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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 report of the Secretary-General dated 17 May 2021 ([S/2021/470](#)). The present report also covers political, security, socioeconomic, human rights, rule of law and humanitarian developments in the Sudan from 21 August to 21 November 2021 and provides an update on the scale-up of the Mission.

II. Significant developments

A. Political situation

2. On 25 October, the armed forces detained the Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, and a number of civilian ministers, officials and political leaders and took control of the State media. In a televised address, the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, announced a state of emergency and suspended articles 12, 15, 16, 24 (3), 71 and 72 of the Constitutional Document, in effect dissolving the Sovereign Council, the Council of Ministers and the yet to be formed Transitional Legislative Council and restoring a Transitional Military Council. He also dismissed state governors (walis), froze the work of the Committee to Dismantle the 30 June 1989 Regime and Retrieve Public Funds, also known as the Dismantling Committee, and ordered that Internet services be suspended. He pledged to hold elections by July 2023.

3. In a press conference held on 26 October, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan said that the military's actions were intended to pre-empt civil strife and put the paralysed transition process on the right track by overseeing the establishment of the necessary institutions and the appointment of a representative Government. He asserted that the



military stood with the Sudanese people in their calls for a civilian Government and would adhere to the Constitutional Document and the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan.

4. The Prime Minister was released from detention on 26 October but remained under house arrest with severely restricted visitation privileges until 21 November. Other detained civilian leaders remained in custody, except for four ministers who were released on 4 November. None of the four female ministers, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who maintained her high media profile, were detained. Meanwhile, between late October and mid-November, more than 150 activists, journalists and civilian officials were arrested throughout the country. Several hundred civilian officials were dismissed from positions in government at the national and state levels, as well as from State-owned economic enterprises and banks. Hundreds of activists, including women's rights activists, reportedly went into hiding.

5. In response to the military's actions, large crowds gathered across the Sudan to protest against the military coup, and a campaign of civil disobedience was launched. During a large-scale demonstration on 30 October, three people were reported to have been killed and scores injured, following reports of the use of live ammunition by security forces. Large demonstrations were also held on 13 and 17 November. There were 7 people reportedly killed on 13 November and 16 on 17 November and several hundred were injured as the army and security forces again used live ammunition and tear gas to contain and disperse the protests. Many protesters were arrested across the country.

6. Sudanese women were seen at the forefront of the protests, and the Women of Sudanese Civic and Political Groups, also known as MANSAM, issued a statement condemning the coup. The increased militarization in the country in the weeks following the coup, shrinking civil society space, threats to women's rights defenders and the virtual absence of women in national mediation efforts suggest formidable challenges ahead to overcome the severe underrepresentation of women in formal positions of power and meet the minimum representation level of 40 per cent called for in the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace Agreement.

7. Two of the non-signatory armed groups to the Juba Peace Agreement, the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, also denounced the coup.

8. The coup was widely condemned by international actors. On 26 October, during a session of the African Union Peace and Security Council, and acting under article 7 (g) of the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Council decided to suspend, with immediate effect, the participation of the Sudan in all the activities of the African Union until the effective restoration of the civilian-led transition. On 28 October, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement calling on the Sudanese military authorities to restore the civilian-led transitional Government and urging all stakeholders to engage in dialogue without preconditions.

9. Over the weeks following the military coup, significant efforts, including by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, were undertaken to facilitate dialogue and identify a peaceful and negotiated solution to the crisis, allowing for a return to the constitutional order. On 11 November, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan announced the formation of a reconstituted Sovereign Council, placing himself as Chair and Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, Commander of the Rapid Support Forces, as Vice-Chair. While the representatives of the military and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front remained the same as in the dissolved Council, the civilian members were replaced.

10. On 21 November, an agreement was signed between Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and the Prime Minister stipulating, inter alia, that the 2019 Constitutional Document would continue to form the basis for the transitional period but would be amended by mutual agreement to ensure the inclusion of all parties, except the National Congress Party. The military-civilian power-sharing arrangement would remain as the “guarantor of stability in the Sudan”, and the interim Sovereign Council would oversee the transition, as envisaged in article 8 of the Constitutional Document. The release of political detainees, an investigation into recent incidents of death and injury during protests and the formation of a technocratic Government were also stipulated in the agreement. It was stated that an inclusive dialogue would be initiated, encompassing all political and social forces. The agreement covered the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and the joining of non-signatory armed groups to the peace process, in addition to expediting the formation of transitional institutions and appointments. A unified national army would be formed, and the Dismantling Committee would be restructured. The announcement sparked fresh protests in Khartoum and elsewhere denouncing the agreement and criticizing the Prime Minister for signing it and the partnership with the military.

11. The coup followed months of rising tension between the civilian and military components of the Sudanese transitional authorities. Some 40 members of the security forces were jailed following a failed coup attempt on 21 September, allegedly perpetrated by supporters of the former President, Omar Al-Bashir. The Prime Minister described the event as an attempt to undermine the civilian democratic transition, while Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and his Deputy, Lieutenant General Dagalo, criticized civilian politicians for unfairly excluding the military from some key civilian-led initiatives and for failures of governance due to political infighting.

