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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 [2579 \(2021\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) until 3 June 2022 and requested me to report to it every 90 days on the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The present report covers political, security, socioeconomic, human rights, rule of law and humanitarian developments in the Sudan from 22 November 2021 to 21 February 2022 and provides an update on the implementation of the Mission's mandate, with gender considerations integrated as a cross-cutting issue throughout.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. The transition in the Sudan continued to witness significant setbacks and challenges during the reporting period. The political agreement of 21 November between the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan and the Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, which was covered in my previous report ([S/2021/1008](#)), was aimed at resolving the political crisis in the country following the military coup of 25 October. However, the agreement was widely condemned by civilian political forces across the Sudan, including the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), the National Umma Party and the Sudanese Congress Party, inter alia. As a consequence, on 22 November, 12 government ministers affiliated with the FFC coalition tendered their resignations.

3. Neighbourhood resistance committees across the Sudan also rejected any negotiation or partnership with the military leadership. Throughout the reporting period, these groups continued to organize mass protests and campaigns of civil disobedience under the slogan "no negotiation, no partnership, no compromise". Women and youth participated actively and prominently in the protests.



4. The Prime Minister committed to forming a new government within two weeks of the agreement and later confirmed that an investigation had been launched into the violence towards protesters. In addition, the General Secretariat of the Cabinet announced a review into official appointments and dismissals by the military since the military coup of 25 October. The Prime Minister met with political forces, including FFC, to discuss a road map for the implementation of the 21 November agreement, which included freezing and reviewing State appointments, returning those dismissed to their posts, expediting the release of detainees and ensuring the rights to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly.

5. On 1 December, the Prime Minister issued a decree replacing a number of undersecretaries in various ministries appointed in the aftermath of the military coup. On 25 November, Abdel-Aziz Fathal-Rahman Abdeen Mohamed was appointed by the Sovereign Council as Chief Justice. He had previously served as Deputy Chief Justice under the former President, Omer Al-Bashir. On 2 December, Khalifa Ahmed Khalifa was appointed by the Sovereign Council as acting Attorney General. While both appointments are within the parameters provided for under the Constitutional Document, the process has been criticized for a lack of consultations among all the forces concerned. The constitutionality of the Sovereign Council has been challenged since its reconstitution on 11 November, in view of the fact that Lieutenant General Al-Burhan had unilaterally replaced four civilian members, in contravention of the relevant provisions of the Constitutional Document governing such appointments. On 13 December, the Prime Minister replaced all acting state governors appointed since 25 October. However, he refrained from appointing a new Council of Ministers, while he continued to seek consensus on a political agreement with political forces.

6. On 16 December, the parties to the 21 November agreement released a draft political declaration on the way forward for consultation with political parties, civil society and resistance committees, inter alia. However, the document was immediately rejected by several political forces which had not been part of the agreement negotiations. Meanwhile, other groups such as FFC, the National Umma Party, SPA, the Popular Congress Party and several scholars from universities across the Sudan also released and outlined competing political declarations and initiatives on the way out of the political crisis.

7. On 19 December, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the 2018 revolution, the Prime Minister stated in his address that the Sudan was experiencing “a major setback in [its] revolution” which was the “beginning of the slipping towards an abyss”. He warned against “entrenched and divergent positions” and urged “all the forces of the revolution and all those who believe in the democratic civilian transition” to agree on a “political pact”. The same day, following weeks of demonstrations, the resistance committees organized mass protests and sit-ins across the country marking the anniversary of the revolution. Although major streets and bridges were initially blocked by the military, mass protests bypassed the barriers and breached key locations, including the grounds of the Republican Palace in Khartoum. One protester was killed, more than 300 were wounded and hundreds were reportedly detained. According to OHCHR, citing media reports, there were 13 cases of alleged rape and gang rape of women and girls, as well as allegations of sexual harassment by security forces during the protests. On 23 December, human rights and women’s groups gathered in Khartoum and Omdurman to protest against the use of rape against female demonstrators.

8. On 24 December, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan issued an emergency order (No. 3/2021) granting regular security forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces, the police and the General Intelligence Service, new sweeping powers enabling them to arrest and search individuals and buildings,

regulate movements of people and confiscate goods and property. The emergency order also granted immunity to regular forces against any proceedings.

9. In the context of increased violence against protesters and the absence of a political agreement, the Prime Minister announced his resignation in a televised address on 2 January. The Prime Minister cited the differences between the military and civilian components and called for dialogue and consensus to complete the democratic transition in the Sudan. Reacting to the resignation of the Prime Minister, resistance committees and activists announced another “March of Millions” for 4 January. Elements of SPA noted that the resignation did not “advance or delay anything in the path of revolution” as the “real power remains in the hands of the Military Council”.

