

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	732
Land:	Sudan
Kilde:	UN Security Council
Titel:	Situation in the Sudan pursuant to Security Council resolution 2715 (2023). Report of the Secretary-General
Udgivet:	29. februar 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	6. juni 2024



Security Council

Distr.: General
29 February 2024

Original: English

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2715 (2023), by which the Council decided to terminate the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and requested the Secretary-General to provide a written report in 90 days on efforts by the United Nations to support the Sudan on its path towards peace and stability. The present report covers developments in the Sudan from 1 December 2023 to 20 February 2024 and provides an update on the work of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and on the drawdown of UNITAMS and the transfer of feasible tasks to the United Nations country team.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. The fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces intensified and continued to expand, affecting new areas of the Sudan during the reporting period. The Sudanese Armed Forces remained largely in control of eastern and northern States, whereas the Rapid Support Forces expanded into Al-Gazira State, capturing Wad Madani. In response, the Sudanese Armed Forces, their supporters and civilians called for popular mobilization in several States. The Rapid Support Forces also remained in control of most of Khartoum and Darfur. The Sudanese Armed Forces launched counter-offensives in parts of Khartoum and expanded its aerial bombardments in several parts of the Sudan.

3. Regional and international partners and Member States continued their efforts to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict. On 9 December 2023, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) convened an extraordinary summit of Heads of State and Government in Djibouti on the situation in the Sudan, attended by, inter alia, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, the United States of America Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and representatives of the European Union and Saudi Arabia. The Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed



Forces, General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, attended the summit. A telephone conversation also took place between several IGAD Heads of State and Government and the head of the Rapid Support Forces, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. In the final communiqué of the summit, the Heads of State and Government stated that IGAD had decided to establish a framework comprising “respected diplomats and political interlocutors” to undertake mediation efforts and tasked the IGAD Executive Secretary to present a candidate or candidates as Special Envoy or Envoys to coordinate and lead IGAD mediation efforts. They also indicated that Generals Al-Burhan and Dagalo had accepted a proposal for a face-to-face meeting with the facilitation of IGAD. The United Nations, the European Union and the United States, as well as some Sudanese civilian actors, welcomed the outcomes of the summit.

4. On 10 December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan issued a statement indicating that the observations and reservations it had expressed on a draft of the IGAD communiqué had not been included and that the Sudan, therefore, did not consider the communiqué to represent the outcomes of the summit. Among those observations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that General Al-Burhan had conditioned the meeting with General Dagalo on the latter accepting a permanent ceasefire and on the Rapid Support Forces leaving Khartoum and assembling their forces in areas outside the capital. The Sudanese authorities also highlighted the imperative for IGAD to consult with the Government of the Sudan and obtain its approval for any efforts to resolve the crisis. Meanwhile, on 10 December, the Rapid Support Forces welcomed the outcomes of the IGAD summit, indicating that General Dagalo had agreed, in principle, to a meeting with General Al-Burhan, provided that General Al-Burhan attended in his capacity as Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces rather than as Chairperson of the Sovereign Council.

5. From 17 to 20 December, a civilian coalition, led by the former Prime Minister, Abdallah Hamdok, known as the Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces or by the Arabic acronym Taqaddum, held a leadership meeting in Nairobi. The meeting concluded with a communiqué in which support was expressed for the outcomes of the 9 December IGAD summit. It was also stated that Taqaddum would contact the leadership of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to request meetings to urge the protection of civilians, humanitarian aid delivery, a return to negotiations through the Jeddah platform and a direct meeting between their commanders to achieve an unconditional ceasefire. Women constituted approximately one quarter of the participants in the meeting. On 25 December, Taqaddum sent letters to Generals Al-Burhan and Dagalo requesting meetings to discuss ending the war. Other civilian and military groups, including Juba Peace Agreement signatories, leaders from eastern Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid al-Nur faction, also launched initiatives to end the war and launch a political process.

6. On 27 December, General Dagalo commenced his first public regional tour since the conflict erupted, with a visit to Uganda, followed by Ethiopia (28 December 2023), Djibouti (31 December), Kenya (3 January 2024), South Africa (4 January) and Rwanda (5 January). During those visits, he met with the respective Heads of State or Government. On 7 January, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan issued a statement denouncing General Dagalo’s regional tour, accusing the Rapid Support Forces of failing to honour the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan and reiterating that the Rapid Support Forces must demonstrate a commitment to the Declaration by evacuating citizens’ homes and civilian objects as a prerequisite for starting new talks.

7. On 1 January, General Dagalo met with the Taqaddum leadership in Addis Ababa. The following day, Mr. Hamdok and General Dagalo signed a joint “Addis Ababa Declaration”, according to which the Rapid Support Forces agreed to engage in an unconditional cessation of hostilities through direct negotiations with the

Sudanese Armed Forces, release 451 Sudanese Armed Forces prisoners of war and facilitate access and the return of citizens in areas controlled by the Rapid Support Forces. In a 5 January speech, General Al-Burhan denounced Taqaddum for signing a declaration with the Rapid Support Forces but stated that he welcomed dialogue with political forces, calling on Taqaddum to travel to Port Sudan to meet. On 15 January, the Deputy Chairperson of the Sovereign Council, Malik Agar, reiterated the Government of the Sudan's openness to meeting with Taqaddum, as it meets with all Sudanese political components. Taqaddum also extended invitations for meetings to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Al-Hilu faction and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLA/AW) faction, which both accepted.

