.

30. In addition, the team outlined a provisional structure and geographical footprint for UNITAMS that will serve as a basis for the ongoing preparations for the submission of the 2021 budget (see annex II). The structure provides for the capacity necessary to support the political transition, national efforts for the protection of civilians and the prevention of conflict, and peacebuilding and development coordination. It is envisaged that UNITAMS will be headquartered in Khartoum, with field offices in Darfur, the Two Areas and Eastern Sudan.

31. Operational support arrangements for UNITAMS will be characterised by two key elements: collaboration with the United Nations country team and a commitment to transitioning from the drawdown of UNAMID. In line with the directions given by the Security Council that the United Nations presence in the Sudan be integrated, the United Nations country team has been included in mission support planning from the outset with the intent of establishing joint support arrangements through a combination of common services arrangements, including co-location where feasible. The continued presence of UNAMID provides an opportunity to temporarily leverage existing support capacities while the UNITAMS support model, comprising common services, a service centre and remote support, is implemented. The anticipated withdrawal of UNAMID, which has long provided capacity in Darfur for the United Nations country team, presents an urgency to move forward in this area and ensure that there are no gaps in support capacity that could have adverse effects on the start-up of UNITAMS. In that context, it is envisaged that the new unified United Nations presence in the Sudan will benefit from assets and other capacities that can be transferred from UNAMID following its drawdown and eventual closure.

32. As with all field missions in Africa, UNITAMS will also benefit from a full suite of transactional services to be provided by the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, assistance from the Global Procurement Support Section and communications and logistics services to be provided by the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, and the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Facility, Valencia.

33. I have approved an initial funding package by providing for unforeseen and extraordinary expenditure to support resource requirements for the start-up and initial months of operations of the new Mission.

34. Recruitment for the UNITAMS advance team is ongoing. Once deployed, in the last quarter of 2020, it will assume responsibility for further planning. The advance team will lead discussions on integration and coordination modalities with the United

Nations country team and UNAMID, respectively. It will also develop the clear and measurable core and contextual benchmarks and indicators requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#), given that the development of those benchmarks will require in-depth and sustained engagement with stakeholders in the Sudan.

IV. Observations

35. The Sudan is making progress with its transition. The Sudan and the international community have to remain steadfast in their commitment to advancing the broad political vision enshrined in the Constitutional Declaration of August 2019. I commend the transitional Government for the steps it has taken thus far to implement the benchmarks contained in the Constitutional Declaration. Those include undertaking economic reforms, reaching a comprehensive peace agreement with armed groups in Darfur and the Two Areas, and amending legislation to improve the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights, with notable improvements with regard to women's rights in particular.

36. Amid this progress, the Sudan is battling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have compounded pressure on the transitional Government by further straining health systems, interrupting economic activity and deepening socioeconomic grievances and humanitarian needs. Furthermore, in recent months, the Sudan has experienced devastating floods and has been affected by the worst desert locust infestation in the Horn of Africa in 25 years, both of which pose major threats to food security and livelihoods. The United Nations is doing its utmost to assist the Government in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and meeting wider humanitarian needs, including through advocacy for support to economic reform efforts.

37. The peace agreement reached on 29 August with the SRF alliance and SLA-Minni Minawi, and the joint agreement on principles signed on 3 September with the SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction, are milestones in the transition. I commend all parties to these agreements for their continued political will and determination in working towards the common objective of peace, despite the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. I also call on those who remain outside the peace process to participate in addressing long-standing internal conflicts in the country and contribute to the success of the country's transition.

38. The implementation of all agreements reached during the Sudanese peace process will require sustained political support and good offices to ensure that trust is maintained between the signatories and that disputes arising from the challenges of implementation are resolved. These are not the first peace agreements reached in the country's recent history, but they are the first to be reached in a transitional context. This unique opportunity for full implementation must be seized. The United Nations will offer support to the implementation of these and future peace agreements during the transition period, as requested by the parties and within its capacity and mandate. It will do so in collaboration with other international partners, notably the African Union.

