Sudan: UN Security Council must take urgent action to protect civilians

Letter · Sudan · 19 June 2024

To Members of the United Nations Security Council,

We are a group of 118 feminist, women's human rights, and human rights groups and organizations, and we write to express our grave concern about the mass atrocities and conflict-induced famine in Sudan. We call on the members of the Security Council to take concrete measures to protect civilians, including women and girls, where violations of International Humanitarian Law amounting to crimes against humanity are taking place by both warring parties of the war, namely the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Civilians, in particular women and girls, are bearing the brunt of this cruel war, under the world's watch. We remind the Security Council members, as signatories to the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, of their responsibility to protect civilians in Sudan.

In this war, approximately 10.5M citizens have been displaced, a majority of which are women and children. According to latest estimations, 2.5 million could die of starvation by September. In the last year, 30,000+ civilians lost their lives, and 24M+ currently face human-made famine, especially women and children. There are 97+ women missing. More than 80% of hospitals are out of service either due to destruction and targeted shelling, or their take-over and transformation into military bases by warring parties. Power cuts are jeopardizing the lives of 219,000+ pregnant women who rely on the services of midwives. Many women have lost their lives. In addition, "hundreds of women and girls died of lack of medications, SGBV survivors have no access to medical support or rape kits, and hundreds of cases of rape were confirmed from Khartoum, Darfur, and other conflict areas within the last year where numbers confirmed do not represent the actual numbers (since) the security conditions and stigma prevent many women from reporting these crimes. On the other hand, dozens of women and girls are stranded in fighting areas, facing increasing life-threatening risks (where) almost 100% of women groups in Sudan lost all their belongings and (are currently) working with minimum capacity".

Sudan is currently experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises globally. The continued fighting in El Fashir, despite warnings from the international community, is threatening the lives of over 3M people, mostly women and children. The massacre and ethnic cleansing of the Masalit in El Geneina of west Darfur last year is about to be repeated against civilians in El Fashir of North Darfur. Millions are trapped in the city without access to food or a safe route to leave conflict areas. In Khartoum, Kordofan and Aljazeera, civilians are trapped in vicious cycles of violence and hunger. The belligerents' obstruction of humanitarian aid and use of starvation as a weapon of war have led to a looming human-made famine in conflict areas of Sudan. In Kalma, children are dying of hunger

in IDP camps, according to local leaders.

Women's groups and local response initiatives, including health workers, bear the responsibility of providing SGBV victims and survivors with emergency support, opening public kitchens to address the current famine, documenting atrocities and crimes perpetrated, and calling for an immediate ceasefire. At the same time, they get arbitrarily arrested, threatened, have their houses looted, are smeared as traitors by the warring parties, and even killed. Moreover, "various reports from multiple sources that specifically address the situation of Sudanese women indicated that the RSF carried out kidnappings, detention, slavery, and various forms of sexual abuse, in addition to electronic threats and harassment, mass rapes, and assassinations."

The war in Sudan is fueled by the continuous supply of weapons and financial resources from other member States of the United Nations. It is well documented that the UAE has provided support to RSF while other countries including Iran and Russia have supported SAF. The UN Security Council (UNSC) must take action to end all forms of weapon supplies to the warring parties. The cost of inaction by the UNSC on the situation in Sudan is prolonging the suffering and increasing the number of lives lost to violence and hunger.

Therefore, we urge the UN Security Council to take prompt measures to:

- Urge the warring parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law
- Protect civilians and protect women and girls under the UNSC Resolution 1325 specifically addressing women's human rights in conflict and create a monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the widespread conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in the Sudan war
- Create a mechanism to guarantee immediate and unconditional access for humanitarian aid across fighting lines and borders
- Create safe corridors for humanitarian aid organizations and groups, ensure the ability of humanitarian relief groups and organizations to operate safely and provide the direly needed support for the Sudanese people, especially women and children
- Immediately restore telecommunications across the country
- Ensure that accountability is guaranteed against warring parties, namely both SAF and RSF, for the war crimes committed and genocide perpetrated against certain tribes in Darfur during this brutal and indiscriminate war
- Extend the arms embargo on Darfur to all of Sudan and create effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the embargo
- Refer the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) so that the ICC's jurisdiction is extended to include all conflict areas in Sudan where war crimes and crimes against humanity were allegedly committed.

