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Seventy-eighth year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hoxha	(Albania)
<i>Members:</i>	Brazil	Mr. França Danese
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France	Mr. Olmedo
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mr. Hamamoto
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique	Mr. Irachande Gouveia
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
	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/2023/644)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 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/2023/644)

The President: 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; Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Mayada Adil, civil society representative.

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/2023/644, 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: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council once more on the situation in the Sudan.

Almost five months have passed since the deadly conflict erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The fighting shows no sign of abating, while neither side appears close to a decisive military victory. Fierce fighting continues in the capital, with the main battles around strategic installations and recurrent attempts by the Sudanese Armed Forces to drive the RSF out of civilian neighbourhoods. At least 5,000 people have been killed since the start of the conflict, and over 12,000 injured. Those are conservative figures — the actual number is likely much higher.

In Darfur, the violence has worsened dramatically, and the warring parties have demonstrated blatant

disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law. Civilians have been targeted on an ethnic basis and driven out of El Geneina and other locations in Darfur. The cross-border mobilization of Arab tribes is further fuelling the conflict and having an impact on regional stability. In South Kordofan and Blue Nile, fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North faction, Al-Hilu, has left many people displaced and caused civilian casualties.

While the situation is relatively calm in the east, tensions have risen amid ongoing tribal mobilization. The mobilization by former regime elements advocating for the continuation of the war is of particular concern. All of those developments add to the risk of a fragmentation of the country. What started as a conflict between two military formations could be morphing into a full-scale civil war.

As the war is entering its sixth month, let me take a step back and reflect. The descent into fighting on 15 April could have been avoided if the warring parties had heeded the multiple calls by both Sudanese and international actors for de-escalation and continued with dialogue. Sudanese civilians and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), along with our regional and international partners, all made efforts to help the parties resolve their differences through negotiations.

The framework agreement of December 2022, which had been negotiated by the military leadership and civilian actors without any external presence, outlined the contours of a political agreement to lead the country towards civilian rule. It also stipulated further consultations on contentious subjects, such as transitional justice and security sector reform. Following a request by the military and civilian signatories, the trilateral mechanism composed of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and UNITAMS facilitated those consultations in a series of workshops, with broad participation from across Sudanese society.

As the consultations proceeded, however, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF were irresponsibly building up their forces in the capital while assuring the international community and the Sudanese people of their commitment to peace. Until the last moment, our trilateral mechanism partners and I had warned that it would take only a spark to ignite armed confrontation. And sadly, that is what happened. Let me be clear, for

the benefit of history, that regardless of who fired the first shot, both sides were clearly setting the stage for war. The warring parties have chosen to settle their conflict by fighting, and it is their duty to the Sudanese people to end it.

The leadership of the Sudanese Armed Forces, as well as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, insist that the conflict is a struggle between the Government, on the one hand, and a rebel force, on the other. We, along with other international and regional actors, continue to speak of the two parties to the conflict, or the two warring parties, that need to end the war. Notably, the two parties constituted what used to be called the military component of the civilian-military partnership under the Constitutional Declaration of 2019. That partnership was ended by the coup of October 2021, jointly undertaken by the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF. The onus is on the leaderships of those two formations to stop the fighting. The military leaders on both sides are needed to negotiate and implement a cessation of hostilities. But military leaders should not continue to rule the country.

International partners, including the United Nations, the African Union, IGAD, the European Union, neighbouring States, Saudi Arabia and the United States — all of us — have continued to press the parties to halt the fighting. UNITAMS has remained in close contact with both sides to urge them to commit to a ceasefire in earnest and move towards a permanent cessation of hostilities. While the Jeddah talks, co-facilitated by the United States and Saudi Arabia, have been formally adjourned, the Jeddah format, which has been accepted by both parties, remains an important avenue for them to reach a ceasefire. However, previous ceasefires have been only partially honoured and have often been used for repositioning and resupply. A durable cessation of hostilities requires political will, robust monitoring mechanisms and the ability to hold the parties responsible for non-compliance.

I am encouraged that the African Union and IGAD have harmonized their respective road maps and efforts to facilitate a political solution. I also commend the summit of the neighbouring States of the Sudan and the resultant ministerial mechanism. We still need the regional and international efforts to cohere, though, and the international and regional actors also need to coordinate their ways and means of influencing the parties to accept a sustainable cessation of hostilities. Most important in this context, I urge Member States to

halt the flow of weapons into the Sudan and to refrain from resupplying either side. In that regard, I would like to commend the armed-struggle movements — both the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement and the non-signatories that decided to stay neutral and use their forces for the protection of civilians in Darfur. And let me express my appreciation for all those civilians and civilian initiatives that have not taken sides and are advocating for ending the war and working for peace at the local level.

Each side is still waiting for the other party to be weakened into surrender. That is futile. The war is destroying the lives of the men and women of the Sudan, violating their basic rights and depriving them of the future they deserve. Since my colleague from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will brief the Council on humanitarian developments, I will not go into detail in that regard. Let me say, however, that the conflict is leaving behind a tragic legacy of human rights abuses. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians committed by the warring parties constitute gross violations of human rights. The Masalit community in particular has been living in pervasive fear of attacks based on its members' ethnicity, following the heinous murder of the Governor of West Darfur and other Masalit leaders in mid-June. Hundreds, if not more, have been killed in El Geneina and other parts of West Darfur.

The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office has received credible reports of the existence of at least 13 mass graves in El Geneina and its surrounding areas, as a result of the RSF and Arab militias' attacks on civilians, with the majority of the civilian victims being from the Masalit community. UNITAMS and our United Nations colleagues are documenting those violations and point out that if verified, they may constitute war crimes. I remain appalled by the widespread acts of sexual violence and other forms of violence against women. We need credible investigations, accountability for those crimes and the provision of services for survivors. Sudanese women's groups are rightly calling for our collective condemnation, as well as for prevention and justice.

Despite the lack of the protection of civilians on the ground, Sudanese women and community-based support groups, such as emergency rooms and resistance committees, continue to put their lives on the line to provide urgent humanitarian assistance. Civilian activists, including women, are making laudable efforts in leading several anti-war initiatives. They

are choosing peace. Those initiatives urge the parties to cease their violence, address urgent humanitarian needs and relaunch a political dialogue. Despite a host of logistical difficulties and security risks, they are intensifying their efforts to coalesce around a common platform. The plurality of the civilian initiatives reflects the diversity of the Sudanese society. They need our collective support and encouragement if they are to establish a common platform. In particular, women-led initiatives have underlined the importance of women's participation in ceasefire negotiations and any future political process.

