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

Situation of human rights in the Sudan

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-36/1, outlines key human rights challenges encountered in the Sudan from 16 December 2023 to 15 November 2024 and includes recommendations for addressing them.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



I. Introduction and methodology

1. The present report, which covers the period from 16 December 2023 to 15 November 2024, is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-36/1, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the assistance of his designated Expert on human rights in the Sudan, to submit a comprehensive report on the situation of human rights in the Sudan to the Council at its fifty-eighth session.

2. A draft of the report was shared with the Sudanese authorities for factual comments. Their initial comments, received after the deadline, on 23 December 2024, are reflected in the report, as relevant.

3. The report is based on information gathered by the Expert on human rights in the Sudan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the Sudan. It includes information obtained through interviews with 776 sources (453 men, 303 women, 9 boys and 11 girls), including victims and witnesses, including during OHCHR monitoring missions to Chad (from 18 February to 3 March 2024, from 14 to 20 July 2024, and from 7 to 20 October 2024), Ethiopia (from 8 to 22 August 2024) and the Abyei Administrative Area (from 11 to 22 August 2024). It also includes analyses of photographs and video footage, in addition to United Nations reports, as well as statements by authorities and other sources. The security situation linked to the expanding conflict and the protection concerns for victims and witnesses, exacerbated by communication disruptions and delay by the Sudanese authorities in issuing visas to OHCHR international staff, compelled OHCHR to rely mainly on remote monitoring.

4. The interviews followed the OHCHR human rights monitoring methodology. OHCHR employs a “reasonable grounds to believe” standard¹ in its assessment of incidents investigated and considers the credibility and reliability of the sources, taking into account their nature and objectivity. It draws conclusions from its assessment of documented incidents only when that standard has been met.

5. The Expert visited Port Sudan from 7 to 11 July 2024, where he met with the Sudanese authorities, United Nations officials, civil society representatives and internally displaced persons. During his visit, he advocated for the protection of civilians; unhindered humanitarian access; the removal of restrictions to civil society’s work; and accountability. He subsequently held a virtual meeting with the Deputy Commander of the Rapid Support Forces on 29 July 2024 in which he raised similar messages. He continued to hold regular online meetings with civil society representatives in and outside of the Sudan to share information relating to the human rights situation. He engaged regularly with the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan. He met virtually with the Chair of Taqaddum² on 29 March 2024.

6. OHCHR continued to engage, inter alia, with the Personal Envoy, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and humanitarian actors through the humanitarian clusters to integrate human rights and protection of civilian considerations in political and humanitarian efforts. The High Commissioner spoke separately by phone with the commanders of the Sudanese Armed Forces and of the Rapid Support Forces on 14 May 2024, urging them to take specific steps to ensure the protection of civilians, and regularly engaged with representatives of the Sudanese authorities.

II. Political and security developments

7. During the reporting period, heavy fighting persisted in many regions and the conflict expanded to new areas, leading to an estimated 3,933 civilians killed, including at least 199 women and 338 children, and 4,381 others injured, including 97 women and

¹ Meaning that factual information has been collected that would satisfy an objective and ordinarily prudent observer that the incident occurred as described with a reasonable degree of certainty.

² Coordination Body of the Civil and Democratic Forces.

140 children.³ The state most affected was Al-Gazira, followed by North Darfur and Khartoum States.⁴

8. On 18 December 2023, the Rapid Support Forces took over Wad Medani, Al-Gazira State, later extending their control to the whole state, except for the locality of Al-Managel. In late October 2024, the Rapid Support Forces launched attacks on villages in eastern Al-Gazira State following the defection of one of their commanders to the Sudanese Armed Forces.

9. During the reporting period, clashes spread to Sennar State and parts of the Blue Nile region, while fighting continued to expand in the Kordofan region. On 24 June 2024, the Rapid Support Forces took control of Jebel Moya (strategically linking Sennar and White Nile States), followed by their control of Sinjah town, Sennar State. On 5 October 2024, however, the Sudanese Armed Forces retook control of Jebel Moya.

10. Since May 2024, the Rapid Support Forces, supported by its allied Arab militias, have besieged El Fasher, North Darfur State, and have launched attacks on the city from several fronts. From 12 September 2024, fighting to control the city intensified. The Rapid Support Forces launched heavy artillery attacks, while the Sudanese Armed Forces carried out airstrikes and shelling to repel them with the support of the Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements,⁵ launching attacks in parts of North Darfur State in early October 2024.

11. In Khartoum State, clashes continued throughout the reporting period, with the Rapid Support Forces taking control of large areas of the state, intensifying when the Sudanese Armed Forces launched a major offensive on 26 September 2024 to regain control, recapturing parts of the city of Khartoum North, such as Halfaya.

12. In late 2023 and early 2024, several armed movements, including signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, aligned themselves with one party or the other to the conflict. The Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army Tambour Faction and the Sudan Shield Forces joined the conflict in support of the Sudanese Armed Forces, which already had the support of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North led by Malik Agar. In contrast, the Third Front-Tamazuj aligned themselves with the Rapid Support Forces. These movements fought in several areas across the Sudan, including in Darfur and in Al-Gazira, Khartoum and Sennar States. While information suggested that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu, remained neutral, the position of other Darfuri armed movements regarding the conflict remained ambiguous, such as the position of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army-Transitional Council, led by Al-Hadi Idris, and the Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces. The Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade indicated support for the Sudanese Armed Forces and was allegedly operating within the popular resistance committees. Allied Arab militias continued to fight alongside the Rapid Support Forces. The multiplicity of actors resulted in a fragmented command and control structure and unclear coordination among the groups, further complicating the security landscape, the conflict dynamics and, to some extent, the attribution of responsibility for certain incidents.

