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

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) until 3 June 2022 and requested the Secretary-General to report to it every 90 days on the implementation of the Mission's mandate and on the progress made against the benchmarks and indicators outlined in the Secretary-General's report of 17 May 2021 ([S/2021/470](#)). The present report also covers major developments in the Sudan from 2 May to 20 August 2021 and provides an update on the scale-up of UNITAMS.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. Notable progress was achieved in advancing key elements of the Sudanese political transition. Leading components of the transitional Government renewed their commitment to work together, against a backdrop of growing popular frustration over the country's political and economic challenges. Sudanese protestors continued to express their grievances and collective demands peacefully, despite isolated violent incidents. In addition, important measures were taken to implement aspects of the Juba Peace Agreement of 3 October 2020. On 14 June, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok appointed new State governors (walis) for North Darfur, West Darfur and the Blue Nile State. Meanwhile, talks resumed between the transitional Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, a major group not a signatory to the Agreement.

3. Against a backdrop of increasing tensions between and within the military and civilian components of the transitional Government, on 22 June Prime Minister Hamdok launched a national initiative entitled “The National Crisis and Issues of the Transition – The Way Forward”, described as a “framework of comprehensive political settlement” between the military and political “transitional partners” to “ensure the success of the transitional period” in establishing “a civil and democratic



State based on equal citizenship". This initiative called for, inter alia, ensuring justice, realizing peace, dismantling remnants of the former regime, fighting corruption, reforming the military and security sector, strengthening national sovereignty and forming the Transitional Legislative Council. Several Sudanese political forces, including the Forces for Freedom and Change coalition, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front and the National Ummah Party, expressed support for the Prime Minister's initiative.

4. The Council of Ministers announced a series of economic, political and security priority measures on 27 June, following a three-day closed-door retreat, including the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. They also outlined various social mitigation measures to help alleviate the adverse impacts of economic reforms. The Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Khalid Omer Yousif, affirmed that the transitional Government would provide the resources necessary to ensure implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and, in particular, expedite implementation of the security arrangements protocol. In early July, the Council of Partners of the Transitional Period set a new deadline for the long-awaited formation of the Transitional Legislative Council, with its first session slated for 17 August, the second anniversary of the signing of the Constitutional Declaration. However, the Council remains to be established.

5. Efforts to bring non-signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement into the peace process continued. A new round of negotiations between the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction and the transitional Government resumed on 27 May in Juba. The talks, which built on the joint Declaration of Principles signed between the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction and the transitional Government on 28 March, were adjourned on 15 June to allow the parties to expand consultations and broaden inclusivity. While the parties did not reach an agreement on a framework agreement, they made significant progress on key elements that were expected to guide the overall process once talks reconvene after consulting with their constituencies. A gender working group was established with the facilitation of UNITAMS, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to mainstream gender into the proceedings to ensure women's rights are protected and advanced in the outcomes of the peace talks. Following the adjournment of the first round of talks, the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur, announced the signing of a political declaration in Kauda, South Kordofan, on 29 July. In the statement, it was noted that the two movements agreed on the need for the unity of the Sudanese State based on secularism, democracy, liberalism, equal decentralized citizenship and balanced development. It also underscored the right of all Sudanese people to determine their fate and their administrative and political future.

6. Initial measures to begin implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement security arrangements also commenced. On 30 June, the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, issued three decrees establishing the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and sectoral and area committees. The decrees also explicitly referenced the role of UNITAMS as participating in the Joint High Military Committee and chairing the Permanent Ceasefire Committee. This development followed a joint statement issued on 27 May by several signatory armed groups, criticizing the transitional Government for the "slow pace" of implementing the security arrangements. In a meeting with the leadership of the armed forces on 27 June, Lieutenant General al-Burhan stated that the army was committed to implementing the security arrangements and reforming its structures as agreed in the Juba Peace Agreement.

7. Accountability for the violent events related to the 2019 revolution and for the subsequent violent crackdown on protestors remained a key demand of protestors. On 11 May, popular demonstrations commemorating the anniversary (according to the Islamic lunar calendar) of the 3 June 2019 killing of more than 100 protestors were forcibly dispersed by the Sudanese Armed Forces, killing two people and injuring 37. Prime Minister Hamdok publicly described the violence as a “crime against peaceful protesters” and called on the Attorney-General to investigate this and similar past incidents. The Sudanese Armed Forces also issued a statement describing the events as “unfortunate” and vowed to investigate. Investigations had started but the cases had not yet proceeded to trial. Further protests erupted again on 3 June as thousands of Sudanese took to the streets restating their call for accountability and expressing anger that, two years later, the independent committee tasked with the investigation had yet to release its findings. One police officer was shot dead. On 15 June, Prime Minister Hamdok addressed the nation, calling for unity “to protect the revolution”. He noted his efforts to maintain a “difficult balance” between all components of the transitional Government and defended recent economic reforms and the importance of “increasing the Sudan’s productivity”.

8. On 30 June, in commemoration of the thirty-second anniversary of the coup that brought former President al-Bashir to power, as well as of the 2019 “million person” march, thousands of protestors from diverse opposition groups, including revolutionary groups, the Sudanese Communist Party and Islamists, protested in several Sudanese cities demanding the end of the transitional Government. Young people also demonstrated in separate pro-democracy protests in support of the revolution. Sudanese authorities reported the arrest of 200 members of the former ruling party, accusing them of plotting “acts of destruction”.

