

UNITAMS

# Mandate Renewal Study

Fostering a Process  
of Trust and Inclusivity

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# UNITAMS Mandate Renewal Study: Fostering a Process of Trust and Inclusivity

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# Executive Summary

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The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) was established on 3 June 2020 under UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2524 to support Sudan during its transition to democratic rule and it was renewed the following year through SC 2579(2021). UNITAMS was conceived of and designed to respond to new and long-standing issues in Sudan: the political transition process that began with the December 2018 revolution and the legacy of armed conflicts. The Mission's mandate explicitly recognises the adverse effects of climate change on the stability of Sudan and stresses the need for appropriate risk assessment and risk management strategies. Yet, since the adoption of the Mission's mandate in June 2020 and its renewal in June 2021, Sudan's political, security and economic situation has deteriorated significantly.

An attempted military coup in September 2021, followed by a successful coup d'état on 25 October 2021, has further worsened Sudan's political crisis, increasing insecurity, undermining the economy, and resulting in the interruption of bilateral and international funding—all amidst the continuing global pandemic. This fast-changing political, security and economic context has placed UNITAMS in a very delicate position in relation to the host government. It has required UNITAMS to focus a significant portion of its attention on good offices and diplomacy so that, together with the African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and other international partners and Sudanese stakeholders, it can support a process aimed at bringing Sudan's transition back on track.

While the UNITAMS mandate remains relevant and adequate, the Mission must continue to be allowed the flexibility to adapt its focus to the fast-changing dynamics on the ground. UNITAMS' good offices' role should remain at the centre of the Mission's efforts during the

next mandated period, helping Sudanese stakeholders to find an inclusive political settlement that can secure a transition to democratic rule in the medium to long term. At the same time, the Mission should continue its work in support of its other objectives and priorities, including the protection of civilians, the implementation of the peace agreement, and advisory and capacity building, particularly related to the rule-of-law sector. The Mission should strengthen its focus on and ability to integrate climate-related security risks into its analytical work, especially as it relates to supporting local conflict prevention, mitigation and reconciliation efforts to prevent inter-communal violence. While there has been significant progress in strengthening collaboration among the UN, AU and IGAD, maintaining and sustaining the partnership must remain a key priority in the Mission's work to promote regional stability.



# 1. Introduction

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The UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) was established on 3 June 2020 under UNSC Resolution 2524 to support Sudan during its transition to democratic rule. The mandate set out four strategic objectives, namely:

- i. Assisting in the political transition;
- ii. Supporting the peace process and implementing future peace agreements;
- iii. Assisting with peacebuilding, civilian protection, and the rule-of-law efforts, especially in Darfur and the Two Areas (South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states); and
- iv. Supporting the mobilisation of aid.<sup>2</sup>

The UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) was established on 3 June 2020 under UNSC Resolution 2524 to support Sudan during its transition to democratic rule.

Since the adoption of the Mission mandate in June 2020, the political, security and economic situation in Sudan has deteriorated significantly. A military coup on 25 October 2021 further worsened Sudan's political crisis, increased insecurity, and undermined the economy. During

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<sup>2</sup> UNSC, "Resolution 2524", S/RES/2524, 3 June 2020, <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3864102?ln=en>>.

the political crisis, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was placed under house arrest. Following ongoing protest and international pressure, the coup leader, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, reversed several decisions taken by the coup leaders between 25 October and 21 November 2021, and released the Prime Minister from house arrest. However, the 21 November 2021 agreement (14-point deal) between the Prime Minister and the coup leaders was met with strong resistance from the general public and various political groups who rejected military rule, and the Prime Minister chose to resign on 2 January 2022.<sup>3</sup>

This fast-changing political, security and economic context has required UNITAMS to focus a significant portion of its attention on good offices and diplomacy so that together with the AU, IGAD, and other international partners and Sudanese stakeholders, it can support a process aimed at getting Sudan's transition back on track.

The level of violence used by the Sudanese security forces to suppress public protest in Sudan has significantly increased since 2021, with a host of violations including protest-related deaths, sexual violence, and indiscriminate violence by security forces. The underlying economic crisis has further deteriorated, with most bilateral and multilateral donors suspending their support in response to the coup. All these developments are unfolding amidst a continuing global pandemic. This fast-changing political, security and economic context has required UNITAMS to focus a significant portion of its attention on good offices and diplomacy so that together with the AU, IGAD, and other international partners and Sudanese stakeholders, it can support a process aimed at getting Sudan's transition back on track.

In this Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) mandate renewal study, the objective is to assess the first 24 months of the Mission and offer recommendations for the mandate renewal process, based on the study's findings. Given recent events and the political crisis in Sudan, this report will focus on two of the Mission's objectives, namely, support for the political transition process, and its partnerships with regional bodies (AU and IGAD). The aim of the study is to support UNITAMS' June 2022 mandate renewal process. The study makes use of the methodological framework developed by EPON to evaluate the effectiveness of a UN mission against its mandated tasks – as per UNSC Resolution 2524 (2020) and 2579 (2021) – taking into consideration a number of factors, including the Mission's resources and the current political context. EPON defines effectiveness as the overall strategic impact of a peace operation, understood as reducing conflict dynamics in the area of operation over a particular period of time, in the context of its mandate and resources. The report draws on official

3 UNSC, "Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan", S/2022/172, 2 March 2022.

documents, primary data, and interviews conducted remotely by the EPON team with officials from UNITAMS, the AU, European Union (EU), IGAD, the Troika, non-government organisations (NGOs), and Sudanese stakeholders, civil society organisations (CSOs), experts and scholars between January and May 2022.

The aim of the study is to support UNITAMS' June 2022 mandate renewal process.

The report is divided into four parts. The first part examines the impact of climate change on the security situation in Sudan. The report then provides a brief history of UNITAMS, highlighting the context and setting in Sudan, key root causes and drivers of conflict, as well as the history of the international engagement. It then examines the drawdown of the UN-AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the deployment of UNITAMS. The second part focuses on UNITAMS' role in Sudan's political process, examining the challenges and opportunities for UNITAMS in supporting Sudanese stakeholders to find a way out of the current political crisis. The third section examines UNITAMS' partnership with the AU and IGAD by focusing on the Mission's interactions, coordination and strategic engagement with these regional partners. The final part makes recommendations regarding the UNITAMS' mandate renewal by highlighting how it can be adapted to ensure the Mission is better positioned to deal with emerging challenges.



# 2. Context

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Sudan is situated in a region that has been identified as one of the most exposed to climate change.<sup>4</sup> Extreme weather, recurrent floods and droughts, and changing precipitation have exacerbated country-wide vulnerabilities stemming from ecosystem degradation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and natural resource scarcities. Conflicts in Sudan have long been linked to unequal development patterns and national resources mismanagement. For example, the nationalisation and sale of land for large-scale mechanised agriculture favoured investors from Khartoum or outside Sudan at the expense of local communities, fuelling tensions and forced displacement.<sup>5</sup> National agriculture policies tended to favour capital-intensive, large-scale farming, which side-lined traditional farming techniques and focused on exporting raw materials and led to land degradation across agricultural areas of Sudan.<sup>6</sup>

Conflicts in Sudan have long been linked to unequal development patterns and national resources mismanagement.

