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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Fuelling Sudan's conflict: weapons, fighters and
external support networks****Report of the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan****Summary*

The mission finds that external support is sustaining military operations and expanding the capabilities of the parties to Sudan's conflict, with grave consequences for civilians. Increasingly sophisticated drone capabilities enabled both parties to strike far beyond immediate front lines, yet greater technical capability did not bring greater civilian protection. The mission documented attacks affecting civilians, hospitals, schools, markets and displacement sites, including attacks that may amount to war crimes.

Behind these operations lie wider networks of weapons, fighters, training and logistical support. The mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that a transnational network supplied the Rapid Support Forces with weapons, logistics, training and foreign personnel, including Colombian contractors involved in advanced weapons and drone systems. Externally trained fighters were identified as participating in operations in Zamzam camp and El-Fasher. Foreign-supplied drones also expanded the Sudanese Armed Forces' long-range strike capabilities, although the mission's findings on external support to the Sudanese Armed Forces remain preliminary.

External support warrants heightened scrutiny where it sustains operations involving serious violations and international crimes, including in El-Fasher, where the mission previously documented war crimes, crimes against humanity and conduct displaying hallmarks of genocide. The mission calls on States to enforce the Darfur arms embargo and suspend transfers of weapons, drones, components, or military assistance where there is a substantial risk of their use in serious violations. It calls on the Security Council to extend the embargo throughout Sudan. The mission reiterates its previous calls for civilian protection, accountability across the full chain of responsibility, and support for victims and survivors.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

I. Mandate, cooperation and protection concerns

1. This report by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan (“the mission”) examines the impact of expanded military capabilities, particularly long-range drones, the conduct of hostilities and civilian protection in Sudan and the role of external support in sustaining and prolonging the conflict. It is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 60/3 of 6 October 2025,¹ which renewed the mission’s mandate and expressed concern at the mission’s findings that there are reasonable grounds to believe that both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces violated international law, amounting to war crimes, and that the Rapid Support Forces also committed crimes against humanity. It condemned all forms of external interference, called for an end to material support to both parties, and urged all states and entities to respect and enforce the Darfur arms embargo.²
2. Following its Urgent Debate of 6 July 2026, the Human Rights Council requested the mission to conduct “an urgent inquiry” into the situation in and around El-Obeid.³ It encouraged the mission to update the Council on the outcome of the inquiry at its sixty-third session and to update the General Assembly at its eighty-first session.
3. In preparing this report, the mission obtained extensive expert advice and first-hand accounts from witnesses and survivors and is grateful for their cooperation and courage in sharing their experiences. It carried out two expert consultations on 5 June 2026 and 17 August 2026 regarding the flow of weapons in Sudan and its impact on the protection of human rights. The mission applied its established methodology and the “reasonable grounds to believe” standard of proof, set out in Annex I.⁴
4. The mission remains concerned by the deteriorating protection environment and the harassment and intimidation of survivors, experts, victims, witnesses, and others perceived as cooperating with documentation and accountability efforts, including with the mission. Stakeholders described fear of surveillance, arrests, reprisals, and threats against journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders inside and outside Sudan by both parties. Telecommunications disruptions imposed by the parties and limited connectivity also constrained people in Sudan from connecting with the outside world.
5. The mission continued engaging with international and regional entities, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Secretary General’s Personal Envoy for the Sudan; the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide; the African Union Special Envoy on the Prevention of Genocide and Other Mass Atrocities; the United Nations Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries; the United Nations Panels of Experts on Sudan, Libya and South Sudan; and the International Criminal Court.
6. The mission conducted several activities with the African Union Joint Fact-Finding Mission on the Human Rights Situation in the Sudan, including a side event in Geneva in March 2026 and a joint statement marking the conflict’s anniversary on 13 April 2026. In Banjul, The Gambia, the two missions participated in joint public and confidential civil society events on 12–13 May 2026 and issued a Joint Declaration on 12 May 2026.⁵
7. The mission also engaged with member states, including Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Panama, and the United Arab Emirates,

¹ A/HRC/RES/60/3, para. 21.

² A/HRC/RES/60/3, para. 20.

³ A/HRC/62/L.48, para. 17.

⁴ See A/HRC/60/22; A/HRC/57/23.

⁵ [Joint Declaration on Sudan - Adopted by the Joint Fact-Finding Mission of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Human Rights Situation in the Sudan and the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan | OHCHR.](#)

regarding allegations of support to the parties by entities, some of which are registered in these states. Chad, Colombia, and the United Arab Emirates provided written and oral responses, for which the mission is grateful. No substantive response was received from Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan or Somalia, while Panama requested additional time to respond.

8. Despite repeated efforts, Sudan continued its lack of cooperation with the mission. On 14 June 2026, the mission sent a *note verbale* to the Government of Sudan through its Permanent Mission in Geneva, requesting a meeting and reiterating its request to visit Sudan. In accordance with standard practice, on 28 August 2026, the mission also shared the final draft of the present report with the Government of Sudan. No response was received.

9. The mission also sought information from the Rapid Support Forces including through letters of 18 May and 12 August 2026 requesting meetings with its leadership and responses to outstanding and additional questions.⁶ On 8 June 2026 the Rapid Support Forces proposed a roundtable discussion. The mission confirmed its readiness to engage. No further response was received.

II. Legal framework

10. The applicable legal framework is set out in previous mission reports.⁷ The parties are bound by international human rights law, international humanitarian law, including Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II, and customary international law. International criminal law also applies, and the situation in Darfur since 1 July 2002 is subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

11. Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions requires States to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. Relevant legal frameworks governing external military support, where applicable, include the Arms Trade Treaty and the international and regional conventions on mercenaries, including the United Nations International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and the Organization of African Unity Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa.

12. The Security Council sanctions regime for Darfur, including the arms embargo under resolutions 1556(2004) and 1591(2005) is binding on all states. Corporations and private military and security companies providing military, logistical, intelligence, or training support may incur responsibilities under applicable international and domestic law, while their personnel may incur individual criminal responsibility.

13. The mission has identified foreign individuals and entities involved in networks providing weapons, foreign fighters, and other military or logistical support to the parties. It publicly names only those designated by the relevant United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee. The mission maintains confidential dossiers on these and other individuals, which may be shared for accountability purposes, consistent with its mandate.

14. Accountability efforts continue before the International Criminal Court and in several domestic jurisdictions.⁸ The Office of the Prosecutor announced that it is accelerating its efforts concerning crimes committed in El Geneina and El-Fasher.⁹

⁶ A/HRC/62/CRP.4, para. 8.