9. At the regional level, disagreement intensified in recent months between Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. On 19 July, Ethiopia announced the completion of the second filling of the Dam reservoir. Egypt and the Sudan condemned the second filling as a continuation of what they considered to be unilateral action by Ethiopia. Tensions remained high between Ethiopia and the Sudan over the management of their common border in the Fashaqah area. Despite heightened ongoing tensions, on 16 August, Prime Minister Hamdok and General Al-Burhan visited Fashaqah, during which time they announced the development of infrastructure and other development projects to advance stability. On 20 June, the Sudan and Ethiopia had agreed to reopen their border crossing, which had been closed for several months. On 24 June, Sudanese-Egyptian military talks had concluded in Khartoum, with the signing of a memorandum of understanding for joint cooperation.

B. Security situation

10. There was a rise in security incidents across the Sudan. Reported incidents of civil unrest across the country increased from 115 in the previous period to 152, although this included many instances of peaceful protest. Criminal incidents affecting the United Nations security management system and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) rose from 26 to 32. Delays in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and the Juba Peace Agreement left civilians vulnerable to the deteriorating security situation. The transitional Government continued efforts to provide physical protection in Darfur through the deployment of joint Government forces to de-escalate violence and calm tensions. However, intercommunal clashes continued to be the main source of insecurity.

11. The most significant intercommunal clashes occurred in South and North Darfur, and South and West Kordofan. In South Darfur, on 5 June, clashes between

the Fallata and Ta’isha tribes in Umm Dafog locality reportedly resulted in up to 48 fatalities and the displacement of 185 people. In response, the State Security and Defense Council held an emergency meeting on 6 June and issued decisions to strengthen security in conflict-prone areas and to expand governance and institutional presence. In South Kordofan, on 9 June, 39 people were reported killed and around 5,700 displaced following an attack by Nuba Logan, Kenana and Kawahlah tribesmen against the Hawazmah tribe in Kalogi locality. Clashes were reportedly related to land ownership and the control of local gold mining sites. On 13 June, in neighbouring West Kordofan, over 16,100 people were displaced in Nuhud, Um Sunut and Abu Zabad localities following intercommunal clashes on the outskirts of Nuhud town. In response to rising intercommunal violence, South Kordofan state authorities declared a state of emergency across six localities (Talodi, Gedir, Aleri, Abu Jibeha, Abu Kershola and Habil), effective from 10 July. West Darfur witnessed clashes between Tama and Gimr tribes in the villages of Kafani and Tangaki on 3 and 4 July over land ownership issues, resulting in the deaths of five people. An unspecified number of locals reportedly fled the area to the Ardamata internally displaced persons camp.

12. North Darfur also experienced intercommunal violence between Zaghawa and Arab tribes on 1 and 2 August in the Gallab area, concerning land ownership issues. This triggered an attack by Arab tribesmen on the villages of Imarta, Gourbe, Gallab, Tabit, Nortik and Arara. An unspecified number of villagers were displaced to the Zamzam camp for internally displaced persons. On 6 August, a joint force composed of personnel from the Sudanese Armed Forces, Rapid Support Forces and signatory armed movements en route to the Gallab area to defuse tensions between the Zaghawa and Arab tribesmen were ambushed by a suspected group of Arab tribesmen at the village of Kolgei, resulting in up to 20 personnel of the joint forces being killed.

13. Clashes also occurred between Sudanese State security actors and factions of SLA loyal to non-signatory leader Abdul Wahid al-Nur. In Central Darfur, on 18 May, a clash reportedly took place between Rapid Support Forces personnel and SLA-Abdul Wahid factions because of tensions over land accessibility in Fanga Suk, North Jebel Marra, reportedly triggering the displacement of 1,284 people. In North Darfur, between 11 and 18 July, five internally displaced persons were reportedly killed by fighting in Sortony involving SLA-Abdul Wahid elements and Sudanese Armed Forces personnel. SLA-Abdul Wahid personnel succeeded in dislodging a Sudanese Armed Forces unit from the area and reportedly took control from 11 to 17 July. The SLA-Abdul Wahid elements retreated following clashes with Sudanese Armed Forces reinforcements on 17 July.

14. In the same region, internal clashes took place between various factions of the SLA-Abdul Wahid wing over issues related to leadership and control of certain areas, risking further fragmentation. Confrontations ensued between the SLA-Abdul Wahid Ghadura faction and the SLA-Abdul Wahid Mubarak Aldouk faction on 24 July at Fara and Kome. Reportedly, an unspecified number of civilians fled the affected areas to the Sabanga gathering site for internally displaced persons.

15. In North Darfur, there were concerns over the deployment of armed groups (all signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement) around the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) logistics base in El Fasher. Representatives of the SLA-Minni Minawi faction, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces, the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council and the SLA-Khamis Abaker faction deployed on 1 June, without notification to UNAMID or local authorities. The groups interfered with access control procedures, harassed United Nations security management system national staff and were implicated in the unlawful removal of contingent-owned equipment items from several UNAMID-contracted trucks outside of the logistics base. On 28 June, the Sudanese Armed Forces, Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Police Force also

deployed to the area. On 2 August, two UNAMID-contracted trucks containing four contingent-owned armoured vehicles were intercepted by armed group personnel outside the UNAMID logistics base. The whereabouts of the trucks remained unknown, and negotiations to recover the contingent-owned armoured vehicles were ongoing.