In 1989, Bashir’s Islamist-backed coup further weakened civil society and restructured state power, creating a patronage network, particularly in the security sector. This placed Sudan’s politics and resources in the hands of the security force and elites from Khartoum and contributed

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4 NUPI, “Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Sudan”, May 2022, <[https://www.nupi.no/nupi/content/download/24996/1034148/version/1/file/20220511\\_NUPIFactSheetSudanMay2022LR3%5B19%5D.pdf](https://www.nupi.no/nupi/content/download/24996/1034148/version/1/file/20220511_NUPIFactSheetSudanMay2022LR3%5B19%5D.pdf)>.

5 Andrew E. Yaw Tchie and Hamid E. Ali, “Restructuring State power in Sudan”, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal*, 2021, 16(1), 41–51, <[https://econpapers.repec.org/article/epcjourn/v\\_3a16\\_3ay\\_3a2021\\_3ai\\_3a1\\_3ap\\_3a41-51.htm](https://econpapers.repec.org/article/epcjourn/v_3a16_3ay_3a2021_3ai_3a1_3ap_3a41-51.htm)>.

6 Ibrahim Elnur, *Contested Sudan: The Political Economy of War and Reconstruction* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

to the further marginalisation of areas on the periphery.<sup>7</sup> As a result, security forces like the Rapid Support Force (RSF) control gold mining areas. Policies like the Central Bank of Sudan's decision to place restrictions on hard currency impede the development of the mining industry, encouraging traditional miners to smuggle their gold into neighbouring countries, creating a mining boom.<sup>8</sup> Some mining practices have led to the contamination of water bodies in West Kordofan state and the destruction of pastures in eastern Sudan.<sup>9</sup> Across the north-south border regions, state and military involvement in commercial farming and exploitative policies also renewed conflicts over timber exploitation by the North's charcoal industry, which has encroached on forests from southern areas.<sup>10</sup>

In 1989, Bashir's Islamist-backed coup further weakened civil society and restructured state power, creating a patronage network, particularly in the security sector.

Following the 2011 secession of South Sudan, Sudan's GDP growth decreased drastically. Since then, continued political instability, economic crisis, violent conflict, and reduced rainfall have undermined livelihoods, thereby increasing poverty, food insecurity, and forced displacement. In conflict areas, the effects of climate change have major impacts on displaced persons who have already exhausted their resources for effectively coping with climate shocks. Approximately three million people are internally displaced in Sudan, primarily by conflict.<sup>11</sup> Agriculture is a driving force in Sudan's economy, where 80% of the population depends on agricultural production, and livestock accounted for 30% of GDP in 2017.<sup>12</sup> Overgrazing, expanding mechanised agriculture, and deforestation have further aggravated land degradation.<sup>13</sup> The advance of the Sahara desert,<sup>13</sup> combined with one of the world's highest rates of deforestation, contributed to increased food insecurity affecting more than 10 million people in Sudan.<sup>14</sup> Sudan's political crisis is embedded and closely interlinked with these

7 Mohamed Ibrahim, "Artisanal mining in Sudan – Opportunities, challenges and impacts", UNCTAD, November 2015, <<https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/17OILGASMINE%20Mohamed%20Sulaiman%20Ibrahim%20S4.pdf>>; Tchier and Ali, "Restructuring State power in Sudan".

8 Ibrahim, "Artisanal mining in Sudan"; Sudan Tribune, "Sudan produces 93 tons of gold in 2018", 17 February 2019, <<https://sudantribune.com/article65222>>.

9 UNEP, "Sudan first state of environment and outlook report", 7 October 2020, <<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34012/SSoEESSEN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>>.

10 UNEP, Sudan: Post-conflict environmental assessment (Nairobi: UNEP, 2007), <[https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP\\_Sudan.pdf](https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Sudan.pdf)>.

11 International Organization for Migration (IOM), "Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Sudan", 2021, <<https://displacement.iom.int/sudan>>.

12 UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "Special Report: 2019 FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to Sudan", 2020, <<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4159en/>>.

13 M. Dawelbait and F. Morari, "Monitoring desertification in a savannah region in Sudan using landsat images and spectral mixture analysis", *Journal of Arid Environments*, 2012, 80, 45-55, <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0140196311003971>>.

14 This section draws from NUPI, "Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Sudan".

socio-ecological systemic conditions and challenges, which have weakened the country's resilience and ability to adapt to the political crisis.

In 2018, widespread protests started to rock Sudan as demonstrators were angry about the sharp rise in bread prices after the government partially lifted economic subsidies for wheat and fuel. The government could no longer afford to pay the subsidies because of the costs of maintaining an oversized security sector.<sup>15</sup> The Bashir regime focused its economic efforts on funding an expanding patronage network, which left it unable to come up with an economic plan to respond to a sharp increase in inflation.<sup>16</sup> It did not take long for the protests to transform into a spontaneous political movement against the nearly 30-year rule of President Omar al-Bashir.<sup>17</sup> On 1 January 2019, a broad coalition of political parties, professional associations, CSOs, and armed movements signed the Declaration of Freedom and Change and the "Freedom and Change Charter", which called for President al-Bashir to be removed from power, which occurred after several more months of protest in the April 2019 Sudanese coup d'état. In the process, a loose opposition (political alliance) movement called the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) was formed against the regime's repression and corruption.<sup>18</sup>

Sudan's political crisis is embedded and closely interlinked with these socio-ecological systemic conditions and challenges, which have weakened the country's resilience and ability to adapt to the political crisis.

On 22 February 2019, President Bashir declared a state of emergency and replaced all state governors with military officials.<sup>19</sup> In an effort to stave off the protests, military and security forces removed Bashir from power on 11 April 2019, after weeks of protests.<sup>20</sup> Bashir was replaced by a Transitional Military Council (TMC), initially headed by the former Minister of Defence, Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf. However, Ibn Auf resigned a day later after protestors resisted his

15 Tchic and Hamid, "Restructuring State Power in Sudan".

16 Ibid.

17 Al Jazeera, "12 defining moments in Sudan's 12-month uprising", 18 December 2019, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/18/12-defining-moments-in-sudans-12-month-uprising>>.

18 Radio Dabanga, "Declaration of Freedom and Change Signed in Sudan capital", 3 January 2019, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/declaration-of-freedom-and-change-signed-in-sudan-capital>>; Al Jazeera, "Our revolution is won: Sudan's opposition lauds deal with military", 5 July 2019, <<https://archive.wikiwix.com/cache/index2.php?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aljazeera.com%2Fnews%2F2019%2F07%2Fsudan-military-council-opposition-reach-power-sharing-agreement-190705013332385.html#federation=archive.wikiwix.com>>.

