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<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Baeriswyl	(Switzerland)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mr. Ishikane
	Malta	Mr. Camilleri
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (S/2023/355)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (S/2023/355)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan; His Excellency Mr. Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; and His Excellency Mr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/355, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Perthes.

Mr. Perthes: More than five weeks have passed since the eruption of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in the Sudan on 15 April. Despite repeated earlier declarations of ceasefire by both sides, there has been no day without fighting, and neither side has been able to claim a military victory.

The agreement on a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements, which was signed two days ago in Jeddah is an important step forward. It offers hope for the civilians and shows that the violence

can be ended if both sides comply. I will return to that at the end of my short presentation.

The civilian population of the Sudan has already paid a heavy price for the senseless violence. According to estimates of the Sudan Doctors' Union, more than 860 civilians have been killed, including more than 190 children, with another 3,500 civilians injured. Many are missing. More than a million have been displaced. More than 840,000 have sought shelter in safer parts of the country, while approximately another 250,000 have crossed Sudanese borders. And those figures do not capture the harrowing stories of the thousands of men and women who abandoned their homes in search of safety across the borders. Many have waited for days and weeks at border crossings to secure passage. And neither of those statistics illustrate the suffering of many others who could not leave and stay in their homes with depleted supplies and no access to humanitarian assistance.

I am grateful to those countries that are receiving refugees and refugees fleeing the Sudan. It is vital that borders remain open to those who seek safety. Procedures at border crossings should be expedited. The United Nations continues to provide its support to alleviate the burden on neighbouring States and ensure that refugee needs are met with dignity.

In Khartoum, Darfur and elsewhere, the warring parties have fought their war with little regard for the laws and norms of war. Homes, shops, places of worship, water and electricity installations have been destroyed or damaged. The health sector is collapsing, with more than two thirds of hospitals closed, many health-care workers killed and medical supplies running low. The frequently reported use of health facilities as military positions is unacceptable. I am appalled by the reports of sexual violence against women and girls, including allegations of rape in Khartoum and Darfur. The United Nations is following up to verify those cases. The warring parties must prevent any reoccurrence of such violence.

Children are facing serious protection concerns and continue to be vulnerable to recruitment, sexual violence and abduction. Reports of rampant looting, intimidation, harassment and enforced disappearance are deeply concerning. United Nations premises and residences, including the compound of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, as well as large amounts of food

and humanitarian supplies, have also been looted. Criminality is compounded by the release of thousands of prisoners and the increasing spread of small arms. And I am also concerned about reported death threats against political activists and leaders, the arrests of Sudanese volunteers and the intimidation of journalists.

In parts of the country, fighting between the two armies — or the two armed formations — has sharpened into communal tensions or triggered conflict between communities. In El Geneina, West Darfur, clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces spiralled into ethnic violence on 24 April. Tribal militias joined the fight, and civilians took up arms to defend themselves. Homes, markets and hospitals were ransacked and burned, and United Nations premises were looted.

In mid-May, renewed violence led to more death and destruction. Altogether, more than 250 persons were reportedly killed, and tens of thousands were displaced to neighbouring Chad. The security situation is impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid. I continue to engage with national and local leaders to de-escalate the situation. Worrisome signs of tribal mobilization have also been reported in other parts of the country, particularly South Kordofan and the Blue Nile region. The fighting throughout the country has resulted in serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and has undermined the protection of civilians. Those violations must be investigated and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. The United Nations family continues to monitor and advocate for an end to all the violations.

Some commentators have placed the blame for this conflict on the international community for not having seen the warning signs. Others blame the political process, or the Framework Agreement — which was intended to lead to a civilian-led Government — or the international community, for giving an outsize role in the process to men with guns. But let us be clear. The responsibility for the fighting rests with those who are waging it daily. The leaders of the two sides share accountability for choosing to settle their unresolved conflict on the battlefield rather than at the negotiating table. It is their decision that is ravaging the Sudan. And they can end it.

What happened on 15 April and has continued since is precisely what the United Nations and our partners in the international community tried to prevent. Before

and after the military takeover of 25 October 2021, we engaged diligently with the two military leaders and with the civilian leadership to persuade them to talk and to return to a meaningful transition to civilian rule through a political process. As the tensions grew amid reports of a build-up of forces, I raised the alarm in my briefing to the Security Council in March (see S/PV.9289) and urged the parties to de-escalate. In the two weeks prior to the outbreak of the fighting, alongside my partners in the trilateral mechanism and the Quad — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Kingdom — I intensified our engagement with the military leaders to de-escalate the situation. We coordinated those efforts with Sudanese civilians, who also tried to mediate between the Generals, recognizing the gravity of the situation. We also asked actors in the region to use their leverage with the two parties. Our efforts continued until the night before 15 April, when we thought progress had been made, only to wake up the next morning to the reality that the parties had chosen war.

Unfortunately, the hostilities have compelled us to temporarily relocate many of our staff to Port Sudan or outside the Sudan. Let me be very clear here. That does not mean that we have abandoned the Sudanese people or the Sudan. We continue to work with our Sudanese partners. We remain firmly committed to four immediate priorities — first, achieving a stable ceasefire with a monitoring mechanism; secondly, preventing the escalation or ethnicization of the conflict; thirdly, the protection of civilians and provision of humanitarian relief and fourthly, preparing a fresh political process for when the time is ripe, with the participation of a broad array of civil and political actors, including women.

Through our hub in Port Sudan, UNITAMS has supported the efforts of our country team and humanitarian partners to restore the flow of humanitarian supplies into and within the country. The United Nations family is doing its utmost to expand our response throughout the country, particularly in areas of acute need. But it is also essential that the eastern areas of the country — Red Sea state, where Port Sudan is, as well as Kassala and Al-Qadarif — be used both as a point of entry for humanitarian aid and for receiving a fair share of that aid, not least with regard to the increasing movement of displaced persons to that region. Additional funding is urgently needed. The revised humanitarian response plan was launched on 17 May,

requesting \$2.6 billion for reaching 18 million people in need, up from 15 million before the fighting began.

Thanks to Saudi and United States mediation, representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces signed a declaration of commitments in Jeddah on 11 May and an agreement on a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements on 20 May. The short-term ceasefire, which is expected to enter into force tonight, will remain in effect for seven days and is renewable. It should allow civilians to move and humanitarian access to reach the people. It is a welcome development, though the fighting and troop movements have continued even today, despite the commitment from both sides to refraining from pursuing military advantage before the ceasefire takes effect. We understand that a basic monitoring mechanism will be set up between the two parties and the mediators. UNITAMS stands ready to support a monitoring mechanism for the longer term or for a permanent ceasefire. We can build on the staff and on the structures that have been established in the Permanent Ceasefire Committee for Darfur, which UNITAMS has been chairing since mid-2021.

I continue to urge the parties to honour the agreement they signed two days ago. They must stop the fighting. They must allow access for humanitarian relief, protect humanitarian workers and assets and allow safe passage for civilians to leave areas where there are hostilities. I will also continue to engage the leadership of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure while pushing for an end to this war. We are coordinating closely with Sudanese partners working for peace. Let me also commend the leaders of the armed movements that are signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement for their efforts to restore peace and for their neutrality in the conflict. Sudanese civil society is playing a strong role in advocating for peace while continuing to support civilians in need, and its efforts must be supported.

Both parties have been calling on me to condemn the other side's actions. I call on both of them to end the fighting and return to dialogue in the interests of the Sudan and its people. Lives and infrastructure are being destroyed. The growing ethnicization of the conflict risks expanding and prolonging it, with implications for the wider region. The agreed short-term ceasefire could and should pave the way for talks for a durable cessation of hostilities. As the talks advance, a diverse array of

civil and political stakeholders should play their role. Ultimately, only a credible civilian-led transition can chart lasting peace in the Sudan. I note the appointment of Malik Aqar, a signatory to the Juba Peace Agreement and Chair of the recently formed peace bloc, as Vice-President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council. Mr. Aqar stated that his overall priority is to reach a permanent ceasefire, end the war and silence the guns. That certainly deserves all of our full support.

The regional and international efforts to urgently end the fighting in the Sudan are laudable. As those efforts multiply, we must ensure coordination if we are to forge a common approach that will enhance our collective leverage and the effectiveness of our efforts. Any coordinated plan must involve the Sudan's neighbours and the region. I am very glad that my colleagues, Commissioner Bankole Adeoye and Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu, will be briefing the Council and going into more detail regarding the efforts of the trilateral partners, the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The United Nations will continue to work closely with our partners in the trilateral mechanism, including the AU and IGAD, in support of those efforts and coordination with others.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Perthes for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Adeoye.