39. The recent upsurge in violence and volatility in Darfur, the Two Areas and Eastern Sudan underscores that peace has not yet been achieved. The volatility highlights the inherent fragility and unique challenges faced by countries in transition. Hence, a comprehensive, country-wide approach is required. I commend the establishment of a national committee for the protection of civilians and encourage the Government to swiftly implement its comprehensive national plan for protecting civilians, which is aimed at addressing not only the immediate need for the continued

physical protection of all civilians across the Sudan, but also provides for other measures that could improve the situation sustainably. I pledge the support of the United Nations to the implementation of the strategy. All stakeholders, including the armed groups, have a responsibility to establish a safe environment for all Sudanese, in particular for women, girls and boys in conflict-affected areas. Without such safety, the people of the Sudan will be able neither to enjoy nor exercise their human rights.

40. Furthermore, peacebuilding requires efforts beyond the implementation of peace agreements. In that regard, the United Nations will support Sudanese stakeholders in addressing conflict drivers and root causes, as well as the legacy of past conflicts. The United Nations will also continue to support peacebuilding efforts across the country, which includes strengthening rule of law institutions and ensuring proper accountability for serious human rights violations in order to consolidate peace and security gains.

41. Spiralling inflation, continuing shortages of key commodities, a growing public deficit and dropping revenues have placed the country's economy in a critical state. The economic hardship that was the driver of the street demonstrations that began in December 2018, and which led to the change in government, have yet to be overcome. In that context, it is imperative that international support is delivered as the transitional Government strives to implement its difficult economic reform agenda. That has been one of my key priorities in supporting the Sudan. I commend donors for the contributions to the Sudan Family Support Programme they pledged at the High-Level Sudan Partnership Conference, held in Berlin on 25 June, and the funding for humanitarian assistance and development activities. I urge donors to release those funds as soon as possible so that the Sudan Family Support Programme can move from its pilot stage to full implementation. This is a crucial element of the economic reform agenda as agreed between the transitional Government and IMF. Progress in the implementation of the IMF staff-monitored programme will help the Sudan to move towards debt relief and secure access to significant funding for international development assistance. Unless addressed, economic sanctions, including the continued inclusion of the Sudan on the list of State sponsors of terrorism of the United States of America, will also have significant implications for the country's access to international financial assistance, investment and debt relief in the short and medium terms.

42. Financial and political support for the transition has to be firmly predicated on continued progress towards a democratic, civilian-led political system in the Sudan. A prosperous and democratic Sudan will serve as an important pillar of stability in the region. The question is not whether the international community can afford the support that the Sudan needs, it is whether the international community can afford not to support the Sudan as it strives to meet its formidable challenges.

43. I welcome the close collaboration with the transitional Government throughout the UNITAMS planning process, which will enable us to deliver in accordance with the will of the Sudanese people to have a peaceful and prosperous country. Similarly, the continuing effective partnership between the United Nations and the African Union will maximize the two organizations' comparative advantages in support of the transition in the Sudan. The planning process also benefited from extensive consultations with our partners in the wider international community, and it has yielded key results. I would like to express my gratitude to my Special Adviser on the Sudan for leading this process and for his efforts in support of the transition in the Sudan.

44. Nevertheless, important work lies ahead before the Mission can deliver its mandated activities by 1 January 2021. I count on your continued support and engagement as we work together towards the success of the transition in the Sudan.

Annex I

Report on African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur pursuant to Security Council resolution 2525 (2020)

I. Introduction

1. The present annex is submitted pursuant to paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 2525 (2020), by which the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide an update on the implementation of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) mandate every 90 days as an annex to the regular reporting requested on United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). The present annex provides an update on the situation in Darfur for the period from 1 June to 31 August 2020.

II. Update on the situation in Darfur and implementation of the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

A. Political situation

Political developments in the Sudan

2. The transitional Government of the Sudan continued to implement provisions of the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August 2019. On 9 July, the Prime Minister sought the resignation of seven ministers in a cabinet reshuffle. On 22 July, he appointed interim civilian governors, including two women, for all 18 states. In Darfur, the appointments were largely welcomed, although some criticized what they saw as partisan appointments.