8. On 13 January, the Government of the Sudan and the Rapid Support Forces issued statements indicating they had received an invitation from IGAD to attend the summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled for 18 January in Uganda. The former declined the invitation, citing non-implementation of the outcomes of the previous summit and cancellation of a face-to-face meeting between Generals Al-Burhan and Dagalo. General Dagalo accepted the invitation and issued a statement on 16 January outlining his vision for the Sudan and principles for negotiations, including that the negotiations must address comprehensively the future of the Sudan, a transition to democracy through elections and a "new unified military tasked solely with the country's defence and devoid of involvement in politics and the economy".

9. On 17 January, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed an African Union High-Level Panel on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Sudan. The Panel, consisting of Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe and Francisco Madeira, was expected to work with Sudanese stakeholders to "ensure an all-inclusive process towards the swift restoration of peace, constitutional order and stability in the Sudan".

10. On 18 January, the IGAD Heads of State and Government convened an extraordinary summit in Uganda attended by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, representatives of the League of Arab States and representatives of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. In the summit communiqué, attendees recalled the "commitment by the parties to the conflict for a face-to-face meeting within 14 days" and called upon the parties "to meet within two weeks". They directed the IGAD secretariat, in coordination with the African Union Commission, to revise the road map that had been adopted by IGAD on 12 June 2023. The IGAD Heads of State and Government met with General Dagalo on the sidelines of the summit and separately with former Prime Minister Hamdok, as leader of Taqaddum. On 16 January, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan stated that IGAD had been informed of the decision by the Sudan to "freeze interactions" with IGAD, stating that the IGAD summit had included an agenda item on the Sudan without consulting the Government of the Sudan, and protesting against the invitation extended to General Dagalo. On 20 January, the Ministry issued another statement announcing that the Government of the Sudan had decided to "freeze its membership" of IGAD in response to the organization's "disregard" for the decision by the Sudan conveyed on 16 January and for the inclusion of the agenda item on the Sudan.

11. On the margins of the African Union summit held from 15 to 18 February 2024, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General met with the newly appointed African Union High-Level Panel on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Sudan and underlined the need for coherent and coordinated mediation efforts among existing mechanisms. He stressed the importance of joining efforts and developing concrete proposals that would alleviate the suffering of the people of the Sudan until an agreement on a cessation of hostilities takes effect. He also engaged with Member States from the

neighbouring countries of the Sudan, during which he reiterated the need for coordinated mediation efforts. Although the Sudan was not a standalone item on the agenda of the Summit, developments in the Sudan were included in the overall peace and security report in Africa submitted by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

12. On 19 February, press reports indicated that the Deputy Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, General Shams Al-Din Kabbashi, and the Deputy Leader of the Rapid Support Forces, Abdulrahim Hamdan Dagalo, had reached a draft agreement entitled “Document on the principles and basis for a comprehensive solution to the Sudanese crisis” in Bahrain in January. The draft agreement reportedly envisioned, inter alia: a civilian, democratic, federal system of governance keeping equal distance from all religions; the establishment of a national professional army; the dismantling of the dissolved National Congress Party regime; and the extradition of International Criminal Court indictees. Subsequently, however, in a speech on 15 February, General Kabbashi stated that the Sudanese Armed Forces would continue to fight until the Rapid Support Forces had vacated civilian properties. Similarly, General Burhan affirmed on 17 February that the Sudanese Armed Forces would not negotiate until the Rapid Support Forces left Khartoum and Al-Gazira State. On 11 February, General Dagalo stated that the Rapid Support Forces would continue to fight following the breakdown of the Bahrain talks.

B. Security situation

13. During the reporting period, heavy fighting and air strikes continued in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri, with the clashes concentrated around strategic locations, namely, the Armoured Corps, the Signal Corps, the Engineers Corps, the Sudanese Armed Forces General Command, the Sudanese Armed Forces Airbase in Wadi Seidna, and the area of Jabal Aulia. On 8 and 9 January, clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces intensified in Omdurman when the Sudanese Armed Forces attempted to advance towards the south and west. On 8 January, the Sudanese Armed Forces claimed to have taken control of areas in Karari and Old Omdurman. On 11 January, at least 10 civilians were killed and two injured as a result of bombings and exchange of artillery shelling in the areas of al-Salamah and Sharg al-Nile. In February, the confrontations intensified in Omdurman near the Engineering Corps as the warring parties reportedly deployed more troops to the area. Sudanese Armed Forces sources reported the breaking of the siege on the Engineering Corps on 17 February; however, this was denied by the Rapid Support Forces.

14. In a significant military development, on 18 December, the Rapid Support Forces gained control of Wad Madani in Al-Gazira State, including of the Hantub bridge and the Sudanese Armed Forces base in the area. The Rapid Support Forces also consolidated their control over other parts of Al-Gazira State, including Rufaa and nearby villages, and established checkpoints along the Wad Madani-Sennar road. On 19 December, the Sudanese Armed Forces issued a statement confirming that its First Infantry Division had withdrawn from Wad Madani and announced an internal investigation into the circumstances that had led to the withdrawal.