10. On 19 January, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan named 15 of the 20 undersecretaries that had been appointed by the Prime Minister as acting ministers until the elections. He also filled the remaining ministerial posts in the transitional authority. In addition, he established a four-person committee composed primarily of Sovereign Council members to engage with Sudanese stakeholders on a way forward and to identify potential candidates for the post of Prime Minister.

11. The situation in eastern Sudan remained unpredictable. On 26 November, the Beja High Council threatened to renew the blockade of Eastern Sudan if its demands for the cancellation of the Eastern Track of the Juba Peace Agreement were not met. Subsequently, on 16 December, the Vice-Chair of the Sovereign Council and the commander of the Rapid Support Forces, Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, announced the suspension of the eastern track of the Juba Peace Agreement. On 28 December, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan formed a committee on the East chaired by Lieutenant General Dagalo. The security situation along the border of the Sudan with Ethiopia also remained volatile, compounded by the continuing insecurity in both countries.

B. Security situation

12. The reporting period witnessed a continued deterioration in the security environment throughout the country. The situation was mainly characterized by armed conflict, intercommunal clashes, human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence, and criminal activity. The response of security forces to mass protests and civil unrest further compounded the situation. Security incidents across the Sudan increased from 157 in the previous reporting period to 429 during the current cycle.

13. Throughout the reporting period, planned and spontaneous protests and sit-ins took place in Khartoum and across the country. The majority of the demonstrations were peaceful, while there were, reportedly, incidents of stone-throwing and an attack on a police station. Security forces routinely used excessive force, including live ammunition, stun grenades and tear gas to disperse protesters. Attacks against journalists and media outlets, as well as the targeting of health facilities and medical personnel, were also reported. The Central Committee of Sudan Doctors reported that, as at 17 February, 81 persons had been killed, at least 68 of whom by live ammunition, while a further 2,500 had been injured in protests since the coup of 25 October. There were also a few, relatively small, pro-military demonstrations.

14. Intercommunal clashes emanating from disputes over land ownership, access to resources and criminality, as well as long-standing farmer-herder conflict involving disparate communities were reported in Central, North and West and Darfur, as well as in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. In total, there were 24 reported

incidents of armed intercommunal clashes, resulting in some 60 deaths, 52 injuries and over 20,000 displaced, as at 3 February.

15. The situation in Darfur continued to be precarious. There have been reports of rape committed against women and girls, and 20 children are reportedly missing. On 4 and 5 December, in the locality of Kreinik in West Darfur, 65 people were killed and 76 injured in ethnic clashes between Masalit and Arab nomads. These figures were confirmed during an inter-agency emergency assessment conducted on 28 December. In addition, 21 people were reportedly killed during renewed clashes between Arab militias and Misseriya forces in Jebel Moon on 8 December. On 20 and 21 January, 11 people were killed and 8 injured in another incident of intercommunal violence between Arab and Masalit communities in Adikong, West Darfur.

16. On 6 December, four people, including two women, were killed in an attack on an Arab tribal leader near the Zamzam internally displaced persons camp near El Fasher, North Darfur. North Darfur also witnessed targeted violence perpetrated largely by Arab nomads on internally displaced persons and farmers in Tawilah, Dar al-Salam and Kutum localities. On 19 January, 10 people were killed and 4 injured in two separate attacks by Arab nomads on Zaghawa farmers in Saloma and Morgei. On 20 January, 5 ethnic Fur were ambushed by unknown militias and killed between Zamzam and Tabat. Internally displaced persons from the Zamzam camp protested against the continuing insecurity in front of the State Governor's office. In Central Darfur, on 10 and 11 December 2021, Arab Rizeigat mobilized and attacked a cluster of 12 villages in Wadi Saleh locality, resulting in displacements to Chad and West Darfur. The number of casualties remains unknown.

17. During the reporting period, there were also reports of desertions from members of armed movements which had signed the Juba Peace Agreement. Many of these are believed to be linked to the ongoing return of combatants from Libya following the Libyan ceasefire agreement. Specifically, the loss of revenue from mercenary activities in Libya has impacted the ability of armed groups to pay and retain command and control over ex-combatants, further fuelling insecurity as these individuals seek alternative, and often illicit, means to support themselves.

18. The reporting period also witnessed a series of incidents targeting the former UNAMID logistics base in El Fasher, in particular from 24 to 29 December and 10 to 13 January. Incidents included numerous incursions into the camp by armed movements and members of the public. This was followed by mass looting of the areas of the camp which had been handed over to the North Darfur State authorities, with sporadic and often heavy gunfire and attempts to burn down parts of the outer security perimeter of the camp. These serious developments necessitated an accelerated final handover of the camp on 28 December 2021 in advance of the previously agreed date of 31 March 2022. The repatriation of the United Nations Guard Unit was conducted on 28 December, followed by the full relocation of international staff of the UNAMID liquidation team to Khartoum on 29 December 2021.

