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

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2636 \(2022\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) until 3 June 2023 and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on its implementation. The report covers developments in the Sudan from 19 February to 6 May 2023 and contains an update on the implementation of the Mission's mandate, with gender considerations integrated throughout as a cross-cutting issue.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. The situation in the Sudan deteriorated dramatically. While some progress was being made in the political process during the early part of the reporting period, large-scale fighting erupted on 15 April between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces, engulfing the country in conflict.

3. Early in the reporting period, military leaders expressed diverging views on the military coup of 25 October 2021 and the issue of the integration of the Rapid Support Forces into one national army. While the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, referred to the events of 25 October 2021 as a “coup” for the first time in a speech in River Nile State on 18 February, he also maintained that it was intended to “correct the situation” in the country. In a televised address on 19 February, the Deputy Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and head of the Rapid Support Forces, Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, stated that his participation in the “military coup” was a “mistake” that had led to the reinstatement of elements of the former regime, accusing the latter of creating rifts between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.

4. Prior to the outbreak of fighting, there had been limited progress in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. On 4 and 5 March, in Khartoum, the



Sudan Peace Commission convened a national workshop for government officials to discuss the updated implementation matrix of the Juba Peace Agreement that was signed on 20 February in Juba. The national workshop identified ministries and institutions in charge of implementing specific actions outlined in the updated matrix. During this part of the reporting period, the trilateral mechanism also continued to engage with the non-signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement. On 21 March, UNITAMS, with support from the United Nations country team, secured the release of 11 Sudanese men in the custody of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction.

5. In parallel, efforts to move the political process towards finalization continued. From 16 to 20 March, the trilateral mechanism consisting of the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in collaboration with the National High Committee for Transitional Justice (composed of signatory parties to the framework agreement, national experts and the Civil Coalition for Transitional Justice) convened a national conference on justice and transitional justice in Khartoum. The conference brought together around 800 participants from across the Sudan (30 per cent of whom were women), including victims of human rights violations, victims' families and national and international experts. Participants recommended promoting a transitional justice model that would help to end the culture of impunity in the Sudan. This was the fourth of five workshops held to expand consultations among the Sudanese as part of the political framework agreement. This national conference was preceded by regional consultations held in Blue Nile State, Darfur, South Kordofan State and Khartoum from 12 to 14 March. Consultations planned in eastern and northern Sudan did not proceed, owing to the absence of authorization from local authorities.

6. On 19 March, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo convened a meeting during which the signatories of the framework agreement agreed to complete the final political agreement by 1 April, finalize the transitional constitution by 6 April and begin the formation of the transitional institutions by 11 April. On the same day, at the request of the signatories to the framework agreement, the trilateral mechanism convened a preparatory meeting during which they agreed to form a drafting committee to prepare a draft final agreement and a committee to continue outreach to the non-signatories.

7. The signatory parties to the framework agreement, in coordination with the trilateral mechanism, convened a workshop on military and security sector reform from 26 to 29 March, which concluded the consultations. Some 260 people participated (20 per cent of whom were women), including representatives of various State security agencies, civil society and signatories and non-signatories to the framework agreement, as well as national and international experts. In their remarks at the opening session, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo expressed their commitment to military and security sector reform. Participants were unable to agree on recommendations at the conclusion of the workshop, as differences remained over timelines for the integration of the Rapid Support Forces into one unified national army and for establishing a unified command structure.

8. On 1 April, the signatory parties to the framework agreement agreed to revise the initial timeline for the completion of the final agreement to allow more time to overcome differences, particularly on military and security sector reform. The drafting committee finalized the draft agreement on 4 April. However, on 5 April, the signatory parties announced their intention to delay the signing of the agreement until the remaining differences between the military leaders had been addressed.

9. Amid growing tensions between the military leaders, the mobilization of troops and a military build-up of both forces, particularly in Khartoum, Darfur and the

northern region of the Sudan, were widely reported since early March, creating fears among the population of potential clashes. In a televised statement on 12 April, the spokesperson of the Sudanese Armed Forces accused the Rapid Support Forces of deploying troops in Khartoum, Marawi and elsewhere in the country without the approval of, or coordination with, the Sudanese Armed Forces. The latter reportedly gave the Rapid Support Forces 24 hours to withdraw from Marawi airport in northern Sudan. In a statement later the same day, the Rapid Support Forces noted that the deployment of troops had been carried out in line with its national mandate and in coordination with the Sudanese Armed Forces. The Sudanese Armed Forces rejected the claims by the Rapid Support Forces of coordination and accused them of creating “terror among citizens”.

10. Concerned with the escalatory rhetoric around the build-up of forces, national and international actors, including the trilateral mechanism, increased engagement with the military leaders to defuse tensions. A national mediation committee was formed by Gibril Ibrahim, the Minister of Finance and leader of the Justice and Equality Movement; Sovereign Council member Malik Agar, who leads the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar faction; and Minni Minawi, the Governor of the Darfur Region and leader of the Sudan Liberation Army – Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) faction. Civilian signatory parties to the framework agreement also established a mechanism led by Sovereign Council member El Hadi Idris, the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council (SLM-TC), to engage with Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo in an attempt to prevent further escalation. On 11 April, the Special Representative convened a meeting of the diplomatic community to provide an update on the situation and explore opportunities for coordinated action to defuse tensions. UNITAMS, together with its trilateral mechanism partners, subsequently engaged with both parties, calling for restraint and the peaceful settlement of differences. On 13 April, France, Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the European Union issued a joint statement calling on Sudanese military and civilian leaders to take active steps to reduce tensions and engage constructively to resolve outstanding issues related to security sector reform.