12. On 26 September, pro-revolutionary protestors gathered in Khartoum at the headquarters of the Dismantling Committee, following rumours that the military had withdrawn security forces from the location. The Prime Minister and Lieutenant General Al-Burhan reportedly held an emergency meeting to defuse tensions. In a televised speech shortly thereafter, the Prime Minister stated that the crisis was not between the military and civilians but “between those civilians and military who believe in the democratic civil transformation, and those who seek to block the road ahead of it from both sides”. On 15 October, the Prime Minister subsequently proposed a road map for dialogue and the de-escalation of tension, including in Eastern Sudan, the resumption of transitional institutions, addressing national security issues, the depoliticization of State institutions and respecting power-sharing arrangements in accordance with the Constitutional Document. The road map also contained calls for a continuation and review of the Dismantling Committee’s operations, ending discord within the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) and progress on transitional justice. However, these proposals did not gain traction.

13. Tensions during the reporting period were further compounded by the continued fragmentation of the civilian component of the transition. On 8 September, the FFC coalition signed a new political declaration of unity, in which it was rejoined by the National Ummah Party and some members of the Sudan Revolutionary Front, namely the Sudan Liberation Army/Transitional Council, the Sudan Liberation Force Alliance and the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction. The declaration was premised on expanding the FFC base, reforming its governing structures and recommitting it to key transitional priorities. On 26 September, a parallel, additional “faction of the FFC” emerged, comprising eight signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, including the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement Minni Minnawi faction. The new grouping continued to challenge the original FFC and the transitional Government, even though it included the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Gibril Ibrahim. It reportedly supported a group of anti-government protestors that

established a sit-in camp in the vicinity of the Republican Palace on 17 October. In turn, a significant number of supporters of the civilian-led democratic transition demonstrated across the country on 21 October.

14. Meanwhile, the situation in Eastern Sudan also escalated, with the closure of Red Sea ports and key roads by members of the Beja High Council, which disrupted the supply of medicine, fuel and wheat to the rest of the country. Beja protestors demanded the dissolution of the civilian Government in Khartoum and called for a military takeover, as well as the abrogation of the eastern track of the Juba Peace Agreement. Following the coup of 25 October, negotiations led to the temporary opening of the port and the main roads on 1 November for a month, pending further consultations.

15. At the regional level, disagreements between Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam continued, and a date for the resumption of talks had yet to be set. Meanwhile, the situation along the Al-Fashaga border between Ethiopia and the Sudan remained volatile, compounded by the escalating conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia and the risk of its further spillover into the Sudan. On 21 September, in the wake of the attempted coup in Khartoum, the Sudanese authorities announced that they had thwarted an attempt by the Ethiopian army to invade Al-Fashaga. The Ethiopian authorities denied this claim.

B. Security situation

16. There was a worrying deterioration in the security environment in the country during the reporting period. In addition to the impact of the attempted coup on 21 September and the coup on 25 October, intercommunal conflict and clashes between armed groups continued in several locations, along with prolonged protests in the east and counter-terrorism operations by security forces in Khartoum. There was a rise in the number of security incidents across the Sudan, from 152 in the previous period to 157. Underreporting cannot be ruled out owing to the continued disruption of communication services in the aftermath of the coup.

17. In the lead-up to and following the coup of 25 October, there was growing civil unrest characterized by significant demonstrations by pro- and anti-transition protestors and a volatile security situation, with significant deployments of military and paramilitary forces in the capital. The military coup triggered a series of demonstrations across the country, organized by resistance committees, professional associations and civil society and spontaneously by local communities. Numerous reports were received of military and security forces dispersing protestors, including by using tear gas and live ammunition.

18. Intercommunal clashes took place between various Arab (Beni Halba, Misseriya) and African (Erenga, Tunjur, Zaghawa) communities in different parts of the country, mostly due to disputes over land ownership, access to resources and criminality, leading to hostilities. Darfur remained the main focus of tension, in particular in the localities of Tawilah and Dar al-Salam, North Darfur, where the wali declared a state of emergency on 19 October.

19. Clashes also occurred among armed groups and with the security forces. On 1 September, government security forces clashed with one of the signatory armed groups to the Juba Peace Agreement, the Tamazuj, in Soba, in the southern part of the city of Khartoum. On 15 September, Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid elements clashed with the Sudanese Armed Forces near the Tawilah area of Darfur. On 12 October, suspected SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction armed elements reportedly attacked a camp belonging to the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction, a signatory armed movement, in the village of Kajor in Southern Kordofan, allegedly over military

training conducted in the area by the signatory armed movement. The attack reportedly resulted in three deaths and 21 injuries. On 9 November, the Rapid Support Forces clashed with Justice and Equality Movement forces in the Jabal Eissa area, North Darfur.