15. The takeover of Wad Madani prompted a sharp increase in calls by the Sudanese Armed Forces, their political allies, community and religious leaders for civilians to be armed, and led to popular mobilization activities in various States, including River Nile, Northern, Sennar, Kassala and Gedaref States. On 27 December, authorities in Kassala reportedly armed local young people to support the Sudanese Armed Forces against possible attacks by Rapid Support Forces. On 30 December, the Governor of River Nile State reportedly announced his “readiness to arm all those capable of

carrying weapons” to defend civilians against possible Rapid Support Forces advances. In Gedaref State, reports indicated that the Sudanese Armed Forces had instructed its Military Intelligence and the General Intelligence Service to distribute weapons to civilians. On 30 December, a movement called the “Popular Armed Resistance” in Al-Gazira State announced its establishment to defend the State against attacks by the Rapid Support Forces. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reviewed multiple video clips purporting to show the recruitment of civilians, including children. On 5 January, General Al-Burhan, in a speech addressing soldiers in Jebeit, Red Sea State, vowed to facilitate the arming of civilians to continue the battle against the Rapid Support Forces. He welcomed the establishment of the Popular Armed Resistance and vowed to arm the movement, under Sudanese Armed Forces supervision. On 7 January, a Rapid Support Forces advisor reportedly announced that the Rapid Support Forces would consider any armed civilian who joined the Sudanese Armed Forces as a “legitimate military target”. In late January, armed movements, including some signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, announced the establishment of training camps in Eastern Sudan and Eritrea. On 20 and 21 February, General Burhan visited training camps of the Sudan Liberation Army Tambour faction in Gedaref and the Justice and Equality Movement in Kassala, respectively, praising the support of those armed movements for the Sudanese Armed Forces.

16. In anticipation of further advances by the Rapid Support Forces toward the northern and eastern States, between 17 and 19 December, authorities in the States of Gedaref, Sennar, White Nile and River Nile – which neighbour Al-Gazira State – declared a state of emergency with a curfew. In Sennar State, on 23 and 26 December, the Sudanese Armed Forces launched air strikes on Rapid Support Forces positions; clashes between the warring parties occurred again on 28 December and continued between 8 and 15 January. Clashes were also reported in White Nile State. After two days of fighting, the Rapid Support Forces reportedly gained control over the town of Qutaynah on 21 December. Further clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces were reported in the Ad Doueim area on 23 and 25 December, and in the Na’ima area on 9 January. On 12 January, heavy deployment of Rapid Support Forces was seen in Al Qutayna.

17. In Darfur, clashes took place in multiple locations. On 3 December, the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid al-Nur faction claimed to have taken control of the Rapid Support Forces base in the town of Deribat, South Darfur. Exchanges of gunfire between the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid al-Nur faction and the Rapid Support Forces were also reported on 11 December in the locality of Tawila in North Darfur and resulted in casualties on both sides. On 16 December, heavy shootings took place between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in El Fasher, reportedly killing two Rapid Support Forces personnel and one member of the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi faction and injuring six civilians from the Abu Shouk internally displaced persons camp. The Sudanese Armed Forces, with reported support from the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid al-Nur faction, clashed with the Rapid Support Forces on 6 January in Eid El Nabak village in North Darfur. Clashes between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces in El Fasher, North Darfur, were also reported on 9 January following an alleged attempt by the Rapid Support Forces to enter the village. On 14, 17 and 29 December and 10 January, the Sudanese Armed Forces carried out air strikes targeting Rapid Support Forces positions in the southern and northern parts of Nyala in South Darfur, which resulted in 14 civilians killed and 23 others injured. From 16 to 18 January, the Sudanese Armed Forces also struck Rapid Support Forces locations in El Geneina airport, West Darfur; El Zurrug, North Darfur and in Khor Ramlah, west of Nertiti in Central Darfur. According to the Rapid Support Forces, 12 civilians were killed in the El Zurrug attack. Another air strike targeted a Rapid Support Forces gold mining site

in the Songo mining area near the Central African Republic and South Sudan border (south-west of Nyala) on 22 January.

18. El Obeid in North Kordofan remained under the control of the Sudanese Armed Forces, with both warring parties attempting to control supply routes connecting Omdurman, Darfur and Kordofan. Intensified clashes occurred between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in and around El Obeid on several days between 9 and 28 December. On 24 December, the Rapid Support Forces attacked a Sudanese Armed Forces camp in El Obeid, which resulted in several civilian deaths and injuries. The attack was reportedly repelled by the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Central Reserve Police. On 26 December, the Sudanese Armed Forces claimed to have taken control of a Rapid Support Forces base in the western part of El Obeid.

19. In River Nile State, on 7 December, the Rapid Support Forces attacked a checkpoint at the village of Umm Shadidah near the border between River Nile State and Kassala State, to which the Sudanese Armed Forces responded by bombing Rapid Support Forces positions. On 1 and 5 January, the Sudanese Armed Forces launched air strikes against Rapid Support Forces positions near the Jabal Gari area, resulting in several civilian deaths and injuries. Moreover, arrests of several individuals suspected by security personnel to be affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces were reported in various towns of River Nile State. On 20 January, a passenger bus travelling from Tambul, Al-Gazira State, to Shendi, River Nile State, hit what appeared to be a landmine, causing the deaths of 10 passengers and injuring several people.