13. The parties to the conflict continued to mobilize civilians for combat. Mobilization often occurred along ethnic and tribal lines, including through the establishment of new armed movements affiliated with a tribe, as in the case of eastern Sudan, exacerbating pre-existing intercommunal tensions in certain areas. The ethnic dimension of the mobilization, and ethnically motivated attacks, exacerbate the risk of a further ethnicization of the conflict.

14. The proliferation of weapons across the Sudan, as well as the continued weapons supplies from States Members of the United Nations, were of serious concern, with weapons

³ Based on monitoring by OHCHR.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi and the Justice and Equality Movement, along with elements of smaller groups, form the Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements in Darfur.

increasingly available to the parties to the conflict and their allied militias in addition to civilians, thereby fuelling the conflict.

15. Despite renewed mediation efforts, a political stalemate persisted. The Jeddah Platform negotiations remained stalled and the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan unimplemented.

16. On 16 January 2024, the Sudanese authorities announced that they had suspended the membership of the Sudan in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The Chairperson of the African Union appointed a high-level panel on the Sudan on 17 January 2024, which is mandated to work with all parties to ensure an all-inclusive process towards the restoration of peace in the Sudan.

17. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2736 (2024),⁶ the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan convened proximity talks with the parties in Geneva from 11 to 19 July 2024 to discuss measures to ensure the distribution of humanitarian assistance and options to ensure the protection of civilians. The talks, in which OHCHR played an advisory role, concluded with the announcement of commitments by the Commander of the Rapid Support Forces to facilitate humanitarian operations and protect civilians. On 14 August 2024, a group of mediators convened talks in Switzerland and launched the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan Group.⁷ The Sudanese Armed Forces refused to participate in person, however, and engaged virtually with the mediators. The mediators secured guarantees from both parties to provide safe and unhindered humanitarian access through two key arteries, including the Adre border crossing.

III. Legal framework

A. International legal framework

18. The applicable international legal framework, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international criminal law, remained unchanged since the previous report of March 2024.⁸

B. National legal framework

19. Aspects of the national legal framework have changed since the previous report of March 2024.⁹

20. Amendments were introduced to the General Intelligence Act of 2010 on 8 February 2024. The amendments notably reinstated the power of the General Intelligence Service to perform law enforcement activities, including arrest, detention and investigation, and grant the Service immunity from prosecution for all acts committed on duty, raising concerns about the arbitrary and undue use of law enforcement powers by the Service and the impunity that may result from it.

21. Constitutional Decree No. 6/2024, approved on 27 April 2024, granted the Security and Defence Council the authority to declare a state of emergency at the request of the Council of Ministers and to recommend war declarations to the Transitional Sovereignty Council. It also established the federal Supreme Technical Security Committee, mandated to provide advice to the Council on the security and political situation and to study and coordinate the security agencies' plans. It further mandated the state and locality security committees to coordinate the work of the security agencies at the state and locality levels.

⁶ The Security Council adopted resolution 2724 (2024) on 8 March 2024, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities during Ramadan and for a sustainable resolution to the conflict through dialogue.

⁷ Composed of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, the African Union and the United Nations.

⁸ [A/HRC/55/29](#), paras. 9–14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 15.

The establishment, by law, of such security committees to be involved in law enforcement during the state of emergency strengthened the de facto robust involvement of the General Intelligence Service and governors in law enforcement powers.

22. On 25 May 2024, the Transitional Sovereignty Council adopted the Istinfar¹⁰ and Popular Resistance Regulations of 2024, establishing a National Committee for Istinfar and Popular Resistance consisting of representatives of State agencies, including retired Sudanese Armed Forces' officials. The regulations also established subcommittees at the region, state, locality and administrative unit levels to plan and implement the general mobilization, organize and arrange the popular resistance and arm those mobilized. The regulations defined "mustanfreeen" as "those who voluntarily respond to calls for general mobilization by joining the popular resistance".

C. State of emergency

23. A state of emergency continued to be imposed in most states. At least 115 emergency orders were also imposed or renewed, regulating curfews, restrictions of movement and restrictions to freedom of opinion and expression and of peaceful assembly.

24. Most of those orders were vague and their application was prolonged for extended periods of time, failing to meet international human rights standards applicable to a state of emergency, including the requirements of legality, necessity and proportionality.¹¹

IV. Impact of hostilities on civilians

A. Airstrikes and shelling

25. Parties to the conflict continued to launch attacks on densely populated areas, often without prior warning, and to use explosive weapons with wide-area effects, particularly in Khartoum State, the Darfur region and some areas of the Kordofan region, raising serious concerns regarding respect by the parties for the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution under international humanitarian law.

26. In and around El Fasher, North Darfur, OHCHR estimated that, since May 2024, 832 civilians had been killed, including at least 79 women and 111 children, and 1,678 others had been injured, including at least 45 women and 36 children, as parties to the conflict repeatedly launched airstrikes and heavy artillery shelling on civilian infrastructure.

27. For example, the Abu Shouk camp for internally displaced persons in El Fasher came under shelling by the Rapid Support Forces on at least two separate occasions, on 22 May and 27 August 2024, initially killing 24 persons, including at least 8 children and 2 women, and injuring at least 30 others. The attacks were reportedly launched to target a commander from a splinter faction of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid belonging to the Fur tribe, who allegedly maintained a presence inside the camp.