⁷ See A/HRC/61/77; A/HRC/60/22; A/HRC/57/23; A/HRC/57/CRP.6.

⁸ See e.g. [Sudan – First war crimes complaint against the RSF filed in Kenya – Legal Action Worldwide](#).

⁹ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-deputy-prosecutor-nazhat-shameem-khan-united-nations-security-council-situation-1>.

III. Redefining battlefields: the impact of advanced drone capabilities

15. The use of technological advances, particularly expanded drone capabilities, has changed the nature of the conflict, extending the geographical reach of hostilities and prolonging fighting without apparent lull, including during the rainy season.

16. Initially, the Sudanese Armed Forces retained an aerial advantage through conventional aircraft and military infrastructure, while the Rapid Support Forces relied primarily on mobile ground forces. By 2025–2026, both parties possessed systems capable of surveillance and attacks across front lines and at considerable distance from their ground forces, ranging from shorter-range multirotor drones to reusable fixed-wing systems and one-way attack platforms. Evidence indicates that externally sourced systems, components, personnel and munitions enabled this expansion.

17. Rapid Support Forces' drones were used extensively in operations around El-Fasher¹⁰ and in attacks on Merowe Dam, Port Sudan, Omdurman, Khartoum and El-Obeid, while the locations were under Sudanese Armed Forces control. Drone operations were also documented in Blue Nile. More recently, Sudanese Armed Forces' aerial operations, including drones, reached locations deep inside Rapid Support Forces-held Darfur, including Ad-Da'ein and Nyala.

18. Aerial attacks, including by drones, on transport routes and essential infrastructure compound the effects of siege or isolation, displacement, and degraded essential services. Damage to electricity, fuel, water, transport and health infrastructure extended the consequences beyond the immediate strike site by disrupting interconnected systems on which civilian survival depends.

19. Expanded drone warfare altered the geographical distribution and persistence of civilian exposure to hostilities. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights documented more than 1,000 civilians killed in drone strikes between January and May 2026.¹¹ The mission collected evidence and previously reported on attacks affecting health facilities, schools, places of worship, markets, displacement sites, civilian gatherings including weddings and funerals, and energy infrastructure.¹²

20. The emblematic cases presented below illustrate these patterns, including expanded geographical reach, successive attacks, and impacts on interconnected civilian infrastructure. They also show how drone operations compounded existing vulnerabilities linked to siege and isolation, displacement, restricted movement and degraded essential services. The cases are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

IV. Drone attacks

A. Rapid Support Forces

1. El-Obeid: infrastructure degradation and interconnected civilian harm

21. El-Obeid illustrates how repeated drone attacks progressively degraded essential infrastructure, in a city already under severe strain and partial siege. Between May and July 2026, attacks damaged or disrupted electricity and fuel infrastructure, affecting water supply, healthcare, transport and other essential

¹⁰ A/HRC/61/77; A/HRC/62/CRP.4.

¹¹ [Deputy High Commissioner Dabo: Sudan cannot be forgotten | OHCHR](#)

¹² A/HRC/60/22, paras. 71-115.

services. Successive disruptions compounded one another, reducing the capacity of remaining services and infrastructure to compensate.

22. El-Obeid, capital of North Kordofan and base of the Sudanese Armed Forces' Fifth Infantry Division, remained under Sudanese Armed Forces control as Rapid Support Forces' pressure intensified in June 2026. Witnesses described near-daily drone attacks affecting military positions, residential areas, fuel supplies, electricity and water infrastructure, causing civilian casualties and further disruption to essential services.

23. Satellite imagery identified damage between 25 May and 25 June to El-Obeid's main electricity substation, numerous fuel stations and the Grand Market assessed as consistent with aerial bombardment. El-Obeid already faced chronic water scarcity, with potable water supply substantially dependent on electrically powered pumping and treatment. Witnesses reported that attacks affecting electricity disrupted water services forcing residents to reduce water consumption and increasingly rely on rainwater and unsafe sources.

24. Repeated attacks on fuel stations and tankers disrupted civilian transport and commercial activity and reduced fuel available for generators serving hospitals and water services. The effects therefore extended beyond fuel supply to other essential services. Witnesses described hospitals struggling to sustain oxygen supplies, dialysis, blood storage and emergency surgery. Pressure on these services was compounded by displacement into El-Obeid.

25. The mission documented attacks on tanker-type vehicles. In late June 2026, a drone struck an empty tanker near Dar al-Fikr School. Witnesses described the vehicle as stationary and non-functional for years and reported civilian casualties, including a schoolgirl who later died from a severe head injury.

26. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that intensified Rapid Support Forces drone operations in June 2026 repeatedly affected electricity, fuel and other infrastructure serving El-Obeid, aggravating existing constraints on water, healthcare, transport and civilian movement. Where such infrastructure constituted military objectives, reasonably foreseeable civilian harm resulting from its disruption remained relevant to the conduct of the attack, particularly where successive attacks and documented consequences made those effects increasingly apparent.

2. Kalogi: successive attacks through the casualty-response chain

27. The Kalogi attacks illustrate how successive drone strikes extended civilian harm beyond the initial strike, affecting responders, casualty evacuation and access to medical care.

28. On 4 December 2025, a drone strike hit Nabaa al-Hanan Kindergarten in Kalogi, South Kordofan, then under Sudanese Armed Forces control, while young children and a teacher were preparing for a school ceremony. Residents and parents gathered to assist the injured. Shortly after, a further strike hit the same location or its immediate vicinity, killing and injuring responders.

29. Casualties were taken to Kalogi Rural Hospital, approximately 600 metres away. A further strike occurred as wounded persons and relatives arrived, close to a vehicle transporting wounded persons, killing its driver and occupants. Witnesses described severe burns and blast injuries, among the children and responders. The attacks killed 114 people, including some 60 children, and injured 35.¹³ Schools remained closed for several months following the attacks, while the hospital ceased operating for approximately 45 days because staff and residents feared further strikes.

¹³ <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-warns-of-dangerous-escalation-of-attacks-on-health-care-in-sudan.html?>

30. Witness accounts and other information available to the mission indicated no military use of the kindergarten and no use of the hospital for acts harmful to the enemy at the time of the attacks.

31. Accordingly, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that the Rapid Support Forces carried out successive drone attacks striking Nabaa al-Hanan Kindergarten, civilians responding to the initial strike, and Kalogi Rural Hospital, killing and injuring large numbers of civilians, including children.