The United Nations will never stay neutral when it comes to war and human rights abuses. We are on the side of the Sudanese civilians, women and children and the vulnerable populations that are bearing the brunt of the conflict. There is little doubt about who is responsible for what. Aerial bombing, often indiscriminate, is conducted by those who have an air force, which is the Sudanese Armed Forces. Most of the sexual violence, looting and killing happens in areas controlled by the RSF and is conducted or tolerated by the RSF and its allies. Both sides are arbitrarily arresting, detaining and even torturing civilians, and there are reports of extrajudicial killings of detainees. We need to impress on the warring parties that they cannot operate with impunity and that there will be accountability for the crimes committed. UNITAMS continues to maintain contact with all sides, including through the Permanent Ceasefire Committee for Darfur, and it is supporting Sudanese, regional and international efforts to re-establish peace, because the Sudan cannot and must not endure the costs of the war indefinitely.

Let me end on a personal note. I have had the privilege to serve as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan for more than two and a half years. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for the opportunity and for his confidence in me, but I have asked him to relieve me of that duty. This will therefore be my last briefing in this function.

I have come to know the Sudan as a country of tremendous potential, indomitable spirit, cultural richness and diversity. The Sudanese people inspired the whole world when they bravely upended three decades of dictatorial rule in 2019. They need our support and solidarity more than ever; they need our support and solidarity in pressuring the military leaderships to end the war, holding them to account

and empowering civilians for an eventual transition towards democratic governance.

I would like to thank the United Nations staff in the Sudan for their unwavering commitment and dedication in supporting the Sudanese people, and I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for their engagement and support for our work.

The President: I thank Mr. Perthes for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wosornu.

Ms. Wosornu: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in the Sudan.

It is no hyperbole to say that after five months of brutal and merciless war, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General just noted, the people of the Sudan are facing a crisis of epic and tragic proportions. Since I briefed the Council last month (see S/PV.9394), the conflict has continued to intensify again around Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan and is unfortunately expanding into more areas, including Al-Jazirah state, the Sudan's bread basket. Fierce and relentless fighting is trapping civilians in Khartoum and other epicentres, including Nyala in South Darfur, increasing yet again the death toll and the numbers of injured.

Those who are able to escape the fighting continue to do so, with the number of civilians displaced now standing at more than 5 million. That equates to 1 million newly displaced persons every month, with 4.1 million displaced within the Sudan, while more than 1 million have crossed the border into neighbouring countries, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. That displacement and insecurity have driven cases, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, again, said, of sexual violence to absolutely distressing levels. Alarming reports of ethnic-based violence in Darfur continue to emerge. As I am sure Council members and we all can agree, this could be a harbinger of a return to horrors we hoped we had left in the past.

It is not only direct hostilities that are killing the people of the Sudan. Civilians are also dying due to an almost complete breakdown of the health system, with the vast majority of people having no access to health services. This lack of health care and the fighting are making it almost impossible to control increasing outbreaks of diseases, including measles, acute watery diarrhoea, malaria and dengue fever. More than 4,300

suspected cases of measles have been reported in 12 of the 18 states. Just to compare, by September 2022, that number stood at 963 measles cases across three states.

Let me again stress that almost half the population of the Sudan — more than 20 million people — are experiencing high levels of food insecurity, in a country with a very healthy bread basket. We are seeing a substantial rise in malnutrition rates, and more than 6 million Sudanese are now just one step away from famine.

With these enormous challenges, the humanitarian community is struggling to scale up operations and meet the growing needs; the needs are enormous. Thus far, we have coordinated the delivery of more than 2,400 trucks of relief supplies, carrying over 110,000 metric tons of aid to various parts of the Sudan. More than 3.2 million people have received some form of humanitarian assistance in the past four months — approximately 300,000 more since my last briefing. However, that, unfortunately, is only close to 18 per cent of the 18 million people we are trying to reach.

As I reported in my previous briefing, following intensive negotiations with the armed groups controlling the routes, we made some progress in restoring the flow of humanitarian supplies to the states of Darfur, with the movement of the first 10 trucks during the first week of August carrying 500 metric tons of supplies. We have now moved a total of 3,100 metric tons of aid to the Darfur region. Those operations included four cross-border deliveries of humanitarian supplies from Chad to West Darfur, carrying 390 metric tons of food, non-food items and medicines.

Severe access challenges continue to hamper the delivery of aid. Currently, it takes huge amounts of time and effort to run the humanitarian operations. For example, on average, it takes two to six weeks, or 16 to 42 days, to move supplies from Port Sudan to the Darfur states. That response, however, is not at scale to meet the enormous needs of the people of the Sudan. Accordingly, on 29 August, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee activated a system-wide scale-up for the Sudan aimed at addressing the rapidly growing number of people in need of assistance in the country. However, we can only do that if we have unhindered and unfettered access, if bureaucratic impediments are removed and if we have sufficient resources.

Rampant insecurity — again, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General outlined — is a significant obstacle to humanitarian action. More than 900 access incidents have been reported since mid-April — around six incidents a day on average. More than 70 per cent of those incidents have involved hostilities or violence directed against humanitarian personnel and assets. The highest number of incidents — more than 30 per cent, or 288 incidents — have been recorded in and around Khartoum, where humanitarian access continues to deteriorate. Since late June, humanitarian organizations have been able to reach Khartoum with only two convoys of 22 trucks, out of a total of close to 100 trucks that have moved more than 4,800 metric tons of relief supplies since mid-May. That is a drop in the bucket, a drop in the ocean. Food security organizations have reached fewer than 280,000 people with relief — a very low 11 per cent of the 2.5 million targeted, 280,000 of the 2.5 million targeted.

I want to flag in particular the critical role played by Sudanese civil society — again, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General mentioned — and local humanitarian workers and associations, including the emergency response rooms in Khartoum. I spoke to them when I was in Khartoum and Port Sudan, and I was extremely impressed by what they have done and continue to do. Throughout this period, they have continued to deliver to those in need, despite the ever-present risks to their lives.

It is imperative that all actors show full respect for international humanitarian law and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, including by ensuring the safe passage of civilians fleeing violence in Khartoum, Darfur and other areas of active hostilities. Again, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes mentioned, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reports that, in the past week alone, more than 103 civilians were killed during military operations by both parties in Khartoum and Omdurman. At least 51 were killed just two days ago in an attack on a market in the Janoob Al-Hazim district in South Khartoum, one of the highest tolls in a single incident since the fighting started on 15 April.

If we are to scale up these life-saving operations, we desperately need the parties to the conflict to recommit to regular direct humanitarian dialogue with us, at a senior level. The Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Martin

Griffiths, and the Resident Coordinator in the Sudan, Ms. Clementine Nkweta-Salami, are actively reaching out to the leaders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to put our humanitarian forum into action. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General referred to that. We urge the Member States to support our efforts to secure those commitments. This is a lifeline for the humanitarian operation.

I also call on the Sudanese authorities to continue to redouble their efforts to facilitate humanitarian operations by fast-tracking visa processes, easing travel restrictions and expediting the customs clearances that will enable us to respond at the speed and scale required.

We have been in continuous dialogue with the Sudanese authorities, both in Port Sudan and in New York. We are grateful for the 70 visas we received over the past two weeks alone. We would ask the Sudanese authorities to continue fast-tracking the remaining 240 pending visas, to grant longer visas — required for smooth project implementation — to our humanitarian partners and to continue working with us to establish a clearer and more predictable process. We count on the support of the Council for those urgent requirements.

