



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

*Provisional*

**9480<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Thursday, 16 November 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Zhang Jun/Mr. Dai Bing . . . . .	(China)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania . . . . .	Mr. Stastoli
	Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Moretti
	Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon . . . . .	Ms. Koumby Missambo
	Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan . . . . .	Mr. Iriya
	Malta . . . . .	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Barbosa
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Ms. Shaheen
	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

Letter dated 6 November 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/849)

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/2023/861)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

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

**Letter dated 6 November 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/849)**

**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/2023/861)**

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): 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 Ms. Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

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/2023/849, which contains the text of a letter dated 6 November 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, and document S/2023/861, 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 Ms. Pobee.

**Ms. Pobee:** The conflict in the Sudan has been raging for more than seven months with no sign of de-escalation. On the contrary, hostilities have intensified in recent weeks. While both warring parties have declared a readiness to negotiate a ceasefire, their actions on the ground suggest otherwise.

In Darfur, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have made significant military gains in recent weeks, gaining control of the Sudanese Armed Forces bases in Nyala, Zalingei and El Geneina between 26 October and 4 November.

At present, the RSF seems poised to advance on El Fasher in North Darfur, expanding its territorial control over all strategic locations in the Darfur region. An RSF attack on El Fasher or its surrounding areas could result in high numbers of civilian casualties, owing to the large number of internally displaced persons located there.

Juba Peace Agreement armed movement signatories based in the area have deployed forces to defend the city. While they had been officially maintaining neutrality in the conflict, earlier today, some of them announced their decision to end their neutrality in the conflict and align with the Sudanese Armed Forces. Their statement refers to alleged human rights abuses committed by the Rapid Support Forces and the increasing risk of the Sudan fragmenting as the reasons for their departure from neutrality.

At the same time, people fleeing to Chad from West Darfur have reported a new surge in ethnically-driven violence directed towards members of the Masalit community. Credible reports indicate that Arab militias affiliated with the RSF committed serious human rights abuses between 4 and 6 November, particularly in the Ardamata neighbourhood of El Geneina. The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) is working to verify these reports, as well as reports that a Masalit militia undertook targeted violence against members of the Arab community in El Geneina, risking cyclical bouts of violence.

Outside of Darfur, deadly clashes have continued in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri, with the main battles taking place around Sudanese Armed Forces strongholds. Tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al-Hilu faction also persist in South Kordofan, while the situation remains tense around El Obeid in North Kordofan. Hostilities have spilled over to new areas, such as Gezira, White Nile and West Kordofan states, placing even more civilians at risk as well as humanitarian operations.

The Sudan is facing a convergence of a worsening humanitarian calamity and a catastrophic human rights crisis. More than 6,000 civilians, including women and children, have been killed since April. The Sudan is now the world's largest displacement crisis, with 7.1 million people displaced. The health situation also remains extremely worrisome.

Despite numerous access constraints, attacks on aid workers and bureaucratic impediments, the United Nations and humanitarian partners continue to deliver life-saving assistance. Overall, 4.1 million people have received life-saving assistance since mid-April, but this is only 22 per cent of the people that humanitarian organizations seek to assist in 2023.

Civilians continue to face serious violations of human rights, including sexual and gender-based violence. The warring parties have reportedly carried out indiscriminate attacks, while also conducting targeted attacks against civilians, in apparent violation of international humanitarian law. Restrictions on civic space and livelihood activities continue unabated. The plight of women and girls across the Sudan continues to significantly deteriorate. Testimonies of victims of sexual violence collected by the Mission predominantly point to armed men in RSF uniforms or RSF personnel as the alleged perpetrators. Allegations of rape and sexual harassment implicating the Sudanese Armed Forces have also been reported, primarily in Omdurman and Bahri.

I welcome the resumption of talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 29 October, co-facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States, with the positive inclusion of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development also representing the African Union. Coordinated regional and international leverage and reinforced linkages to ongoing civilian initiatives will be essential to strengthen the talks and the likelihood of further progress.

The statement of commitments, adopted by the parties in Jeddah on 7 November, is an important first step towards addressing the needs of the Sudanese people. We welcome the launch of the Sudan Humanitarian Forum on 13 November and are hopeful that it will facilitate the implementation of the humanitarian commitments made in Jeddah.

Regrettably, the parties did not reach an agreement on a ceasefire in this round of Jeddah talks. Instead, they have intensified the fighting.

While a ceasefire must be put in place by the warring parties, no durable solution can emerge without engaging civilians as the paramount stakeholders in a political process. In that context, we welcome the initiatives by civilian actors to coalesce around a common peace platform. A meeting of civilian stakeholders held in Addis Ababa in October was an

important development towards that end. The meeting, along with other initiatives convened by civilian stakeholders put forward principles of what a future, inclusive democratic Sudan could look like.

We also welcome the consultative meeting of signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, convened in Juba on 24 and 25 October, and commend the Government of South Sudan for hosting the meeting.

While Sudanese women continue their activism against the war and in favour of an inclusive transition, we are seeing a diminishment of women's political participation. No political process will succeed if women are not adequately present at the table and their concerns are not addressed.

A joined-up mediation approach will be essential to not only increase pressure on the parties but ensure that ceasefire and civilian political tracks are harmonized and integrated. Diplomatic efforts should also include regional States that can exercise tangible leverage on the warring parties to end the war. To that end, we are encouraged by the prospects for renewed regional efforts to advance peace and dialogue.

Given the dramatically changed circumstances on the ground since the outbreak of the conflict, the Secretary-General has initiated a strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan to provide the Council with options on how to adapt the Mission's mandate to better fit the current context. That will help ensure that the Mission's objectives and priorities adequately reflect the needs of the Sudanese people and support the Sudan on its path towards peace and stability.

The Secretary-General has appointed Mr. Ian Martin to lead the strategic review. We encourage Council members to engage with him to share their views on the future of the Mission. Mr. Martin will hold extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including Sudanese authorities, civil society, regional and subregional organizations, Member States and relevant entities within the United Nations system. While the review team will work expeditiously, we would ask Council Members for sufficient time to ensure that the process is as thorough as possible and reflects the views of a wide range of actors.

It is high time that the warring sides recognize the futility of continued fighting and prioritize dialogue and de-escalation. It is also important that the situation

in the Sudan does not fall off the international radar, but rather that the international community renews its commitment to revitalize collective and coordinated peace efforts under the leadership of the region.