3. Kulba displacement site, Kadugli: renewed exposure after displacement

32. By late October 2025, Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan, remained under siege, with access to food, healthcare and other essential supplies severely constrained. On 31 October, a drone struck the former International Organization for Migration premises in Kulba, being used to shelter displaced families. Witnesses described fire, damage to nearby houses and multiple civilian casualties. A medical worker reported that seven children were injured, five of whom subsequently died. Another witness described a displaced relative whose leg was severed in the attack.

33. Available information indicated no military use of the premises, with witnesses reporting no Sudanese Armed Forces presence at or near the site and the mission obtained no information indicating military use at the time of the attack. The mission therefore finds that the premises retained their civilian character at the time of the attack.

34. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that a Rapid Support Forces drone struck the former International Organization for Migration premises being used to shelter displaced families, killing at least five civilians, including children, and injuring others.

4. Other attacks affecting civilian concentrations

35. The mission documented additional Rapid Support Forces-attributed drone attacks affecting civilian concentrations and essential infrastructure across Kordofan and elsewhere in Sudan, including Omdurman, Khartoum and Blue Nile. In South Kordofan, attacks occurred amid prolonged siege and isolation in Sudanese Armed Forces-held Dilling and Kadugli, where access to food, healthcare and humanitarian assistance was already severely constrained.

36. In February 2026, drone strikes hit Al-Shartai Health Centre in Kadugli, causing civilian casualties. On 15 January 2026, a drone struck Dilling market, killing at least 12 civilians and injuring others. The attack occurred while Dilling was under prolonged siege, which had severely restricted access to food, fuel, medicines and healthcare. The mission found reasonable grounds to believe that the strike formed part of a broader pattern of Rapid Support Forces drone operations affecting civilian areas and infrastructure in the city.

37. The mission also received evidence of repeated attacks affecting schools, medical facilities, fuel and water infrastructure, markets and residential areas across South and North Kordofan, particularly from late 2025 onwards, following the Rapid Support Forces' capture of El Fasher and Babanusa.

Conclusion

38. The above attacks occurred where civilians were already affected by siege, isolation and restricted access to essential services. By extending attacks to civilian concentrations and infrastructure, drone operations deepened existing vulnerabilities through persistent aerial exposure. Attacks on El Obeid, Omdurman and Khartoum North in 2026 indicate that these patterns extended beyond Kordofan.

B. Sudanese Armed Forces

1. Ad-Da'ain Teaching Hospital: extended aerial reach and loss of referral capacity

39. Ad-Da'ain, the capital of East Darfur, lay approximately 400 kilometres from areas of active ground fighting in Kordofan. Its teaching hospital served as the principal public referral facility for more than two million people across East Darfur.

40. On 20 March 2026, the first day of Eid al-Fitr, successive aerial strikes hit the hospital while patients, relatives and medical personnel were present. A medical worker placed two strikes approximately a few minutes apart. The first struck the emergency area, including the pharmacy, blood bank and laboratory. A further strike occurred after responders began assisting the injured, causing additional casualties and prompting some to withdraw for fear of further strikes. Witnesses described severe blast injuries, fire and extensive casualties, including bodies identified only by clothing or personal effects.

41. The hospital was rendered non-functional, disrupting emergency, intensive, surgical, maternity, paediatric and other specialised care, removing critical referral capacity from communities already facing severe shortages of functioning health facilities. Patients requiring specialised care subsequently faced travel of more than 150 kilometres to the next referral hospital.

42. Satellite imagery identified at least three direct impact points within the hospital complex and no comparable visible damage to nearby police or government buildings. The mission also examined reports that wounded Rapid Support Forces fighters were treated at the hospital and that vehicles were positioned outside. The mission obtained no information indicating weapons storage, attacks launched from the hospital or other military use.

43. Taken together, the evidence provides reasonable grounds to believe that the Sudanese Armed Forces carried out successive drone strikes on Ad-Da'ain Teaching Hospital, killing at least 70 people, injuring 146 and rendering the hospital non-functional. The attack on Ad-Da'ain Teaching Hospital illustrates the expanded reach of Sudanese Armed Forces drone operations into Rapid Support Forces-held territory and the consequences for major civilian infrastructure.

2. Abu Zaima market: civilian commercial activity exposed to drone attack

44. On 6 June 2026, a munition struck a small metal-roofed shop inside Abu Zaima market in Hamrat El Sheikh, North Kordofan, where adolescents and young men rented and played video games. Witnesses described that civilians had gathered inside and around the premises and reported hearing a drone over Abu Zaima for approximately 30 minutes before the strike. The shop was destroyed and an adjoining bakery damaged. Nine bodies were reportedly recovered at the site, while three injured persons subsequently died. Witnesses reported no armed personnel, positions or other apparent Rapid Support Forces' presence in or near the market at the time.

45. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that the Sudanese Armed Forces carried out the drone strike on civilian commercial premises in Abu Zaima market while civilians were present.

3. Yabus market: civilian harm and disruption of essential services

46. Yabus, in southern Blue Nile near the Ethiopian border, was a stronghold of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North al-Hilu and had been subject to repeated Sudanese Armed Forces' aerial attacks during 2026.

47. On 29 or 30 March 2026, a drone attack attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces struck the main market and the nearby water-pump area. Witness testimony and other information received by the mission, including photographs and video-footage of

munition remnants, indicate that at least two munitions struck the densely populated area. One struck the main market, extensively damaging shops and market infrastructure, while another struck near the water pump area, killing at least 13 civilians and injuring others, including women and children. The attack also damaged an adjacent medical facility, while the market remained closed for several weeks, disrupting local commerce and access to services.

48. On the evidence presently available, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that the Sudanese Armed Forces carried out the drone attack on Yabus market and the nearby water-pump area, causing civilian casualties and disrupting commerce and essential services.

4. Other attacks affecting civilian concentrations

49. The mission documented further drone attacks attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces on locations where civilian presence was substantial or readily foreseeable. The cases below are illustrative and summarised briefly.

50. On 8 April 2026, a strike on a wedding gathering in Kutum, North Darfur, reportedly killed around 30 civilians. On 27 April, a drone strike on Al-Hamidiya displacement camp in Zalingei killed at least five civilians and injured 12 others.