11. Despite calls from national and international actors, on 15 April, heavy fighting broke out between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces in Khartoum and Merowe. The clashes rapidly expanded geographically with numerous confrontations in Darfur and North Kordofan. The spokesperson for the Sudanese Armed Forces described the situation as a “conspiracy and aggression” by the Rapid Support Forces, accusing them of “rebelling against the State”. Meanwhile, the Rapid Support Forces described the clashes as a “cowardly act” and a “treacherous attack” by the Sudanese Armed Forces. Fighting continued in Khartoum on 15 and 16 April. Significant fighting was also reported in El Fasher in North Darfur, El Obeid in North Kordofan, Nyala in South Darfur and Kassala in Kassala State. The insecurity resulting from the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces led Gedaref, Kassala, White Nile, Al-Gazira, River Nile and Red Sea States to declare a state of emergency.

12. Fighting, including the use of air strikes, continued the following days in various parts of Khartoum and elsewhere in the country. On 17 April, the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press release announcing a formal decision taken by Lieutenant General Al-Burhan to dissolve the Rapid Support Forces. The United Nations, with the support of Member States, negotiated partial humanitarian pauses on 16 and 17 April. The parties did not, however, meaningfully adhere to them. On 20 April, a three-day humanitarian pause over Eid al-Fitr was brokered by the United Nations in close coordination with Sudanese and international and regional partners. While this resulted in a reduction in the level of fighting, clashes and air strikes

continued, including in Khartoum, Darfur and North Kordofan. Many foreign embassies, international organizations and humanitarian aid organizations evacuated their personnel from Khartoum over several days, starting on 20 April. Many Sudanese civilians also fled Khartoum to safer areas, including to neighbouring countries.

13. On 24 April, the United States brokered a 72-hour ceasefire and secured the agreement of the warring parties on the establishment of a mechanism to oversee the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of a permanent cessation of hostilities and humanitarian arrangements. Each party appointed focal points. The ceasefire was only partially upheld. The two parties announced the extension of the 72-hour ceasefire twice further, on 27 and 30 April, following discussions with the trilateral mechanism and the Quadrilateral comprising the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States. Both parties, however, continued to accuse each other of violating the ceasefire. On 2 May, South Sudan announced that Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo had agreed, in principle, in telephone calls with the President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, to a seven-day ceasefire from 4 to 11 May.

14. In Darfur, the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces was concentrated in North, South, Central and West Darfur. In East Darfur, the situation remained more stable, although skirmishes were reported. In North Darfur, on 20 April, the state governors – assisted by native administration and religious leaders, armed signatory movements of the Juba Peace Agreement and the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee chaired by UNITAMS – negotiated a three-day local ceasefire for Eid al-Fitr, which contributed to significantly decreasing the violence. This truce was renewed indefinitely after the Eid al-Fitr period, contributing to relative calm. In West Darfur, fighting in El Geneina, near the Chadian border, that initially began on 15 April resumed on 25 April, along with reports of communities arming themselves and joining the fight. In Central Darfur, following initial clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in Zalingei, on 25 April a committee formed of community leaders announced a permanent ceasefire agreement between the parties and called upon the population to return to their homes. The situation there remains tense but stable. Heavy fighting was also experienced in North Kordofan State, particularly around El Obeid airport, resulting in civilian casualties as well as in displacements and the destruction of infrastructure.

15. In Eastern Sudan, fighting broke out on 15 April but quickly de-escalated. Calm gradually returned across the region, which is controlled mainly by the Sudanese Armed Forces. Port Sudan in Red Sea State became a main relocation and evacuation point for Member States and their nationals, the staff of international organizations and Sudanese nationals. This influx of people increased the challenges faced by the city in terms of accommodation and provision of basic services and the increased prices of commodities. Kassala and Gedaref States welcomed many internally displaced persons, mainly from Khartoum.

16. The outbreak of fighting in the Sudan was widely condemned. The Secretary-General and several world leaders urgently engaged with Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo, calling for an end to the violence. Throughout the remainder of the reporting period, the Secretary-General continued reaching out to the military leaders of the Sudan and worked closely with Member States and regional organizations to advocate for an immediate end to the fighting.