19 Al Jazeera, "12 defining moments".

20 One journalist wrote, "Sudanese intelligence chief Salah Abdallah Mohamed Saleh [Gosh] resigned [...] one day after the defense minister quit following the military's overthrow of the president. [...] Gosh led the feared National Intelligence and Security Service and oversaw the agency's brutal crackdown on protestors who participated in four months of sometimes deadly demonstrations that led to [...] military's ouster of al-Bashir." Salem Solomon, "Sudan's new Military Council leader promises civilian rule within 2 years", Voice of America, 13 April 2019, <<https://www.voanews.com/a/sudan-faces-a-future-without-al-bashir/4872834.html>>.

appointment, making way for Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.<sup>21</sup> Despite the fall of Bashir, protests continued to spread throughout Sudan, including a sit-in with thousands of activists in front of the military headquarters in Khartoum. One of the core demands of the protestors was the return to civilian rule, which remained unmet. Negotiations between the FFC and the TMC broke down when security forces violently dispersed demonstrators at the sit-in on 3 June 2019, killing up to 241 people.<sup>22</sup>

In an effort to stave off the protests, military and security forces removed Bashir from power on 11 April 2019, after weeks of protests.

Following the massacre, domestic and international pressure from countries like Norway, the United Kingdom, and United States—Troika States—and joint mediation efforts by the AU and Ethiopia (the Prime Minister of Ethiopia was the chairperson of IGAD at the time) led the TMC to agree to a partnership with civilians represented by the FFC.<sup>23</sup> The TMC and the FFC signed a constitutional declaration for a transition process facilitated by the AU on 4 August 2019, which entered into force on 17 August 2019.<sup>24</sup> The declaration stipulated a 39-month transition process, which would end with democratic elections. The government was to be led by a civilian prime minister selected by the FFC. A Sovereign Council would provide oversight for the transition and key appointments. The Council would consist of 11 members: five civilians selected by the FFC, and five military representatives selected by the TMC. The eleventh member was to be a civilian selected by the FFC and the TMC.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the Sovereign Council was designed to rotate its leadership between military and civilians, with the military leading the first period and civilians leading the second period, restarting once the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) was signed.<sup>26</sup> A Transitional Legislative Council and thematic commissions were tasked with legislation and policy work. On 21 August 2019, Abdalla Hamdok,

21 BBC, “Sudan’s coup leader Awad Ibn Auf steps down”, 13 April 2019, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47913338>>.

22 Adrienne Fricke, “‘Chaos and fire’: An analysis of Sudan’s June 3, 2019, Khartoum Massacre,” Physicians for Human Rights, March 2020, <<https://phr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PHR-Report-Sudan-Chaos-and-Fire-March-2020-ENG.pdf>>.

23 Clayton Hazvinei Vhumbunu, “Reflecting on the role of regional and international interventions in resolving the post-coup crisis in Sudan”, ACCORD, 25 February 2020, Gn 3 October 2020, the current g<<https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/reflecting-on-the-role-of-regional-and-international-interventions-in-resolving-the-post-coup-crisis-in-sudan>>.

24 Constitution Net, “Sudan Constitutional Declaration August 2019”, <<https://constitutionnet.org/vl/item/sudan-constitutional-declaration-august-2019>>.

25 Andrew E. Yaw Tchie, “Sudan’s deep state still poses a threat to the democratic process”, The Conversation, 2020, <<https://theconversation.com/sudans-deep-state-still-poses-a-threat-to-the-democratic-process-130243>>.

26 Andrew E. Yaw Tchie, “Navigating Sudan’s quest for democratic transition”, ACCORD, 2021, <<https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/navigating-sudans-quest-for-democratic-transition>>.



an economist and senior UN official, became Prime Minister, while General Burhan became the head of the Sovereign Council.<sup>27</sup>

On 3 October 2020, the Government of Sudan and armed movements signed the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan (also known as the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA)), with a broad set of provisions based on five regional tracks as well as national issues. Mediated by the Government of South Sudan, it included armed groups from Darfur, Blue Nile, North and Centre, South Kordofan, and Eastern Sudan.<sup>28</sup> The JPA restarted the transition clock to 39 months since its signing. The Agreement was seen as an alliance between the military and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), which the FFC feared. Sudan's two strongest armed groups, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) al-Hilu and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdelwahid (SLA-AW), did not join the JPA. The SPLM-N demanded the establishment of a secular state and enshrining the right of self-determination for its continued participation.<sup>29</sup> The SLA-AW argued that the Agreement did not capture and address the root causes of conflict and was too much of a compromise.<sup>30</sup> While SPLM-N continued separate negotiations with the transitional government, Al-Hilu refused to engage in the process led by the Higher Council for Peace headed by the Deputy of the Sovereign Council and leader of the RSF, General Mohamed 'Hemedti' Hamdan Dagalo.

The TMC and the FFC signed a constitutional declaration for a transition process facilitated by the AU on 4 August 2019.

The fragile coalition of the civilian and military parts of the government saw recurring push-backs. On 21 September 2021, a coup attempt was carried out by military officers allegedly loyal to the Bashir regime.<sup>31</sup> The military was said to be worried about the Prime Minister's intent to bring the military companies under civilian management and recover public property held by former military officials. Moreover, the military was concerned that the civilian control of the transition would lead to criminal investigations and prosecutions related to acts committed during and after the ousting of Bashir's regime as well as abuses committed by the former regime.<sup>32</sup>

27 Al Jazeera, "New ruling body ushers in Sudan's complex shift to civilian rule", 21 August 2019, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/8/21/new-ruling-body-ushers-in-sudans-complex-shift-to-civilian-rule>>.

28 Constitution Net, "Sudan Peace Agreement", 30 October 2020, <<https://constitutionnet.org/vl/item/sudan-peace-agreement>>.

29 Zaid Al-Ali, "The Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan: Summary and analysis", International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2021, <<https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-juba-agreement-for-peace-in-sudan-en.pdf>>.

30 Relief Web, "SLM-Nur supporters reject Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan", 6 September 2020, <<https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/slm-nur-supporters-reject-juba-agreement-peace-sudan>>.

31 The Guardian, "Sudan coup attempt has failed, government says", 21 September 2021, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/21/sudan-coup-attempt-has-failed-state-media-reports>>.

32 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/reversing-sudans-dangerous-coup>

The following weeks saw large uprisings, both from demonstrators supporting a military takeover and counter-demonstrations from those in favour of a civilian-led government. Demonstrators were split between those drawn from supporters of the National Congress Party (NCP) and the SRF—with whom the generals had struck deals during the JPA—and protestors from the FFC movement and the resistance committees. Military leaders demanded that the government coalition reform and their supporters demonstrated against the transitional government’s failed attempts to secure “justice and equality”.<sup>33</sup> On the civilian side, demonstrators supporting the transition towards democracy claimed the attempted coup was an attempt by the military to consolidate power.<sup>34</sup>

On 3 October 2020, the Government of Sudan and armed movements signed the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan.

