



General Assembly

Distr.: General
13 December 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-third session

19 June–14 July 2023

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Joint written statement* submitted by African Centre for
Democracy and Human Rights Studies, Interfaith
International, Rencontre Africaine pour la defense des droits
de l'homme, non-governmental organizations in special
consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Human Rights Situation in the Sudan

The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) is utterly devastated by the outbreak of armed confrontations in the Sudan. The ongoing conflict, which pits the Sudanese Armed Forces and its paramilitary formation i.e., the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), hits both rural and urban areas. The armed confrontations are especially destructive as both parties are, in fact, using the state's economic resources and military capabilities to fight this war. We draw attention to Communiqué PSC/HoSG/COMM.1156 (2023) adopted by AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on 27 May 2023 in which AUPSC expressed its "deep concern" and strongly condemned "the ongoing senseless and unjustified conflict ... which has resulted in an unprecedented dire humanitarian situation, indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians, wanton destruction of infrastructure, including facilities of diplomatic missions in gross violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law (IHL/IHRL)."

In his statement before the 36th Special Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 11 May 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Volker Türk strongly condemned "this wanton violence, in which both sides had trampled international humanitarian law, notably the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution." The military confrontations caused immense damage to human lives and livelihoods, including destruction of homes, food stores and hospitals and disrupted supply of electricity and water service, conditions that render life impossible. This catastrophic humanitarian situation is due to the use of aerial bombardments and shelling by heavy artillery in densely populated civilian areas, particularly in the Sudan's capital city Khartoum.

The ongoing violence provoked the forced displacement of millions of civilians, deepened the economic decline and increased inflation rates. The ability to access food in some parts of the country, including Khartoum is sharply declining. The revised Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2023 for the Sudan, published on 18 May 2023, estimates that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in the Sudan has increased by 57% from 15.8 million, in November 2022, to 24.7 million in May 2023. To foot the bill, the HRP requires US\$2.56 billion, an increase of US\$800 million, making it the largest appeal ever issued for the Sudan. This sharp increase in the numbers of people in need of humanitarian assistance and the steady decline in access to basic needs suggest that at least 20% households face complete lack of food and/or other basic needs, which is above the threshold of famine/humanitarian catastrophe according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), also known as IPC scale. This classification indicates that starvation, death, and destitution are evident; when acute malnutrition prevalence exceeds 30%; and mortality rates exceed 2/10000/day.

The humanitarian situation is expected to worsen in the country due to the Sudan's decision to expel Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the Sudan. Such decision undermines the 4 June 2020 agreement between the Sudan and the UN Security Council on the establishment of the Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) which, among other things, targets mobilizing of international assistance, coordinating humanitarian work, and offering technical support to the country.

In El-Ginnena, capital city of West Darfur State, armed militiamen took advantage of the current chaotic situation and inflicted heavy casualties among the civilian population. They completely destroyed government buildings, hospitals and medical centers, food stores and marketplaces thus imposing conditions of living that bring destruction in whole or part of the inhabitants of the area. In fact, massive killings, destruction of human habitat and forced displacement of civilians due to attacks by nomad militiamen against Massaliet African tribe, have been increasing dramatically since December 2019. On 28 July 2020, the former United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) expressed its deep concern about the increase in violent attacks on civilians, rural communities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in various localities in Darfur region.

ACDHRS draws attention to some serious, yet largely ignored factors underneath armed conflicts and political unrest in the Sudan. These factors are the purposeful socio-economic exclusion of certain segments of society, racism, discrimination, tribalism and manipulation of ethnic differences. The proliferation of hate speech and incitement to ethnic violence, particularly through Sudanese animated social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, and Clubhouse) are growing unabated in recent years, yet they were met by silence from the authorities. Hate speech is being used by anti-democracy forces to sabotage the political transition towards civilian-led rule and to undermine peaceful coexistence. The racist phenomena rear their ugly heads at a time of complicated political change and unbearable socio-economic hardships, which are breeding grounds for further discrimination, ethnic manipulation, and violence. Top-ranking officials, politicians, and opinion-makers occasionally utter ethnically insensitive rhetoric, often in response to what they consider as threat to inherited economic and political gains by elite groups. Ethnically incentive remarks are also used to express frustration to the slow efforts to meet the peace dividends and to rehabilitate and heal the victims of internal armed conflicts.