16. The security situation in the eastern Red Sea State remained volatile. On 24 May, authorities declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew following violence between the Beja and Nuba tribes in which at least five people reportedly killed and 13 wounded in Port Sudan. In early July, tensions again escalated into violence, after members of the Beja community blocked the main road into Port Sudan to protest against the arrest of their kinsmen during anti-Government protests on 30 June. United Nations movements to and from Port Sudan were temporarily suspended. The explosion of a hand grenade in a sporting club in Port Sudan on 10 July reportedly left five people dead and six injured. There were reports of an attempted simultaneous attack on a nearby hotel, which was averted. The security situation in the city returned to calm following deployment of the joint Sudanese Armed Forces, Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Police Force.

C. Socioeconomic situation

17. The Sudan made important strides in its macroeconomic agenda and continued to implement difficult economic reforms, including lifting fuel subsidies and abolishing the customs exchange rate. On 17 May, President Macron of France hosted the International Conference to Support the Sudanese Transition in Paris, to mark the re-integration of the Sudan into the global economy and to attract foreign investment, particularly in energy, infrastructure, agriculture, mining and telecommunications.

18. On 28 June, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board announced that the Sudan had reached the decision point for the highly indebted poor countries initiative. Following commitments made by Member States in Paris, on 29 June IMF and the World Bank approved initial debt relief for the Sudan, reducing the country's debt from \$56 billion to \$28 billion. The clearance of arrears unlocked \$2 billion in World Bank International Development Association grants and \$2.5 billion for a 39-month IMF extended credit facility arrangement, enabling the Sudan to benefit from the Fund's global allocation of additional special drawing rights, and offering a much-needed boost to liquidity. Paris Club creditors also agreed to cancel \$14 billion in bilateral debt and restructure more than \$9 billion.

19. Despite these important milestones, the country continued to face severe economic hardship, with daily interruptions in water and electricity and acute shortages of fuel and medical supplies. On 9 June, fuel subsidies were fully lifted, increasing diesel prices by 128 per cent. On 22 June, the customs exchange rate was abolished, increasing tariffs on some commodities. Consequently, the currency further depreciated to 450 Sudanese pounds to 1 United States dollar by July, compared with 380 pounds to 1 dollar at the beginning of May. The national inflation rate also continued to increase, reaching about 413 per cent year on year in June, compared with 379 per cent in May. Prices of sorghum, millet and important food commodities were on average double the price of 2020, and one in five Sudanese was expected to face unprecedented levels of acute food insecurity during the lean season.

20. The World Bank and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued to provide technical support to the transitional Government's family support programme (known locally as "Thamarat"), which aimed to cushion the effects of economic reforms by providing monthly direct cash transfers of \$5 per person to 80 per cent of families initially for six months and potentially scaling up to 12 months, subject to the

availability of additional resources. As of the end of July, the programme had registered 1.6 million families in 14 states across the country and had transferred funds to 520,000 families, including families in Blue Nile; South, East, North, West and Central Darfur; Kassala; Khartoum; West, South and North Kordofan; Red Sea; Sennar; and White Nile.

21. Other reforms unveiled by the transitional Government included plans to liquidate and privatize State-owned companies, laws on investment and public-private partnerships and the introduction of conventional banking, in addition to the existing Islamic banking system. These were seen as critical to attracting investment and stimulating private sector growth.

D. Protection of civilians, human rights and the rule of law

22. The protection of civilians remained of concern, with continued intercommunal clashes and a resumption of violence between signatory and non-signatory parties. The adjudication and investigation of emblematic cases on serious human rights violations witnessed limited progress, and at the overall nationwide level, the establishment of rule-of-law institutions and required judicial reforms, including a comprehensive review of the legal framework according to the Constitutional Document, remained slow. On 17 May, the Sovereign Council dismissed the Chief Justice and accepted the Attorney General's resignation. While the Constitutional Document provided the Sovereign Council with the authority to appoint the Chief Justice and the Attorney General in the interim, it did not expressly provide the Sovereign Council with the authority to dismiss judicial office holders or accept their resignation.

23. As part of the planned judicial reforms, once established, the High Judicial Council would have the responsibility to make proposals for judicial appointments, as well as appointments of the Constitutional Court judges. The Prime Minister's stated commitment to include the establishment of the High Judicial Council among his priority actions over the coming months was a critical step towards sustainable justice sector reforms. The establishment of key commissions required by the Constitutional Document also remained pending. The laws establishing the Anti-Corruption, Transitional Justice and Peace Commissions were approved by the Sovereign Council in April and formally published on 17 July. However, the Commissions were not yet operational. Legislation for other key Commissions, including on Women and Gender Equality, Elections, Legal Reform, Human Rights, Land and Civil Service Reform, had yet to be finalized. On 23 June, a first instance court in Khartoum sentenced a 21-year-old man, who was not assisted by a lawyer, to cross amputation for armed robbery. The ruling sparked reactions from civil society and the National Human Rights Commission, which called for the execution of the sentence to be suspended pending a comprehensive reform of the criminal law.