Even if those internal access obstacles were removed, a lack of funding for humanitarian operations would leave millions without the assistance they desperately need. Unfortunately, the \$2.6 billion revised humanitarian response plan for this year is but 26 per cent funded. That is already affecting the ability of humanitarian operations and organizations to provide critical services such as water, sanitation, health and hygiene. If we are to meet the urgent needs of the people of the Sudan, we desperately need increased donor support. We are grateful for the funding received so far, but we urge more to be done at speed and at scale.

We thank the co-hosts of the ministerial event coming up on 20 September in the margins of General Assembly high-level week on the cost of inaction in the Sudan. That will be an important opportunity to show the people of the Sudan that we have not forgotten them and that the international community is committed to supporting them in their gravest time of need.

I started my remarks by stating that the people of the Sudan were facing a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. But I want to make one thing absolutely clear — the situation can and will get immeasurably worse unless urgent action is taken. The longer this conflict continues, the more this catastrophe will

deepen and the more lives will be lost and livelihoods destroyed. I therefore urge the international community to spare no effort in seeking a negotiated solution to bring this war to an end.

The President: I thank Ms. Wosornu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Adil.

Ms. Adil: I would like to thank the Albanian presidency for inviting me to address the Security Council today. I will focus on two main topics: first, accountability for the victims of war, specifically victims of conflict-related sexual violence during this tragic time in the Sudan and secondly, efforts to strengthen the participation of women in the political sphere in the Sudan and the importance of such efforts.

It is a real honour to be here in the Chamber. I am here to represent all Sudanese women from all the regions of the Sudan. I speak on behalf of my sisters, brave mothers and colleagues in Sudanese civil society. We are all united in our demands and goals for the Security Council — the war must end now.

However, condemning the war is not enough. I am speaking up today for all the Sudanese women and girls fighting for freedom and survival, fighting for themselves and their families and loved ones. I am speaking up for those who were raped, sexually assaulted and exploited as sex slaves. I am speaking up for those still missing.

Today I am not just a young woman activist, today I am S.A., a 24-year-old victim of rape on July 2023, in Khartoum, who said:

“I have been raped in front of my family members, and they could not save me from the hell of the war criminals who viciously forced themselves on me”.

Today I am Also D.Y., who was sexually assaulted in one of the refugee camps in Darfur. She said:

“I have been raped multiple times by a man dressed in formal attire. He threatened me that if I bring it to the ear of other women, he will know and will rape them too. He considered me his sex slave”.

The predators behind those crimes are walking freely as we speak, without accountability, threatening and treating women’s bodies as their personal battlefields. Pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence as a weapon of war and a direct threat to international peace and security, we demand a team

of experts to work with grassroots organizations in the Sudan to provide mechanisms to investigate, prosecute and hold individuals accountable for their involvement in criminal activities committed in the Sudan and take those cases to the International Criminal Court. We demand international lawyers to defend victims of sexual violence and to provide legal assistance under the principle of extraterritorial jurisdiction, which allows Member States' courts to prosecute individuals for crimes committed outside the country's borders, including acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We demand support for women's rights organizations and women's rights defenders.

In the Security Council, the security and protection of Sudanese women must be a priority. Preserving Sudanese women's dignity and rights must be prioritized today more than ever. As a Sudanese gender activist put it so eloquently: "men create the war, and women step in to make the peace."

I have the obligation today to remind Member States that Sudanese women are making peace and are peace advocates. They were the ones on the front lines of the 2019 peaceful civilian revolution, with their resilience and outstanding efforts to reinforce stability and peace — and now by actively engaging in the humanitarian assistance in emergency rooms or community-based organizations while mobilizing resources to meet the urgent needs of vulnerable women and girls.

But since this war erupted, their political spaces have been diminished. In the Sudan, No Oppression against Women Initiative groups have been targeted by security forces, and women have been forbidden from participating in demonstrations. They have been excluded from all regional and international discussions and all institutions taking initiatives to end this war. We demand from the Council that their political participation be considered a priority and for Sudanese women to be part of all decision-making processes.

Finally, I have to point out that the injustice and humanitarian crisis we have faced as the Sudanese people has been neglected as the global humanitarian financial system continues to focus its aid on countries in the global North.

The Council should therefore be responsible for providing humanitarian relief, including health-saving assistance. Women and different population categories need this in other States, as do the Sudanese refugees in

the neighbouring countries. Leaving them to face death is a crime; we urge the Council to take effective, quick decisions and actions.

I leave the Council with urgent questions, and I would like all the member States to answer them in their next words:

What will it take for the international community to effectively pressure the two parties to end the war? How will the Security Council guarantee women's political participation in peace negotiations in all international institutions? Now we have all the reports of the sexual violence that women are facing, and the Council has not formed any investigation committee yet. When will it do that? In accordance with resolution 1820 (2008), how will the Council provide justice for all the victims of war? What is the situation for refugees at the borders and for displaced people? Are they receiving urgent assistance that is equal to the dire situation they are in?

We do not want promises, only action, and urgent action is the Council's obligation to the Sudanese people.

The President: I thank Ms. Adil 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 Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes and Ms. Wosornu for their briefings and Ms. Adil for her powerful testimony. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Ghana for his report on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan.

Let me start by paying tribute to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes and, through him, to the United Nations staff in the Sudan and the region for all their work under extremely challenging circumstances, including strenuous efforts towards a political solution. Volker Perthes has been a tireless advocate of peace and a true friend of the Sudan. We thank him for his service.

The conflict is now entering its sixth month. During that time, neither the Sudanese Armed Forces nor the Rapid Support Forces have acted in the interests of the Sudanese people. In urban areas, civilians are trapped without access to food, water or basic services owing to continued aerial bombardments largely, as we have heard, by the Sudanese Armed Forces. While in Darfur, reports of widespread sexual violence, ethnically motivated killings, forced recruitment of child soldiers

and the burning of villages by the Rapid Support Forces and its allied militia are truly abhorrent.

The bloodshed needs to end. We call on the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to negotiate in good faith in the interests of the people of the Sudan.

The rich tapestry of the Sudan's civilian groups, supported by neighbours and the United Nations, can play a vital role in support of the aspirations of the Sudanese people for a better future. And we need collective international action to help end the violence, secure humanitarian access and establish a credible political process. In that regard, we support a leading role for regional actors, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the Sudan's neighbours.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the Sudanese people. We will continue to work with international partners to ensure that those responsible for this brutal conflict are held to account.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Director Wosornu for her briefing and the Permanent Representative of Ghana for his report. I also thank Ms. Adil for her insightful and courageous words. She has given a voice to many women and girls today and has empowered them in doing so. In particular, I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his professionalism and tireless efforts over the past couple of years. Meanwhile we remain firm in our belief that blaming United Nations officials and scapegoating the United Nations will not bring us closer to reaching a just and lasting peace.