51. On 2 August, a drone strike hit a customary court session in Ghara al-Zawiya village, North Darfur, attended by many civilians, including community leaders, elders and minors. A substantial number were killed or injured. Witnesses described the court as a long-standing community dispute-resolution mechanism and reported no military activity or military presence at or near the site. Some reports indicated that two individuals described as Rapid Support Forces officers were among those killed; the mission could not independently verify their status. Even if established, their presence alone would not deprive the gathering of its civilian character or render the court premises a military objective absent evidence of military activity or use.

Conclusion

52. Taken together, these cases indicate a pattern in which Sudanese Armed Forces' drone operations exposed civilians and civilian infrastructure across multiple regions to the effects of aerial attack, causing casualties and disrupting essential services.

C. Differentiated impact on women and children

53. The mission found that drone attacks interacted with pre-existing gender inequalities, displacement and barriers to essential services, to produce differentiated harms for women and girls. Women and children were repeatedly among those killed and injured in drone attacks documented by the mission.

1. Impact on maternal health

54. Drone attacks on health facilities and critical infrastructure disrupted maternal health services. In El-Obeid, attacks affecting electricity and other infrastructure reduced already limited healthcare capacity, while the maternity hospital suspended operations after a nearby drone strike damaged operating theatres and the pharmacy. Health personnel described shortages of medicines, qualified staff and specialised obstetric services, increasing risks of maternal and neonatal deaths where emergency care, blood products, or emergency surgery were delayed or unavailable.

55. Repeated attacks also compounded maternal-health risks by disrupting access to obstetric care. Health professionals reported increases in miscarriages, stillbirths and pregnancy complications during periods of repeated aerial attack, which they associated with acute stress, restricted movement and delayed access to care.

2. Impact on children

56. Drone attacks had particular consequences for children, both as direct victims and through damage to civilian infrastructure necessary for their survival and development. Children were repeatedly among those killed and injured in attacks attributed to both parties.

57. Attacks affecting hospitals, schools, water systems, and displacement sites also disrupted healthcare, immunization, education, safe water and shelter, while prolonged displacement and interrupted schooling heightened protection risks; particularly for girls, including child marriage, exploitation and other forms of gender-based harm.

D. Conclusion

58. The mission finds that expanded and diversified drone capabilities altered the geographical reach and civilian consequences of hostilities. Greater range and operational persistence, enabled both parties to strike far beyond front lines, reducing the practical protection afforded by distance. Cases investigated by the mission documented civilians struck in places of residence, refuge, education, markets, medical facilities and community gatherings, including where substantial civilian presence was readily foreseeable.

59. The consequences extended beyond the point of impact. Fear of further strikes delayed rescue and evacuation in some cases, while severe explosive injuries occurred where timely medical care was already constrained. Repeated attacks also eroded the civilian systems on which survival depended, compounding the effects of conflict and deprivation. Drone strikes also caused extensive bodily destruction, complicating identification and burial of the dead, causing extreme distress to survivors, relatives and medical personnel.

E. International humanitarian law violations and war crimes

1. Rapid Support Forces

60. The mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that the Rapid Support Forces carried out the drone strikes documented above, including those affecting El-Obeid, Nabaa al-Hanan Kindergarten, Kalogi Rural Hospital, and the Kulba displacement shelter. It identified no military use that deprived the kindergarten, or displacement shelter of their civilian protection or the hospital of its special protection.

61. The mission finds that these attacks failed to comply with obligations of target verification and precautions in attack. Where civilian or protected objects were themselves the objects of attack, the attacks also violated distinction. The repeated strikes affecting Kalogi Rural Hospital indicate a failure to respect the special protection afforded to medical units.

62. The mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that the Rapid Support Forces committed serious violations of international humanitarian law. Directing attacks against civilian objects, hospitals or educational facilities may amount to war crimes.¹⁴

2. Sudanese Armed Forces

63. The mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that Sudanese Armed Forces carried out the drone strikes documented above affecting Ad-Da'ein Teaching Hospital, Abu Zaima market, and Yabus market.

¹⁴ Customary Rules of IHL, Rules 7, 15, 16.

64. The mission established the civilian character of the affected locations and identified no military objectives at the immediate impact sites. It finds reasonable grounds to believe that the attacks were inconsistent with the principles of distinction and precaution.

65. The mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that Ad-Da'ein Teaching Hospital retained its protected status. Treating wounded Rapid Support Forces members did not remove the protection afforded to the sick and wounded hors de combat under Common Article 3 of the Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol II.

66. Taken together, these and other documented incidents provide reasonable grounds to believe that Sudanese Armed Forces members committed serious violations of international humanitarian law. Where civilian objects were intentionally targeted, such conduct may amount to war crimes.

V. Networks that enable the continuation and escalation of hostilities

67. The mission continued to receive information indicating that external actors have helped sustain the conflict through arms and military equipment, financial and logistical support, foreign fighters and other assistance. This support enabled military operations during which serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed, some of which may amount to international crimes. The relationship between external support and military operations is particularly significant in Darfur, including El-Fasher, where the mission found that the Rapid Support Forces and allies displayed hallmarks of genocide, and increasingly in the Kordofan states.¹⁵

68. In resolution 60/3, the Human Rights Council condemned external interference fuelling the conflict and reiterated the mission's call to halt material support to both parties and for all states and entities to respect and enforce the Darfur arms embargo, established under Security Council resolution 1556(2004) of 30 July 2004 and subsequent resolutions.¹⁶

69. In this report, the mission focuses on external support to the Rapid Support Forces. This reflects evidence arising from its investigations into violations and international crimes associated particularly with the takeover of El-Fasher and the subsequent atrocities. The mission subsequently obtained substantial, converging information concerning external networks supplying the Rapid Support Forces with weapons, advanced military technology, foreign fighters, financing and other forms of support. The nature, scale and apparent continuity of this support, and its nexus to Rapid Support Forces' operations in areas where the mission documented grave violations and international crimes, warranted closer examination of these external networks and their possible contribution to the commission or facilitation of such violations.

70. The mission is also concerned by increasing information regarding external support to the Sudanese Armed Forces, including the acquisition and deployment of advanced weapons and technologies capable of materially affecting the conduct of hostilities and civilian protection. Such support may engage international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law, including where external assistance contributes to the commission of violations or international crimes. The mission is therefore expanding its investigations to examine external support to the Sudanese Armed Forces, including its sources, nature, scale and use.

¹⁵ A/HRC/61/77; A/HRC/62/CRP.4.

¹⁶ A/HRC/RES/60/3, para. 20.

At this stage the investigation is at its initial phase and the information below is consequently preliminary.

71. The mission will continue to investigate support to all parties in accordance with its mandate and evidentiary standards and will report further where the evidence permits.

