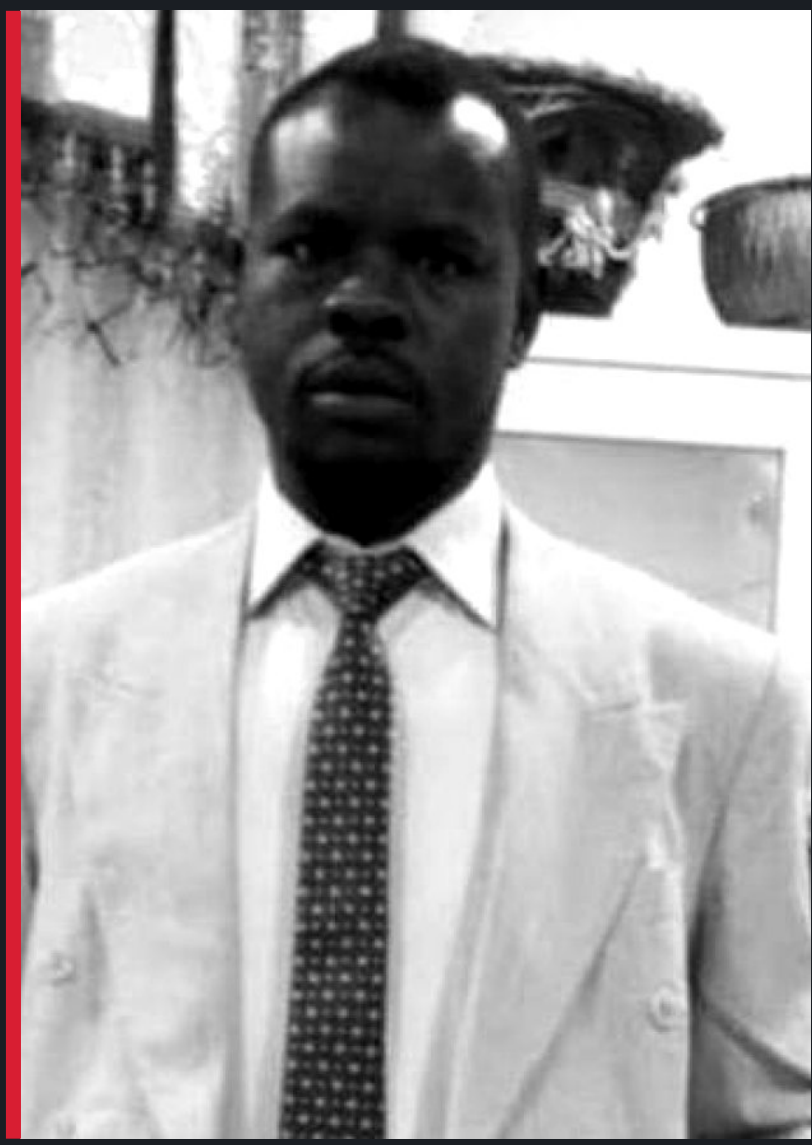

Advocacy dossier

Khamis Arabab

خميس أرباب

Killed Sudan

Khamis Arabab was a lawyer in El Geneina who spent two years defending victims of attacks on IDP camps. He was killed on 30 May 2023 when members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked his house.

01

The case at a glance

Khamis Arabab was a lawyer in El Geneina who spent two years defending victims of attacks on IDP camps. He was killed on 30 May 2023 when members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked his house.

Status	Country
Killed	**Sudan**

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Order a full, independent, and impartial investigation into the killing of Khamis Arabab, with timely public reporting on findings.

02 Identify and prosecute those responsible, both the direct perpetrators and any state officials who ordered, enabled, or covered up the killing.

03 Provide effective reparation to the family of Khamis Arabab.

04 Take immediate steps to protect other defenders working in the same field from similar attacks.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Extrajudicial killing International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6

Threats and intimidation UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

03

How the case unfolded

15 April 2023

Context

Armed conflict erupts in Khartoum

Armed conflict broke out in Khartoum between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, spreading rapidly to Darfur and escalating militia violence in West Darfur.

24 April 2023

Threats and intimidation

Phone threats against the Krinding victims' lawyers

A lawyer on the committee representing victims of the 2019 attack on Krinding camp told Human Rights Watch that he and other committee members began receiving anonymous phone threats on 24 April 2023, the day fighting reached El Geneina. Human Rights Watch lists Khamis Arbab among the committee's lawyers.

May 2023

Threats and intimidation

Death threats issued to Khamis Arabab

According to a Darfur Bar Association announcement in May 2023, Khamis Arabab and his colleague Mohammed Ahmed Kudia received death threats from militia members.

28 May 2023

Context

Colleague Mohammed Ahmed Kudia killed

Mohammed Ahmed Kudia, human rights defender and lawyer, was killed by members of the Rapid Support Forces. His house was burned down and his property looted.