As the conflict in the Sudan now enters its sixth month, we remain deeply concerned by the vicious cycle of violence, which we strongly condemn. We call on both parties to cease hostilities without preconditions and work towards negotiating a credible, lasting and inclusive ceasefire.

We are disturbed by the way that violence has moved from Khartoum into the depths of Darfur, with the conflict escalating into systematic, ethnically based violence. All that bears terrifying similarity to the situation 20 years ago.

Malta deplores the loss of life and the indiscriminate targeting of critical infrastructure and humanitarian and medical personnel, premises and assets. We remind

all parties of their obligations under international law and that humanitarian workers must never be a target.

We deplore in the strongest terms the increasing use of sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war. Women and girls continue to face the most horrific impacts of the conflict. Reports of abductions have raised serious concerns that women and girls are being forced into slavery.

More than 4.2 million people need gender-based violence prevention and response services. With 80 per cent of medical infrastructure across the country no longer functional, we call for the scale-up of medical and psychosocial support and monitoring. Crucially, we call on the parties to ensure safe and unimpeded access for all those who need it.

Justice to survivors must be accompanied by thorough investigations. Perpetrators must be held accountable. We reiterate our support to the efforts of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in investigating incidents in Darfur in the current hostilities.

We are troubled by the almost tenfold increase in grave violations against children, including killings, maiming, recruitment and sexual violence. The suffering inflicted on children is unacceptable and must stop.

We are also concerned about the forcible displacement of over 5 million people within the Sudan and across its borders into neighbouring countries. The catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Sudan should serve only to guide the parties to lift any impediments to the humanitarian response. Humanitarian aid must reach those most in need in a safe, rapid and unhindered manner.

We commend OCHA and humanitarian partners for their facilitation of food delivery. We are playing our part by contributing to the Sudan emergency supplementary appeal of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, together with the European Union's commitment of €256 million for humanitarian and development assistance in 2023.

Malta calls for coherence in ongoing mediation efforts to unlock the deadlock and provide a unified platform to de-escalate and cease hostilities and return the Sudanese actors to the transitional drawing board. The efforts by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab

States, as well as by neighbouring and other parties, must remain complemented by unified messages by the Security Council.

We urge that women's groups and women's rights activities be included in the ceasefire negotiations, mediation efforts and any future dialogue process. Their inclusion is integral to ensure that a settlement reflects the voices of the Sudanese people in a holistic manner.

We recognize the value that the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan holds in providing its good offices in support of peace efforts. We also commend its stepped-up capacity to monitor and document alleged human rights violations and abuses, as well as delivering humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, Malta urges both parties to adhere to peace and to bring the Sudan back to the path of security and stability. We must spare the Sudanese people further pain and suffering.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3).

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Volker Perthes and Ms. Edem Wosornu for their briefings and commend the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to help the Sudanese people at this difficult moment in their national history. We also thank the Ms. Mayada Adil for her perspective. I would also like to acknowledge the work carried out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General during his tenure in the Sudan under difficult circumstances and wish him well in his future endeavours.

Since the start of the conflict in the Sudan on 15 April, the people of the Sudan have continued to witness a worsening security and humanitarian situation, including in Darfur, and with impacts on neighbouring countries such as Chad, the Central African Republic and, to a lesser extent, South Sudan.

With no decisive victory in sight and the reality of a protracted and widespread national conflict looming, the A3 wishes to once again appeal to the leaders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to give peace a chance as the situation in the Sudan can be normalized only through dialogue and negotiations. We echo the voices of the people of the Sudan, who

are tired of the war and are calling on the parties to unconditionally cease hostilities, silence the guns and resort to dialogue.

In that context, the A3 also joins the strong condemnation of the ongoing conflict issued by the quartet of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) at the end of its second meeting and its call for the warring parties to immediately halt all hostilities, reiterating that there is no military solution to the conflict in the Republic of the Sudan.

We worry about the detrimental impact of the war on the already volatile situation in the Darfur region. We are dismayed that the intensification of fighting in El Genina has been accompanied by the deliberate targeting of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), the use of heavy artillery attacks and the creation of vulnerabilities for the civilian population, who remain unprotected.

We are also deeply concerned about the situation in Kadugli, in South Kordofan, which remains extremely volatile. Roads connecting Khartoum to Kordofan and Darfur are blocked, limiting the movement of essential goods and humanitarian supplies. Schools, hospitals and places of worship have also been targeted in several parts of the Sudan, while homes, international non-governmental organizations and United Nations compounds have had facilities and assets looted. The conflict has forced large-scale displacements of populations, as we have heard, and worsened an already dire humanitarian situation.

We are also worried about the conflict-related sexual violence that has been reported as widespread in Darfur by the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, which has received approximately 100 reports of such incidents. The A3 wishes to state that the perpetrators of all heinous crimes should be held accountable as soon as the situation normalizes, while efforts are also undertaken to protect the most vulnerable, especially women and children.

On the political processes, the A3 fully supports the efforts of the Heads of State and Government of the IGAD quartet group to implement the IGAD road map for peace in the Republic of Sudan, adopted in Djibouti on 12 June. We also welcome the efforts by the African Union to establish a credible civilian political dialogue among the Sudanese people. We further note the invitation extended to IGAD to participate in the

Jeddah process for the implementation of short-term ceasefire and humanitarian arrangements, which is formally adjourned at the moment, and urge the Sudanese parties to uphold their commitments.

We urge continuing efforts by the African Union to facilitate a structured, unified and coherent approach towards peace by the Sudanese parties and an all-inclusive consultation with civilian stakeholders. We believe that different processes by different actors in the international community, if not coordinated, can frustrate the desired results for an early and lasting peace in the Sudan. We urge coordination and strong action to also abate the proliferation of arms in the Sudanese conflict.

On the relationship between UNITAMS and the warring parties, we encourage UNITAMS to remain engaged with the Sudanese people by providing assistance in their greatest moment of need.

Lastly, a review of the present situation in the Sudan would not leave anyone in doubt of the huge humanitarian challenges confronting the Sudanese people, especially women and children. We commend the efforts of the international community in supplying the needed aid to IDPs in the Sudan and call for sustained international support for the humanitarian efforts required in the Sudan and neighbouring countries. The A3 reaffirms its solidarity with the people of the Sudan, expresses its commitment to achieving peace and security in the country and reiterates the need for respect of the Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for chairing this very important meeting. I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes and Ms. Wosornu for their sobering briefings. I also want to thank Ms. Adil for representing the voice of women in the Security Council and for her very compelling appeal.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Special Representative Perthes for his extraordinary efforts and service over the past year. We regret his departure. I understand that the Sudanese Government once again warned it would end the United Nations mission in the Sudan if the Special Representative participated in this briefing. Those threats are unacceptable, and the United States stands firmly behind the work of the Special Representative and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan. We stand with the people of the

Sudan. We stand with the United Nations. No country should be allowed to threaten the Council's ability to carry out its responsibilities for peace and security.