24. Enhanced cooperation with the International Criminal Court continued. Between 24 and 27 May, the Court's Pre-trial Chamber II held a confirmation hearing in the case against former Darfur Janjaweed leader Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman (aka Ali Kushayb) that resulted, on 9 July, in the confirmation of all 31 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity against the accused, who was to stand trial before a Trial Chamber. The outgoing Court Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, and the new Court Prosecutor, Karim Khan, visited the Sudan, respectively in June and August, and each met with members of the transitional Government as well as internally displaced persons and victims in Darfur. They called upon the transitional Government to transfer the remaining indicted suspects to the Hague for trial. The transitional Government reiterated its willingness to transfer Court suspects detained in Khartoum, including former President al-Bashir, to the Court for trial, but no action

had yet been taken. On 4 August, the Cabinet unanimously adopted a draft bill to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The draft bill will require approval by the Sovereign Council to become effective. On 12 August, the Court Prosecutor and the Minister for Justice signed a new memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation that included all individuals against whom warrants of arrest had been issued by the Court.

25. Representing a key milestone, on 10 August, the Sudan deposited with the United Nations Treaty Section the required instruments, marking the final step in the process to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The treaties were due to enter into force for the Sudan on 9 September.

26. Regarding freedom of the press, on 29 and 30 June, at least 15 online media news outlets were reportedly unable to gain access to their electronic content, including editorial management of their respective websites within the Sudan. This was allegedly owing to an order issued by the Prosecutor of Cybercrimes, but not officially communicated to the news websites, accusing them of spreading misinformation. The directive was justified on the basis of “public safety” and made on the basis of the July 2020 amendment of the 2007 Cybercrimes Act. The decision to restrict access coincided with anti-Government protests. As of 19 July, all websites had reportedly been unblocked.

27. The transitional Government took commendable steps to improve child protection legislation. This included the Cabinet’s decision that Sudan would withdraw its reservations to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child related to child marriage, the right of married pregnant girls to education and child rights to privacy. Legislation under revision included the Child Act, the Trafficking in Persons Act and the Personal Status law regulating family relations. Amendments were expected to address many of the challenges that children face, especially girls. On 1 June, the Ministry of Social Development issued a decree to establish a high-level technical committee on Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), composed of line ministry representatives and some women’s groups. The committee was yet to be established.

E. Humanitarian situation

28. The fragile economic situation, intercommunal conflict and localized armed clashes in Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan and Port Sudan, as well as the Ethiopian refugee crisis in eastern areas and recent heavy rains, continued to drive humanitarian needs. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic remained a challenge, affecting the safety and livelihoods of vulnerable Sudanese and refugees. High food prices persisted amid deepening inflation, causing increasing food insecurity. According to WFP, in June 2021 the average cost of the local food basket was 282.86 per cent higher compared with June 2020 and 13 per cent higher than the previous month, mainly owing to the depreciation of the Sudanese pound. The humanitarian community was working with the transitional Government to enhance response preparedness during the rainy season.

29. Owing to an increase in intercommunal conflict, as at 5 August, more than 353,000 people had fled their homes in West and South Kordofan and West, North, Central and South Darfur since the start of 2021. Finding sustainable solutions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return or integration of displaced persons residing in overcrowded gathering points in El Geneina remained an urgent priority, particularly as sanitary conditions had worsened following the start of the rainy season.

30. In North Darfur, on 15 July, clashes in Sortony reportedly resulted in approximately 30,000 internally displaced persons fleeing to surrounding mountains; some have since returned. Health, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene services were currently unavailable. Residents in Sortony relied on rainwater or an open well near the camp for drinking water. While clearance for an inter-agency humanitarian mission to Sortony had yet to be granted, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society undertook a food distribution effort on 6 August. On 13 June, in West Kordofan, more than 16,100 people were displaced in the Nuhud, Sunut and Abu Zabad localities following intercommunal conflict on the outskirts of Nuhud town. Those displacements took place at the onset of the rainy season, depriving the affected people of the opportunity to farm.

31. The influx of refugees continued from the Tigray region of Ethiopia into eastern parts of the Sudan, though at a slower rate. As at 31 July, 55,493 Ethiopian refugees had fled to the Sudan, with 1,225 arrivals reported in June. Out of that total, 47,959 refugees had been biometrically registered, with 18,660 registered at the Um Rakuba camp and 19,560 at the Tunaydibah camp. In total, 5,762 individuals had been biometrically registered in Hamdayet and 3,077 in Village 8. In addition, 7,534 asylum seekers from the Benishangul-Gumuz region were currently hosted in Blue Nile State, and about 900 new arrivals from Amhara had been registered at the household level and assisted in the Basunda locality. Aside from family reunification cases, the relocation of Ethiopian refugees out of transition centres (Hamdayet and Village 8) remained on hold upon government advice. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was advocating with Sudanese authorities to resume the relocation exercises, and to identify additional settlement sites for refugees. Assessments of possible new sites were ongoing. The inter-agency contingency plan for refugee influxes from Ethiopia to the Sudan, updated in July, foresaw up to an additional influx of 96,000 refugees from August to December. Works were ongoing to mitigate rainy season-related floods in the camps and transition centres. The United Nations was working with the transitional Government on the identification of a suitable non-flood-prone area for establishing a third camp.

32. Movements across the South Sudanese border also continued, with more than 40,000 refugees having crossed to the Sudan since January, mainly to White Nile and East Darfur States. UNHCR and partners were responding to the situation and had opened a new refugee settlement site in White Nile State (the Algaana camp), which required further extensions to accommodate the influx. At the same time, local authorities and NGOs reported a slight increase of Sudanese refugee returnees from South Sudan to Blue Nile State (in particular to the Baw locality) and South Kordofan State in the Sudan.

