

Conferencia Modelo de las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York para América Latina y el Caribe
New York Model United Nations Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
NYMUNLAC 2021 – Edición Virtual
5 -8 March 2021

United Nations Security Council (SC)
Interim Technical Note due to the COVID-19 pandemic

“The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war. That is why today I am calling for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives.”

-António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN

Topic A: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict- Missing Persons in Armed Conflict

While the world faces the consequences of the pandemic and citizens all around the world remain in lockdown to protect themselves and their relatives from the virus, some conflicts have not allowed rest to the communities they currently affect.

Since the definition of armed conflict is a broad one, the overall increase in demographic and sector-related violence contributes, to a great extent, to the open conflicts in which more than 6 million disappear per year (ICRC, 2014). Key data from 2020-2021 follows:

- Domestic violence has increased by 20% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The World Health Organization has reported an increase of 37% in violence against women in the Eastern Mediterranean region (WHO, 2021).
- The U.S. Department of Defense’s “budget to counter ISIS has been cut by one-third for fiscal year (FY) 2021, down from \$300 million to \$200 million” (Mulroy et al, 2021).
- There was a fatal increase in violence against the transgender and gender non-conforming community in 2020 (Human Rights Campaign, 2020).
- More than 750,000 deaths were attributed in 2019-2020 to drug dealing and drug violence, especially in Latin America and Southeast Asia (Ritchie, 2019).
- Cumulatively, the Syrian conflict has seen more than 130,000 people go missing (Bomberger, 2020).
- Kashmir, one of the main hot zones to date, reports an accumulated 8,000 missing people across China, India, and Pakistan.
- The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has more than 50,000 active cases in 88 UN member states (OHCHR, 2020).
- Sudan, Mexico, Argentina, and Norway have established the agenda for this year’s UN task force on enforced disappearances by sharing their experiences with violent and non-violent conflict.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), finds itself truly concerned by the particular impact that armed conflicts have over civilians, specifically over groups such as children,

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women, people with disabilities, older people, refugees and internally displaced persons. Therefore the Council has stressed the need for effective assistance and protection of all kinds of civilians in armed conflicts. Throughout 2020, this subject remained in the agenda of the regular sessions of the UNSC, being discussed for the last time during the session of april 19th, in which the members reiterated their commitment to achieve measures that ensure the prevention of armed conflicts and pursue their conclusion.

In addition, the Council continues to encourage the UN as an organism as well as its members to support those countries that have been affected by an armed conflict. They reaffirm the need of strategies that can guarantee the enhancement of long-term recovery and the building of resilience of the distressed population.

Topic B: The Situation in Sudan

As a consequence of some tensions within the Sudanese region easing out, the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement on October 3rd 2020 by the Government of Sudan, the Sudan Revolutionary Front and the Sudan Liberation Movement – Minni Minawi, and the reports from the African Union, the Security Council terminated the UNAMID mandate on New Year's Eve, 2020-2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the gradual return of forces is to be carried out over a period of 6 months. (*Security Council resolution 2559, 22 December 2020*).

Although Sudan has made progress in its democratic transition, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCaprio notes that “political forces are increasingly fragmented” (Security Council, 22 December 2020). The transitional Government is currently undertaking efforts to form a legislative body, based on its constitutional document.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a plethora of difficulties to the world stage, impacting conflicts around the world in many ways. In the specific case of South Sudan, the Report of the Secretary General regarding the Situation in South Sudan details how mandates established by the United Nations in the region (in particular, the UNMISS), have “engaged in widespread activities to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in South Sudan.” Nevertheless, the pandemic has been a major limitation to the correct development of the mission, being an additional factor that contributed to the thwarting of peace negotiations (*Security Council, February 23 2021*).

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Parallel to the bloody protests and rivalries that have taken place as a response to the presence of Sudan's semi-military authority, the country's transitional government's Council of Ministers, led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdook must add to its list of priorities to respond to the health emergency crisis. Since former President Al-Bashir seized power in 1989, the country's public health system has continually degraded, leaving the current government the enormous challenge of combatting the pandemic, while trying to sustain the country from further attacks and trying to revitalize the economy. Although the country's health system does not stand far from Sub-Saharan averages, "conflict, displacement and chronic poverty" have caused big distinctions between rural and urban areas, being the former the most affected (WHO, 2021).

As Under-Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Affairs, DiCaprio notes, a five-month-long shutdown was put in place to stop the spread of the virus. These restrictions resulted in a dramatic decline of economic activity, as well as a loss of 42% of State revenues. Increased spending in emergency health programs amounted to a budget deficit of \$250 million per month. Furthermore, huge inflation and volatility of exchange rates negatively affect the international community's delivery missions" (Security Council, 22 December 2020).

Resolution 2524 outlines how different forces in the Sudanese region have responded positively to the Secretary-General's calls for a global ceasefire to help eradicate the pandemic (Security Council *Res 2524*, 2020). Nevertheless, COVID-19, combined with the intense floodings of the year, have also aggravated humanitarian needs. Large displacements of people have come from the Tigray region (which, although part of Ethiopia, hosts conflict and devastation), placing more weight on the shoulders of the Sudanese government to cope with the crisis. (Security Council, 22 December 2020). It is imperative that the international community keep supplying Sudan with financial assistance.

As per *Resolution 2524(2020)*, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan deployed to Khartoum in October 2020. This fully integrated mission has also established offices in Darfur, the Two Areas and Eastern Sudan, (Security Council, 22 December 2020), to aid in achieving its four objectives: "assisting the political transition; supporting peace processes; bolstering peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law; and promoting the mobilization of economic, development and humanitarian assistance." (Security Council *Res 2524*, 2020). Within this last point, the UNITAMS is providing relief for Covid-19 in hard-to-reach areas.

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The Security Council is to meet once again to discuss the situation in Sudan.

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