Last week, I travelled to Chad to see the devastating consequences of the conflict in the Sudan first-hand. While there, I visited a refugee settlement near the Sudanese border. It was one of the saddest days of my life. I met refugees who were attacked by warring parties, thrust into a conflict they had no role in starting and no ability to end. I met a grandmother escaping with two small children, without the parents anywhere in sight. I met young women, some of whom were victims of unspeakable sexual violence at the hands of the militia — and we heard that from Ms. Adil today. I also met a young girl who told me she had lost her ambition. I really could not fathom that, and I told her that she has to hold on to her ambition and that no one could take that away from her. It truly broke my heart.

While in Chad, I visited the Médecins Sans Frontières hospital, where doctors are treating hundreds of severely malnourished children. And when I walked through the hospital, the first thing I noticed was how eerily silent and quiet it was. The children were too weak to speak or even cry. I saw a six-month-old baby who was the size of a newborn and a child whose ankles were swollen and body blistered from acute malnutrition. The good news is that thanks to the heroic efforts of the hospital staff and humanitarian workers, those children are on the road to recovery. I also note that so many Sudanese refugees told me how grateful they are to the Chadian people and Government for welcoming and supporting them. On behalf of the United States, I want to express my profound appreciation to the people across Chad and the Government for their kindness and generosity.

But while the refugees I met were able to escape the conflict, millions of people are still trapped and desperate inside the Sudan and are running out of food and basic resources. They are running out of hope. Attacks on health facilities have left more than 80 per cent of hospitals inside of the Sudan non-functional. And the public health crisis has been exacerbated by poor sanitation, a lack of electricity, non-functioning water treatment options and the over-capacity of morgues. We also know that clashes and roadblocks are preventing humanitarian aid from reaching people in dire need and endangering the lives of aid workers. We call on the Sudanese authorities to allow for the unhindered and sustained movement of humanitarian goods and

personnel, facilitate the importation of humanitarian goods and equipment and expedite visa approvals for international humanitarian workers.

My takeaway from that trip was this — and we heard this from our briefers: the international community is failing the Sudanese people. As we speak, the Sudan's humanitarian response plan for 2023 is less than 30 per cent funded. That is shameful, and it is a stain on our common humanity. For our part, the United States is committed to supporting the Sudanese people in their time of need. While in Chad, I announced that the United States is providing nearly \$163 million in additional humanitarian assistance for the people of the Sudan and for neighbouring countries. That brings the total United States humanitarian assistance for the Sudan emergency to nearly \$710 million.

During my trip, I also announced United States sanctions on Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo, a senior commander in the Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the brother of RSF Commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as "Hemedti", for his connections to abuses by the RSF against civilians in the Sudan. Additionally, we are imposing United States visa restrictions on Abdul Rahman Juma, the Rapid Support Forces General and West Darfur Commander, for his involvement and gross violations of human rights. We must all condemn and work to prevent and respond to the ongoing atrocities in the Sudan and hold those responsible accountable. Such acts of brutality have been contributing to widespread conflict-related sexual violence across Darfur, as reported by the interim report of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan.

The United States joins its regional and international partners in calling for the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces to end the fighting, respect human rights and adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law. We support coordinated international diplomatic efforts in pursuit of peace by the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the League of Arab States, the United Nations and other partners from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.

Finally, we remain unwavering in our support for the democratic aspirations of the Sudanese people for a civilian Government and a stable democratic Sudan. We will continue to support civilian leaders working closely with the AU and IGAD and charting a process

to establish a transition to democratic civilian rule. As we do that, we must ensure inclusive, accountable and transparent processes that reflect the full diversity of the Sudanese people. I will continue to raise this issue in the Council. We cannot look away while people suffer as the conflict rages on. The international community must do more to address the humanitarian crisis and secure peace and justice for the Sudanese people — for the child I saw wasting away in hospital, for the victims of rape and other atrocities, for all who are trapped in the violence and struggling to survive, and for that young woman who looked at me and told me she had lost her ambition — in the hope that one day we can help her claim that back.

Mr. Olmedo (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Volker Perthes, Edem Wosornu and Mayada Adil for their briefings. I would particularly like to thank Mr. Perthes for his work as Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) for the past two and a half years. I believe we are all conscious of the subtleties of his analysis and his consistent personal and professional commitment to the Sudan.

Five months after the start of the conflict, the clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces continue to escalate to the detriment of the Sudanese people. No military success is in sight. The spiral of violence is stoking inter-ethnic tensions, which risk creating a civil war, fragmenting the country and destabilizing the region. We condemn all of the violence that has been committed, especially in Darfur. Those responsible must be held accountable.

Our priority is to implement a cessation of hostilities and launch a settlement of the conflict. We welcome all the diplomatic efforts under way. We believe those efforts can be coordinated and focused on three areas — a cessation of hostilities, guaranteed safe and unhindered humanitarian access and the participation of civilians in a political process that can enable lasting peace and a return to civilian Government. The story of the Sudan's future cannot be written without the civilian political forces, including women, of course. The 2019 revolution placed the legitimacy of power in the hands of civil society. An ambitious vision of the democratic transition is needed to move beyond the current deadlock. We urge the members of Sudanese civil society to prioritize unity in order to ensure that their voices are heard. The actors supporting one or the other of the warring parties must stop fuelling the

conflict. In keeping with Security Council resolutions, the delivery of military equipment to Darfur is subject to an embargo. We call on the countries of the region to remain neutral.

France reiterates its support for the work of UNITAMS. We call on the Sudanese authorities to issue all the visas required for the Mission's work in a timely fashion and to facilitate an improved humanitarian response. UNITAMS has a role to play in strengthening all diplomatic efforts, as well as those of civil society, and in continuing to determine the facts when human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law are observed.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank our colleague from Ghana for his briefing (see S/PV.9416). I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Volker Perthes and the Director of Operations and Advocacy in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Edem Wosornu, for their briefings. I am grateful to Ms. Mayada Adil for giving such a strong voice to the victims.

First of all, like others, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to Mr. Perthes for his unwavering commitment to peace in the Sudan. I wish him all the best for the future. I would also like to thank all United Nations staff for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese people. As the Secretary-General says in his report (S/2023/644), it is critical to ensure that the voices of civilians are not drowned out by the sound of bullets. Their testimonies remind us of our collective responsibility to protect civilians and support them in their aspirations for lasting peace. I would like to tell Ms. Adil that we have indeed heard her moving testimony and her appeal to us. I would like to emphasize three points.

First, as my colleagues have said, the fighting must stop immediately, and the parties must abandon their pursuit of a military victory. The high number of casualties and displaced persons among the civilian population, the appalling increase in serious violations of children's rights and the large-scale destruction of infrastructure paint a bleak picture. We condemn all violence against civilians and reiterate our call on all the parties, especially the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law.

We continue to hear reports in Darfur of ethnic killings, summary executions and sexual and gender-based violence. It is all a déjà-vu nightmare for the people of the Sudan. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights rightly pointed out in June, yesterday's impunity has fuelled today's cycle of violence. To break that cycle, those responsible must be prosecuted and brought to justice. All allegations of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law must be investigated thoroughly, impartially, independently and without delay. We are grateful to those who continue to risk their lives to document the facts on the ground, and we encourage the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan to continue its support for those activities.

