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Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and a follow-on presence

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2525 \(2020\)](#) of 3 June 2020, requested the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide a special report with recommendations on the appropriate course of action regarding the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The present special report provides an overview of the political and security situation in Darfur, efforts made by the transitional Government to advance the peace process and the protection of civilians with the support of UNAMID, and options with respect to UNAMID beyond the end of its current mandate on 31 December 2020.

II. Situation in Darfur

2. In the period under review, Darfur was marked by important political and security developments. The signing of a peace agreement between the transitional Government and an alliance of Sudanese armed groups in Juba on 3 October 2020 was a political milestone for the region and has created an opening to address long-standing grievances as part of the transition process. However, while negotiations for the peace agreement were being held, there was an uptick in local-level clashes involving rebel elements, intercommunal violence and civil unrest. Areas under the influence of groups that have not joined the peace process remain volatile. Darfur, the most impoverished region in the country, is particularly affected by high inflation and a scarcity of fuel and other commodities.

A. Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan

3. The peace talks held in Juba culminated in the signing, on 3 October 2020, of a peace agreement between the transitional Government of Sudan, the coalition of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front armed opposition groups and with the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Minawi. The Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan has region-specific protocols pertaining to, respectively, Darfur, the Two Areas as relating to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar

* Reissued for technical reasons on 19 November 2020.



faction, East Sudan, North Sudan and Central Sudan, and a separate protocol on national issues. Under the protocol on national issues, the transitional period has been set at 39 months from the signing of the Agreement and rebel signatories have been allocated three seats on the Sovereign Council and 25 per cent of the seats in the transitional legislature and the Council of Ministers. The national protocol also provides for the creation of regional systems of governance and for national dialogue and constitutional reform. The protocols on Central, East and North Sudan address economic, political, social and cultural issues in each region. The protocol involving SPLM-N/Agar stipulates power- and wealth-sharing and security arrangements that include the reform of the national army, a permanent ceasefire and monitoring mechanism, and a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

4. The protocols on Darfur deal with security arrangements, power- and wealth-sharing, as well as with displacement, accountability and justice, land, and intercommunal reconciliation. The security arrangements include a permanent ceasefire, the establishment of monitoring mechanism, the deployment within 90 days of a 12,000-strong security-maintenance force composed of forces from the Government and armed groups. Other key provisions include the restoration of Darfur's regional status, the proportional allocation of state and local government posts, inclusion of women at all levels of authority and decision-making, the launch of a Darfur development fund with an annual budget of \$750 million over 10 years, the resolution of forcible land occupation and the establishment of a Darfur land commission, the establishment of a special court for crimes committed in Darfur and the appointment of an independent prosecutor, the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees with guarantees of security, return of land, compensation and basic services.

5. The implementation of these provisions will be supported by a series of committees to be established, three of which provide a specific role for the United Nations: a joint military high committee for security arrangements, which will serve as the main mechanism for decision-making and dispute resolution with regard to the implementation of the Agreement and in which the United Nations will be represented; a permanent ceasefire committee, chaired by a representative of the United Nations as a third party, that is accountable to the joint military high committee; and a regional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commission, to be established within 30 days, with the support of the United Nations as a third party, as well as of other United Nations system agencies. In addition, the protocols on internally displaced persons and refugees stipulate partnership with UNAMID or another United Nations system agency as a third party, United Nations system agencies, relevant national and international agencies, and international and national aid organizations to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and ensure the protection and dignified treatment of internally displaced persons and refugees during the process of return and reintegration or resettlement. The Agreement also provides for guarantors from the African Union, the United Nations, South Sudan and the international community to support the monitoring, implementation and evaluation of the Agreement. Finally, the Constitutional Declaration was amended to reflect the provisions of the Juba Agreement.

6. The Juba Agreement creates an opportunity to address the conflict drivers in the Sudan, including in Darfur. A permanent ceasefire, the formation of an accountable and representative security-maintenance force and the integration of the former combatants into the national army can reduce violence and enhance public trust in security and rule of law institutions, provided that those steps are taken with the participation of affected communities and in line with international human rights standards. The establishment of a special tribunal for crimes committed in Darfur,

together with other justice, accountability and reconciliation measures that address impunity for war crimes and serious violations of human rights, including those committed against children, will be an essential part of fostering confidence in the new arrangements. The restoration of regional autonomy is a significant step that, together with the earmarked fund for Darfur, can generate greater administrative focus and attention for the fair and equitable allocation of resources for the development of the region. In addition, the establishment of comprehensive mechanisms and processes for the demarcation, restitution and legal recognition of land and *hawakeer* (land traditionally used by a particular clan or tribal group), including for women and young people, could facilitate durable solutions to forced and voluntary displacement and promote intercommunal reconciliation.