19. At the regional level, there were tensions on the border between the Sudan and Ethiopia. On 27 November, it was reported that a group of armed perpetrators crossed the border from Ethiopia and attacked Sudanese Armed Forces personnel at Birkat Nourain near Gedaref, resulting in an unspecified number of casualties among Sudanese Armed Forces personnel. Ethiopia denied any involvement in the attack. On 29 November, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan visited the contested Fashaqah border area following the incident. Similar clashes were reported on 30 November and 1 and 2 December 2021 at Taya village in the border area with Ethiopia. No information on casualties from the latter incidents was available.

C. Socioeconomic situation

20. The political crisis during the reporting period severely impacted the Sudanese economy, resulting in interrupted access to markets and reduced income-earning opportunities, market activities and trade flows. This led to higher prices and supply shortages of basic goods, including medicine, wheat, fuel and agricultural inputs. It further resulted in reduced purchasing power and increased food insecurity, deepening vulnerability in the population – many of whom remain in need of basic services and assistance.

21. According to the International Monetary Fund, inflation decreased from 340 per cent in November 2021 to 318 per cent in December 2021. Key economic reforms initiated in 2021, such as the devaluation of the official exchange rate and the removal of fuel subsidies, contributed to the headline inflation rate reaching an average of 359 per cent in 2021, a sharp increase from 163 per cent in 2020. A record high inflation rate of 423 per cent was reached in July 2021.

22. Political uncertainty led to an increase in demand for United States dollars during the reporting period, resulting in a decrease in the value of the Sudanese pound by more than 5 per cent on the black market in January 2022. During the course of 2021, the currency had maintained a stable exchange rate against the United States dollar after being sharply devalued in February 2021.

23. In response to the military coup, a significant portion of international assistance to the Sudan was paused, including support by the World Bank, the European Union and the United States of America, inter alia. Progress toward debt relief on the country's eligible debt under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative has slowed as creditors have been reluctant to finalize agreements. The Initiative will be slowed down further by the absence of funds to implement the poverty reduction strategy paper and achieve agreed reform benchmarks for the Sudan to reach crucial Heavily Indebted Poor Countries completion point triggers. The Family Support Programme, a cash-transfer scheme launched with the assistance of the World Bank and the World Food Programme in February 2021, was also paused, affecting more than 9.2 million registered beneficiaries and depriving them of this assistance.

24. The 2022 budget was approved by the acting Cabinet on 22 January 2022, with the stated objectives of reducing inflation and attaining sustainable economic growth and stability in the exchange rate, as well as improving people's pensions and State workers' salaries and increasing spending on health education and necessary services. The budget relies fully on the State's own limited resources and, without external funding, will require borrowing from the domestic banking system or Central Bank (monetization).

25. An increase in electricity tariffs of up to 600 per cent came into effect in January 2022. The farmers' association in North Sudan threatened to close all roads in the north of the country if the electricity tariff increase for agricultural projects was not reversed, which would heavily affect trade flows with Egypt. Farmers and resistance committees proceeded to close the main road to Egypt on 10 January. Fuel prices sharply increased on 5 February, putting further strain on the economy.

26. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals remains off track. The current political and economic crisis negatively affected access to social services and pushed already vulnerable families deeper into poverty. An additional 50,000 children are estimated to have suffered from severe acute malnutrition in 2021 as compared with 2020, bringing the total number of malnourished children in the country to 570,000.

D. Human rights, rule of law and protection situation

27. During the reporting period, the human rights situation worsened, with widespread reports of human rights violations, in particular in the context of the response of security forces to protests in the Khartoum area against the coup and against the involvement of the military in government. Despite calls for restraint, security forces repeatedly used excessive force, firing live ammunition, stun grenades and tear gas at protesters, resulting in deaths and serious injuries, including of women and children. Security forces also attacked health facilities and medical personnel, intercepted ambulances and in some cases prevented injured patients from receiving medical care. Targeted arrests of resistance committee members and civil society activists, including women's rights activists in Khartoum and elsewhere in the country, were carried out and remain ongoing. Most were detained for short periods while some were held incommunicado and without charge.