3. Demonstrations took place in Khartoum and other parts of the country, including in camps for internally displaced persons in Darfur. Demonstrators demanded justice for the victims of the June 2019 crackdown on peaceful protesters in Khartoum, improved security and service delivery, and other reforms. Protesters in Darfur, including in Nertiti, Kabkabiyah, Kass, Kutum, El Fasher, Ed Daein and Masteri highlighted protection challenges and demanded that authorities disarm militias and improve security.

Peace process

4. The peace talks between the transitional Government and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Minni Minawi, mediated by the Government of South Sudan, proceeded largely online owing to restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and reached a successful conclusion on 31 August with the initialling of a peace agreement. The ceremony was preceded on 28 and 29 August by the signing of eight peace protocols that were focused on wealth- and power-sharing, displaced people and refugees, land ownership and lands traditionally used by a tribal community (*hawakeer*), compensation and rehabilitation, accountability and reconciliation, the pastoral sector, and security arrangements. The formal participation of women in the talks remained marginal. The Operation provided logistical and technical support for the peace process.

5. The Sudanese Alliance, an umbrella for splinter groups from SLA-Abdul Wahid and the Justice and Equality Movement, joined the Darfur track of the Juba talks in May. Despite its withdrawal from the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, SLA-Minni

Minawi also continued to participate, with Mr. Minawi himself initialling the 31 August agreement. SLA-Abdul Wahid continued to reject the peace process.

B. Security situation

6. The overall security situation in Darfur deteriorated during the reporting period, largely as a result of an increase in intercommunal violence and criminality and the continuation of infighting within SLA-Abdul Wahid.

Fighting between forces of the transitional Government and armed movements

7. The Operation recorded 48 incidents of armed conflict resulting in 115 fatalities, compared with 37 incidents and 34 fatalities from 1 March to 31 May 2020. On 1 June, SLA-Abdul Wahid attacked the Sudanese Armed Forces checkpoint in Kutrum, Central Darfur, reportedly leading to the killing of 27 Sudanese Armed Forces soldiers and 9 SLA-Abdul Wahid elements. Confrontation between the SLA-Abdul Wahid factions of Mubarak Aldouk and Saleh Borsa also continued, with clashes between 21 May and 11 June in the Daya area, Central Darfur, resulting in 17 fatalities and the displacement of 6,887 families. SLA-Abdul Wahid infighting continued between 26 July and 3 August in Buh and Torong Tonga, South Darfur, resulting in 48 fatalities and significant displacement.

Intercommunal conflict and land issues

8. Intercommunal violence increased across Darfur, with UNAMID recording 15 intercommunal clashes with 126 fatalities during the reporting period, compared with 13 clashes with 93 fatalities in the period from 1 March to 31 May 2020. Intercommunal violence further led to new displacements and the destruction of villages and farms. In several instances, police stations and government buildings, including armouries, were attacked and looted. In West Darfur, clashes between the Masalit and Northern Rizeigat in the area of Masteri and El Geneina in late July left about 75 civilians dead while displacing close to 7,000 people in Masteri and over 13,000 in El Geneina, with more than 30 villages affected and 1,500 houses burned. In North Darfur, internally displaced persons at Fata Borno camp were attacked on 13 July by nomad militias, killing nine. In South Darfur, conflict between Masalit and Fallata from 23 to 26 July led to 18 fatalities.

9. Land-related intercommunal conflicts increased with the start of the farming season, with a total of 85 land-related conflicts and 17 fatalities compared with 47 land-related conflicts with 20 fatalities in the period from 1 March to 31 May 2020. Attacks on Boronga, South Darfur, on 26 and 31 July by suspected Misseriya left one person dead, some 28 houses burned and at least 20,500 people displaced, and gave way to protests in Kass during which a Sudan Police Force station was burned and the armoury looted.