Mr. Adeoye: On behalf of the African Union (AU), at the outset, let me assure members of the Security Council of the African Union's full cooperation in ensuring the success of its deliberation and engagement on African issues, particularly that of the Sudan.

The worrisome situation in the Sudan, which is on the Council's agenda today, is engaging the attention of the African Union at the highest level. Members are aware how greatly we were mobilized from the very first days of the overthrow of former President Omer Al-Bashir to support the efforts to overcome the post-revolution challenges in the Sudan. The AU, with the support of its partners, worked to put in place a mediation arrangement that was expected to lead to an inclusive, smooth and broad-based political transition. The AU deployed active and effective mediation with the support of AU member States and development partners in 2019, which, in general, was met with the satisfaction of the Sudanese people and partners, when

an institutional transitional mechanism for a peaceful and balanced transition was established.

Unfortunately, the acute internal disagreements, exacerbated by fragmentation and polarization among political and military actors in the Sudan, coupled by the multiplicity of external interference, undermined the transition, which, of course, led to the stalemate resulting in the irresponsible and senseless coup of 25 October 2021. The AU condemned the coup and eventually, in line with its normative principles and shared values, suspended the Sudan's membership, while continuing to work with partners for the rapid restoration of constitutional order and a consensual transition. In doing so, we established the trilateral mechanism and collaboratively worked with the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, together with the AU. As all know, a political framework agreement was signed in December 2022, and work was under way to ensure its extension to all political actors and additional inclusivity.

However, the outbreak of hostilities on 15 April, between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, tragically dashed our hopes to the lead-up of the resumption of the political transition process and civilian-led democratic rule. Since then, the AU has been working relentlessly to ensure an end to the conflict. On 16 April, exactly one day after the outbreak of hostilities, the African Union Peace and Security Council convened to consider the crisis in the Sudan. It condemned the fighting, called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and requested the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to use his good offices to ensure that the guns be silenced. On 20 April, the AU Commission Chairperson brought together the key actors in the international community to coordinate and intensify efforts for an immediate ceasefire, as well as humanitarian assistance and the resumption of the political process. Consequently, on 2 May, the AU convened the expanded mechanism, and consultations are under way for its full operationalization. Our conviction is that only well-coordinated collective action will give the success of the international action for peace and stability in the Sudan a chance. Separate, competing or rival actions would further complicate and undermine the search for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

It is in that context that the African Union has developed a comprehensive de-escalation plan, which identifies six pillars that need to be addressed for

a sustainable resolution of the Sudanese conflict. Permit me to highlight the six pillars, which are: first, coordinated international action to avoid the proliferation and duplication of mediation initiatives; secondly, an immediate, unconditional, permanent and comprehensive ceasefire; thirdly, urgent humanitarian action to alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese people; fourthly, the protection of civilians, State infrastructure and ensuring accountability for actions taken by the warring parties; fifthly, firm support for neighbouring countries in the region that have been impacted by the crisis; and, lastly, the resumption of a fully representative and inclusive political process leading towards the return of democratic, civilian-led Government.

We are hopeful that African leaders will reconvene under the auspices of the African Union Peace and Security Council later this week to endorse the African Union de-escalation plan. As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes has described, the situation in the Sudan remains dire. The destruction of public and private institutions is unfortunately systematic, which is the case with health, academic, economic, financial, social and humanitarian institutions. The sick and the wounded are dying without receiving any care. That is totally unacceptable. Gross human rights violations are rampant. Arrests, looting and sexual assault are on the rise. We must urgently end the fighting, without delay.

The Council must shoulder its responsibility in the face of the intolerable and unnecessary conflict. The African Union has closely monitored the steps taken by Saudi Arabia and the United States in Jeddah. We also welcome the commitment demonstrated by the two warring parties by signing a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian agreement. However, we call for further concerted actionable efforts towards a lasting cessation of hostilities. We urge them to go the full distance to achieve peace. A comprehensive permanent silencing of the guns now is the only remedy for the good people of the Sudan. The resumption of the political transition premised on inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation that brings together all actors of Sudanese society, fully complemented by the international community, will promote peace and stability in the Sudan.

We must now collectively start planning for inclusive negotiations on a political process that will be agreed to by the Sudanese people. It is important

that we take on board the relationship between the centre and the periphery, between the State and its citizens and between the Sudan and its neighbours so that the Sudanese can build the Sudan that they want. The African Union is working to support such an inclusive political process that will allow for the full representation of the voices of all sectors of Sudanese civil society and political parties. The AU is also striving to ensure that States bordering the Sudan, which are endlessly receiving growing numbers of traumatized Sudanese refugees, are assisted at this difficult time. The AU will be deploying special envoys — as directed by the Chairperson of the Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat — to all neighbouring countries in due course.

A strong commitment by the Council to a ceasefire, the implementation of humanitarian assistance and the resumption of the political process is imperative, as is a united and coherent international coalition, to promote peace in the Sudan. We must arrest the Sudan's slide into complete collapse and chaos, which would have unbearable consequences for the region, the African continent and the world at large.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Adeoye for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gebeyehu.

Mr. Gebeyehu: Allow me to begin my statement by thanking the Council for convening yet another meeting on the situation in the Sudan and inviting the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to brief it and share our views and perspectives. The Security Council's continued engagement and follow-up on developments in the Sudan is much appreciated and needed.

IGAD welcomes the signing of the agreement on a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements in the Sudan between representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces on 20 May 2023 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, brokered by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America. That most recent development constitutes commendable progress and makes us cautiously optimistic that a permanent cessation of hostilities is within reach. As per the agreement, the ceasefire will remain in effect for seven days, effective today, and is subject to extension on the basis of agreement between the parties. We are also happy that the agreement is aimed at, inter alia, facilitating the delivery and distribution

of humanitarian assistance, the restoration of essential services and the withdrawal of forces from hospitals and essential public services, which are greatly needed by the people of the Republic of the Sudan.

The fact that previous ceasefire agreements were violated repeatedly in the past five weeks may cause our hope for and trust in respect for the current ceasefire agreement by the warring parties to wane. However, it is noteworthy that, unlike previous agreements, the parties have signed the current agreement, which will also be monitored by a United States- and Saudi-supported ceasefire monitoring mechanism. Irrespective of challenges that may be faced in its implementation, such progress is worth capitalizing and building upon.

The past five weeks of fighting have had a heavy toll on the people of the Republic of the Sudan. As reports and Special Representative Perthes have indicated, this is the start of a substantial challenge facing the people of the Sudan unless we collectively stop the violence and conflict. The longer the fighting takes, the higher the toll will be. It will also further complicate and compound the crisis, as new internal and external actors may become involved in the conflict. Most importantly, shortages of food and medical facilities and services will exacerbate the humanitarian crisis.

Besides the people of the Sudan, neighbouring countries are also feeling the impact of the war, as they are hosting thousands of refugees. Those countries are either emerging from conflict or facing serious economic and humanitarian crises themselves. For instance, the Republic of South Sudan, which has close economic and social ties with the Republic of the Sudan, has been affected by the conflict, as the price of goods has spiked, and the purchasing power of the South Sudanese pound has weakened since the conflict broke out in the Republic of the Sudan.

It is due to the close historical social and economic ties that IGAD member States have with the Sudanese people, as well as the direct impact that the war is having on those countries as a result of their geographical proximity, that IGAD has been actively working together with other partner organizations and States to secure a ceasefire. In that regard, the high-level IGAD delegation led by His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit has been engaging the warring parties on a daily basis and consulting and coordinating with regional and international actors. On 17 and 18 May, I was in Juba, South Sudan, to encourage President

Mayardit in his commitment to lead IGAD's efforts to resolve the crisis in the Sudan and also to exchange views on the next steps to be taken to silence the guns in the Republic of the Sudan. I call on the international community to support and complement those efforts in a coordinated manner.

Despite our limited capacities and resources, IGAD and its member States are doing everything possible within our reach to support the people of the Sudan. Neighbouring countries have also sent humanitarian assistance. Countries such as Ethiopia, South Sudan and Djibouti have played a key role in the evacuation of foreign citizens and the staff of diplomatic missions and international organizations based in the Sudan. It is high time that the international community work closely and support those front-line countries to help them to provide adequate and timely support to the people of the Sudan and Sudanese refugees, as well as in sending much-needed humanitarian support to the country.

While I appreciate and commend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America for their relentless efforts in facilitating the Jeddah talks, I encourage them to involve and engage with the trilateral mechanism as the entity entrusted by the regional, continental and international communities to facilitate the political process in the Republic of the Sudan.