28. In three separate incidents in July 2024, several artillery shells, reportedly fired by the Rapid Support Forces, fell on the Al-Mawashi (livestock) market and the surrounding neighbourhoods in El Fasher, killing at least 43 civilians, including 2 boys and 1 girl, and injuring at least 97 others. On 26 September 2024, the same market and surrounding neighbourhoods were hit by artillery shells reportedly fired by the Rapid Support Forces, killing 27 civilians, including 5 children and 4 women. On 4 October 2024, the Sudanese Armed Forces reportedly launched an airstrike on a livestock market in Kutum locality, northwest of El Fasher, killing at least 50 civilians, including 12 women and 10 children and injuring at least 150 others. The airstrike also burned down the market, destroying large quantities of goods and products.

¹⁰ Translates into "mobilization".

¹¹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 4; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 29 (2001).

29. In addition, on 12 October 2024, 23 civilians were killed, including women and children, and 40 others were injured in an airstrike by the Sudanese Armed Forces on the central market, in the Al-Azhari area, Khartoum, allegedly targeting Rapid Support Forces members reportedly shopping in the market. Many shops were also destroyed in the attack.

30. Attacks were also reported in the Kordofan region. For instance, on 5 October 2024, at least 30 civilians were killed and over 100 others injured in several airstrikes by the Sudanese Armed Forces on a public market in Gebrat El Sheikh locality, west of El Obeid, North Kordofan State. On 7 October 2024, the Rapid Support Forces reportedly attacked Al-Damokiah village, in Khawr Teggat locality, North Kordofan State, killing at least 19 civilians, including 3 boys, and injuring many others.

B. Attacks against civilians and other protected persons

31. OHCHR received reports of an increase in civilian casualties in the context of attacks by the Rapid Support Forces and their allied Arab militias while attempting to take control of villages and localities in several states, including Al-Gazira, North Darfur, Sennar, West Kordofan and White Nile States. In some incidents, civilians reportedly took up arms to defend themselves.

32. For instance, on 30 March 2024, the Rapid Support Forces attacked several villages west of Sukkar, Sennar city, Sennar locality, killing at least 29 people, and injuring 16 others. In another incident, the Rapid Support Forces reportedly attacked Jalagani village in Sennar State on 15 August 2024, killing over 80 people, including 24 women and children, and injuring many others.

33. On 5 June 2024, the Rapid Support Forces attacked Wad Al-Noura village, Al-Gazira State, killing at least 120 people. Some civilians reportedly took up arms in self-defence. In another emblematic incident, on 25 October 2024, 141 civilians, including at least 10 children and 2 pregnant women, were reportedly killed and more than 200 others injured when the Rapid Support Forces launched attacks on Al-Seriha and Azraq villages in Al-Kamlin locality, in the northeast of Al-Gazira.

34. The fighting severely affected persons with special protection under international humanitarian law, including humanitarian and health workers. For instance, on 22 June 2024, a shell reportedly launched by the Rapid Support Forces on the Saudi Maternity Hospital in El Fasher hit the pharmacy inside the hospital, killing a female pharmacist along with four civilians. On 19 August 2024, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Sudan reported that at least 22 aid workers had been killed while on duty and at least 34 others had been injured.¹²

35. These incidents raise serious concerns about the targeting of civilians and other protected persons. Intentionally directing attacks against civilians and against personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance mission constitutes a war crime.¹³

C. Attacks on schools and specifically protected objects

36. From the start of the conflict until May 2024, 88 violent attacks on schools were recorded.¹⁴ On 14 March 2024, the Sudanese Armed Forces reportedly launched at least three airstrikes on the Al-Hadra public primary school, in Hadra village, Dalami locality, South Kordofan State, killing at least 14 civilians, including 10 students (5 boys and 5 girls) and 2 teachers, and injuring 44 other students (25 boys and 19 girls). On 14 August 2024, shelling, reportedly by the Rapid Support Forces, affected the Abu Sitta girls' school in El Obeid, North Kordofan State, killing 10 girls and 1 teacher, and injuring 10 girls and 2 teachers.

¹² See <https://sudan.un.org/en/276785-humanitarian-coordinator-sudan-calls-protection-civilians-and-aid-workers-and-end-impunity>.

¹³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, art. 8 (2) (e) (i) and (iii).

¹⁴ See <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/sudan-violent-attacks-schools-and-education-surge-fourfold-one-year-conflict>.

37. Across the Sudan, the World Health Organization documented 61 attacks on healthcare facilities during the reporting period, leading to 157 deaths and 95 injuries,¹⁵ in what appears to be a sustained pattern of attacks against healthcare facilities. Between 9 May and 23 June 2024, OHCHR documented nine attacks targeting healthcare facilities in El Fasher city alone. Most of those attacks, believed to have been launched by the Rapid Support Forces, were by artillery shelling, without prior warning. For instance, on 18 May 2024, the Rapid Support Forces fired several artillery shells into El Fasher, one of which hit the Saudi Maternity Hospital, injuring nine civilians and causing damage to the facility. Between 25 May and 3 June 2024, Al-Janobi Hospital was subjected to three mortar and bullet attacks allegedly by the Rapid Support Forces, killing 2 and injuring 14, including patients and caregivers.

38. Attacks on places of worship by the parties to the conflict continued to be reported. On 22 September 2024, two civilians were killed when the Rapid Support Forces stormed the Sheikh Awad-Allah Mosque in the Al-Shoba neighbourhood in El Fasher and opened fire on worshippers. On 30 September 2024, an unspecified number of worshippers were reportedly injured inside the Al-Ateeq Mosque in the Karari area, Omdurman, when a shell, believed to have been fired by the Rapid Support Forces, struck the mosque.