On 25 October 2021, Burhan announced a military take-over of the whole government, arguing that the composition of the Sovereign Council led to an unstable situation “threatening peace and unity”.<sup>35</sup> Several ministers and senior officials were arrested, the Prime Minister was put under house arrest, and a state of emergency was declared, including the suspension of key constitutional provisions. In reaction to the military coup and acting on its stance against unconstitutional changes of government, the AU suspended the country’s membership, calling for the reinstatement of a civilian-led government.<sup>36</sup> Bilateral donors and international financial institutions froze aid programmes that depended on their cooperation with State authorities. The World Bank, for example, suspended funding, including US\$2 billion from the International Development Association 19 (IDA19) programme.<sup>37</sup>

The Agreement was seen as an alliance between the military and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF).

33 BBC, “Sudan: Protestors demand military coup as crisis deepens”, 17 October 2021, <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58943013>>.

34 Ibid.

35 CNN, “The military has taken over in Sudan. Here’s what happened”, 26 October 2021, <<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/10/25/africa/sudan-coup-explained-intl-cmd/index.html>>.

36 AU, “Communique, adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1041st meeting held on 26 October 2021 on the Situation in Sudan”, PSC/PR/COMM.1041.

37 World Bank, “Sudan clears arrears, gains access to \$2 billion in new World Bank financing”, 26 March 2021, <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/03/26/sudan-clears-arrears-gains-access-to-2-billion-in-new-world-bank-financing>>; World Bank, “World Bank Group paused all disbursements to Sudan on Monday”, 27 October 2021, <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2021/10/27/world-bank-group-paused-all-disbursements-to-sudan-on-Monday>>.

On 21 November 2021, Prime Minister Hamdok returned to his position after signing a power-sharing agreement with General Burhan.<sup>38</sup> The talks resulted in a 14-point deal. Some political parties were involved, in particular, retired Major General Fadlallah Burama Nasser,<sup>39</sup> the designated head of the National Umma Party.<sup>40</sup> The FFC and resistance committees,<sup>41</sup> however, rejected the agreement, perceiving it as legitimising the coup.<sup>42</sup> For pro-democracy groups, the lack of support from civilian coalitions exacerbated a perception of betrayal of the democratic process and represented a clear setback. On the day of the signing of the 14-point deal, all FFC-appointed ministers resigned from the Cabinet in protest. Hamdok was not able to appoint a new technocratic government and he later resigned on 2 January 2022.<sup>43</sup> After the coup, several officials from Bashir's regime were reinstated in government and high-level positions. Acting Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq, acting Labour Minister Suad al-Tayib Hassan, Commerce Minister Amal Saleh Saad, and director of the general intelligence service Ahmed Mufaddal are all close allies of Bashir. Since the signing of the JPA in 2020, some of the signatories have taken up new positions in the transitional government after demanding government positions for themselves and rewards for their followers. For example, the Justice and Equality Movement leader Gibril Ibrahim was appointed as Finance Minister and Minnawi was appointed Governor of Darfur.<sup>44</sup> On 7 April, several high officials from Bashir's regime, including former NCP leader Ibrahim Ghandour, who was accused of "undermining the constitutional order and financing terrorism"<sup>45</sup> and "inciting war against the state",<sup>46</sup> were cleared by the court on the basis of a lack of evidence.<sup>47</sup> Civilian protests remained frequent, widespread, and met with high levels of violence from the security forces. The political crisis continues to

38 Al Jazeera, "Sudan's Hamdok reinstated as PM after political agreement signed", 21 November 2021, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/21/sudans-hamdok-reinstated-as-pm-after-political-agreement-signed>>.

39 Retired Major General Burama's military background ties him closely with General Burhan, as a junior defense minister in the government of the Sudanese Islamist Movement in the 1990s. He is seen to be appointed as the head of the National Umma Party to satisfy its supporters in western Sudan. Burama and the secretary-general of the party, Wathiq al-Birar, supported the Burhan-Hamdok declaration, a part of a faction of the party considered close to the military or that does not mind sharing power with the military.

40 Middle East Monitor, "The National Umma Party declares its support to agreement between Burhan and Hamdok", 28 November 2021, <<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20211128-the-national-umma-party-declares-its-support-to-agreement-between-burhan-and-hamdok>>.

41 The committees emerged three years ago after the crisis in Sudan started to peak—early in the uprising against Bashir. The foundations of the committees can be found in lessons learnt from the protest that took place in 2013, which were quickly and violently crushed by the Bashir regime.

42 Deutsche Welle, "Sudan: Is Hamdok's return a signal of democracy or military victory?" 22 November 2021, <<https://www.dw.com/en/sudan-is-hamdoks-return-a-signal-of-democracy-or-military-victory/a-59901328>>.

43 Al Jazeera, "Sudan's Hamdok resigns as prime minister amid political deadlock", 2 January 2022, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/2/sudan-pm-abdalla-hamdok-resigns-after-deadly-protest>>.

44 Andrew E. Yaw Tchier and Jihad Mashamoun, "After the Coup: Regional strategies for Sudan", African Arguments, 7 January 2022, <<https://africanarguments.org/2022/01/after-the-coup-regional-strategies-for-sudan>>.

45 Sudan Tribune, "NCP's Ghandour voices support for al-Burhan coup, saying Sudan is now better", 9 April 2022, <<https://sudantribune.com/article257507>>.

46 Radio Dabanga, "Former Sudan Minister and collaborators acquitted of terrorism charges", 8 April 2022, <[www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/former-sudan-minister-and-collaborators-acquitted-of-terrorism-charges](http://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/former-sudan-minister-and-collaborators-acquitted-of-terrorism-charges)>.

47 Oscar Rickett, "Sudan's Bashir is in prison, but his officials are sweeping back into power", Middle East Eye, 11 April 2022, <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/sudan-bashir-prison-his-officials-sweep-back-power>>.

generate uncertainty and volatility characterised by significant setbacks in political, security, socioeconomic, human rights and humanitarian development in Sudan.<sup>48</sup>

The political crisis continues to generate uncertainty and volatility characterised by significant setbacks in political, security, socioeconomic, human rights and humanitarian development in Sudan.

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48 UNSC, “Situation in Sudan”, S/2022/172.

# 3. A brief history of UNITAMS

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The UNSC adopted Resolution 2524 on 3 June 2020, establishing UNITAMS. UNITAMS was set up as a political mission to assist in Sudan’s “progress towards democratic governance”.<sup>49</sup> UNITAMS responds to both new and long-standing issues in Sudan, including the political transition process that began with the December 2018 revolution and the legacy of armed conflicts, particularly in Sudan’s marginalised regions in the West, South and East. Its 2020 mandate specified four strategic objectives:

- i. Assisting in the political transition;
- ii. Supporting the peace process and implementing future peace agreements;
- iii. Assisting with peacebuilding, civilian protection, and the rule-of-law efforts, especially in Darfur and the Two Areas (South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states); and
- iv. Supporting the mobilisation of aid.<sup>50</sup>

UNITAMS was set up as a political mission to assist in Sudan’s “progress towards democratic governance”.