28. On 22 January, a prominent women's rights defender, Amira Osman, was arrested at her home by security forces, marking the first high-profile case involving the targeting of a women's rights leader since the coup of 25 October. She was subsequently released on 6 February. Restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression increased, with cases of attacks against journalists and the media. While investigation committees were established to investigate the deaths of protesters, allegations of sexual violence and other incidents, progress has been limited. In early February, several high-profile political party members who were serving as members of the Dismantling Committee, including a former cabinet minister and a Sovereign Council member, were arrested on charges of "breach of trust", under article 177 (2) of the Criminal Act of 1991, following a complaint from the Ministry of Finance.

29. From November 2021 to January 2022, UNITAMS documented 161 alleged incidents of human rights violations and abuses involving 778 victims, including 22 children. Violations of the right to life accounted for 368 victims (295 men, 63 women and 10 children), violations of physical integrity accounted for 366 victims (340 men and 26 women) and abductions accounted for 14 victims (including 10 women), while sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, accounted for 30 victims, including 12 children. Of the 161 documented incidents of human rights violations and abuses, 26 were attributed to government security forces and 97 to non-State actors, including armed movements and militia groups, while unknown or unidentified individuals accounted for 38 incidents.

30. The first visit of the United Nations Expert on the human rights situation in the Sudan, scheduled for 22–27 January, was postponed at the request of the Sovereign Council on 19 January. The Expert was designated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 12 November in response to a request by the Human Rights Council to monitor the human rights situation following the military coup and until the restoration of a civilian-led government. New dates for the visit of the Expert are pending approval by the Sudanese authorities.

31. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict, co-chaired by UNITAMS and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), verified 20 grave violations against 15 children (7 boys and 8 girls) during the fourth quarter of 2021. Of these, 4 boys were killed and 3 boys and 1 girl were maimed; 7 girls were subjected to sexual violence. There was one attack on a hospital and four incidents of denial of humanitarian access. The violations were attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces Military Intelligence (1), Rapid Support Forces (1) and unidentified perpetrators (18). Violations were verified in North Darfur (11), East Darfur (3), West Darfur (3), South Kordofan (2) and Central Darfur (1). This represents a more than 50 per cent decrease of verified violations in

the fourth quarter as compared with the third quarter in 2021. This decrease continues to be attributed to lack of access, as previously stated by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in a public statement on 6 November 2020. Since then, the operational context has further deteriorated and therefore the reported figures do not reflect the full impact of armed conflict in the Sudan. Children in the Darfur states continue to remain the most affected by grave violations against children in the Sudan.

32. The United Nations also verified 120 serious violations of children's rights that occurred in the context of the civil unrest as a result of the military coup on 25 October. Nine children have been killed during demonstrations, mainly in Khartoum, while another 13 have been injured. Most violations were against adolescent boys. Boys and girls as young as 12 have been detained. Children have been impacted as a result of frequent attacks on medical facilities.

33. In response to increasing intercommunal violence in Darfur, the Joint High Council on Security Arrangements, chaired by Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, announced on 7 December the establishment of a temporary special task force composed of approximately 3,300 personnel from signatory parties to the Juba Peace Agreement, including government forces and the five Darfur movements under a joint command. The temporary force was to be afforded wide powers to address rule of law concerns, protect civilians and their property, collect weapons and bring offenders to justice. The forces were undergoing training in El Fasher in preparation for deployment to hotspot areas in Darfur when, on 3 February 2022, at a meeting of the Joint High Council in El Fasher, chaired by Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, a number of new measures were announced. These included the replacement of the special task force by the joint security-keeping force, as called for under the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. The participants at the Joint High Council meeting also stipulated that all armed movements outside of cities in Darfur, as well as Tamazuj forces, had to be grouped at assembly areas, as called for in the Juba Peace Agreement. The movement of illegal unlicensed vehicles in Darfur and their entry from neighbouring countries was prohibited. The new measures also called for the conduct of joint security operations to combat insecurity in cities following the departure of armed movements. Participants at the Joint High Council meeting further stressed the criticality of the collection by the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee of the data required to complete the integration of forces and begin the implementation of the security arrangements as outlined under the Juba Peace Agreement.

E. Humanitarian situation

34. The ongoing economic crisis and high inflation continued to affect the most vulnerable, including internally displaced persons and refugees. In 2021, some 9.8 million people remained acutely food insecure as inflation resulted in high prices for agricultural and other key commodities, impacting food prices. In addition, approximately 494,000 people were exposed to additional food insecurity as a result of the poor rainy season and long dry spell in Kassala state. In 2021, erratic rainfall and a prolonged dry spell resulted in poor crop harvest, which significantly affected livestock and animals. Water yards, the main source of water for people and livestock, were also significantly affected by the dry spell. Most of the water yards were in poor condition or no longer functional.