7. The Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction (SLA/AW) has remained outside the ongoing peace process and has mobilized opposition to the Juba Agreement within some camps for internally displaced persons, which poses a challenge to the comprehensive resolution of the conflict, as well as to the protection of civilians. On 1 September, speaking by audio link to over 1,500 supporters who had gathered at the Humaira camp in Kass, South Darfur, Abdul Wahid announced his own peace initiative in the form of a national dialogue that would encourage the participation of all groups and actors. On 17 September, a proposal attributed to Abdul Wahid was announced for an internal dialogue on the peace process to allow Darfuris, especially internally displaced persons, to voice their opinions on resolving long-standing grievances and root causes of the conflict. From 6 to 8 September, thousands of internally displaced persons loyal to Abdul Wahid demonstrated in the Hamadiya, Hasahisa and Khamsadagaig camps for internally displaced persons in Central Darfur, voicing their opposition to the Juba Agreement. In Kass and Menawashei, in South Darfur, internally displaced persons also expressed their rejection of the Agreement to UNAMID.

8. The SPLM-N faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu initially withdrew from the talks on 20 August to express its discontent with the composition of the Government delegation. Eventually, it signed a declaration of principle with the Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, in Addis Ababa on 3 September to support the democratization of the Sudan on the basis of the separation of religion and State and later started to engage in the peace process. On 3 October, a coalition of eight splinter rebel groups issued a statement to criticize the Juba Agreement as incomplete, having excluded certain groups from the negotiations.

B. Women, peace and security

9. With UNAMID support, 20 women from Darfur and other regions attended the talks in Juba and presented a position paper to inform the negotiations. On 3 October, UNAMID supported three Darfuri women leaders to witness the signing of the Juba Agreement. However, women's representation in decision-making remains low, including in the security sector, notwithstanding the Government's efforts to recruit women to the police. The Darfur Women's Platform, an umbrella organization of women's protection and mediation networks, professional women's associations, the women's wing of the Forces for Freedom and Change, women-led civil society organizations and representatives of displaced women, continues to advocate for the inclusion of women in the political process.

C. Fighting involving armed movements

10. Although the level of fighting between government forces – composed mainly of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces – and SLA/AW had subsided after the start of the peace talks in Juba in August 2019, the conflict continued to simmer and escalated in 2020. In May 2020, SLA/AW resumed its attacks against government forces. On 1 June, SLA/AW forces attacked a Sudanese Armed Forces checkpoint in Kutrum, 22 km north-east of Nertiti, Central Darfur, which resulted in 27 soldiers of the Sudanese Armed Forces and 9 SLA/AW combatants killed. The intermittent clashes between government forces and SLA/AW are concentrated around Golo and to the east of Nertiti, Central Darfur. Clashes between SLA/AW factions have been concentrated in the area between Golo and Daya, as well as near Rockero, in Central Darfur, and in the Torong Tonga, Deribat and Kidingir areas in South Darfur. They have caused new displacements to the Toga and Savanga gathering sites east of Golo and Rockero in Central Darfur, and to Kidingir and Layba in South Darfur. In the period from May to October 2020, approximately 27,000 people were reportedly displaced.

11. Factional infighting within SLA/AW over its participation in the peace process also intensified. From May to October, UNAMID recorded 162 fatalities from 82 incidents involving armed confrontations, amounting to a more than fourfold increase compared with the 39 fatalities from 53 incidents recorded from January to May and a more than sixfold increase compared with the 25 fatalities from 35 incidents recorded from August to December 2019. For instance, on 21 May, SLA/AW factions led by Abdelgadir Abderrahman (“Gaddura”) and Saleh Borsa renewed their attacks against another faction, led by Mubarak Aldouk, in Daya, Central Darfur, to consolidate their control over all elements of the movement. The attempt was opposed by other commanders, which led to clashes in Torong Tonga from 26 July to 3 August 2020 resulting in 48 fatalities. Since 30 September, infighting over the control of local gold mines and tax collection has been reported in the Duo area north-west of Menawashei in South Darfur, with an unconfirmed number of displaced persons, according to a verification patrol conducted by UNAMID on 13 October.

12. From 5 to 16 September, a total of 392 female-headed households, were reportedly displaced from the Sortony gathering site for internally displaced persons in North Darfur to the Savanga and Toga gathering sites in the vicinity of Rockero and Golo, respectively, in Central Darfur. This new displacement reportedly followed the detention of several internally displaced persons accused by a commander of the Rapid Support Forces against internally displaced persons of being part of SLA/AW. Some of the women reported physical assaults by members of the Forces, while the Forces had also arrested a dozen other internally displaced persons on the pretext of anti-crime campaigns. Internally displaced persons have also reported several incidents of assault, detention and harassment by the Sudanese Armed Forces at the Savanga site. Humanitarian needs at these congested sites, which continue to receive new arrivals, include shelter and other non-food items, nutrition for children, medical assistance, particularly in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and protection services. Humanitarian convoys from El Geneina, West Darfur, were scheduled to arrive in Zalingei on 24 September but were blocked by the Massalit community in the Mornei area, where tensions persist following the escalation of intercommunal tensions in July 2020. Meanwhile, UNAMID has visited the Sortony site to verify the reports and has informed the local authorities.

