



## **After two years of deadly conflict, the Government of the Sudan renews its commitment to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence**

*Press Release: For Immediate Release*

**New York, 16 April 2025:** On the occasion of an official visit to Port Sudan by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), Ms. Pramila Patten, the Government of the Republic of the Sudan has taken decisive steps for the prevention and eradication of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) by renewing a Framework of Cooperation to address CRSV, to be implemented with the support of the United Nations.

*“The signing of this Framework of Cooperation comes at the two-year mark of this tragic and devastating conflict – that has unleashed suffering on countless civilians. I stand in unwavering solidarity with the resilient people of Sudan, particularly the women and children who bear the heaviest brunt of this crisis, and whose bodies have been part of the battlefield. The United Nations has collected evidence that sexual violence in the form of rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, abduction, forced impregnation amongst others, has been inflicted on them, with victims ranging from 75-years-old women to one-year-old babies”,* stated Special Representative Patten.

Despite significant obstacles to reporting these crimes – stemming from fear and stigma faced by survivors, as well as insecurity and targeted attacks against health structures and service providers – alarming and widespread patterns of sexual violence have been documented since the onset of the conflict. These include rape and gang-rape, often occurring during attacks on urban areas and IDP sites, targeting individuals fleeing from conflict-affected areas, during prolonged occupation of residential areas, and in the context of abductions that have resulted in sexual slavery. *“The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and its allied militias have been overwhelmingly implicated in systematic and/or widespread acts of sexual violence against civilians. A few cases have also been attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)”* said SRSG Patten. *“Our most pressing priority is to put in place measures to prevent these crimes and to respond to the needs of survivors”*, added the Special Representative.

The landmark agreement, signed with the Government of the Republic of the Sudan, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2467 (2019), prioritizes a number of areas such as the provision of holistic services for survivors; supporting the review and/or adoption of legislation to strengthen protection from conflict-related sexual violence; engaging with Sudanese justice and security actors, including to enhance capacity for the investigation and prosecution of crimes of sexual violence; and, engagement with other relevant actors such as tribal, religious and community leaders, civil society including

women and youth-led organisations and survivors themselves who will be at the heart of all efforts. *“I commend the Government of the Sudan for its commitment to address these egregious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law through the signing of this Framework of Cooperation. This is a critical step towards safeguarding the dignity and rights of all survivors of sexual violence and recognizing their incredible resilience”.*

In Port Sudan, SRSG Patten met with the Vice-President and Deputy Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, and with the Ministers of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Justice and Social Development, with the Attorney General and the Head of the Unit for Combating Violence against Women. She also met with the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator a.i., the United Nations Country Team, gender-based violence service providers, women-led organizations, and visited assistance structures, including shelters and women’s safe spaces, in which she heard firsthand accounts from survivors. The Government of the Sudan welcomed the Special Representative’s offer to deploy a technical team to support the development of an implementation plan. The process will be led by the Ministry of Social Development and will engage other relevant national authorities and institutions, including the Sudanese Armed Forces.

*“For peace to be sustained in Sudan, there is a need for accountability. This agreement seeks to put an end to the cycle of impunity which has been a root cause of decades of continued violations. It signals a collective commitment to ensuring that the horrors of sexual violence become a ghost of the past rather than a fixture of the future”,* concluded SRSG Patten.

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