39. Reports also indicated that the fighting had caused extensive damage to several cultural heritage institutions in the Sudan, including the National Museum. On 16 January 2024, the Regional Network for Cultural Rights reported that the Rapid Support Forces had raided the archaeological sites of Al-Naqa and Al-Musawarat, south of Shendi city, River Nile State,¹⁶ and expressed concern about the possibility of the archaeological site being turned into a battlefield.

40. These incidents raise concerns about the failure of the parties to distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. Under international humanitarian law, intentionally targeting civilian or other protected objects constitutes a war crime.¹⁷

D. Recruitment and use of children

41. OHCHR continued to receive allegations of the recruitment and use of children by the parties and their allied armed groups and militias, with an increased number of children observed in mobilization and training activities, which is prohibited under international human rights and humanitarian law.¹⁸ Poverty and school closures were key factors driving children to join the parties to the conflict.

42. In May 2024, OHCHR documented the case of four boys, aged between 14 and 16 years, who were recruited by the Rapid Support Forces in the Singu area, South Darfur State, and joined the fighting in Khartoum State in 2023. After a week, the boys fled, fearing for their lives. Two of them returned to fight after being approached by a Rapid Support Forces commander, while the two others returned later, after being lured with money and vehicles by their friends.

43. OHCHR received reports that in eastern Sudan, armed groups associated with or supporting the Sudanese Armed Forces, including three Darfuri movements, had also recruited children to take part in the conflict. It also received reports alleging that three eastern armed groups, as well as mustanfreen, had recruited and trained children to support the military efforts of the Sudanese Armed Forces.

44. Children also joined the fighting to protect their families or communities from harassment or abduction, which was cited by community members as a risk, particularly for families in which no member was associated with one of the parties to the conflict. In May 2024, OHCHR obtained information about a 14-year-old boy from East Nile, Khartoum

¹⁵ See <https://extranet.who.int/ssa/LeftMenu/Index.aspx>.

¹⁶ See <https://shorturl.at/V0asY>.

¹⁷ Rome Statute, art. 8 (2) (e) (i) and (iv).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, art. 8 (2) (e) (vii); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), art. 4 (3) (c); and Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 38 (2) and (3).

State, who was recruited by the Rapid Support Forces in 2023 among a group of 20 young people from the same area, most of them aged under 18 years, fearing harassment by the forces who controlled the area.

V. Right to life, liberty and security of person

A. Summary executions

45. Incidents of arbitrary deprivation of life continued to be reported. The Special Operation Forces¹⁹ and mustanfreen were implicated in cases of summary executions of persons allegedly accused of collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces, particularly after the Sudanese Armed Forces seized control of the Al-Abbasiya neighbourhood in Omdurman in mid-January 2024. For instance, on 11 January 2024, a doctor was shot dead by the Special Operations Forces and mustanfreen in Omdurman due to his perceived collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces, despite his attempt to explain that he was taking care of his ill relatives in the area.

46. OHCHR also received reports that summary killings in Al-Gazira, Khartoum and North Kordofan States by the Special Operations Forces and mustanfreen had been largely ethnically motivated based on perceived support for the Rapid Support Forces. On 15 February 2024, three young men were reportedly killed by the Sudanese Armed Forces in North Kordofan State, while traveling through El Obeid, as they were suspected to be affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces because of their ethnic origins.

47. An increase in summary killings of civilians by the Rapid Support Forces and their allied Arab militias in the states under their control, including Al-Gazira, Khartoum and North Darfur, was also reported, including in the context of the looting of private properties.

B. Sexual violence

48. During the reporting period, OHCHR received credible reports of 60 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, involving at least 83 victims (62 women, 18 girls and 3 men), bringing the total number of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence documented by OHCHR since the beginning of the conflict to 120, involving at least 203 victims (162 women, 36 girls, 4 men and 1 boy). Forty of those incidents occurred in Khartoum State and 65 in the Darfur region. The remaining incidents occurred in Al-Gazira, Gedaref, Kassala, North Kordofan, Red Sea and West Kordofan States and on the road in unspecified states. In over 70 per cent of the 89 incidents documented in total, men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms and armed men affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces were implicated as perpetrators, while the Sudanese Armed Forces were implicated in three incidents. Two members of security forces and a man from an armed movement allied with the Sudanese Armed Forces were also implicated as perpetrators in three incidents, while armed men in unidentified uniforms were implicated in six incidents.

49. Cases of conflict-related sexual violence were vastly underreported, including because of stigma, fear of reprisal, Internet shutdowns and mobile phone disruptions, or simply due to the collapse of medical and judicial institutions. Only six of the incidents documented by OHCHR since the conflict erupted had been reported to judicial authorities. OHCHR received information that victims had been threatened not to report cases, including those allegedly committed by the Sudanese Armed Forces and allied armed movements.

50. Reports of sexual violence appeared to follow a geographical pattern as the fighting spread across the country. OHCHR received reports of sexual violence committed by the Rapid Support Forces in Al-Gazira State, notably following their taking control of large parts of the state in January 2024 and again in October 2024 during intensified hostilities, and also

¹⁹ Special armed unit within the Sudanese Armed Forces.

collected initial information of sexual violence after the escalation of the situation in El Fasher, North Darfur State, in May 2024.

51. Sexual violence reported in West Darfur State was often linked to ethnically motivated attacks by the Rapid Support Forces against the Masalit community, which was consistent with findings from the previous reporting period. In one rape incident documented during the reporting period, but which had occurred in June 2023, a man in a Rapid Support Forces uniform had told a woman that, that year, all Masalit girls would deliver their children.