35. From 22 November 2021 to 16 January 2022, 324 security incidents impacting United Nations and humanitarian partners were reported in the Sudan. This is a 17 per cent increase as compared with the same period in 2020–2021. On 28 and 29 December, unknown armed groups entered three World Food Programme (WFP)

warehouses in El Fasher and on 29 December, the State Ministry of Education and warehouses of the Bank of Agriculture and Zakat Chamber in El Fasher were looted. According to WFP, 5,300 metric tons of food and nutritional supplies were looted, and the warehouses were dismantled. These incidents negatively impacted the distribution of food and nutrition supplies for up to 2 million people in North Darfur and in other Darfur states. Following the incidents, WFP suspended its operations in North Darfur on 30 December and subsequently restarted them in early February.

36. In 2021, the total number of refugees in the Sudan was over 1.1 million. New arrivals from January to December 2021 amounted to 105,511 people, 11 per cent more than in the previous year. Refugees from South Sudan totalled more than 800,000. In December 2021 alone, about 5,520 refugees arrived from South Sudan. Ethiopian refugees, mainly from the Tigray region, continued to arrive in Eastern Sudan and Blue Nile state, numbering 59,300.

37. The total number of internally displaced persons in the Sudan is over 3.1 million, with over 89,000 newly displaced in Darfur since October 2021. Since December 2021, Kreinik, West Darfur, has witnessed significant displacement due to the surge of intercommunal violence. An estimated 61,621 individuals are currently seeking shelter in Kreinik town, Um Tajuk and Murayat villages and in Ardamata internally displaced persons camp in El Geneina locality. In November 2021, a further 6,730 individuals were reportedly displaced to Murnei village owing to intercommunal clashes between Arab tribes near Murnei village in Kreinik locality. In North Darfur, 3,155 individuals are currently seeking shelter in Ghusa Village and El Serif Town, following displacement in villages within El Serif locality.

38. Malaria remained the main reason for patients seeking consultation and treatment. From 22 November to 31 December, 214,875 cases of malaria were reported, bringing the total number of cases in 2021 to 2,368,611. The Federal Ministry of Health reported that 869 suspected cases of dengue fever were reported between 5 October 2021 and 8 January 2022 from seven states of the Sudan. The Ministry stated that 155 cases were confirmed, with about 60 per cent of the confirmed cases reported from North Darfur, 25 per cent from North Kordofan and the rest from Kassala. From October to December, 81 suspected cases of dengue fever were reported throughout the Sudan, according to the Ministry.

39. The number of confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases continued to rise, as compared with the previous reporting period. Since the start of the pandemic, 61,376 people have tested positive for COVID-19, with 3,901 recorded deaths. Khartoum State accounted for 65.3 per cent of all reported cases and 32 per cent of COVID-19 related deaths. Only 4.7 per cent of the 46 million people of the Sudan are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. United Nations agencies and partners continue to support the Federal Ministry of Health with vaccines and logistics for vaccination.

III. Role of the United Nations in the Sudan and implementation of resolution 2579 (2021)

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

40. Following the agreement of 21 November, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan continued to engage with all political and military actors and international partners to support constructive efforts aimed at ending the ongoing political crisis. In addition to meeting Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, the Prime Minister and Lieutenant General Dagalo, the Special Representative engaged

extensively with domestic facilitators and with representatives of various political parties and of resistance committees.

41. In December, at the request of the Prime Minister, United Nations electoral experts met with his staff to outline key steps and challenges associated with the delivery of elections in 2023 and to provide technical advice on those matters. The discussions ceased following resignation of the Prime Minister. On 27 December, it was reported that the Sovereign Council had requested for the electoral preparations to begin. However, the United Nations system in the Sudan has not re-engaged on this issue in the absence of a legal basis for such actions outside the transitional framework provided for under the Constitutional Document.

42. Throughout the reporting period, the Mission undertook extensive monitoring of and reporting on demonstrations, killings and arrests that occurred in the aftermath of the military coup. UNITAMS also engaged in advocacy for respect for human rights and adherence to international standards in response to protests.

43. Following disturbing reports of incidents of sexual violence during the 19 December protests, UNITAMS, in collaboration with the United Nations country team and local partners, including the Ministry of Social Welfare, established an integrated working group to monitor and consolidate information and to coordinate access to medical, legal and psychosocial assistance for survivors of sexual violence. The working group helped streamline the referral pathway for survivors of sexual violence. The Sovereign Council established a committee of prosecutors to investigate the reports of incidents of sexual violence during the protests of 19 December.

