

## Call for action to stop atrocious crimes and grave human rights violations in Sudan

22 January 2025

We, the undersigned organisations and individuals, submit this call to express our deepest concern at the grave violations and atrocities that have been committed and are continuing to be committed by both parties and their affiliates in various parts of Sudan within the context of the 20-months long armed conflict. Following the advance of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and their recapture of Wad Madani<sup>1</sup> on 10 January 2025, we are gravely concerned at incidents of revenge attacks, extrajudicial executions, and other acts of violence and intimidation committed by the SAF and its affiliates – including allied Sudan Shield Forces<sup>2</sup> – against particular ethnic groups on the (unsubstantiated) basis of their alleged collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). We call on the international community to ensure that the warring parties comply with their obligations under international humanitarian laws and international human rights laws, and that robust measures are in place to protect Sudanese civilians and vulnerable communities from further violence. We also urge you to condemn the discrimination and hate-driven rhetoric stoking such violence and deploy any diplomatic leverage at your disposal to halt the commission of international crimes – including the possible spectre of genocidal violence in Sudan.

Reports and video footage from multiple sources document horrific acts of violence perpetrated by the SAF and their affiliates, including apparent cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, torture and extrajudicial executions.<sup>3</sup> These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that amount to international crimes.<sup>4</sup> We strongly condemn the targeting of residents of the camps in Gazira State.<sup>5</sup> By all appearances, the patterns of violence committed against residents amount to the deliberate and systematic destruction of their homes and livelihoods. In recent days, the situation has spiralled into a catastrophe with numerous attacks being conducted against residents of *Kanabi*, at least dozens of whom were arbitrarily rounded up and extrajudicially executed, including children and the elderly. In some instances, individuals were reportedly burned alive in their homes. This abhorrent round of revenge attacks has provoked a nationwide outcry and condemnations from major political parties and civil society groups in the country. Reportedly, “death squads” apparently affiliated with the SAF, the Sudan Shield Forces and other allied militia, are responsible for many of the violations.<sup>6</sup> The victims are unarmed civilians who are targeted because of their (real or perceived) ethnic origin, skin colour, and ties to Darfur, Kordofan, South Sudan, and other ‘peripheries’. The individuals targeted are mostly agricultural workers belonging to ‘African’ tribes such as the Tama, Misseriya, Fur, Zaghawa, and Massalit. Perpetrators seek to publicly explain their atrocities by accusing these groups of being the social support base or “collaborators” of the RSF. These claims lack any real credibility and are instead consistent with a

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<sup>1</sup> The capital of Gazira state (200km south of Khartoum).

<sup>2</sup> A militia group led by Abu-Agla Kikel, a commander who defected from the RSF to the SAF in October 2024.

<sup>3</sup> See for e.g., Centre for Information Resilience, “[Violence across Gezira following SAF takeover of Wad Madani](#)”, 17 January 2025; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[Sudan conflict taking more dangerous turn for civilians](#)”, 17 January 2025. Additional material is held on file.

<sup>4</sup> See also UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, “[Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan into violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and related crimes, committed in the Sudan in the context of the conflict that erupted in mid-April 2023](#)” (A/HRC/57/CRP.6), 23 October 2024. Arabic version available [here](#). This and other reports cited describe the prevailing patterns of violations committed by the warring parties since 15 April 2023. The actions of the SAF and its allies in Wad Madani are consistent with these patterns.

<sup>5</sup> Residential areas allocated to agricultural or other workers known as *Kanabi* in Sudanese Arabic.

<sup>6</sup> Centre for Information Resilience, “[Violence across Gezira following SAF takeover of Wad Madani](#)”, 17 January 2025

narrative routinely employed by the SAF, the RSF, and other military and security actors to justify their discriminatory violence.<sup>7</sup>

Since the outbreak of the ongoing armed conflict in April 2023, thousands of unarmed civilians, many of whom originate from Darfur or Kordofan, have been arbitrarily arrested and detained by military and security services.<sup>8</sup> Some of these individuals were subsequently extrajudicially executed in major cities in the northern, eastern and central regions of Sudan. The shocking video footage of tens of young men being paraded on the streets of Wad Madani (on 16 December 2023) before later being executed by the security forces is a vivid reminder of the gravity of the situation.

The longstanding culture of impunity for perpetrators of serious human rights violations is a well-established root cause of recurring atrocities and human rights violations in Sudan, including within the current armed conflict. Residents of Gazira have been regularly victimised by the RSF since its capture of the region in December 2023.<sup>9</sup> Following the defection of former RSF commander Abu-Agla Kikel to the SAF in October 2024, the RSF conducted another wave of revenge attacks against civilians in Gazira.<sup>10</sup> Rather than committing to investigate and prosecute the abuses perpetrated under Kikel's command as an RSF leader, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan – leader of the SAF and de facto head of state – ignored his heinous crimes. Following their recapture of the Wad Madani this month, the SAF is now itself victimising Gazira's residents alongside Kikel's Sudan Shield Forces.

Since 15 April 2023, both the RSF and the SAF have been implicated in the commission of numerous international crimes, including the RSF and allied militia groups' responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possible genocide in West Darfur.<sup>11</sup> At present, the SAF and its affiliates are victimising civilians in Gazira, Kordofan, and other States, while the RSF is continuing its aggressive offensive to control Al-Fashir (North Darfur), and an intense battle for control of Khartoum is expected imminently.