33. Regarding the broader health situation, outbreaks of disease occurred in eastern parts of the Sudan, where 28 out of 466 cases of acute jaundice syndrome tested positive for hepatitis E. In South Darfur, cases of measles were confirmed. Efforts to step up water and sanitation continued, and a measles vaccination campaign was being prepared. As at 10 August, 37,532 positive cases of COVID-19 confirmed by PCR testing, out of 71,789 suspected cases, and 2,799 associated deaths had been reported by the Federal Ministry of Health. This was a significant increase compared with May, by which 35,289 confirmed cases had been reported, with 2,600 deaths. Since mid-March, the Ministry of Health had been implementing a COVID-19 vaccination programme that aimed to cover 20 per cent of the country's total population by September. According to the World Health Organization, as at 22 August, 829,682 doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered.

34. Since mid-July, flooding had been reported in Jazirah, Gedaref, Khartoum, North Kordofan, River Nile, South Darfur, West Darfur and White Nile. As at

4 August, more than 12,000 people were estimated to have been affected by heavy rains and flooding in seven states.

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

A. Scale up of UNITAMS

35. UNITAMS continued to scale up its presence in the country, with over 123 staff (To be updated) deployed in the Sudan by the end of the reporting period. The Mission's leadership team was now in place, with Heads of Office deployed to El Fasher and Kadugli. The Police Commissioner and three police liaison officers assumed their functions, and 18 of the 21 authorized individual police officers were deployed in multifunctional teams to El Fasher, Nyala and Zalingei. In response to the request by the Sudanese authorities for assistance in operationalizing ceasefire arrangements provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement, UNITAMS created a new temporary position within the Mission, onboarding a retired general to serve as interim chair of the permanent ceasefire commission.

36. On 4 July, the transitional Government and the United Nations signed the status-of-mission agreement which, inter alia, recognized the need for freedom of movement for United Nations personnel and assets. To ensure the agreement was operationalized, the transitional Government undertook to provide UNITAMS staff with a universal travel permit. UNITAMS also assumed charge of two medium utility helicopters, and established an operational schedule to support the Mission and partners in the delivery of the mandate. A fixed-wing aircraft for the Mission was in the process of being contracted.

B. Assist the political transition, democratic governance, protection and promotion of human rights and sustainable peace

37. UNITAMS, under the leadership of the Special Representative, continued to engage with all relevant actors in moving the transition forward, in particular to underline the urgency of establishing the Transitional Legislative Council to ensure an inclusive transition. UNITAMS also deployed its senior constitutional adviser to the Sudan, who began to undertake consultations with Sudanese counterparts to identify areas for technical support for the constitution-making process, in collaboration with partners.

38. Following the electoral needs assessment in June, UNITAMS deployed its Principal Electoral Affairs Officer to the Sudan. An integrated plan for United Nations electoral assistance, which would include staff and resources from various specialized agencies, as well as UNITAMS, was being developed. Efforts had also been launched to coordinate with other national electoral assistance providers on the ground. Work was under way to support the Ministry of Justice in drafting a law to establish a new electoral management body, a task prioritized by the transitional Government.

39. The United Nations Population Fund continued to lead United Nations efforts to support the Sudanese Central Bureau of Statistics on plans for the next national census, tentatively planned for early 2022. Under its current configuration, the main process would need to be preceded by an initial pilot census. Out of an estimated budget of approximately \$100 million, the transitional Government had pledged to cover 53 per cent of those costs, leaving a shortfall of \$43 million once contributions received to date are accounted for.

40. As part of efforts to bolster the freedom of the press, UNITAMS also conducted training for 103 journalists from 11 states on combatting hate speech in the media, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund. In addition, UNITAMS undertook additional training for civil society organizations on the protection of civilians and human rights, focused on combating hate speech, in coordination with the Office of Counter-Terrorism. Those efforts constitute part of an ongoing nationwide programme on combating hate speech targeting different segments of the population.

C. Support peace processes and implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements

41. Consistent with the priorities established in resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), UNITAMS supported the talks between the transitional Government and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction from 27 May to 15 June as a facilitator, in collaboration with the South Sudanese mediation team. This included the provision of technical proposals and substantive, operational and logistical support to the peace talks secretariat and the South Sudanese mediation team. UNITAMS, in cooperation with UN-Women and UNDP, also strengthened the meaningful participation and inclusion of women in the peace process by convening a group of 30 women's rights leaders to engage in high-level advocacy on the margins of the talks, ensuring the inclusion of a rotational five-woman team of technical observers to monitor and support the negotiations from a gender perspective and promote gender-responsive negotiated outcomes.

42. As part of efforts to signal the international community's commitment to supporting the parties in the peace process following the last round of Juba talks, the Special Representative led a mission to areas under the control of the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction on 2 and 3 July, along with members of the United Nations country team and the Special Envoys of Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States (the Troika). The delegation engaged with all relevant parties in support of the process to encourage dialogue towards the attainment of the mutually shared objective of a democratic Sudan based on equality and respect for diversity.

43. On 7 July, UNITAMS, with the support of UN-Women and UNDP, convened an introductory, technical session on ceasefire and security arrangements for women engaged in the peace talks. UNITAMS, in partnership with a local civil society organization, also convened a workshop on civil society's role in ceasefire mechanisms in support of implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement.