Launch of political consultations

44. On 8 January, following the resignation of the Prime Minister, UNITAMS, in consultation with Sudanese and international partners, announced the launch of a United Nations-facilitated intra-Sudanese political process aimed at supporting Sudanese stakeholders in agreeing on a way out of the political crisis and forging a sustainable path forward towards democracy and peace. The Special Representative underlined that the process would build on Sudanese proposals and initiatives, leading to Sudanese-owned outcomes. He further indicated that the process would be time-limited, with clearly communicated parameters. He strongly encouraged all stakeholders to ensure the meaningful participation of women throughout the process.

45. The United Nations-facilitated process commenced with intensive consultations over a one-month period with a wide range of stakeholders, including an extensive spectrum of political parties, the military, signatory and non-signatory groups to the Juba Peace Agreement, civil society groups, resistance committees, professional associations, women's groups, nomads, internally displaced persons, religious leaders and academics. They encompassed groups in Khartoum, Darfur, South and West Kordofan, the central states and North and East Sudan. As at 10 February, 110 groups, including 15 women's organizations, had participated. Other Sudanese stakeholders also shared their positions and vision papers.

46. Many Sudanese stakeholders and some regional and international actors welcomed the United Nations-led facilitation efforts, including the Troika on the Sudan (Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States); the Quad for Sudan (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States), the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Group of Friends of the Sudan, in its meeting of 18 January in Riyadh, also welcomed the United Nations-facilitated political process. Following the conclusion of the consultations, the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will

work together to develop a framework for engagement for the next phase of the process.

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

47. The reporting period witnessed almost no progress in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, with the exception of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, which increased its activities in support of the Agreement.

48. Supported by UNITAMS and a team of experts from United Nations headquarters, the Committee held its third meeting on 25 November in El Fasher to discuss the Committee's workings and assess incident response modalities. With visits to El Geneina and Ed Daein on 8 and 14 December, respectively, it also completed a series of joint familiarization and sensitization visits to all Darfur state capitals where sectoral Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee structures are to be based. A joint field visit was also undertaken to an informal assembly area in Korma, North Darfur, where an estimated 300 Sudan Liberation Army/Transitional Council combatants gathered following their return from Libya.

49. On 10 January 2022, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee visited the Sudanese Armed Forces training centre at Gadeed El Sail, North Darfur, one of the designated centres for training the armed movement combatants scheduled to be integrated into the planned 12,000-strong joint security-keeping force for Darfur. UNITAMS and the Chair of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee (who is also a UNITAMS staff member) have urged the authorities to form the joint security-keeping force, including during a meeting of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee with Lieutenant General Al-Burhan on 3 February. It is understood that 1,000 armed movement combatants who were in the process of assembling in Gadeed El Sail as a part of the now-defunct special task force will instead join the joint security-keeping force.

50. Considerable efforts are being undertaken with Sudanese authorities and members of the international community to augment the resources of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee and strengthen its operations. The Wali of North Darfur allocated the previous Ceasefire Committee office complex in the former UNAMID logistics base as a headquarters. The complex was officially handed over to the Committee on 20 December in the presence of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan. Despite security arrangements having been agreed with the Committee members, these premises were looted during the events of 24–29 December and rendered unusable. Alternate premises in the former UNAMID logistics base have since been identified and are to be rehabilitated while efforts are under way to establish and secure funding for offices in the other Darfur state capitals.

51. The UNITAMS team supporting the Chair of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee has been strengthened during the reporting period, in addition to a phased roll-out of the headquarters in El Fasher, to be followed by sectoral offices and the establishment of field teams in each of the sectoral permanent ceasefire committees. The Juba Peace Agreement signatories have repeatedly expressed their concern regarding their ability to participate in the Ceasefire Committee without external support, including salaries and logistics. Similarly, support for the integration of armed movements into the security services or their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is required to provide signatory movements' combatants with a vision for their future in a peaceful Darfur.

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

52. The environment for peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law was severely affected by the political crisis in Khartoum. However, UNITAMS, in cooperation with the United Nations country team, continued to support Sudanese-led initiatives where possible.

53. Following intercommunal clashes, an inter-agency mission to Kreinik took place to assess the humanitarian needs of people affected by the conflict. The mission found that shelter and non-food items, food, health, livelihoods and water, sanitation and hygiene for all (WASH) services were the primary humanitarian needs identified by those affected. A United Nations integrated strategic task force on Darfur was subsequently established on 11 December under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative to monitor the situation and propose coordinated responses and strategies going forward. Planned interventions, including one-month emergency food assistance and other activities, were, however, postponed owing to insecurity which limited access.

