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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 [2685 \(2023\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) until 3 December 2023 and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on its implementation. The report covers developments in the Sudan from 21 August to 31 October and provides an update on the implementation of the mandate of the Mission, with gender and age considerations integrated throughout as cross-cutting issues.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. The situation in the Sudan seriously deteriorated throughout the reporting period. Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces continued around strategic areas in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri and in Darfur and the Kordofan regions, and expanded to new areas, such as White Nile and Al-Gazira States. International and regional diplomatic initiatives towards brokering a ceasefire, facilitating humanitarian assistance and engaging civilian stakeholders in preparation for a political process remained stalled. Notwithstanding, Sudanese civilian leaders continued efforts to establish a unified civilian front against the war and to find a political way forward out of the crisis.

3. On 24 August, the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, departed from the Sudanese Armed Forces headquarters in Khartoum for the first time since the war started. During public meetings with members of the Sudanese Armed Forces and local leaders in several states, he denied links between the military and Islamist members of the former regime, characterized the Rapid Support Forces as a group of “rebels” and “mercenaries” and vowed to “crush” its “rebellion”. Lieutenant General Al-Burhan also undertook visits to Egypt (29 August), South Sudan (4 September), Qatar (7 September), Eritrea (11 September), Türkiye (13 September) and Uganda



(16 September), where he reportedly raised concerns about human rights abuses committed by the Rapid Support Forces and the need to reinforce bilateral cooperation. He also indicated his willingness to return to ceasefire negotiations, conditioned on the Rapid Support Forces vacating residential areas and concentrating its troops in allocated sites. On 6 September, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan issued a decree abolishing the law that had established the Rapid Support Forces in 2017 and its 2019 amendments.

4. The head of the Rapid Support Forces, Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, released an audio recording on 4 September accusing Lieutenant General Al-Burhan of seeking to reinstate the former regime. On 14 September, he released another audio recording warning that, if Lieutenant General Al-Burhan were to form a “war cabinet” in Port Sudan, it would prompt the Rapid Support Forces to establish a parallel government with Khartoum as the capital. The Deputy Chair of the Sovereign Council, Malik Agar, stated that, upon the return of Lieutenant General Al-Burhan from New York, a new cabinet would be announced in Port Sudan. The rhetoric suggesting the formation of parallel governments triggered negative public reactions from some civilian and regional stakeholders given the risks inherent to the fragmentation of the country. On 11 September, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, through a letter signed by the Secretary-General of the Sovereign Council, Mohamed al-Ghali, instructed the Sovereign Council members, Malik Agar and Lieutenant Generals Shams el-Din Kabbashi, Yasser Atta and Ibrahim Jaber, to oversee the ministries and other government bodies.

5. On 21 September, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan attended the General Assembly. In his speech during the general debate, he accused the Rapid Support Forces of committing war crimes and called for them to be designated as a terrorist organization. He also committed to transferring power to civilians through the establishment of an interim technocratic government, followed by elections. On the same day, Lieutenant General Dagalo released a video statement, which he claimed was his speech to the General Assembly, and accused Lieutenant General Al-Burhan of colluding with the former regime, asserting that his legitimacy had been lost. Lieutenant General Dagalo also expressed his readiness to declare a nationwide ceasefire to alleviate the humanitarian situation and initiate a political process that would lead the country towards a democratic transformation.

6. On 6 September, the United States announced financial sanctions targeting the deputy leader of the Rapid Support Forces, Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo, and, on 28 September, against Ali Karti, a former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan and leader of the Sudanese Islamic Movement.

7. A broad range of Sudanese civilians, including women and youth groups, continued to mobilize against the war and advocate for a return to a political transition. Women’s groups staged peaceful protests inside the Sudan, including in Damazine and Blue Nile State, and engaged in advocacy efforts in the region. The Women Against War coalition issued a statement on 18 September warning against the partition of the country and calling for a permanent ceasefire and the initiation of a political process with the meaningful participation of women. The two factions of the Forces of Freedom and Change – the Central Council and the Democratic Bloc – pursued separate consultations and regional engagements to garner support for their initiatives. The Forces of Freedom and Change – Central Council visited Egypt, Ethiopia, Qatar and Uganda to discuss ways to end the war.

8. The Forces of Freedom and Change – Democratic Bloc and other figures, including Major General Abdulrahman al-Sadeg al-Mahdi and El Tigani el-Sissi, met in Asmara on 8 September and formed a new coalition called the “Democratic National Forces for the Cessation of War and Managing the Transitional Period”. This

coalition issued a Declaration and Transitional Charter, calling for an end to the fighting and the formation of transitional institutions, including a military-civilian Sovereign Council led by the Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces but with no Rapid Support Forces representation.

9. The National Mechanism for Supporting a Civilian Democratic Transition and Stopping the War in Sudan, composed of academics, former politicians and professionals, announced its intent on 29 September to communicate with all national actors, including the warring parties, and organize related meetings in an effort to stop the war. They proposed the development of an interim emergency government to respond to crisis, guarantee essential services and ensure the unity and stability of the country. On 3 October in Port Sudan, they handed Lieutenant General Al-Burhan a road map to stop the war and form a civilian “interim emergency government.”