The United Nations stands ready work with partners and play an effective and supporting role in ending the conflict and restoring a fully civilian transition. The continued cooperation and unity of the Council on the Sudan will be critical in that regard.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Pobeë for her briefing.

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

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobeë for her briefing, and I welcome the participation of the representative of the Sudan in this meeting.

The conflict in the Sudan is having a catastrophic impact on civilians. More than 6 million people are now displaced inside and outside of the country. We pay tribute to the tireless efforts of the Sudanese people, United Nations staff and aid workers who are working to provide support for the millions plunged into starvation and insecurity by the fighting between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces.

In Darfur, the recent RSF offensive has been appallingly violent, with credible reports of human rights abuses and atrocities, including ethnically targeted killings, unjust detentions and widespread sexual violence. Continued air strikes in urban areas by the Sudanese Armed Forces have led to a heavy loss of life and thousands trapped without access to basic services. And we note with concern the announcement today that signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement have ended their neutrality in the conflict. That can only risk leading to further bloodshed.

The conflict requires urgent diplomatic action. We are encouraged by the resumption of the Jeddah talks and the subsequent establishment of a humanitarian forum.

We urge both warring parties to act on their commitment to improve humanitarian access through concrete actions.

The meeting in Addis Ababa of Sudanese civilian stakeholders is an important step towards the establishment of a representative pro-democracy

civilian front. We support that effort and underline the need to make the process even more inclusive.

We urge the warring parties to recognize that the transfer of power to a civilian Administration is the only way forward and to work constructively towards meaningful peace talks. The conflict cannot be ended through military means. Further coordinated action under African leadership, along with other international partners, remains vital.

Irrespective of developments over the coming months, there is a clear need for a continued United Nations role in the Sudan, working in concert with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations following the strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ms. Martha Pobeë, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, for her remarks. We recognize the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan at this meeting.

Ecuador reiterates its condemnation of the armed violence and the perverse effects of the clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces which, for seven months, have claimed the lives of thousands of people and have affected millions of civilians, leaving a devastating panorama in their wake, with nearly 5 million displaced persons, 3 million of whom are children; more than 1 million refugees and the disruption of public health services, which has increased the outbreaks of diseases, including cholera, dengue fever, malaria and measles, which were under control before the conflict.

The provision of services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence is a priority in the Sudan. The reports of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls are heartbreaking, in particular the situation of enslavement of women and girls in the Sudan, abducted and held under inhumane and degrading conditions. We condemn the use of sexual violence as a weapon.

We reiterate our support for the investigative work of the International Criminal Court and, in that regard, we hope that the recent resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/54/2) will allow that body to compile evidence of crimes for future criminal

proceedings. In that regard, the statement presented by the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide should be a cornerstone of the investigations to be carried out, especially in Darfur. If confirmed, those facts could constitute crimes against humanity, in the face of which the Council cannot remain silent.

The humanitarian situation in the country is extremely worrisome, with almost 25 million people in need of humanitarian assistance — that is, almost half of the Sudanese population. We recognize the work of humanitarian organizations, especially the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which, despite the obstacles to the provision of humanitarian assistance, has delivered more than 150,000 metric tons of aid to 4.1 million Sudanese in the past seven months.

Ecuador recognizes and supports the Sudan Humanitarian Forum, which took place on 13 November, as a result of the Jeddah negotiations, and we call on the international community to continue contributing to those processes.

The exemplary role of Sudanese civil society, especially women and young people providing humanitarian aid, not only alleviates the situation of those most in need, but also contributes to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. We call on the United Nations to continue to support the peacebuilding initiative of the tribal leaders from the east of the Sudan, as well as all other initiatives that promote reconciliation and seek the resolution of differences through dialogue.

We reiterate our appreciation for international, regional and multilateral initiatives to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. It is time to join efforts in a single, inclusive and consolidated peace process to overcome this conflict. However, we are concerned about the news in this meeting about the announcement of a cessation of neutrality by rebel groups of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan.

We appreciate the 6 November letter from the Secretary-General, on the strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (S/2023/849), which we have been informed will take into account its needs, direction, priorities and configuration in order to support peacebuilding in the Sudan. We look forward to obtaining accurate information that will help focus the Mission's work to support the path to peace and stability in the country.

With regard to information on the flow of arms to the warring parties, we call on all States Members of the United Nations to respect the arms embargo in Darfur imposed by the Security Council and to refrain from supplying military material to the warring parties.

The Security Council must act in accordance with the existing mandate and using all the tools at its disposal, including those provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Iriya (Japan):** I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her briefing.

Let me begin my statement by reiterating Japan's strong call on the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to stop fighting immediately, allow unhindered humanitarian access, return to a peaceful and inclusive political process and uphold international humanitarian law, including by ensuring the safety of civilians. We are seriously concerned about warnings of the potential for the expansion of current clashes into a full-blown civil war.

Japan is deeply disturbed by the dire humanitarian situation in the Sudan. Reports of ethnically motivated attacks and sexual- and gender-based violence are alarming. We are also concerned about the outbreak of infectious diseases given the dysfunctional health care system and lack of humanitarian access to the affected areas. An influx of displaced persons could pose a risk to neighbouring countries that generously host refugees despite their own challenges.

To pressure the parties to stop fighting, it is imperative that the international community unite and speak with one voice. In that regard, Japan welcomes the recent resumption of the Jeddah talks, which have led to the Statement of Commitments, and thanks the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, among others, for their efforts to bringing both parties to the negotiating table. The parties must abide by the commitment to ensure safe, sustained and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need. The Security Council should work more closely with the relevant international and regional actors to ensure the coherence of all efforts to realize a ceasefire.

Japan takes note of the Secretary-General's intention to conduct a strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan.



While Japan's support for the Mission is unchanged, we recognize the need for the United Nations and the Mission to adapt to the complex situation on the ground. Japan calls on the Sudan, the host country, to fully cooperate with the United Nations in that regard. We look forward to receiving the results of the review in January 2024, as the Secretary-General mentioned, so that the Security Council can discuss how the United Nations can best contribute to peace and security in the Sudan and the region.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobeë for her briefing. As she indicated in her sobering remarks, fighting continues to rage in the Sudan, with no sign of abatement. Far from media attention, the conflict is taking a catastrophic toll on the civilian population, as previous speakers today have mentioned. And, as the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan pointed out last week, the conflict has few equivalents in terms of the scale of the crisis or the depth of the suffering.