52. More than half of the reported rape incidents took the form of gang rape – a consistent trend since April 2023 – indicating a coordinated use of sexual violence in the context of the conflict, mainly by the Rapid Support Forces and their allied Arab militias, which may amount to a war crime.²⁰ For example, in February 2024, five men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms took turns in the gang rape of a woman in South Darfur, arguing that the order in which they took turns was determined by their ranks, as testified by a survivor.

53. Reports of pregnancy and children born as a result of rape increased fivefold compared with the previous reporting period, including the rape of women and girls detained in slave-like conditions by men in Rapid Support Forces uniforms and allied Arab militias in the Darfur region. Service providers reported the difficulties faced by pregnant survivors, including in obtaining safe and legal abortions or finding adoption solutions for the children.

54. Attacks on and the collapse of the healthcare system had a disproportionate impact on women's and girls' health. Victims faced serious challenges in reaching medical, psychosocial and legal support on time, in particular for post-exposure prophylaxis or emergency contraception, but also for surgical care, such as fistula repair. Attacks on the Saudi Maternity Hospital since May 2024 in El Fasher, North Darfur State, the only hospital receiving survivors of sexual violence in the area for a long time, further affected victims' access to medical care. OHCHR also received reports of threats against service providers supporting survivors of sexual violence.

55. In March 2024, the acting Attorney General announced exceptional criminal procedures, including the reporting of cases of sexual violence to prosecutors regardless of the territorial jurisdiction, flexibility in the provisions of the Criminal Form 8 and the possibility of abortion for rape-related pregnancy cases. The changes came in response to advocacy efforts by local civil society organizations, which have reported on some positive progress since then, including regarding access to legal abortion, which can only be ensured if the Office of the Public Prosecutor carries out the judicial procedures in a timely manner.

C. Detention

56. Throughout the reporting period, OHCHR monitored a pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions of civilians by the joint security forces – commonly known as the Cell – composed of the Sudanese Police Force, the General Intelligence Service and Military Intelligence, and accompanied, in some cases, by *mustanfreeen*. Arrests were often directed at activists associated with the Forces of Freedom and Change, resistance committees, emergency response rooms and *Taqaddum*, and were mostly carried out without due process and accompanied by a search of personal belongings, often conducted in such a way as to elicit humiliation and intimidation. Some of the arrests were allegedly conducted through the abuse of emergency powers in the states controlled by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

57. In June 2024, at least 2 lawyers, 3 political leaders, 7 members of the resistance committees and 10 humanitarian volunteers were reportedly arrested by the Sudanese Armed Forces and their affiliated security agencies in Al-Gazira, Gedaref, Khartoum, River Nile, Sennar and White Nile States. While some were released after a few days in detention, some were believed to still be detained.

58. OHCHR received reports that the Sudanese Armed Forces continued to arbitrarily detain people for their perceived support to the Rapid Support Forces or based on their tribal affiliation or origins. In North Darfur State, OHCHR received reports in June and July 2024

²⁰ Rome Statute, art. 8 (2) (e) (vi).

of hundreds of people, including civilians, being detained in inhumane conditions by the Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements. OHCHR also collected reports of inspections of civilians from the Darfur and Kordofan regions, including at checkpoints, reportedly by intelligence services, in Northern and River Nile States and on the road between Al-Gazira and Sennar States. Between 26 and 29 October 2024, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade arrested approximately 200 men in Dinder city, Sennar State, after they took control of the city, accusing the men of collaborating with the Rapid Support Forces. Most of those arrested belonged to the Fallata, Rufa'a and Rizeigat tribes.

59. The Rapid Support Forces continued to arbitrarily detain hundreds of civilians on the basis of either their real or perceived ethnic and tribal affiliation or their alleged support to the Sudanese Armed Forces and their allied armed movements. For instance, in West Darfur, the Rapid Support Forces reportedly continued to arrest Masalit community members while fleeing to Eastern Chad. On 2 March 2024, the Rapid Support Forces reportedly arrested dozens of men from El Geneina, Morni and Zalingei, in the Adikong area, near the border with Chad. In July 2024, the Rapid Support Forces arrested two young men on grounds of their alleged collaboration with the armed movements allied with the Sudanese Armed Forces in North Darfur.

60. According to monitoring by OHCHR, the Rapid Support Forces detained civilians if they resisted the looting of their property, or simply for ransom purposes. For instance, on 14 June 2024, the Rapid Support Forces abducted six persons in El Fasher, North Darfur, and reportedly requested a ransom for their release. Two were reportedly released after the ransom was paid.

61. OHCHR continued to receive information about persons who had been arbitrarily arrested, held incommunicado from a few days to months and tortured. Repeated assaults with water hoses, sticks, slapping, kicking and, in some cases, burning with melted plastics were some of the tactics reportedly used. For instance, on 3 February 2024, an activist, who had been blindfolded, his hands and legs tied, was taken by the Rapid Support Forces to a detention centre in Hasahisa, Al-Gazira State, where he was severely beaten with a gun butt and hoses to confess that he was a member of the Sudanese Armed Forces. He was later released, only to be rearrested and held incommunicado on 12 July 2024 by the Special Operation Forces in Atbara, River Nile State, where he was tortured to extract a confession that he was a member of the opposing forces.

D. Disappearances

62. Reports of disappearances and missing persons, including through detention and abduction by parties to the conflict, persisted throughout the reporting period, raising concerns of enforced disappearances.

