

Advocacy Brief: Addressing Human Rights Violations in Darfur, Sudan

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Introduction

Since April 15, 2023, Darfur has witnessed a significant **escalation in human rights violations** and breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and the obstruction of humanitarian aid. From 16 December 2023 to 15 November 2024, the OHCHR estimated the number of civilians killed in Sudan to 3,933, with North Darfur being one of the most affected States. Recently, several indiscriminate attacks on marketplaces and displacement camps sheltering unarmed civilians have been documented including the attacks on 14 February 2025 on the Abou Shok and Zamzam displacement camps, forcing hundreds of thousands of displaced people to flee.

OMCT partners' organizations have reported numerous cases of **civilian deaths, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, and repeated looting of humanitarian aid convoys** across Central, North, South, and West Darfur. Violations were committed by both the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), with RSF responsible for looting aid and targeting civilians, while SAF carried out indiscriminate aerial bombardments, causing additional casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Key challenges

The ongoing conflict in Darfur is marked by a **lack of accountability** for grave human rights abuses. The continued **impunity** of perpetrators exacerbates the humanitarian crisis, endangers civilian populations, and undermines the prospects for peace and justice. Additionally, **human rights defenders, particularly women's rights activists**, face targeted violence, displacement, and repression, forcing them to flee the country and severely restricting their ability to document and address these violations while working in exile. The US aid cut also weakens CSO's work.

The violations in Darfur have led to extensive **civilian suffering**, mass displacement, and deepening humanitarian crises. **Sexual violence** has been systematically used as a weapon of war, disproportionately affecting women and girls. **Arbitrary detentions** and **enforced disappearances** have created a climate of fear, further silencing dissent and obstructing justice.

Humanitarian aid remains blocked or looted, depriving vulnerable populations in desperate need of essential resources such as food, medical supplies, and shelter.

Recommendations

1. **Immediate Cessation of Hostilities:** Diplomatic pressure must be exerted to ensure an immediate ceasefire and initiation of negotiations without preconditions.
2. **Protection of Civilians and Defenders:** Implement stronger security measures to protect human rights defenders, women's rights activists, and displaced civilians from violence and harassment.
3. **End the Use of Airstrikes on Civilian Areas:** Ban the use of heavy artillery and aerial bombardments in civilian-populated regions.
4. **Facilitate Humanitarian Aid Access:** Ensure safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid by holding RSF and SAF accountable for attacks on aid convoys.
5. **Provide resources to Human Rights Defenders:** closing the gap of the US aids cut and the major impact on the documentation and advocacy work of CSOs.
6. **Support for Women's Rights Defenders:** Provide protection, resources, healthcare, psychosocial support and safe spaces for women defenders, ensuring their safety and ability to continue their advocacy.
7. **Accountability for Perpetrators:** Strengthen mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable, including extending the ICC's jurisdiction over all of Sudan and supporting independent investigations.
8. **Empower Fact-Finding Mechanisms (FFM):** Strengthen and support the HRC and ACHPR-established FFM to conduct on-ground investigations.

Yalla Narsud

Mr Abdulhafeez Ali Abdulrahman Ishag jedoaliali@gmail.com

Zula Club

Ms Nadeen Adam Issa Adam nadeenadam53@gmail.com

Awafy

Mr Musbah Issa Mohammed Adam musbah.issa@awafy.org

Darfur Women's Rights Defenders Coalition

Ms Awatif Ahmed Isshag Osman awatifsudani2020@gmail.com

Sudan Human Rights Hub

Mr Moneim Adam moneim@sudanhrh.org

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