In that respect, I would like to highlight three priorities for my country.

First, we must protect civilians. To that end, the fighting must stop immediately. We call on the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to seize every opportunity to commit to a ceasefire. The confidence-building measures adopted as part of the Statement of Commitments last week in Jeddah are a step in that direction. Those measures are all the more important as hostilities between the two parties have intensified during the resumption of talks, particularly in Darfur. We are extremely concerned to receive once again, this time from the Ardamata district of El Geneina, alarming and credible reports of further ethnic massacres committed by the RSF and allied militias, mainly against the Masalit community. We condemn those acts in the strongest possible terms. Two days ago, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide again warned us of the growing risk of genocide and other atrocity crimes. We simply cannot ignore those warning signs. Respect for international humanitarian law and human rights is not optional, but imperative. We demand independent investigations and justice for the victims.

Secondly, we must improve the humanitarian situation. We welcome the launch this week of the Sudan Humanitarian Forum, which was envisaged at

the last round of negotiations in Jeddah. We call on the parties to keep those promises and to take immediate and concrete steps to reduce access constraints and bureaucratic obstacles. We would also like to thank the countries of the region once again for welcoming people fleeing the conflict, keeping their borders open and facilitating cross-border humanitarian operations. As the Assistant Secretary-General noted, this conflict has led to the world's largest displacement crisis, and humanitarian needs are reaching unprecedented levels. Switzerland remains committed to the humanitarian response. Last week, we provided the World Food Programme in Egypt an additional \$1.4 million so that the Sudanese people can continue to receive vital assistance.

Thirdly, efforts have to be made to find a negotiated and lasting solution to the conflict. We know that the Sudanese people will not accept a military solution. Switzerland reiterates its call for a return to a credible and inclusive political process. In that regard, we welcome the efforts currently being made by civilian actors, especially women, to bring together diverse voices united against the war in order to establish common objectives for the country's future. I also welcome the various diplomatic initiatives being put forward by regional and international stakeholders with a view to working for a peaceful solution. Those efforts must be closely coordinated and complementary if they are to achieve lasting results. I would like to remind the Council that in September Mayada Adil, a representative of civil society, asked the Council (see S/PV.9417) on behalf of Sudanese women to consider their political participation in these processes as a priority. We want to emphasize that point.

Given the gravity of the situation in the country and in the region, the Council must assume its responsibility to advance peace and security and protect the Sudanese people, who desperately want to live in peace. We believe that a United Nations political presence in the Sudan is essential to supporting diplomatic efforts in that regard. We welcome the Secretary-General's letter (S/2023/849) announcing an independent strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, led by Ian Martin, and hope that its recommendations will provide the Council with specific options for a viable and context-sensitive configuration. We will engage constructively in the discussions ahead.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique (A3).

We thank Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobe for her comprehensive briefing and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in today's meeting.

The A3 remains deeply concerned about the persistent fighting between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces. We deplore the continued fighting in the capital and the expansion of the conflict to other parts of the country, especially Darfur. We reiterate our condemnation in the strongest terms of the ongoing violence against civilians, including sexual violence and violence against children, as well as the looting and destruction of essential infrastructure. We also condemn the air attacks and fighting in densely populated areas. We are particularly dismayed by the high price that has been paid by civilians, with 10,400 dead since 15 April due to the clashes, and we convey our deepest condolences to the bereaved families. We are alarmed that the fighting in the Sudan has triggered a serious escalation of intercommunal violence and an increase in inter-ethnic tensions. In the Darfur region, for example, violent clashes continue, with civilians from the Masalit and other non-Arab communities being targeted based on their ethnic identity.

At the political level, we welcome the fact that since the start of the crisis, regional bodies such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have worked hard to mobilize their capacities to help put an end to the violence in the Sudan. In that regard, the A3 reiterates the call made by the African Union and IGAD for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Even if each of the two parties still believes it can prevail militarily, an objective assessment suggests a different conclusion. We want to reiterate our repeated statements in the Council that there can be no military solution to the serious crisis that the Sudan is going through, and we urge the parties to embrace negotiation and dialogue to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

The A3 also echoes the second communiqué, of 6 September, of IGAD's Quartet Group of Countries for the Resolution of the Situation in the Republic of Sudan, which underlines the need to implement the AU road map for the resolution of the conflict in the

Sudan and welcomes the African Union's commitment to establishing a credible civil political dialogue that is Sudanese-owned and -led. In that regard, we welcomed the holding from 23 to 26 October in Addis Ababa of a preparatory meeting of Sudanese civil and political actors, under the auspices of the African Union and IGAD. The A3 reiterates its concern about the multiplicity of initiatives, however, which could weaken mediation efforts and has so far failed to put an end to the clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF. In that regard, we emphasize the crucial role of regional and subregional organizations in resolving the crisis and reaffirm our belief that it is essential that inclusive mediation action be concerted and coordinated if it is to achieve lasting peace.

We welcome the resumption of the Jeddah talks and the Sudanese Armed Forces and RSF paramilitaries' reaffirmation of their commitments to taking steps to facilitate increased humanitarian assistance and implement confidence-building measures, including for the movement and work of humanitarian agencies. We encourage the parties to respect their international commitments and to prioritize the interests of the Sudanese people by finding a political solution to the conflict.

The humanitarian consequences of the confrontation between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF have been disastrous. The A3 emphasizes that since the beginning of the crisis, 5.7 million people have been displaced, 25 million people need humanitarian assistance to survive, and 19 million children will be out of school in the Sudan this year. The catastrophic humanitarian situation has been exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which have had an adverse impact on the country. Neighbouring countries such as Chad, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, which have been hosting a constant flow of refugees, are themselves coping with fragile security and humanitarian contexts. There is an urgent need to accelerate the humanitarian response while at the same time ensuring that the flow of refugees and displaced people and the circulation of weapons are properly managed to limit any destabilizing impact on the other countries of the region. We therefore urge a coordinated approach to the humanitarian and security response by all stakeholders, particularly at the borders of the countries hosting refugees, in order to appropriately help the populations fleeing the horrors of the fighting. We continue to appeal urgently to donors and the

international community to mobilize funds to finance the humanitarian response plan.

Since the beginning of the crisis in the Sudan, at least 20 aid workers have died and many others have been injured. We pay tribute to their work and honour them as we also call for secure and unhindered humanitarian access. It is time for the parties to respect their commitment to ensuring that humanitarians are allowed a secure and unhindered space so that they can truly assist the Sudanese populations, who have suffered too much.