The Mission’s mandate also explicitly recognises the adverse effects of climate change on Sudan’s stability and stresses the need for appropriate risk assessment and risk management strategies.

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<sup>49</sup> UNSC, “Resolution 2524”, S/RES/2524.  
<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

The Mission was established as UNAMID was closed down. UNAMID was the first and so far only joint hybrid UN-AU operation.<sup>51</sup> In contrast to UNAMID, UNITAMS is a UN mission that covers the whole of Sudan. When UNITAMS was established, the UNSC also adopted a resolution extending UNAMID's mandate until 31 December 2020 and requesting the UN and AU to submit a final report on the "responsible drawdown and exit of UNAMID" as well as the security situation in Darfur.<sup>52</sup> The UN and the AU began a reconfiguration and eventual drawdown of UNAMID in 2017, as the Mission "faced a hostile government that made further progress unlikely as well as waning interest and tightening budgets from powerful countries".<sup>53</sup> The drawdown was also a reaction to a counterinsurgency and disarmament campaign led by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary force. During the RSF campaign, most armed groups were displaced from Darfur. As a result, the levels of violence decreased significantly since the height of mass atrocities and armed conflict in 2003 and 2004.<sup>54</sup>

For the new transitional government in Khartoum, a peace process with armed groups was a high priority.

UNAMID's drawdown took place without a final political settlement on the conflict in Darfur. For the new transitional government in Khartoum, a peace process with armed groups was a high priority. The transitional government requested that UNAMID stay for another year in October 2019, while it engaged in peace negotiations with armed groups and figured out how future UN support for Sudan should be arranged. In early 2020, Prime Minister Hamdok sent an initial letter to the UN Secretary-General outlining the government's request for a "Chapter VI peace support operation in the form of a special political mission with a strong peacebuilding component".<sup>55</sup> After consultations with the military component within the Sovereign Council, Hamdok sent a second letter with a more limited set of tasks, which no longer included a request for police advisers and support for a protection of civilians mandate.<sup>56</sup>

Given the continued insecurity in parts of Darfur, the co-penholders initially planned to include a small police force in the follow-on mission. In March 2020, a draft resolution mandating a follow-on mission was leaked. According to the draft, the primary objective of the Mission was

51 Ralph Mamiya, Hansen Wibke, Andrews Atta-Asamoah, Daniel Gebreegziabher, Seba Issa, et al. "Assessing the effectiveness of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)", EPON, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2020, <[https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/EPON\\_UNAMID\\_Report.pdf](https://effectivepeaceops.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/EPON_UNAMID_Report.pdf)>.

52 UNSC, "Resolution 2525", S/RES/2525, 3 June 2020, <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3864104?ln=en>>.

53 Ralph Mamiya et al., "Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)".

54 UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur", S/2016/1109, 23 December 2016.

55 UNSC, "Letter dated 27 January 2020 from the Prime Minister of the Sudan Addressed to the Secretary-General", S/2020/77, 27 January 2020. (Since withdrawn.)

56 UNSC, "Letter Dated 27 February 2020 from the Prime Minister of the Sudan Addressed to the Secretary-General", S/2020/221, 20 March 2020.

to support the political transition and the ongoing peace process, but it included a chapter VII mandate for the protection of civilians in Darfur and it would have authorised the deployment of formed police units and a reserve military capability to create a Quick Reaction Force.<sup>57</sup> The Government of Sudan protested against the plans and the “chapter VII” mandate became a red line for the government. It argued that the situation had changed after the transition and that Sudan now had a government that was committed to protecting its citizens. The government submitted a national strategy for the protection of civilians to the UNSC as proof of this commitment.<sup>58</sup> As a result of these developments, when it comes to protection, the UNITAMS mandate is designed to provide technical support to the Sudanese government’s own efforts to protect its civilians.<sup>59</sup>

By the end of November 2021, UNITAMS had deployed 157 staff members (110 international and 47 national staff members) out of a staffing table including 258 staff members.

It took more than six months for the UN Secretary-General and the UNSC to agree on the leadership of UNITAMS, as UNSC Members and the Government of Sudan rejected several suggestions.<sup>60</sup> Finally, Dr Volker Perthes was appointed to lead the Mission as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on 7 January 2021. He arrived in Khartoum on 2 February 2021.<sup>61</sup> Throughout 2021, UNITAMS built up its initial operational capability, scaled up its deployment in Khartoum, and opened several state offices. By the end of November 2021, UNITAMS had deployed 157 staff members (110 international and 47 national staff members) out of a staffing table including 258 staff members, with a 50% vacancy rate applied in the budget, as is standard for the first year of a mission.<sup>62</sup>

After the initial period of one year, UNITAMS’ mandate was extended for another 12 months on 3 June 2021 through UNSC Resolution 2579 with six priorities within UNITAMS’ four

57 Radio Dabanga, “UNSC Proposal to Replace Unamid During Sudan’s Transition to Democracy”, 22 March 2022, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/unsc-proposal-to-replace-unamid-during-sudan-s-transition-to-democracy>>.

58 UNSC, “Letter Dated 21 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council”, S/2020/429, 1 June 2020.

59 UNSC, “Resolution 2524”, S/RES/2524.

60 Colum Lynch and Robbie Gramer, “Big-power rivalries hamstring top U.N. missions”, Foreign Policy, 22 July 2020, <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/22/united-nations-competition-russia-china-guterres-sudan-big-power-rivalries-hamstring-top-missions>>.

61 UNITAMS was officially operational in Q3 2020, when the first UN officials deployed to Khartoum. The January 2021 deadline was for UNITAMS to meet its minimum operational capacity (something they arguably did not have by that point). See UNITAMS, “Mr. Volker Perthes, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General For Sudan, arrives Khartoum”, 2 February 2021, <<https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/mr-volker-perthes-un-special-representative-secretary-general-sudan-arrives-khartoum>>.

62 UNSC, “Situation in the Sudan and the Activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan”, S/2021/1008, 3 December 2021; UN General Assembly, “Proposed Programme Budget for 2021 UNITAMS”, A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.7, 23 October 2020.

strategic objectives.<sup>63</sup> The objective was “support to the peace processes and implementations of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements”, the ceasefire agreement in Darfur, as UNITAMS chairs the Permanent Ceasefire Committee, and support for the establishment of state protection of civilians committees in Darfur, in line with its mandate to support the government’s implementation of its national protection of civilians strategy.<sup>64</sup> On 4 July 2021, the Government of Sudan and UNITAMS signed the Status of Mission Agreement.<sup>65</sup>

The objective was “support to the peace processes and implementations of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements”, the ceasefire agreement in Darfur, and support for the establishment of state protection of civilians committees in Darfur, in line with its mandate to support the government’s implementation of its national protection of civilians strategy.

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63 UNSC, “Resolution 2579”, S/RES/2579.

64 Ibid.

65 Sudan Tribune, “Sudan, UN signs agreement on UNITAMS’s status”, 5 July 2021, <<https://sudantribune.com/article67864>>.