44. Following the presidential decrees establishing the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and its sectoral and area committees, UNITAMS and United Nations Headquarters commenced planning and identified for deployment an advance multidisciplinary team to support the operationalization of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, comprising experts in ceasefire arrangements, policing, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, humanitarian liaison and mine action. This was undertaken utilizing existing Headquarters resource platforms and additional in situ Mission capacities. UNITAMS was planning a consultative meeting with representatives of the Juba Peace Agreement signatories, civil society and women's groups to develop shared expectations around the role and operations of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism and related security arrangements in advance of the development of a broader concept of operations.

45. In support of the Juba Peace Agreement and its security arrangement implementation, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) deployed four

multitask teams capable of survey clearance, explosive ordnance disposal operations, community liaison and risk education to Ullu, a stronghold of the Juba Peace Agreement signatory SPLM-N Malik Agar faction, which was heavily contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war. The scale of demining activities in Ullu would be expanded to eight teams in October, after the rainy season, enabling the safe return of Sudanese refugees from South Sudan.

46. Given the importance of peacemaking efforts at the subnational level, UNITAMS concluded the first of six state-level peacebuilding assessments with a view to identifying further entry points for United Nations support. The assessment in El Geneina, where intercommunal violence occurred in January and April, highlighted conflict drivers related to an absence of security forces, weak rule of law, criminality and the proliferation of arms, the weakened role of native administration, cycles of displacement and the political marginalization of some communities. Further assessments were planned for South Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Gedaref and Kassala.

47. Under the framework of the Juba Peace Agreement, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was assisting children affected by armed conflict, in particular those associated with armed forces and groups. Specifically, it was providing the necessary programmatic support to ensure that children associated with such elements had the assistance to secure their release, as well as receive interim care, family tracing reunification and community-based sustainable reintegration, through an evidence-based strategic framework agreed upon with the transitional Government, the United Nations System, governmental partners and the community.

D. Assist Sudanese-led peacebuilding, civilian protection and rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas

48. In support of the operationalization of the transitional Government's National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, UNITAMS – in partnership with UNHCR and protection actors – began supporting the establishment of state protection for civilian committees in the five States of Darfur, including by holding a workshop in North Darfur, the development of terms of reference and capacity-building to enhance understanding of the National Plan, as well as key protection and human rights concepts. These state-level committees, which included government, armed forces and civil society actors, would spearhead state-level protection activities with support from United Nations partners.

49. At the national level, UNITAMS and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes worked on a “one-United Nations” strategy for the protection of civilians to act as an operational, advocacy and resource mobilization tool to support the transitional Government in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. Furthermore, UNITAMS and partner protection agencies developed and deployed an early warning and incident monitoring tool that would monitor key threat indicators, including hate speech, casualty incidents and human rights abuses, for analysis to enable responsive decision-making and targeted protection advocacy.

50. Consistent with resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), the United Nations began implementation of the human rights due diligence policy by developing a Sudan-focused strategy that would guide United Nations support to State and non-State security actors. The strategy would also inform the transfer of UNAMID assets to State entities that benefit the protection of civilians. The United Nations country taskforce on monitoring and reporting grave violations against children continued its transition to new arrangements. UNITAMS replaced UNAMID, and the Deputy Special Representative, Khardiata Lo N'Diaye, who also served as the Resident

Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, was to co-chair the mechanism, together with UNICEF. The country taskforce continued to engage with armed groups, including the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction and the SLA-Minni Minawi faction, to accelerate efforts to achieve full compliance with their respective action plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

51. On 4 June, UNITAMS formed a United Nations rule-of-law working group to support the United Nations country team in delivering coordinated support to the transitional Government on rule-of-law issues. Programmatic support delivered through the group included support to the development of the draft law on violence against women, support to justice reform efforts, in particular the High Judicial Council, and convening civil society meetings to discuss justice issues, including transitional justice. In collaboration with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and OHCHR, UNITAMS also presented to the transitional Government expert papers on best practices on vetting and comparative models of legislation regarding high judicial councils. The Mission also held regular meetings with justice actors, civil society and internally displaced persons in Darfur to advise on reforms and improving delivery on accountability.

52. The UNITAMS Police Advisory Unit worked closely with the Sudanese Police Force on the implementation of security arrangements outlined in the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. Key activities included assessments and planning for Darfur and the Two Areas, with a primary focus on supporting prevention and physical protection, including by providing training to the Sudanese Police Force, the formation of joint forces and extending police authority on the basis of consent received from the affected communities through community-oriented policing principles. The three United Nations Police multifunctional teams deployed in Darfur undertook extensive engagement with their counterparts in the Sudanese Police Force, as well as community leaders and internally displaced persons. The Sudanese Police Force also identified key thematic policing areas to implement the National Plan and develop its capacity, including on the use of technology-based tools, an early warning system and the formation of quick response teams. Relatedly, on 12 July, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations corrections task force organized a workshop to discuss the United Nations support to the Federal Prison Department's request to establish a dedicated training centre for corrections personnel. UNODC is conducting a comprehensive needs assessment for the prison sector that should lay the foundation for future international funding. UNITAMS was to explore avenues to fund the establishment of the prison training centre in collaboration with the task force.

53. UNITAMS also partnered with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to deliver initial peacebuilding activities in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Exceptional financing from the UNITAMS assessed budget supported demining and conflict transformation activities in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, supporting Sudanese women, young people and civil society. Programming, through UNDP, included a microgrant scheme focusing on conflict resolution initiatives and capacity-building to ensure civil society and local government entities are capacitated and able to support conflict transformation initiatives, service delivery and durable solutions for internally displaced persons.