We take note of the Secretary-General's letter (S/2023/849) announcing the launch of an independent strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), to be led by Mr. Ian Martin, whose findings and recommendations are expected to be shared with the Council in January 2024. We encourage the Council to take this and the views of the host country into account, in line with the principles of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, during negotiations on the renewal of the UNITAMS mandate.

Finally, the A3 stresses that the demand for a lasting ceasefire must remain a priority and should continue to be at the centre of discussions with all the parties. We reiterate our solidarity with the Sudanese people during the difficult and challenging period that the country is going through, and we reaffirm our commitment to the independence, territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of the Sudan.

**Ms. Shaheen** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her briefing and welcome the participation of Ambassador Mohamed in today's meeting.

This week marks seven months since fighting erupted in the Sudan, during which the lives of the Sudanese people have been upended. While the conflict continues to spread, violence has become widespread, including sexual violence. As Assistant Secretary-General Pobee mentioned earlier, more than 6,000 civilians, including women and children, have been killed since the fighting began in April. I would therefore like to emphasize three points today.

First, all parties must commit themselves to an immediate, permanent and sustainable ceasefire. That is urgent for ending the violence, which is threatening

the lives of civilians, as well as for delivering much-needed humanitarian assistance to reach those in need. We hope that the parties will engage in good faith in the resumed talks in Jeddah, aimed at helping realize those objectives. The discussions will offer an opportunity to build on the agreements reached in May, including the joint commitments announced on 7 November. It is important to take into consideration that the successful outcome of the talks will require strong regional and international support. In that context, facilitating those talks with African participation, through the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), together with the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is a welcome development in garnering regional efforts to ensure a lasting ceasefire.

Secondly, all parties should uphold their commitments already made in Jeddah. It will be impossible to meet the massive humanitarian needs without ensuring safe and unhindered aid. The reports of looting humanitarian facilities and supplies reflect the dire situation faced by the brotherly Sudanese people. Furthermore, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 20 humanitarian aid workers have lost their lives since April. Those who continue to operate on the ground are facing enormous obstacles in the delivery of aid, as they are continuously subjected to attacks. Under such difficult circumstances, we commend the efforts of Sudanese civilians, including women and youth, who are actively helping in the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the Sudan. That must be matched by the commitment of the parties to end the conflict and with international solidarity with the Sudan, given the funding shortages. We also call for the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel, in line with international humanitarian law. For our part, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Sudan is a top priority. The United Arab Emirates has provided more than \$100 million in relief aid, which includes more than 8,800 tons of food, medical aid and other relief items.

Thirdly, given the regional dimension of the Sudanese crisis, the leaders of the region play a critical role in urging the parties to cease hostilities. We are of the view that the initiative by neighbouring States led by the Arab Republic of Egypt is one of the important initiatives to explore the means to end the conflict and address its repercussions for the region, similar to



the other initiatives led by the League of Arab States, the African Union and IGAD. We underscore the importance of coordinating among all mediation tracks to ensure the success of regional and international efforts in the Sudan.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates remains steadfast in its solidarity with the brotherly Sudanese people during this difficult ordeal and reaffirms its full respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Sudan. My country will continue to support all efforts aimed at bringing the crisis to an end.

**Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobee for her briefing. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, Mr. Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith Mohamed, at this meeting.

We continue to follow with concern the development of the armed conflict in the Sudan. The situation has seriously deteriorated in recent months. Intense battles are being fought over strategic facilities in the area of the capital. We note the difficult situation in Nyala and Zalingei and the escalation of hostilities in El Fasher and North Kordofan. Military operations have spread into new territories, leading to many casualties, including among civilians. The country is facing a humanitarian disaster. The number of displaced persons is becoming unprecedented.

We continue to call on the parties to the conflict — the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces — to demonstrate political will and take the necessary steps to bring about a ceasefire. We believe that differences can be resolved around the negotiating table. Unfortunately, to date, none of the many mediation initiatives has produced significant results, especially in terms of ending the armed confrontation. It is also not encouraging that the region as a whole is in a vulnerable situation and that, while the situation in the Sudan not only has an impact on the region, the converse is also true. We welcome the aspirations of the Sudan and neighbouring countries to restore trust in the region.

The Sudanese conflict is rooted in history and complex national particularities. In that regard, any reconciliation efforts must take those factors into account and must involve all national stakeholders. Mediation initiatives must not be allowed to deepen disputes or increase mistrust, as we have unfortunately

seen in a number of cases. In our view, that is a sign that the actions of external players are motivated by their own interests, not the interests of the Sudanese people. We are categorically opposed to attempts at political or social engineering, including outside the Sudan. The Sudanese do not, and should not, need to rely on mediators with the colonial mindset of their knowing best. The cost of playing such games could be further chaos. Close coordination between the mediators and the Sudanese authorities is needed more than ever to achieve tangible results towards reaching a settlement based on realistic goals. Restoring stability in the country must be at the top of the agenda. That is the highest priority. Lessons must also be learned from previous failed efforts.

At the same time, the country is in dire need of assistance. We commend the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian organizations that are working selflessly on the ground in very difficult conditions, with limited resources. As we have always done in the past, we encourage humanitarian workers to act strictly in accordance with the United Nations guiding principles for humanitarian assistance. What is most important now, however, is to step up such efforts both within the Sudan itself and neighbouring countries that are under increasing pressure, including as a result of the large number of refugees.

We have said before that much of the responsibility for the current situation lies with the leadership of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). Many of the tasks under the mandate have remained on paper over the years, for various reasons, including the lack of promised financial assistance from donors. According to our calculations, United Nations humanitarian and economic entities are now adequately carrying out their functions with the resources available to them. In fact, the separation of those functions from the political component has not at all affected the effectiveness of assistance to ordinary Sudanese, who find themselves in catastrophic conditions. The UNITAMS mandate will expire on 3 December. We have taken note of the plans for conducting a strategic review aimed at preparing recommendations for further United Nations assistance to the Sudan. However, we still consider that the position of the Government of the Sudan on this issue will be the determining factor. The future of

UNITAMS will be decided based on the views of the host country.

In conclusion, we would like to confirm our unfailing support for the territorial integrity, independence, unity and sovereignty of the Sudan.

**Mr. Stastoli** (Albania): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobeë for her briefing, and I welcome the representative of the Sudan to this meeting. I would like to focus on three main points.

