

Speech: International community should be united in demanding peace in Sudan and Darfur

Thank you, Mr President. And let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Assistant-Secretary-General Gilmour for their briefings this morning.

Let me speak a little about the wider situation in Sudan and its impact on Darfur. And then secondly, on UNAMID and our approach to the upcoming mandate renewal, Mr President.

We meet again during uncertain times in Sudan. When we last met in this chamber, I said that the Transitional Military Council had a choice. They could choose to deliver the legitimate demands of the Sudanese people for a political system that is inclusive, respectful of human rights, and the rule of law. They could choose to engage with the international community, to gain the support that Sudan desperately needs as it seeks to turn around decades of economic mismanagement and to help resolve conflict. Instead, the Transitional Military Council chose brutal violence that resulted in the death of over 100 peaceful civilian protesters and the injury of hundreds more. Through our press statement this week, we in this Council strongly condemned this violence and urged the authorities to immediately end the use of violence, fully respect human rights, and ensure justice and accountability. And I am sure that will be the clear and unambiguous message that will be sent by members of this Council today. We note that today the Transitional Military Council has acknowledged the violations committed by the security services on the 3rd of June and has said that an investigation is underway. The United Kingdom urges the military authorities to ensure that this investigation is transparent and ensures the accountability that the military authorities have as a responsibility to deliver for the Sudanese people. May I also say how much we support the position of the African Union.

The African Union has demonstrated strong regional leadership in response to the situation in Sudan and we fully support the AU's efforts to find a peaceful and swift resolution to the current crisis. We call on all international partners to show their support for those AU efforts.

Mr President, unfortunately the violence and human rights violations and abuses perpetrated in Khartoum on, and since the 3rd of June, are all too familiar to the people of Darfur. As Andrew Gilmour referenced there remain serious human rights and protection concerns in Darfur. The very forces that perpetrated the recent violence in Khartoum, the Rapids Support Forces or our RSF, have targeted – and continue to target – civilians in Darfur. This includes indiscriminate shooting, looting and burning of villages, and sexual and gender based violence amongst other crimes. And as noted by the Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict – Pramila Patten – in her statement on Sudan yesterday, the Rapid Support Forces have

been consistently listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict related sexual violence. Let us not forget that the Rapid Support Forces came from the militia known as the Janjaweed. This militia was responsible for a conflict which the United Nations estimates led three hundred thousand dead and two and a half million displaced. And it should be of great concern to us all that the Rapid Support Forces currently occupy most of the team sites which UNAMID has vacated to date.

The Transitional Military Council have shown no signs of abiding by previous agreements on the handover of UNAMID team sites for civilian use, and, as Jean-Pierre Lacroix stated, they have gone so far as to explicitly demand by decree that UNAMID's remaining teams sites should be given to the RSF.

Mr President, UNAMID's team sites must not be handed over to the RSF. Doing so would not only be in violation of existing agreements on the hand over these sites, as well as UN principles, financial rules, and regulations, but it would also be grossly negligent. We would risk enabling violence against civilians.

Since the events of the 11th of April, Darfur has witnessed a spike in violence in internally displaced persons camps, inter-communal clashes, and attacks on humanitarian actors. This week UNAMID verified inter-communal clashes in central Darfur that led to the death of 17 people, the injury of 15, and more than 100 houses burned. Following this incident, UNAMID plans to intensify that confidence building measures to promote into communal dialogue. This is just one example of the important role – despite its limited footprint – which UNAMID continues to play in Darfur.

Mr President, the other obvious impact of the wider situation is on the Darfur peace process, which is currently stalled. Now, the Transitional Military Council previously stated that resolving Sudan's internal conflicts would be their top priority and that at that time was a welcome statement. However, their recent actions severely undermined that commitment. The United Kingdom therefore calls on the military authorities to undertake confidence building measures, including agreeing to an independent and transparent investigation of the violence in Khartoum.

Mr President, the United Kingdom remains committed to the transition from peacekeeping to peace building in Darfur. And for this transition to be successful a number of conditions should be met. UNAMID's departure must be undertaken responsibly without creating security and protection vacuums. And for peace building to be sustainable, the international community requires a willing and able host state partner. Unfortunately, the current conditions do not lend themselves to this. And as a result we in this Council have a responsibility to step back. To take stock of the current situation. And to consider how that affects the assumptions that we have all expressed before and all shared about UNAMID's immediate future. I would like to say that, as we have been since UNAMID first deployed to Darfur 15 years ago, the United Kingdom remains firmly committed to supporting efforts to build peace and stability in Darfur. And that commitment guides our approach to UNAMID's mandate renewal. The United Kingdom and Germany believe that the most prudent approach would be a technical rollover of UNAMID's mandate.

A technical rollover would provide time for progress on the broader political situation. It would give time for the issue regarding the handover of UNAMID's team sites to be resolved. And it would enable the United Nations and African Union to develop a political strategy to address the outstanding challenges that remain following UNAMID's departure. I take note of the African Union communique issued yesterday, and in particular the clear rejection in that communique of any handover of assets to the Rapid Support Forces under any circumstances and their demand that the decree issued by the Transitional Military Council should be repealed. Along with Germany, we will engage with all colleagues on the council, and in particular our African Union friends, on the detail of that proposed technical rollover.

Mr President, in conclusion, we will be watching the actions of the Transitional Military Council in the coming days and weeks. They still have a choice to make. The international community should be united in demanding that they make the right choice. That would require immediate steps to establish a civilian led transitional authority which would in turn pave the way for peace in Darfur. Moreover Mr President, they have an obligation to the people of Sudan who have shown tremendous bravery and perseverance in a dignified and legitimate demands for a better tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr President.