D. Intercommunal violence

13. Intercommunal conflict increased in 2019 and into 2020. From June to October 2020, UNAMID recorded 146 fatalities (111 in July alone) as a result of 31 clashes and disputes, amounting to a more than fourfold increase in the number of casualties compared with the same period in 2019, which saw 31 fatalities as a result of 23 incidents, and a more than eightfold increase compared with 2018, when 17 fatalities were caused by 15 incidents. Land-related conflicts, predominantly involving crop destruction by pastoralists, remained almost constant, with 32 fatalities from 134 incidents between June and October compared with 49 fatalities from 171 incidents during the same period in 2019 and 20 fatalities from 126 incidents during the same period in 2018.

14. The areas most affected by land-related incidents are Kutum, Sortony and Saraf Umrah in North Darfur, El Geneina, Masteri and Jebel Moon in West Darfur, Golo and Nertiti in Central Darfur, and Kass and Graidia in South Darfur. In Graidia, on 23 July 2020, attacks by Fallata herders against Masalit farmers in Abdos returnee village resulted in 15 returnees being killed and 20 others injured. In Masteri, where 84 civilians were killed in clashes between the Masalit and Northern Rizeigat in July 2020, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces have been deployed to towns but not to the surrounding areas, which has prevented farmers from accessing the land, which has in turn resulted in continued intercommunal tensions. A UNAMID staff member was deployed to co-locate with the Governor of West Darfur and provide advisory support, and the state security committee has agreed to send mobile forces to the Masteri area to protect farmers and their lands during annual cultivation and harvest seasons in the future, but this is yet to materialize.

15. Similarly, the level of criminality involving armed robbery, theft, and other acts of violence remained relatively unchanged in 2020. From June to October, UNAMID recorded 97 fatalities from 882 criminal incidents, compared with 78 fatalities from 812 incidents during the same period in 2019. The period from January to May 2020 saw 129 fatalities from 1,107 incidents. There were 166 incidents of violence and harassment against internally displaced persons in the five-month period from June to October 2020, compared with 247 cases during the five-month period from January to May 2020. Incidents of conflict-related sexual violence reported to UNAMID from May to August 2020 increased by 10.5 per cent compared with the same period in 2019. Overall, data about security incidents in Darfur show an increase in violence since the beginning of the year, with spikes in intercommunal conflict caused by armed nomads, an expansion of the affected territory and an escalation in the fighting between combatants associated with SLA/AW and government security forces since May 2020.

16. While tensions between nomadic and farmer communities usually heighten during the farming season, from May to November, the escalation of intercommunal violence in 2020 appears to be linked to the ongoing national transition process. Farming communities and internally displaced persons in Darfur have demanded basic services, as well as the disarming of militias and armed nomads and protection from them, and the removal of herders from their lands. To voice their demands, they have staged peaceful protests in Kabkabiyah, Kutum and El Fasher in North Darfur, Nertiti and Kass in Central Darfur, Ed Daein in East Darfur and El Geneina, Masteri and Mornei in West Darfur. Such protests are no longer isolated incidents. A sustained sit-in movement that started in Nertiti on 28 June and resulted in a decision by the transitional Government to remove local officials still in place from the previous Government, inspired further sit-in protests in Fata Borno, Kutum and Kabkabiyah. In response to the protests, the Government announced a series of measures, some of which are yet to be implemented, such as the disarmament of nomadic militias in

Nertiti and the resolution of land disputes through joint committees in Kutum. In Mornei, local communities staged a peaceful sit-in protest after a dispute over farmland destruction had led to two deaths on 17 September. They submitted a series of demands to the Governor of the state, including the demand to transfer commanders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudanese police forces. Some of the protests came under attack by armed militias, for example in Fata Borno. From June to October, there were 6 fatalities and 86 injuries from 100 cases of civil unrest, compared with one fatality and 18 injuries from 72 cases from January to May.