20. Government security forces conducted what they characterized as counter-terrorism operations in Khartoum on 28 September and 4 October. The operations featured the exchange of fire between the security forces and alleged terrorist cell members reportedly affiliated with Da'esh, in two separate incidents. Six security personnel and 3 suspects were reported to have been killed, while four security personnel were injured and 25 suspects were arrested. Various weapons, including firearms and explosives, were reportedly seized as a result of the operations. On 9 and 12 October, security forces also reportedly made arrests and confiscated explosives in response to activities related to terrorism in Kusti, White Nile State.

C. Socioeconomic situation

21. While there had been initial signs of economic recovery in the Sudan in recent months, the military coup d'état put such progress in jeopardy. Persistent political instability, in both the east and Khartoum, alongside the lingering effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and high inflation, also continued to hamper investment, economic activity and private consumption amid high unemployment and low productivity.

22. Prior to the coup, the Sudan was expected to experience modest positive economic growth of 0.6 per cent in 2021 as the quick pace of economic reforms began to produce tangible results. The recent clearance of debt arrears with international financial institutions and the decision of the executive boards of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to authorize debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (estimated at close to \$50 billion) had begun to bear fruit, with the World Bank set to commit approximately \$2 billion in grants to help to tackle poverty and inequality and boost growth. The Sudan was also due to receive \$500 million in budget support, \$300 million for electricity improvements and \$300 million for irrigation projects before the end of 2021.

23. However, in the immediate aftermath of the coup on 25 October, the World Bank announced that it had paused disbursement for all its operations in the Sudan as well as the processing of any new projects. The United States of America also announced the suspension of \$700 million in emergency assistance to the country and Germany suspended aid until further notice. France, a leading creditor, also announced that it would reconsider the cancellation of debt owed to it by the Sudan. The suspension of Internet services from 25 October until partial restoration on 18 November also had a negative impact on the economy.

24. Following the devaluation of the official exchange rate and the removal of fuel subsidies earlier in the year, price growth reached a record high of 428 per cent (year-on-year) in July 2021 and subsequently fell to 388 per cent in August and 366 per cent in September. The deceleration at elevated levels came as costs of both local and imported goods declined, influenced by lower prices and stability in the exchange rate. Nevertheless, household purchasing power remained low as goods shortages and high transport and fuel prices continued to affect business activity. The economy was also negatively affected by the closure of Red Sea ports and roads and the resulting need to divert imported goods.

25. The roll-out of the family support programme, a cash-transfer scheme launched in February 2021, continued to expand, including in the states of Western, Northern and Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, Eastern Darfur and Central Darfur. More than

8 million people have registered but not all have received support. Challenges with registration and payment systems have delayed the roll-out. The programme was expected to launch its third phase by mid-November to reach all states. However, after the World Bank paused its activities in the Sudan, the programme suspended registration and direct cash payments to citizens until further notice.

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

26. The human rights situation in the Sudan remained fragile, with continued reports of incidents of intercommunal violence, especially in Darfur, attacks against civilians and conflict-related sexual violence. The declaration of a state of emergency on 25 October was followed by the arbitrary arrest and detention of numerous persons, including ministers and other officials, leaders of the FFC, members of the Dismantling Committee and regional subcommittees, opposition leaders, civil society activists, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists. At the time of writing, at least 18 of those arrested, including senior officials, were being held incommunicado and their whereabouts were unknown. There was no official record of their arrest and their families and lawyers had been denied access to them.

27. According to medical sources, at least 43 protesters were reportedly killed as a result of the excessive and disproportionate use of force by security forces in response to protests against the coup, and more than 600 persons, including women, were reportedly injured, suffering bullet wounds and injuries caused by tear gas inhalation and beatings. Cases of violence against women and children were recorded, including during a raid on a female student dormitory located near the military headquarters in Khartoum on 25 October. Many female students were reportedly beaten, resulting in injuries. Many civilians were also arrested in relation to their participation in the protests. Most have since been released but many still face charges. While police and other security forces continued to deny using live ammunition to disperse demonstrators, the acting Governor of Khartoum announced on 20 November that he had formed a fact-finding committee led by a prosecutor to investigate incidents of death and injury during the protests on 13 and 17 November, and stated that the perpetrators would be brought to justice. The political agreement of 21 November also referred to an investigation into all events that occurred during protests, including deaths and injuries, and contained a commitment to “bringing perpetrators to justice”.

28. On 25 October, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan invoked state of emergency legislation to suspend mobile-based Internet services, and telecommunications were disrupted across the country. The interruption of Internet services prevented the population from accessing information and significantly impeded the capacity to verify allegations of human rights violations. Owing to the shutdown, all radio stations and television channels reportedly stopped broadcasting, except for Sudan National Television and Omdurman Radio, which were controlled by the security forces. A court ruled on 9 and 11 November to reinstate Internet services under customer protection legislation, the ruling was not immediately implemented. Internet services were partially restored on 18 November, with limited access to social media applications. Some journalists were also arbitrarily arrested and assaulted while reporting on protests, and their homes and offices were raided by security forces. There were concerns that journalists would be charged with crimes under the vague provision of committing crimes “against the unity of nation” or other provisions in the Criminal Act of 1991.