20. In South Kordofan State, the situation remained tense following reports of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction having gained control of the town of Dilling on 8 January. On 10 January, the Rapid Support Forces attacked the Sudanese Armed Forces base in Dilling but were reportedly pushed back by the Sudanese Armed Forces and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction. On 3 and 5 December, Hawazma community members affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces exchanged gunfire with Nuba community members affiliated with the SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction in the village of Tokma, allegedly following the arrest of a Hawazma community member by the SPLM-N Al-Hilu faction. The incident resulted in the deaths of two civilians and civilians fleeing the area. On 11 December, Hawazma and Nuba community members exchanged gunfire in the town of Dibibat. On 14 February, the SPLM-N Al-Hilu faction took control of Habila after clashes with the Rapid Support Forces, which later attacked the villages of Zaltia, Tungul and Gardud. Twenty-four civilians were reportedly killed and 11 others were injured. In West Kordofan, the Rapid Support Forces attacked the Sudanese Armed Forces 22nd Infantry Division in Babanusah between 24 and 28 January, and on 12 and 13 February. Reportedly, the Sudanese Armed Forces continued an aerial bombardment of the Rapid Support Forces in the area and were able to push back the offensives. Several combatants from both sides were killed and injured.

21. During the reporting period, 32 security incidents affecting personnel of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations were reported. Most of the incidents occurred in Khartoum, including an attack on an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) convoy evacuating civilians, which resulted in several civilian casualties and three ICRC staff members being injured. Increased incidents of criminality and the targeting of United Nations staff, premises and civilians were reported from Wad Madani and nearby towns under the control of the Rapid Support Forces, resulting in the deaths of at least 450 civilians between 8 December and 22 February.

C. Human rights, rule of law and protection situation

22. The human rights and protection situation continued to deteriorate throughout the Sudan, marked by systematic violations and abuses of human rights, and breaches of international humanitarian law, with air strikes, aerial bombardments, heavy artillery and indiscriminate shelling targeting civilians. Widespread lootings, arbitrary arrests, torture, the recruitment of children and detentions, alongside an increased crackdown on civic space, continued throughout the reporting period. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), since the start of the conflict, at least 12,260 people had been killed because of the fighting as at 8 December and more than 33,000 others injured. That includes more than 7,000 civilians killed as at 6 December, with women and children constituting a significant portion of civilian casualties. Civilians were killed in their homes, in public facilities and on the streets while engaging in civilian activities. On several occasions, attacks targeted a military site located near a civilian neighbourhood. The vast majority of incidents involving the killing of civilians took place in neighbourhoods located near the presidential palace and the General Command, in the vicinity of the Armoured Corps, and in various neighbourhoods in the south and east of Khartoum. Similar incidents were reported in Bahri and Omdurman, in particular in the vicinity of the Shambat bridge, the Signal Corps, the Engineers Corps and the Wadi Seidna military base. The Sudanese Armed Forces conducted air strikes and artillery shelling against Rapid Support Forces positions in Darfur, West Kordofan and North Kordofan, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties. Most of the aerial strikes were carried out by the Sudanese Armed Forces, while artillery shells were fired by both parties, with the Rapid Support Forces firing the highest number. In most incidents, no prior warning was given to civilians. Camps for internally displaced persons in West Darfur, South Darfur and Central Darfur were also attacked.

23. In December, there was a marked increase in incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention, in particular by the Government's General Intelligence Service and the Sudanese Armed Forces' Military Intelligence. In Gedaref, Kassala and Port Sudan, several incidents were reported of security personnel arresting civilians suspected of being affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces. Most of the arrests targeted members of political parties, human rights defenders, lawyers, members of resistance committees, volunteers supporting emergency services, civilians opposed to the war and people perceived as supporters of the Rapid Support Forces. Some of the arrests appear to have been ethnically motivated. In most cases, individuals were arrested without either a warrant or being informed of their legal rights, and some were allegedly ill-treated in detention. Arrests increased significantly during the second half of December, in the context of the takeover of Al-Gazira State by the Rapid Support Forces. On 16 December, the Sudanese Armed Forces spokesperson was quoted in the media as stating that 50 people had been detained by the authorities in Wad Madani owing to their alleged collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces. The reporting period also witnessed an increase in hate speech in River Nile, Northern and White Nile States and in the east of the country. On 29 December, the Governor of River Nile State reportedly gave an ultimatum to individuals perceived to be supporters of the Rapid Support Forces or the Forces of Freedom and Change to leave the State within two days. The warring parties also imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement, hindering the ability of civilians to seek safety and leading to siege-like conditions in areas.

24. The expanding hostilities also considerably shrank the space for civil society, peaceful assembly and freedom of association. On 22 January, the spokesperson of the Government of the Sudan announced that the Federal Minister of Governance had decided to dissolve all change and service committees in all States of the Sudan,

including resistance committees, emergency rooms and neighbourhood committees. The directive imposed the freezing of the committees' bank accounts and inventory of assets and entails the formation of alternative steering committees. The decision included the endorsement of previous decisions taken by governors against change and service committees in some States, including in North Kordofan (18 January), North Darfur (23 January), Gedaref, Red Sea, Northern, River Nile, Al-Gazira, Kassala, Sennar, White Nile and Khartoum States.