54. In Darfur, UNITAMS supported peacebuilding activities to build on work conducted by UNAMID aimed at improving local conflict management capacities and sustaining peacebuilding gains, especially in the Jebel Marra area. With funds from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs multi-year appeal, UNITAMS, through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, supported the creation of a series of mechanisms aimed at mitigating and preventing conflict

between farmers and pastoralists along livestock grazing routes. Through UNDP, a youth ambassadorship programme was initiated to enhance civil society engagement, and a series of round tables was undertaken to discuss progress in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians in each of the Darfur States.

55. UNMAS enabled the delivery of humanitarian aid to five enclaves in South Kordofan and Blue Nile under the control of the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction to which United Nations humanitarian assistance had not gained access since 2011 owing to their contamination with explosive remnants of war. Those activities, which enabled essential support for education and school feeding programmes, included identifying safe crossline corridors to ensure humanitarian actors can operate safe from the risks of explosive ordnance. Through extrabudgetary funding, mine action teams supported community-based peacebuilding in Hamra, South Kordofan, by demining the previously contaminated main routes connecting to Kadugli. In South, West and North Darfur, mine action teams focused on the surveying and removal of explosive remnants resulting from the recent tribal conflict in Darfur, increasing the safety of local populations and contributing to conditions favourable for the return of internally displaced persons.

56. To enhance the capacities of national and international counterparts, funds provided by the Peacebuilding Fund enabled the convening of five capacity-building workshops on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding for implementing partners in the five Darfur States, with the participation of 100 representatives from national and international NGOs, transitional Government partners and United Nations agencies. The workshops aimed at strengthening the capacities of key implementing partners of the ongoing Darfur programmes funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.

E. Support the mobilization of economic and development assistance and the coordination of humanitarian and peacebuilding assistance

57. The United Nations formally launched the Sudan Financing Platform multi-partner trust fund’s “peacebuilding and stabilization” window (known as the “Sudan peace fund”) to support mandate implementation. The new window, which had benefited from initial contributions from Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, served as a pooled funding mechanism that allowed for the provision of flexible and scalable support to respond to emerging needs. It represented a pass-through arrangement that did not replace bilateral relationships between donors and United Nations agencies, but rather facilitated partnership between UNITAMS, the United Nations country team and donors, in consultation with the transitional Government, to ensure peacebuilding programming was coordinated, sequenced and prioritized.

58. Investment through the new window was to be guided by a joint programmatic framework, the “Sudan peacemaking, peacebuilding and stabilization programme”, which was currently being finalized. The programme was based on the mandate contained in Security Council resolutions [2524 \(2020\)](#) and [2579 \(2021\)](#) and responded to priorities as identified by the transitional Government in the Constitutional Charter, the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, the Juba Peace Agreement and the national action plan for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), as well as the declaration of principles in the context of the ongoing peace process. The programme identified programmatic activities required to ensure mandate implementation and aligned with the benchmarks presented to the Security Council in the report of the Secretary-General of 17 May ([S/2021/470](#)).

59. Consistent with the guidance of the Security Council, the Sudan peacemaking, peacebuilding and stabilization programme placed emphasis on delivering tangible improvements to vulnerable populations in conflict-affected and marginalized areas

and on building effective and accountable institutions at the national and the subnational levels. At the same time, UNITAMS supported the transitional Government in designing and structuring the Sudan partners' forum, which brought together development partners and the transitional Government to enable the timely and effective coordination of development assistance under government leadership.

60. To enhance overall coordination and effectiveness, and in fulfilment of the mandate set out in resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), UNITAMS and the United Nations country team continued to develop integrated approaches in full accordance with the principle of national ownership. A mapping of United Nations development system capacities in the Sudan was carried out. The exercise identified existing capacities and gaps of the country team, as well as opportunities for synergies between humanitarian, peacebuilding and sustainable development interventions to inform the strategic planning of the country team and UNITAMS. The country team and UNITAMS also launched the process to develop the common country analysis, which would lead to the adoption of a joint integrated strategic framework/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework setting out the United Nations vision, priorities and programmes in the Sudan, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

61. The integrated strategic framework/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework would also include the provisions for joint monitoring and reporting. At the country level, a joint planning team was established to take forward the common country analysis and the integrated strategic framework/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes. Thematic working groups bringing together the United Nations country team and UNITAMS were functioning in the areas of human rights and protection of civilians, rule of law, gender and peacebuilding. Consistent with resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), UNITAMS also began work with the country team and the transitional Government to establish a baseline and targets for the benchmarks, as well as a robust monitoring and data collection mechanism to track progress. The Mission's benchmarks would also inform the common country analysis and the integrated strategic framework/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

F. Transition from UNAMID and liquidation process

62. With the completion of the drawdown of UNAMID on 30 June, a dedicated UNITAMS-UNAMID integrated team completed the last of 17 internal United Nations seminars on programmatic activities with the United Nations country team to inform future programming. Following the closure of the UNAMID state liaison functions, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator and the Assistant Secretary-General, M'Baye Babacar Cissé, convened a joint internal United Nations workshop on consolidating peacebuilding gains in Darfur. Recommendations from the workshop would be pursued through the Sudan peacemaking, peacebuilding and stabilization programme, which served as the programmatic framework guiding the UNITAMS multi-partner trust fund.