10. On 26 July, the Prime Minister announced the deployment of additional joint security forces to Darfur to protect local populations during the farming season. The Operation has been working closely with the country's authorities and local communities to de-escalate tensions and reinforce the Government's protection capacity. Large-scale violence around the Kalma camp for internally displaced persons over the killing of two nomads on 10 June was averted by UNAMID intervention and the deployment of government security forces. In response to the incidents in Fata Borno, UNAMID has scaled up its presence to deter further violence and support the Government. Similarly, in the Hamadiya camp for internally displaced persons in Central Darfur, UNAMID strengthened its military and police

patrolling to deter violence after a power struggle for the camp's leadership resulted in violence, with many families fleeing the camp.

Incidents against United Nations personnel and installations

11. A total of 65 mostly criminal incidents targeted at UNAMID, United Nations and humanitarian personnel and premises were recorded during the review period.

C. Protection of civilians

12. Civilians in Darfur continued to be vulnerable to attacks owing to the persistently weak protective environment. Notwithstanding movement limitations due to COVID-19, UNAMID continued to contribute to the protection of civilians, including access to humanitarian assistance. The military component conducted a total of 4,605 patrols, including 888 related to the protection of civilians. The police component deployed 893 patrols, including 352 to camps for internally displaced persons, 199 related to firewood, grass or farmlands, 172 to villages and 106 to towns, 32 to markets, 2 to return areas and 30 to migration routes. The Operation facilitated 51 humanitarian escorts as an emergency response to about 50,000 beneficiaries in the Jebel Marra. The Mission also supported the voluntary surrender of 200 weapons in Central Darfur and cleared 20 hazardous areas of explosive remnants of war, and destroyed 64 explosive remnants of war and 34 rounds of small arms ammunition.

13. The Operation provided COVID-19 prevention support to camps for internally displaced persons in the greater Jebel Marra, benefiting over 5,000 people. In collaboration with state authorities, the Mission contributed to COVID-19 awareness campaigns and distribution of hygiene material and protective equipment. The Mission conducted workshops on COVID-19 for prisons and justice institutions in Darfur and engaged with Sudanese authorities on preventing its spread there.

14. With the COVID-19 pandemic, UNAMID and the United Nations country team used the flexibility in the State liaison functions initiative to redirect \$1.9 million to equip and maintain Government isolation centres across Darfur. Despite delays to State liaison function activities caused by the pandemic, construction of a police station in the Shoba return area in North Darfur was completed on schedule. Through the State liaison functions, non-food relief items were distributed to 400 vulnerable households of internally displaced persons.

15. The Operation continued to build institutional and physical infrastructure to help to prevent outbreaks of violence and mitigate their toll. In West and North Darfur, workshops were held in collaboration with Sudanese authorities to strengthen women's resilience and mitigation capacities in relation to gender-based violence. In South Darfur, two capacity-building workshops on child protection and children's rights were held to enhance the skills of social workers and persons living with disabilities. Also, trainings were held for prison officers, including 28 women, in North and South Darfur on the human rights approach to prison management.

16. During the reporting period, UNAMID engaged closely with the Government to support the national plan of the Sudan for protecting civilians after the exit of UNAMID of 21 May 2020 (see [S/2020/429](#)). On 16 and 28 July, UNAMID and the Government held meetings to discuss the Operation's support and agreed to establish a high-level coordination mechanism. On 13 and 14 August, UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan held a high-level joint workshop to improve cooperation in addressing the protection challenges in Darfur, with the parties agreeing on a coordination mechanism and a task force to enhance cooperation.

D. Humanitarian situation

17. During the reporting period, humanitarian needs were driven largely by the increase in intercommunal clashes, the economic situation, flooding and the impact of COVID-19. The drivers included the intercommunal violence in West, North and South Darfur, where humanitarian partners conducted assessments and provided assistance in response. Over the past nine months, humanitarian partners have also provided assistance to some 350,000 people in previously inaccessible parts of South Darfur. This furthers recent improvements in accessing areas occupied by SLA-Abdul Wahid, following engagement with the Government and SLA-Abdul Wahid.

18. As at 6 August, seasonal flooding had affected more than 16,000 people in North, South, East and West Darfur, with the Government and humanitarian partners providing assistance to those affected. At the same time, the COVID-19 outbreak and related restrictions compounded existing economic challenges. According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report, some 2.8 million people are facing a food crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in Darfur during the current period.