30 May 2023

Killing

Khamis Arabab killed in attack on his house

Khamis Arabab was killed when members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked his house in El Geneina.

11 June 2023

Context

Colleague Khidir Sulieman Abdelmageed killed

Khidir Sulieman Abdelmageed, head of the human rights organisation Afkar, was killed on the road in El Geneina while attempting to flee his house after receiving death threats.

9 May 2024

Other act

Human Rights Watch documents the killing of El Geneina lawyers

In its report on the 2023 attacks on El Geneina, Human Rights Watch named Khamis Arbab Ishaq (Khamis Arabab) among four lawyers killed between late April and June 2023, three of whom served on the committee for victims of the 2019 Krinding camp attack. It said it could not corroborate whether they were killed because of their work. A lawyer interviewed by Human Rights Watch gave the date of his death as 16 May 2023.

July 2026

Context

Port Sudan court sentences RSF leaders in absentia over El Geneina

A court in Port Sudan sentenced Rapid Support Forces leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo and 15 other RSF figures, including West Darfur commander Abdul Rahman Juma Barkallah, to death in absentia for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in El Geneina, including the June 2023 killing of Governor Khamis Abakar. Published reports do not say whether the killings of lawyers in the city formed part of the case.

9 July 2026

Context

ICC reports progress in El Geneina investigation

International Criminal Court Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan told Reuters that new evidence linked crimes committed in El Geneina and El Fasher to leadership levels. No public arrest warrants had been issued, and she said court rules prevented her from saying whether any had been sought.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: this record was checked again. No investigation into the killing of Khamis Arabab has been reported. In July 2026 a court in Port Sudan sentenced Rapid Support Forces leaders to death in absentia over crimes in El Geneina, and the International Criminal Court reported progress in its El Geneina investigation, but neither has been reported to cover his killing. Sources differ on the date of his death: Front Line Defenders gives 30 May 2023, while a lawyer quoted by Human Rights Watch gave 16 May 2023. Human Rights Watch named him, with Tareg Hassan Yagoub Elmalik and El Sadeg Mohammed Ahmed Haroun, among lawyers for the victims of the 2019 Krinding camp attack who were killed in 2023.

Background and Work

Khamis Arabab was a lawyer and member of the Darfur Bar Association based in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state. For at least two years prior to his death, he focused his legal practice on defending victims of attacks on camps for internally displaced persons in and around El Geneina. He also provided legal aid to victims of human rights violations across the wider Darfur region, working in a context marked by recurrent violence, impunity, and the targeting of displaced communities.

West Darfur had seen waves of displacement and militia attacks in the years leading up to 2023. Camps for IDPs around El Geneina were repeatedly targeted, and legal representation for survivors was scarce. Khamis took on cases that exposed patterns of violence and sought accountability in a context where such work carried mounting risk.

Threats and the Escalation of Violence

In May 2023, the Darfur Bar Association issued an announcement stating that Khamis Arabab and his colleague Mohammed Ahmed Kudia had received death threats from militia members. The threats were linked to their work on cases concerning attacks on IDP camps in El Geneina.

On 15 April 2023, armed conflict erupted in Khartoum between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group that had grown out of the Janjaweed militias. The conflict spread quickly to Darfur, where RSF units and allied militias escalated attacks on civilian populations, particularly in West Darfur. El Geneina became a focal point of violence, with targeted killings, looting, and arson reported throughout May and June.

The Killing

On 30 May 2023, members of the Rapid Support Forces attacked Khamis Arabab's house in El Geneina. He was killed in the assault. The attack came two days after the killing of Mohammed Ahmed Kudia, whose house was also burned down and his property looted by RSF members on 28 May 2023.

Twelve days later, on 11 June 2023, Khidir Sulieman Abdelmageed, head of the human rights organisation Afkar and a colleague of Khamis in the human rights community, was killed on the road in El Geneina while attempting to leave his house after receiving death threats. All three men were human rights defenders working in the same city. All three were killed within two weeks.

Context and Pattern

The killings of Khamis Arabab, Mohammed Ahmed Kudia, and Khidir Sulieman Abdelmageed took place against the backdrop of widespread violence in West Darfur in May and June 2023. Human rights defenders, lawyers, and activists documenting abuses or providing legal representation to victims found themselves directly targeted. The attacks on their homes, the death threats, and the manner of their killings suggest a pattern of reprisal for their work.

Khamis Arabab had witnessed the outbreak of violence in West Darfur and had worked to document and litigate the abuses committed against displaced communities. His killing, alongside those of his colleagues, reflects the collapse of protection for human rights defenders in the region during the 2023 conflict. No investigation into his death had been announced in the reports that documented it, and no one has been reported held accountable.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/khamis-arabab/

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