63. As at 15 November 2024, a total of 2,309 people had been reported disappeared or missing, including 475 women, 165 boys and 90 girls, raising concerns of possible enforced disappearances.²¹ For example, on 8 April 2024, a man and his son disappeared in Tuti Island, Khartoum State, in unknown circumstances when Tuti Island fell to the Rapid Support Forces. While the victims were reportedly held in Soba prison, their family was never able to confirm their presence nor visit them. At the time of writing, they were still reported disappeared.

64. A sharp increase in disappearances was noted after the Rapid Support Forces took control of certain areas, including in Al-Gazira, Central Darfur, Khartoum, Sennar and West Darfur States. OHCHR observed a pattern of disappearances of people at checkpoints manned by the Rapid Support Forces while fleeing the conflict. Disappearances also allegedly increased in areas controlled by the Sudanese Armed Forces, including as the joint security forces allegedly arbitrarily arrested and held people incommunicado.

²¹ According to local non-governmental organizations.

VI. Civic space

65. The shrinking of civic space in the Sudan was marked by the arbitrary arrest and detention of civil society actors, often based on the individuals' work or opinions.

66. Emergency measures excessively restricted the right to freedom of expression, including by interfering with a person's opinion against the war. Overly broad provisions included the prohibition on the publication of any information, including on social media, that would threaten public security, including information relating to the armed forces or State agencies. In an illustrative example, in May 2024, the East Gedaref criminal court sentenced a man to two years of imprisonment for a Facebook post merely recalling the values of the 2019 revolution.

67. During the reporting period, the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate recorded 107 human rights violations against journalists, including attacks and threats, by both parties to the conflict. At least 12 journalists, all men, were killed, including 2 while in detention, and 31 were arbitrarily detained, including four women.

68. The Sudanese authorities also continued to unduly interfere in media freedom. On 2 April 2024, the Ministry of Culture and Information suspended the operation of three satellite television channels due to their perceived lack of professionalism and transparency. On 23 April 2024, the Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath channels announced that their permission to operate in the country had been reinstated. The operations of Sky News Arabia reportedly remained suspended. Furthermore, in Red Sea State, journalists were requested by the authorities to obtain weekly permits to undertake journalistic work, which appears to contravene the principles of necessity and proportionality,²² with particular restrictions applying to access to sites hosting displaced persons, limiting the capacity of journalists to report on their situation.

69. Civil society organizations in various areas, including the Blue Nile and Kordofan regions and eastern Sudan, continued to face constraints on their operations, unduly restricting the right to peaceful assembly and association.²³ The organization of activities by civil society organizations without prior approval from the relevant authorities was prohibited and requests were required to be submitted along with the agenda and a list of the facilitators and participants. In some instances, approvals were denied, particularly for human rights-related activities. In other cases, the intelligence services or the Sudanese authorities cancelled events, requested to be present or interrogated the organizers, creating a chilling effect on civil society. In June 2024, an organization working on women's rights in the Kordofan region was requested to suspend an activity that had been previously authorized, and its staff was subsequently interrogated by the General Intelligence Service.

70. In addition, at least five organizations informed OHCHR of challenges in meeting the requirements for renewing their registration, in particular having to pay the costly fees established in June 2024 for national non-governmental organizations as well as the associated costs for the in-person submission of the registration request in Port Sudan. Those requirements appear to be unduly burdensome, costly and time-consuming, and could be perceived as a way to deny or delay the organizations' operations.

71. In May 2024, at least two political activists, including a woman, were arrested by the Military Intelligence in the Blue Nile region and Gedaref State as they were preparing to travel for a Taqaddum conference. While one was released shortly after the arrest, the other was detained for over three months in a military detention centre.

72. In February 2024, a nationwide telecommunications shutdown, allegedly by the Rapid Support Forces, left almost 30 million Sudanese without Internet or telephone access for more than a month,²⁴ severely affecting the right to access to information as well as the distribution

²² Human Rights Committee, general comments No. 31 (2004) and No. 34 (2011).

²³ In January 2024, the Federal Minister of Government decided to dissolve all change and service committees. The committees included members of the resistance committees and emergency response rooms.

²⁴ See <https://www.nrc.no/news/2024/may/sudan-telecommunications-joint-statement>.

of humanitarian aid and the reception of funding for life-saving activities. While telecommunication networks were restored in many areas affected by the blackout, in all states, Internet and telephone access was disconnected or unstable at various times during the reporting period. In many parts of the Sudan, the satellite Internet constellation Starlink was the only means of access to online information and services but came at a high financial cost. The use of Starlink was banned in some areas by the Sudanese Armed Forces, including the Blue Nile region, while, in some cases, including in El Fasher, that decision was reversed.

VII. Humanitarian situation

73. The ongoing conflict has triggered the world's largest displacement crisis. As at 6 November 2024, over 11.1 million people were internally displaced, including more than 8.4 million displaced since the beginning of the conflict. Over 3.1 million individuals also fled to neighbouring countries.²⁵ The dire situation of internally displaced persons was further aggravated by incidents of forced evictions or threats of evictions from their temporary shelters.