25. During the reporting period, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office documented 88 incidents of killings of civilians, dozens of incidents resulting in injuries, recorded cases of sexual violence affecting 118 women and girls, 135 cases of arbitrary arrests and detention, 130 cases of enforced disappearances and dozens of cases of looting and the destruction of civilian properties, including three incidents of attacks on medical facilities, an increase compared with the previous reporting period.

26. As at 7 February, OHCHR had received credible reports of 60 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, involving at least 120 victims (100 women, 1 man, 18 girls and 1 boy). In total, 53 of those incidents included rape, including 29 incidents of gang rape. The remaining cases included attempted rape (4 cases) and incidents of other forms of sexual violence (3 cases), including one allegedly involving abduction and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The highest number of such incidents were recorded in the States of Khartoum (27 incidents), followed by South Darfur (10 incidents), North Darfur (10 incidents), Central Darfur (4 incidents), West Darfur (2 incidents), North Kordofan (1 incident), West Kordofan (1 incident), Red Sea (1 incident), Kassala (1) and on the road in unspecified States (2 incidents).

27. The responsibility for 49 incidents (81 per cent) was attributed, by victims, to men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms and armed men affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces, and the responsibility for 2 incidents was attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces. The responsibility for the remaining incidents was attributed to unknown men. The 60 credible reports of conflict-related sexual violence are most likely not an accurate reflection of the reality, owing to an inability for most victims to report cases because of a lack of confidence in police and judicial institutions and social stigma associated with sexual violence. The Sudanese unit for combating violence against women and children noted that the documented number of cases only accounted for a small fraction of the actual cases of gender-based violence.

28. During the period from 1 December to 20 February, the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 115 violations against 102 children (43 boys, 37 girls, 22 sex unknown). Of those, six children experienced multiple violations (one boy was recruited and maimed, four girls were affected by sexual violence and abduction, one girl experienced maiming and sexual violence). The violations occurred in the five Darfur States and in Al-Gazira, Khartoum, North Kordofan, Red Sea, West Kordofan and White Nile States. Violations against children included killing (36), maiming (38), attacks on hospitals (5), attacks on schools (3), cases of abduction (12), sexual violence (6) and recruitment and use (10).

29. The Sudan continued to witness the breakdown of the rule of law. Even in areas less affected by the conflict, the absence of justice officials, the failure of the State to pay officials and the targeted destruction and looting of rule-of-law infrastructure, including police stations, courts and prisons, deepened the vacuum in the justice system and resulted in impunity for widespread violations.

30. Mechanisms established by the conflict parties with the stated intention of investigating and addressing conflict-related crimes failed to deliver. Amid increasing

risk of the politicization of rule of law institutions, Sudanese lawyers, inside and outside the country, continued to engage in defence of the rule of law, including by supporting human rights defenders and documenting violations, despite being subjected to harassment, arrest, detention and violence.

D. Socioeconomic situation

31. The protracted conflict has debilitated the economy of the Sudan, which is estimated to have contracted by more than 18 per cent in 2023, the highest in the world. The inflation rate is estimated to have increased by 256.2 per cent in 2023, the third highest in the world. Estimated at 46 per cent, the Sudan has the highest unemployment rate in the world, according to the International Monetary Fund.

32. The 2023 to 2024 agricultural output is expected to be below average owing to insecurity and a lack of access by farmers to fields, as well as agricultural input shortages, including reduced access to finance, the widespread shortage and high cost of inputs such as labour and fuel, and unfavourable weather forecasts. Food insecurity projections from October 2023 to February 2024 estimate that 17.7 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity – an 18 per cent increase from original forecasts and the highest number recorded during the country's harvest season.

33. The ramifications of physical infrastructure destruction and looting in commercial and service sectors, and overall business activity disruptions, are having far-reaching impacts on economic activity. According to the Sudanese Chamber of Commerce, in the months after the war started, the average value of Sudanese exports was \$32 million per month, compared with an average export value of \$350 million per month during 2022, a decline of more than 90 per cent. The widespread shelling by both parties caused the major destruction of civilian infrastructure necessary for basic services.

34. According to Government sources, there has been an estimated 70 per cent decline in government revenues, and federal employees are receiving 60 per cent of their pre-war salaries. Government expenditures are believed to have increased by about 12 per cent above the budgeted allocations. As a result, the budget deficit is expected to have widened substantially in 2023, with its monetization leading to increased inflation.

35. Food prices have increased significantly since the outbreak of the conflict. Below-average production of wheat and the swift depreciation of the Sudanese currency resulted in an increase in wheat flour prices, which are now 103 per cent higher than before the start of the conflict. The price of sorghum, groundnuts and goats has increased by 45, 75 and 81 per cent, respectively. The price of the local food basket has increased by 83 per cent since the first quarter of 2023.

E. Humanitarian situation

36. Since the outbreak of the conflict in April 2023, the situation in the Sudan has become the largest displacement crisis in the world, with 7.6 million people, including 3.5 million children, displaced during that time frame within and outside of the country. This constitutes about 15 per cent of the population and includes 6.1 million people displaced in 6,547 locations across the country's 18 States and about 1.6 million people who have sought refuge in the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

37. The expansion of the clashes between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces to Al-Gazira State on 15 December affected an estimated

510,000 people, of whom about 275,800 people – or 54 per cent – were subjected to first-time displacement, while about 234,000 people – 46 per cent – had previously sought refuge in Al-Gazira State from Khartoum State and experienced secondary displacement. Prior to the eruption of those clashes, an estimated 525,000 displaced people had sought refuge in Al-Gazira State.