10. On 11 October, tribal leaders from eastern Sudan signed the “Initiative to Strengthen Social Peace” between the Beja components and social entities in Kassala State. In the Initiative, they affirmed the unity of the land and people of the Sudan, supported the Sudanese Armed Forces and called for reconciliation and the unity of the different Beja tribes and their administration in eastern Sudan. They also called for an Eastern conference to address political and other issues.

11. A broad group of Sudanese civilian actors met in Addis Ababa from 23 to 26 October in a preparatory meeting with the aim of building the broadest possible civilian front to stand against the war and restore democracy. The meeting, attended by 100 participants, included representatives of three major anti-war initiatives and representatives from resistance committees, political parties, civil society organizations, women’s groups, native administration, academics, retired military and religious figures. The participants agreed to convene a constituent conference for the coordination of civil democratic forces to end the war and restore democracy in the country. They also agreed to establish a preparatory leadership body, headed by the former Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, and an executive coordination office. They agreed that non-partisan forces would represent 70 per cent of these structures, while political entities and armed struggle movements would represent 30 per cent of them. A minimum of 30 per cent of the structures were to be represented by women.

12. On 4 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan denounced a meeting held between the African Union and the Political Adviser of the Rapid Support Forces, Youssef Izzat, noting that “rebel movements and criminal terrorist militias” should not be given legitimacy. The African Union responded by emphasizing its approach to engage all Sudanese stakeholders regardless of their affiliations. On 6 September in Nairobi, the President of Kenya, William Ruto, chaired the second meeting of the Quartet Group of Countries for the Resolution of the Situation in the Republic of Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The Quartet called on the parties to cease hostilities, to engage in dialogue and to consolidate all mediation initiatives. On 7 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan criticized the communiqué of the Quartet for failing to condemn the atrocities of the Rapid Support Forces and for making no reference to consultations with the Government of the Sudan on the next steps that it envisioned. The Ministry threatened that the Sudan would leave IGAD if its request for Kenya to be removed as the Quartet chair was not heeded.

13. On 19 September in New York, the Foreign Ministers of the States neighbouring the Sudan convened for a second time at a meeting chaired by the Foreign Minister of Egypt on the margins of the General Assembly. The Foreign Ministers affirmed the adoption of the road map that they had formulated during their previous meeting, held in N’Djamena on 7 and 8 August, and agreed to implement its provisions.

14. Under the auspices of the President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, South Sudan convened a “consultative meeting between Juba Peace Agreement signatories parties for Peace in Sudan”, including all armed movement signatories and representatives of the Government of the Sudan, in Juba from 23 to 25 October. The meeting was aimed at forging a consensus on the role of the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement in resolving the current crisis. Members of the international community, including Egypt, the United States of America, the European Union, IGAD and UNITAMS, attended. The final statement expressed support for the Jeddah ceasefire platform and indicated that South Sudan would invite civilian forces for consultations.

15. In a joint statement on 29 October, the United States, Saudi Arabia and IGAD, also representing the African Union, announced the reconvening of the ceasefire talks between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in Jeddah. The statement outlined three objectives for the talks, namely, facilitating humanitarian assistance, the establishment of ceasefires and confidence-building measures, and the possibility of achieving a permanent cessation of hostilities. It was noted in the statement that the talks would not address broader political issues.

B. Security situation

16. Heavy fighting and airstrikes between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces continued daily in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri around strategic locations – including the Armoured Corps, Karari Base, the Signal Corps, the Engineers Corps, the Sudanese Armed Forces General Command and several key bridges. The Rapid Support Forces breached the eastern defences of the Armoured Corps on 22 August, following prolonged clashes with the Sudanese Armed Forces. On 1 September, the Sudanese Armed Forces began to display a new military capacity, employing kamikaze drones to carry out precision strikes against Rapid Support Forces vehicles. On 16 September, the Rapid Support Forces undertook a military offensive on the Sudanese Armed Forces headquarters, which led to heavy fighting and the destruction of several public buildings. Attacks on residential areas of Khartoum, including through airstrikes, resulted in high numbers of civilian casualties. While the total number of civilian casualties remains difficult to calculate, a conservative estimate is that 4,000 to 5,000 civilians have been killed since the start of the conflict. There were a limited number of clashes by the warring parties in the north of Al-Gazira State, where the Sudanese Armed Forces launched airstrikes on the positions of the Rapid Support Forces.

17. Following heavy fighting on 26 October, the Rapid Support Forces gained full control over the Sudanese Armed Forces base in Nyala. Major General Abdelrahim Dagalo called for the resumption of the administrative functions of the state, appointed the Rapid Support Forces state commander as the Division Commander of the former Sudanese Armed Forces base and a new Director of Nyala Police. From 26 to 28 October, the Sudanese Armed Forces launched airstrikes on the Rapid Support Forces sites in Nyala. The fighting led to several casualties and displacement of the population.