17. Consultations with UNAMID, humanitarian partners and Sudanese experts on the ground provide further context to the intercommunal tensions in the past few years. To some extent, the arms collection campaign carried out by the Government in 2017 and 2018 improved the security situation in urban areas and led to the voluntary return of internally displaced persons. However, the return or resettlement was not sustained, as many returnees only visited farms for crop cultivation and harvesting, rather than staying on a permanent basis. Meanwhile, nomads also struggle with their seasonal migration practices, as demographic shifts, in particular shifts in population growth, displacement and urbanization, have changed their ecological needs, notably their need for access to water and forestry. Those factors are compounded by climate change. Some nomads have opted to resettle, including in places of origin of internally displaced populations. This has led to an increase in disputes over land with herder communities, which turned violent in 2019, as government security forces withdrew to Khartoum in response to the political developments in the capital. The escalation of intercommunal violence in West Darfur in December 2019 between the Masalit and Rizeigat groups was an example of such tensions. It is noteworthy that the deployment of the government security forces contained the situation for some time, even though tensions have lingered and escalated again in July 2020, resulting in 67 fatalities.

18. The trend continued in 2020, as armed nomadic groups resorted to attacking internally displaced persons and farmers staged large-scale and prolonged sit-in protests to demand the restoration of their land rights, as witnessed in Fata Borno, North Darfur, on 13 July 2020. The protests also constituted a challenge for the government security forces. Meanwhile, the Government has indicated that it plans to complete the arms collection campaign, informing UNAMID on 9 September of its plan to initiate an operation to search for and forcibly seize illegal weapons. UNAMID has engaged with government authorities on this approach, as such an operation could have security implications in volatile camps, such as Kalma, Hamadiya and Sortony, as well as among armed tribal groups.

E. Access restrictions

19. From June to October 2020, there were two incidents in which access was denied on security grounds. On 7 August, the planning team for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) was denied access to Golo. On 4 September, a UNAMID police patrol accompanying a non-governmental organization was denied access at a checkpoint of the Sudanese Armed Forces in the vicinity of Golo.

III. Protection of civilians

A. National plan for the protection of civilians

20. It is significant that the Sudanese transitional authorities have publicly taken full responsibility for tackling the protection of civilians for the first time since the beginning of the conflict in Darfur. Their national plan for the protection of civilians after the exit of UNAMID (see [S/2020/429](#), annex), submitted to the Security Council on 21 May 2020, encompasses eight thematic areas and contains a wide range of commitments. The national plan is overseen by means of an implementation mechanism based in Khartoum that involves key ministries. A workplan is currently being developed. The national plan provides for more training and financial incentives for military and police personnel with protection tasks, for the deployment of police to camps for internally displaced persons and for the establishment of community police.

21. The plan initially announced by the transitional Government to deploy 12,000 security personnel from the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese police forces to Darfur, was subsequently revised to 6,000 personnel. By 26 August, an undisclosed number of joint forces in 80 armed vehicles (10 belonging to the Sudanese Armed Forces, 50 to the Rapid Support Forces and 20 to the reserve police) arrived in North Darfur to protect farming areas in the localities of Kabkabiyah, Saraf Umra and Sereif. With the assistance of UNAMID, the Government also dispatched civilian and security personnel in response to incidents that occurred in the Kalma camp for internally displaced persons on 11 June 2020, in the Hamadiya camp on 29 June, and in the Fata Borno camp on 13 July. Government security forces were also deployed to Abdos, South Darfur, from 23 to 25 July, to Masteri on 25 July and to Nertiti on 3 October.

22. The efforts of the Sudanese authorities in the wake of intercommunal violence and civil unrest are a welcome development. Their presence has thus far been focused on areas around state capitals or has been temporary in nature in the aftermath of large-scale incidents. Their presence requires further capacities to ensure sustained engagement, protection and prevention in areas of concern. In places where government forces do not yet have full access, particularly in the Jebel Marra and surrounding areas (such as the Kalma camp) that are under the influence of SLA/AW, UNAMID has continued to play a pivotal third-party role, facilitating dialogue and promoting confidence-building measures with conflict-affected constituencies. In the Hamadiya camp, UNAMID responded to the increase in violent attacks and casualties relating to factional infighting by ensuring the round-the-clock presence of one of its formed police units supported by a military quick reaction force starting on 3 August 2020. UNAMID has engaged the state-level authorities, including by proposing joint patrols with the Sudanese police forces, but the internally displaced persons have rejected any entry of State security forces in the camp. Internally displaced persons continue to report violations, including in Sortony, especially against women conducting livelihood activities outside the camp.

23. Women's protection networks supported by UNAMID continue to provide real-time information on emerging tensions, flashpoints and impending attacks. These community-level networks have cooperated with UNAMID and the joint government forces to map hotspots and inform patrol plans at the locality level. The attacks against civilians in Kutum, Kass and Boronga in June and July 2020 were first reported by the local women's protection networks.