First, Albania remains deeply concerned about the Sudan's escalating political, security and humanitarian crises. The prolonged conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, spanning seven months, has worsened an already dire situation in the country. The crisis has led to an alarming situation, with more than 18 million people lacking basic needs such as water and food, and affecting the approximately 3.5 million children who are suffering from acute malnutrition. Outbreaks of disease, including cholera, have been increasing and are causing more deaths owing to the lack of health-care services. Furthermore, non-governmental humanitarian organizations are closing their facilities owing to the insecure conditions, which is preventing civilians from receiving basic medical assistance. The situation calls for an urgent humanitarian response.

Secondly, the violence in the Sudan is causing rapid and massive displacement, affecting 5 million internally displaced persons, with an additional 1.17 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. The Sudanese people deserve coordinated efforts to address their pressing needs. In that regard, we welcome the resumption of the Jeddah talks and hope to see the rapid and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and an immediate ceasefire. We also commend all international and regional diplomatic initiatives, including those led by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the League of Arab States, aimed at achieving a permanent cessation of hostilities through inclusive political talks. We very much regret the decision of the Juba Peace Agreement signatories to end their neutrality.

Thirdly, the conflict has escalated ethnically based violence, fuelling intercommunal clashes, in particular in Darfur. Albania is deeply concerned about the disturbing and credible reports of widespread atrocities being committed against civilians, particularly instances of sexual violence such as rape and gang rape,

notably in the Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan regions. Furthermore, women and girls attempting to escape violence have been encountering increased harassment. We must end that suffering now. We reiterate our call to the conflicting parties to safeguard civilians, particularly women and children.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our support for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, and commend its dedicated efforts despite the significant challenges. We welcome the strategic review initiated by the Secretary-General and stress the crucial role of the United Nations in advancing human rights and safeguarding civilians. Albania stands with the people of the Sudan in their pursuit of peace and justice.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobeë for her briefing, and I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan here today. I would like to emphasize several points.

First, no military solution can end the crisis. The continued clashes over the past seven months have not changed that reality, in fact, quite the contrary, the stubbornness of the warring parties has only undermined their legitimacy. The sole outcome of the past seven months is that the suffering of the civilian population has been exacerbated, the humanitarian situation has worsened, and the unity of the Sudan and the stability of the region has been jeopardized through seven months of conflict, 6 million displaced persons and 1 million refugees in neighbouring countries.

In that regard, we regret the inability of the parties to agree to a cessation of hostilities during the recent Jeddah talks. We call on them to implement the commitments that they made in May to protecting civilians and, during the last round of negotiations in November, to ensuring humanitarian access. We encourage them to return to the negotiating table without delay, especially to prevent any escalation in El Fasher. We welcome the efforts of the United States and Saudi Arabia, which are now joining with those of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

We are particularly concerned about the reports of atrocities committed against people in Darfur based on their ethnicity. If confirmed, those incidents could amount to crimes against humanity. We commend the work of the United Nations Integrated Transition

Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) in verifying those incidents, as well as the investigations announced by the International Criminal Court. We encourage the Sudanese authorities to cooperate with the United Nations in verifying all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed since the beginning of the conflict, and in particular with the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan. The perpetrators of those abuses must be held accountable for their actions.

We once again call on the parties concerned not to fuel the conflict. The armed movements in the Sudan must continue to resist efforts to involve them in the conflict. The countries of the region must maintain their neutrality and international actors must refrain from supporting the warring parties. Moreover, the Security Council retains the ability at any time to review the sanctions regime it introduced in 2005, including in order to adapt it to the reality of the current situation. We reiterate our support for UNITAMS and the renewal of its mandate. We welcome the Secretary-General's announcement of a review of the Mission, which will be an opportunity for the region and the Sudanese authorities to express their expectations of the United Nations.

France and the European Union stand in solidarity with the Sudanese people and the countries in the region. The European Union and its member States have pledged to contribute to the humanitarian response and have already mobilized €500 million, which represents a third of the total international response since the beginning of the crisis. Nine humanitarian airlifts to Chad and Port Sudan have also made it possible to deliver 600 tons of humanitarian cargo since the beginning of the conflict.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our support for all Sudanese civil society initiatives assisted by the African Union with a view to achieving a political solution.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her briefing and for her leadership in the face of this dire crisis.

The United States strongly supports the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), and we call on all Council members to continue to stand behind it as it works to support an end to the conflict, protect human rights, promote unhindered humanitarian assistance and

facilitate the resumption of a process that can move the Sudan towards a democratic political settlement. I also note that we look forward to the recommendations in the Secretary-General's strategic review of UNITAMS.

Nineteen years ago, in a different role, I visited a refugee camp in Adré, in Chad. It was overflowing with refugees fleeing a horrific civil war in the Sudan. I met families who had left everything behind to find safety, and I saw babies who were severely malnourished, their parents forced to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their children. When the most recent Juba Peace Agreement was signed, there was a new-found hope for sustained peace. But today that hope has faded, and another war has turned the Sudan into a living hell. The conflict has gone on for longer than six months, and in that time, the warring parties — the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) — have engaged in a brutal struggle for power, with total disregard for the lives of the Sudanese people. More than 5,000 people have been killed and more than 5.7 million have had to flee their homes. Khartoum has been devastated, and Darfur is also bearing the brunt of the conflict.

The RSF and allied militias have carried out massacres and other horrific abuses across West Darfur, and just this week eyewitnesses reported further human rights abuses in West Darfur, the ethnic targeting of the ethnic African Masalit community and the arbitrary detention of civilians, including local leaders, human rights defenders and activists. According to doctors and the United Nations, more than 800 people and counting were killed in a multi-day attack in Ardamata, in what may amount to the single largest mass killing since the war erupted in April. We are deeply alarmed by reports that the RSF used heavy weapons to attack El Fasher and by credible reports that both the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces have failed to take sufficient measures to prevent civilian casualties in the city's residential neighbourhoods.

We call on all Member States to uphold the United Nations arms embargo on Darfur. We urge the warring parties to immediately cease their attacks in and around El Fasher and to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law concerning civilians, as reaffirmed in the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians in the Sudan of 11 May. We also know that conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, has been rampant. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights, women and girls are being abducted, chained and held against their will in RSF-controlled areas in Darfur. Let me repeat that. Women and girls are being abducted, chained and held against their will. That is all happening on our watch, and it is a stain on our collective humanity. We said never again, but so far those have proved empty words. We have failed to hold the perpetrators of those evils to account, and that needs to change immediately.