17. On 16 April, IGAD convened an extraordinary assembly of its heads of State and government, where it was agreed that the Presidents of Djibouti, Kenya and South Sudan would be dispatched to Khartoum. However, the ongoing fighting prevented their visit. On the same day, the League of Arab States held an emergency meeting,

expressing its readiness to exert efforts to help the Sudan to end the crisis. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union also met on 16 April and called for an immediate ceasefire without conditions and decided to undertake a field mission to the Sudan to engage with the stakeholders. On 20 April, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission convened a virtual ministerial-level meeting, bringing together leaders of the United Nations, IGAD, the European Union, the League of Arab States and representatives of Member States. In the communiqué issued following the meeting, participants called upon the parties to end the violence, resume dialogue and establish “humanitarian corridors”. Participants also agreed to coordinate their respective initiatives. The African Union Commission convened a follow-up meeting on 2 May in Addis Ababa to further assess the situation and coordinate efforts. On 3 May in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the Executive Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held an emergency meeting, calling upon Sudanese parties to cease military escalation and return to dialogue.

18. At the national level, on 15 April, civilian signatory parties to the framework agreement called on the military leaders to immediately cease hostilities and prevent the country from a “total collapse”. Across Sudanese society, political figures and parties, business leaders, women’s rights groups, civil society and Sudanese citizens living abroad quickly joined the calls for a ceasefire and humanitarian support. Many resistance committees mobilized to provide urgent humanitarian support to civilians trapped in homes, injured or in need of food and water. On 27 April, a new civilian coalition composed of political parties, resistance committees, trade unions, women’s rights groups and 130 prominent public figures called for an end to the fighting and the restoration of democracy. They advocated for the complete withdrawal of the military institutions from politics, for security and military reform and for mitigating the attempts of the former regime to return to power. On 3 May, several Juba Peace Agreement signatories, including Minni Minawi, Gibril Ibrahim and Malik Agar, formed a “peace bloc”, affirming their opposition to the war. They called for the reintegration of the Rapid Support Forces and all armed movements into the Sudanese Armed Forces. They also advocated for the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, including its security arrangements.

19. On 6 May, Saudi Arabia and the United States announced the start of “pre-negotiation talks” between representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The two Member States urged both parties to actively engage in the talks towards a ceasefire.

B. Security situation

20. Prior to the outbreak of fighting, intercommunal clashes had taken place in the Darfur states. These included an incident of armed robbery between elements of the Fur and Arab Jalol communities on 2 March, resulting in the killing of one Arab man, and the killing, on 23 March, by unidentified perpetrators, of a trader from the Mararit community. In the latter incident, the local community reportedly pursued and killed two alleged assailants, which led to retaliatory attacks by the Arab Rezeigat on 23 and 24 March, resulting in six individuals reportedly killed and 11 others injured. Approximately 30,000 individuals fled across the border to Chad as a result of these clashes. Intercommunal violence led authorities to extend a state of emergency in Blue Nile (22 February) and South Kordofan (24 February) States and to declare a state of emergency in West Kordofan State (27 February). The most significant of these clashes took place in West Kordofan on 27 February, involving mainly the Misseriya and Hamar communities.

21. Violence escalated rapidly following the outbreak of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, with large-scale heavy aerial

bombardment, shelling, shooting and the use of artillery. Khartoum State remained the epicentre of the violence, with continued sporadic clashes in the Darfur region and North Kordofan.

22. Since the start of the fighting, widespread looting of United Nations premises has occurred in Khartoum and Darfur. In Nyala, most of the United Nations premises and guesthouses were looted, on 15 April, with vehicles, office assets and, in some instances, personal belongings of staff members stolen. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Head of Unit in Nyala was injured. On the same day in El Fasher, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Food Programme (WFP) guesthouses were caught in crossfire and two mortars landed in UNHCR guesthouse compounds, narrowly avoiding injury to staff. A rocket-propelled grenade also exploded inside the WFP guesthouse, causing minor injuries to two international staff members from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). On 16 April, mortars landed within the UNHCR perimeter and the UNDP compound, which resulted in the destruction of a United Nations vehicle. On the same day, the office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sustained damage from the fighting, and the UNDP compound was partially destroyed by fire. Also on 16 April, the co-located UNICEF office and guesthouse, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) premises and the WFP and UNHCR guesthouses were looted. UNICEF personnel were held at gunpoint for two hours and all their personal belongings and some vehicles were stolen. On 17 April, the offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations were looted. On 18 April, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported the looting of its medical supplies warehouse and the hijacking of vehicles in Nyala. On 19 April, in Khartoum, men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms attempted to break into the office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and broke into the World Bank building. On the same day, stray bullets and projectiles from the fighting impacted the UNITAMS offices and UNHCR and WFP guesthouses in Zalingei, Central Darfur. A WFP staff member was injured in Zalingei owing to the explosion of a projectile. On 20 and 21 April, the UNHCR warehouse and office in El Fasher were looted. On 21 April, also in Khartoum, the UNHCR field office was looted. On 24 April, the WFP workshop was also looted and four WHO vehicles and two WFP vehicles were stolen. On 26 April, in El Geneina, the IOM, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNITAMS and WFP offices were looted. On 6 May, the WFP country office in Khartoum was looted. During the reporting period, WFP indicated that close to 17,000 metric tons of food products, worth an estimated \$13–14 million, were looted.

23. During the period, attempted sexual assaults on international female personnel were reported against three representatives of international non-governmental organizations and one United Nations staff member.

