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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
1137<sup>TH</sup> MEETING (MINISTERIAL LEVEL)

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BRIEFING NOTE

ON THE UPDATED BRIEFING ON THE SITUATION IN SUDAN

## **BRIEFING NOTE UPDATED BRIEFING ON THE SITUATION IN THE SUDAN**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Following the coup of 25 October 2021, a fresh impetus was given to the quest for a consensual compromise political solution with the signing of the Political Framework Agreement on 5 December 2022. This agreement was the outcome of tough negotiations between the military and civilian sides. Nevertheless, the many unresolved challenges include deepening trust among stakeholders, promoting inclusivity in the political process and ensuring consistent and unified support of regional and international stakeholders for the ongoing political process.

2. The political stalemate which has prevailed since October 2021 has delayed the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and contributed to the resurgence of communal conflicts in the country. This has resulted in the deterioration of social cohesion and the security, humanitarian and socio-economic situation in the country. According to data provided by humanitarian stakeholders in Sudan, tribal conflicts caused the internal displacement of 310,300 people, claimed the lives of 991 and led to the injury of 1,173 others in 2022.

### **II. POLITICAL SITUATION SINCE THE 25 OCTOBER 2021 COUP D'ÉTAT**

3. The 25 October 2021 coup ended the civil-military partnership under the 2019 Constitutional Declaration drafted under the auspices of the African Union (AU). The coup led to the suspension of Sudan from participating in the activities of the Union. This strong principled position was welcomed by the Sudanese and international stakeholders working to promote democracy in Sudan.

4. The coup worsened the political situation due to the state of emergency and other exceptional measures announced by General Abdel Fatah al-Burhan, Chairman of the Sovereign Transitional Council and Chief of Staff of the Sudanese army. These measures led to the arrest and detention of several political figures, former ministers in the Hamdok administration, as well as several activists. Resistance committees and other political stakeholders continued to organize protest marches demanding the withdrawal of the military from the political scene and the restoration of civilian-led transitional institutions. The security forces often resorted to the disproportionate use of force to disperse protestors. The Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors reported that at least 123 protestors have been killed, while thousands have sustained injuries since 25 October 2021.

### **III. ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE POLITICAL CRISIS**

- ***Initial failed agreement:***

5. On 21 November 2021, General Burhan and Prime Minister Hamdok signed an agreement allowing the Prime Minister to return to his position and to release certain political detainees. However, this Agreement was rejected by the Sudanese people who continued to protest in the streets. The Agreement could not stop the violence that the law enforcement agencies unleashed on demonstrators. With the escalation of violence and the failure on the part of the political stakeholders to settle on a broader political agreement, Prime Minister Hamdok announced his resignation on 3 January 2022. This situation has worsened the political crisis and created a judicial and constitutional void. Since these events, Sudan has not had a Prime Minister.

- ***Facilitation efforts made by the African Union and the Trilateral Mechanism***

6. Since the coup took place, the African Union Liaison Office in Sudan has been active in engaging with all the politico-military stakeholders, by encouraging them to find an inclusive solution to the political impasse. The Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye's mission to Khartoum in January 2022 amplified this message. Similarly, the high-level visit of the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, ensured that the position of the AU on the situation in Sudan was strongly reaffirmed, while the political stakeholders were made to understand that inclusive dialogue is the only viable solution. The visit also ensured that the isolated initiative taken by the Head of the United Nations Political Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), Mr. Volker Perthes, to launch a political process led solely by the United Nations was ended. Consequently, a Trilateral Mechanism was established at the end of March 2022, with the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations working together to support the political process.

7. The missions undertaken between March and June 2022 by the African Union Special Envoy for Sudan, Prof. Mohamed Al Hacen Lebatt, have also made it possible to deepen the strong commitment of the AU, including within the Trilateral Mechanism. Between April and June 2022, the AU initiated consultations and subsequent indirect talks between the military and civilian sides in order to find common ground. These engagements led to the lifting of the state of emergency on 29 May 2022 and the release of several political figures and activists.

8. On 8 June 2022, direct talks among the stakeholders were initiated. The military side, the signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement and other political parties participated in this process. However, an important segment of the political class, particularly the parties making up the Forces for Freedom and Change – Central Committee (FFC1 which signed the 2019 Constitution and participated in the transitional institutions until the military coup was staged), the resistance committees, the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) and others, boycotted the meeting and stressed their rejection of direct dialogue with the military. They demanded the withdrawal of the military from the political process. Having observed that an important segment of the political class was not part of our process, the Trilateral Mechanism decided to suspend work, while continuing consultations with the political stakeholders and encouraging inclusive dialogue among them.