18. In Zalingei, Central Darfur, the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces clashed from 30 August to 3 September and on 6 September. From 14 to 17 September, the Rapid Support Forces repeatedly attacked the Sudanese Armed Forces base located in the proximity of the Hasahisa and Hamidiya camps for internally displaced persons, leading to several civilian casualties and injuries. On 26 September, 6 displaced people were killed and approximately 2,300 left homeless after their shelters were burned during clashes near Hasahisa camp. On 30 October, the Rapid Support Forces, led by Major General Abdelrahim Dagalo, attacked the Sudanese Armed Forces base. The warring parties reportedly reached a settlement

resulting in the withdrawal of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces gaining full control of the base, leading to de facto control over the city and main roads. Separately, intercommunal violence between the Beni Halba and Salamat continued in central Darfur.

19. In North Darfur, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces clashed in El Fasher on 9 September. The joint armed struggle movement force constituted to protect civilians and humanitarian convoys reportedly clashed with the Rapid Support Forces during this fighting. On 29 September, a large convoy of commercial trucks from Kotsi, White Nile State, to El Fasher, North Darfur State, under the escort of the joint armed struggle movement force, was ambushed by armed perpetrators around Al Koma locality. The ensuing gunfire exchange between the joint armed struggle movement force and the armed elements reportedly resulted in civilian casualties. Later, before this convoy of trucks reached El Fasher, the Rapid Support Forces reportedly insisted on inspecting five trucks suspected to be carrying supplies for the Sudanese Armed Forces. On 5 October, the Governor of Darfur stated that a new batch of armed struggle movements had joined the joint armed struggle movement force, which intend to expand their deployment in various areas, and announced that the newly conscripted would be deployed swiftly based on needs.

20. In West Darfur, the Rapid Support Forces and affiliated Arab militias continued to exercise de facto authority over the State, with the Sudanese Armed Forces remaining in their base. On 11 September, armed men from the Masalit community reportedly killed five members of the Arab community in Anjimi village, close to the Chadian border (27 km south of El Geneina). On 6 October, elements from the Sudanese Alliance Movement who had relocated to Adré arrived in Kulbus, reportedly escorted by the joint Chadian-Sudanese force. Local leaders in Kulbus opposed the return as it could lead to conflict in the locality.

21. In North Kordofan, the warring parties attempted to control key roads connecting Omdurman, East Darfur and Kordofan. Clashes took place on 30 and 31 August and 5, 6 and 17 September, as well as on 8 October, reportedly resulting in 23 civilians killed and 95 others injured. On 11 September, in Umm Rawaba locality, the Rapid Support Forces withdrew following protests by the local community, prompting the Sudanese Armed Forces to deploy vehicles in the locality. The Rapid Support Forces later returned and clashed with the Sudanese Armed Forces on 13 and 19 September. On 1 October, both parties clashed in Wad Ashana (115 km west of Kosti), resulting in the Sudanese Armed Forces launching airstrikes in the area for the first time, reportedly killing eight civilians. In West Kordofan, clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces erupted on 17 September in El Fula at a Sudanese Armed Forces checkpoint, reportedly killing two of their personnel. In addition, on 30 October, the Rapid Support Forces gained control of the airstrip and oil field in Baleela locality. On 31 October, the Sudanese Armed Forces recovered the two sites and the Rapid Support Forces withdrew to Abu Zabad and Al Quoz. The airport is reportedly damaged.

22. Clashes continued between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al-Hilu (SPLM-N/AH) faction and the Sudanese Armed Forces in South Kordofan. On 31 August, in Al Tagato village (59 km north of Kadugli town), SPLM-N/AH attacked a Sudanese Armed Forces checkpoint, reportedly resulting in four of their personnel killed and six injured. On 27 September, SPLM-N/AH and the Sudanese Armed Forces exchanged heavy gunfire in Kadugli near the Hajer al-Mak area, with one civilian reported killed and six injured. On 2 September and 9 October, SPLM-N/AH elements attacked Sudanese Armed Forces positions in Dilling and Dallami localities. On 3 September, clashes took place between SPLM-N/AH and the Sudanese Armed Forces approximately 14 km north of Kadugli. Separately, on 10 September, Sudanese Armed Forces and SPLM-N/AH clashed on the north-eastern fringes of Kadugli town,

resulting in injuries to four civilians. Earlier, on 8 September, both parties clashed in Abu Kershola locality.

23. During the reporting period, 51 security incidents affecting personnel of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations were reported. Most of the incidents occurred in Khartoum. Incidents of road banditry, extortion and robbery at checkpoints affecting United Nations national staff members, convoys and assets were also reported.

C. Human rights, rule of law and protection situation

24. The human rights and protection situation continued to deteriorate drastically. As the conflict escalated during the reporting period, large numbers of civilians were killed or injured and thousands more forced to flee their homes to seek safety. Despite repeated calls for de-escalation and appeals for adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law, the warring parties continued to carry out indiscriminate attacks utilizing heavy weapons in residential areas and engaged in targeted attacks against civilians and civilian objects. In a worrying development, abductions, arbitrary arrests and detentions, looting and vandalism and attacks on and occupation of hospitals and medical facilities sharply increased as compared with the previous reporting period.