24. Many embassies and diplomatic residences were also targeted by attempted break-ins, shootings and lootings, reportedly by men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms. On 17 April, the Ambassador of the European Union was assaulted in his residence. On the same day, a United States diplomatic convoy was fired upon. On 28 April, a Turkish evacuation plane was fired upon as it was landing at Wadi Seidna airport, north of Khartoum. On 6 May, the vehicle of the Ambassador of Türkiye to the Sudan was fired upon.

25. On 23 April, a United Nations-led convoy, comprising 1,165 United Nations, international NGO and diplomatic personnel and their dependants, left Khartoum on board 68 vehicles and reached Port Sudan on 24 April. On 25 April, a first group of approximately 400 evacuees boarded a French navy vessel from Port Sudan to Jeddah, following which United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights transferred them to

either Nairobi or Entebbe the following day. This first sea evacuation prioritized vulnerable personnel, including those with dependants. In Darfur, 64 United Nations and international NGO personnel from Zalingei, Central Darfur, and El Geneina, West Darfur, crossed the border via road to Chad on 24 April. On 26 April, 36 personnel from Nyala, South Darfur, and Ed Daein, East Darfur, arrived via road in South Sudan. On 27 April, 102 personnel from El Fasher, North Darfur, were evacuated to N'Djamena on board a French military aircraft. On 29 April, a second sea evacuation from Port Sudan of 155 evacuees to Jeddah took place on board a commercial Saudi Arabian vessel. These United Nations personnel were transferred to Nairobi and Entebbe by Jordanian aircraft the following day. The Special Representative remains in the Sudan with a small number of international personnel.

C. Human rights, rule of law and protection situation

26. Prior to the outbreak of fighting on 15 April, UNITAMS had documented 27 alleged incidents of human rights violations and abuses in the context of intercommunal violence and clashes between armed elements involving 101 victims, including 75 men, 20 women and 6 children (4 girls and 2 boys). Of the 27 documented incidents, 25 were verified. Of the 25 verified incidents, 5 were reportedly attributed to government security forces, affecting 6 victims, and 20 were reportedly attributed to non-State armed groups, including armed movements and militia groups, affecting 93 victims. Further, violations of the right to life accounted for 29 victims (27 men, 1 girl and 1 boy); violations of physical integrity accounted for 52 victims (42 men, 9 women and 1 boy); sexual and gender-based violence accounted for 5 victims (3 women and 2 girls); physical assault accounted for 6 victims (3 men and 3 women); abduction accounted for 7 victims (5 women, 1 man and 1 girl); and 2 men were subjected to arbitrary arrest. Since the outbreak of fighting, it has not been possible to conduct any verification or investigation that would enable these numbers to be reliably updated.

27. From the coup of 25 October 2021 until the outbreak of fighting on 15 April, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office had documented the killing of at least 125 people in the context of protests, including one woman and 24 children, of whom two were girls. This represented an increase of two in the number of people killed since the end of the previous reporting period. Both people killed during this period were boys, a 14-year-old who was hit in the head with a tear-gas canister and a 17-year-old who was killed with live ammunition. During the reporting period, at least 221 people were injured during protests.

28. Early in the reporting period, prior to the outbreak of fighting, the United Nations continued to receive reports of sexual violence against women from camps for internally displaced persons who engaged in livelihood activities outside the camps. During that period, UNITAMS documented five incidents of conflict-related sexual violence in North Darfur (one), South Darfur (two) and Central Darfur (two), affecting eight women and six girls. Reportedly, two incidents were perpetrated by groups of men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms and three others by armed Arab tribesmen.

29. Also early in the reporting period, the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 13 grave violations against 13 children (11 boys and 2 girls): 11 children were maimed and two were killed during protests in Khartoum. The signatories of the Sudan road map to prevent the six grave violations against children, agreed to under the Juba Peace Agreement, made some progress in implementing the road map prior to the onset of fighting. A total of 122 children (91 boys and 31 girls) associated with armed forces and armed groups were released in Kuma (58) and Kutum (64) in North

Darfur with support from the United Nations. The children were released from the Third Front-Tamazuj (64), Sudan Liberation Forces-Hajar (28), SPLM-N Yassir Arman faction (20), SLA/MM (7), joint armed forces (2) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (1). Since the outbreak of fighting, it has not been possible to conduct any verification or investigation that would enable these numbers to be reliably updated.

30. Progress in criminal justice reforms remained stalled. Allegations of torture and ill-treatment by security forces and judicial corporal punishment continued to be reported. On 6 March, the Central Khartoum Criminal Court dismissed all charges against eight members of resistance committees accused of involvement in the killing of a military intelligence officer during a protest on 8 March 2022. No evidence was produced in court to substantiate the charges against the eight, who had been detained for up to a year. On 1 March, the police announced that a police officer accused of shooting dead a young protester in Khartoum on 28 February had been arrested. On 14 March, the accused was charged with murder and the case has been referred for trial by a civilian court.