63. UNITAMS supported UNAMID in facilitating planning for the use of residual assets in support of the Government's National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. UNITAMS and the United Nations country team representatives joined UNAMID in meetings of the joint task force with the transitional Government and provided advice to address government requests. With the start of the liquidation phase on 1 July, the UNAMID liquidation team remained focused on the transfer and sale of United Nations assets, with the expectation that remaining surplus assets would be disposed through a holistic plan for donations that will be presented to the General Assembly before 30 September.

IV. Observations

64. More than two years after the 2019 revolution, the democratic transition in the Sudan continues to face significant challenges. Tackling those challenges will require resolve and coordination on the part of all stakeholders in the Sudan, with continued support from the international community. I commend the efforts of the Sudanese authorities to move the transition forward, including undertaking difficult economic reforms that have paved the way for the country to begin receiving debt relief under the enhanced highly indebted poor countries initiative. This landmark achievement is an important step towards easing the heavy debt burden inherited from the past.

65. I am encouraged by the Prime Minister's initiative of 22 June, which sets out a clear path towards a renewed transition that is responsive to the demands of the population and offers an opportunity for restoring inclusive, broad-based commitment to the transition's objectives. The success of this initiative requires buy-in from both the military and civilian components of the transitional Government. It should be underpinned by a spirit of compromise and consensus-building, as well as an inclusive, transparent decision-making structure within the civilian component with demonstrated support from the international community.

66. The establishment of the remaining key transitional institutions is critical for advancing an inclusive and sustainable political transition. The rapid formation of the Transitional Legislative Council, with 40 per cent representation of women, and of the relevant committees and commissions emanating from the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace Agreement is particularly essential. Other gaps in the institutional architecture should likewise be urgently addressed, including the formation of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Supreme Council of the Public Prosecution. I welcome the entry into force of the laws establishing the Anti-Corruption, Transitional Justice and Peace Commissions. The swift operationalization of those Commissions will be crucial.

67. I welcome the progress in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, in particular the issuance of decrees on the formation of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee and related sectoral and area committees. I urge the quick operationalization of these critical bodies to help address pressing security challenges and the protection of civilians. The United Nations multidisciplinary advance team will do much to facilitate initial meetings of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and sectoral and area committees, and will work with all relevant stakeholders to develop a concept of operations for the future support of UNITAMS to the implementation of the ceasefire arrangements as per the Juba Peace Agreement. At the same time, I encourage the timely formation of the Juba Peace Agreement Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism at the national level, which remains essential to provide the overall strategic direction to peace implementation.

68. Peace in the Sudan will not be complete until all conflicts there come to an end. This requires non-signatory armed movements that remain outside the peace process to display bold leadership and commit to negotiations that will lead to a fully inclusive, democratic and sustainable peace. I am encouraged by the progress made in the first round of talks between the transitional Government and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction in early June. I urge both parties to build on this initial progress and advance a constructive framework for addressing their remaining differences. Regarding the eastern track of the Juba Peace Agreement, I encourage all stakeholders to make a concerted effort to address outstanding issues through inclusive dialogue to reach consensus toward implementing the peace agreement and

build trust in the interest of the population. I also urge other non-signatories who are not yet in peace talks to join the peacemaking process.

69. The meaningful participation and inclusion of women is essential for sustainable peace. Sudanese women's rights leaders continue to raise concerns that the transition is not delivering results for women and the gap between their civic action and levels of formal representation in positions of power is stark. The transitional Government's recent decree on the formation of a ministerial-level committee concerning resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) is an important step forward, as are measures to strengthen the protective environment for women through the development of draft legislation on violence against women. Further progress on implementation of the national action plan for the implementation of [1325 \(2000\)](#), with requisite financial support from the international community, must be a priority.

70. I am increasingly concerned about security developments, including rising intercommunal tensions in Darfur and other areas of the country. More needs to be done to effectively protect civilians. The needs and perspectives of women and girls, who are often the most vulnerable during conflict, require particular attention. In Darfur, the transitional Government and armed movement signatories have yet to adequately fulfil this responsibility, creating a vacuum that could be exploited by those who seek to instigate violence or undermine the peace process. The transitional Government and its peace partners should fully implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, accelerate the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and establish the joint security keeping force in Darfur for the purpose of protecting civilians. These steps are critical to illustrate the capacity of the State to protect its civilians. I also urge all parties to commit to resolving peacefully the underlying issues giving rise to violence.

71. The Sudan has extensive peacebuilding needs that require coordinated support and adequate financing. In that regard, I welcome the establishment of the Sudan peace fund and I am grateful to the Governments of Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their generous contributions to the financing platform. I call upon other donors also to support this pooled funding mechanism which provides an essential instrument to mobilize funding and resources for the Sudan, on the basis of agreed priorities and partnership.

72. The situation in Fashaqah the border area between Ethiopia and the Sudan remains a concern. I urge the two countries to take concrete steps toward dialogue with a view to finding a peaceful way forward to resolve their differences. I also urge Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan to restart negotiations, under the auspices of the African Union, to find a mutually agreeable solution to their dispute concerning the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. I will continue to explore opportunities to encourage a peaceful resolution, in collaboration with key partners, including at the regional level.

73. The ongoing response of the Sudanese authorities to the COVID-19 pandemic, which the United Nations continues to assist, is commendable. More international support is needed to address the challenges of the pandemic, including its economic impact, and provide life-saving assistance to those in need.

74. I thank my Special Representative, Volker Perthes, and all United Nations personnel in the Sudan for their dedication and efforts in support of the Sudan and its people.