25. During the reporting period, UNITAMS documented 345 alleged incidents of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law affecting 2,672 victims, including 2,409 men, 158 women and 105 children (72 boys and 33 girls). Of the 345 incidents documented, 38 were reportedly attributable to the Sudanese Armed Forces, affecting 401 victims; 160 reportedly attributable to the Rapid Support Forces, affecting 713 victims; 102 incidents were reportedly jointly attributable to both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, affecting 1,136 victims; 2 incidents were reportedly attributable to the Sudanese Police Force, affecting 2 victims; three were reportedly attributable to the General Intelligence Service, affecting 36 victims; 31 were reportedly attributable to non-State armed groups, including militia groups and armed signatory parties to the Juba Peace Agreement, affecting 359 victims; and 9 incidents were reportedly attributable to unknown perpetrators, affecting 25 victims.

26. Of the 2,672 victims of human rights violations and abuses and international humanitarian law violations, 1,151 were victims of violations of the right to life (1,025 men, 62 women, 20 girls and 44 boys); 1,226 were victims of violations of the right to physical integrity (1,147 men, 46 women, 8 girls and 25 boys); 241 were victims of arbitrary arrest and detention (220 men, 17 women, 2 boys and 2 girls); 35 were victims of abduction (16 men, 18 women and 1 boy); and 19 were victims of sexual and gender-based violence (1 man, 15 women and 3 girls).

27. Airstrikes, mainly attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces, continued to cause significant civilian casualties and extensive destruction of properties and infrastructure. From 21 August to 31 October, UNITAMS documented the killing of at least 283 civilians (242 in the capital, Khartoum, and 41 in Nyala, capital of South Darfur State) and estimated that a further 295 had been injured, including women and children, mainly by airstrikes, and, in a few cases, by drones and stray bullets.

28. In a context of impunity, both parties have threatened, detained and ill-treated lawyers, activists and human rights defenders. On 5 September, media reported that at least five lawyers had been killed in South Darfur by the Rapid Support Forces or allied Arab militias. Among those killed was a prominent human rights defender who had been providing legal aid services to victims of human rights violations and abuses in South Darfur for many years. In eastern Sudan, Kordofan and Blue Nile regions, a

sharp increase in the harassment, arrest and detention of human rights defenders and local community activists, including anti-war activists, was reported. The incidents were largely attributed to military intelligence of the Sudan Armed Forces, who often detained civilians and denied them access to family visitation rights.

29. The conflict continued to severely impact the administration of justice. In September, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Sudan was placed under the supervision of the Sovereign Council. Justice institutions in Khartoum and Central, North, South and West Darfur ceased to function. In North Darfur, the joint armed struggle movement force of the armed movement signatory parties to the Juba Peace Agreement assumed some justice functions, including dispute resolution, to fill the vacuum left by formal justice institutions. The absence of justice sector officials owing to the conflict, notably in South Kordofan and East Darfur, has significantly limited the capacity of the formal justice sector to administer judicial proceedings. A single judge was overseeing the judiciary in Kadugli, South Kordofan. In East Darfur, major cases could not proceed since only three junior judges and two prosecutors were in office. In Khartoum on 16 September, the building housing the Ministry of Justice was burned down following clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, increasing concerns over the potential loss of vital legal records.

30. The plight of women and girls also deteriorated, with increased allegations of sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, in Khartoum, Darfur and the Kordofan regions. Access to critical services, including psychosocial and medical support, remained extremely limited owing to widespread disruption of the health system. Women and girls continued to be exposed to shelling and bombardments while in their homes, to harassment and violence as they attempted to flee to other areas and to looting and abductions as their homes were being occupied. From 24 August to 2 October, UNITAMS documented at least nine airstrikes and 14 instances of shelling in Omdurman and Bahri, with one particularly horrific shelling landing on a market area populated by women traders in the Mayo district of Khartoum.

31. Conflict-related sexual violence, in particular rape and gang rape, continued to be a significant factor in the ongoing hostilities. As at the end of October, the United Nations joint human rights office had received credible reports of 53 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting at least 106 victims (85 women, 1 man, 20 children), primarily in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan regions. According to reports, men in Rapid Support Forces uniform were implicated in 36 incidents as perpetrators, while armed men affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces were identified as perpetrators in 6 incidents. In the other incidents, survivors identified as perpetrators armed men with no clear affiliation. The joint human rights office has received unconfirmed reports of women being held in captivity in Darfur in inhumane conditions and possibly subjected to sexual slavery and exploitation.

32. The reporting period saw a marked increase in grave violations perpetrated against children, especially killing, maiming and conflict-related sexual violence. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 314 violations against 303 children (159 boys, 101 girls, 43 sex unknown) in Central Darfur, North Kordofan, Khartoum, South Kordofan, West Kordofan and North Darfur States. Violations against children included killing (118), maiming (178), sexual violence (4) and abduction and killing (1), abductions (2) and denial of humanitarian access for children (2).

33. On 15 September, the Sudanese Armed Forces released from detention 30 boys who were reportedly used as combatants by the Rapid Support Forces. The International Committee of the Red Cross received and facilitated the movement of these children from Khartoum. The children are currently receiving programmatic

support overseen by the National Council for Child Welfare in Kassala. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting continues to engage with parties to the conflict for access to conduct age assessments for the affected boys.

34. On 11 October, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution [54/2](#), establishing a fact-finding mission on the Sudan to collect evidence of crimes under international law for future criminal proceedings before the International Criminal Court and national courts. On 12 October, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan issued a statement rejecting the establishment of the mission and stating that steps taken by the Sudanese authorities to address impunity and accountability through a national investigation mechanism had not been taken into account.

