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Statement by Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the situation in El Fasher, North Darfur

(5 June 2024) – The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, strongly reiterates her alarm over the intensification of violence in El Fasher, North Darfur, following her meeting on 3 June with the UN Secretary-General’s Personal Envoy for Sudan, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra. “In my briefing to the UN Security Council on 21 May, I raised alarm over the risks of large-scale violence in El Fasher, where civilians were already being disproportionately affected by indiscriminate attacks. Only a few days later, the warring parties are reportedly continuing to commit deliberate attacks, among others, against critical civilian infrastructures including medical facilities and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where many innocent civilians were already seeking refuge from the unbearable loss and suffering inflicted upon them and their loved ones,” she deplored.

The Special Adviser warns that the warring parties continue to progress with their military campaigns, blatantly disregarding the multiple calls to stop this horrendous violence and to protect civilians, as well as to facilitate safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access. “Between 1 April and 31 May, nearly 130,000 people are estimated to have been displaced due to the fighting in El Fasher. The city has reportedly been sieged, and the access to humanitarian aid and essential services, including water, food, and healthcare, remains severely restricted. Famine is looming in many parts of the city. Safe haven for civilians is effectively being reduced. This is deeply disturbing. It is unquestionable that risk factors and indicators for genocide and related crimes are present, and the risks are increasing. The warring parties *must*, immediately, explicitly and with no space for ambiguity, call for the protection of all civilian populations and respect their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as of the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians. They committed to do this. They must uphold their word and commitment without any further delay,” she reiterated, recalling her previous statements of 15 April 2024, 21 December 2023, 14 November 2023, 5 September 2023, 13 June 2023, 3 November 2022 and 8 September 2022, as well as her briefing to the UN Security Council on 21 May 2024.

In particular, Special Adviser Nderitu expresses serious concern over the reports of ethnically motivated attacks against the non-Arab communities in and near El Fasher, including by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their allied militias. “Violence invites more violence. There are also reports of retaliatory attacks targeted against Arab civilians in the region. If the violence does not stop now, the numerous international, regional, and community-level efforts to durably

restore the already fragile social fabric in the region will risk yet another major setback. We cannot and must not let this happen,” she implored.

“While only warring parties can stop the fighting, the international community also remains responsible to take action to protect the Sudanese people from existing and increasing risk factors of genocide and related crimes. I reiterate my call to the international community, including the UN Security Council, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, as well as the League of Arab States, to take all possible action aimed at urgently protecting the Sudanese civilians and of creating a conducive environment for a peaceful and durable resolution of the conflict. The hostilities must cease immediately and permanently – in El Fasher and in the overall territory of Sudan. Opportunities for coordinated dialogue need to be expedited and in a concerted manner, recognizing the diverse voices of the Sudanese people therein, from civil society, women, and young people to traditional and religious leaders. All venues for dialogue must be explored and accelerated as a matter of urgency,” she underlined.

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