E. Human rights situation

19. From June to August, UNAMID documented 93 alleged human rights violations and abuses, involving 403 victims, including 40 women and 28 minors, which reflects an increase relative to the 97 cases involving 299 victims that were documented between March and May 2020. Owing to various factors, including the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, these may not be the actual numbers.

20. Women continued to be particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and abuses. The Operation documented 20 cases of sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence involving 28 survivors, which represents an increase of 10 cases compared with the same period in the previous year. The cases included the assault and rape of two Fur women, allegedly by nomads, on 25 June near Belle el-Sereif village in Central Darfur, and the rape of two women on 16 July in the Tiga farming area in North Darfur. The Operation verified 364 incidents of grave violations affecting 77 children (37 boys and 40 girls) and 5 attacks against schools and hospitals. The violations included rape and other forms of sexual violence, killing and maiming, abduction, attacks against schools and hospitals, and the use of unexploded explosive ordnance. They included the gang rape of a 15-year-old female, allegedly by nomads, on 3 June near the Otash camp for internally displaced persons in South Darfur and the sexual assault of 11- and 8-year old girls on 8 July by two men in the Buri farming area in Central Darfur. Alleged perpetrators included members of the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and SLA-Abdul Wahid elements. Owing to the lack of resources and capacities on the ground, access to justice and accountability responses for child victims of grave violations remains limited.

21. During the reporting period, the Government amended laws impeding human rights, particularly women's rights; it abolished the death penalty for apostasy, criminalized female genital mutilation and repealed public order laws that laid down how women could behave in public. It also signed a framework for cooperation with the United Nations on addressing conflict-related sexual violence. The Operation and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights jointly established the COVID-19 rights watch initiative to highlight concerns over vulnerable groups and mitigate the subversion of human rights and rule of law processes.

III. Coordination with the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and transition planning

22. The UNITAMS planning team visited Darfur from 5 to 8 August. The team travelled to Zalingei, El Fasher and Nyala to meet the new civilian governors and civil society groups, and visited the Kalma and Hassahisa camps for internally displaced persons in South and Central Darfur. The team's visit to the UNAMID temporary operating base in Golo, Central Darfur, and a planned visit to a gathering site for internally displaced persons there could not take place as Sudanese military intelligence denied access to those locations.

23. Simultaneously, the Operation engaged the Sudanese authorities about putting in place the structures necessary to support the eventual drawdown and exit of UNAMID in a responsible manner. While much of the work during the reporting period was focused on support to the Government's protection of civilians responsibilities as described above, it also included engagement in other areas, such as in the form of a workshop held on 12 August with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. This resulted in a joint technical committee for activities to support community engagement in the creation of a protective environment and to reduce intercommunal tensions.

IV. Financial aspects

24. The General Assembly, in its resolution [74/261 C](#) of 30 June 2020, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the Operation in amounts not exceeding \$240.2 million for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2020.

25. As at 27 August 2020, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMID amounted to \$320.8 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$4,657.0 million.

26. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs was made for the period up to 31 July 2019, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment was made for the period up to 31 March 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

V. Observations

27. I commend the parties for the initialling of a peace agreement and of eight important protocols at the culmination of the Juba talks. It constitutes a significant milestone for the country's political transition, laying solid foundations for a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of the Sudan. Despite the lengthy process, its outcomes are a testimony to the strong commitment of all the stakeholders to peace. I call on the parties to engage without delay in the implementation of all provisions, particularly those addressing the issues of land ownership and the system of *hawakeer*, refugees and internally displaced persons, the pastoral sector, and security and justice; doing so will bring immediate relief and benefits to the long-suffering population of Darfur. I also encourage those who have not joined the peace process to date to show courage and determination in addressing their differences through engagement and dialogue for the benefit of the constituencies they represent. Finally, I commend the resolute efforts of the Government of South Sudan to bring this process to a successful end.