54. UNITAMS, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), began a series of in-depth peacebuilding assessments in seven states of the Sudan, namely North, South and West Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Red Sea and Kassala. These had been planned prior to the coup and remained essential to support the delivery of the Mission's mandate. Consultations with stakeholders, including internally displaced persons, refugee returnees, host communities, farmers, nomads, women, youth, students, local authorities, traditional leaders, resistance committees, political parties and civil society, have taken place in 24 conflict-affected localities. These assessments are intended to support the design of conflict-sensitive programmes by United Nations agencies in the affected areas that take into account the evolving political dynamics at the national and subnational levels and contribute to promoting sustaining peace.

55. On 14 and 15 December, the Mission held a series of engagements with the State authorities in Darfur to highlight the deteriorating security situation and its impact on human rights and civilian protection. In meetings with the Governor of North Darfur, it underscored the need for acceleration of the deployment of the joint security-keeping force, especially in hotspot areas. The Mission also offered its support to provide specialized training on human rights and international humanitarian law to the special task force (which was subsequently replaced by the joint security-keeping force for Darfur), if required. In similar meetings with the Governor of West Darfur, UNITAMS raised concerns over intercommunal clashes and attacks against civilians in West Darfur. While encouraging locally driven mediation processes, UNITAMS highlighted the need to combat impunity and promote accountability.

56. With regard to the provision of operational support for the protection of civilians architecture, the Mission supported the ongoing roll-out of state-level protection of civilians committees round tables in Darfur. The round tables were interrupted by the political impact of the military coup of 25 October. A follow-up round table took place for the North Darfur state-level protection of civilians committee on 18 and 19 December, which assisted the development of workplans.

57. Owing to the volatile political and security environment following the military coup and ensuing demonstrations, UNITAMS was not able to conduct planned activities aimed at strengthening Sudanese Police Force capacity in the area of protection of civilians. However, the Mission continued to collocate and engage with the Sudanese Police Force in Khartoum and the Darfur region and conducted a series of intensive advisory sessions to equip and assist the Sudanese Police Force

leadership on the provision of effective community policing. To this end, the establishment of a gender desk at the headquarters of the Central Darfur police, with the support of the United Nations, was a notable achievement.

58. On 22 December and 18 January, UNITAMS, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP, hosted round tables on international standards and norms of law enforcement in response to protests. Under Sudanese legislation, the Attorney General has the authority to grant the security services permission to engage in the use of force in controlling protests. The round tables led to the creation of a working group within the Attorney General's Office to develop guidelines on the use of force during protests.

59. On 23 December, the Deputy Special Representative attended the graduation ceremony of the first all-female demining training in the Sudan, which was supported by UNITAMS. The 28 women that participated in the training sessions will be the first group of female deminers to join mine action operations in the Sudan.

60. During the reporting period, 16 km of high-priority road was assessed and six contaminated areas covering 127,000 sqm were cleared and released for use by local communities. Over 134 items of explosive ordnance were destroyed in Blue Nile state. In addition, 10 land clearance teams and seven explosive ordnance risk education teams were deployed to South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, while two risk education teams were deployed to Kassala to provide risk education and awareness to over 50,000 Tigrayan refugees in their camps.

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

61. The pausing of international development assistance after the military coup on 25 October affected development and peace-related programming. Life-saving humanitarian assistance continued to be funded, albeit with more donor restrictions on Government engagement.

62. In December 2021, the Government of Norway contributed approximately \$800,000 to the multi-partner trust fund, which stood at \$8,211,289 as at 17 February. These funds have enabled the Mission to bring in additional capabilities to support the political consultations, including to ensure the participation of women from throughout the country. The Mission also received other targeted support.

63. Plans to develop a United Nations-Sudan transition framework, which would have established joint priorities with the Government for United Nations engagement in the Sudan during the transitional period with a focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, remained on hold in the light of the political crisis.

64. UNITAMS continued to work in an integrated manner with the United Nations country team, serving as Co-Chair for the programme management team and the operational management team. The integrated United Nations country team completed a programme criticality exercise to underpin its operations across the Sudan. It also continued to collaborate on strategic and contingency planning throughout the reporting period and has undertaken joint advocacy and communication activities.

IV. Observations

65. The struggle of the Sudanese people for freedom, peace and justice is exemplified every day by the courage and sacrifices of so many women and men, young and old, to achieve these aspirations.

66. I am appalled by the reports of increased intimidation, harassment and instances of sexual violence against women. I am deeply concerned by the alleged targeting of health facilities and the use of live ammunition against civilians exercising their right to protest. I condemn these actions and call upon the Sudanese authorities to respect the right of protesters to peaceful assembly and association, in keeping with its international obligations. All forms of violence against women must cease immediately. The authorities should undertake a thorough investigation into the allegations of rape and sexual harassment, as well as the death and injury of protesters as a result of the disproportionate use of force, including live ammunition. At the same time, national authorities must refrain from undertaking arbitrary arrests and fully respect the human rights of those being detained, providing them with due process rights as provided for under the law.