29. Protection challenges coupled with the weaknesses and capacity constraints of State institutions and law enforcement entities continued to expose civilians to vulnerabilities. The resurgence of intercommunal conflicts resulted in the killing of civilians, the destruction of property and displacements, especially in West Darfur

and North Darfur, while clashes between herders and farmers continued with impunity. Some of the violence against civilians was accompanied by the forceful eviction of farmers from their land by Arab nomads. In the Tawilah locality of North Darfur, despite mediation efforts initiated by state authorities, the wali of North Darfur and the Sovereign Council, civilians continued to face harassment and attacks from armed militia groups. This fragile situation was exacerbated by the gradual return of Libya-based Darfuri fighters, who were involved in several armed clashes in North Darfur.

30. From August to November 2021, UNITAMS documented 185 alleged incidents of human rights violations and abuses, involving 607 victims, including 14 children. Violations of the right to life accounted for 107 victims (81 men, 22 women and four children), violations of physical integrity accounted for 326 victims (290 men and 36 women), abductions accounted for 8 victims (including 5 women and one minor), while sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, accounted for 6 victims, including four children. Confirmed arbitrary arrests and detentions accounted for 160 victims (148 men and 12 women), all of which occurred in the aftermath of the military coup. As at 21 November, 120 detainees had been released while 40 continued to be detained. Of the 185 incidents, 102 were attributed to government security forces and 55 to non-State actors, including armed movements and militia groups, while unknown or unidentified individuals accounted for 28 incidents.

31. The United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting grave violations against children, co-chaired by UNITAMS and the United Nations Children's Fund, verified 42 grave violations against 41 children (30 boys and 11 girls) and one incident of military use of a school during the reporting period. The violations were attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces (28) and unidentified perpetrators (14). Violations were verified in North Darfur (29), West Darfur (8), Central Darfur (2), Southern Kordofan (1), East Darfur (1) and Kassala (1). The incident of military use of a school was attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces and took place in South Darfur. This represents a 90 per cent increase in the number of verified violations during the reporting period, compared with the previous period. Darfur remained the most affected region, with 94 per cent of verified violations taking place there. The task force continued to engage with the transitional Government and armed groups on ending and preventing grave violations against children.

32. The recurrence of significant violence exposed protection gaps and delays in the implementation of the transitional Government's reform agenda, including the deployment of the joint security-keeping force as provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians.

33. Prior to the coup, the transitional Government had made some effort to address protection and security concerns as part of its primary responsibility to protect civilians. The rate of response to violence against civilians improved, with investigations and the arrest of alleged perpetrators in 19 incidents. On 5 September, the transitional Government convened the first high-level meeting of the country's international partners with the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians. While acknowledging protection concerns in Darfur, the transitional Government highlighted several challenges that had affected the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, including funding gaps, delayed deployment of the joint security-keeping forces, as well as political and practical difficulties in implementing the Juba Peace Agreement.

34. The transitional Government also proposed the establishment of a coordination task force composed of representatives of United Nations protection entities and the

National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians, which is responsible for the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. With the support of UNITAMS, the transitional Government finalized arrangements to organize a national workshop on 1 and 2 November on the National Plan, bringing together the interministerial body responsible for the implementation of the Plan, UNITAMS and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to develop a comprehensive action plan and implementation road map. These plans were put on hold following the arrest of key government officials on 25 October, including the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, who were lead focal points for the workshop.

35. In the months preceding the coup, the scope for strategic justice and accountability reforms diminished, while polarization in the justice sector intensified following disagreements between the Dismantling Committee and the Supreme Court. The permanent appointment of a Chief Justice and an Attorney General has remained pending since May 2021, when the Sovereign Council dismissed the Chief Justice and accepted the Attorney General's resignation. The transitional Government had not established any of the independent commissions envisaged in the Constitutional Document, including the Transitional Justice Commission, which many civil society groups viewed as lacking sufficient tools to be effective.

36. On 25 September, the Dismantling Committee announced the dismissal of 399 public employees, including 17 judges (7 from the Supreme Court) and prosecutors. The judiciary reacted promptly, noting that the Committee did not have the authority to vet judges and prosecutors. A total of 10 additional decisions by the same chamber of the Supreme Court followed in which it annulled decisions by the Committee in relation to employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Energy, arguing that the Committee lacked the competence to make such decisions and pointing to procedural violations in how its decisions were reached.

E. Humanitarian situation

37. The challenging economic environment, high inflation, heavy rains and floods and the subsequent increase in disease outbreaks continued to drive humanitarian needs across the Sudan during the reporting period. Following a brief pause in activities after the coup on 25 October, humanitarian operations resumed with some impact on sectors working closely with the civil service, such as the health and education sectors. Field operations continued despite limited fuel availability.