24. With regard to locations from which UNAMID has withdrawn, as in West Darfur, peacekeepers have continued to engage the Sudanese authorities remotely,

conveying early warning signs, offering support, urging them to react quickly and implementing peacebuilding initiatives through its State liaison functions. In West Darfur, UNAMID advised state authorities to take security and reconciliation measures to diffuse tensions in Masteri. In addition, as part of its support to the implementation of the national plan for the protection of civilians, UNAMID has proposed to the transitional Government that its military advisers co-locate with Sudanese security personnel in state capitals across Darfur to provide advisory support on protection issues, as recommended in the previous special report (S/2020/202). However, that offer was not supported by the counterparts in the Government who, instead, requested mostly logistical and financial support from the United Nations for the implementation of the national plan.

B. Rule of law and human rights

25. In Darfur, with the support of UNAMID and the United Nations country team, justice chain institutions have been extended to many remote locations, including district courts, prosecution offices, prisons and police stations. There has been an increase in the number of police stations and posts being established in remote areas. Yet the effective use of these institutions remains a challenge for a number of reasons, including capacity deficits and resource constraints. While a few prisons in Darfur have been rehabilitated, they remain congested and those in remote localities continue to be in decrepit condition. There are currently 115 formal judges at all levels and 58 prosecutors in Darfur. In response to intensified tension and violence, the Government deployed three prosecutors to the Nertiti locality during the reporting period.

26. However, a number of challenges persist, such as building confidence among local communities in the ability of the rule of law institutions to deliver justice, ensuring accountability and providing legal protection to vulnerable communities, in particular women and children. Some Sudanese police personnel have been accused of tribal bias and ineffectiveness, and their stations and facilities in Kutum, Kabkabiyah, Kass, Nertiti and El Geneina have been attacked during protests. Similarly, demonstrators have targeted prison facilities in Kass and Ardamata, which made it necessary to transfer detained persons to Khartoum and Nyala. UNAMID has stepped up a range of activities with the Sudanese police forces to enhance police relations with communities, including joint patrols within and around the camps for internally displaced persons, community policing and the establishment of emergency response centres. A total of 84 joint patrols were conducted from August to October 2020, including in Zalingei, Saraf Umrah, Shangil Tobaya and the farming areas around Kutum, Fata Borno and Tawillah, and in Kalma. In Kutum and Kalma, communities have requested that UNAMID, the Sudanese police force and prosecution authorities conduct joint investigations into incidents of violence.

27. Of the 179 cases of human rights violations and abuses documented between May and October 2020, 36 cases of human rights violations in Darfur were attributed to members of the State security forces, including the Rapid Support Forces, Sudanese Armed Forces and Sudanese police forces. In total, 137 cases were reported to the Sudanese police forces, but case files were reportedly opened for 46. Most reports were not acted upon by the police beyond taking the complaint and opening a file. Arrests were few, with only 66 documented arrests of the alleged perpetrators. Only rarely did cases go through the entire criminal justice process of arrest, investigation, trial and sentencing, as appropriate. Efforts are hampered by a lack of resources, especially vehicles and other equipment needed to conduct investigations and follow-up on complaints, as well as a lack of capacity and access. The lack of knowledge and understanding among the victims of their right to seek legal redress

or to participate in investigations are additional factors limiting the number of cases that go through the criminal justice system.

28. In June 2020, UNAMID documented 11 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in North, West and Central Darfur, with nine of the victims being gang-raped. This was a significant increase compared with June 2019, when two cases of conflict-related sexual violence were documented. In July 2020, there were nine cases of conflict-related sexual violence in North and Central Darfur, six of which involved child victims. The perpetrators were identified as uniformed armed men, persons described as nomads and SLA/AW members. Most of the survivors of the conflict-related sexual violence committed in 2020 were girls under the age of 18.

29. Human rights violations against children in Darfur remain prevalent. From June to October 2020, the most frequently occurring such violations were killing and maiming (123 children, including 41 girls) and sexual violence (19 girls). A majority of the violations occurred in the context of intercommunal violence or conflicts between nomads and farmers in rural areas. In Jebel Marra, infighting between SLA/AW splinter groups has exacerbated violations against children, including rape, killing and maiming, and abduction, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Children living in Government-controlled areas of Jebel Marra also remain vulnerable to attacks. Almost one third of the total violations against children were attributed to government security forces, often in the context of military operations, attacks against civilian populations or excessive use of force against demonstrators. Government security forces were also responsible for occupying three hospitals and three schools.

30. In the light of the foregoing, it is commendable that the Government has taken measures to end and prevent violations of child rights, including their recruitment into and use in armed groups, and that it conducted a national awareness-raising campaign aimed at preventing violations against children. With technical support from UNAMID and UNICEF, the Government has developed a national plan for the prevention of violations against children and has supported the training of security forces, local authorities and community members on child rights. Another welcome development is that the Rapid Support Forces continue to collaborate with UNAMID for the establishment of its own human rights and child protection unit. Finally, the Government has continued to work with UNAMID to establish community-based child protection networks and set up training on child protection and child rights for child protection committee members, particularly at the state level.