For its part, the United States is committed to securing justice for the people of Darfur. While I was in Chad in September, I announced sanctions and visa restrictions on key RSF leaders, and the United States welcomes the establishment of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan. We must keep going with this. There must be accountability.

This conflict is nothing more than two generals fighting for power in a selfish, callous and senseless way. It has caused the largest displacement crisis in the world, with nearly 6 million civilians fleeing their homes in search of a semblance of safety. A staggering 19 million children in the Sudan are unable to return to their classrooms, creating one of the worst education crises in the world. More than 24 million Sudanese are in urgent need of life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The United States has stepped up as the world's leading humanitarian donor to the Sudanese response effort. But only a fraction of the United Nations appeal has been funded. Today we call on all Member States to do more and to give more. Yet we know that sustained peace is the only way to save lives and end this humanitarian crisis. That is why the United States, together with Saudi Arabia and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, has reconvened ceasefire talks between the parties. Following the first round of reconvened negotiations, the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces committed to participating in a joint humanitarian forum led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to resolve impediments to humanitarian access and the delivery of assistance. The two parties also agreed to identify points of contact to assist with movements of humanitarian personnel and assistance, and resolved to implement confidence-building measures, including establishing communication between the leaders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF, arresting prison escapees and fugitives and reducing hostile rhetoric. The world is now closely watching their next steps to see

whether they live up to those commitments — or break yet another set of promises to the Sudanese people.

Let us be clear that there can be no military solution to this conflict, and external actors that provide arms or support to the warring parties are only throwing fuel on the fire. The immediate focus must be on protecting civilians, providing humanitarian assistance to those in dire need and negotiating an end to the conflict. In September, nearly two decades after I visited the refugee camp in Adré, I returned. Once again, Adré was sheltering thousands of people who had fled fighting in the Sudan. It was as if I was stepping back in time and reliving the horrors of the past. I once again saw children who were in critical condition, whose ankles were swollen and bodies blistered from malnutrition. I once again saw parents desperate to help their children. How can we let this happen again? How can we allow children to suffer like this?

There is no shortage of crises before us in Gaza, Ukraine, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere. But we must continue to address the dire needs of the Sudanese people and to push for peace. It is far past time for the parties to put down their weapons and resume civilian governance. Let us all do everything possible to help the Sudanese people secure the freedom, peace and justice they deserve.

**Mr. Moretti (Brazil):** I join others in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her comprehensive briefing, and I welcome the Sudanese delegation to this meeting.

We welcome the agreement reached between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces as a result of the Jeddah talks last week. We commend the role played by Saudi Arabia, the United States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, also acting on behalf of the African Union. We also take note of the belligerent parties' commitment to improving humanitarian access and implementing confidence-building measures. Those are crucial first steps that if implemented will certainly help to ease the suffering of the Sudanese people, but they are far from enough. After seven months, the conflict has reportedly resulted in more than 10,000 deaths, the destruction of the country's infrastructure and 25 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. We deeply regret that the parties were not able to agree on arrangements to cease their hostilities, and we join others in calling for an urgent ceasefire and inclusive peace talks.



The expansion of the conflict to new areas and the recent military escalation in Darfur are having an enormous impact on civilians. We remain alarmed by the heightened intercommunal tensions and the high incidence of conflict-related sexual violence. We are gravely concerned about the continued attacks on civilians, including along ethnic lines. We urge all the parties to the conflict in the Sudan to uphold their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We commend the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) for strengthening its reporting and monitoring capacity, despite the significant challenges that it has faced since 15 April.

As we heard during the open debate on 25 and 26 October (see S/PV.9452), the voices of Sudanese women are crucial to ending the conflict and paving the way for a peaceful political transition. We commend the resilience of those women who have advocated for peace, justice and freedom. The Sudanese people would benefit from inclusive peace initiatives. The mediation efforts to end the ongoing fighting in the Sudan and to ensure a successful political transition must include the full and meaningful participation of civilians, especially women. Inclusive efforts are more likely to achieve and sustain peace.

The conflict in the Sudan remains one of the world's most serious crises, yet we, as a Council, have so far not been able to act in a concrete way to help alleviate the plight of the Sudanese people. We note with satisfaction the Secretary-General's decision to initiate an independently-led strategic review of UNITAMS. We should take this opportunity not only to renew our commitment to United Nations efforts in the Sudan, but to renew our commitment to the Sudanese people and to ending the current crisis.

**Ms. Gatt (Malta):** I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her briefing. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to this meeting.

Malta strongly condemns the continued violence in the Sudan. As the conflict enters its seventh month, we reiterate our call on both parties to immediately cease the ongoing hostilities, to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid and to seek an eventual return to the political transition process. We also call on both parties to respect their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We are concerned about the Sudan's integrity, particularly the increasing risks of a territorial fragmentation along military and tribal lines. Any solution to the conflict should be underpinned by a united and comprehensive civilian front. We also express concern over today's declaration by the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement on ending their neutrality.

In unlocking a coherent international response, Malta calls for enhanced coordination among regional and subregional mediation initiatives, underpinned by support from the Council.

Malta deplores human rights violations by both parties. Those include the arbitrary detention of civilians and human rights defenders, arbitrary killings, torture, sexual violence and extortion. In Darfur in particular, we are alarmed by the atrocities in Ardamata. More than 1,000 members of the Masalit community were killed in attacks carried out by the Rapid Support Forces and its affiliated militias.

We are deeply concerned about widespread conflict-related sexual violence. Reports of captured women being subjected to sexual slavery and exploitation in Darfur are appalling. Survivors deserve justice, and perpetrators must be held accountable. We call for thorough investigations into all allegations to combat the cycle of impunity. We also remain seriously troubled by the stark increase in grave violations against children, particularly killing and maiming, sexual violence and the use of children as combatants. We welcome the safe release of 30 boys who were reportedly used as combatants in September and support continued access to conduct age assessments of affected children.

A humanitarian catastrophe is currently unfolding. Almost half of the population requires humanitarian assistance, with millions having been internally displaced or fled the country. We are concerned about outbreaks of previously contained diseases and cases of malnourished children. Those are further exacerbated by the lack of functioning health-care facilities, which have been subject to direct attacks.