D. Socioeconomic situation

35. The conflict continued to severely disrupt the economy and impair agricultural production, which led to price hikes and severe shortages of food and other essential commodities. During the lean season, from July to September, approximately 20.3 million people throughout the Sudan, more than 42 per cent of the population, were driven into high levels of acute food insecurity. Forecasts made by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification for the harvesting period of October 2023 to February 2024, estimate that approximately 15 million people are likely to face high food insecurity. The collapse of the banking system in parts of the country impacted the financial resources allocated to purchasing agricultural inputs, including seeds, fertilizers and fuel.

36. The price of the local food basket is 49 per cent higher than prior to the conflict. According to the World Food Programme, inflation is anticipated to have exceeded 250 per cent, accompanied by a growing divide between the parallel and official exchange rates. In the first half of October, the dollar exchange rate reached 875 Sudanese pounds on the parallel market and 700 Sudanese pounds in some commercial banks, up from approximately 600 Sudanese pounds before the conflict. The decline in the value of the Sudanese pound points to heightened demand for the United States dollar, primarily for financing imports.

37. The economic importance of Port Sudan increased as banks and financial institutions based there were largely able to resume operations, with commerce and trade intensifying. The amount of oil that South Sudan transported through Sudanese pipelines to Port Sudan has increased since the conflict began. Livestock exports reached 2.7 million head of cattle in 2023, compared with 1.9 million in 2022.

Humanitarian situation

38. The conflict in the Sudan – in particular in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan – has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation. Millions lack access to essential goods and services such as food, water, shelter, electricity, education, health care and nutrition. More than 18 million people lack access to sanitation and approximately 3.5 million children under 5 are acutely malnourished. This underscores the urgent need for a multisectoral humanitarian response, as half of the population of the Sudan – 24.7 million people – require humanitarian assistance.

39. Since the conflict began, the Sudan has witnessed one of the fastest-growing displacement crises in the world, with 4.85 million people displaced to more than 5,034 locations throughout the 18 states. Approximately 1.17 million people have crossed into neighbouring countries, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Within the Sudan, an estimated 191,300 refugees have fled areas of active conflict to other locations, while 19,000 refugees from

Ethiopia and the Central African Republic have left the Sudan seeking safety in third countries. Some 291,500 South Sudanese refugees have returned to South Sudan.

40. Numerous challenges, including insecurity, and power dynamics among armed groups, bureaucratic impediments, funding shortfalls, poor or limited telecommunications systems and poor infrastructure have complicated negotiations for secure and unhindered access to affected areas. In addition, the looting of humanitarian premises and warehouses has hampered the delivery of assistance. Humanitarian access remains severely limited, especially in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan, where humanitarian needs are considered to be the highest. More than 70 per cent of the 6.3 million people who are close to famine are in areas where access is extremely limited owing to active fighting and insecurity. From 15 April to 30 September, 931 incidents impacting humanitarian operations have been reported, of which 36 per cent were the result of active hostilities, 26 per cent were the result of violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities and 20 per cent constituted bureaucratic impediments. At least 20 humanitarian workers have been killed and 30 injured since the start of the conflict.

41. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported increased attacks on health-care facilities and their occupation by the warring parties, with 60 such incidents causing 11 deaths and 38 injuries as at 31 October. More than 70 per cent of hospitals in the conflict-afflicted states are no longer functional. Disease outbreaks – including cholera, dengue fever, malaria and measles – that were under control before the conflict have been on the rise owing to the disruption of public health services and causing deaths. WHO launched a funding appeal to raise \$145.2 million to provide medical support to 7.6 million people in dire need of health assistance.

42. Heavy rains and floods impacted Northern State, River Nile, North Darfur, Gedaref, White Nile, North Kordofan and South Kordofan States. By mid-September, heavy rains and flooding caused physical damage to private infrastructure, affecting 1,700 people in El Fasher and Lait localities in North Darfur. In El Fasher, 84 homes were destroyed and 210 others damaged. At least 266 latrines were either washed away or damaged in Zamzam camp, affecting approximately 1,500 displaced people living there. Overall, since the onset of the rainy season in July, approximately 88,000 people in 20 localities across 8 states have been affected by heavy rains and flooding.

43. On 20 September, the Governments of Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia and the European Union, the African Union and the United Nations convened a high-level ministerial side event on the margins of the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly to mobilize support for the humanitarian response in the Sudan and the region.

44. Inadequate funding remains a major challenge. The revised 2023 Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan requires \$2.57 billion to provide life-saving multisectoral assistance to the more than 18 million people in desperate need up to the end of 2023. According to the Financial Tracking Service of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the appeal is only 33.6 per cent funded, as at 31 October.