38. The ongoing conflict– in particular in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan States – continued to exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation. Humanitarian needs across the Sudan are at a record high, with 24.8 million people, or every second person, needing humanitarian assistance in 2024. This was 9 million more than in 2023. Millions of people lack access to essential goods and services, such as food, water, shelter, electricity, education, health care and nutrition.

39. The Sudan is facing a rapidly deepening hunger crisis, with nearly 18 million people facing acute hunger during the harvest season. Of that number, nearly 5 million people are in emergency levels of hunger (level 4 of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification). That is double the number of people recorded at the same time last year and the highest number ever recorded in the country during the harvest season, which typically sees the lowest levels of hunger. There is an extremely concerning risk that a hunger catastrophe will unfold by this year's lean season, in May, as aid agencies face challenges to expand and maintain access to people who are experiencing the highest levels of hunger, in particular those trapped in conflict hotspots. Currently, only 1 in 10 people in emergency levels of hunger – only one step away from famine-like conditions – can be reached by aid agencies. There are confirmed reports of deaths due to malnutrition in Zamzam camp near El Fasher, and fears that Sudanese civilians are dying in other locations owing to lack of access to humanitarian assistance caused by security and bureaucratic impediments and insufficient financial resources.

40. From 1 December 2023 to 17 January 2024, 14 incidents affecting humanitarian operations were reported, of which 35.7 per cent were the result of violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities; 28.6 per cent were the result of operational interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities; and 35.7 per cent constituted bureaucratic impediments. There were several reported cases of looting of humanitarian assets. At least 20 humanitarian workers have been killed and 33 injured since the start of the conflict.

41. WHO reported increased attacks on health-care facilities, with 62 incidents leading to 38 deaths and 45 injuries reported between 15 April 2023 and 17 January 2024. That includes six attacks on health-care facilities, resulting in 27 deaths between 1 October 2023 and 17 January 2024. More than 70 per cent of hospitals in the conflict-afflicted States are no longer functional. A stockpile of pharmaceutical supplies set up in Al-Gazira State as a regional warehouse became inaccessible when the conflict spread to there in mid-December. The stockpile would have been sufficient for six months for the whole of the Sudan. The inability to gain access to those stocks leaves hundreds of thousands of patients, especially those with chronic and incurable diseases, at risk of further harm if supplies are not distributed to targeted hospitals and health centres.

42. Outbreaks of diseases that had been under control before the conflict – including cholera, dengue fever, malaria and measles – were on the rise, owing mainly to the disruption of public health and water and sanitation services. More than 10,400 suspected cholera cases, including 292 associated deaths, had been reported as at 31 January 2024 in 11 States. This represented an increase of about 17.3 per cent compared with the number of cases reported at 31 December 2023. The month of December witnessed a 77.2 per cent increase in cholera cases. In December, oral

cholera vaccination campaigns were carried out in Gedaref and Al-Gazira States, with about 2.2 million people vaccinated.

43. Despite a multitude of challenges, including limited access, humanitarian workers continued to respond to the immense needs. Between 15 April and 31 December 2023, 167 humanitarian partners provided 7 million people across the Sudan with life-saving assistance, and 5.7 million people received agricultural and livelihoods support. Cross-border mechanisms remained essential for scaling up aid delivery and reaching more people in need of humanitarian assistance. From 1 December to 17 January, 102 trucks carrying 5,623 tons of assistance were delivered through a cross-border aid delivery mechanism from Chad. The cross-border operation was coordinated with all parties involved, to facilitate the operation effectively. In the light of the growing humanitarian needs and the inability of cross-line operations to effectively reach the vulnerable population owing to fighting and other challenges, the scale-up of cross-border assistance in coordination with all parties will be critical for the United Nations to provide life-saving assistance to the malnourished and those with increased vulnerability. Since mid-December, cross-line operations from the eastern part of Chad to Khartoum, Kordofan and Darfur States had been on hold following the escalation of fighting in the Kordofan region, and in Al-Gazira, Sennar, River Nile and Khartoum States, as well as ongoing bureaucratic and administrative impediments. As a result, the planned movement of 132 trucks with 4,277 tons of supplies in Khartoum, Kordofan and Darfur States was cancelled. Furthermore, 35 trucks loaded with 1,500 tons of relief items heading to Kordofan and Darfur States had been stranded in North Kordofan State for more than five weeks, owing to the clashes and insecurity. Another 31 trucks returning from delivering food assistance in the Kordofan States had been stranded in North Kordofan State since October.

44. In addition to access constraints, funding represents a continued challenge for humanitarian operations. The 2023 Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan received 43 per cent of the \$2.6 billion required to meet the needs of 18.1 million people. The 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, in which \$2.7 billion are requested, is 3 per cent funded as at 31 January 2024.