Secondly, humanitarian efforts in the Sudan and the region remain at the centre of our concerns. We have indeed heard the tragic accounts from Ms. Wosornu. We remind all the parties of their obligation under international humanitarian law to facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians in need and to protect medical personnel and infrastructure. Switzerland urgently calls on the parties to the conflict to explore all possible options in order to agree on measures to be taken to that end. We also remain committed to the humanitarian response in the Sudan, as well as in the countries affected by the crisis. As we have just heard from our colleagues, we welcome the generosity with which countries in the region have been receiving people fleeing the conflict, which demands additional resources and requires borders to be kept open. We also welcome the access to North and South Darfur that OCHA has managed to negotiate in recent days.

Thirdly, a return to an inclusive political process is the only credible and lasting solution to the conflict. In order to create space for dialogue, we urge the parties to the conflict to resume negotiations in good faith towards a sustainable ceasefire. In that respect, Switzerland welcomes the diplomatic efforts currently being made, which must be closely coordinated and complementary in order to achieve lasting results and put an end to the violence and destruction.

We also support the Secretary-General's appeal to all parties to include women, who are committing themselves to the cause of peace with courage and determination — of which we have heard many examples — in the ceasefire negotiations and

throughout the future dialogue process. The joint press stakeout by the signatories to the statement of shared commitments on women and peace and security this morning reiterated the call for protection against any attack on their security.

As the conflict in the Sudan enters its sixth month, we must redouble our efforts to prevent it from falling back into the abyss of atrocious violations. I would like to reiterate Switzerland's full support for UNITAMS and for the continued role of the United Nations in the Sudan. As the Special Representative just said, the Sudan is

(spoke in English)

“a country of tremendous potential”.

(spoke in French)

Switzerland remains determined to work alongside the United Nations and the Sudanese people so that they can realize their aspirations for peace, justice and democratic governance.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We are grateful to Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and to the Permanent Representative of Ghana, Mr. Harold Agyeman, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, for their briefings. We also listened to the statements made by Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ms. Mayada Adil, a representative of Sudanese civil society.

At the outset, we wish to express our regret that the representative of the Sudan is not participating in the quarterly briefing today. Some members of the Council chose to escalate the situation, forcing our Sudanese colleagues to distance themselves from today's discussion. The implications of such actions for the future work of the Security Council concerning the situation in the Sudan are seriously worrisome.

Meanwhile, the situation in the Sudan remains extremely tense. In the months since 15 April, armed hostilities have spread over large swathes of the country, resulting in numerous human casualties and the large-scale destruction of infrastructure. The country is on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe. Outbreaks of inter-ethnic violence and serious crimes against civilians have been recorded in a number of regions,

including Darfur. The total number of refugees and internally displaced persons already exceeds 5 million. Unfortunately, the conflict is becoming protracted.

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated a peaceful resolution of the Sudanese crisis with unconditional respect for the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country. We continue to call on the Sudanese parties to demonstrate political will and take immediate steps to end the armed confrontation.

We support international and regional mediation initiatives aimed at finding political and diplomatic solutions that enjoy the trust of the Sudanese people. We see great potential in the ministerial mechanism to facilitate a Sudanese settlement that was established following the summit of the Sudan's neighbouring countries held on 13 July in Cairo, the next meeting of which will take place in New York next week. At the first meeting of the mechanism's participants, on 7 August in N'Djamena, key areas of work were identified that, in our view, correctly reflect current priorities. Among them are a timely cessation of hostilities, the launching of a broad inter-Sudanese dialogue and the resolution of humanitarian issues. The road map promoted by the Sudanese authorities to normalize the military and political situation in the country is also aimed towards that end.

We are in favour of closer cooperation between the efforts of external players and Khartoum officials so as to achieve tangible results in a settlement of the crisis. We oppose any attempts to use the mediation efforts of regional actors and neighbouring countries for geopolitical purposes. The main task right now is to stabilize the country and safeguard State institutions.

We deem foreign interference in the sovereign affairs of the Sudan, with a view to imposing on it certain allegedly universal democratization schemes and non-inclusive solutions, to be entirely inadmissible. We believe that the external pressure exerted on the Sudanese leadership by certain Western States demanding untimely and unprepared reforms contributed to the aggravation of the internal political crisis in the country. Unfortunately, the leadership of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan adopted a similar destructive approach. It therefore came as no surprise that, as a result, the Sudanese authorities declared the Head of the Mission, Mr. Volker Perthes, *persona non grata*.

We believe that the Security Council should respect the sovereign decisions of the Government of the Sudan regarding the special political mission deployed at the request of the host country under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. The current situation, where there is a lack of trust in the leadership of the Mission, does not allow the United Nations to fully implement its mandate. We would like to underscore that this is not a new situation — such trust has been eroding over many months, and the special political mission has not fulfilled all of the tasks entrusted to it, including those that were considered priorities by the Sudanese. There is also controversy surrounding the work towards a political settlement, with issues pertaining to biased mediation arising from all sides of the political spectrum. Ultimately, the process completely collapsed.

Finally, we are convinced that, even since May, when the situation emerged, a responsible solution could have been found that would have confirmed the reputation of the United Nations as an honest broker and put the interests of the Sudanese people first, especially at the current stage of this unprecedented crisis. We have also witnessed the destructive influence of a number of Security Council members who provoked a further escalation of the differences between Khartoum and the United Nations.

We trust that, no matter how the course of events develops, the United Nations will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the Sudan and to neighbouring countries suffering the consequences of the crisis. Moreover, such efforts should be intensified.

We see no need, in the light of current events, to expand the Security Council sanctions regime beyond the existing parameters with a focus on the Darfur region. As a matter of principle, we have always opposed the imposition of illegitimate unilateral restrictions, which Western countries use as a punitive tool to attain their own interests. It is obvious that Western pressure and blackmail pertaining to economic assistance do not work in the Sudan or in other regions of the world.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the Russian Federation's unwavering readiness to continue to assist the friendly country of the Sudan in successfully overcoming its current difficulties and returning to the path of peace and sustainable development.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Ghana for his report as Chair of

the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, and I listened carefully to all of the briefers today, including Ambassador Agyeman in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan.

In the light of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/644), I would like to make the following three points.

First, efforts are needed to de-escalate the situation as soon as possible. The armed conflict in the Sudan has continued to intensify, accompanied by rising civilian casualties. There is widespread concern in the region. As a good friend and partner of the Sudanese people, China sincerely hopes that, in the interests of the country and its people, the parties will resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations to create conditions for the return of peace and stability.

The recent period saw initiatives proposed by the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to resolve the Sudanese issue and sustained efforts to that end by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Among other things, China supports the enhanced efforts of the countries of the region on diplomacy, mediation and communication with the Sudanese parties to reduce tensions as soon as possible.