- ***Positive developments in the political situation***

9. During a television broadcast on 4 July 2022, General Burhan announced the withdrawal of the military from the political process in order to allow the civilian stakeholders to reach an inclusive political agreement. On the same occasion, he announced the intention of the military to withdraw from running the country and the political scene, once the civilians had reached consensus to form a civilian government. This announcement was generally welcomed by the political stakeholders. Similarly, General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, also known as "Hemedti", Vice-Chairman of the Sovereign Transitional Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), underscored the commitment to withdraw from the country's political governance process.

10. The commitment made by the military gave fresh hope to the quest for a political solution to the Sudanese issue. Thus, several political coalitions, professional associations and civil society stakeholders made post-crisis proposals based on the military's commitment to withdraw from the transitional government institutions. Among the initiatives, the Steering Committee of the Sudanese Bar Association was able to get consensus on the draft constitution in particular.

11. However, some stakeholders which include the Governor of the Darfur region, Mini Minawi, and the Minister of Finance, Gebreil Ibrahim (both signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement), refused to participate in this process, accusing the members of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC1) of being behind the Bar's initiative. Alternatively, at the beginning of November 2022, Mini Minawi and Gebreil launched a new political coalition.

12. This new entity named the "Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC2) - Democratic Coalition", brings together parties wielding very little influence, with the exception of Mini Minawi, Gebreil Ibrahim, and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP/the Jafar Mirghani faction; another faction led by Hassan Mirghani is with the other FFC1). Some parties forming the FFC2 coalition are accused of having actively supported or being part of the National Congress Party (NCP of former President Bashir, a party that was dissolved by law in 2019 after the revolution), or having been formed recently without any political base or supporting the military coup of 25 October 2021.

13. In spite of these political divisions, the military side forwarded its written comments on the draft constitution proposed by the Steering Committee of the Sudanese Bar at the end of October 2022. The military side declared its readiness to negotiate with the civilians. Similarly, the signatories from the politico-social side of the divide showed the same desire to end the crisis. Thus, the discreet and direct negotiations (without the facilitation of the Trilateral Mechanism) which took place between the military and civilian stakeholders ended with the signing of a "Political Framework Agreement" on 5 December 2022.

- ***Political Framework Agreement of 5 December 2022***

14. In addition to Generals Burhan and "Hemedti", about forty political parties and professional associations signed the 5 December 2022 Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreement proposes a 24-month transition starting from the appointment of a civilian Prime Minister. Under the Agreement, the military commits to withdraw from the transitional government institutions; they will be members of a Defence and Security Council to be chaired by the Prime Minister.

15. The parties also committed to improve the Framework Agreement through a wide consultative process on five priority issues, namely: i) Dismantling of the regime of former President Bashir; ii) Resolution of the crisis in eastern Sudan; iii) Juba Peace Agreement and completion of the peace process; iv) Reform of the army and security sector; and v) Justice and transitional justice. Thematic workshops are expected to be held on these five areas with the participation of signatory and non-signatory parties, as well as civil society, experts, and youth and women's groups. The recommendations of these workshops will inform the direction of the negotiations between the parties in order to reach a final agreement which will ensure the adoption of a new transitional constitution and the formation of a new government to manage the transition period together with the organization of elections. The stakeholders requested the Trilateral Mechanism to facilitate the next stage of the political process.

16. The signing of the Framework Agreement was warmly welcomed by the members of the international community, including neighbouring countries, including Egypt and South Sudan, as well as many AU Member States and the Arab League. The United Nations Security Council and the European Union also welcomed this important development.

- ***Commencement of the implementation of the 5 December Framework Agreement***

17. On 8 January 2023, the signatories to the Framework Agreement officially launched the "Final Phase of the Political Process" in Sudan. This ceremony, held in Khartoum, was heavily attended by

the signatories, including Generals Burhan and Hemedti. When they took the floor, the two Generals reaffirmed the commitment of the military to withdraw from the political governance of the country after a final and inclusive agreement is reached. Representatives of the European Union (Sweden), Troïka/QUAD (Saudi Arabia also spoke on behalf of the United States, United Arab Emirates, Norway and the United Kingdom), the Arab League (Morocco) and the Trilateral Mechanism (African Union) took the floor to affirm their support for the ongoing political process. They also requested the Sudanese stakeholders to prioritize dialogue and consensus, and called on the others to join the ongoing political process.

18. On 9 January 2023, the four-day workshop on the dismantling of the 30 June 1989 regime (the regime of former President Bashir) began in Khartoum. More than 350 people, 60 percent of whom represented civil society, professional associations as well as women's and youth organizations and resistance committees, were in attendance. The next workshop on the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement was scheduled to be held in Khartoum from 31 January to 3 February 2023. The other workshops are expected to be held by the end of February 2023.