31. The outbreak of fighting on 15 April led to a dramatic deterioration in the human rights and protection of civilians situation across the Sudan, exacerbating an already precarious situation. As of 6 May, the fighting had resulted in the killing of at least 512 people and more than 4,193 injured. Civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals, shops, mosques and schools, were indiscriminately attacked using heavy artillery and shells, including explosive weapons with wide-area effects, resulting in widespread destruction and thousands displaced in Khartoum and elsewhere. The parties' failure to fully adhere to humanitarian pauses resulted in many civilians risking their lives to access supplies or medical care. Reports of the widespread looting of homes, carjackings and attempted sexual assaults by armed elements further compounded the risk to civilians.

32. On 18 April, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to remind their fighters of their obligations under international law to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The High Commissioner called for prompt, thorough and independent investigations into the killings of civilians and the holding accountable of those responsible.

33. Following the outbreak of the fighting, several incidents were reported of prisoners being released or escaping. On 24 April, it was reported that 1,500 prisoners in El Obeid prison were freed owing to a lack of food, water and electricity. On the same day, in West Kordofan, 400 prisoners reportedly escaped El Fula prison, with five others killed while attempting to escape. Riots were also reported in Port Sudan prison on 25 April. Inmates in the Shallah (El Fasher), Nyala and El Geneina prisons were all released. In South Kordofan (Kadugli), Blue Nile (El Damazin), and East Darfur (Ed Daein), only prisoners and pretrial detainees for minor crimes were released, owing to a shortage of food supplies. On 26 April, the Ministry of the Interior released a statement accusing the Rapid Support Forces of breaking into five prisons in Khartoum between 21 and 24 April, freeing inmates and killing and injuring several prison officials. Prison officials contacted by UNITAMS estimated the number of inmates released from prisons in Khartoum to be about 12,000. In a statement on 26 April, the Sudanese Armed Forces claimed that the former President, along with other officials of the former regime, had been moved prior to the fighting to a military hospital on the recommendation of the medical staff of Kober prison.

D. Socioeconomic situation

34. Prior to the outbreak of fighting on 15 April, workers and trade unions, particularly in the media and education sectors, had continued to organize widespread strikes over low or unpaid salaries, while calling for structural reforms. Meanwhile, high food prices had continued to affect the most vulnerable, worsening their livelihoods and food security. In March, the price of locally grown sorghum had increased by 71 per cent compared to March 2022, while the cost of the local food basket monitored by WFP increased by 25 per cent compared to March last year. As at April, inflation was approximately 63 per cent, the lowest since December 2019, compared to 83.6 per cent the previous month.

35. The socioeconomic situation in the Sudan, which was already dire, further deteriorated with the outbreak of fighting on 15 April. The fighting disrupted economic activities, including through the closure of businesses, airports and roads, affecting the movements of goods, services and people across the country. This severely affected the supply of food, fuel, medicine and other essential commodities. The prices of foodstuffs, fuel, transportation and other commodities rapidly increased. Communications and Internet services experienced intermittent disruption. The closure of several bank branches and the disruption of digital banking systems negatively affected financial transactions, including access to cash. Several commercial banks were reportedly looted in Khartoum by armed elements and civilians. Finally, progress on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was already modest. The outbreak of fighting has reversed progress across the board and has the potential to have significant long-term consequences for development.

E. Humanitarian situation

36. The outbreak of fighting on 15 April has led to a drastic deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Sudan. Humanitarian activities have been interrupted in several states owing to widespread insecurity, with many reports of looting of humanitarian assets, including of food, office equipment and vehicles. Humanitarian needs prior to the fighting were already at record levels, with a total of 15.8 million people (57 per cent of whom were women) estimated to require humanitarian assistance in 2023.

37. Humanitarian actors are working in an extremely dangerous environment. Five humanitarian workers have been killed since 15 April, leading to the suspension of some humanitarian organizations' operations. Following the killing of one of its staff members, IOM announced the temporary suspension of its humanitarian operations in the Sudan on 21 April. WFP temporarily suspended its operations from 16 April to 1 May, after the killing of three of its staff members on 15 April.

38. The looting of humanitarian compounds and guesthouses, detailed above, in Central Darfur and South Darfur resulted in at least 10 WFP vehicles and 6 food trucks being stolen, as well as the loss of up to 4,000 metric tons of food. Across the Sudan, more than 17,000 metric tons of food were looted from WFP, with heavy damage and even destruction caused to warehouses, offices and guesthouses. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service has been completely grounded. One aircraft was damaged beyond repair at Khartoum International Airport on 15 April.

39. Acute shortages of food, water, medicines and fuel, and limited access to communications and electricity, continue to be reported. WHO has verified 28 attacks on health-care facilities since the start of the fighting: 75 per cent of health facilities in Khartoum are closed, and only 16 per cent are operating as normal, leaving millions

of people without access to health care. The remaining facilities in Khartoum and the Darfur states are stretched beyond capacity and nearly non-functional owing to staff fatigue and lack of supplies. The onset of fighting has made it difficult for expectant mothers in the Sudan to seek antenatal care, safe delivery services or postnatal care in hospitals and clinics, but UNFPA continued to support them across the country.