Once again, we draw the attention of the international community to the fact that the armed conflict in Sudan is escalating into a full-blown internal war that will further polarize the Sudanese people along ethnic and tribal lines and may spill over into neighbouring South Sudan<sup>12</sup> and Chad. Discriminatory violence, hate crimes, and escalating public rhetoric calling for the "elimination" of certain Sudanese citizens based on their race or region of origin, in a multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious country, serve as alarming precursors to further atrocity crimes, and increasing public calls to "eliminate" certain Sudanese citizens on racial grounds or because of their regions of origin, in a multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious country, is a precursor to further atrocity crimes, including genocide.

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<sup>7</sup> See for e.g., REDRESS, Darfur Network for Human Rights, ACCESS, and SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law, "[Serious Human Rights Violations Perpetrated in the Context of Mass Civilian Detention in Sudan](#)", September 2024. Arabic version available [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g., fn 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid; Human Rights Watch, "[Sudan: Rapid Support Forces Target Civilians](#)", 10 November 2024.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g., reports of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to the UN Security Council Pursuant to Resolution 1593 (2005) since 15 April 2023; fn 4; Human Rights Watch, "[The Massalit Will Not Come Home' - Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan](#)", 9 May 2024; REDRESS and SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law, "[Ruining a Country, Devastating its People](#)", September 2023; U.S. Department of State, "[Genocide Determination in Sudan and Imposing Accountability Measures](#)", 7 January 2025.

<sup>12</sup> SudanTribune. (2025, January 20). 16 sudanese nationals killed in South Sudan riots. Sudan Tribune.

[https://sudantribune.com/article296285/#google\\_vignette](https://sudantribune.com/article296285/#google_vignette)

## **Recommendations**

### **To States and other actors in a position to influence the warring parties**

- We call on you to ensure that the warring parties comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights laws, and that robust measures are in place to protect Sudanese civilians and vulnerable communities from further violence.
- We also urge you to condemn the discrimination and hate-driven rhetoric stoking such violence and deploy any diplomatic leverage at your disposal to halt the commission of international crimes – including the possible spectre of further genocidal violence in Sudan.

### **To the warring parties**

- All warring parties should respect Sudan's obligations under international humanitarian law concerning the treatment of civilians. The SAF and its affiliates should immediately cease all ethnically motivated extrajudicial executions and ill-treatment of civilians, including camp residents in Gazira.
- Publicly commit to the protection of human rights, and to supporting processes that ensure all perpetrators are held accountable and brought to justice (including commanders under the principle of command responsibility), and that victims and their families receive reparation.
- No amnesties should be (purportedly) provided for crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, torture, enforced disappearance, conflict-related sexual violence, or gross violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law and other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.
- Allowing any official visits requested by reputable independent monitors, including the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan (UN Sudan FFM), the African Union Hybrid Joint Fact-Finding Mission in Sudan (AU Sudan FFM), and relevant UN Special Procedures mandate-holders.

### **To the United Nations Secretary General**

- Urgently call on the commander general of SAF and the Sudanese de facto authorities to ensure that any investigation it leads into recent events in Wad Madani is conducted in accordance with international standards. In this respect, we note that the relationship between the warring parties and the de facto authorities, public prosecution, and judiciary in areas under their control raises significant concerns (including the possibility of the warring parties applying pressure to influence decisions), if not precludes the possibility of prompt, effective, and independent investigations and subsequent criminal proceedings.
- Advise the UN Security Council to hold an urgent follow-up session on protection of civilians in Sudan with the aim of ensuring adoption of a robust resolution in that regard.

### **UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide**

- Consider issuing a statement on the latest developments in Sudan (particularly the recent events in Gezira state);
- Consider requesting an official visit to Sudan or some of its neighbours.
- Consider carrying out a mission to Sudan and/or some of the neighbouring countries as appropriate, coordinating closely with relevant mechanisms, including the UN Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

### **To the UK Government (as penholder on Sudan at the UN Security Council)**

- Call for a special follow up discussion on Sudan at the UN Security Council on recent developments, and protection of civilians;

- Re-double efforts to pass a resolution on Sudan focusing on protection of civilians, particularly vulnerable groups and prevention of further atrocities.
- Explore innovative approaches to Protection of Civilians beyond the UN Security Council framework, emphasizing closer collaboration with grassroots actors for monitoring human rights violations and delivering relief , leveraging diplomatic influence to curtail the role of spoilers on all sides and supporting local community-based initiatives as appropriate.
- Take steps to develop innovative approaches to protecting civilians in Sudan beyond the traditional UN Security Council apparatus, including closer collaboration with grassroots actors on monitoring human rights violations and delivery of humanitarian relief, supporting community-based mediation platforms, and deploying greater diplomatic leverage to curtail the role of spoilers on all sides.

**To the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan (UN Human Rights Council)**

- Urgently request an official visit to Sudan or some of its neighbours (re-doubling such efforts in the case of the UN Sudan FFM).
- Consider issuing a short report or a statement on the most recent developments in Sudan, including recent events in Gazira.

**Signed by:**

1. ACCESS
2. African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)
3. African European for Humanitarian Action and Development, Paris
4. Al Fajr Organization for Peace, Development and Justice, Stockholm
5. Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations
6. Darfur Bar Association (DBA)
7. Darfur Initiative for Peace and Justice
8. Darfur Victims Support Organization
9. Emergency Lawyers - Sudan
10. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
11. Justice Africa Sudan (JAS)
12. REDRESS
13. Rights for Peace
14. Rise for Rights and Justice
15. SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law
16. Sudan Human Rights Hub
17. Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker (STPT)
18. Sudan's Doctors for Human Rights
19. Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM)
20. Sudanese women in Diaspora for Ending the War
21. Wind Organization for Development and Humanitarian Aid

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