A. Rapid Support Forces

1. External support networks

72. Evidence verified by the mission, including from witnesses with first-hand information, provides reasonable grounds to believe that a transnational network facilitated the military operations of the Rapid Support Forces through interconnected air, land, and maritime supply routes linking individuals and entities located in the United Arab Emirates, Chad, southeastern Libya, and Puntland in Somalia.

73. Evidence indicates that locations in Chad, southeastern Libya and Puntland (Somalia) functioned as transit and logistical hubs through which weapons, personnel and other military supplies were moved into Rapid Support Forces-controlled areas. The mission also obtained evidence linking individuals and entities based in the United Arab Emirates to elements of these supply arrangements, as detailed below. This support played an important role in advancing the Rapid Support Forces' capacity to sustain operations in Darfur, Kordofan, and other regions in Sudan, of which the emblematic cases above are a few examples.¹⁷

2. Weapons, drones and logistical support

74. The mission received credible information indicating that, from at least April 2025 through and beyond the takeover of El-Fasher, weapons, military equipment and other supplies transferred to the Rapid Support Forces included material consistent with equipment previously exported to the United Arab Emirates.

75. Witnesses with first-hand knowledge and other independent sources described artillery systems (including "NORINCO AH-4 155mm howitzers"), air-defence systems (including "FK-2000" systems), radars, armoured vehicles, Land Cruisers, uniforms, ammunition, weapons and medical supplies transferred through regional routes involving Bosaso in Puntland (Somalia), Benghazi, Kufra and Jufra (Libya), and Chad before reaching Rapid Support Forces-controlled areas. Authenticated imagery corroborated these accounts, confirming the presence of NORINCO AH-4 155mm howitzers among equipment recaptured by the Sudanese Armed Forces after retaking of Khartoum, and of FK-2000 systems in Dubeibat on at least 10 February and 7 July 2026.

76. Witnesses also informed the mission of drone-related equipment, transferred through regional routes to the Rapid Support Forces including CH-95 reconnaissance and strike drones, electronic warfare capabilities and associated technical support. Witnesses with first-hand knowledge described boxes containing weapons and ammunition being offloaded from aircrafts at Nyala Airport and subsequently distributed to Rapid Support Forces camps.

77. Multiple sources identified Nyala Airport as a principal entry point for supplies into the Rapid Support Forces-controlled territory. The mission also received information indicating that Rapid Support Forces members supported by Colombian contractors launched drones from Nyala against Sudanese Armed Forces-controlled areas, including Kordofan and Khartoum states. The mission further obtained evidence of drone command and control stations on Nyala airport runway reportedly

¹⁷ See also, Sudan Panel of Experts (2025): S/2025/239.

imported through the same routes and repeatedly targeted by Sudanese Armed Forces missiles between April and July 2025.

78. The mission compared weapons systems identified by witnesses among reported imports with authenticated imagery and footage. Several reported systems were consistent with weapons and military equipment documented at Rapid Support Forces operational sites.

79. The mission verified footage of drone remnant consistent with CH-95/FH-95 systems at multiple locations across Sudan, including El-Fasher, Nyala and El-Obeid. Verified footage recorded in El-Obeid on 28 February 2026 showed a downed drone assessed as an FH-95 on the roof of a civilian house in the city centre. On the same day, at least nine people were killed and several others injured in a series of drone attacks on El-Obeid. These alleged transfers are significant because they sustained the Rapid Support Forces' capacity to conduct hostilities, while some of the capabilities supplied or supported were used in operations affecting civilians and civilian objects.

3. Transit and facilitation

80. Multiple sources identified locations in Chad as a logistical corridor through which personnel and supplies moved towards Nyala and other Rapid Support Forces controlled areas of Darfur. Witnesses with first-hand knowledge described recurring cargo flights originating from locations in the United Arab Emirates to Chad and onward movement of military supplies and personnel, including foreign contractors, into Rapid Support Forces-controlled areas in Sudan.

81. Witnesses, relevant experts, verified video and satellite imagery and other evidence identified locations in southeastern Libya, particularly Benghazi, Kufra, and Jufra, as hubs for foreign personnel, and military supplies destined for the Rapid Support Forces-controlled areas. Benghazi, Kufra and Jufra were described as hubs receiving weapons, vehicles, fuel, food supplies, and military personnel prior to onward transfer to Sudan, with support from Libyan National Army Battalions, including the Subul al Salam Battalion.¹⁸

82. The mission also obtained evidence of training facilities in Benghazi and Kufra where Rapid Support Forces' fighters received specialised technical training in the operation and maintenance of weapons, including AK-47 rifles, RPG launchers, and DShK heavy machine guns. Foreign trainers including Colombian nationals provided technical instructions. Training lasted up to three months, after which participants were deployed to Rapid Support Forces' operations in Kordofan, Darfur, and elsewhere. Foreign trainers reportedly accompanied groups for at least a month following deployment to provide advice.

83. Jufra reportedly hosted a military camp where fighters from Sudan, Chad and other countries received training for deployment with the Rapid Support Forces. Jufra further functioned as a transit hub for personnel travelling between Benghazi and Sudan. Verified open-source material identified Rapid Support Forces' fighters trained in Libya who subsequently participated in the attacks on Zamzam camp in April 2025 and El-Fasher in October 2025.

84. The evidence identified Bosaso, Somalia, as a recurring logistical hub and transit point used by external actors to date, including United Arab Emirates-based individuals and entities, for personnel and cargo destined for Rapid Support Forces-controlled areas. Sources described Ilyushin-76 cargo flights linking Bosaso, Kufra, Benghazi, and Chad from which cargo and personnel were subsequently transferred into Sudan. Witnesses further reported that United Arab Emirates-based individuals

¹⁸ See also, Final Report of the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, S/2026/224.

and entities maintained facilities in Bosaso, including a military base through which foreign contractors transited.

4. Recruitment of Colombian contractors

85. From at least August 2024, the recruitment and deployment of foreign contractors, particularly Colombian nationals, formed a significant component of the transnational support network for Rapid Support Forces' operations. Multiple sources described a structured system through which former Colombian military personnel were recruited, trained and deployed to support the Rapid Support Forces. Estimates of the number of Colombian contractors varied considerably, ranging from 350 to 2000 individuals. Based on credible independent sources, including information indicating that recruitment of Colombian contractors for deployment to Sudan remains ongoing, the mission assesses that the total number may approach 2000.