## 4. UNITAMS' support for the political transition

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Resolution 2524 (2020) tasked UNITAMS with supporting “national efforts to realise the objectives of the Constitutional Document”, which is the 2019 agreement to establish a civilian-led transitional government.<sup>66</sup>

The Mission advocated for speedy implementation and offered advice and capacity-building workshops, but the Mission could only offer guidance, which has limited impact on the will of some stakeholders to implement the provisions of the constitutional document fully.

In the first three quarters of 2021, UNITAMS' assistance to the political transition focused on providing technical support where it found willing partners. In June 2021, the Mission developed a framework for electoral assistance.<sup>67</sup> UNITAMS conducted several training sessions, consultations, and meetings with Sudanese State and non-state actors to provide technical assistance to different parts of the political transition, and train journalists and civil society actors on human rights and responses to hate speech.<sup>68</sup> In September 2021, UNITAMS cooperated with Sudanese stakeholders and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in examining areas

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<sup>66</sup> UNSC, “Resolution 2524”, S/RES/2524.

<sup>67</sup> UNSC, “Situation in the Sudan and the Activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan”, S/2021/766, 1 September 2021.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

for technical support provision for the constitution-making process and UNITAMS provided advice to the Ministry of Justice.<sup>69</sup>

The Mission advocated for speedy implementation and offered advice and capacity-building workshops, but the Mission could only offer guidance, which has limited impact on the will of some stakeholders to implement the provisions of the constitutional document fully. For example, a key issue was the work of the Committee for Removal of Empowerment and Recovery of Public Funds, tasked with dismantling the structures of the former regime, including seizing assets associated with the NCP and its associates.<sup>70</sup> Many questioned the rigour and legality of the process by which the Committee operated. In September 2021, a workshop organised by UNITAMS and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) highlighted shortcomings and recommended that the Committee define and publish its own guidelines, but the Committee did not act on these recommendations before the coup in October 2021.<sup>71</sup>

The military coup on 25 October 2021 created a significant challenge for UNITAMS, and its focus turned to facilitating a “return to constitutional order”.

In the weeks preceding the coup, shuttle diplomacy by UNITAMS as well as international envoys in September and October 2021 failed to persuade Burhan not to overtake power.<sup>72</sup> The military coup on 25 October 2021 created a significant challenge for UNITAMS, and its focus turned to facilitating a “return to constitutional order”.<sup>73</sup> Following the October 2021 coup and ongoing protests across the country, UNITAMS monitored and reported on killings, human rights violations, and widespread sexual violence—collaborating with government bodies and local and international actors to report and respond to the violations.

UNITAMS was one of the several international and Sudanese actors trying to mediate between the FFC, the military and security forces, and the Prime Minister, whom Burhan placed under house arrest with restricted visitation rights. The agreement between Burhan and Hamdok, which reinstated Hamdok as Prime Minister, was cautiously welcomed by UNITAMS and the

69 UNDP, “Rule of Law and justice reform”, n.d., <<https://www.sd.undp.org/content/sudan/en/home/rule-of-law-and-justice-reform-.html>>.

70 Radio Dabanga, “Sudan Empowerment Removal Committee Protests Court Decision on Judicians”, 6 October 2021, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-empowerment-removal-committee-protests-court-decision-on-judicians>>.

71 UNSC, “Situation in the Sudan”, S/2021/1008, p. 11.

72 Abdi L. Dahir and Declan Walsh, “‘They lied.’ Inside the frantic days leading to Sudan’s coup”, *The New York Times*, 29 October 2021, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/29/world/africa/sudan-coup-general.html>>.

73 UNITAMS, “UNITAMS SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes remarks to the Security Council”, 28 March 2022, <<https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/unitams-srsg-mr-volker-perthes-remarks-security-council>>.

international community.<sup>74</sup> Subsequently, protesters accused the UN of supporting the coup and the Mission was faced with considerable disinformation and fake news from different sides. Demonstrators staged a protest in front of UNITAMS' premises, but refused to talk to the SRSG when he offered to meet with the protesters.<sup>75</sup>

UNITAMS was one of the several international and Sudanese actors trying to mediate between the FFC, the military and security forces, and the Prime Minister, whom Burhan placed under house arrest with restricted visitation rights.

Following the resignation of Prime Minister Hamdok, who had not been able to form a new cabinet, the SRSG announced the start of a consultation process on 8 January 2022. Given the lack of trust and disinformation aimed at UNITAMS and the SRSG, resistance committees were initially sceptical, fearing it would violate their principles of the “three nos”: no negotiation, no compromise, and no partnership with the military. As it became clear that the consultation process would only include bilateral conversations between UNITAMS staff and mainly civilian Sudanese stakeholders based on an extensive questionnaire about constitutional and political questions, some resistance committee representatives, especially from outside Khartoum, were ready to engage in the process.

Following the resignation of Prime Minister Hamdok, who had not been able to form a new cabinet, the SRSG announced the start of a consultation process on 8 January 2022.

To overcome distrust, UNITAMS published weekly updates with photos and names of organisations with which its staff had met. In total, UNITAMS spoke with around 800 people from 110 organisations, including political parties, women's organisations, tribal leaders, armed movements, academics, and others in Khartoum, El Fasher and Kadugli. Approximately one-third of the participants were women. The Mission has received over 80 written inputs.<sup>76</sup> Throughout the consultations, UNITAMS emphasised the importance of Sudanese leadership and ownership of the process.<sup>77</sup>

74 UNITAMS, “UNITAMS statement on today's agreement”, 21 November 2021, <<https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/unitams-statement-today%E2%80%99s-agreement>>.

75 Sudan Tribune, “Demonstrators reject UNITAMS, calls for Perthes departure from Sudan”, 26 January 2022, <<https://sudantribune.com/article254567>>.

76 UNSC, “Situation in the Sudan”, S/2022/172; UNITAMS, “Summary paper: Consultations on a political process for Sudan. An inclusive intra-Sudanese process on the way forward for democracy and peace”, February 2022.

77 UNSC, “Situation in the Sudan”, S/2022/172.

In February, UNITAMS announced the end of the first phase of the consultation on the political process and issued a report summarising the results of the comprehensive consultations it held with an extensive range of political and social stakeholders in Sudan. Without naming stakeholders, the report mentioned significant areas of (near) consensus. These included issues such as:

- The urgency to end killings and violence;
- The need to lift the state of emergency;
- Respecting freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Ending arbitrary arrests and detentions;
- Conducting an independent investigation of violence;
- The importance of creating conditions for a constitutional process and elections based on inclusivity and credibility; and
- Ensuring accountability at all levels.<sup>78</sup>

The objective of the second round of consultations is presented as a return “to constitutional order and transitional path, with an empowered civilian-led government to steer the country through the transitional period and address the critical priorities.”

