

Ensuring accountability for the most serious of crimes committed in Darfur

Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to begin by thanking the Prosecutor for her thirty-third report on the situation in Darfur pursuant to Security Resolution 1593, which is her final report to the Council in that capacity.

The United Kingdom would like to express its deep gratitude to the Prosecutor for her unwavering commitment to the pursuit of justice over the past 9 years. The continued work of Ms Fatou Bensouda and her team have played a vital role in the effort towards ensuring accountability for the most serious of crimes committed in Darfur.

Mr President, as detailed by the Prosecutor in her report, the situation in Darfur continues to be characterised by intercommunal violence resulting in the deaths and large-scale displacement of civilians.

We call for an immediate end to ongoing violence across Sudan. In this respect, we also urge the Government of Sudan to implement swiftly the National Plan for Civilian Protection, and we underline the need for accountability for crimes committed before, during, and since the revolution in order for Sudan's transition to succeed.

Mr President, the United Kingdom commends the constructive and sustained dialogue between the ICC and the Government of Sudan, including the facilitation of evidence gathering and access to witnesses, which has enabled significant progress to be made in the case against Mr Abd-Al-Rahman. Here, we particularly welcome the historic visit of the Prosecutor to Sudan, and in particular Darfur, which gave her the opportunity to engage with the victims and affected communities.

Such positive developments are testament to the Government's meaningful engagement with the Court and genuine efforts to fulfil the transitional justice provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement. We urge the Government of Sudan to build on this positive cooperation, in particular by facilitating the prompt transfer of Mr Harun to the Court to be tried alongside Mr Abd-Al Rahman. We believe that a single trial of these two co accused together is essential to avoid re-traumatising the victims and witnesses through multiple trials. The United Kingdom's Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan raised the need for the urgent transfer of Mr Harun with the Government of Sudan this week in Khartoum.

Mr President, the United Kingdom stands ready to assist the Court and the Government of Sudan in facilitating the four ICC arrest warrants which remain outstanding in the Darfur situation, and calls for the surrender of Mr Banda who remains a fugitive from the Court.

Finally, we wish to record our appreciation of the excellent cooperation between the UN and the Office of the Prosecutor, and in this respect we also underline the role UNITAMS can play in supporting the Government of Sudan as they work to deliver accountability and justice for Darfur

In closing, Mr President, I would like to reiterate the United Kingdom's support for the Government of Sudan's important progress toward meeting the calls of the Sudanese people for justice and accountability, as part of our wider support to Sudan's transition to full democracy.