86. Witness testimony and documentary evidence enabled the mission to identify key entities, *inter alia*, registered in Colombia and the United Arab Emirates, as being linked to this transnational network, and working closely together in the recruitment process and subsequent deployment to Sudan of Colombian contractors. The mission obtained credible evidence indicating that these entities played a significant role in facilitating recruitment, contracting, transportation and deployment arrangements.

87. The mission also received information that some contractors were not informed at the time of recruitment that they would be deployed to Sudan, while others reportedly received lower salaries than stipulated in their contracts.

88. The founder of one of the key entities, Colonel Álvaro Andrés Quijano Becerra, was based in Abu Dhabi, while his wife, Ms. Claudia Viviana Oliveros Forero, coordinated recruitment in Colombia. They were both sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council Committee on 28 April 2026 for their role in recruiting and deploying former Colombian military personnel to Sudan.¹⁹

89. While Colombia acknowledges the involvement of Colombian entities and individuals in recruiting contractors for deployment to Sudan, the United Arab Emirates has disputed any claims that entities and individuals under its jurisdiction were involved.

5. Transit routes, training, and operational deployment

90. Witnesses described multiple routes used to deploy Colombian contractors to Sudan. Initial groups reportedly went through the United Arab Emirates, Bosaso, and Benghazi before crossing southern Libyan desert corridors into Darfur.²⁰ Subsequent groups reportedly also travelled via Bosaso or the United Arab Emirates, transiting through Chad before entering Sudan via Nyala Airport. Witness testimony indicates that upon arrival in Dubai or Abu Dhabi they were transported to a military-style facility in Ghayathi for about two months of military training by instructors from different countries alongside members of the Rapid Support Forces. The training reportedly covered drone operations, indirect fire systems, air-defence systems, and other advanced weapons systems.

6. Role in training, drone operations and advanced weapons systems

91. Witnesses reported that Colombian contractors played a significant role in operating and maintaining surveillance, strike and one-way attack drones, supported artillery deployment and other advanced weapon systems, and provided intelligence support, technical maintenance and military instruction. Many were stationed in

¹⁹ <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1591/materials/summaries>.

²⁰ See also, Libya Panel of Experts (2026): S/2026/224.

camps in and around Nyala, including Nyala Airport, where they operated drones and air-defence systems.

92. In some cases, Colombian contractors remained responsible for operating and maintaining drone systems without transferring their operation to Rapid Support Forces' members. Witnesses indicated that some remained embedded alongside the systems during operations because the necessary technical expertise was not widely available within Rapid Support Forces' ranks. Drone-controllers were reportedly recovered from a building in El-Fasher's Al-Thawra neighbourhood identified as having been used by Colombian contractors to launch drones.

93. Colombian contractors also reportedly provided specialised training in drones and other advanced weapons systems at camps in and around Nyala, and in Kufra and Benghazi in southeastern Libya.

7. Presence and operational role in El-Fasher

94. Several sources indicated that Colombian contractors, particularly members of the "Desert Wolves" Battalion, were present in and around El-Fasher before, during, and after its takeover by the Rapid Support Forces. They were reportedly deployed to support military operations to seize the city and surrounding areas. Verified open-source material identified Spanish-speaking light-skinned contractors operating alongside Rapid Support Forces' units in Darfur during this period. Witness testimony indicates that Colombian nationals were captured in the El-Fasher area, before the take-over, in possession of loitering munitions, surveillance drones and armed drones. Other sources indicated that Colombian contractors operated artillery systems, drone platforms and other technical equipment during the offensive.

8. Other foreign fighters

95. Witnesses also reported fighters from South Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia, including women, serving primarily in frontline, rather than technical roles. They were identified in El-Fasher and elsewhere and identified by witnesses on the basis of language, accent, and, in some cases uniforms.

96. Witness testimony, corroborated by photographic, video and documentary evidence, indicates that foreign fighters, drone operators, technicians and military specialists were integrated into Rapid Support Forces operations, particularly in the use and support of advanced weapons systems and other technical capabilities.

Conclusion

97. Viewed collectively, the evidence provides reasonable grounds to believe that the Rapid Support Forces benefited from a transnational support network involving weapons and other military material, logistical assistance, training and foreign personnel.

98. The mission has reasonable grounds to believe that private companies, intermediaries and associated individuals operating across multiple countries, including Colombia, the United Arab Emirates, Chad, Libya and Somalia, facilitated elements of this support network.

99. This support sustained Rapid Support Forces' military operations during a conflict marked by serious violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and the commission of international crimes. This was particularly clear in El-Fasher.

100. The nature, scale and persistence of external support raise serious concerns regarding compliance with the Darfur arms embargo and other applicable international law obligations. They warrant further investigation, including by competent national authorities, regarding the responsibility of individuals and entities that knowingly provided assistance contributing to international crimes.

B. Sudanese Armed Forces

101. The mission's investigation into external support to the Sudanese Armed Forces and its impact on respect for international law obligations, remains preliminary. Investigations on the origin of these systems, transfer modalities, and the entities and states involved, are ongoing.

102. Available evidence indicates that, since late 2023, the Sudanese Armed Forces has significantly expanded its drone capabilities through foreign-supplied systems. These capabilities enhanced reconnaissance and precision-strikes capabilities.

103. The mission verified open-source imagery and footage of drone strikes and downed drones in Kordofan and Darfur from January 2026 onwards attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces. Technical analysis identified features consistent with Bayraktar Akıncı combat drones, including twin-turboprop propulsion components, distinctive propeller assemblies, munition-release mechanisms, and manufacturer markings on recovered wreckage. Footage from Nyala, South Darfur, on 8 January 2026, and Al-Farshaya, South Kordofan, on 24 January 2026, was assessed as likely depicting Akıncı platforms. As this system is not manufactured in Sudan, its documented presence indicates the use of foreign-supplied military equipment in long-range precision-strike operations.

104. The mission also received images regarding the attack on Yabus Market on 29 or 30 March 2026, which military experts assessed as depicting components consistent with a Yiha III loitering munition. The same munition type was identified in verified open-source footage relating to other incidents attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces, including a strike in Abu Zabad, West Kordofan, on 6 July 2026. This further indicates Sudanese Armed Forces use of foreign-supplied drones.

105. Based on the available information, the mission has reasonable grounds to believe that the Sudanese Armed Forces used foreign-supplied drones and loitering munitions in attacks that struck civilian objects, including Yabus Market in Blue Nile, and may amount to a serious violation of international humanitarian law and a war crime.