28. The progress of the transitional Government on its democratic transition, including the appointment of interim civilian governors for all five Darfur states, is

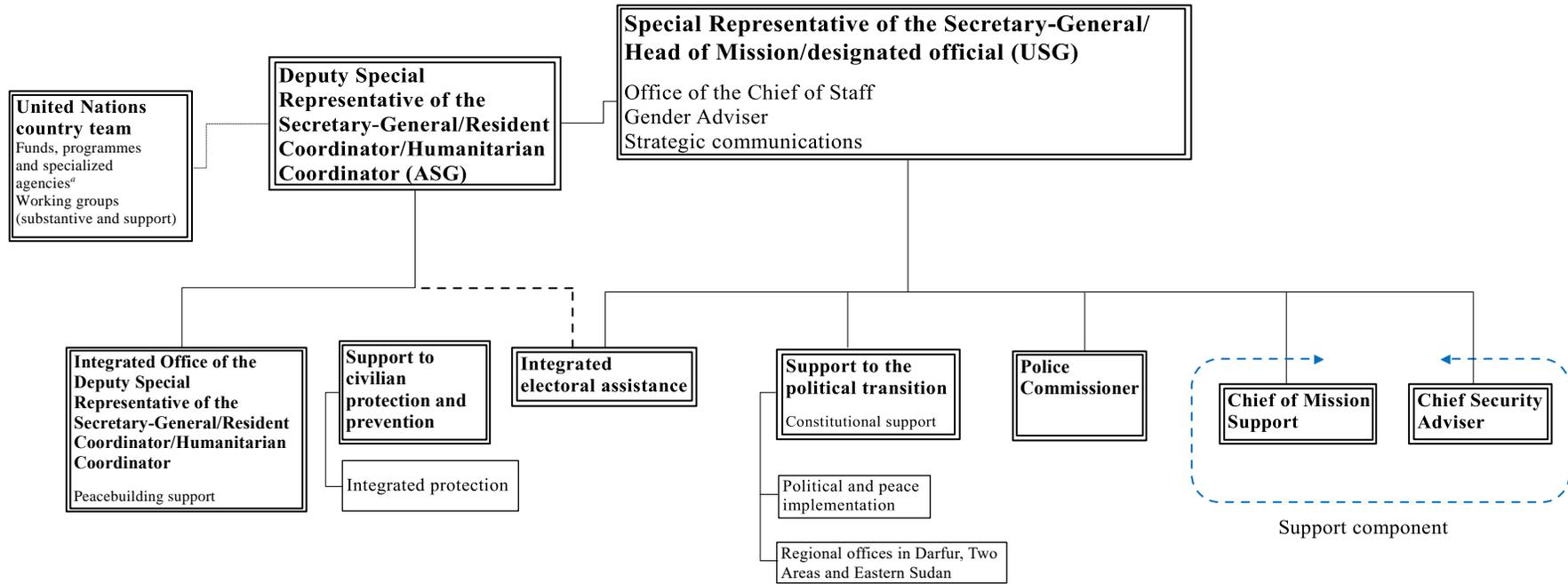
very encouraging. I applaud the progress on commitments to gender equality and women's rights, and I urge the transitional Government to ensure that it achieves 40 per cent representation of women, as called for in the Constitutional Declaration.

29. The recent rise in intercommunal violence in Darfur is, however, very concerning. Coming at a time when discussions are being held over the future of Darfur, the increased clashes and demands for greater security are a reminder that many Darfuris continue to worry that they may be left behind by the new agreement. I welcome the Government's response to the violence and the demonstrated will to address the legitimate security demands of internally displaced persons and other Darfuris. The 31 August peace agreement should serve as a turning point to bring all affected communities on board in their search for peace.

30. The bold steps undertaken by the transitional Government towards a national plan for protecting civilians deserve acknowledgement and support. The Operation is fully committed to providing effective support to the Government's protection responsibilities in Darfur and I am heartened by the recent engagements in that regard, including in the form of the high-level workshop held in August 2020. It is important that commitments lead to tangible results and that mechanisms established in those meetings lead to even deeper cooperation on protection.

Annex II

Proposed organization chart of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan for 2021



Abbreviations: USG, Under-Secretary-General; ASG, Assistant Secretary-General.

^a Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labour Organization, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations Volunteers, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.