

# Achieving justice for victims in Darfur

Merci Madame la Presidente,

Madame President, I would like to thank the Prosecutor for her 31st report on the situation in Darfur pursuant to Security Council resolution 15/93 (2005). The work of the Prosecutor and her team is an important part of efforts towards accountability for those who suffered appalling crimes in Darfur. The International Criminal Court also has an important role to play in global efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern, and the United Kingdom fully supports its efforts to hold perpetrators to account and achieve justice for victims in Darfur.

Sudan is at an historic moment, one year on from the removal of a brutal regime. Along with the people of Sudan we look forwards – towards a transition to a democratic and peaceful Sudan. Part of that future, as recognised within the constitutional document agreed following the 2019 revolution, is the pursuit of accountability and transitional justice. This must be delivered as soon as possible for the victims of Darfur, who are long owed justice for crimes committed against them.

Madame President, as the Prosecutor details in her report, there has been progress in Darfur over the last several years and we welcome that. But issues of concern remain. This reporting period has included incidents of violence, the most serious in El Geneina, which have resulted in death, injury, and further displacement of many civilians. Concern over sexual and gender-based violence and violence towards returnees continues. And we must not forget that over two million people are still internally displaced. This Council agreed last week to a new mission to support Sudan's transition and peace process and, with that, attention must remain on the protection of civilians. The United Kingdom is pleased that accountability for Darfur and justice for victims, remains a central issue in the ongoing peace talks between the Government of Sudan and armed groups in Juba.

Madame President, I would like to thank the Prosecutor and her team for their continued dedication and work on this situation during this reporting period. The United Kingdom welcomes the progress that has been made by the Office of the Prosecutor to further and strengthen their investigations, despite a difficult operating environment, including the impact of COVID-19. We welcome reports yesterday that one of the indicted individuals, Ali Kushayb, is in the custody of the ICC. The United Kingdom commends the authorities in the Central African Republic, France, Chad, and the Netherlands and the leaders of MINUSCA for the role that they played in getting him into custody in The Hague.

As the Prosecutor highlights, a positive development emerged in February of this year, when the Government of Sudan stated its intention to try those indicted by the ICC for the crimes for which they have been charged. United

Kingdom Ministers welcomed this announcement, which signifies an important step in Sudan's progress towards fulfilling the goals of the revolution and achieving a peace settlement in Darfur. However, we do not yet understand how the Government of Sudan will cooperate with the ICC. We urge them to productively engage, and swiftly, with the Court and the Prosecutor. The willingness demonstrated in February is to be commended, and we sincerely hope that, as a signal of that willingness, the Prosecutor will be permitted to visit Sudan and Darfur as soon as COVID-19 implications allow. A way forward needs to be agreed, along with greater clarity on how the individuals concerned will be tried and the nature of the justice that the Government in Khartoum has committed to delivering. The United Kingdom stands ready to assist, where helpful, as part of our wider commitment to support the people of Sudan.

Madame President, we again thank the Prosecutor and her team for their continued commitment to pursuing these investigations and achieving justice for victims in Darfur.