106. The use of foreign-supplied drones in Darfur, including Nyala, raises concerns regarding compliance with applicable arms-transfer obligations and the Darfur arms embargo. Continued transfer of weapons, drones, or military assistance therefore requires heightened due diligence. States and entities involved in such transfers should refrain from supplying military materiel where there is a foreseeable risk that it could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law and ensure full compliance with applicable international obligations, including, where applicable, the Arms Trade Treaty.

107. The mission is continuing its investigation into this matter.

C. Responsibility of external actors

1. Corporate entities and the provision of logistical support and foreign personnel

108. The United Nations International Convention on Mercenaries and the OAU Convention require states parties to prohibit and suppress mercenary activities, including recruitment, financing, training, organization and support.

109. The mission found that foreign contractors performed combat-support and specialist functions, while associated companies and intermediaries supplied weapons, military materiel, logistical support and technical services. These activities supported the Rapid Support Forces during a period marked by widespread and publicly documented violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international crimes.

110. Under international law, aiding and abetting entails knowingly providing practical assistance, encouragement or moral support that substantially contributes to the commission of a crime.²¹ The assistance need not be indispensable to the commission of the crimes; it is sufficient that it materially enabled, facilitated, sustained or enhanced the capacity of the perpetrators to carry out the criminal conduct.

111. Corporations and private military and security companies supplying arms, military services or logistical support in contravention of Security Council resolutions 1556(2004) and 1591(2005) may be implicated in violations of the applicable sanctions regime. Under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, businesses operating in conflict-affected environments are expected to undertake heightened human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, and mitigate adverse impacts linked to their operations and business relationships.

112. The mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that entities and associated individuals operating across several states were involved in the recruitment, financing, transportation, training and deployment of foreign fighters and the provision of military supplies, logistical support and technical services to the Rapid Support Forces, materially contributing to that group's operational capabilities. The evidence indicates that this support sustained Rapid Support Forces' military operations during a period marked by serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and international crimes.

2. Engagement with states

113. The mission's investigation identified recruitment, financing, contracting, transit and logistical activities supporting the Rapid Support Forces through the territory of several states, including Chad, Colombia, Libya, Somalia, and the United Arab Emirates. It also identified foreign fighters of Ethiopian and South Sudanese nationality. States are required to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances. This obligation requires them not only to refrain from contributing to violations, but also to exercise due diligence and take all reasonable measures within their power to prevent violations where there is a clear risk that they will be committed, to bring ongoing violations to an end, and to prevent further violations where they have already occurred. The gravity of the violations, and the foreseeable risk of their recurrence has been well documented including in this mission's reports on Sudan since 2024. States must take appropriate measures to ensure accountability, including, as applicable, by investigating and prosecuting individuals suspected of responsibility.

114. The mission sought information from the states concerned regarding activities identified within or through their territories and summarizes their positions below.

3. Position of concerned states

(a) Chad

115. In its response of 16 June 2026 to the mission's request for information of 20 May 2026 and during a meeting with the mission on 18 June 2026, Chad reaffirmed its commitment to Sudan's sovereignty, international law and strict neutrality in the conflict. Chad stated that it had strengthened border surveillance and security measures to prevent the infiltration of armed elements, recruitment of Chadian nationals, and illicit trafficking of weapons, ammunition and other military materiel.

²¹ See e.g. *Prosecutor v. Furundžija*, IT-95-17/1-T, ICTY Trial Chamber, Judgment, 10 December 1998, paras. 209-249; *Prosecutor v. Tadić*, IT-94-1-A, ICTY Appeals Chamber, Judgment, 15 July 1999, para. 229; *Prosecutor v. Perišić*, IT-04-81-A, ICTY Appeals Chamber, Judgment, 28 February 2013, paras. 26-28; 48.

It further stated that it had no knowledge of weapons, drones or military equipment being transferred through its territory and rejected allegations that its territory or facilities had been used to provide military support to any party to the conflict.

116. The mission appreciates Chad's cooperation and acknowledges the considerable humanitarian and security challenges it faces, including the large-scale arrival of refugees and difficulties monitoring long borders.

117. Evidence indicates, however, that private actors and transnational networks used portions of Chadian territory, particularly remote border areas, for transit and logistical activities. While recognising the security, humanitarian and resource constraints faced by Chad, the mission notes that the use of Chadian territory and transit routes formed part of external support networks benefiting the Rapid Support Forces. It encourages Chad to fully investigate these concerns, take measures to prevent and halt these illicit activities, and continue strengthening border monitoring and calls on the international community to assist these efforts.

(b) Colombia

118. In its response of 8 May 2026 to the mission's 21 April 2026 letter requesting information and during meetings in Geneva of 10 September 2025 and 16 June 2026 with his Excellency, late Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Gustavo Gallón Giraldo, Colombia reiterated its opposition to mercenarism and concern over Colombian nationals' participation in foreign armed conflicts, including in Sudan. It described measures, including an interinstitutional coordination mechanism established in June 2025, prevention campaigns and assistance to affected nationals and their families. Colombia referred to the March 2026 visit of the United Nations Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries, steps towards accession to the International Convention on Mercenaries, and efforts to strengthen domestic criminal legislation. It noted that three Colombian nationals had been listed under the United Nations Security Council's sanctions regime for Sudan and that it was implementing the applicable measures. Colombia further expressed readiness to cooperate with Sudan through information-sharing, legal cooperation, and dialogue between military authorities to support investigations, accountability, and prevention.

119. The mission welcomes Colombia's cooperation and measures to address mercenary-related activities including efforts to strengthen prevention, regulation, and accountability and its stated commitment to criminalize mercenary-related activities under domestic law. At the same time, the evidence indicates that networks involving Colombian nationals recruited, contracted, transported and deployed personnel to support Rapid Support Forces operations in Sudan, including through private companies and intermediaries operating across multiple jurisdictions.

120. The mission found no information indicating that the state of Colombia directed, controlled, supported or endorsed such activities and therefore makes no findings of state responsibility. However, the mission finds reasonable grounds to believe that private entities and individuals operating from or through Colombia participated in the recruitment, financing, contracting or deployment of foreign personnel supporting the Rapid Support Forces. The mission encourages Colombia to continue investigating such activities and to cooperate with relevant international accountability mechanisms.