The only way we can stop the fighting in the Sudan sooner rather than later is if our efforts are better coordinated and streamlined and our collective actions swifter. We all have one purpose and goal in the Sudan: to silence the guns and to resume the inclusive Sudanese-led, Sudanese-owned political process that will pave the way towards the formation of a civilian-led transitional Government. Let us put our heads together and join hands to support the Sudanese people's quest for durable peace and democracy. As experience in the region shows, our chances of success are greater when efforts are coordinated and neighbouring States are actively involved and engaged in finding solutions.

I would like to end my remarks by reiterating IGAD's unwavering commitment to continue working and coordinating closely with the United Nations and other continental and international actors, as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America, towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and the resumption of an inclusive political process in the Sudan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Gebeyehu for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes, Commissioner Bankole Adeoye and Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu for their briefings.

Let me start by underlining our support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes and all United Nations staff who continue to work in the Sudan under extremely challenging circumstances.

The conflict in the Sudan is a tragedy and has had a devastating impact on the Sudanese people. The United Kingdom urges the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to immediately stop fighting, protect civilians and grant safe and immediate humanitarian access.

Coordinated action by international and regional partners is crucial to help end the conflict. So, we welcome all diplomatic efforts towards that goal, including the 11 May Jeddah declaration and the ceasefire agreement agreed on 20 May. But those commitments will be worthless if they are not put into action or if they are used to secure a military advantage. We call on the parties to abide fully by their commitments in letter and spirit.

We also welcome the efforts of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States to help bring an end to the violence. It is essential that there be a strong coordination of efforts among regional and multilateral bodies.

It is also imperative that the voices of the Sudanese civilians be heard loud and clear. They must be included at every stage of the process, especially in mediation efforts to bring an end to the fighting and ultimately to deliver a democratic transition with a civilian government.

Let me address the appalling human rights and humanitarian situation caused by the fighting.

As we have heard, more than 500 civilians have been killed, thousands injured and millions more lack food and medicine. In West Darfur, visceral violence is igniting at a scale not experienced in decades. More than 150,000 people have been forced to flee the Sudan. The United Kingdom would like to extend its thanks

and pledge its support to the neighbouring countries that have welcomed refugees.

Humanitarian need has risen sharply, having already been at record levels prior to the conflict. So, we call for an immediate end to the continued attacks on civilian infrastructure, including homes, health-care facilities, schools and places of worship. The looting of humanitarian assets is simply unacceptable. The perpetrators must be held accountable.

In conclusion, we offer our full support to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, as we enter discussions on the renewal of its mandate, and we stand in solidarity with the Sudanese people in their demands for a peaceful and democratic future.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3) — Gabon, Ghana and my own country, Mozambique.

The A3 sincerely thanks this morning's briefers for their very important contributions. We thank His Excellency Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan; His Excellency Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; and His Excellency Mr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan at this meeting.

We have noted the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) (S/2023/355).

(*spoke in English*)

The A3 would like to commend UNITAMS for the tremendous work it has conducted in a very difficult and challenging environment which characterizes the current situation in the Sudan. The invaluable work of UNITAMS, with the cooperation of the Sudanese authorities, has facilitated the evacuation of civilians, diplomatic personnel and humanitarian workers from areas of intense fighting in the Sudan. Furthermore, UNITAMS has sought to continue with humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese people, despite all the challenges.

The A3 deplores the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Sudan, which undermines all the progress achieved particularly in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. It is evident that the current crisis puts the progress achieved thus far at risk. Therefore, the A3 emphasizes the need for the parties to silence the guns immediately and return to the path of negotiation.

Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique commend the leadership of the African Union and IGAD in seeking solutions to address the situation in the Sudan. We stress that the trilateral mechanism is crucial to have a viable, sustainable and credible political process, focusing on the resort to dialogue between the parties in conflict, to build inclusive and long-standing peace in the sisterly country.

The A3 further commends the African Union for the formulation of a de-escalation plan which will concretely contribute to the stabilization efforts. The Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces are therefore encouraged to fully embrace the de-escalation plan for the benefit of the Sudan, the Sudanese people and the region.

We also welcome UNITAMS strenuous efforts towards the cessation of hostilities and return to political negotiations. We take this opportunity to encourage UNITAMS to continue to assist the political transition in the Sudan and support the peace process and the implementation of the Juba Agreement.

The security situation in the Sudan is deteriorating and alarming owing to the current crisis. It has created a conducive environment for exacerbating the intercommunal clashes that already continue to pose security challenges in some regions of the country, particularly in Darfur, Blue Nile and South and West Kordofan states. That situation poses serious security threats to the seven neighbouring countries.

Human rights violations, including attacks on the civilian population, particularly women, children and vulnerable people; diplomatic personnel and United Nations and humanitarian workers are being reported, and we condemn those attacks.

We register with grave concern the targeting of diplomatic premises, including the widespread looting of United Nations premises, particularly in Khartoum and Darfur. The A3 condemns in the strongest terms

these criminal acts. They are in serious breach of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

We reiterate that targeting civilian populations is totally unacceptable. It constitutes a gross violation of international humanitarian law. Perpetrators of such acts should be brought to justice in due course.

Ghana, Gabon and Mozambique are deeply concerned about the spillover effects of the current crisis in neighbouring countries, including the increase of cross-border flows of refugees, which may lead to an increase in violence. In this context, there is a need for stronger collaboration between UNITAMS and other United Nations Missions and entities operating in the region, in order to properly identify early-warning signs of escalation of violence in the region.

The humanitarian situation was already dire in the Sudan. With the eruption of these armed confrontations and the disruption of chains of supply of several products already associated with the socioeconomic vulnerabilities, the humanitarian situation has gotten worse. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/355) indicates that more than 700,000 people have been internally displaced, most of whom are from Khartoum, West Darfur and South Darfur. With the current crisis, more than 150,000 people are estimated to have left the Sudan.

In order to respond to the humanitarian crisis, the A3 reiterates the appeal for sustained support for the 2023 humanitarian response plan for the Sudan. The plan targets 12.5 million people through more than 200 projects in such key sectors as education, health, child protection, gender-based violence and nutrition. We also encourage humanitarian assistance through other multilateral and bilateral mechanisms, paying particular attention to the socioeconomic situation in the Sudan.

The A3 welcomes all efforts aimed at achieving a humanitarian truce and the establishment of humanitarian corridors. We call for better coordination of all the actors and stress the need to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided in the Sudan and in neighbouring countries in compliance of the guiding principles governing the delivery of humanitarian aid.

The A3 wishes to reaffirm the centrality of the role of the African Union, IGAD and the trilateral mechanism in stabilizing the situation in the Sudan. We call for respect for the Sudan's sovereignty in dealing

with its challenges. Gabon, Ghana, and Mozambique pay tribute to the Sudanese people for the courage and strength they have demonstrated during these difficult times.

While paying tribute to the Sudanese people, we wish to state that the Sudanese parties must not lose sight of the central objective of resuming the transition process towards an inclusive, democratic, civilian-led transition Government that is able to address the acute political and economic recovery of the country. We urge the Sudanese people to refrain from acts of violence and tread the path of national unity, reconciliation and the building of peace in the country.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Let me start by thanking Special Representative Volker Perthes, Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, and Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu for providing their essential briefings today. I welcome Ambassador Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith Mohamed and the Sudan's delegation to this meeting. I also commend the tireless work of the personnel of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in a highly demanding situation.

Brazil is concerned by the humanitarian challenges provoked by over a month of continuous armed conflict. We stand in solidarity with the people of the Sudan. We commend the communities that have assisted fleeing families in every corner of the Sudan as well as Egypt, Chad, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Ethiopia. We also commend the vital work of the United Nations personnel and the humanitarian agencies on the ground. I wish to convey our appreciation for the adjustments Special Representative Perthes and UNITAMS have made since 15 April to implement the Mission's mandate.

As argued by the Secretary-General in his most recent report (S/2023/355), the Sudan's rapid descent into deadly conflict is a terrible setback for the country. We believe another terrible setback would be the insistence on solving the current conflict through military means. The United Nations, the African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States and virtually all of the Sudan's partners have called for ceasefires and truces precisely because military means will not solve the root causes of the ongoing conflict.

We also endorse the Saudi-American initiative that led to the Declaration of Commitment to Protect the

Civilians of the Sudan. We echo the trilateral mechanism and welcome the short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements agreed on Saturday in Jeddah.

We call on the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to exercise maximum restraint and uphold the truce. We encourage them to use negotiation, mediation, dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution tools. These instruments are all means to achieve peace in the Sudan, which is an end that, we are convinced, profoundly interests the parties to the conflict and the Sudanese people.

We therefore emphasize that the negotiation between the RSF and the SAF is not surrender by either side. Negotiation is instead the first step to halting the current military clashes, providing adequate protection for millions of civilians in the Sudan, and avoiding additional damage to essential civilian infrastructure in Khartoum, Omdurman, Darfur and elsewhere.