- ***Challenges facing the ongoing political process***

19. The 5 December 2022 Framework Agreement could not bring all the Sudanese stakeholders together. Notably, it was rejected by the "Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) – Democratic Coalition" of Jafar Mirghani, Mini Minawi and Gebreil Ibrahim who condemned the lack of inclusiveness of the process. In fact, frantic efforts were made to involve these stakeholders in the political process, particularly Mini Minawi and Gebreil Ibrahim, given their capacity as signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement; the same was the case of other signatories like Al Hadi Idriss, Malik Agar and Tahar Hajar. However, Mini Minawi and Gebreil rejected this proposal and insisted on participating as members of the FFC2 and coming along with the other members of their coalition. This proposal was rejected by both the military and the FFC-1 who agreed on a list of political stakeholders who should participate in the political process. This list actually includes Mini Minawi and Gebreil, and not the other members of their coalition.

20. This situation demonstrates the difficulty in reaching consensus on the identification of parties which should participate in the political process. Each party is seeking to downplay that of the others. Indeed, no side can legitimately monopolize the political space and claim supremacy over the others, when free and credible elections are yet to be held to settle the issue of legitimate power.

21. Furthermore, a series of meetings were held with the two blocs (FFC1 and FFC2) between December 2022 and early January 2023 and were facilitated by the military leaders. The two parties were close to reaching an agreement in the form of a political statement to allow Mini Minawi and Gebreil Ibrahim to join the political process. However, on 2 January 2023, the Head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Service, General Abbas Kamel, undertook an official mission to Khartoum. He met with General Burhan and representatives of the FFC1 and FFC2. General Abbas Kamel proposed that the Sudanese parties should hold talks in Egypt for a consensus to be reached. The FFC1 bloc declined the offer and urged Egypt to support the ongoing political process based on the 5 December 2022 Framework Agreement in order to avoid duplication of the process. On the other hand, the FFC2 accepted the offer and stressed that it was an opportunity for them to emerge from the political impasse. Since then, discussions between the two FFC factions have been suspended. However, Egypt continued its initiative by inviting the Sudanese parties to a dialogue in Cairo from 1 to 8 February 2023. However, some stakeholders like the FFC – Central Committee declined the invitation.

22. It is critically necessary to avoid a parallel political process, to unite all regional and international stakeholders around the ongoing political process and to encourage the other

stakeholders, particularly Mini Minawi and Gebreil Ibrahim, to join the political process in the best interests of the Sudanese people.

23. It should be observed that Egypt, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, officially welcomed the signing of the 5 December 2022 Framework Agreement and, consequently, the launch of the final phase of the political process in a communiqué dated 9 January 2023. Egypt considers this launch as an important and positive development.

#### **IV. SECURITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

##### **- *2020 Juba Peace Agreement not implemented in a broad sense***

24. The implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement focused mainly on a power-sharing arrangement allowing signatories to be appointed to high-level positions in the federal government and at the regional level. However, the other equally important aspects of the Agreement especially, security arrangements, have not yet been actualized. In July 2022, a total of 1,700 members of the armed groups which signed the agreement completed their training for integration into the Joint Security Forces, as provided for in the Juba Agreement. However, their deployment has not yet been effected due to logistical issues and ongoing discussions on some technical aspects such as the harmonization of ranks and chain of command and control. These delays are contributing to the creation of a security vacuum in the areas affected by the conflict, such as in Darfur.

##### **- *Upsurge in community tension***

25. Tension between communities has also seriously increased in the states of Darfur, Kordofan and the Blue Nile. It has resulted in the proliferation of militia groups in the hinterland of the country, as well as the proliferation of illicit light weapons and the commission of organized crime. Consequently, the security and humanitarian situation have deteriorated.

26. Various factors contributing to this situation include the Covid-19 pandemic, armed conflicts and violence, suspension of international aid after the 25 October 2021 coup d'état, as well as inflation. According to projections of humanitarian agencies, a third of the Sudanese population will require humanitarian aid in 2023.

#### **V. IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

27. The AU has remained actively engaged in supporting the peace efforts in Sudan. The commitment of the AU is more necessary now than ever before. As a member of the Trilateral Mechanism, the AU shares its perspectives on the political process and particularly insists on the principles of inclusivity, transparency and proportional representation and local ownership. In spite of the very limited institutional capacity, the AU Liaison Office is striving to be present and to support the work of the Trilateral Mechanism, in line with the principles of the AU. The Office continues to share information and holding coordination meetings with the African diplomatic corps accredited to Khartoum.

28. The Sudanese transitional authorities and civilian stakeholders have high expectations of the African Union and its Member States. There is a real interest in sharing African experiences and expertise in issues relating to security sector reform, the fight against corruption and transitional justice. The AU could play a very useful role in this regard, including by mobilizing the required technical and diplomatic support for the ongoing political process in Sudan.

