



UN Special Representative Pramila Patten expresses grave concern over alleged acts of sexual violence against women and girls during the 19 December 2021 demonstrations in Sudan and calls for restraint and accountability for those responsible

Press Release: For Immediate Release

New York, 23 December 2021: United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, is gravely concerned about the situation in Sudan following reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment perpetrated against women and girls by the security forces during demonstrations in Khartoum on Sunday 19 December 2021, to mark the third anniversary of the mass demonstrations that led to the fall of President Omar al-Bashir and to protest against the military coup of 25 October and the political agreement signed on 21 November 2021.

Special Representative Patten expresses deep concerns about credible reports of serious human rights violations, including the use of rape and gang rape of women and girls to disperse protesters who had attempted a sit-in, close to the Republican Palace, in the evening of 19 December. These incidents are reminiscent of the allegations of sexual violence during the suppression of demonstrators in Khartoum on 3 June 2019. Special Representative Patten notes with concern reports indicating that while some of the survivors of sexual violence have filed judicial complaints and have sought immediate medical assistance after the incidents, others have opted not to report and/or seek medical and other assistance, owing to social stigma, fear of persecution and reprisals. Pending verification of these incidents by relevant United Nations bodies, Special Representative Patten highlights the fact that the absence of criminal accountability for these crimes, can prevent survivors from coming forward to seek redress and perpetuates cycles of impunity that hinder peacebuilding and recovery efforts in the country.

“I demand the immediate and complete cessation of all human rights violations and abuses including sexual violence. I call on the authorities to take effective measures to ensure ease of access to medical, legal and psychosocial support to the survivors, and put in place accountability mechanisms to prevent reoccurrence of such violence, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2467 (2019). The perpetrators of these human rights violations must be identified and prosecuted. I join the call of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a prompt, independent and thorough investigation into the allegations of rape and sexual harassment,” stated Special Representative Patten. “I request the relevant authorities to work closely with the United Nations so as to accelerate the implementation of the Framework of Cooperation signed in 2020 between the United Nations and the Government of Sudan on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence through concrete measures including the documentation, investigation and prosecution of sexual violence to reinforce individual and command responsibility and accountability,” Special Representative added.



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Special Representative Patten calls upon the international community, including members of the Security Council, to use their good offices with leaders of Sudan to demand an end to all forms of violence and intimidation against civilians, including sexual violence. With further protests planned, it is crucial that security forces act in full respect for international laws and standards regulating the use of force.

The two implementing arms of my office, namely the United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict comprising of 21 United Nations entities and the Team of Expert on Rule of Law, stand ready to support national authorities and the civil society for a targeted conflict-related sexual violence prevention and response.

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