C. Protection issues and the way forward

31. There is a broad understanding that, in Darfur, two main types of structural threats have an impact on the civilian population and on relations between pastoralist and farming communities: the remnants of the counter-insurgency policy pursued by the former regime, and climate change. With regard to climate change, notably the decline in rainfall and its impact on the grazing routes of nomads and the harvest of farmers, which has critically altered the relationship between these complementary production systems. The reversal of the impact of the Darfur conflict, which enabled nomad groups to displace many farmer communities into the camps for internally displaced persons, requires good governance and courageous decisions to address, primarily, the issues of land and internal displacement. From that perspective, the protection of civilians goes well beyond the provision of physical security and should be aimed at creating a broader protective environment to include the protection of livelihoods and food security.

32. The political transition that the Sudan is currently undergoing has led the Government of the Sudan to assume its primary protection responsibilities and create

the policy and institutional framework necessary for doing so. At a joint workshop on the implementation of the national plan for the protection of civilians in Darfur, held on 13 and 14 August, the Government and UNAMID identified as issues requiring immediate attention, namely those pertaining to the camps for internally displaced persons and intercommunal conflicts, weapons collection, the identification of hotspot areas and capacity-building for actors involved in the national plan for the protection of civilians. A joint task force was established to coordinate and implement a set of actions by deadlines ranging from October to December. Through the joint task force, the Government authorities have requested the assistance of UNAMID regarding 15 subjects, mostly in the areas of training, logistics support, such as the provision of equipment and rehabilitation of infrastructure, the removal of unexploded remnants of war, and community policing. UNAMID intends to provide support in these areas for the remainder of its mandate.

33. The Juba Agreement established a comprehensive framework to address the protection of civilians in a multifaceted way by providing solutions to the dimensions of security, justice and reconciliation, refugees and internally displaced persons, land and *hawakeer*, and livelihoods. Some of the provisions in the security protocol to the Agreement would, however, require time, well beyond the current mandate of UNAMID. The new 12,000-strong security-maintenance force, made up of 6,000 members of all Sudanese security forces and 6,000 members of armed groups, is to be established within 90 days from the signing of the Agreement and is to be tasked with law enforcement responsibilities in Darfur to fill the gap after the departure of UNAMID. The timelines for the effective formation of the security-maintenance force will depend on a number of important factors. The forces belonging to the signatory armed groups are reported to be outside the Sudan. The process could require further negotiations with government security forces on details of the movement, cantonment of forces and organization of the security-maintenance force, as well as the eventual integration of the rebel forces into a national army. Its successful operation in Darfur will greatly depend on the training of the force and, most importantly, on building trust among communities, especially among those in camps for internally displaced persons who have expressed scepticism towards the Juba Agreement. The implementation of processes related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as justice, will require integrated planning and approaches, effective coordination and adequate operational and programmatic support from national and international counterparts.

34. In line with Security Council resolution [2525 \(2020\)](#), UNAMID commenced the implementation of a comprehensive planning and performance assessment in July. A timetable has been developed to plan, develop, test and launch the relevant tool by November, focusing on five themes, namely security, the peace process, the protection of civilians and human rights, and access to basic services and to the authorities at the level of the states.

D. Deployment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan

35. In its resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#), by which it established UNITAMS, the Security Council assigned to the Mission as one of its strategic objectives to “assist peacebuilding, civilian protection and rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas”. In line with that objective, UNITAMS will support the strengthening of institutions to deliver justice and accountability and coordinate United Nations civilian protection and peacebuilding activities, such as local-level conflict prevention, mitigation and reconciliation, and community violence reduction, particularly for women, children and vulnerable groups. The primary modes of

engagement for UNITAMS will be advocacy, technical advice and capacity-building in support of national and international partners, including United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes. It is anticipated that UNITAMS will have a field office in El Fasher and liaison presences in Zalingei and Nyala.

36. As UNITAMS and the United Nations country team endeavour to expand their presence to some capitals of the Darfur states in 2021, the nature of their engagement in the protection of civilians will be fundamentally different from that of UNAMID. UNITAMS is not mandated to provide physical protection. The Mission will support the implementation by the Sudanese authorities of the national plan for the protection of civilians to build a greater protective environment for civilian populations in conflict and post-conflict areas. The country team is already conducting protection activities in Darfur, but financial constraints, exacerbated by the current fiscal climate and the cost of the COVID-19 response, could limit the scope of those activities and of any additional efforts by UNITAMS. UNITAMS will also aim to contribute to the mobilization of support for peacebuilding activities by the country team in order to strengthen the protective environment. UNAMID will play a key role by leveraging existing capacities to support UNITAMS start-up through transfers of assets and extending administrative support on cost-reimbursable basis in that period. The country team has relied on government escorts, which have so far been unable to enter some of the camps, including Kalma in South Darfur, Hamadiya, Hasahisa and Khamsadagaig camps and from Nertiti towards the mountains of Rockero and Golo localities of Central Darfur.