29. The new phase of the political process is a major opportunity for Sudan to emerge from the political impasse and to restore the transition, in order to promote durable peace and stability, economic recovery and the return of the country into the fold of nations, especially that of our organization – the African Union. Given the geo-strategic location of Sudan at the crossroads of Africa, its stability will have a major positive impact on the continent. This is why it is necessary to make every possible effort in this regard.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

30. In view of the foregoing, the PSC may wish to consider the following recommendations:
- a) **Express deep concern** over the political stalemate prevailed since October 2021, which has delayed the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and contributed to the resurgence of communal conflicts;
  - b) **Re-affirm** the continued support of the AU to the ongoing political process to ensure the sustainability of the final solution and return to constitutional order, in close coordination with IGAD; in this regard, **direct** the AU Commission to strengthen partnership and cooperation with IGAD on promoting conflict resolution and peace, as well as constitutionalism in Sudan;
  - c) **Also express concern** over the failure to appoint a Prime Minister since the resignation of H.E Abdallah Hamdok, on 2 December 2021, which has created a political vacuum and worsened the political crisis and created a judicial and constitutional void;
  - d) **Renew the call** for the formation of a broad-based government headed by a Prime Minister appointed by consensus, to steer the transition to a new democratic dispensation in Sudan;
  - e) **Welcome** the announcement by General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan, on 4 July 2022, regarding the withdrawal of the military from the political process to allow the civilian stakeholders to reach an inclusive political agreement, as well as the intention of the military to withdraw from running the country, once the civilians had reached consensus to form a civilian government; and, in this context, **appeal** to the military to fully implement this commitment;
  - f) **Urge** the Sudanese authorities to intensify the talks between the military and civilian components in line with the Constitutional Declaration of August 2019, in order to find common ground and form a civilian government capable of meeting the requirements of the transitional period; and **call on** all the parties and stakeholders to place the supreme interests of Sudan and its people above all else and resolve any differences peacefully;
  - g) **Reiterate the call** for the unconditional release of all political detainees as a necessary step towards genuine national reconciliation and rebuilding of the nation;
  - h) **Commend** the establishment and work of the Trilateral Mechanism since March 2022, bringing together the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations and **encourage** the three organizations to collaboratively intensify their efforts towards supporting the Sudanese political process;
  - i) **Express concern over** the suspension of direct talks initiated on 8 June 2022, among the stakeholders; and **request** the Trilateral Mechanism to continue with consultations with the political stakeholders, and encourage the stakeholders to continue with direct talks and

inclusive dialogues, with a view to find an amicable solution to the political challenges facing the country;

- j) **Applaud** the efforts deployed by the Steering Committee of the Sudanese Bar Association to get consensus on the draft constitution and the military for submitting its written comments on the draft constitution proposed, as well as its readiness to negotiate with the civilians;
- k) **Welcome** the signing of a “Political Framework Agreement” on 5 December 2022 by Generals Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Daglo and some political parties and professional associations which proposes a 24-month transition, starting from the appointment of a civilian Prime Minister, and the commitment by the military to withdraw from the transitional government institutions; **also commend** the signatories of the Framework Agreement for officially launching the “Final Phase of the Political Process” in Sudan, on 8 January 2023;
- l) **Call on** political parties and groups that are yet to sign the Framework Agreement to do so in the collective and supreme interest of the Sudanese people who are yearning for peace and stability;
- m) **Request** the international community to support the implementation of the Framework Agreement and to avoid duplication of the process;
- n) **Reiterate the Call** for the implementation of the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement, especially security arrangements, and in this regard, **request** the AU Commission to engage the Sudanese authorities with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Agreement;
- o) **Express concern** over the volatile security situation in the states of Darfur, Kordofan and the Blue Nile due to escalating inter-communal violence, which has resulted in the proliferation of militia groups and proliferation of illicit weapons and organized crime;
- p) **Decide** to undertake a field mission to show solidarity with the people of Sudan in their legitimate quest for a democratic, stable and prosperous country and **encourage** the Sudanese authorities to continue cooperating with the PSC;
- q) Once again, **call on** partners to continue to provide the necessary support, including technical and financial, as well as humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese authority, in order to effectively support the ongoing transition process and to alleviate the plight of the Sudanese people;
- r) **Underline** the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of the AU Liaison Office including by providing both human, material and financial resources to enable it to more effectively discharge its mandate; and
- s) **Urge** all stakeholders in the Sudan, particularly the Military and Political Parties to work together towards the speedy and sustainable restoration of the constitutional order through the consensual design of an inclusive roadmap for democratic elections and governance.

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# Communiqué of the 1137th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, Held on 6 February 2023, on the Updated Briefing on the Situation in the Sudan.

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