Statement by the Chair of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan before the Human Rights Council

7 September 2026

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

Our report *"Fuelling Sudan's conflict: weapons, fighters and external support networks"* highlights two key closely connected findings.

First, how weapons technology, particularly long-range drones, has redefined the battlefields. Second, how these advanced military capabilities are being sustained through external support, including weapons, technology, logistics, training and personnel.

Mr. President,

Both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are increasingly using long-range drones, resulting in attacks now reaching far beyond traditional front lines, and with devastating consequences for civilians.

Civilians have been harmed in their homes, schools, hospitals, markets, displacement sites and places of refuge and while attending weddings, funerals and other community gatherings.

The impact of these drones cannot be measured by counting civilian casualties alone, but must be understood through the services lost, the infrastructure destroyed and the lasting disruption to daily life.

In July, this Council requested us to urgently investigate the situation in and around El Obeid, North Kordofan and to update you during this session. The investigation is ongoing. Repeated RSF drone attacks affected electricity, fuel and other key infrastructure that civilians depended on for water, healthcare and transport. These attacks underscore that these risks remain acute, as civilians continue to face repeated aerial threats, displacement and pressure on already strained essential services in a city under partial siege.

In Kalogi, South Kordofan, successive RSF drone strikes on a kindergarten and a hospital harmed not only those caught in the initial attacks but also those trying to assist the wounded. As a result, 114 were killed including 60 children.

In Da'ein, East Darfur, SAF strikes rendered Ad-Da'ein Teaching Hospital non-functional, killing at least 70 people and depriving more than two million people of access to critical health services.

In Yabus, Blue Nile State, SAF drone attacks struck the main market and nearby water infrastructure, causing extensive damage to shops and markets.

Women and children continue to bear a heavy burden. They were repeatedly among the dead and injured. The attacks often deepen existing inequalities and barriers to essential services. In El-Obeid, the maternity hospital suspended operations after a nearby drone strike by RSF damaged operating theatres and the pharmacy. For children, the destruction of schools, health facilities and other civilian infrastructure affects not only their safety today but also their future development and well-being.

Based on the evidence gathered, we found reasonable grounds to believe that both the SAF and the RSF committed serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law which may amount to war crimes.

Mr. President,

The report also examines how this conflict is being fueled through external interference, and material support.

We found reasonable grounds to believe that a transnational network facilitated RSF military operations, linking individuals and entities in the UAE, Chad, southeastern Libya and Puntland in Somalia. Using air, land and sea routes, the network supplied weapons, drone-related equipment, military material, logistical assistance, and personnel to Nyala and other RSF-held areas in Sudan.

The evidence also indicates that former Colombian military personnel were recruited, trained and deployed to support the RSF. They played an integral role in RSF drone operations, operating and maintaining drone systems, and training personnel, including before and during the takeover of El Fasher, where we documented conduct bearing the hallmarks of genocide. Foreign fighters from South Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia were also identified.

Our investigation into external support to the SAF that may contribute to violations of human rights and IHL is at its initial phase. We will update the Council on this as our work progresses.

States have a responsibility not only to refrain from contributing to violations, but also to take reasonable measures to prevent them where there is a clear and foreseeable risk.

Given the established human rights and IHL violations in Sudan, many of which amount to international crimes, continued support raises serious concerns and may extend responsibility beyond those who directly commit abuses to those who knowingly facilitate or enable them.

Mr. President,

As our work to establish facts, circumstances and root causes of the conflict continues, we are also deeply concerned by the deteriorating environment for documentation and accountability. Survivors, witnesses, journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders continue to face intimidation and harassment by all warring parties, inside and outside the country, including for cooperating with this mission. These reprisals must end.

Many people who spoke with us did so at considerable personal risk. Their courage places a responsibility on the international community not only to document violations, but to act.

Our recommendations include the following:

This senseless war must end. The parties must comply fully with international human rights and humanitarian law, and take all feasible precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects.

States should halt military support emanating from their territory that risks fueling violations and effectively investigate the individuals and entities under their jurisdiction that illicitly support the parties to the conflict.

The Darfur arms embargo must be enforced and its extension across Sudan should be supported.

Evidence must be preserved and made available to independent investigative and judicial bodies. Victims and witnesses must be protected.

Survivors must receive immediate assistance and access to effective remedies and reparations.

Importantly, accountability efforts must extend across the full chain of responsibility, including those who commit, order, finance, supply or otherwise facilitate international crimes.

My colleagues, Mona Rishmawi and Joy Ngozi Ezeilo will be pleased to answer your questions. I thank you.