(c) United Arab Emirates

121. In its responses of 24 February and 19 June 2026 to the mission's request for information on the alleged supply of weapons and mercenaries through the United Arab Emirates and with the involvement of entities registered there, and during meetings with the mission on 26 February and 19 June 2026, the United Arab Emirates rejected allegations that it provided military, logistical, financial or political support to the Rapid Support Forces. It maintained that it had remained neutral throughout the conflict, had not supplied arms or ammunition, and had not recruited,

financed or facilitated foreign fighters deployed to Sudan. It further emphasized its commitment to international law, compliance with Security Council resolutions, support for peace initiatives, and humanitarian assistance to Sudan and neighbouring countries.

122. The United Arab Emirates maintained that allegations of arms transfers, recruitment of foreign fighters and support to the Rapid Support Forces were unfounded and based on unverified or unreliable information. It stated that the 2025 report of the United Nations Panel of Experts on Sudan did not establish that the United Arab Emirates had supplied weapons to the Rapid Support Forces. It also stated that it conducted investigations into allegations relating to entities under their jurisdiction and found no evidence linking such entities to mercenary activities or individuals reportedly deployed in Sudan. The United Arab Emirates maintained that the allegations formed part of what it characterised as a false media campaign led by the Sudanese authorities in Port Sudan.

123. The United Arab Emirates informed the mission of its legal and regulatory frameworks governing arms transfers, private security companies, anti-money laundering, corporate conduct and international crimes. It highlighted the existence of domestic legislation criminalising war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including extra-territorially in certain circumstances. It also stated that corporations registered in the country may incur criminal liability for offences committed by their representatives, directors or agents.

124. The mission takes note of these submissions and welcomes the United Arab Emirates stated commitment to compliance with international law, regulation of private actors and accountability for unlawful conduct. It also acknowledges the humanitarian assistance provided by the United Arab Emirates.

125. Based on the totality of the evidence, however, the mission finds that individuals and entities operating from, registered in, or linked to the United Arab Emirates played a significant role in networks involved in the recruitment, financing, transportation and deployment of foreign military contractors and the provision of military-related support benefiting the Rapid Support Forces.

126. Given the evidence that some of the activities occurred over an extended period, concern the activities of entities registered in and involved operations within the jurisdiction of the United Arab Emirates, the mission considers that further and stronger measures should be taken by the United Arab Emirates to prevent, investigate, and halt activities conducted from its territory that are foreseeably capable of contributing to violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international crimes in Sudan.

127. The mission notes the United Arab Emirates stated commitment to preventing misuse of its territory for unlawful purposes and its assertion that robust regulatory and enforcement mechanisms are available to address such conduct. The mission further notes that in April 2026, the United Arab Emirates initiated proceedings concerning alleged transfers of military materiel linked to the conflict in Sudan. Although those proceedings concern alleged support to the Sudanese Armed Forces rather than the Rapid Support Forces, they indicate the availability of domestic mechanisms capable of examining comparable conduct.

128. The mission recommends that the United Arab Emirates investigate allegations concerning companies, intermediaries and individuals involved in supplying military material, logistical support, training, financing or foreign personnel to parties to the conflict, in particular the entities and individuals identified above, and, where appropriate, take effective enforcement action.

(d) Non-responsive states: Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Somalia

129. The mission sent requests for information to Ethiopia, Libya, and Somalia on 11 June 2026, and to Panama and South Sudan on 5 August 2026 but received no

substantive responses. Libya responded on 16 June, stating that the Ambassador was unavailable to meet, but did not address the request for information. South Sudan responded informally on 7 August, requesting more time, which was granted, but provided no further response. Panama responded formally and requested a six-weeks extension, which was granted. Ethiopia and Somalia did not respond.

130. The mission encourages the governments of Ethiopia, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan to engage with it particularly in light of evidence of illicit activities stemming from their territory as documented in this report.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

131. The mission finds that the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces committed serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in the course of drone operations, with some conduct amounting to war crimes. Expanded range, persistence and increasingly sophisticated capabilities enabled both parties to strike far beyond immediate ground front lines; yet greater technical precision did not translate into greater civilian protection. The mission documented repeated attacks affecting civilians, civilian objects and protected infrastructure, including hospitals, markets, schools and displacement sites. Drone warfare changed where civilians could be reached, eroding the protection afforded by distance.

132. External support is sustaining these military capabilities. The mission identified a transnational network supplying the Rapid Support Forces with weapons, logistical support, training and foreign personnel, while foreign-supplied drones expanded the Sudanese Armed Forces' long-range strike capability. Continued transfers and support amid well-documented violations raise serious concerns under international law. The concern is particularly acute where external support sustained Rapid Support Forces operations in Darfur, including El-Fasher, where the mission previously documented war crimes, crimes against humanity and conduct displaying hallmarks of genocide.

133. Despite repeated warnings, drone strikes and broader hostilities continue, including renewed drone strikes in El-Obeid and escalating violence in Blue Nile. The weapons, financing, personnel and technology that sustain this war must be constrained. The mission therefore calls for urgent action to:

(a) **Protect civilians in drone operations. Parties to the conflict must end the fighting, take all feasible precautions particularly where hospitals, schools, displacement sites and other concentrations of civilians may be affected. International mechanisms for the protection of civilians in Sudan must be seriously explored.**

(b) **Efforts to preserve records relevant to accountability for drone strike attacks on civilians must be supported and encouraged. This includes preserving targeting and authorization records, coordinates, imagery, platform and munition data, operator logs and post-strike assessments; investigate strikes causing substantial civilian harm; and provide relevant records to independent investigative and judicial mechanisms.**

(c) **Stop military support that risks fueling violations. States must enforce the Darfur arms embargo; trace and halt transfers of drones, weapons, components, technical assistance and other military support where there is a substantial risk of their use in serious violations of international humanitarian law; implement applicable arms-transfer and personnel support obligations; strengthen end-use monitoring and traceability; investigate individuals and entities involved in illicit military support to the parties, and impose targeted sanctions on those implicated in violations. The Security Council should extend the arms embargo throughout Sudan.**

(d) Support and resource entities, including the UN Panel of Experts on Sudan that record weapons transfers, military support and drone attacks.

(e) Support victims. States and civil society should ensure immediate assistance to victims of attacks, including emergency care, rehabilitation, prosthetics and psychosocial support, without prejudice to their right to reparation.

(f) Pursue accountability across the full chain of responsibility—including those who commit, order, finance, supply or otherwise facilitate international crimes—through domestic and international proceedings; support universal jurisdiction; cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court; and support extending its jurisdiction beyond Darfur to the whole of Sudan, and the establishment of a specialized independent judicial mechanism in the form of a specialized court for Sudan working in tandem with the Court.