45. Despite these immense challenges, by the end of September, a total of 156 humanitarian partners have provided humanitarian assistance throughout the Sudan, reaching more than 4.1 million people. As at 13 October, almost 3,390 trucks with more than 156,000 metric tons of relief items have been delivered through the Humanitarian Information Sharing System, facilitated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. These responders included community-based groups such as the emergency response rooms, which offer critical assistance in hard-hit areas, supporting hospitals, securing food and water supplies and helping civilians in distress. Cross-border mechanisms remained essential for scaling up aid delivery

and reaching more people in need with humanitarian assistance. From 2 August to 17 October, 71 trucks carrying 1,838 metric tons of assistance have been delivered through a cross-border mechanism from Chad. The cross-border operation was coordinated with all parties involved to effectively facilitate the operation.

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, in the protection and promotion of human rights, and sustainable peace

46. UNITAMS continued to exercise its good offices functions in support of efforts to end the conflict and prepare for an eventual return to a political transition. Sudanese, regional and international partners continued to seek the good offices of the Mission and expertise in support of process design for peace efforts and political talks, including to convene civilian stakeholders towards an inclusive political process and on broadening participation and ensuring the meaningful participation of women's groups and civil society. To do this, the Mission maintained extensive networks of contacts with key political, military and civilian actors both inside and outside the Sudan.

47. The Mission continued to urge the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to cease hostilities, ensure unhindered humanitarian access and ensure the resumption of a political process. It also engaged with armed movements and regional authorities in Darfur, the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States and eastern Sudan to undertake conflict prevention efforts. UNITAMS engaged with regional and state authorities, including the Regional Governor of Darfur, as well as the Governors of North, West and Central Darfur, and local commanders to de-escalate conflicts between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces and raise issues in relation to the protection of civilians. Following a skirmish in eastern Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Forces of the Eastern Sudan Parties and Movements Alliance on 18 September, UNITAMS engaged with state authorities in eastern Sudan, political actors and local leaders to help de-escalate tensions. In the Blue Nile region, UNITAMS engaged interlocutors such as the Peace Council and local officials to promote local peace initiatives.

48. UNITAMS proposed initiatives to defuse inter-ethnic tensions, in particular in the light of the systematic targeting of the Masalit community. In doing so, the Mission engaged with the Sultan of the Masalit and urged the Governor of Darfur to utilize the High Executive Committee of Native Administration to engage the Masalit Arab communities to de-escalate tensions between them.

49. UNITAMS continued to engage with the representatives of civilian initiatives, including women's rights groups and youth, to empower them and support their voices, as well as to encourage greater coordination among them. UNITAMS continued its virtual consultations with women's groups and activists in the Sudan and neighbouring countries and disseminated a survey to identify women's priorities and needs. UNITAMS attended the opening and closing session of a preparatory meeting to build the broadest possible civilian front to stand against the war and restore democracy, held from 23 to 26 October in Addis Ababa, and a briefing to the international community. UNITAMS continued to encourage broad-based inclusive civilian representation and offered technical assistance as needed and requested. From 29 to 31 October, UNITAMS, in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the European

Union, the Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation (CMI) and Inclusive Peace, convened 30 Sudanese women leaders in Cairo to facilitate strategic discussions on advancing the women and peace and security agenda and supported their high-level advocacy efforts. In Darfur, UNITAMS engaged with actors, from professional associations, inter alia, and woman leaders in Central Darfur, to use their leverage with warring parties to facilitate humanitarian access and protect civilians, including displaced populations. In eastern Sudan, UNITAMS reached out to community leaders and encouraged them to ensure an inclusive approach to any related peace initiative for eastern Sudan. UNITAMS continued to provide technical support to the African Union and IGAD in relation to their planned meeting to convene civilians.

50. UNITAMS continued to carry out field-based and remote monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses, while maintaining strategic engagement and advocacy with key stakeholders. Following the arrest, detention and torture of several civilian activists in eastern Sudan, UNITAMS established contact with the detained civil activists and documented the incidents. At the same time, UNITAMS engaged the local authorities to promote respect for human rights, freedom of expression and civic spaces.

51. During the reporting period, UNITAMS continued to encourage efforts to improve the coherence of international and regional mediation initiatives led by the African Union, IGAD and neighbouring countries, as well as the Jeddah talks. UNITAMS remained engaged with the leadership of these initiatives, providing technical advice when requested. UNITAMS attended a consultative meeting between Juba Peace Agreement signatory parties for peace in the Sudan, convened in Juba from 23 to 25 October, at which it emphasized the role of the Sudanese in stopping the war and the importance of ending the resupply of weapons to the warring parties and stressed the importance of ensuring coordination between regional and international initiatives.

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

52. During the reporting period, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee continued to engage with the armed movement signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement and the warring parties on the need to de-escalate tensions, as well as sensitizing them on the need to maintain neutrality in the conflict in accordance with their obligations under the Juba Peace Agreement. The engagement of the Committee also resulted in the successful coordination of humanitarian convoys from Khartoum to various locations in Darfur, including to El Fasher in North Darfur, Nyala in South Darfur and some areas of West Darfur.

53. The engagement of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee also contributed to the deployment of the joint armed struggle movement force composed of the armed movement signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement on 28 August in Nyala, South Darfur, to create a buffer zone to protect civilians in view of the fighting in the city. The Committee supported dialogue efforts between local representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces commanders to ease tensions throughout Darfur. An intervention by the joint armed struggle movement force temporarily halted fighting on 27 August in Nyala. The Committee continued to maintain regular contact with its members throughout Darfur to monitor the security situation, report on ceasefire violations and urge de-escalation. In late October, following the takeover by the Rapid Support Forces of the Sudanese Armed Forces base in Nyala and the resulting clashes that ensued, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire

Committee facilitated the efforts of the joint armed struggle movement force to help relocate the internally displaced people from Nyala, to safer locations in Darfur.