Peaceful coexistence is a prerequisite. It is among the conditions that will enable the parties to the conflict to pave the way for a political transition to a civilian-led Government. There will be no Sudanese ownership of this political process without peaceful coexistence between its leading military and paramilitary forces.

We sincerely hope that the Sudanese stakeholders realize the damage that continuous fighting has caused and will cause to the Sudan and the Sudanese people. We call on them to engage with the ongoing initiatives in good faith. There is widespread international support for reaching a peace deal between the parties. The African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States and partners of the Sudan have led the primary initiatives to reach a ceasefire. The next step is silencing the guns once and for all.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Perthes and the representatives of the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for their briefings. I welcome the Permanent Representative of the Sudan at this meeting.

Armed conflict in the Sudan has been going on for over a month, with fighting raging in many places and casualties on the rise, leading to a worsening humanitarian situation. China is deeply saddened. As a good friend and partner of the Sudan, we sincerely hope that the two parties to the conflict will prioritize the Sudan's peace and the well-being of its population,

end hostilities as soon as possible and resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiation.

China notes that the two parties to the conflict have reached a temporary ceasefire on multiple occasions and signed an agreement for a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangement in Jeddah last week. The pressing task is to ensure the implementation of commitments to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to facilitate and provide security guarantees for humanitarian assistance and evacuation. We hope that the parties to the conflict will maintain the momentum on dialogue, strive for a more durable ceasefire and political arrangement and bring the country's development back on track.

China commends and supports the League of Arab States, AU, IGAD and other regional organizations and relevant countries for their key role in promoting peace talks. We call on the United Nations and international partners to support and cooperate with regional organizations with a view to providing the necessary time and space for regional mediation. The developments in the Sudan have once again demonstrated that a solution to the question of the Sudan can be found only from within the country. External interference or unilateral sanctions will not solve the problem but will instead intensify tensions and aggravate the political and social crises. The international community needs to draw the appropriate lesson. Relevant parties should seriously reflect on the current situation and refrain from expanding unilateral sanctions and thus continuing down the wrong path.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, the already fragile economic and humanitarian situation in the Sudan and its neighbouring countries has become even more worrisome. According to the data from the United Nations, as a result of the conflict, more than 700,000 people have become internally displaced persons, more than 200,000 people have fled to neighbouring countries and some 25 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

China commends the Sudan's neighbours, which, despite their difficulties, are hosting a large number of Sudanese refugees, and we call on the international community to step up assistance to the Sudan and its neighbours in order to alleviate the spillover impact on the region. China supports the Organization's efforts to communicate and coordinate with the Sudan and its neighbouring countries on humanitarian issues in order

to help the countries of the region with their response capacity and to ease humanitarian pressure.

The mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) will expire in early June. In view of the current situation, UNITAMS will face considerable challenges in its future work. The Council's original intention in authorizing the Mission was to assist the Sudan, at the country's request, with the completion of its political transition. The opinions of the Sudan are therefore fundamentally important in the discussion on the Mission's mandate.

China encourages the penholders to stay in close touch with the Sudan and fully respect its views. That is contribute to the smooth functioning of UNITAMS in future and to long-term cooperation between the United Nations and the Sudan.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Volker Perthes, for his briefing and for the work of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) in such a difficult and complex context. We also thank Mr. Bankole Adeoye and Mr. Workneh Gebeyehu for their briefings and acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan.

Ecuador stands in solidarity with the people of the Sudan, as well as with the families of the victims, including humanitarian workers, who have lost their lives in this conflict.

It has now been 37 days since the start of the armed violence in the Sudan, which is deteriorating the already precarious humanitarian situation of the civilian population, with a differentiated impact on women and children. The Security Council cannot and must not remain immobile in the face of this situation and must call on the parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and acts of violence. A return to calm is urgently needed in order to ensure free, safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and to facilitate an effective dialogue process between all actors involved.

In this scenario, UNITAMS must play a critical role in the search for peace and security, which affects not only the Sudan, but the entire region. The work of the Mission needs to be strengthened. In the upcoming renewal of its mandate, contained in resolution 2636

(2022), we must therefore address recent events with a view to building capacities in the context of the challenges posed by the political, humanitarian, development and security situation.

First, in terms of political strengthening, we highlight the Mission's work within the trilateral mechanism, as well as its involvement in security sector reform issues. In that regard, Ecuador considers that the Mission's role is fundamental in the efforts being made by the countries of the region and by regional organizations, such as the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States, leading to a transition process towards lasting peace. The Mission's efforts remain central to enhancing gender inclusion in the political process and should continue and strengthen the work done before the outbreak of violence.

Secondly, on the humanitarian situation, we are concerned about the massive displacement of the population, with alarming figures — approaching 1 million people, with another 250,000 having fled to neighbouring countries. We highlight and recognize the generosity of the countries of the region that have taken in refugees. It is imperative that the agencies and entities of the United Nations system have the necessary resources to overcome this humanitarian crisis, with a view to alleviating the situation of people being displaced and the host populations. Women and girls are always the most affected in that context. That is why the role of UNITAMS is crucial in conducting peacebuilding activities, protecting civilians and strengthening the rule of law, with a special focus on gender-based violence. It will also be important to strengthen the work of UNITAMS in the area of explosive-ordnance clearance and demining activities, which are part of the obligations established in the Juba Peace Agreement.

Thirdly, with regard to the role of the socioeconomic situation, the events of the past few days have reversed the progress that had been made in the Sudan in achieving some of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The role of UNITAMS is therefore indispensable in restoring the coordinated support of the agencies and other bodies of the United Nations in conducting future activities, together with the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ecuador supports the renewal of the UNITAMS mandate and remains committed to ensuring that the

Security Council provides the tools needed to support the Sudan in overcoming these new challenges. We acknowledge the seven-day ceasefire agreement signed by the parties and hope it will enable unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, protect civilians, especially women and children, provide protection for humanitarian workers and property and facilitate the official procedures that enable effective access for aid.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes, Commissioner Adeoye of the African Union (AU) and Mr. Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, for their briefings, as well as for their tireless work on the Sudan.

Japan supports all the efforts by the trilateral mechanism — of the United Nations, the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development — to help the Sudanese people in need. At the time of the Special Representative's previous briefing on 20 March (see S/PV.9289), we were encouraged by the reporting on the Sudan's transition process, following the signing of the Framework Agreement last December and the broad and inclusive workshops on the outstanding issues that were facilitated by the trilateral mechanism earlier this year. However, on 15 April everything changed, and Japan is alarmed by how rapidly the situation has deteriorated. With that in mind, I will mention three points.

First, Japan reiterates its call on both parties, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, to immediately stop fighting and return to a peaceful political process. We cannot accept any use of force that undermines a Sudanese-led and Sudanese-owned process towards a transition to civilian rule, as outlined in the Constitutional Declaration of 2019. In that regard, Japan commends the regional and international initiatives aimed at seeking a lasting ceasefire and a return to political dialogue.

Secondly, Japan is seriously concerned about the humanitarian situation, not only in the Sudan but in neighbouring countries as well. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 1 million people, including women and children, are expected to have fled the country by October to seek security and fulfil their basic needs. We welcome the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of the Sudan and the agreement on a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements,

and we urge the parties to keep to those agreements. In response to the influx of refugees, Japan has decided to provide assistance to Chad, Egypt and South Sudan through international organizations.

Thirdly, Japan stresses the importance of maintaining the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) in those difficult circumstances. The Council must speak in a united voice and support the Mission as it seeks to revive the political process while also maintaining the other three pillars of its mandate. Going forward, we are ready to actively contribute to discussions on how best to adapt the Mission's strategic objectives and operations to the rapidly changing circumstances, while ensuring that Council members have optimal insight into the political dynamics that affect its work. We also call on all parties in the Sudan to ensure that UNITAMS can carry out its activities unhindered.

I want to conclude by reiterating our firm support to the Mission and our solidarity with the people of the Sudan as they face an unprecedented challenge to the democratic transition in which they have invested so much hope and sacrifice.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Let me thank Special Representative Perthes for his sobering briefing and take this opportunity to welcome the new Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Ms. Nkweta-Salami, to her new role. I also welcome the participation of the Commissioner of the African Union (AU), the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in today's meeting.

The work that Mr. Perthes and his team have done to advance the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) in the current environment is truly impressive and we appreciate the fact that they are operating under extremely challenging conditions. It is now more critical than ever for the Council to signal its full support for the Mission.

Over the weekend, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States announced that the Sudanese security forces agreed to a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements. We call on both parties to fulfil their obligations under the seven-day ceasefire and to allow humanitarian aid and relief assistance to reach those in desperate need.