40. More than 700,000 people have been internally displaced in the Sudan. Displaced people have been recorded in 15 of the country's 18 states. The states hosting the highest number of displaced people are White Nile (which hosts 25.6 per cent of all displaced people), West Darfur (21.2 per cent) and Northern (14.4 per cent) States. The highest number of displaced people have come from Khartoum (502,200 people, approximately 68.2 per cent of the total internally displaced), followed by West Darfur (21.8 per cent of displaced people) and South Darfur (6 per cent). Cross-border movements from the Sudan to Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan have been observed. According to IOM and UNHCR figures, more than 150,000 people have left the Sudan. This includes over 108,000 refugees and asylum seekers and over 45,000 refugee returnees.

41. During a visit to Port Sudan on 3 and 4 May, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, together with the Special Representative, engaged with Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo, as well as with civil society and humanitarian workers. He urged the warring parties to firmly commit to the safety of humanitarian personnel, assets and premises and to enabling humanitarian access.

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

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

42. Since the outbreak of fighting on 15 April, UNITAMS has focused its good offices efforts on urging the parties to cease hostilities, respect international humanitarian law and return to political negotiations. The Special Representative engaged intensively with the leadership of both parties to advocate for a ceasefire and humanitarian pauses while encouraging dialogue to resolve the conflict. However, all other ongoing and planned activities under the objective were suspended for the remainder of the reporting period.

43. Prior to the outbreak of fighting, the trilateral mechanism had engaged intensively to de-escalate the tensions building between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, up until the eve of the fighting on 14 April. This included calls upon regional Member States to invite the military leaders to hold discussions on confidence-building measures. In response to the fighting, UNITAMS, as part of the trilateral mechanism, continued to engage closely with regional organizations and Member States in the pursuit of ceasefires, including through the provision of technical expertise on ceasefire monitoring.

44. As part of its facilitation role of the final phase of the political process in the earlier part of the reporting period, the trilateral mechanism worked with the signatory parties in planning and organizing the two remaining consultations on justice and transitional justice, and on security sector reform. This included the provision of funding, technical expertise, logistical support, community engagement, coordination and experience-sharing. It also included the provision of gender expertise to support

the meaningful participation of women in the political process. To foster inclusivity and promote broad-based participation, the trilateral mechanism facilitated travel for 223 participants from remote locations to the national conference on justice and transitional justice in Khartoum. They included internally displaced persons, members of women's rights groups and youth.

45. The trilateral mechanism also engaged with the parties that did not sign the framework agreement to urge them to join the political process. During March, the trilateral mechanism held meetings with representatives of SLA/MM, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Democratic Unionist Party/Jafaar Mirghani and the Sudanese Communist Party and with Al-Tigani Al-Sisi. The trilateral mechanism also continued to engage with Abdelaziz al-Hilu and Abdul Wahid al-Nur. It also engaged various groups opposing the Eastern Track of the Juba Peace Agreement and supported their efforts to unify their ranks and put forward a representative to join the process on behalf of Eastern Sudan.

46. As part of its support to strengthen gender inclusivity in the political process, UNITAMS provided technical and facilitation support to Sudanese women from political parties, armed movements and civil society. This included capacity-building workshops on security sector reform for 30 women from the regions and Khartoum, and mediation training for 60 women from Eastern Sudan, in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and with the support of the Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Government of Sweden.

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

47. Prior to the outbreak of fighting on 15 April, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee chaired by UNITAMS continued to play a critical role in implementing the security arrangements provision of the Juba Peace Agreement in Darfur. The Committee also enhanced its monitoring of the security situation across Darfur and closely engaged with the signatory parties and other stakeholders to defuse and de-escalate potential tensions that could lead to ceasefire violations.

48. From 28 February to 2 March, the Central Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee conducted a training session in Zalingei on monitoring ceasefire violations for representatives of signatory parties to the Juba Peace Agreement. Field visits and exercises were undertaken in all five sectoral committees in Darfur aimed at identifying and endorsing assembly areas, devising modalities to submit lists of signatory armed movement members and monitoring operational movements of these groups.

49. The UNITAMS Police Advisory Unit supported the Sudanese Police Forces in developing guidelines for the protection of civilians, as stipulated under the Juba Peace Agreement. The guidelines provide protection of civilian approaches to be undertaken by the police component within the Joint Security-Keeping Force in accordance with the international principles of protection of civilians and human rights.

50. Following the outbreak of fighting, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee supported state authorities and community leaders in negotiating and implementing a ceasefire between the parties in North Darfur, contributing to decreased violence before and after Eid al-Fitr. Similar efforts were deployed in El Geneina and Zalingei, leading to a temporary de-escalation of the situation. The Committee also supported efforts to engage dialogue between local commanders to ease tensions in Nyala, South

Darfur. After the evacuation of its personnel, the Committee continued monitoring the security situation and ceasefire violations remotely and enhanced its engagement with national stakeholders. However, certain activities, such as capacity-building and field visits, were suspended for the remainder of the reporting period.

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

51. Prior to the outbreak of fighting on 15 April, UNITAMS had undertaken activities in support of peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law, working closely with the United Nations country team and national counterparts. However, the fighting resulted in the suspension of all ongoing and planned activities under the objective for the remainder of the reporting period.

