



UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict expresses grave concern over alleged acts of sexual violence in Sudan during the ongoing violence

Press Release: For Immediate Release

New York, 24 May 2023: The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), Pramila Patten, is gravely concerned about reports of sexual violence against women and girls, including allegations of rape, in the context of violent hostilities which erupted between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023.

“I am very alarmed by emerging reports of sexual violence in different parts of Sudan and urge all parties to the conflict to comply with international human rights and humanitarian law, and in particular, to guarantee immediate and complete cessation of all violence against civilians, including sexual violence, as per their respective commitments in the ‘Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians in Sudan’ and the ‘Agreement on a Short-Term Ceasefire and Humanitarian Arrangements’ signed in Jeddah on 11 and 20 May respectively. It is imperative that unfettered access to services is guaranteed by all parties, while they should instantly issue strict command orders that prohibit sexual violence, directed at their own forces as well as groups and individuals fighting on their side or under their command, and put in place mechanisms to adequately monitor the conduct of all armed elements they control”, Special Representative Patten stated.

There are strong indications that it is parties to the conflict who have committed sexual violence, including rape, against women and girls. Medical facilities were destroyed or looted, and movement was restricted due to insecurity on the roads leading to functioning hospitals in other towns or cities. Some of the survivors who were able to receive medical assistance and psychosocial support had to travel vast distances owing to limited services on the ground. A number of the incidents appear to have occurred in the residential areas of the capital, or while fleeing from the capital, while others took place in Darfur where reports of sexual violence have consistently been reported since 2003, which has led to the listing of the parties to the current conflict in the annex of the annual reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence.

“While investigations should be initiated expeditiously, I call upon all parties to the conflict to undertake immediate measures to reinforce individual and command responsibility, such as suspending or removing from their ranks any commander, officer, or soldier suspected of ordering, committing, or taking no action to prevent sexual violence in their areas of responsibility. Accountability for conflict-related sexual violence is critical to a peaceful transition and the future of Sudanese democracy. This is more urgent than ever in light of the prevailing impunity which has perpetuated an environment in which armed elements can act without restraint. I urge the concerned authorities to work closely with the United Nations to hold perpetrators accountable, in line with 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”, SRSG Patten concluded.



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 against civilians, including sexual violence.

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