The United States remains committed to bringing about a sustained end to the conflict in the Sudan, which has inflicted immense pain and suffering on the Sudanese people. We have heard disturbing reports of attacks on civilians, air strikes on hospitals, sexual and gender-based violence and looting. We must all do our part to bring about peace and stability. And we must do so with urgency. There is no time to waste. To that end, we are in close cooperation with our partners, including Saudi Arabia, the African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States and our other partners in the Quad and the troika and the friends of the Sudan. The United States welcomed the 11 May Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of the Sudan, which recognizes the obligations of both sides under international humanitarian law to respect human rights and facilitate humanitarian assistance. Those obligations align with the goals and intent of the AU's 20 April communiqué and support its forthcoming road map for de-escalation.

As we work towards peace, the United States is committed to addressing the dire humanitarian needs on the ground. More than 24 million people are now in need of humanitarian assistance, a 57 per cent increase over previous estimates. Humanitarian agencies, national non-governmental organizations, civil-society organizations, professional unions and neighbourhood-based resistance committees are going to incredible lengths to deliver food, provide medical care, resupply hospitals and support evacuations, but they cannot do that heroic work without unhindered humanitarian access. All parties must allow for immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for those in need or displaced by the fighting. We support the leadership of the United Nations in marshalling resources for the Sudanese people, including through the newly revised humanitarian response plan, and we look forward to closely coordinating our efforts.

For its part, the United States is committed to helping support the needs of the more than 250,000 people who have crossed into neighbouring countries in search of safety and the more than 840,000 who are displaced inside the Sudan and cannot leave owing to fighting, fuel shortages or fear. At the same time, we must not forget the needs of the 1.1 million refugees who were in the Sudan prior to the fighting. We appreciate and commend the work of the neighbouring countries that have welcomed Sudanese arrivals, and we encourage all countries to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers have access to protection and can

eventually return to their countries of origin voluntarily and when conditions permit.

Finally, I would like to note that the United States continues to engage with Sudanese civilian leaders, resistance committees and civil society to establish a civilian-led democratic Government as soon as possible. The United States stands with the people of the Sudan as they push for freedom, peace and justice under democratic civilian rule. And we continue to send a clear message to the Sudanese security forces that they should end this senseless conflict once and for all.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I would like to begin by thanking our briefers today for their very comprehensive updates on the developments in the Sudan, and I welcome the participation of the Ambassador of Sudan in this meeting.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangement agreed and signed in Jeddah over the weekend. The agreement reinforces the 11 May Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan and forms part of a step-by-step approach agreed by the parties. We thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States for their extensive efforts in facilitating those important developments. We urge for more talks to improve the security and humanitarian conditions for civilians on the ground and to enable the necessary political solution to this crisis. In the meantime, we stress that the details of the recent agreement must be fully implemented.

The work of the United Nations on the ground and of diplomatic missions has been exceptional in extremely challenging circumstances. We strongly condemn the vandalizing of diplomatic premises, including the latest incidents at the Embassies of Kuwait, Jordan and Qatar. Diplomatic premises must be protected in accordance with international law, including the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Since the beginning of the fighting, the United Arab Emirates has sent nine planes to the Sudan, evacuating nearly 1,000 people. We continue to host and care for nationals from 26 different countries. We are also supporting neighbouring countries that have taken in refugees. The United Arab Emirates dispatched 229 tons of aid to Chad to support displaced Sudanese and the Government of Chad's humanitarian response, and we encourage all who can to support the displaced.

There still remains much work to be done. The seven-day ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements signed over the weekend build on the Jeddah Declaration, by which the parties agreed to facilitate the safe passage of aid workers and the distribution of humanitarian supplies. They also agreed to allow the unimpeded flow of goods, restore essential services and withdraw forces from hospitals and essential public facilities. We hope they will be able to make good on those commitments. The United Arab Emirates will support the Security Council's endorsement of the Jeddah Declaration and the short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements. Together they must be built on within a wider format, including with partner countries, to promote confidence among the parties.

From what High Commissioner Filippo Grandi told the Security Council last week, as well as recent data from Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we know the number of refugees is increasing. More than 200,000 refugees have now crossed over into neighbouring countries. That is accelerating a humanitarian crisis for the region at a time when the Sudan's neighbours are themselves under great strain. We commend those neighbouring Governments that have allowed people to seek refuge despite their own difficulties. The millions who remain in Khartoum and other areas of the Sudan face unacceptable danger and are struggling to meet their basic needs. Fuel shortages mean that hospitals do not have consistent power. The ongoing fighting makes it difficult to replenish dwindling food supplies, and there are reports of food shortages in many areas. The alarm bells continue to ring for all of us.

Tragically, the lives of many children have also been upended or cut short by the fighting. According to UNICEF, 190 children were killed during the first 11 days of the fighting alone, with another 1,700 injured. Most worrisomely, those numbers are underreported. Children are entitled to exceptional protections under international humanitarian law, and the Council has called for special measures to be taken to protect them, including in its resolution 2601 (2021).

We commend the courageous efforts of the Sudanese front-line responders providing emergency services and reiterate our call for all actors to abide by their commitments. Measures such as flights between Port Sudan and Addis Ababa are pivotal for the welfare of civilians, but they are simply a stopgap for the permanent ceasefire that we want to see in place to ensure

the continuity of relief services. The only sustainable end to this situation is through a political track, which must include a broad array of civil and political actors, including women. The United Arab Emirates will continue to work with all key partners to support coordinated mediation efforts at all levels. The United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States have been committed to supporting the Sudan on its path to peace. The solution does lie in a broad regional approach with a strong international backbone.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the continued engagement of the United Nations, through the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, is critical, and we support the renewal of its mandate. We also support the work of the many United Nations agencies operating on the ground. The international community must remain resolute in its commitment to safeguarding the future of the Sudanese people. Only by calling for a return to the political track will the violence be brought to a swift and sustainable end.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative Perthes, Commissioner Adeoye and Executive Secretary Gebeyehu for their briefings.

In the wake of the outbreak of the clashes in Khartoum on 15 April, we reiterate our call on both the parties to cease hostilities without preconditions and to lead the Sudan back to a political transition. We welcome the latest mediation efforts, including the Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan and the brokering of the upcoming seven-day ceasefire. We believe that is the only path to sustainable peace and stability in the Sudan.

Malta firmly deplores the loss of life and is deeply concerned about the fact that since the start of the clashes more than 800 people have been killed, including 200 children, and more than 5,000 injured. Women and girls remain at high risk of sexual and gender-based violence, with extensive reports of rapes and sexual assaults. Protection measures must be put in place and strengthened for women and children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind. We want to remind all the parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law and call for safe, rapid

and unhindered humanitarian access to all civilians, at a time when humanitarian needs in the Sudan have risen to record levels. We also call for thorough investigations and for perpetrators to be brought to justice and held accountable for their crimes. Malta condemns all attacks on civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals, schools and places of worship. We also condemn attacks on humanitarian and medical workers or on United Nations premises. We are concerned about the fact that an estimated \$14 million worth of food products destined for the most food-insecure sectors of the population, along with more than 1 million polio vaccines intended for children, have been destroyed as a result of looting.

It is clear that the conflict in the Sudan is having repercussions on the wider region. An estimated quarter of a million people have fled the country, and the high number of refugees and displaced marks a crisis of regional proportions. As Sudanese and third-country nationals fleeing the Sudan face perilous journeys, we acknowledge the efforts being made by neighbouring countries to host those seeking refuge. At the same time, we remain concerned about the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Sudan, especially the women residing in IDP camps, who remain at high risk of sexual and gender-based violence.

Malta welcomes all efforts that seek to support dialogue and mediation, including by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States and the United Nations, as well as by the Sudan's neighbours and other partner countries. We commend the efforts of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee, chaired by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), as well as the civilian signatory parties to the Framework Agreement, who have also been instrumental in defusing tensions and promoting community-level dialogue. All efforts must be inclusive and ensure the participation of women, young people and civil society. Malta will continue to support a political settlement, including through unified messages from the Council. We urge both parties to listen to and act on those calls. We express our full support for Special Representative Perthes and UNITAMS for their unfaltering commitment to the Sudan's path towards stability, despite their limited capacity. As we look forward to the Mission's renewal, we also want to use today's meeting to call for full respect by the authorities for the UNITAMS mandate.

Our message is clear. It is only by silencing the guns that we can guarantee a space for dialogue and mediation and a solid foundation for the Sudan to return to a path towards a civilian-led Government, peace and a stable democratic future.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Mr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their briefings. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, Mr. Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith Mohamed, to today's meeting.

Russia is deeply concerned about the dangerous dynamics of the situation in Sudan. The 15 April outbreak of hostilities between units of the regular army and the Rapid Support Forces has resulted in many casualties. The humanitarian situation is complex. The numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees are growing. Any further escalation of the situation risks exacerbating the security situation in the Sudan itself as well as destabilizing neighbouring countries that are themselves in extremely vulnerable situations. Many are struggling with their own conflicts, receiving international assistance and hosting peacekeeping and special political missions.