37. Considering the pace at which UNITAMS and government security forces are being deployed to Darfur, active measures to enhance the protective environment in support of the Government's efforts to implement the national protection plan and the framework of cooperation on conflict-related sexual violence signed between it and the United Nations are of the utmost priority.

38. The worsening economic crisis in the Sudan is a significant factor in the country's fragile security situation. Given the need for coordinated international support for the Government's economic reform and recovery efforts, UNITAMS has a mandate to support the mobilization of economic and development assistance and to promote cooperation with international institutions and donors. The announcement by the United States of its decision to remove the Sudan from its list of State sponsors of terrorism would open the door for the country's access to international financial assistance, investment and debt relief. Economic recovery will be a critical element in the restoration of peace and security in the Sudan and, by extension, in Darfur.

IV. Recommendations for the appropriate course of action regarding the Mission drawdown

A. Consultations with the transitional Sudanese authorities

39. As part of the tripartite coordination mechanism on UNAMID, representatives of the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan met in Khartoum at the expert level on 22 October and at the principal level on 25 October 2020 with the participation of the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare, the UNAMID Joint Special Representative, Jeremiah Mamabolo. The delegation of the Government of Sudan was co-led by Mohamed Sharief Abdalla, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Omer El Sheikh, Chair of the National Executive Committee for Coordination with

UNITAMS. The participants received an update on the protection of civilians in Darfur and discussed the further course of action.

40. During those meetings, the representatives of the African Union and the United Nations acknowledged the concrete practical steps and the progress achieved in the implementation of the national plan for the protection of civilians along both tracks, physical protection and protective environment. They also acknowledged the positive impact of the political transformation in the Sudan on the protection of civilians in Darfur and reaffirmed the primary responsibility of the Government to protect its citizens. In that regard, they welcomed the establishment, by decree No. 360 of 13 October 2020, of a civilian protection force, which started to deploy on 15 October. The force is composed of 12,000 troops based in three sectors at 18 team sites in Darfur, including the current footprint of UNAMID, and at an additional six sites. They also welcomed the collection and destruction of some 300,000 weapons; the strengthening of the Sudanese police presence in Darfur by newly graduated units of female-only police officers to tend to the needs of women and children; the training of internally displaced persons in community policing and early warning as a measure to address their specific needs and build trust; the adoption of new legislation as well as engagement with communities of internally displaced persons to find long-term solutions to their needs; and the organization of a number of reconciliation conferences between tribes in West and North Darfur.

41. Furthermore, the participants in principal-level meeting of the tripartite coordination mechanism acknowledged the unequivocal position of the Sudanese transitional authorities on the termination of the UNAMID mandate by 31 December 2020 and the full operationalization of the UNITAMS presence thereafter in line with Security Council resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#). In the meantime, the participants in the mechanism agreed that UNAMID would continue its capacity-building work until 31 December 2020 in accordance with its mandated tasks. In addition, a document detailing the lessons learned by UNAMID from its experience will be prepared as a legacy for the African Union and the United Nations and for sharing with their Sudanese counterparts and civil society organizations. It was agreed that the discussion and the views of the Government would be duly reflected in the joint report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union on UNAMID, to be submitted to the Security Council by 31 October 2020. The views of the Government were further reiterated in meetings held on 25 October 2020, with the Prime Minister and with the Chair of the Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

42. The participants in the meeting took note of the ongoing preparations by UNAMID for a sequenced and responsible drawdown pending the issuance of guidance and timeframes in line with Security Council resolution [2525 \(2020\)](#). The Government reaffirmed its commitment to fully facilitating all drawdown activities, including repatriation of personnel from troop- and police-contributing countries and their contingent-owned equipment immediately after the adoption of the Security Council resolution on terminating the mandate of UNAMID.

B. Recommendations on the appropriate course of action

43. In response to the request of the Security Council, formulated in its resolution [2525 \(2020\)](#), for recommendations on the appropriate course of action regarding the drawdown of UNAMID, and in the light of recent developments in the Sudan and consultations with the country's transitional authorities, we recommend the termination of the UNAMID mandate by 31 December 2020 and the full operationalization of the UNITAMS presence in accordance with Security Council resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#).