The issue of the Sudan is a product of a multiplicity of political, historical, communal and other factors. External pressure and interference are a significant source of continued instability in the Sudan. The international community should learn its lessons and effectively safeguard the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country, accommodate the concerns of all Sudanese parties and constructively support the easing of the situation.

Secondly, we need to step up humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian situation is dire in many parts of the Sudan, with 25 million people in need of assistance, and the demand for food, drinking water and medical supplies is urgent. China thanks the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations for their outstanding relief work for the people in distress. We hope that the United Nations guiding principles for humanitarian assistance are duly followed in those operations and call on all parties in the Sudan to facilitate their work. Recently, China delivered multiple shipments of humanitarian goods, including life-sustaining goods and medical supplies,

to the Sudan. More such shipments will follow. China is concerned about the grave shortfall in humanitarian funding. We call on the international community, especially traditional donors, to resume their assistance and call on the parties concerned to lift unilateral sanctions to avoid negative humanitarian repercussions. During the upcoming high-level week of the General Assembly at its seventy-eight session, a meeting on the humanitarian situation in the Sudan will be held. China hopes that it will provide the opportunity for the international community to come together to pledge more significant support to relieve the humanitarian crisis in the Sudan and neighbouring countries.

Thirdly, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) is facing considerable challenges in its work. China has noted the concerns expressed in a recent letter from the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the President of the Security Council. As a prerequisite for fulfilling its mandate, UNITAMS needs to maintain communication and cooperation with the Sudanese authorities. The international community and the Council should encourage the two sides to rebuild mutual trust and prevent the situation from deteriorating. As the political and security situations in the Sudan have evolved significantly in recent years, the Council must reflect on and assess how UNITAMS can play its role under the current circumstances. To that end, it should fully take into account the views of the Sudan, determine the course of cooperation between the United Nations and the Sudan vis-à-vis the country's concerns and needs and help it to rebuild peace and stability.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Volker Perthes for his briefing. I also thank Ms. Edem Wosornu and Ambassador Agyeman for their comprehensive briefings. We also listened carefully to the statement by Ms. Mayada Adil.

It has been nearly six months since the outbreak of the crisis in the Sudan. As we heard in today's briefings, the situation on the ground, including the displacement of millions of people and the collapse of basic services, reflects the gravity of the crisis and the urgent need to end it. It is therefore important for the international community to focus on urgently responding to the humanitarian situation. That means intensifying aid relief to the Sudanese people in order to alleviate their suffering as much as possible, which requires exploring all means to strengthen coordination and cooperation in that regard, such as establishing new partnerships at

the local, regional and international levels to achieve tangible results on the ground. We look forward to the outcomes of the meeting to be held on the sidelines of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar and a number of other partners in the region and international partners to garner support and strengthen the humanitarian response in the Sudan and the region.

We are encouraged by the humanitarian efforts of the Sudan's neighbouring countries to help facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. We commend the Sudanese organizations and local community groups that continue to deliver relief aid under very challenging circumstances. We also appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and the broader United Nations system in the Sudan and encourage them to continue providing and coordinating humanitarian aid.

In the light of reports of the interruption of certain humanitarian activities, looting and the destruction of humanitarian facilities caused by insecurity in some areas, we reiterate our call on the parties to abide by international humanitarian law and ensure unhindered and safe humanitarian access to aid for those in need. A lasting and immediate ceasefire is essential to protect civilians and humanitarian workers and mitigate the humanitarian crisis. The interests of the Sudanese people must be prioritized over all other considerations. It is of the utmost urgency to de-escalate the conflict and cease all hostilities, particularly in the light of reports of escalating intercommunal violence, which threatens to destroy the social fabric of the Sudan. We therefore stress the importance of complementarity between regional and international efforts and local initiatives that seek to prevent tensions at the community level. One example is the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, which in the past has contributed to reducing violence, de-escalating tensions and facilitating efforts to protect civilians, despite the security challenges in the region. The ceasefire and resuming dialogue remain critical and positive steps to achieve the necessary conditions for a return to the political process.

In recent months, we have witnessed diplomatic momentum giving reason for hope, especially at the regional level, to address the crisis in the Sudan. We therefore reiterate the importance of building on those efforts to reach a lasting settlement that includes the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians, the

restoration of basic services and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Sudan's neighbouring countries play an important role, which requires our continued support. We hope that the concrete steps that the Arab Republic of Egypt continues to take within the framework of the neighbouring countries initiative will contribute to facilitating cooperation to achieve stability in the Sudan.

More broadly, the United Arab Emirates supports regional efforts to end the conflict, including by the African Union through its road map, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. In order for such efforts to succeed, it is necessary to continue coordination on all mediation tracks, as unity of purpose is key to achieving an immediate and permanent ceasefire and the resumption of the political process.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its solidarity with the fraternal Sudanese people during this difficult time. We remain committed to providing them with relief assistance and supporting all diplomatic efforts to end the crisis. We hope that a national consensus will be reached that puts the country on the path leading to sustainable security and stability.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Mr. Volker Perthes; the Director of Operations and Advocacy at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Edem Wosornu; and the civil society representative, Ms. Mayada Adil, for their informative briefings. I would like to underscore the work done by Mr. Perthes, which has made it possible to promote peace and which Ecuador therefore supports. We wish him every success in carrying out his future responsibilities. We are also grateful for the information provided to us by the Permanent Representative of Ghana.

The armed violence and its adverse effects on the civilian population must be condemned. Conflict-related crimes of sexual violence, indiscriminate attacks on civilians, forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, terror campaigns, attacks on schools and hospitals, attacks on camps for internally displaced persons, ethnically motivated killings, the selective burning of villages, the lack of basic services and arms trafficking, among other things, run contrary to international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Therefore, the Security Council cannot remain silent. The perpetrators of such crimes, including crimes against humanity, must be investigated

and brought to justice. We support the work of the International Criminal Court so that it can act according to its mandate, if necessary, and prevent atrocities such as the ones we just mentioned from reoccurring. There can be no impunity.

The situation involving 24 million people in need of humanitarian assistance is of great concern. Coupled with the lack of access to services, that situation presents a bleak outlook, given the entrenchment of the conflict. The international community's support is therefore essential.

The unceasing work of humanitarian providers and the presence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who recently visited the country, attest to the need to continue working to protect civilians with the support of countries in the region, such as that provided by the Government of Chad, which has received approximately 400,000 Sudanese refugees in recent weeks. We hope for the continued support of the countries in the region that have kept their borders open in spite of the difficult situation they are dealing with. It is time to combine our efforts in a single, inclusive and consolidated peace process that will make it possible to put an end to this conflict, which has claimed so many lives and continues to worsen the country's already deteriorating humanitarian, economic and social situation.

We urge the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to end the bloodshed and the suffering of the Sudanese people. There can be no military solution to any conflict. We also urge the authorities to facilitate access for humanitarian workers and allow conflict-affected populations the freedom to seek safety. The Security Council must act in line with the current mandate and use all the tools at its disposal, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I thank Ambassador Agyeman for his 1591 Committee briefing. I am also grateful to Special Representative Perthes, Director Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Ms. Adil for their comprehensive and compelling presentations. I especially commend and thank Mr. Perthes for his tireless work in the Sudan on behalf of the United Nations.