In order to effectively respond to the current crisis in the Sudan, we must understand its causes and analyse the steps that led to this outbreak of tensions. We believe that to a great extent the conflict is a result of the mismanagement of the political settlement in the Sudan. Much of the responsibility for that lies with the Western countries that have long considered themselves entitled to interfere in the country's internal affairs. Instead of enabling a genuinely Sudanese-owned and Sudanese-led political process to take place, hasty measures have been imposed on the country that are neither based on the national political culture nor broadly accepted by the population. Unfortunately, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) also forced the process of the transfer of power to civilians.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the efforts to attract international financial assistance for the much-needed social and economic stabilization of the country have been inadequate. On the contrary, in fact,

the country has been deprived of that assistance as a form of punishment, making its provision contingent on achieving artificial deadlines and obtaining consent for the adoption of questionable democratizing formulas. We continue to believe that the Sudanese people should be fully granted the right not only to make decisions about their own and their country's future but also to take full responsibility for them. Many of the structural problems of Sudanese society have their roots in the legacy of colonialism and are related to the process of consolidating a unified State. That discussion is beyond the scope of the current crisis and represents a long-term effort, but if we fail to address it, sustainable stability in the country will be difficult to achieve.

We call on the Sudanese parties to demonstrate the necessary political will and take immediate steps to definitively end the armed confrontation. We believe that any disagreement can be resolved at the negotiating table, and the Sudanese have the wisdom and political experience they need to do that. We welcome regional efforts to help the Sudan. We need to give them space and time, consult with countries of the region and support the steps they take. We must ensure that there is no repetition of the experiences in Libya, where forceful intervention led the country to catastrophe and has destabilized half the continent. We believe that the signing of the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of the Sudan and the agreement on a seven-day humanitarian truce by representatives of the army leadership and the Rapid Support Forces is a step in the right direction.

For its part, Russia, for which the Sudan has always been a friendly country, is maintaining contact with the Sudanese parties. If needed and requested, we stand ready to assist them, but we will not interfere in the country's internal affairs. The Russian embassy in Khartoum is continuing its work despite serious security threats. At this point, it will be critical to ensure that all the mediators work in a concerted manner, regardless of their potential national interests. We hope that the measures being taken will create the necessary conditions for stabilizing the situation in the country and relaunching an inclusive political process. Attempts to influence the situation by force, including through illegitimate unilateral coercive measures, are counterproductive.

With regard to the future work of UNITAMS, we believe that given the current situation on the ground, now is not the time to complicate the parameters of

United Nations assistance. The current mandate could be technically extended, and the main role delegated to national and regional efforts. It could then be revisited after the acute phase is over. Providing humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese population and to the neighbouring countries that have generously opened their borders will be crucial.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative for the Secretary-General Volker Perthes, African Union Commissioner Bankole Adeoye and Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Workneh Gebeyehu. I will focus on five points.

The situation has continued to deteriorate since 15 April in West Darfur as well as in Khartoum. We condemn the indiscriminate acts of violence, which are in violation of international law and the commitments made by both parties on 11 May in Jeddah. They must not go unpunished. Rallying members of armed groups based on their community affiliation has also continued, and we condemn those developments. As we know, this crisis threatens to destabilize the entire region. We are witnessing a massive increase in the number of displaced persons, refugees and food-insecure people. The determination of the parties to continue fighting means that millions of civilians will continue to be affected either by the clashes or by the disruption of humanitarian assistance.

We welcome the continued action of the United Nations on the ground, as well as the solidarity of neighbouring countries in hosting refugees. Together with its European partners, France will fully play its part in contributing to the humanitarian response. The European Union's support already amounts to more than €150 million for 2023. We are also supporting the efforts undertaken by regional actors, as well as the United States and Saudi Arabia, and we welcome the ceasefire that has just been agreed. The parties must implement all the commitments made in Jeddah by opening humanitarian corridors and ceasing hostilities. The scale of the crisis demands that close coordination be maintained with international partners, including the European Union.

The Security Council must speak out and remain active on this issue. It is unacceptable that the Council has not adopted any kind of statement since the first day of the conflict. The work of the Security Council is complementary to regional efforts, especially those

of the African Union. It is all the more necessary because the parties have not responded to those efforts to date and have locked themselves into continuing the fighting. We reiterate our full support for the work of the United Nations and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). We welcome the continued work of the Special Representative with the parties, in conjunction with the African Union and IGAD. We also encourage UNITAMS to give as much support as possible to the actions of political forces advocating for peace, especially in civil society and at the local level. Peace cannot be restored without the involvement of all Sudanese actors. When the time comes, Sudanese civil society must take part in the discussions to achieve a lasting ceasefire and a political solution to the crisis.

In view of the remarks made by the representative of the Russian Federation, I would like to add some comments to my initial statement.

Russia is accusing the West of imposing its own policies on the Sudan and not doing enough there. That is completely erroneous, given that the driving force behind the conflict is a rivalry between two generals exacerbated by internal divisions in the Sudan. I would like to point out that the establishment of a unified army was never imposed from outside. I would also like to remind the Russian Federation that where financial assistance is concerned, France was at the forefront of the initiative to relieve Sudan's debt from 2019 onwards, an initiative that Russia was the last country to join, in 2021, and that the process was suspended after the coup d'état in October 2021 without prejudice to humanitarian aid. It has always been clear that our financial assistance is tied to the democratic transition, which was not externally imposed either but was rather a result of the aspirations of the Sudanese people themselves. It is the failure to address those aspirations since the 2021 coup that has contributed to the current crisis.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I too would like to thank Special Representative Perthes, Commissioner Adeoye and Executive Secretary Gebeyehu for their briefings. Let me also express Albania's deep gratitude to Mr. Perthes and his team for their commitment and tireless efforts in the Sudan, especially during these very challenging times. We appreciate his update on the evolving situation in the country and commend his presence here today, despite the difficulties and danger

involved in travelling in and out of the country. We also welcome the representative of the Sudan to this meeting.

We join others in welcoming the news of a temporary seven-day humanitarian ceasefire between the parties, mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia this past Saturday. However, words must be followed by action. Continuing the conflict will only worsen divisions, fragment society and escalate the risk of prolonged intercommunal clashes. Albania deeply regrets the current situation in the Sudan, which has compromised the significant progress that had been achieved before the conflict erupted. The risk of severe regional fragmentation is extremely high and deserves the Council's attention. We are gravely concerned about the scale of casualties, injuries and displacements in Khartoum and Darfur. It is disturbing to hear the reports of the numbers of newly displaced people. In that regard, we commend the Sudan's neighbours for keeping their borders open and allowing internally displaced persons to seek shelter. Furthermore, conflict disproportionately affects communities according to gender. Before the crisis, approximately 8 million women and girls needed humanitarian assistance. The conflict has further intensified their challenges in accessing vital services and has heightened their vulnerability to sexual violence.

We urge both conflicting parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and infrastructure. We strongly condemn acts of violence targeting diplomats, United Nations employees, humanitarian organizations and medical workers and the looting of their properties. Furthermore, it will be vital to ensure the safe movement of civilians away from areas of ongoing hostilities, granting them access to essential resources such as food, water and medical supplies.

In conclusion, we commend all diplomatic efforts made by the international community, regional actors, the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States. Albania reiterates its strong support for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and commends the work of the Mission and its dedicated team led by Special Representative Perthes.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Switzerland.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing and would like to express Switzerland's gratitude to him and his team for their tireless efforts in extremely difficult conditions. We thank the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan. Sudanese civil-society actors have played a key role in the efforts to return to a democratic transition and have a critical role to play in the political efforts to stabilize the current situation. Their voices must be heard. I therefore regret that the current conditions did not allow civil society to participate safely in today's briefing.

I share the concerns expressed by my colleagues about the ongoing fighting, which is plunging the Sudan, already in the grip of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, into a humanitarian disaster. The latest reports on the escalation of violence in El Geneina in West Darfur are particularly worrisome. We express our sincere condolences to the families of the victims. I would like to highlight three points.

First, it is essential to silence the guns to protect civilians. The heavy toll that the conflict is taking on the population is unacceptable, and yet the fighting has continued in densely populated areas, critical infrastructure continues to be targeted and widespread looting and theft threaten the security and livelihoods of civilians. Many diplomatic premises, as well as those of humanitarian organizations, have been looted or destroyed, severely limiting their occupants' ability to support the Sudanese population. The conflict also threatens to exacerbate existing conflicts, particularly in Darfur and Blue Nile state, which could lead to a further escalation of the conflict.