We commend the relentless efforts and courage displayed by humanitarian staff. We support the continued delivery of relief items facilitated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the scaling up of aid delivery through cross-border mechanisms. As we welcome the recent resumption of talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, we continue to stress

the need for rapid, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid.

The European Union has pledged \$500 million to the United Nations humanitarian response plan and €256.4 million for humanitarian and development assistance.

Since its establishment, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) has facilitated and empowered the voices of Sudanese civilian groups in the political process, especially women's rights groups and youth. We value the continued monitoring and reporting on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by UNITAMS, including the follow-up on cases of sexual violence. As the Council soon approaches negotiations for the renewal of the Mission's mandate against the backdrop of the strategic review, we are confident that convergence is premised on the crucial presence of the United Nations in the Sudan.

To conclude, Malta urges a return to peace, which reflects the true call of the Sudanese people. The Sudan's future generations deserve a brighter future that sees their aspirations fulfilled.

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

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her briefing, and I welcome the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to this meeting.

China is deeply saddened by the drawn-out conflict in the Sudan, which has exacerbated the suffering of civilians and the humanitarian crisis. China has noted that the two parties to the conflict have resumed negotiations in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and welcomes the fact that the parties have reaffirmed their humanitarian commitments and agreed to take measures to enhance mutual trust. China supports the participation of the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the mediation process and welcomes the efforts of countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Egypt and Chad. Restoring peace and stability in the Sudan is the common aspiration of the Sudanese people and the international community at large. China sincerely hopes that the two parties will put the interests of their country and its people first in order to achieve an immediate ceasefire, restore normal order and work

together to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

Like others, China is deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation in the Sudan. The ongoing conflict is aggravating the humanitarian crisis. Currently, 25 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, more than 6 million have been displaced and more than 1.2 million have fled to neighbouring countries amid the fighting. China pays tribute to the international humanitarian agencies for their tremendous work and appreciates the substantial assistance provided to refugees by the Sudan's neighbours. China supports the United Nations in continuing to play a coordinating role in the provision of humanitarian relief. At present, there is a serious shortage of humanitarian funding in the Sudan and neighbouring countries. The international community, especially traditional donors, should maintain their assistance so as to prevent the crisis from worsening any further.

In the light of the changing situation on the ground, the way in which the United Nations should play its due role is an important question facing the Security Council. China has taken note of the letter from Secretary-General Guterres to the Council (S/2023/849) in which he proposed an independent strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). China hopes that the review will be conducted in such a way that the views of the Sudanese authorities and regional organizations, including the AU and IGAD, will be sought and taken into account.

The recommendations arising from that independent review on future arrangements for UNITAMS should meet the actual needs of the Sudan, serve the purpose of promoting the peace process and be helpful in providing robust support to the country's development. The independent review should, on the one hand, be conducive to cooperation between the United Nations and the Sudan and, on the other, avoid imposing external solutions. China supports Secretary-General Guterres in stepping up his good offices and supports the United Nations in continuing to play a constructive role on the issue of the Sudan.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

**Mr. Mohamed (Sudan)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobe for her briefing. I also thank all those delegations that have expressed their concerns regarding the events in the Sudan in a constructive manner.

As for the war, I emphasize that the Sudanese Armed Forces are continuing their just struggle against the rebellious Rapid Support Forces militias that have been waging an all-out war of aggression against the Sudanese State since 15 April. The Sudanese Government continues to take initiatives in the political and security spheres and is cooperating with all regional and international powers to bring an end to the suffering of our people. The President of the Transitional Sovereign Council and his deputy have carried out regional visits in recent days to explain the real situation in the Sudan and to reiterate the position of the Government, namely, that the war must be brought to an end.

The position of the Sudanese Government on ending the rebellion is fully endorsed and supported by all components of Sudanese society, which strongly reject the presence of the rebel Rapid Support Forces and their allies in any security or political format in the Sudan, in particular after our citizens and the world have witnessed the large-scale systematic crimes committed by those militias in Khartoum and in Darfur, particularly the alarming events in the west of Darfur and in El Geneina. We hope that the Prosecutor's team of the International Criminal Court has taken note of that.

The Rapid Support Forces is not a party but parties that receive weapons and fighters while they displace citizens from six states. Citizens from six countries are fighting alongside the Rapid Support Forces. They were apprehended or killed in combat. We must change the way we think about the Rapid Support Forces. In that context, we regret to note that the rebel militias continue to commit atrocities, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and other international crimes to bring the Sudan back to prehistoric times in West Darfur and Central Darfur, North Kordofan and peaceful residential areas in Um Durman, despite their commitments during the Jeddah talks to protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In recent days, the militias have committed the following crimes: ethnic cleansing in West Darfur, which started in June; the killing of more than 4,000 civilians from the Masalit tribe; the expulsion of most

residents of the state capital and the neighbourhood. There are videos praising those expulsions. Moreover, killings by the militias on a tribal basis are increasing to include the village of Ardamata, where they search for new victims while assassinating local leaders such as Mohammed Arbab, his son and eight of his grandchildren; and another leader, Abdelbasit Suleiman, his wife and his son. The militias had already killed the brother of the sultan of Masalit and have continued to hold a large number of residents and torture them to death. Those crimes constitute a systematic strategy to empty the state of its original inhabitants and to re-establish foreign elements and mercenaries, including non-Sudanese there.

Moreover, those militias attack camps of displaced persons in Zalingi in central Darfur and perpetrate abominable crimes on the basis of tribal identity. They attacked peaceful villages in Umm Ruwaba in North Kordofan where they committed massacres killing dozens of civilians. They continue shelling residential areas using advanced rockets in places such as Kerery, Um Durman and a market in the suburb killing a large number of unarmed citizens. They continue indiscriminate bombing of residential areas in El Fasher in North Darfur while forcing the inhabitants to leave the area in line with an ethnic cleansing strategy. They have looted and damaged Um Kadada hospital in North Darfur where they stole all the equipment, electrical appliances and vehicles leading to a cessation of medical services. That was preceded by looting and destroying hospitals and the university in Nyala city in South Darfur.

Facilities of the judicial system in Khartoum Bahri and east of the Nile have been looted. The Rapid Force militias have burned cars and have stolen millions of pounds that were intended for the salaries of judges and employees. The militias have stolen computers and taken over court buildings to use as their headquarters. Criminal Courts and other courts in Khartoum Bahri and in the eastern area were targeted, as well as the Environmental Court, the Civil Court, the Criminal Court and the Children's Court in other places. They were looted along with 50 cars and 60 homes possessed by judges with the aim of destroying the judicial system.