F. Work of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan

45. Following his appointment in November 2023, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra, commenced his engagement to support existing peace initiatives and dialogue processes aimed at resolving the conflict. During an initial visit to the Sudan and the region, the Personal Envoy engaged with the leaders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces with the aim of building confidence between them and moving towards mutually acceptable solutions. The Personal Envoy also consulted with other Sudanese stakeholders, including civilian and military political actors and representatives from civil society organizations, women and youth groups. He also engaged with regional leaders, counterparts from the African Union, IGAD and the League of Arab States, as well as capitals of Member States, including in Europe, the Gulf, the United States and some States neighbouring the Sudan. In his engagements, he underlined the need for a unified, coherent international mediation process that builds on existing efforts and harnesses the resources and approaches of the concerned organizations to help the Sudanese end the war.

III. Implementation of resolution 2715 (2023), including updates on the drawdown of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and the transfer of feasible tasks to the United Nations country team

46. Immediately following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2715 (2023), UNITAMS initiated drawdown and transition planning for the Mission. The aim of the transition planning was to safeguard and consolidate the work undertaken jointly as an integrated United Nations presence in the Sudan during the lifespan of the Mission's mandate and identify tasks and knowledge that could be transferred from UNITAMS to relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and to the Personal Envoy and other partners. The exercise also aimed to identify the capacity and resource gaps resulting from the departure of the Mission and establish requisite financial arrangements that would enable the United Nations system in the Sudan to continue some of the tasks and programmatic activities previously carried out by UNITAMS. The transition process worked to ensure continued United Nations engagement in the areas of human rights, civilian protection, peacebuilding, women, children, peace and security and other programmatic activities.

47. UNITAMS and the United Nations country team established a coordination mechanism under the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator to steer the transition planning process. Subsequently, three priority areas were identified for the transition, namely: (a) conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding; (b) protection of civilians, human rights and the rule of law; and (c) women, peace and security and young people. Those priority areas aligned with the updated United Nations common approach in the Sudan, which was jointly developed by UNITAMS and the United Nations country team to complement the existing United Nations Development Assistance Framework in effect until 31 December 2024. As such, the outcomes of the transition planning will fit within the existing planning framework of the United Nations country team.

48. Three thematic workshops aligned with the priority areas were held in January with technical-level experts from the Mission and the United Nations country team, followed by seven in-depth sessions on cross-cutting issues. Bilateral consultations continued with United Nations agencies and national and international partners. Those consultations resulted in the finalization of the transition plan. The recommendations included ensuring the following: continued United Nations support to peacebuilding and resilience capacities and programmes that support the consolidation of peace, in particular at the local level; dedicated capacity around analysis to ensure that United Nations operations are conflict-sensitive and respond to the fluid operating environment; capacity to address protection issues stemming from grave violations against children in conflict and conflict-related sexual violence; and that the United Nations continue to engage with a range of actors to ensure women's participation in political processes and peace talks.

49. In addition to the transition planning process, the Mission continued to provide situational awareness and early warning to support the transition process, fulfil the 90-day reporting requirement to the Security Council and ensure the orderly withdrawal of the Mission from the Sudan. Planning support was also provided to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations country team. UNITAMS also engaged intensively with the Personal Envoy to transfer its analysis, institutional memory and contacts.

50. UNITAMS established a road map for the drawdown of staff, including a staff management group as per the Secretary-General's Administrative Instruction on

downsizing or restructuring resulting in the termination of appointments (ST/AI/2023/1). That process informed the finalization of the staff retention and drawdown plan, and termination notifications for most staff were subsequently issued. The majority of the Mission's staff were to be separated by 29 February 2024. A total of 64 positions had been identified for the liquidation team starting on 1 March and ending on 31 August 2024. In that context, 15 new entry visas were approved for those UNITAMS staff who were required to travel to the Sudan to support the Mission's drawdown and liquidation.

51. UNITAMS had been engaged in a comprehensive assessment of the status of its assets, collaborating closely with the Department of Operational Support for satellite imagery of the affected locations to ascertain the extent of the damages and the resultant losses incurred by the Organization, which include transport, infrastructure, information technology equipment and general inventory for mission sustenance. Owing to the security situation, UNITAMS has been unable to gain access to any of its locations to assess the conditions and extent of the damages. UNITAMS issued notes verbales to the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform the Government of the looted properties and the locations that are inaccessible to the Mission. The Government was reminded of its responsibility to ensure the safety and security of UNITAMS premises and equipment as stipulated in the status-of-mission agreement.

52. One of the main concerns for the Mission pertains to environmental considerations, wherein some of the Mission's assets may be categorized as a potential environmental hazard when not disposed of in a safe and responsible manner. Despite the Mission's efforts to implement the necessary environmental protection protocols and measures, the prevailing circumstances impede the Mission's ability to fulfil its environmental commitments prior to the completion of its drawdown and liquidation period.

53. In parallel, UNITAMS had terminated 18 leases in nine locations as at 13 January. The Mission presently holds leases on two properties utilized for accommodation and vehicle parking. The contractual agreements governing those premises are anticipated to conclude by 31 May.

54. UNITAMS also prioritized archiving its records to ensure that the institutional memory gained over the Mission's lifespan is preserved in accordance with the established archiving and record management procedures. A records and archives closure plan was established to ensure the effective management of paper and digital records during the transition and liquidation period. The process was divided into three phases, the first of which – planning – had been completed. The retention and disposal phase was ongoing and would be followed by the final phase – transfer of records.