For some observers, the report failed to clearly outline the internal fault lines within and between the entities consulted. Others were critical because the report did not articulate how the initial phase would lead to phase two. While a second phase of consultations was announced and outlined, no starting date was officially set (it was later identified as having started on May 12).<sup>79</sup> The objective of the second round of consultations is presented as a return “to constitutional order and transitional path, with an empowered civilian-led government to steer the country through the transitional period and address the critical priorities.”<sup>80</sup> This phase is intended to include representatives from key Sudanese stakeholders discussing the basic questions to start a new transitional process, the appointment of a new prime minister, a transitional roadmap, and the conditions for elections.

78 UNITAMS, “Summary paper”.

79 UNSC, “Situation in the Sudan”, S/2022/172.

80 UNITAMS, “UNITAMS SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes remarks to the Security Council”.

The relationship between UNITAMS and the Sudanese government after the coup has been fragile. The Secretary-General's 90-day report to the UNSC on 2 March 2022 stated that the military coup on 25 October 2021 was a significant setback for the political transition toward peace and democracy.<sup>81</sup> In response, the Sudanese government sent a letter to the UNSC on 22 March 2022, criticising UNITAMS for focusing heavily on the political transition and neglecting the other parts of its mandate, which focused on the protection of civilians, support for the peace process, and mobilising resources and development assistance. The Sudanese government denounced the Secretary-General's description of the 25 October military takeover as a "coup" and the situation after as a "setback".<sup>82</sup> General Burhan also threatened to expel the SRSG if he continued to "overstep" his mandate.<sup>83</sup>

## UNITAMS finds itself in a very delicate position.

For the past few months, official government platforms and high government officials, including the chairperson of the Sovereign Council, General Burhan, have launched attacks against the UN Mission, accusing the UN of foreign interventions and crossing lines. More recently, El Jaish, a Sudan Armed Forces newspaper, accused the SRSG of spreading chaos and terrorism and being a Nazi on 17 April 2022.<sup>84</sup>

Tension between the two organisations contributed to several missed opportunities for the UN and AU to play a more strategic role in supporting the political process in Sudan.

UNITAMS finds itself in a very delicate position. Its primary task is to support the transition to democratic rule, which implies civilian rule. The current Government of Sudan came to power through a military coup that effectively suspended the 2019 agreement to return to civilian rule. The coup leaders, and the military leadership in general, are at best reluctant to hand over power to an elected government because they fear losing their privileged status, including the role the military plays in the economy, and some fear prosecution for past and more recent abuses. The only way the military can justify staying in power is to make the case that the country will descend into chaos if they are no longer in a position to impose order. By continuing to work towards bringing the 2019 agreement back on track, UNITAMS is, despite its best efforts to remain impartial, in effect backing the interests of those who support a transition to democratic

81 Ibid; UNSC, "Situation in the Sudan", S/2022/172.

82 Sudan Tribune, "Major points that triggered Sudan's anger from UNITAMS report", 7 April 2022, <<https://sudantribune.com/article257458>>.

83 Radio Dabanga, "Sudan's Gen. El Burhan threatens to expel UNITAMS head for 'interference'", 2 April 2022, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-s-gen-el-burhan-threatens-to-expel-unitams-head-for-interference>>.

84 Sudan Tribune, "How the military harnessed the African Union in the UNITAMS process to legitimize the coup", 22 April 2022, <[https://sudantribune.com/article257937/#google\\_vignette](https://sudantribune.com/article257937/#google_vignette)>.

rule, and against those who wish to see an indefinite continuation of military rule. It is thus not surprising that the military regime is trying to discredit the UN Mission and create tension among international partners, including the AU, IGAD, the Troika and the UN. In this context, a critical aspect of the work towards a peaceful transition to democratic rule is to maintain and further strengthen the partnership between the AU, IGAD and the UN.

## 5. UNITAMS-AU-IGAD partnership

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The partnership between the UN and the AU in Sudan is influenced by past perceptions and interactions related to the drawdown and closure of UNAMID. Some of these tensions transferred over to the relationship between UNITAMS and the AU.<sup>85</sup> Tension between the two organisations contributed to several missed opportunities for the UN and AU to play a more strategic role in supporting the political process in Sudan.

Tension between the two organisations contributed to several missed opportunities for the UN and AU to play a more strategic role in supporting the political process in Sudan.

Similarly, IGAD's role in Sudan's political transition process became less clear after the IGAD chairpersonship moved from Ethiopia to Sudan.<sup>86</sup> As Sudan is the current chair of IGAD, the role of the chairperson of IGAD in Sudan is limited, and more responsibility seems to have shifted to the IGAD Executive Secretary and staff. Nonetheless, a recent IGAD report demonstrates better awareness of the situation on the ground.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, the recent visit from IGAD and AU delegates to Sudan demonstrates potential inroads that UNITAMS and the AU can continue to capitalise on.<sup>88</sup>

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85 Interview, February 2022.

86 Ibid.

87 Sudan Tribune, "IGAD considers appointing special envoy for Sudan", 6 February 2022, <<https://sudantribune.com/article254940>>.

88 UNSC, "March 2022 Monthly Forecast", 28 February 2022, <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-03/sudan-11.php>>.

Interviews highlighted that there was optimism that a tripartite agreement between UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD would significantly contribute to addressing many of these challenges. For many interviewees, close coordination and cooperation between UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD is necessary to push the political process forward and ensure the participation of all Sudanese actors in the country's path to civil and democratic transformation.

Close coordination and cooperation between UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD is necessary to push the political process forward and ensure the participation of all Sudanese actors in the country's path to civil and democratic transformation.

Since March 2022, UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD agreed on the need to combine their efforts and on creating a common mechanism in Sudan to resolve the political crisis, and bring the country back to constitutional order and on track to democratic transition. To this end, the AU Chairperson and UN Secretary-General met in New York, where they agreed to join efforts in Sudan to resolve the political crisis in the country. They also decided to include IGAD as the closest sub-regional organisation in the country. This effort was replicated at country level, where the AU Special Envoy for Sudan, Prof. Mohammed El Hacem Lebart, and the UNITAMS SRSG, continue to try and merge their initiatives with IGAD. The initiatives were established under a tripartite mechanism, which is designed to facilitate talks that would bridge the gap between civilians and the military and help towards restoring constitutional order in the country.

The UNITAMS-AU-IGAD-facilitated process, or the so-called "Trilateral Mechanism on Sudan", launched in April 2022 has helped to facilitate Sudanese-led and -owned talks to restore constitutional order and reach credible and acceptable civilian rule. In April and May 2022, the Trilateral Mechanism held talks with key Sudanese stakeholders, including several political parties and coalitions, representatives from the resistance committees, youths, the military, representatives from armed groups, Sufi leaders, women's groups, as well as Sudanese academics and intellectuals. The goal of these consultations was to gauge the views of the Sudanese stakeholders on the appropriate format and substance for potential future talks.

The Trilateral Mechanism has generated consensus on the imperative to settle political differences through dialogue. All those consulted agree on four priority areas to be tackled urgently:

- i. Constitutional arrangements, including addressing the civilian-military relationship and also concerning the institutions governing the transitional period, such as the Transitional Legislative Council;
- ii. The mechanism and criteria for selection of the Prime Minister;



- iii. The government programme; and
- iv. The roadmap for completing the transition, including the holding of elections.