52. In the early part of the reporting period, four workshops on peacebuilding were held in South Darfur (12 and 13 March), North Darfur (15 and 16 March), Blue Nile (3 and 4 April) and South Kordofan (10 and 11 April) with representatives of state and local authorities, native administrations, civil society, women's groups, youth, internally displaced persons and pastoralists. These workshops were an opportunity to discuss and disseminate the findings of state-level peacebuilding assessments funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and exchange views on peacebuilding priorities to inform future programming.

53. Activities supported by the Peacebuilding Fund were being implemented across the Sudan before the outbreak of fighting. From 26 February to 2 March, representatives of Canada, Norway and Switzerland held a joint visit to a project in Blue Nile. Implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-Women and UNDP, the project was aimed at supporting gender-responsive natural resource governance mechanisms and livelihoods. From 12 to 16 March, the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations System Staff College, UNDP and IOM hosted a training of trainers in Khartoum for United Nations staff and representatives from national and international civil society organizations on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding in the Sudan. The programmes of the Peacebuilding Fund had been enhancing the access of youth and youth-led civil society organizations in Central and West Darfur to local civic spaces through the provision of microgrants for the implementation of youth-led community-based initiatives and youth-led community level dialogues.

54. The UNITAMS Police Advisory Unit provided strategic advisory support and organized capacity-building activities for Sudanese counterparts and communities on the themes of protection of civilians, community policing, response to sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. The Unit, together with UNDP and UNHCR, organized two capacity-building training sessions on community policing in Khartoum from 19 to 21 March and in El Geneina, West Darfur, on 19 and 20 March, bringing together a combined total of 85 participants, including 32 women. A workshop was also organized in El Fasher, North Darfur, on 15 and 16 March with 17 participants, including four women, raising awareness about community-police partnership.

55. During the early part of the reporting period, UNITAMS continued to engage national actors and regional partners on mine action. The Mission co-chaired the annual meeting of the Mine Action Support Group, highlighting the status, risks, challenges and opportunities of the mine action efforts made by the Sudan to fulfil its international obligations and implement the demining activities stipulated in the Juba Peace Agreement.

56. UNITAMS cleared 326,800 square metres of land contaminated with explosive ordnance in Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur. In the process, it destroyed 2,917 items of explosive ordnance, including 5 anti-personnel mines, 68 anti-tank mines, 625 items of unexploded ordnance and 2,219 rounds of small arms ammunition. In addition, the Mission provided risk education and awareness to 14,607 people (3,313 boys, 8,889 girls, 828 men and 1,577 women).

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

57. Prior to the outbreak of fighting, UNITAMS and the United Nations country team had engaged with international partners on the development of a support package for once a credible civilian-led government was formed. The United Nations had also engaged in a planning process to develop a new interim cooperation framework for 2024–2026 that would guide United Nations support in advancing peace and sustainable development in the Sudan within the context of a new transition period. International development assistance had remained paused as a result of the coup of 25 October 2021.

58. The outbreak of fighting on 15 April resulted in the suspension of all ongoing and planned activities under the objective for the remainder of the reporting period. This included all United Nations development assistance interventions in the Sudan, as well as its international planning processes. UNITAMS and the United Nations country team are working together to conduct assessments of the situation in the light of the changed circumstances and to adjust the actions of the United Nations as needed in support of the Sudanese people.

E. Mission operational and planning issues

59. Prior to the fighting, the Mission had pursued efforts to extend its footprint to reach full operational capacity. Before the relocation and evacuation of staff, three regional offices in El Fasher, Kadugli and Kassala and five liaison offices in El Damazin, El Geneina, Port Sudan, Nyala and Zalingei were operational, and the Mission was finalizing an office arrangement for the Kauda liaison office. At that time, there was limited progress in the deployment of Mission personnel due to delays in the issuance of visas and travel waivers. As at 6 May, the Mission comprised 249 civilian staff, 26 police personnel and 25 military observers, out of an authorized staffing ceiling of 356 civilian staff (inclusive of two general temporary assistance positions), 42 police officers and 28 military observers.

60. The eruption of fighting on 15 April posed severe operational challenges for UNITAMS. To ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel, the Special Representative initially recommended that staff shelter in place. Between 18 and 27 April, in the light of the grave deterioration of the security situation, it was decided to evacuate all internationally recruited United Nations personnel and their dependants from Khartoum. A small number of personnel currently remain in Port Sudan to support the good offices of the Special Representative and to meet future humanitarian and development programmatic requirements. Decisions were also taken to approve the self-relocation of all locally recruited United Nations personnel and their dependants from Khartoum; the evacuation and self-relocation, respectively, of all internationally recruited United Nations personnel and locally recruited United Nations personnel and their dependants from Darfur, South Kordofan and West Kordofan and El Obeid; and the evacuation and self-relocation, respectively, of

designated non-programme-critical internationally recruited United Nations personnel and non-programme-critical locally recruited United Nations personnel and their dependants in Eastern Sudan, Blue Nile, Al-Gazira, White Nile and Sennar.