Reports confirm that, since April, 14 cases of sexual violence against young girls between 9 and 18 years of age in Khartoum, Nyala and El Geneina have been documented. Most of the girls were of particular ethnicities and poor families. They were forced into sexual slavery, as is done by Da'esh. CNN

has documented one of the most terrible of those cases after the criminals released a video themselves last June. The rebel militias forced women and girls in Khartoum and South Darfur into sexual slavery where they were repeatedly kidnapped and subjected to forced disappearance.

The independent national Unit for Combating Violence Against Women has documented 29 cases which can be qualified as sexual slavery. Those assaults were accompanied by forced disappearances of women and girls and repeated acts against their honour and dignity by a number of members of the Rapid Support Force militias. Girls in the district of Halfayet Almuluk were repeatedly kidnapped, including minors. Reports confirm that forced disappearances of women and girls by the militias of the Rapid Support Forces have taken a dangerous turn after news about selling detained girls in an act of humiliating human dignity. The enslavement of girls, taking them out of Khartoum or out of the Sudan across the border to neighbouring countries by the Rapid Support Forces, reminds us of what happened with the Yazidi women who were kidnapped, sold and subjected to slavery by Da'esh in Iraq in 2014.

We call on the international community and sisterly countries to address those acts of sexual violence by providing medical assistance as a priority to save lives, because there is a severe shortage of post-rape hospital treatment and of preventative medicine for sexually transmitted infections, AIDS and hepatitis.

We have established a joint plan between the Unit for Combating Violence Against Women and the United Nations Population Fund to strengthen national mechanisms to protect women and children and to combat violence against women even within the state of emergency in a number of the states in the country.

With regard to justice, there have been major repercussions in terms of justice owing to the ongoing armed conflict. Of course, armed conflicts affect all walks of life and justice institutions in the Sudan are no exception. However, justice institutions in most of the Sudan's states — in 15 out of 18 states — are functioning normally except in the capitals of some states in Darfur, namely, Nyala, Zalingi and El Geneina, as well as Khartoum Bahri, owing to security reasons as a result of the attacks launched by the Rapid Support Forces militias.

In Darfur, there are 32 prosecutor offices, including 68 prosecutors in 54 local districts. The

report (S/2023/861) states that the Public Prosecutor's Office was put under the control of the transitional Sovereignty Council. That is not correct. The Public Prosecutor's Office is an independent body pursuant to article 32 of the constitutional document for the transitional period from 2019 to 2020. No entity can intervene in the work of the Public Prosecutor's Office. The oversight by the transitional Sovereignty Council is only an administrative oversight.

We welcome the condemnation by the Human Rights Council, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Norway, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Deputy Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). They all have condemned the atrocities committed by the Rapid Support Forces against civilians in the Sudan, including sexual violence and killings based on ethnicity. We call on other States to condemn those heinous crimes and to ensure that the militia leaders committing those crimes against the Sudanese people are held accountable. We call for stricter measures to address the systematic criminal acts, including compelling the mercenaries and those who support the militias by providing them with weapons to stop doing that. Certain delegations noted that weapons must not be provided to both parties. That would harm the armed forces. The Rapid Support Forces do not import weapons; they receive them as gifts from other States, which are therefore partners and responsible for the perpetrated atrocities.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, the risks emanating from the current humanitarian situation call the Government of the Sudan to cooperate with the United Nations to mitigate its effects, particularly in vulnerable groups, such as women and children. We are cooperating with the United Nations when it comes to security dangers, protection measures and national measures to ensure rescue and humanitarian assistance in accordance with United Nations and national legal parameters. Of course, there are justified parameters established by Governments when it comes to security, safety and health.

The President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council has created a high-level governmental committee to ensure the proper functioning of crossing points and to receive humanitarian assistance. The delegation of the armed forces, which participated in the latest negotiations in Jeddah, reaffirmed the Sudanese



commitments to facilitate humanitarian work; complete customs-clearance processes within a week; address visas and issue multiple entry visas to the country directors of humanitarian organizations; cancel travel authorizations, especially in regions suffering from epidemics; grant work authorizations and extend them to the country directors for one year, or six months for other officials; appoint liaison officers and create a platform for joint humanitarian issues led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and facilitate the entry of 98 trucks currently in Port Sudan into all regions and guarantee their security and that of its personnel, along with relief assistance, until they reach their final destination.

We recognize the need to secure the financial resources pledged at the donors conference for the Sudan, as the lack of funds constitutes a major challenge.

As the Council knows, resolution 2524 (2020) established UNITAMS and was adopted through positive engagement between the Sudan and the United Nations on a consensual basis, pursuant to the 27 February 2020 letter from the previous President of the transitional Government to the Secretary-General, reflecting the concerns of the Government during the transitional period.

We welcomed the cooperation of the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the entire United Nations and their appreciative response to the political transformation and change in the Sudan following the revolution. However, the performance of the Mission in achieving the goals set forth in the relevant Security Council resolutions was disappointing. The Sudan has made clear in many Council meetings its comments and positions with regard to Mission's performance. The Sudanese Government also called for a strategic review of the Mission's work and for redefining its future actions.

The Under-Secretary for the Foreign Affairs Ministry also visited New York in April 2022 and submitted Sudan's comments to the Secretariat and to the members of the Security Council, along with a road map to rectify the Mission's working methods. Regrettably, no changes have been made when it comes to the Mission's operations.

The current situation in the Sudan requires a total overhaul of the Mission, which no longer meets the aspirations of the Sudanese people and Government. It has not responded to the priorities that accompany the political transition and has sought objectives outside of its mandate.

Accordingly, I would like to convey to the Security Council the decision of the Government of the Sudan to immediately end the work done by UNITAMS for the reasons clarified in a letter issued today by the Foreign Minister of the Sudan addressed to the Secretary-General. I would like to reaffirm to the Council that the Sudanese Government will continue to engage constructively with the United Nations in order to address the interests of the Sudan and establish a new mechanism that meets the needs and demands of the current circumstances in the country. A high-level Sudanese delegation will meet the Secretary-General and certain members of the Security Council next week in order to discuss this issue in detail, as a follow-up to the meeting held between the Secretary-General and the President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council in September on the sidelines of the high-level segment of the General Assembly. In that connection, we recall the principle that states that the success of United Nations mechanisms hinges on the consent of host countries.

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

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

*The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.*