74. Humanitarian access challenges and the deliberate obstruction of aid by parties to the conflict continued to have a severe impact on the populations most at risk, with over 24.8 million people – more than half of the population of the Sudan – in need of assistance. In September 2024, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 73 access incidents that had had an impact on humanitarian operations in 16 states and 30 localities since January 2024.²⁶ For instance, on 3 August 2024, the Rapid Support Forces blocked trucks carrying critical medical supplies in Kabkabiya, North Darfur State, for over a month.²⁷ A positive step was the reopening in August 2024 – initially for three months and extended for another three months – of the Adre crossing, which had been closed in February 2024 by the Sudanese authorities. Access remained severely limited, however, with an increasing number of access incidents reported across the Sudan.²⁸

VIII. Economic and social rights

75. The conflict has led to an unprecedented food crisis, jeopardizing the right to food across the Sudan. An estimated 25.6 million people were expected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity between June and September 2024. Fourteen areas in nine states, including in the Darfur and Kordofan regions, Al-Gazira State and some hotspots in Khartoum State, face a risk of famine if the conflict escalates further.²⁹ On 1 August 2024, the Famine Review Committee found it plausible that Integrated Food Security Phase 5 (Famine) had been ongoing in July 2024 in the Zamzam camp, and concluded that such conditions would continue into the August to end of October projection period, with the likelihood that famine would remain high in the Zamzam camp after October.³⁰

76. The Sudan is among the top four countries in the world with the highest prevalence of global acute malnutrition,³¹ with 3.7 million children under 5 years of age and 1 million

²⁵ See <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/sudan-mobility-overview-3>.

²⁶ See <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-september-2024>.

²⁷ MSF Sudan (@MSF_Sudan), “Our 3 trucks bringing life-saving medical supplies – including therapeutic food – to #Zamzam and El Fasher have been blocked in the town of Kabkabiya for over a month by the RSF”, 4 August 2024, available at https://x.com/MSF_Sudan/status/1820060733536620617.

²⁸ On 20 August 2024, all border crossings were placed under the Transitional Sovereignty Council's supervision.

²⁹ See https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Sudan_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Snapshot_Jun2024_Feb2025.pdf.

³⁰ See https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Committee_Report_Sudan_July2024.pdf.

³¹ See <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-update-1-october-2024>.

pregnant and breastfeeding women acutely malnourished.³² Testimonies collected by OHCHR underscored the gravity of the situation, with residents from Al-Haj Youssef, Khartoum North and Omdurman reporting multiple starvation-related deaths within their neighbourhoods.

77. OHCHR received information that after the Rapid Support Forces took control of Al-Gazira, farmers saw significant looting of their agricultural crops. The Rapid Support Forces' control in strategic areas with significant agricultural value, such as the Darfur and Kordofan regions and Al-Gazira and Sennar States, had a profound impact on the agricultural sector, disrupting the agricultural workforce and monopolizing cash crop production, severely affecting food availability and accessibility in the Sudan.³³

78. The right to health continued to deteriorate drastically in the Sudan, with only 20 to 30 per cent of healthcare facilities functional, and only at minimal levels, amid outbreaks of diseases such as cholera, dengue fever and malaria. Approximately 75 per cent of essential medical supplies were unavailable.³⁴ The situation was particularly dire in conflict-affected areas, where the accessibility and availability of medications, vaccines and health services were extremely limited. For instance, a man from El Geneina, West Darfur State, reported to OHCHR that his mother had died in February 2024 due to lack of treatment for cardiomegaly, as most healthcare facilities in El Geneina had not been operational.

79. More than 90 per cent of the country's 17 million school-age children had no access to formal education, significantly affecting the right to education. Approximately 10,400 schools were in active conflict zones and about 3,200 schools were being used as shelters by displaced persons, making the education crisis in the Sudan one of the most severe in the world.³⁵

80. The conflict also resulted in near catastrophic impacts on the right to safe drinking water, with more than 18.9 million people lacking access to safe drinking water and sanitation services due to significant service disruptions and attacks on water infrastructure.³⁶ Testimonies received by OHCHR from Khartoum State and the Darfur and Kordofan regions indicated the severe lack of availability, accessibility and affordability of safe drinking water. Even in areas not directly affected by the conflict, such as Port Sudan, access to safe drinking water was largely restricted. That situation disproportionately affected at-risk populations, including displaced persons, who were often forced to drink unsafe water, increasing the risk of water-borne diseases.

81. People's rights to work and to just and favourable conditions of work were significantly affected. A large number of people lost their jobs and livelihoods and did not find new job opportunities, resulting in an unemployment rate of 58 per cent – the highest globally.³⁷ At least 10 individuals interviewed by OHCHR reported that they had crossed into a neighbouring country due to the deteriorating living conditions in the Sudan and the lack of job opportunities. In addition, while the authorities had committed, in the light of the fiscal crisis and the increased allocation of resources towards war-related expenditures, to pay at least 60 per cent of their wages,³⁸ civil servants across the Sudan reported to OHCHR that the payments had been inconsistent, indicating arrears of accumulated wages. State-level civil servants in regions controlled largely by the Rapid Support Forces were seriously affected, as no systematic salary payments had been made since April 2023.

³² See https://www.unocha.org/attachments/b059b91f-eed2-49f5-9fff-d466a6ec5cc3/SUDAN_20241130_Humanitarian%20Update_01-30%20November2024_FINAL.pdf.

³³ Based on OHCHR monitoring; and <https://ebrary.ifpri.org/digital/collection/p15738coll2/id/136946/>, p. 15.

³⁴ See https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/emergencies/phsa--sudan-complex-emergency-030424.pdf?sfvrsn=81039842_1&download=true, p. 20.

³⁵ See <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/unicef-sudan-humanitarian-situation-report-no-23-1-30-september-2024>.

³⁶ See <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/media/13266/file/UNICEF%20Sudan%20-%20Investment%20Case%20-%20Water%20a%20basic%20human%20right.pdf>.

³⁷ See <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/SDN>.