44. In the meantime, UNAMID will continue its support to the implementation of the Juba Agreement and capacity-building work until 31 December, in line with its mandated tasks. It is recommended that the international community, in particular the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, continue to explore, together with the Sudanese authorities, appropriate support measures to sustain peace, security and development efforts in Darfur and other parts of the Sudan in order to help to end the cycle of violence. Finally, it is recommended that a lessons-learned exercise be carried out to fully document the experiences accumulated by UNAMID as a legacy for the African Union and the United Nations, and that that document be shared with the Sudanese counterparts and other relevant partners, including civil society organizations.

45. The environmental clean-up, the removal of the Operation's footprint and the repatriation from closed locations of staff, troops and police will take an estimated six months, subject to COVID-19 and the rainy season. In the meantime, the El Fasher logistics hub and a small team in Khartoum will be the residual operations required to liquidate the Operation.

46. As agreed within the tripartite coordination mechanism, UNAMID and the National Executive Committee for Coordination with UNITAMS are to hold regular meetings on arrangements for the period following 31 December, subject to Security Council guidance, to ensure that UNAMID staff can complete outstanding drawdown activities and downstream activities associated with the liquidation. The principles of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations regarding the disposal of property, including by gift, were reaffirmed, with UNAMID confirming that all United Nations-owned equipment was designated primarily for UNAMID-mandated activities, which included support to the national plan for the protection of civilians as managed through the joint task force mechanism and State liaison function activities, and that any surplus was prioritized for other entities of the Organization, such as UNITAMS and the United Nations country team, to be used in the interest of civilian end-users and local communities.

C. Financial overview

47. The General Assembly, in its resolution [74/261](#) C of 30 June 2020, appropriated the amount of \$240.2 million for UNAMID for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2020. As at 8 October 2020, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMID amounted to \$168.7 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations amounted to \$2,723.3 million. Reimbursement of troops and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 December 2019, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has also been made for the period up to 31 December 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

D. Observations

48. The transitional Government has taken two significant steps towards achieving sustainable peace across the country, including in Darfur. First, it has transmitted to the Security Council its national plan for the protection of civilians. Second, following months of negotiations, it signed the Juba Agreement. In both documents, it sets out important commitments with regard to protecting civilians and addressing the root causes of conflict across the country, including Darfur. Both are ambitious plans that will serve as a framework of engagement for the United Nations and the African Union and will require substantial commitment to implement.

49. The Juba Agreement is the culmination of all prior efforts aimed at achieving an inclusive peace in the Sudan. Those include previous agreements, such as the Darfur Peace Agreement and the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, as well as the work of the Africa Union and its High-level Implementation Panel. Considering the extent of the international investment made thus far in peace efforts in Sudan and Darfur, the momentum and opportunity before the Security Council of the United Nations and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union are unprecedented. Conversely, to succeed where past processes have faltered will require significant political will as well as technical support to manage a series of linked and complex processes. In that context, as the parties enter the implementation phase of the Juba Agreement, Member States could consider bilateral support for the fulfilment of specific provisions, particularly those in which third-party involvement is envisaged, in line with similar arrangements from the past in other areas of the Sudan and based on needs expressed by the Sudanese transitional authorities.

50. The recent spike in violence in Darfur, albeit not on the scale of the early days of the conflict, highlights the inherent fragility of any major political transition. The shift in the balance of power – with new alliances made, both at national and local levels – also entails inevitable uncertainties. The Juba Agreement, however, reinforces the sense that previous structures and arrangements will be overturned with an attendant reshaping of the relationships between the Government and armed groups, as well as among ethnic communities and other relevant constituencies. The accommodation of representatives of armed groups in the Sovereign Council and other governing bodies will affect the national transition process, which may prompt further readjustments in the implementation of the Constitutional Declaration and the milestones enshrined in it. While Darfur presents distinct security and protection challenges, these issues need to be considered in conjunction with the overall progress in the country and the overall support of the United Nations system and the African Union. Considering the urgent and multifaceted challenges facing the transitional Government as it responds to the continued economic crisis, readjusts the timeline, completes the remaining transitional tasks and undertakes life-saving efforts in areas affected by prolonged conflicts, it is imperative that international partners seize the opportunity and support the Government in implementing the national plan for the protection of civilians and the Juba Agreement.

51. We should also acknowledge the multiplicity of challenges that continue to face the country, which invariably have a negative impact on its overall security. In that connection, it is particularly important that the international community assist the Sudan with its economic recovery in order to contribute towards the overall stabilization of the political and security situation in the country.

52. In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to the Joint Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for UNAMID, Jeremiah Mamabolo, and to the leadership and all the personnel of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and the humanitarian partners who continue to work committedly on the transition to the exit of the Operation from Darfur.