Secondly, both parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law. Parents and children remain trapped in the crossfire and are struggling to access food, water and medical care. It is essential to facilitate and enable full, safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to civilians in need and the evacuation of the injured, as was affirmed in the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan. Many who were able to flee the violence remain very vulnerable and need our full support. We commend the countries of the region for their solidarity in hosting refugees and returnees. We welcome the agreement on a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian

arrangements signed by the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in Jeddah, which comes into effect tonight. Its full implementation is crucial to alleviating the suffering of the population. Switzerland will continue to support humanitarian efforts in the Sudan and in the region.

Thirdly, respect for a long-term ceasefire must be combined with a return to negotiations. In that regard, we support the ongoing diplomatic efforts, in particular those of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), neighbouring countries and bilateral partners. Those diplomatic efforts should be closely coordinated. As regards prospects for an eventual return to a political process, it must be underscored that Sudanese civil-society actors remain at the heart of any sustainable solution.

In conclusion, we reiterate our full support for UNITAMS and the trilateral mechanism. We stand with the Sudanese people in achieving their aspirations for peace, justice and democratic governance.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The statement made by the representative of France is yet more proof of what I said in my earlier statement. It is well known that the international community to which our Western colleagues refer includes only themselves, and that they are never to blame for anything. Indeed, all they do is bring "peace" and "democracy" to the world. Such endeavours have never resulted in stability, however. That is the way that "peace" and "democracy" have been brought to Libya, Somalia and many other parts of the world. As regards France's efforts on "peace" and "economic development" in Africa, volumes have been written about that already.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), for his

comprehensive briefing. We have taken note of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) (S/2023/355). I also thank Mr. Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; and Mr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). I also thank Ambassador Pedro Comissário Afonso for the statement he delivered on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council. I welcome the new Resident Coordinator, Clementine Nkweta-Salami, and I pray for mercy for the spirits of the fallen during the clashes.

This statement is divided into three parts: the truce, ceasefire and humanitarian assistance. I will first address the humanitarian situation.

Thankfully, the agreement on a short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements was signed between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces on 20 May with a view to ending the armed clashes. It may be renewed and could lead to a permanent ceasefire. It will remain in effect for a week, starting today. The agreement, facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America, strengthens the Jeddah declaration, signed on 11 May, and its primary purpose is to protect civilians and to curb the impact of the war on civilians, to promote compliance with international humanitarian law and respect for human rights, ensure access to humanitarian assistance and restore basic services.

The agreement commits the other party to evacuate and to not to capture territories and to protect public facilities, in particular hospitals, medical facilities, power plants and water infrastructure. It also establishes a defined monitoring mechanism for coordination to oversee the implementation of the agreement and update it. The scope of the agreement includes all of the Sudan and seeks to bring to an end to the hostilities and the targeting of civilian and humanitarian aircraft and to prevent weapons from being received from foreign sources and to bring to an end boarding and quartering in civilian residences, military build-up, the demolition and destruction of civilian infrastructure and all acts of looting and vandalizing.

The agreement addresses, in a practical way, the humanitarian concerns and ensures access for humanitarian assistance in the following manner. For

its part, the Sudanese Government will commit to the principles of the Jeddah declaration that complements this agreement, while respecting international humanitarian law and human rights, and will ensure the conditions for the provision of urgent assistance and access to humanitarian agencies without impediments and will guarantee the protection of humanitarian workers and cooperate with the International Commission for the Red Cross (ICRC) with regard to detainees and prisoners during the conflict, in accordance with its sovereignty.

Secondly, with regard to the monitoring and coordination mechanism, the Government of the Sudan agreed that the mechanism will include three representatives from Saudi Arabia and the United States and three representatives from every party with liaison officers in order to implement the short-term ceasefire and facilitate the humanitarian arrangements. The humanitarian actors in the Sudan, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the ICRC, may communicate with the mechanism concerning issues of violations of the ceasefire or risks humanitarian workers are facing. Accordingly, there will be coordination to guarantee the protection of civilians and protect freedom of movement, while respecting the principles of humanitarian work.

As a result of the humanitarian situation, the Government of the Sudan has launched an initiative and has called on the international community, United Nations agencies and relevant regional organizations, as well as donors, to provide humanitarian assistance. The Government has committed Port Sudan and the airports of Dongola, Port Sudan and Wadi Seidna to receiving assistance, with distribution carried out by United Nations agencies and national organizations, as per the work of the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission and as per humanitarian principles which emphasize neutrality and integrity in humanitarian activities.

The Government facilitated the visit of Under-Secretary-General Mr. Martin Griffiths to the Sudan to support the humanitarian work, and the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission has coordinated with international actors and is currently managing relief operations and providing support to affected persons. The Commission has also affirmed that it is ready to remove impediments facing humanitarian agencies. We are coordinating with all parties to chart the safe corridors through which assistance will be distributed to affected persons, hospitals and medical centres.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the friendly States that have provided support and humanitarian assistance to the affected people in the Sudan, including the United Nations.

Thirdly, with a view to addressing the aggression and protecting civilians, based on our constitutional responsibility to protect our national security, we have exercised restraint and committed to upholding the norms of war to minimize losses. That has been demonstrated through the signing of the Jeddah declaration and the new agreement to implement a temporary ceasefire. Moreover, we have responded to the repeated calls for a ceasefire, which led to the current agreement.

The Sudanese Armed Forces have been able to largely contain the aggression targeting the Sudanese State. We have exercised restraint and committed to upholding the norms and have contained the area of the conflict to a narrow area and to prevent the enemy from achieving strategic gains. We have prevented the insurgent militias from receiving assistance from across the borders. The Sudanese Armed Forces have used carefully targeted weapons with limited impact. However, the insurgent militias are seeking to receive additional resources from within the Sudan and abroad. That makes it imperative for the Sudanese Armed Forces, despite the agreements, to continue monitoring entry points. The militias have attacked El Obeid city twice and have sought to use the airport to receive foreign assistance. However, we have successfully thwarted their attempts without civilian losses. They tried to attack the army headquarters in the city of Nyala, but that was easily defended. Small numbers of militia attacked the town of Rahad, to the east of El Obeid city, and they burned a police station and a local market with the intention to loot and vandalize.

Fourthly, despite the fact that those violations have been addressed neutrally in the report of the Secretary-General, we would like to provide examples of the systemic crimes committed by the insurgent militias to destroy our economic order and erase institutional and collective memory. They have looted 27 banks, 16 factories, 32 companies, businesses, mobile and jewellery stores, various warehouses and food centres, pharmacies and research centres. They have looted markets in Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum Bahri, leading to losses in the billions of dollars. As a result, close to 150,000 citizens are now unemployed.

Diplomatic missions and residences have been attacked. Systemic looting has targeted diplomatic missions to sabotage the Sudan's relations with the world. Between 16 April and 1 May, our Ministry of Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, military and security services, and Civil Aviation Authority received close to 50 reports of criminal attacks on the following diplomatic missions, in chronological order: the United States of America, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, the European Union, Kuwait, Djibouti, India, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria, Spain, the Niger, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Morocco, Libya, the Sultanate of Oman, Canada, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Egypt — in whose embassy an administrative attaché was assassinated — Chad, the Congo, Qatar and Uganda. In addition, gunfire has erupted against residences of ambassadors and other members of diplomatic missions, whose vehicles have been looted or destroyed. Surveillance cameras have also been destroyed and the rebel forces are now positioned directly around those diplomatic premises.

Crimes have also been committed against governmental agencies and protection caravans. Court and tribunal registries have been stolen. Land-ownership registries at Land Office have been destroyed or stolen, in order to establish the militia's ownership of the buildings they have occupied in carefully selected residential neighbourhoods. Other crimes can be categorized under cultural-historical erasing: militias have looted different museums — of the judiciary, of the army and the National Museum, they have vandalized multiple universities, including the Universities of Al-Ahfad and Omdurman, and they have destroyed national monuments.

The militias have also committed rape, thereby sabotaging the honour of our citizens. They have also detained civilians, including women and children, and destroyed millions of vaccines for children. They have targeted civilian objects, houses of worship, including mosques, and five churches, transforming them into military sites. Moreover, we refer the Council to the statement made recently by Ms. Sulaima Ishaq Mohamed Al-Khalifa, Director of the Combating Violence against Women unit, which denounced the systematic crimes perpetrated by the rebel militias.

Are these not considered by the Security Council crimes of aggression? The destruction of the capital of the country, other cities, public roads, airports and

different civilian centres, as well as vital infrastructure and strategic facilities creates a situation of chaos and leads to the collapse of the State. We therefore call on the international community and the Security Council to condemn in the strongest of terms these unprecedented acts of aggression crimes against the State, diplomatic missions and international organizations.