Signatories:

1. Abolition Feminism for Ending Sexual Violence, UK

2. Action Transformation Network
3. African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
4. African Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders
5. Africans Rising
6. Almostgball for Enlightenment and Development
7. ALTSEAN-Burma
8. Amplifying Impact
9. Anuradha
10. Association for Progressive Communications – APC
11. Association pour la soridalite au Travail
12. AWID
13. BLAST Frst Ltd
14. Bloom
15. CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice
16. Centre for Women's Awareness and Development
17. CHOICE for youth and sexuality
18. CIVICUS
19. Coalition for Genocide Response
20. Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders CSHRDs www.cshrds.org
21. Community Development and Sustainability Organization (CDS)Kenya
22. CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)
23. Dada Yangu
24. Delete Nothing
25. Delta Football Club, Pakistan
26. Democracy Without Borders-Kenya Chapter
27. DIWA
28. Dristi Nepal
29. Eagles Empowered to Soar Inc
30. Egyptian Front for Human Rights
31. El Nadeem Center
32. Equality Fund
33. Femena
34. Feminist antimilitarist collective, Sarajevo

35. feminist consulting collective
36. Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO)
37. Feminist Dissent
38. Feminitt Caribbean
39. FHC
40. Global care for health support initiative
41. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
42. Global Fund for Women
43. Good Health Community Programmes
44. Governance Programming Overseas – Sudan (GPO)
45. Helping hands Foundation
46. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
47. Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
48. International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)
49. International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
50. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
51. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
52. Intervention Council for women in Africa
53. Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh
54. Kenya Human Rights Commission
55. Let's Talk Period!
56. Mahila Janachetana Kendra
57. Mexiro AC
58. Mudra Social Welfare Society
59. Nairasha Legal Support
60. Nassawiyat
61. National institute of public administration
62. Nforjeu Limited
63. NOOR
64. Nora organization for combating violence against women and girls
65. One Love Ethiopia Tour
66. Pan African Positive Women's Coalition-Zimbabwe
67. PAX – Netherlands

68. Polycom Girls
69. Population and Development Initiative
70. Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice
71. Rights for peace
72. Rise Initiative for Women’s Right Advocacy-RiWA
73. Rural Development Association
74. Gender Justice & Health Thematic Group, PHM
75. SEWA Nepal
76. She Impacts
77. SITABICHA DREAM SHG.
78. Social Welfare and Agricultural Development Organization
79. Society for women’s Education and Awareness Development
80. Spring of Wellness
81. Sudanese Women Rights Action (SUWRA)
82. SUKUAMIS
83. Sustainable Human Empowerment SHE Associates
84. Sustainable Translations
85. Syrian Female Journalists Network (SFJN)
86. Tagoloan Gender Advocacy Group (TAGAD)
87. Taskeen Health Initiative
88. Tawonga Community Based Organization
89. The Circle
90. The Menstrual Project
91. The Missing Third Project
92. The Progressive
93. The Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in Southwest Asia and North Africa (WHRDMENA Coalition)
94. The Stella Nyanzi Foundation
95. The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
96. Think Africa Ltd
97. UN Program, Occidental College
98. United Funding and Development for Underage Mothers (UFDUM), Inc.
99. UNITED PEOPLE GLOBAL ORGANISATION

100. Universitas Gadjah Mada
101. Urgent Action Fund Latin America and the Caribbean
102. UTTHAN
103. Wilde Ganzen Foundation
104. WILPF
105. Women Development Fund (WODEF)
106. Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRDIC)
107. Women in Black Against War
108. Women Living Under Muslim Laws
109. Women Now for Development
110. Women on Web
111. Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling – Palestine
112. Women's International Peace Centre
113. Women's Regional Network
114. Women4GlobalFund
115. Young Feminist Solidarity with Palestine
116. التحالف الديمقراطي للمحامين السودانيين – Democratic Coalition of Sudanese Lawyers
117. منظمة أندي للتنمية وحقوق الإنسان – Andy for Development and Human Rights

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