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

54. Working in coordination with United Nations agencies, UNITAMS regularly engaged on civilian protection at the national, regional and local levels to help identify and analyse new and emerging threats to civilians and advocate with the parties to take appropriate action to mitigate harm to civilians and comply with international legal frameworks.

55. UNITAMS continued to monitor and report on rule of law developments, including on the functioning of formal and informal justice institutions, the operation of prisons, including arrests and detention by both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, the targeting of justice officials and lawyers, the destruction and looting of justice infrastructure, police stations and land registries and their case files and records and the role played by intercommunal dispute resolution mechanisms in mediating the conflict. Alleged criminal violations, including possible breaches of international law, were documented. The measures adopted by the Sudanese authorities, the armed struggle movements forces and the Rapid Support Forces, towards criminal accountability were analysed and included in UNITAMS reports to inform advocacy with the warring parties. UNITAMS continued to monitor and follow up on reported allegations of sexual violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, and, through engagement with state authorities and local partners, advocated for the provision of medical support to the survivors.

56. UNITAMS carried out a field mission to Wad Medani, Al-Gazira State, from 25 August to 1 September, where it interacted with survivors of sexual violence, verified reported cases of conflict-related sexual violence and discussed with local partners sexual violence prevention, response and risk mitigation among displaced persons in Wad Medani. Consultative meetings were held with local non-governmental organizations that specialized in women's rights.

57. UNITAMS held regular meetings on accountability with the Sudanese Armed Forces through their human rights focal points, as well as with the Rapid Support Forces through their Human Rights and Child Protection Unit and with other armed groups. From 23 August to 2 October, UNITAMS held meetings with representatives of the warring parties to discuss the growing pattern of violations against civilians during the conflict, including indiscriminate shelling of residential areas, aerial bombardments and increasing use of heavy artillery in densely populated areas where civilians are unable to flee. UNITAMS underscored to the warring parties their obligations to protect civilians, including facilitating the safe and unimpeded passage of medical and humanitarian personnel for the delivery of aid in accordance with international law. In October, UNITAMS undertook missions to some of the countries neighbouring the Sudan, where it engaged with Sudanese civil society groups and human rights activists. The discussions were focused on human rights and protection concerns and the need for enhanced documentation for future accountability. Arrangements were made for technical assistance and capacity-development support to strengthen the monitoring and reporting capacities.

58. On 15 September, UNITAMS, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other local partners, facilitated the safe release of dozens of child combatants allegedly recruited by the Rapid Support Forces, in accordance with national and international guidelines on the protection of children in time of conflict. UNITAMS continued to advocate with the warring parties to protect

children, end and prevent grave violations against them and to immediately release without preconditions all children from their ranks and facilitate their access to support services.

59. UNITAMS strengthened its monitoring, documentation and reporting on the conflict, which continues to provide the Mission with data, trends and advocacy tools. The Human Rights Incident Monitoring Tool continued to be an invaluable platform for data and trends to inform UNITAMS operations and advocacy efforts. The UNITAMS cross-border technical working group provided a regional dimension which offered multiple streams of engagement to address the consequences of the Sudan crisis.

60. In coordination with national actors and the mine action partners, the Mine Action Service expanded life-saving efforts by deploying field teams to deliver explosive ordnance risk education. The Service reached 39,946 people (10,149 girls, 8,743 boys, 13,662 women and 7,392 men), including those displaced by the ongoing conflict who are particularly vulnerable to the risk of mines and unexploded ordnance. The Service also provided briefings on explosive ordnance safety to 389 humanitarian workers (133 women and 256 men), representing 16 United Nations entities and 19 non-governmental organizations in Port Sudan and El Damazin.

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

61. In a joint statement issued on 14 September, more than 50 humanitarian and human rights organizations advocated for greater international solidarity in relation to the Sudan crisis, underlining that mass atrocities are taking place. In the statement, they urged donors to increase humanitarian funding for local and international organizations providing vital assistance in the Sudan and neighbouring countries. Similar messages were raised by the Deputy Special Representative and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, during her engagements with donors, including in missions to capitals in Europe and the Gulf.

62. The Peacebuilding Fund continued to support several ongoing projects to address the current situation, including an initiative implemented by the Carter Center that supports, inter alia, an independent youth citizen observer network to promote civic space for youth. Other projects focusing on eastern Sudan provide livelihoods and basic services, strengthen resilience through community-based natural resource management and support the empowerment of youth.

E. Mission operational and planning issues

63. UNITAMS continues to operate inside and outside of the Sudan, with temporary presences in Nairobi and Addis Ababa. Where feasible, the staff of the Mission continues to engage with local stakeholders and conduct field missions. Communications disruptions, security conditions and access limitations continue to be a challenge. Following high-level engagement on the margins of the General Assembly, limited progress was registered in the issuance of visas for international staff, with 14 entry visas and 8 residential visas approved during the reporting period. However, approvals remained slow, hindering the timely deployment of staff in and out of the Sudan. As at 31 October, the Mission staffing stood at 245 civilian staff, 2 police personnel and 11 military observers. Consistent with the Secretary-General's gender parity strategy, more than half of senior civilian appointments (chiefs of service and above) continued to be held by women.