38. Following the announcement by the Beja High Council to end the one-month closure of Red Sea ports and roads, 950 containers that had remained stuck since mid-September were moved out of the port. Humanitarian organizations have not subsequently reported any issues with the movement of commodities from the port.

39. The number of acutely food-insecure people decreased from 9.8 million in the period from June to September to about 6 million in October with the start of the harvest season. However, food insecurity may continue after the harvest season between November 2021 and February 2022 as production costs had increased three to four times compared with the previous season, according to the World Food Programme.

40. More than 59,000 people were displaced owing to conflict between August and October, mainly in parts of Darfur and in Southern Kordofan. As at 11 November, over 365,000 people had been displaced in the Sudan in 2021, according to the International Organization for Migration, of whom around 349,000 were displaced owing to conflict. In Sortony, North Darfur, where up to 30,000 people were reportedly displaced during the previous reporting period, humanitarian organizations started to provide food, water, sanitation and hygiene and education-related assistance

following an inter-agency mission to Sortony on 22 September. Humanitarian organizations were working to cover the remaining response gaps in terms of access to health, nutrition and safe water services. Prior to the inter-agency mission, access to Sortony had not been possible for nine weeks as local authorities did not approve the movement of humanitarian personnel, citing security concerns.

41. As of end of October, about 58,000 refugees from Ethiopia sought shelter, protection and assistance in Gedaref and Kassala States. The majority arrived following the outbreak of fighting in Tigray. Since July, nearly 2,000 Quemant have crossed into the Basunda locality in Gedaref from the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. In addition, approximately 10,200 refugees from South Sudan sought shelter, protection and assistance in the Sudan during August and September, mostly in White Nile and East Darfur States. Between January and September 2021, about 67,800 refugees from South Sudan arrived in the Sudan, bringing the total number of South Sudanese refugees in the country to 786,500.

42. Malaria was one of the main diseases affecting patients seeking consultation and treatment. As at 15 October, the Federal Ministry of Health reported 1,822,868 cases of malaria compared with 1,456,413 during the same period in 2020. The number of cases exceeded threshold levels in many states. Over 1,860 cases of hepatitis E had also been registered in the Sudan since June, with most cases reported in Gedaref and South Darfur. Humanitarian partners scaled up their water, sanitation and hygiene response, rehabilitating and building over 5,000 new latrines in Gedaref, including in areas hosting refugees. They also supported the state Ministry of Health with hepatitis E tests and trained epidemiologists in affected states on the detection and reporting of suspected cases. A total of 189 cases of dengue fever were reported, the majority in Northern Kordofan and Kassala.

43. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases continued to increase sharply. As at 20 November, 41,766 positive cases had been registered since the beginning of the pandemic, with over 3,300 associated deaths. COVID-19 cases were highly underreported owing to the lack of access to testing and a fragile surveillance system. The roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in the Sudan was slow, according to the Ministry of Health. Since mid-March, only 3 per cent of the country's 47 million people have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

44. During the reporting period, the World Health Organization Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care recorded one incident affecting patients, personnel and facilities.

45. Heavy rains and floods that started in parts of the Sudan in June continued to affect people in 14 of the 18 states, overwhelming the local response capacity. A total of 314,500 people were affected, with 15,000 houses destroyed by torrential rain and flooding, a further 46,000 damaged and an unconfirmed number of public infrastructure facilities and farmlands affected. The transitional Government, through the Humanitarian Aid Commission, along with humanitarian partners reached close to 183,000 flood-affected people with various types of humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene and nutrition aid. Flood preparedness activities carried out earlier in 2021 helped to reduce the impact of the floods on people.

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

A. Scale-up of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan

46. The scale-up of UNITAMS continued to accelerate. By the end of November, the total number of staff deployed stood at 157 (110 international and 47 national staff members). There was progress in the establishment of the Mission's field network, with the regional hub in El Fasher fully staffed and operational, and with the initial deployment of personnel in Kadugli. Preparations were ongoing for the opening of field presences in the east and other parts of Darfur. Planning was also completed for the establishment of the Office of the Chairperson of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee in El Fasher, and UNITAMS put in place temporary capacity for the Office pending approval from the United Nations legislative bodies. The Office of the Chairperson will lead the Mission's efforts in providing support for implementing the ceasefire arrangements of the Juba Peace Agreement.

B. Integrated approach

47. UNITAMS and the United Nations country team continued to deepen their collaboration. The United Nations common country assessment for the Sudan was finalized. It comprises detailed analysis of the country's development context and national vision for sustainable development, cross-boundary, regional and subregional perspectives, and analysis of progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the priority areas of peace, people, prosperity, planet and partnerships. The assessment process included a national stakeholder mapping exercise and consultations with key partners at the national and state levels, including members of the transitional Government, civil society organizations, women's organizations and groups, youth groups and groups of marginalized and vulnerable persons.

48. The United Nations in the Sudan began consultations on the development of the United Nations-Sudan transition plan (integrated strategic framework), which will articulate the common vision, priorities and responsibilities of the United Nations in support of the country's transition. The transition plan was being developed in partnership with the transitional Government and was expected to be finalized before the end of the year. However, progress slowed after the coup of 25 October, especially with respect to planned consultations with the transitional Government.

