



JOINT STATEMENT BY THE ALPS GROUP REGARDING TALKS IN SWITZERLAND & PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING THE CRISIS IN SUDAN

By **U.S. MISSION GENEVA**

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The Sudanese people have suffered 16 horrific months of war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that has resulted in 10 million people being forced to flee their homes, more than 25 million people plagued by acute hunger, and one million people facing starvation. Responding to the demand of the Sudanese people for greater action by the international community, the United States of America, Switzerland, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the African Union, and the United Nations convened in Switzerland on August 14, 2024, with the objective of taking concrete and immediate action to alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese people, save lives, and achieve a lasting cessation of hostilities.

Building upon the foundation of the Jeddah process, over the last 10 days, the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) Group secured the reopening and expansion of critical humanitarian access routes, received commitments to improve the protection of civilians, particularly women and children, as well as developed a framework to ensure compliance with the Jeddah Declaration and any future agreements between the warring parties.

Using a hybrid negotiating model that combined in-person, proximity, and virtual diplomacy, the ALPS Group partnered with frontline humanitarian responders and directly engaged the RSF and SAF to open access for the delivery of emergency food, medicine, and services to millions of Sudanese in need. The ALPS Group secured guarantees from both parties to the conflict to provide safe and unhindered humanitarian access through two key arteries – the Western border crossing in Darfur at Adre and the Dabbah Road with access through the North and West from Port Sudan – and aid trucks are on the road to provide famine relief in Zamzam Camp and other parts of Darfur. These routes must remain open and safe so we can surge aid into Darfur and begin to turn the tide against famine. Food and starvation cannot be used as a weapon of war. We continue to make progress toward opening an access route through the Sennar junction, and the United Nations is undertaking a feasibility study for routes across the country that can enable aid access. Collectively, securing these routes would expand humanitarian access for nearly 20 million vulnerable Sudanese. We call on all parties to ensure that this urgent flow of aid continues and accelerates. To that end, we also welcome the RSF acceptance of a streamlined notification system to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery, and encourage the SAF to take action on similar proposals.

In the face of ongoing brutal violence and atrocities, including gross violations against women, it is critical that the two warring parties take immediate action toward implementation of the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan of 11 May 2023 in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2724 (2024) and 2736 (2024), adopted on 8 March 2024 and 13 June 2024 respectively, and the latest communique of the African Union Peace and Security Council dated 21 June 2024. To that end, the ALPS Group also worked to advance the protection of civilians, consistent with obligations of the parties under international humanitarian and human rights law and the Jeddah commitments. We have urged both parties, and received the RSF's commitment, to issue command directives to all fighters throughout their ranks to refrain from violations, including violence against women or children, the use of starvation or checkpoints for exploitation, and attacks on humanitarian operations and essential services such as agricultural fields, farmers and operations related to the harvest.

Additionally, the ALPS Group presented to both warring parties a proposal for a compliance mechanism to resolve disputes, receive complaints, and address problems arising in relation to implementation of commitments around the protection of civilians under existing agreements, including the Jeddah Declaration, and international humanitarian and human rights law. We and other partners are ready to work with the parties to operationalize this mechanism.

We appreciate the decision of the RSF to send a senior delegation to Switzerland to engage with the ALPS Group. Though we were in consistent communication with SAF virtually, we regret their decision not to be present, and we believe that limited our ability to make more substantial progress towards key issues, particularly a national cessation of hostilities. The ALPS Group remains open to both parties joining future rounds of talks to urgently relieve Sudanese suffering. We remain committed to answering the call of the people of Sudan to pursue a national cessation of hostilities, secure humanitarian access to every state across the country, and negotiate an immediate cessation of hostilities in areas such as El Fasher, Khartoum, and Sennar.

Out of dedication to the Sudanese people, the ALPS Group will continue to build on the results and momentum created over the last 10 days. We will continue to elevate and integrate the voices of women in the process and broader efforts to improve humanitarian access, protect civilians, and end the war. We call on the international community to honor and increase its pledges of financial support for the humanitarian response in Sudan and the region, including those made in Paris in April 2024. We will continue to build on the foundation of the Jeddah Declaration, under the auspices of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and we thank Switzerland for its generous hosting of this effort.