64. Given the dramatically changed circumstances in the Sudan and the challenges faced by the Mission in implementing its mandate, the United Nations has initiated a strategic review of UNITAMS. The aim of the review is to provide the Security Council with options on how to adapt the mandate of the Mission and engagement in the Sudan. This will help ensure that the mandate, priorities and configuration of UNITAMS reflect the needs and capacities of Sudanese stakeholders and the objectives of the international community.

IV. Observations

65. The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces has created a humanitarian catastrophe in the Sudan. Both parties continue to pursue a military victory and are intensifying and expanding their operations with no sign of de-escalation. Civilians are paying the highest price. The pain and suffering of the Sudanese people must be brought to an end swiftly.

66. Recognizing that the preservation of the Sudan and the stability of the region is at stake, I call on the conflict parties to immediately cease fighting and commit to a durable cessation of hostilities, paving the way for an inclusive dialogue and the resumption of a democratic political transition restoring the constitutional order. I welcome the resumption of the Jeddah talks and call on the parties to use this opportunity to agree to a ceasefire and the facilitation of humanitarian access. The presence of the warring parties in the vicinity of civilian areas, including residential areas and displaced camps, is increasing the vulnerability of civilians. The parties must adhere to key humanitarian principles that respect and protect civilians from harm. I urge the parties to move from these areas, including camps for internally displaced people in Darfur. I also commend the various initiatives put forward by regional and international actors to help resolve the conflict, including the leadership of the region and subregion under the auspices of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development respectively. To be effective, these efforts must be underpinned by strong coordination and coherence to deliver tangible outcomes and avoid the potential for a fragmented international response. The United Nations is ready to offer dedicated high-level good offices and expertise to help bolster these efforts.

67. I remain deeply concerned about the escalation of inter-ethnic tensions and intercommunal conflicts. The longer this conflict continues, the greater the risk of a complete collapse of the Sudan or an all-out civil war, causing further harm to the Sudanese people and those in the region. I call upon the armed movement signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement to maintain their neutrality to help prevent the country from further sliding into a civil war. The conflict continues to threaten regional stability and increases the likelihood of a spillover into neighbouring countries. I thank the neighbouring countries for allowing cross-border humanitarian operations to be undertaken from their territory and for admitting and hosting people fleeing from the Sudan. I urge the international community to enhance support to the countries hosting Sudanese refugees.

68. The human rights and civilian protection situation deteriorated markedly over the reporting period. I am appalled by the reports of escalating sexual violence, including rape, against women and girls as a direct consequence of the conflict and the weaponization of gender-based violence. I implore the warring parties to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law. It is important that parties to the conflict take urgent measures to ensure that women and girls are exposed to no further harm and that the perpetrators of such acts are held accountable.

69. I welcome the efforts of Sudanese civilians, including women and youth, who are delivering humanitarian assistance to the degree possible and promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The United Nations will continue to support their efforts and amplify their voices. I also welcome the recent signing of the Initiative to Strengthen Social Peace in eastern Sudan by tribal leaders and all other local initiatives that seek to promote reconciliation and resolve differences through dialogue. I urge all parties to heed the call of civil society and civilian groups for their inclusion in ceasefire negotiations and any future dialogue process.

70. I thank the Member States that have pledged funding for relief efforts in the Sudan. However, additional funding and donor flexibility are urgently needed to close funding gaps hampering the necessary scale-up of operations for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian community is doing everything it can to deliver but can only reach more people if more resources become available.

71. I deeply regret that humanitarian actors continue to face serious challenges in delivering life-saving assistance to the people in need. A humanitarian pause is urgently needed to allow access. I urge the authorities and all military actors to abide by their obligations under the “Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan”, signed on 11 May 2023, and ensure unfettered access for humanitarian agencies to all areas. This includes clear processes and the timely facilitation of visas for humanitarian partners and the easing of travel permits and customs clearances. The safety and security of aid workers and humanitarian assets is an obligation under international law and must be respected by all parties to the conflict.

72. Given the importance of building resilience, I also urge the international community to support assistance beyond life-saving activities to enable the Sudanese people to live in dignity and have agency over their lives. This includes supporting livelihoods and agriculture, front-line workers and the provision of basic services for internally displaced persons and host communities as a means of preventing further tensions in areas of the country that remain relatively stable. There is a need to pay specific attention to the future generations of Sudanese. Almost 19 million children in the Sudan will not go to school in 2023. This is unacceptable and must be addressed swiftly.

73. I thank my former Special Representative, Volker Perthes, for his dedication and service over the last two and a half years to the Sudanese people and the United Nations. I also thank my Deputy Special Representative, Clementine Awu Nkweta-Salami, together with all United Nations staff and the humanitarian community, for their tireless efforts in providing support to the Sudan and its people in these challenging circumstances. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the Sudanese people in their quest for peace and a brighter future.