

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan

10 September 2024

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted that the conflict in Sudan has persisted for over sixteen months, with civilians suffering the most from hostilities between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Despite promises from both sides to protect civilians, violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights continue. Thousands of civilian casualties have resulted from indiscriminate attacks, while infrastructures like hospitals and schools have been destroyed. The situation is compounded by the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, with 172 victims documented, predominantly women and girls. Ethnically motivated violence has also escalated, notably targeting the Masalit community. Civic space is shrinking, with emergency laws restricting civil society and media, and arbitrary detentions based on political or ethnic identity are on the rise. The conflict has displaced over 10.7 million people internally and 2.1 million to neighbouring countries, leading to widespread food insecurity and a looming risk of famine. The UN Office continues its efforts to document violations, advocate for accountability, and support peacebuilding initiatives, but stresses the urgency for international action to end the violence and promote a civilian transition.

Mr. Mohammed Chandi Othman, Member of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) for the Sudan, presented the report and noticed that the IFFM has conducted an extensive investigation into the ongoing conflict, despite being denied access to Sudan itself. The report's findings reveal widespread human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed by both the SAF and the RSF. These include indiscriminate attacks on civilians, airstrikes, heavy artillery shelling in densely populated areas like Khartoum and Darfur, and the destruction of critical infrastructure. Both sides are implicated in war crimes such as arbitrary detention, torture, and the obstruction of humanitarian aid, while the RSF and its allied militias have also committed crimes against humanity, including sexual violence, ethnic-based attacks, and the use of child soldiers. The Masalit community in El Geneina has been particularly targeted with large-scale killings, torture, and persecution. The report emphasizes several **key recommendations**: 1. The urgent need for a ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian aid; 2. The deployment of an independent force to protect civilians; 3. The extension of the arms embargo across Sudan; 4. And the expansion of the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction. Additionally, the establishment of a victim's support and reparations office is crucial to address the needs of those affected by the conflict.

H.E. Mr. Alfaith Mohamed Eisa Tayfoor, Attorney General of the Sudan and Chair of the National Committee for the Investigation of Crimes and Violations, highlighted several critical issues related to the ongoing conflict in Sudan. He emphasized the committee's commitment to fair trials and accountability, reporting that 18,741 cases had been investigated, including those involving members of the regular forces. The judiciary has been proactive in addressing impunity, with numerous cases already referred to national courts and suspects pursued both domestically and internationally. He condemned the atrocities committed by the RSF, accusing them of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The RSF has allegedly targeted civilians, particularly the Masalit ethnic group in West Darfur, resulting in over 5,000 deaths and thousands of injuries. The RSF was also accused of committing sexual violence, forcibly recruiting children, and engaging in systematic looting and destruction of infrastructure. Additional atrocities included the extrajudicial executions of civilians, attacks on people with disabilities, and widespread violence against the elderly. The Attorney General highlighted further violations by the RSF, including prison breakouts that freed thousands of inmates, recruitment of mercenaries, and attacks on civilian airports, diplomatic missions, and humanitarian

aid convoys. The RSF's actions also impacted key sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and energy, causing significant material damage. To conclude, he enlisted some key recommendations, including supporting the National Committee for Investigation, ending the Fact-Finding Mission's mandate, pressuring the UAE to cease its support of the RSF, and assisting Sudan in recovering looted property. He also called for establishing a compensation fund for victims and classifying the RSF as a terrorist organization.

Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, raised concerns regarding the ongoing human rights and humanitarian crisis in Sudan, specifically highlighting the risk of genocide. Since 2022, the Special Adviser has issued multiple warnings about violations in Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Gezira, and has briefed the UN Security Council on the gravity of the situation. She added that all risk factors and indicators of genocide are present in Sudan, with serious allegations that such crimes may have already been committed. The violence, ongoing for over 500 days, continues to spread across the country, with civilians disproportionately affected by systematic and indiscriminate attacks. The use of heavy weaponry, airstrikes, looting, and targeted violence against civilians, including torture, detention, and sexual violence, were emphasized. The deliberate destruction of homes, land, and essential services, alongside rampant hate speech and incitement, has deepened ethnic cleavages, particularly affecting non-Arab communities such as the Masalit, Zaghawa, and Fur, as well as Arab civilians. In addition, the Special Advisor called attention to the systemic targeting of the Masalit ethnic group in Darfur by the RSF and allied militias, with deliberate and brutal attacks aimed at destroying the community, including widespread killings, sexual violence, and deprivation of basic needs, such as water and electricity. Reports from Chadian refugee camps suggest that young men and boys have been specifically targeted. The use of derogatory language, amplified by social media, further incites violence and glorifies atrocities. The Special Adviser emphasized that impunity for past crimes in Darfur, including genocide and related crimes, has contributed to the current violence. Holding perpetrators accountable is essential to preventing further atrocities. In this context, she underlined the importance of the work of the IFFM for Sudan in collective evidence and addressing the root causes of the violence, calling for continued international support for the Mission. Finally, she recognized the efforts of international and regional actors, including the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in facilitating humanitarian access and promoting peace.