Hate speech and manipulation of tribal differences instigated what seem to be carefully orchestrated deadly inter-tribal confrontations in hitherto safe parts of the country in the Blue Nile State in mid-July, early September, and mid-October 2022. Typical confrontations between the Misseriya nomads, the Nuba and other indigenous African tribes were reported in Lagawa town and its environs in West Kordofan State since mid-October 2022.

Conclusion :

1. ACDHRS strongly condemns the ongoing armed confrontations between the Sudanese army and RSF, which caused the killings and injuries or violent assaults against thousands of individuals, especially civilians, including members of diplomatic corps and international humanitarian workers. So far, the confrontations forced more than one million civilians to flee their homes and led to the massive destruction of civilian installations, including hospitals and disrupted electricity and water services in Khartoum and other parts of the country.
2. ACDHRS calls on the warring parties to observe unconditional cessation of hostilities, put immediate halt to aerial bombardments and shelling inside residential areas and avoid further bloodshed, protect civilians, especially women and children, establish humanitarian corridors and to facilitate access to humanitarian aid to civilians caught up in the conflict.
3. The precarious human rights and humanitarian situation in the Sudan requires close follow-up from the HRC, therefore, we strongly recommend that the Council establishes an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate the situation prevailing in the Sudan since 15 April 202
4. We also recommend that HRC appoints an Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan to support the Council's efforts and to mobilize the international community towards the ongoing human rights and humanitarian crisis in the country.
5. Resurgent violence in the Sudan is a matter of grave concern. ACDHRS is particularly concerned about the growing hate speech and calls for ethnic hatred, vilification, and ethnic profiling as well as warmongering, including incitement to the killings of pro-democracy activists and advocates of civilian rule that have been uttered by some the Sudanese clergyman.
6. We, hereby, ring the alarm bells that racism and discrimination in the Sudan are deepening inter-communal animosities, widening national divide and may eventually lead to a full-blown internal war reminiscent of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide. ACDHRS urgently calls upon all stakeholders, including the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council to intensify their efforts and prevent further deterioration of the situation.

7. A national campaign on tolerance and peaceful coexistence should be component of any future peace deal in the Sudan. Such campaign should develop a comprehensive multidisciplinary National Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination in order to fulfill the Sudan's obligations under the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which were agreed upon at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Measures entailed in such Plan of Action should effectively address the ongoing injustices and heal the wounds of the past.
8. ACDHRS calls on the Sudanese civil society and the Sudan-focused regional and international non-governmental organizations and media to mainstream issues of ethnic hatred, intolerance, and racial profiling in the Sudan in their agendas and to design advocacy plans that address the growing dangers posed by these phenomena.
9. Special efforts should be made to address the consequences of the ongoing ethnic-cleansing campaigns against indigenous tribes in Darfur as has been demonstrated by the attacks against civilians in Al-Ginnena, West Darfur State since the outbreak of the armed confrontation on 15th April 2023. These new waves of ethnic violence are characterized by massive destruction of lives and livelihoods, the complete destruction of hospitals, marketplaces, food stores, and government buildings.

Sudan Documentation Centre Pan-African Forum on Rights and Development, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

IPC Scale, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrated_Food_Security_Phase_Classification

Resolution S/RES/2524 (2020) adopted by the UN Security Council on 3 June 2020, [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2524\(2020\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2524(2020))

UNAMID Condemns violent attacks on peaceful protestors, civilians and IDPs in North, South and West Darfur, 28 July 2020, <https://unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-condemns-violent-attacks-peaceful-protestors-civilians-and-idps-north-south-and-west-darfur>