67. The military coup of 25 October and the ensuing political crisis have seriously set back the transition in the Sudan, rolled back key achievements and jeopardized the country's economic recovery, financial viability and much-needed relief assistance. UNITAMS has initiated and concluded its first round of inclusive consultations under its good offices role as set out in Security Council resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), by seeking to facilitate a Sudanese-owned agreement on a way forward. This is important to address the current political stalemate and restore the path toward a democratic civilian-led dispensation in line with the aspirations of the Sudanese people.

68. Time is of the essence. The Sudan urgently needs a negotiated solution to restore political and economic normalcy. As preparations proceed for the next phase of discussions, Sudanese leadership will be essential to build consensus around shared concerns and ensure a Sudanese-owned outcome. It is vital that those consultations are as inclusive as possible and bring together all relevant Sudanese stakeholders, including the meaningful participation of women. I encourage all Sudanese stakeholders to constructively engage with the political process, in coordination with UNITAMS, the African Union, IGAD and relevant Member States. The restoration of a constitutionally legitimate transition will be essential for the international community to resume financial and economic assistance.

69. Given the political impasse in Khartoum, the lack of progress in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement further risks instability in all Sudanese territory. I call upon the authorities and relevant armed movement signatories to urgently fulfil their commitments and expedite the implementation of transitional security arrangements provided for under the Agreement without further delay. This includes: (a) the issuance of the declaration outlining the composition of the forces of the armed movements; (b) the full establishment and completion of training of the joint security-keeping force in Darfur; and (c) the rapid integration of forces and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. This will require technical and financial support from the international community, as appropriate.

70. I welcome steps taken to operationalize the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, which remains among the few mechanisms already established as part of the security arrangements envisioned in the Juba Peace Agreement. Expanding it to cover all five Darfur States will be essential to meet the region's current security challenges, including to oversee a permanent ceasefire. In order to ensure that it is capacitated to fulfil these functions, the mechanism will require adequate resourcing

from the national authorities and Member States. This is all the more important as the return of fighters from Libya risks compounding existing complex conflict dynamics in the Sudan, in particular in the absence of viable options for demobilization and reintegration.

71. While dialogue efforts continue, the needs of the Sudanese people remain acute. The economic situation is dire, with inflation averaging 350 per cent in 2021 and the average prices of basic food continuing to increase sharply. Humanitarian needs have increased since last year. Over 14.3 million people, one in three people in the Sudan, are projected to require humanitarian assistance in 2022. At the same time, the Sudan hosts 1.16 million refugees, with more than 3 million internally displaced people (as at October 2021), of whom 440,000 were newly displaced in 2021 alone. Of these, 55 per cent are children. There is an urgent need to advance durable solutions, while increasing the resilience of host communities and stepping up conflict-mitigating measures.

72. Protection of civilians remains a major concern in many parts of the country. Unaddressed root causes of conflict, political tensions and the failure to make progress on key provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement have contributed to an alarming escalation of violence, in particular in Darfur but also in South Kordofan. The National Plan for Civilian Protection should be implemented without further delay.

73. The impact of climate change is acutely felt throughout the Sudan, with crop failure and conflict-related disruptions of the agricultural season resulting in a poor harvest. In East Darfur alone, over 1,000 farms have been destroyed in conflict between farmers and pastoralists. Without urgent support to restore livelihoods and assist farmers ahead of the next planting season, the situation will become increasingly tenuous.

74. I strongly condemn the looting of former United Nations assets at the former UNAMID logistics base, which had been handed over to the Government and was destined for Sudanese entities working on protection of civilians. The looting of WFP warehouses safeguarding vital humanitarian supplies for the population has further increased food insecurity. Attacks on humanitarian organizations are unacceptable and constitute a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Such actions disrupt or render impossible the delivery of life-saving assistance for the most vulnerable.

75. Given the criticality of sustained assistance to the people of the Sudan, I encourage Member States to help address immediate humanitarian needs and the significant loss of livelihoods. Likewise, support for the protection of civilians and community stabilization efforts remains essential. Sustaining local peace infrastructures, rule of law and dispute resolution mechanisms, including to tackle potential conflict triggers along migratory routes, remains vital to mitigate the risk of conflict escalation and empower local peacebuilders.

76. I extend my appreciation to my Special Representative, Volker Perthes, and all United Nations personnel in the Sudan for their continued and tireless efforts in support of the country and its people. The United Nations remains fully committed to supporting the Sudanese people during these tumultuous times, working alongside regional and international partners.