The fighting in the Sudan has gone on for far too long. The parties must immediately withdraw their forces from civilian areas, cease their hostilities and engage in good-faith negotiations. A political solution to the conflict that fully respects the Sudan's sovereignty,

independence and territorial integrity is the only pathway to a peaceful transition in the Sudan and is also key to stability in the region. We commend the efforts by the United Nations, the work done by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and the leadership displayed by the African Union and its Peace and Security Council. We support the continued engagement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States, the initiatives led by the Heads of State and Ministers of the Sudan's neighbouring States, and other efforts aimed at resolving the conflict peacefully. We stress the importance of coordination among the peace initiatives. The Security Council must provide timely and effective support for such efforts.

The conflict in the Sudan continues to cause widespread death, injury and displacement. The humanitarian situation is nothing but catastrophic, with millions of women, men, girls and boys in need of food, water, shelter and medical care. Civilians are facing dire conditions in Khartoum, Omdurman, Nyala, El Geneina and other urban centres and rural areas. As we heard in the joint press stakeout earlier, women and girls continue to be the object of horrific acts of sexual abuse and aggression. The mounting inter-ethnic clashes throughout Darfur, and the tribal mobilization in Kordofan, are especially disturbing. Those responsible for violations of human rights and humanitarian law must be held accountable and brought to justice. The conflict is also devastating the country's infrastructure, and its impact on the Sudan's economy is already severe, with many serious social implications.

The people of the Sudan deserve a future of peace, progress and dignity. We urge all the parties to the conflict to face up to their responsibilities to the Sudanese population and begin the complex task of building a political transition. We also call on the Council to fulfil its responsibilities and step up its efforts to find a solution to the current crisis in the Sudan.

Mr. Hamamoto (Japan): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes and Director Wosornu for their updates. Japan greatly appreciates the tireless work of the United Nations in an extremely difficult situation. I would especially like to thank Mr. Perthes for his professional work and wish him all the best for the future. I am also grateful to Ms. Adil for her insights and His Excellency Ambassador Agyeman for his input as the Chair of

the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan (see S/PV.9416).

The clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces have now lasted five months, and the death toll is rising every day. The Secretary-General's report (S/2023/644) says that "the impact of the conflict on the humanitarian situation in the Sudan is catastrophic." We are concerned about the fact that both parties have continued to pursue a military victory and are scaling up their mobilization. It is also worrisome that the Secretary-General's report describes ethnically motivated attacks and warns that they carry the potential of expanding the conflict into a full-blown civil war.

First and foremost, Japan repeats its urgent call to both parties to stop fighting, allow unhindered humanitarian access, return to a peaceful and inclusive political process, uphold international humanitarian law and ensure the safety of civilians.

Secondly, we appreciate all the regional and international mediation efforts, including those of the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States and the Sudan's neighbouring countries, as well as the Jeddah talks. Japan urges both parties to commit to those initiatives.

Thirdly, Japan reiterates its full support for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan. Three months ago, the Council unanimously voted to extend the Mission's mandate (see S/PV.9337) in view of the Sudanese people's difficult circumstances. The four pillars of the Mission's mandate have proved all the more important since the fighting erupted, and Japan is ready to actively contribute to the upcoming discussions on how the Mission can best adapt to the changing situation. Japan would like to remind the Council how much the Mission has contributed to fulfilling the aspirations of the Sudanese people since its establishment in 2020.

I would like to conclude by renewing our commitment to peace and stability in the Sudan and the region.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Albania.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes, Director Wosornu and Ambassador Agyeman for their briefings. I want to express Albania's profound appreciation for Mr. Perthes's work and tireless

efforts, in particularly challenging circumstances, to help the Sudan and its people in their quest for a future of peace. His briefing today reflects his continued professional engagement in the Sudan, and I thank him for the accurate report and for calling a spade a spade. We are grateful for his service. We also thank Ms. Mayada Adil for her sobering remarks. We are very pleased that she could be here. Even though hearing her account was painful, we commend her for giving a voice to all Sudanese women, especially the victims of this senseless war, and we encourage her to continue her civic commitment to helping to overcome the tragic events her country is going through. I would like to highlight three points.

First, as we have heard, the prolonged, intense and deadly conflict between the rival forces, spanning six months, has plunged the Sudan into a catastrophic humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. That totally avoidable conflict, a power struggle between ambitions at the top, is claiming close to 30 victims a day, including civilians. It has increased ethnically based violence and fuelled intercommunal clashes and, as we heard, risks degenerating into a full-scale civil war. In Darfur, racially motivated attacks on civilians, targeting non-Arab communities, have led to force, displacement and killings, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General mentioned. The longer this conflict goes on, the more it becomes clear that there can be no military solution. Unfortunately, in the meantime, the country is being destroyed, and the civilian population continues to endure massive human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law.

Albania remains deeply concerned about reports on civilians being deprived of food supplies, water and electricity and falling victim to theft, looting and widespread sexual assault. As Ms. Adil highlighted, there have been numerous confirmed cases of rape, sexual slavery, torture and religion- and gender-based violence.

Just prior to this meeting, 11 members of the Council, signatories to the shared commitments on women and peace and security, issued a strong call for protection of civilians and accountability for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence in the Sudan. We regret and condemn the use of heavy artillery, artillery fire and aerial bombardments, destroying civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities in major cities, particularly in Khartoum. Heavy armed clashes are preventing civilians from fleeing the conflicts or using humanitarian corridors. Violence has spared no one, including United Nations staff members trying to provide humanitarian assistance.

We therefore urge the warring parties and all armed militias to cease hostilities. We remind them of their obligation to protect civilians throughout the country, with a particular focus on women and children. We call on the Government of the Sudan to expedite visa applications for United Nations staff and partners assisting with humanitarian aid delivery. These people are not going on vacation; they are rushing to go in order to assist the needy and to save lives.

Secondly, violence in the Sudan is having ripple effects throughout the region. More than 200,000 refugees have returned to South Sudan and approximately 700,000 Sudanese have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, particularly in Chad. We commend all bordering countries for their ongoing support in welcoming refugees. As we heard from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the crisis has already generated a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions. Urgent need is required, and urgent need must be provided. We, the international community and the United Nations, in particular, cannot fail the Sudanese people — because their leaders have let them down.

Thirdly, Albania remains committed to supporting coordinated regional and international efforts, and we commend the initiatives led by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States to reach an immediate ceasefire and bring the parties to talks on restoring a meaningful and inclusive political process. That is the only way to end this nightmare and get out of the quagmire.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our unwavering support for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan. We commend the Mission's tireless efforts during such an alarming crisis in the Sudan. We will continue to stand with the Sudanese people and their aspirations for peace and justice in their quest to re-establish a civilian Government.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I invite now Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the matter.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.