When the country took a break for the holy Eid al-Fitr, the Trilateral Mechanism paused the process to give Sudanese stakeholders time to celebrate the holiday and prepare for the next phase, which the Trilateral Mechanism will resume after the Eid. The intention of the Trilateral Mechanism after the Eid is to begin intense engagement with the stakeholders over the four priority issues at the core of the transition. If sufficient trust emerges, the Trilateral Mechanism may try to convene the parties in some form of direct dialogue.



# 6. Key findings and recommendations for the UNITAMS mandate renewal: Fostering trust through partnerships and adaptability

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This section summarises the key findings of the study and makes two recommendations regarding key aspects of UNITAMS’s mandate that it should give special attention to over the coming 12 months. Overall, the findings do not indicate that it is necessary to change the UNITAMS mandate, but they indicate a need for the Mission to be given more flexibility to adapt its focus to fast-changing dynamics on the ground (which it has done with some success to date already). This should include ensuring that the Mission has the resilience and agility to continually innovate ways to optimise its strategic partnerships and engage with a broad and inclusive range of Sudanese stakeholders.

## 6.1. Clarifying mandate priorities

While there seems to be broad consensus that the current four objectives of the UNITAMS mandate are adequate and should be maintained, there are divergent views on which priorities UNITAMS should focus on over the coming months. The previous mandate renewal in June 2021 emphasised six priorities. After the coup in October 2021, the Mission pivoted its attention towards three main aspects of the mandate:

- i. To initiate political talks, consistent with its “good offices mandate”, and to support inclusive dialogue, with the aim of bringing a Sudanese-owned transition back on track;

- ii. To support and advocate for human rights and the protection of civilians, given the violence against protestors, increasing number of intercommunal clashes, and growing number of internally displaced persons; and
- iii. To support the implementation of the JPS, particularly the security arrangements.

Overall, the findings do not indicate that it is necessary to change the UNITAMS mandate, but they indicate a need for the Mission to be given more flexibility to adapt its focus to fast-changing dynamics on the ground

With regard to the Mission's priorities, this study recommends:

- The Mission should strengthen its focus on, and ability to, integrate climate-related security risks into its analytical work, especially as it relates to supporting local conflict prevention, mitigation and reconciliation efforts aimed at preventing inter-communal violence;
- The UNITAMS good offices' role should remain at the centre of its efforts in the next mandated period. Even if negotiations fail to bring about a return to the 2019 agreement in the short term, helping Sudanese stakeholders to find an inclusive political settlement that can secure a transition to democratic rule in the medium to long term should remain the top priority.
- At the same time, the Mission should continue its work in support of its other objectives and priorities, including the protection of civilians, support to the JPA, advisory and capacity building support to the rule-of-law sector, etc.

## 6.2. Strengthening partnerships

For many interviewees, close coordination and cooperation between UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD was identified as key to maintaining concerted and coherent support for a process that can bring the transition to democratic rule back on track.

While there has been significant progress over the last few months to strengthen the collaboration between the UN, AU and IGAD, maintaining and sustaining the partnership should be recognised as a key priority, especially considering that the military regime will continue to try to discredit the UN and undermine the partnership.

With regard to partnerships, this study recommends that:

- UNITAMS' new mandate explicitly acknowledge that close cooperation with the AU and IGAD is essential to ensuring coherent international support for a Sudanese-led peaceful political transition; and
- The Mission be tasked with providing all necessary support to the efforts of the Trilateral Mechanism on Sudan.



# 7. Annex 1: The Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) project summary

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Peace operations are among the most important international mechanisms for contemporary conflict management. However, their effectiveness remains the subject of confusion and debate in both the policy and academic communities. Various international organizations conducting peace operations, including the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU), have come under increasing pressure to justify their effectiveness and impact. Although various initiatives are underway to improve the ability to assess the performance of peace operations, there remains a distinct lack of independent, research-based information about the effectiveness of such operations.

To address this gap, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), together with over 40 partners from across the globe, have established an international network to jointly undertake research into the effectiveness of peace operations. This network has developed a shared methodology to enable the members to undertake research on this topic. This will ensure coherence across cases and facilitate comparative research. The network produce a series of reports that are shared with stakeholders including the UN, AU, and EU, interested national government representatives, researchers, and the general public. All the EPON reports are available via <https://effectivepeaceops.net>. The network is coordinated by NUPI. Many of the partners fund their own participation. NUPI has also received funding from the Norwegian Research Council and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the Network and its research, including via the UN Peace Operations project (UNPOP) and the Training for Peace (TfP) programme.

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## 8. Annex 2: The Training for Peace (TfP) Programme summary

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### 8.1. What are the objectives of the TfP programme?

The Training for Peace (TfP) Programme works to generate knowledge, support the development of policy and builds the capacity of police and civilian peacekeepers.

The Programme also:

- Provides technical expertise, including for the African Standby Capacity;
- Supports the development of strategic policy and doctrine;
- Undertakes studies aimed at capturing lessons from AU missions; and
- Provides training and supports the development of training curriculum and material.

The programme's main objectives are to provide support to the AUC to enhance knowledge and understanding of the evolving conflict and security environment on the continent, and contribute to strengthening the AUC's comprehensive range of response capacities.

Overall, the goal is to contribute to strengthening the capacity of the AUC to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and insecurity on the continent through deploying the full spectrum of peacemaking tools.

## 8.2. Partnership and trust amid uncertainty and flux

The TFP programme is currently in its sixth phase. It started with a focus on peacekeeping training in southern Africa 26 years ago. Today it has developed and adapted to Africa's changing peace and security needs.

TFP helps the African Union (AU) to:

- Generate new knowledge derived from its own and related African peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding experiences and drawing on evidence-based research;
- Develop innovative and world-leading policies, doctrine and guidelines that will guide the next generation of AU mediation, observer and peace missions; and
- Build the capacity of the personnel that will undertake, support and direct AU and African mediation, observer and peace missions, and support the AU to maintain the African Standby Capacity and the African Standby Force.

## 8.3. What do we work on?

Themes covered by the TFP contribute to preventing conflicts, Silencing the Guns and sustaining peace. These include:

- Emerging security threats, such as violent extremism;
- AU peace support operations, with a particular focus on the role of police and civilian peacekeepers;
- In-depth support and research on Conflict prevention, PCRd and SSR;
- Ongoing research on UN/AU relations, including support to the AUPOM and A3; and
- Inclusivity, with a particular focus on youth, women and gender.

## 8.4. Our theory of change

Support to the AU Commission (AUC) and regional economic communities (RECs)/ regional mechanisms (RMs) contributes to increased knowledge and institutional capacity at the strategic levels. This enables the organisation and its RECs/RMs to effectively prevent and respond to conflicts and complex security challenges, thereby promoting and sustaining peace in Africa.





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