Mr. Abdel Salam Sidahmed, Chairperson of the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM), commended the IFFM for the Sudan for its diligent efforts despite significant challenges and urged Member States to take the report's findings seriously. He emphasized that the geographical expansion of the conflict in Sudan has led to a significant escalation in violations of IHL and human rights laws, resulting in one of the largest displacement crises globally. Mr. Sidahmed asserted that the humanitarian crisis in Sudan is not an accidental outcome of the war, but a direct result of systematic violations committed by both the RSF and the SAF. Both parties have shown disregard for international norms, particularly concerning civilian protection. After over 500 days of war, it has become clear that this is a war of attrition against Sudanese civilians, with both sides responsible for atrocities, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and sexual violence. The RSF has continued to invade new territories, leaving destruction and displacement in its wake, while the SAF has conducted airstrikes in populated areas, harming civilians and damaging essential infrastructure such as hospitals and camps for internally displaced persons. Mr. Sidahmed also called attention to the human aspect of the crisis, reminding the Council that beyond statistics are real people whose lives have been shattered. He stressed the need to focus on justice, redress, and reparations for the victims of the conflict, and voiced strong support for the FFM's recommendations, particularly those aimed at protecting civilians and ensuring accountability. In this regard, he advocated for expanding the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to cover the entirety of Sudan and called on the HRC to extend the IFFM's mandate for another year. As the conflict continues, further investigations are necessary to

collect firsthand information and verify allegations. He noted that accountability is crucial to addressing impunity in Sudan, which has been a key driver of the ongoing conflict. Apart from the ICC, the IFFM remains the only international body focused on accountability, evidence collection, and preservation throughout Sudan, and Sidahmed urged the Council to view the IFFM as complementary to other regional and international mechanisms.

Interactive dialogue

61 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The vast majority of delegations expressed deep concern about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan**, with several noting the scale of displacement and the dire need for humanitarian aid, and, therefore, stressing the importance of securing humanitarian access to affected areas.

Germany, Netherlands, and Japan raised **specific concerns about the impacts of the conflict on vulnerable groups**, particularly women and children, who have been disproportionately affected by the violence and human rights violations.

A significant number of countries, including **EU Member States, Ghana, Malawi, and New Zealand**, emphasized the **importance of accountability to break the cycle of violence and ensure justice for victims**. In this regard, they recognized the key role of the IFFM and other internal mechanisms such as the ICC.

Other groups of countries, including the **African Group** and the **Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf**, highlighted the **urgent need for a ceasefire** and peaceful resolution to the conflict. Similarly, some delegations, including **Egypt, Niger, and China** called for dialogue and peace processes led by Sudanese actors, with support from international and regional organizations.

A smaller group of countries, including **Libya, Iran, Syrian Arab Republic, and Venezuela** focused on the **importance of respecting Sudan's territorial integrity** and avoiding external interference in its internal affairs, and advocated for a Sudanese-led solution to the conflict.

Eritrea underlined that any efforts to resolve the conflict must adhere strictly to the principles of sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, and recalled that Sudan has repeatedly rejected resolution 44/2 which established the mandate of IFFM because it possesses the national capacity to investigate any violations and ensure accountability through its own established institutions. Similarly, **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** and **Burundi** expressed concern about the imposition of external mechanisms without Sudan's consent, criticizing what they viewed as the politicization of human rights agenda.

Sudan called for the termination of the IFFM's mandate, asserting that its existence perpetuates the Council's politicization of the Sudanese situation.

NGOs stressed the urgent need for accountability, humanitarian assistance, and the protection of human rights. Overall, they underlined the importance of extending the mandate of the IFFM, considering its role crucial for ensuring justice and accountability for human rights violations. More specifically, the **East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project** highlighted that the IFFM's functions, such as evidence collection and identifying perpetrators, are deemed essential for breaking the cycle of impunity and violence in Sudan. **Amnesty International** and **Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies** noted that the conflict in Sudan is exacerbated by the influx of weapons, despite the UN arms embargo, with recent supplies from countries like China, Russia, Türkiye, and the UAE. **Caritas Internationalis** focused on the humanitarian situation in the North Darfur, where over 26 million people are at risk of acute food insecurity, and underlined that immediate and large-scale humanitarian intervention is needed to prevent further deterioration.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (61 country delegations):

Norway (on behalf of the Nordic Baltic countries), European Union, Pakistan (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Qatar (on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf), New Zealand (on behalf of a group of countries), Gambia (on behalf of the African Group), Qatar, Liechtenstein, Germany, Ireland, Sierra Leone, Kuwait, Iraq, Luxembourg, Malta, United States of America, Jordan, Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Netherlands, Japan, Malawi, Togo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Bahrain, Eritrea, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Russian Federation, Belarus, United Arab Emirates, Monaco, Mauritania, Venezuela, South Africa, Senegal, Ethiopia, China, Türkiye, Libya, Burundi, Tunisia, Morocco, Greece, Uganda, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Kenya, Belgium, Niger, Yemen, Chad, Ukraine, France.

NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (10):

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Lawyers for Lawyers, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Committee for Justice, Elizka Relief Foundation, Caritas Internationalis, Amnesty International, International Service for Human Rights, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Rencontre Africaine pour la defense des droits de l'homme.

International organizations: UNICEF.

To watch the full meeting refer to the UN WEB TV: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).