Mine action

55. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2715 (2023), the National Mine Action Authority of the Government of the Sudan had requested that the United Nations continue to provide mine action support after the drawdown of UNITAMS. On that basis, the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations decided to remain in the Sudan to continue mine action activities in support of the Sudanese people and the United Nations and humanitarian actors in their delivery of humanitarian assistance. Explosive remnants of war, in the form of unexploded ordnance, remain a serious concern for humanitarian operations and threaten the lives and livelihoods of civilians.

Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee

56. Following the termination of the UNITAMS mandate on 3 December, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee officially ceased its engagement with the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement and closed its national offices throughout Darfur. The United Nations component of the Committee continued to provide analysis and report on the security situation in relation to military activities. Concurrently, the Committee completed the archival process for standard operating procedures, information and records pertaining to ceasefire violations.

IV. Observations

57. The devastating conflict in the Sudan started almost a year ago and shows no sign of relenting. Its protracted nature is now exacerbated by the continued escalation and proliferation of hostilities, a deepening humanitarian crisis and the country's social fabric being torn apart. Ethnic divisions, persistent human rights violations and abuses, and the erosion of civic space continue unabated. The war is destroying the lives of Sudanese men, women and children, violating their basic rights and depriving them of the future they deserve. The fighting must stop, and peace talks must begin.

58. The expansion of hostilities into new areas has driven a significant increase in the already massive humanitarian needs. The parties to the conflict must ensure the protection of civilians in all circumstances. Attacks on essential civilian infrastructure must stop. The warring parties must guarantee unhindered access for humanitarian personnel and supplies. The desperation of the Sudanese affected by the war is growing, and humanitarian needs are immense. Given the continued fighting and other impediments hindering the flow of cross-line assistance, cross-border humanitarian assistance remains essential. I urge the Government of the Sudan and its neighbouring States to continue to facilitate the flow of cross-border humanitarian assistance, and to expand it, so that desperate civilians throughout the Sudan can be reached with critical life-saving assistance. I also call on the international community to scale up and sustain its provision of aid so that the humanitarian response can reach more people in desperate need.

59. The time has come for a revitalized international effort that reinforces complementarity, inclusivity and coherence in the quest for a resolution to the crisis in the Sudan. My Personal Envoy will continue to work with regional and multilateral partners, including the African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States and key Member States, towards swiftly reaching an agreement on a cessation of hostilities and a lasting political solution. A harmonized and collective multilateral approach remains essential to achieving that goal. In addition to the efforts of regional organizations, I call on those Member States with leverage on the warring parties to play a meaningful role in bringing them back to the negotiating table.

60. I welcome the efforts of IGAD, under the stewardship of Djibouti, to make progress in mediation efforts by convening summits of Heads of State and Government in Djibouti in December and in Uganda in January. I also welcome the initiative of the African Union Commission Chairperson to appoint three eminent personalities as members of the African Union High-Level Panel on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Sudan. The United Nations will continue to push for the cohesion and effectiveness of international efforts to end the war.

61. While an immediate halt to the fighting is needed, an inclusive political process that works in parallel will also be essential to ensure that peace is sustainable. I look to the vibrant and diverse arena of civilian political actors of the Sudan to converge around preparations for a political process that can return the country to the path of

democratic transition. Continuous dialogue with civilian stakeholders is of paramount importance, including women's rights groups, young people and leaders who are actively mobilizing for an end to the war and who must play a central role in the resolution of the conflict. Our collective focus must remain on supporting the Sudanese people in securing peace and a return of a credible and democratic government.

62. I am concerned about the increasing calls by the warring parties to arm civilians and the widespread mobilization campaigns among the population. These signal a dangerous trajectory that may lead to further fragmentation of the country, deepen intracommunal tensions and ignite more ethnic-based violence. I am also concerned about the erosion of civic space, arbitrary arrests and harassment of civilian activists. Such actions must stop immediately, and all parties must respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

63. I am appalled by the continued reports of rape, gang rape, sexual exploitation, abductions and captivity of Sudanese women and girls. These are unacceptable. I urge all parties to the conflict to ensure their forces cease committing sexual violence, issue command orders specifically on ending conflict-related sexual violence and work to prevent and respond to this violence, including by ensuring that perpetrators of such acts are held accountable.

64. I also remain disturbed by reports of Member States supplying the warring parties with weapons and resources. Such activities exacerbate and escalate the conflict in the Sudan and threatens the stability of the region. I urge Member States instead to work towards bringing an end to the war.

65. While the departure of UNITAMS will create certain capacity gaps with regard to advancing peace and peacebuilding efforts, the United Nations is not leaving the Sudan. The United Nations country team will continue its essential work, including by providing life-saving humanitarian assistance. Continued international support for that work is of critical importance. I also call on the Sudanese authorities to continue their cooperation, including by facilitating the timely issuance of entry visas and the unhindered movement of United Nations personnel and partners in the country to deliver much-needed support.

66. I thank my Personal Envoy for the Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra; my Deputy Special Representative, Clementine Awu Nkweta-Salami; and all United Nations personnel in the Sudan for their continued dedication and efforts in support of the country and its people. I thank UNITAMS staff for their dedication in the service of the Sudanese people during the past three years.