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

49. UNITAMS continued to engage with all relevant actors to support the transition. Following the coup on 25 October, the Special Representative actively supported the promotion of dialogue and the coordination of mediation efforts aimed at reaching a negotiated political settlement and restoring the constitutional order. UNITAMS also used its good offices to facilitate dialogue between tribal leaders in the east of the country and the transitional authorities with a view to building confidence and easing the closure of the eastern ports and roads, which was eventually ended following the coup.

50. Ahead of the publication of the draft constitution-making law on 9 September, UNITAMS, together with international partners, provided technical advice to the Minister of Justice. The draft law provides for the establishment of the Constitutional

Commission, detailed steps for the constitution-making process and the formation of a general secretariat and trust fund to administer and support the process. The Ministry of Justice commenced a series of consultative meetings with stakeholders across the Sudan on 18 October. UNITAMS began consultations with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and constitutional experts to identify areas for technical support for the constitution-making process.

51. On 19 and 20 September, UNITAMS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided support to the Office of the Prime Minister in holding a workshop for secretariat and subcommittee members of the Dismantling Committee on international best practices, standards and norms in vetting. The workshop highlighted challenges associated with implementing the broad scope of attempts to dismantle remnants of the former regime in the Sudan and managing public support. Recommendations underscored the urgent need to define and publish the Committee's procedural rules and criteria and increase training. However, these recommendations could not be implemented before 25 October, nor after the coup as the Committee's leaders were among those detained.

52. Advisory work on a number of rule of law, human rights and governance matters, in particular ongoing consultations on draft laws and various commissions due to be established pursuant to the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace Agreement, was interrupted by the coup of 25 October, largely owing to the removal of government counterparts, including the Attorney General.

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

53. Implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, in particular its security arrangements, continued to make modest progress. In consultation with the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee held its inaugural meeting on 3 and 4 October in El Fasher, North Darfur, with representatives of the transitional Government and signatory armed movements. Discussions were focused on the operationalization of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee through, inter alia, an effective joint mechanism to monitor, verify and resolve ceasefire violations. The Chairperson of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee also held consultations with representatives of Chad and South Sudan as constituent members.

54. In preparation for the inaugural meeting, UNITAMS facilitated a technical consultative meeting with representatives of the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, regional leaders, representatives of regional administrations and civil society organizations, including women's groups, in Khartoum on 5 and 6 September. The meeting helped to establish a common understanding of the mandate, tasks and institutional structure of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee, as well as the requirements for its operationalization. Following the inaugural meeting, the Chairperson of the Committee and his team conducted familiarization visits to Nyala and Zalingei to raise awareness among representatives of the regional administration and members of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on the composition and work of the new ceasefire monitoring mechanism in order to further explore potential areas of cooperation and coordination. The second meeting of the Committee was held on 24 and 25 October and was adjourned at the midpoint by consensus among all participants to allow for consultations on the next steps following the coup. As part of its tasks, the Committee also mobilized efforts to deescalate tensions in response to the outbreak of clashes on 9 November between signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement.

55. UNITAMS and the United Nations Secretariat developed a concept of operations and assessment of required resources to ensure the sustainability of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee. The initial concept is focused on capacities in Darfur, while noting the potential for the extension of ceasefire functions to other parts of the country subject to ongoing peace talks. The Mission also began a series of consultations with signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement to map broader support needs and enhance its capacity for supporting the implementation of the human rights, protection and justice elements of the agreement.

56. The Mission continued to engage both the transitional Government and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, as well as the South Sudanese mediation team, on options to resume the peace process and bridge differences between the parties following the adjournment of talks on 15 June. UNITAMS conducted a scoping mission to Kauda on 31 August in addition to a series of meetings held in Khartoum with representatives of both parties. Meanwhile, engagement with women from SPLM-N continued, specifically to hear their views on the political process and on capacity-building needs. These consultations led to the planning by UNITAMS, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNDP of a joint workshop on Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and women's leadership in Juba on 30 and 31 October, which was postponed owing to the coup.

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

57. UNITAMS and the United Nations country team continued to support the transitional Government's preparations to establish key independent commissions, including the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Peace Commission and the Transitional Justice Commission. While laws for the establishment of these commissions were formally published on 17 July, the selection of commissioners and the operationalization of the commissions remained pending. Consultations on the draft laws on the Legal Reform Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the Gender Commission were under way until the coup of 25 October. Legislative drafting had not yet begun on other key bodies, such as the Civil Service Commission and the Land Commission.

58. In September, UNDP and UNITAMS started a series of discussions on strengthening the Office of the Attorney General to prosecute serious crimes and boosting judicial independence. However, delays in appointing the Chief Justice and the Attorney General (both posts vacant since May 2021) limited progress on justice reform. Also in September, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime conducted a prison reform scoping mission to the Sudan in close coordination with the General Directorate of Prisons and Reform, which included prison visits and an initial training course for the senior management of the Directorate. On 21 September, UNDP supported the Judicial Training Institute in hosting a conference with chief judges from all states to identify reform priorities. The recommendations were meant to lead to a judicial reform strategy.