On building peace, in parallel with the official efforts of the UNITAMS and the Government, steps have been undertaken by civil society to build peace and reconcile society. To that end, civilian components in South Darfur have signed a document calling for the end of the war and the restoration of civilian life. The signatories included 80 tribes, which is germane to our discussion, given that speakers today have mentioned that the ethnic impact of the conflict is clearly growing.

With regard to the situation in El Geneina, West Darfur, an emergency meeting was held, with the Governor of Darfur in attendance. Urgent visits to El Geneina and meetings with volunteers health workers and different civilian representatives took place in order to address the situation on the ground and, in cooperation with State authorities, de-escalate the situation and achieve peace after the bloody events in the area in the recent period. In addition, supplies and medicine have been provided from Port Sudan to be distributed among the affected, and all internal roads have been secured to and from Darfur.

On the negative implications for the region, there is a conceptual misunderstanding with regard to the classification of the Sudanese who have fled to neighbouring countries in recent days, using the terms refugees and internally displaced persons. This is not a denial; rather, I seek to establish the facts. Under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person outside his or her country of citizenship who, for reasons of persecution — on the basis of race, religion, nationality or membership in a certain social or political group — is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country or is unwilling to return to the country. It is true that modern regional refugee instruments have expanded the definition of refugees to include foreign aggression, occupation, foreign hegemony, public disorder and internal conflict, but in this case, there are no large numbers of refugees in Egypt, Eritrea or Chad, and the Sudanese who have fled there have not been classified as such.

Pursuant to the guidelines on internal displacement, the internally displaced are persons who have been forced to abandon their homes or regular places of residence to avoid armed conflict, widespread violence, natural disasters or human rights violations, but have not crossed international borders. That is why there are no camps in Khartoum, its suburbs or in the various cities for persons who have left Khartoum and returned to their families living elsewhere. This is one of the advantages of the well-known solidarity among people in the Sudan. For those who have referred to such persons as internally displaced persons, describing them as such does not grant a special legal status to persons who are actually internally displaced; as long as they remain within their country's borders, they remain citizens and cannot be classified as internally displaced persons. Nevertheless, the thousands of Sudanese all over the Sudan who have sought refuge with their families inside the borders do require urgent assistance and relief.

As for the large numbers of persons who have crossed the borders to neighbouring countries as afflicted persons, they are suffering difficult circumstances in Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad and South Sudan. Many of them have not been registered as refugees and do not have personal resources. They therefore must be granted priority, so they can receive humanitarian support.

It is worth mentioning that the number of Sudanese who have reached Ethiopia through the Gallabat crossing, intending to travel to Ethiopia or other places has, as of 18 May, reached 3,568 persons, including only 30 registered refugees. The number of Sudanese persons who have registered as asylum-seekers since 12 May is only about a hundred persons, and before 18 May, they numbered only 60 refugees. Most of the Sudanese who have left the country through the Gallabat crossing have not sought asylum in Ethiopia, as their destination are the Gulf States or Egypt. These persons represent 95 per cent of the those crossing the border with electronic visas; only 2 per cent of those who reached Ethiopia came with a tourist visa allowing them to remain there for a month.

Most of the people who have left the country are businesspersons and rich individuals who reside in hotels in Addis Ababa. In Egypt, the Egyptian representative verified to me that there are no camps for refugees and that the Sudanese residing in Egypt are there as citizens, not refugees. We thank the Egyptian Government for hosting them and ask the international

community to support those Sudanese persons because they number more than 90,000 persons. I have asked the States of neighbouring countries to provide a response to the negative regional impact of the armed conflict in the Sudan. However, no one has verified that there has been an impact on regional security.

As for the regional efforts of the IGAD and the African Union (AU), we support the AU 2063 Agenda, in particular its Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030 initiative, for States that have recently emerged from long-term conflict, in order to achieve resilience and restore calm, peace and all aspects of the post-conflict reconstruction and development agenda. We look forward to the fulfilment of the role of IGAD and the trilateral mechanisms, including that of Presidents Museveni, Mayardit and Guelleh. The Sudan will participate in the IGAD summit in Djibouti on 12 June.

Since most delegations have addressed the role of UNITAMS, I would like to mention that the Mission was voluntarily requested by the Sudan, and the Security Council established it in 2020. It is an integrated mission called upon to assist during the transition in the Sudan, pursuant to Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

Peacemaking is not only linked to the political-demographic track. It involves renewed communication with donors to go beyond the provision of basic humanitarian support to increase resources. We hope that the new Resident Coordinator, Ms. Clementine Nkweta-Salami, will work towards that end and make positive progress through re-engagement with donors. We hope that priority will be given to the following areas.

First, there must be peacebuilding through development assistance.

Secondly, once the conflict ends, there must be reconstruction by providing technical advice for the implementation of integration, disarmament and demobilization programmes.

Thirdly, youth capacity-building and skills must be enhanced. The role of youth in contributing to a political settlement, leading the transformation and building a civilian project by assisting vulnerable groups to benefit from the Government economic plan must also be strengthened.

Fourthly, women and girls must participate more in the peacebuilding process.

Fifthly, initiatives must continue to support the capacity to sustain peace and build resilience, to coordinate humanitarian efforts, to enhance social reconciliation, to build trust among sectors of local communities and to promote the role of youth and women in peacebuilding.

Sixthly, resources must be mobilized to achieve social and economic integration for internally displaced persons. We must also mobilize international support in order to meet development needs. We reiterate that there is a shortfall with regard to the provision of resources for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Mission reports have always blamed the Sudan, however, the financial assistance pledged by donors and international actors has not been provided.

Finally, efforts must be made to rebuild and to rehabilitate the service sector.

I have some remarks regarding the report. I note that the report failed to mention who began the conflict — the rebel forces. Regarding the progress of the political process, as indicated in the report, the report was far from the truth, given that the manner the process evolved was one of the elements that complicated the political scene, due to the lack of neutrality and transparency. We note that the Head of the Mission sent messages that led to a negative impact, such as the short period granted to integrate the Rapid Support Forces into the Sudanese Armed Forces — five years. Accordingly, some political factions tended to be inflexible and made statements involving limited options and threatening war. That includes some statements made by leaders of the Central Council.

With regard to commending some resistance committees that provided services for those displaced from Khartoum, the report does not mention the assistance of local residents. Despite the role of the insurgent militias in attacking persons and infrastructure, many have not deplored or condemned them. That is not true for the Sudanese Armed Forces, which have been blamed and denounced.

The lack of compliance with the previous truces was not intentional. It only occurred because the other side violated the ceasefire and opened the doors of the prison — as attested by prisoners themselves — to let them out. The reason for that was not the lack of food in prisons, but rather the attack on police by the militia in Kober and Al-Huda prisons,

which led convicted criminals to return to society and make it more dangerous.

With regard to the new visas, the evacuation of United Nations personnel due to the dangerous work environment and the killing of some staff security is sufficient justification for our caution in issuing new visas — in order to ensure that we can guarantee their safety. The Government is doing what is necessary so as to enable humanitarian work through a high national committee, led by the Minister of Social Solidarity, as well as dedicated staff from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions in Port Sudan in order to facilitate arrangements.

The Mission also did not make any concrete effort to implement the Sudan Liberation Forces' projects in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. Its approach in communicating with the various political parties was unbalanced, which weakens gains made in workshops it organized in the field of democracy and sustained peace. This shortcoming was due to flaws in approach and implementation and not being sensitive to local environment capacities, which undermined urgent national ownership priorities.

With regard to the protection of civilians and missions, the Government had taken all necessary measures, including providing additional protection for the Head of the Mission and senior staff, but attacks by the militia were deliberate.

With regard to mobilizing resources and supporting economic growth, we have been dealing with the military component since 25 October 2021, with donors

withholding their resources because of the current political situation.

Finally, daily life has started to return to normal in Omdurman. Transportation has restarted, but risks remain, with some insurgent militia elements becoming entrenched in various homes that were forcefully taken from their owners in the neighbourhoods of Al-Hashmab, Al-Abassiya and Al-Umara.

Badr Airlines, in Port Sudan, has announced flights to Cairo, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with continued aviation activity in the airports of Port Sudan and Wadi Seidna. Turkish Airlines also submitted an aviation authorization request to connect the Sudan with other countries through Port Sudan. Bus transportation continued from Khartoum to Port Sudan and from Khartoum to the cities of Ad-Damazin, Kosti, Sennar and as far as the cities of Rabak and Al-Jabalayn, close to South Sudan. The process of exporting cattle from western Sudan aboard two ships to Saudi Arabia was finalized. Banks have begun restoring their activities in most cities, with the Central Bank branches overseeing such activities in the states of the Sudan.

Allow me to express to the Sudanese people that there are some positive elements in these difficult times.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.