61. The Mission continued to engage with the authorities at various levels, reminding them of the Government's responsibility to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Mission, including through ensuring freedom of movement for UNITAMS personnel, in accordance with the status-of-mission agreement of 4 July 2021. Following the temporary relocation of United Nations staff from Khartoum and other locations, the United Nations reminded the Sudan of its obligation to protect United Nations premises and assets. The Government of the Sudan assured the United Nations that the necessary protection was being provided.

IV. Observations

62. The rapid descent of the Sudan into deadly conflict is a terrible setback for the country. The heavy fighting between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces that erupted on 15 April is continuing unabated despite continuous attempts to compel the parties to cease hostilities and return to the negotiating table. The political crisis resulting from the military coup of 25 October 2021 and the current fighting have dashed the hopes of the Sudanese people for a peaceful and inclusive transition. The efforts made in the preceding years towards the political transition, the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, peacebuilding, the establishment of the rule of law and economic development in the Sudan risks being lost.

63. The situation of civilians trapped in urban areas and experiencing attacks, heavy shooting and bombardment daily is unacceptable and deeply worrying. The number of civilians killed, injured and displaced, particularly in Khartoum and the Darfur states, is horrific. I extend my condolences to the family members who have lost loved ones and convey my wishes for a speedy recovery to all those who have been injured.

64. I renew my call upon Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and Lieutenant General Dagalo to immediately cease hostilities, facilitate unhindered humanitarian aid operations and initiate dialogue in good faith to find a peaceful settlement to this crisis. Civilians must be allowed safe passage to move from areas of active hostilities and access food, water and medical supplies. Continued fighting will only deepen divisions, destroy civilian infrastructure and fragment society and risks plunging the country into prolonged conflict and fomenting regional instability.

65. I am appalled by continued fighting in densely populated areas and the attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals, schools and places of worship, as well as attacks on humanitarian and medical workers. The two warring parties must abide by their obligations under international law and ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The safety and security of United Nations personnel, premises and assets as well as humanitarian and medical workers must also be ensured. Incidents of looting of premises belonging to the United Nations, diplomatic missions and other humanitarian organizations, as well as attacks against United Nations personnel and diplomats, are unacceptable. All incidents of targeting, killing and injuring of civilians, including humanitarian and medical workers, and other prohibited acts under international law, must be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

66. The United Nations will continue to use its good offices and engage with the leadership of the two parties to urge an end to the fighting, in close coordination with our regional and international partners. The United Nations remains fully committed

to supporting all initiatives aimed at de-escalating tensions, facilitating unhindered humanitarian access, establishing a lasting ceasefire and supporting a political settlement. I commend regional and international leaders for their engagement in that respect. I also commend the Sudanese actors who have led efforts to mediate a ceasefire and of those who have mobilized against the war.

67. Humanitarian needs in the Sudan were already at record levels prior to the fighting, with one third of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. This number has now rapidly risen. While it is imperative that aid reaches millions in need throughout the Sudan, humanitarian operations are currently severely hampered. Fighting and attacks on airports and other critical humanitarian access hubs have made operations virtually impossible, forcing several humanitarian organizations to temporarily suspend their operations in hotspots. Warehouses, vehicles and other humanitarian assets have been attacked, looted or seized. I urge the parties to stop these violations. I call upon donors to urgently increase their support to the people of the Sudan in this time of acute humanitarian need.

68. The fighting has already resulted in a massive displacement of the population. We need compassion and solidarity with the Sudanese women, men and children who are fleeing for their safety. I thank the neighbours of the Sudan who have welcomed Sudanese refugees and urge all countries to keep their doors open to those in need. I call on the international community to swiftly support those countries in their efforts to protect Sudanese refugees.

69. Many Sudanese people have opened their homes in Khartoum and elsewhere to civilians fleeing the violence. I thank them for their generosity at such a time of crisis. I am also heartened by the robust and organized support of the resistance committees and community volunteers whose courage to coordinate support to civilians in need has been exemplary, particularly as large-scale relief and aid operations remain impossible. The show of compassion and support by ordinary Sudanese women and men reminds us daily of the indefatigable and resilient Sudanese society.

70. The reports of mobilization by some communities and armed groups in support of the fighting parties are alarming. The potential ethnicization of the fighting is a dangerous risk that has the potential to further fragment and prolong the conflict. I renew my call upon all communities to maintain their neutrality and refrain from taking sides.

71. Even before the fighting, people in conflict-affected areas had suffered from the lack of security, with intercommunal violence and armed clashes continuing to take a heavy toll on civilians. The Joint Security Keeping forces in Darfur had not been deployed. The mechanisms stipulated in the Juba Peace Agreement aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict had not been established. At the appropriate time, implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement must proceed to address the insecurity and root causes of conflict. I commend the efforts of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, chaired by UNITAMS, in defusing tensions and promoting dialogue between the Juba Peace Agreement signatory parties and with communities.

72. I thank my Special Representative, Volker Perthes, and all United Nations personnel in the Sudan for their continued dedication and efforts to support the people of the Sudan in this time of crisis and under extremely challenging circumstances. The United Nations remains strongly committed to supporting the Sudanese people in their aspirations for a peaceful and secure future.