59. UNITAMS continued to support the operationalization of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. On 3 and 4 October, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations country team, the Mission launched the first of a series of round tables between the state-level protection of civilians committees and community representatives, including civil society and women protection networks. The round tables sought to foster community engagement at an early stage of the operationalization of the committees. The second round table began on 24 October in Ed Daein, East Darfur, but was suspended midway

owing to the coup. Further round tables had been planned for all five states in Darfur before the end of the year.

60. UNITAMS worked with the United Nations country team to finalize a joint strategy to support the transitional Government in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. A detailed programme document and a list of activities were developed, with particular focus on prevention, physical protection and the creation of an enabling and protective environment. The programme, slated to include training on international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as the operationalization of the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians and state-level protection committees, remained in question at the time of reporting.

61. Earlier in the reporting period, UNITAMS supported the Sudanese Police Force in the assessment of needs to support the implementation of the police's mandate in the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. The assessment was jointly presented by the Mission and UNDP to members of the international community on 7 September. UNITAMS continued to support the Sudanese Police Force in capacity-building and training, including on the protection of civilians, human rights and gender awareness, in addition to confidence-building measures with communities and internally displaced persons. The Mission assisted a recruitment process conducted by the Sudanese Police Force that resulted in the selection of 687 candidates, including 249 women, exceeding the previous threshold of 20 per cent.

62. UNITAMS initiated a series of peacebuilding assessments for North Darfur, South Darfur, Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, Red Sea and Kassala States to inform the Mission's good offices role at the subnational level, as well as peacebuilding planning and programme design. These in-depth, subnational conflict analyses, scheduled to be undertaken in collaboration with the transitional Government and partners, were put on hold following the coup.

63. On 14 October, the Special Representative joined the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Labour, a member of the Sovereign Council, Ibrahim Jaber, donors and implementing partners for the opening of the Sudan Regional Training Centre for Humanitarian Mine Action in Omdurman. UNITAMS provided technical support and capacity-building for project design and implementation, as well as for administering donor funding. The Centre stands as the newest mine action landmark for improving both capacity-building and technical assistance in response to the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war in the country.

64. UNITAMS and the National Mine Action Centre provided explosive ordinance disposal training to 21 participants from local mine action non-governmental organizations. It also provided training to 21 individuals from the SPLM-N Malik Agar faction who were subsequently integrated into the national non-governmental organization for demining activities in Ulu, Blue Nile, which consisted of four demining teams undertaking operations to pave the road for required humanitarian support in areas controlled by that faction. Furthermore, UNITAMS, in partnership with the National Mine Action Centre, finalized a comprehensive assessment report on victim assistance and the disability sector in the Sudan. In the report, it assessed and identified the needs of the most at-risk populations and of victims of explosive hazards across the country, while providing a road map to strengthen victim assistance interventions.

65. The Office of Counter-Terrorism intensified advice to Sudanese stakeholders on a counter-terrorism framework, including through the organization of workshops to strengthen the country's capacity to prevent and counter terrorism in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. In the framework of the United Nations-European Union Counter-Terrorism Partnership for the Sudan, the Office

held a workshop in Khartoum on 13 and 14 September on the protection of vulnerable targets and critical infrastructure.

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

66. Prior to the coup, UNITAMS had continued its efforts to improve the coordination of economic and development assistance in the Sudan. On 9 September, the Mission supported the launch of the Sudan Partnership Forum by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. Chaired by the Prime Minister, with the United Nations, the World Bank and a donor representative as Vice-Chairs, the Forum was designed to foster coordination on the planning and delivery of development assistance in line with national priorities and established global principles of effective development cooperation.

67. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#), the Sudan peacemaking, peacebuilding and stabilization programme – the programmatic framework supporting mandate implementation – was finalized and shared with Member States. Terms of reference for the multi-partner trust fund, also known as the Sudan financing platform, were finalized and two projects were approved for funding: one supporting the good offices function of the Special Representative and the other increasing capacity within the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs to implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians.

C. Review of benchmarks

68. The Mission continued to develop proposed benchmarks and indicators to track progress against strategic objectives, in line with the request outlined by the Security Council in its resolution [2579 \(2021\)](#) to work with the United Nations country team and the Government to identify qualitative indicators to complement existing indicators that are quantitative in nature. To this end, revision of the benchmarks continued in conjunction with finalization of the Sudan peacemaking, peacebuilding and stabilization programme and commencement of the Sudan transition plan to ensure the alignment of planning and reporting frameworks. Planned consultations with the transitional Government were, however, delayed following the coup.

IV. Observations

69. With the third anniversary of the Sudanese revolution approaching, the future of the Sudanese transition remains uncertain. The military coup of 25 October and the dissolution of the civilian component of the transitional Government shattered the hopes of many Sudanese for a civilian-led democratic future. It risks derailing the significant achievements made on the international and economic fronts and depriving the Sudan of much needed aid and debt relief. The continued arbitrary arrest and detention of civilian officials, journalists and activists have further alienated those seeking the restoration of constitutional order.

70. The agreement reached on 21 November between Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and the Prime Minister is a step towards resolving the political crisis gripping the country and returning to the constitutional order. All sides need to make concerted and timely efforts to negotiate, with a view to effectively addressing unresolved issues in an inclusive manner, and in such a way that is considered legitimate by the Sudanese people and the country's partners. The United Nations continues to extend its good offices to facilitate a dialogue that can support the transition to a democratic Government in the Sudan in line with the demands and aspirations of the Sudanese

people, in close coordination with the African Union and regional partners, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States.

71. I reiterate my call for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arrested and detained arbitrarily, and to cease arrests of political opposition leaders and activists. Those who have been charged should be afforded a fair trial. Amid an increasingly hostile environment for journalists, I also urge the authorities to respect freedom of speech and freedom of the press. There are consistent reports of the use of live ammunition by security and military forces against peaceful protestors, resulting in deaths and injuries. This is unacceptable. I urge the Sudanese authorities to abide by their obligations under international human rights law and to respect the rights to life, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. I welcome the commitment set out in the political agreement to investigate all deaths and injuries of protestors and call for such investigations to be thorough, independent and transparent and for those responsible to be held accountable. I also express my condolences to the families and friends of those who died and wish a speedy recovery to those injured.

72. The slow implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement remains of concern. The military coup of 25 October has jeopardized the Agreement and the important progress made in ending conflicts throughout the Sudanese territory. The actions of the military have eroded trust and confidence among the non-signatory armed groups to the Agreement and risk setting the country back on a path of violence and conflict. The absence of progress in the talks between the transitional Government and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction is disheartening. Meanwhile, the eastern track has remained a driver of conflict and efforts to facilitate an inclusive dialogue to reach consensus on outstanding political issues have not progressed, in the light of the political crisis in Khartoum. I urge all parties to make good faith efforts towards peacemaking and addressing the underlying causes of conflict for the benefit of the Sudanese people.

73. The establishment of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Permanent Ceasefire Committee constitutes a significant step towards the implementation of security arrangements stipulated in the Juba Peace Agreement. It is critical that the Committee is provided with adequate, timely and sustainable logistical and financial support. I encourage the authorities and the partners of the Sudan to ensure that the country receives the resources necessary to fulfil its critical task and establish its various structures, including at the state level, so that it reaches all Darfur states. Sustained efforts will be required to ensure the inclusion of gender-responsive programming and the meaningful participation of women at all levels, including field teams, while engagements with women's groups continue. 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 and support to peace implementation.

74. Rising intercommunal tensions in Darfur and other areas of the country remain a source of concern. While the transitional Government had made some progress in addressing intercommunal violence through mediation efforts before the coup, civilians continue to be at risk. I urge the authorities to fulfil their responsibilities to protect civilians, including by making progress in the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, notably through the deployment of the joint security-keeping force and related provisions in the Juba Peace Agreement. Special attention is also required on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence.

75. The coup highlighted the importance of accountability, while also demonstrating the challenges of civilian justice institutions in the Sudan to address and prevent serious human rights violations. The absence of a permanently appointed Chief Justice and Attorney General since May and a Constitutional Court throughout the transitional period has meant that there is no functioning independent mechanism by which human rights violations, including illegal detentions, can be reviewed. All judicial appointments must be made as soon as possible as part of ongoing deliberations to restore the constitutional order and a demonstrated commitment to deliver on calls for accountability for serious crimes, including those committed during the recent political crisis. At the same time, the commitment in the political agreement to reforming the dismantling process is an opportunity to positively revise it. The United Nations stands ready to support reforms and better align Sudanese vetting efforts with international standards and norms.

76. Sudanese women played a central and historic role in the revolution that led to the civilian-led transition, which makes their absence from high-level political decision-making even more pronounced and troubling. Security concerns and communication difficulties due to the disruption of telecommunications and the Internet blackout have impeded collective organizing, and yet women continue to come out in high numbers to peacefully demonstrate in support of the civilian-led transition. I am concerned by reports of harassment, intimidation and incidents of targeted violence against women protestors. I urge all parties to cease all forms of violence against women. I encourage the rightful participation of women in mediation efforts to resolve the current political crisis.

77. The number of COVID-19 cases has been on the rise in the Sudan. Interruptions to testing and to the vaccination campaign following the coup have compounded matters. Despite the challenges, testing and vaccination efforts must be restarted as soon as feasible, under the auspices of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, to avoid a further deterioration of the situation and the emergence of a health crisis in the context of a political one.

78. I thank my Special Representative, Volker Perthes, and all United Nations personnel in the Sudan for their dedication and tireless efforts in support of the country and its people, in particular at this time of political uncertainty in the Sudan.