³⁸ See <https://suna-sd.net/posts/gbryl-abrahym-fy-hoar-alrahn-alaktsady-maa-sona> (in Arabic).

IX. Administration of justice and accountability

A. Situation of the justice system and the administration of justice

82. The formal justice system continued to collapse in the Darfur region, in Al-Gazira, Khartoum and Sennar States and in most of the three Kordofan States due to the absence of or disruption to policing services, prosecution offices and courts.

83. The Rapid Support Forces' take-over of Wad Medani, Al-Gazira State, in mid-December 2023 led to the complete suspension of the town's formal justice system. Wad Medani had been serving as the temporary hub for federal public prosecutions after the conflict erupted in Khartoum. Subsequently, the headquarters of the Office of the Public Prosecutor was moved to Port Sudan.

84. At the end of the reporting period, formal justice services were limited to the three eastern states, the Northern, River Nile, South Kordofan and White Nile States and the Blue Nile region.

85. On 2 January 2024, the Governor of Darfur formed a legal committee to follow up on the Darfuri detainees alleged to be affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces, most of whom had been reportedly working in the informal sector and gold mining industry. The committee reportedly had been mandated to coordinate with the judicial, police and security authorities to release the detainees. No information on the committee's progress was made public.

86. On 8 January 2024, the head of the Rapid Support Forces' Committee on Peace and Reconciliation declared the appointments of judges, prosecutors, and members of native administrations³⁹ in the neighbourhoods of Al-Nasr, Al-Azhari and Kalaka in southern Khartoum State to carry out judicial and law enforcement tasks. The development was condemned by Sudanese lawyers.⁴⁰ It was preceded by the announcement by the Governor of West Darfur State, a Rapid Support Forces appointee, on 2 January 2024, of the establishment of 20 emergency courts in Adikong, Ardamata, Azerni, Kerenik and Morni.

87. Alleged perpetrators of past violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, who had been released from prison at the beginning of the conflict, remained at large at the time of writing, including those under arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court.

B. Domestic investigations into conflict-related violations

88. On 20 March 2024, the acting Attorney General directed the Office of the Public Prosecutor to proceed with the investigation of allegations of enforced disappearances. According to the Sudanese Group for Victims of Enforced Disappearance, the Office of the Public Prosecutor started investigating 451 complaints, resulting in the issuance of criminal notices in 100 cases.

89. On 9 September 2024, the National Committee to Investigate Crimes and Violations of National Law and International Humanitarian Law informed OHCHR that 18,741 cases had been registered against Rapid Support Forces members and their allied Arab militias for alleged crimes, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, sexual violence and child recruitment. Three cases had been registered against Sudanese Armed Forces members. According to the Committee, the prosecution had initiated several investigations, including into the killing of the former Governor of West Darfur State and attacks on El Geneina, Sheikh Al-Samani, Wad Al-Noura and Wad Medani. Prosecutions and court proceedings reportedly had started in absentia against Rapid Support Forces members.

³⁹ Native administrations consist of tribal leaders who oversee the affairs of tribal groups in accordance with traditional norms and regulations.

⁴⁰ On 18 January 2024, the Sudanese Bar Association denounced the appointment as unconstitutional for violating the principle of the independence of the judiciary.

90. The Rapid Support Forces reportedly established investigative committees in Al-Gazira and Khartoum States to investigate crimes that had occurred in areas under its control, and also established investigative committees to conduct its own investigation into the killing of the former Governor of West Darfur State and to investigate the events in Ardamata of 2023. The Rapid Support Forces also reportedly established field courts by virtue of the Rapid Support Forces Act of 2017, through which 400 Rapid Support Forces members were allegedly prosecuted. No information on the progress of the investigations has been shared or made public, raising significant concerns about the lack of transparency and compliance with international standards.

C. Prosecution of civilians accused of collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces

91. OHCHR monitored the increasing trend of trials and convictions of civilians accused of collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces in the states under the control of the Sudanese Armed Forces. In the reporting period, at least 28 people, including 5 women, were sentenced to death and 31 others sentenced to imprisonment, including 2 girls, raising serious concerns about the respect for the rights to life, liberty and security. Sentences handed down by courts in Gedaref and Kassala, and in Ad-Damazin, Atbara and Port Sudan, ranged from five years to life imprisonment and were issued in most cases following extremely speedy trials, raising concerns over the respect of fair trial guarantees. Common charges included undermining the constitutional order, waging war against the State and joining and supporting terrorist organizations, as set out in articles 50, 51, 61 and 65 of the Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991.

92. OHCHR has serious concerns about the prosecution of at least 89 anti-war opinion holders and political dissenters, including the Taqaddum leadership, many of whom are abroad, issued in three separate arrest warrants, on 3 and 4 April 2024, decided by the acting Attorney General and the Office of the Public Prosecutor based on an initial complaint submitted by the National Committee to Investigate Crimes and Violations of National Law and International Humanitarian Law. The arrest warrants were based on a common standard list of charges, including that of undermining the constitutional order, some of which carry the death penalty.

X. Conclusion and recommendations

93. **The parties to the conflict continued to show utter disregard for international law and for the protection of civilians. They committed gross violations and abuses of international human rights law as well as serious violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes. Further investigations would be needed to establish whether other serious crimes under international law have been committed.**

94. **Entrenched impunity was one of the drivers of the conflict and has been fuelling it ever since. Accountability, regardless of the rank and affiliation of the perpetrators, is critical to breaking the recurring cycles of violence and impunity in the Sudan and preventing further violations and abuses.**

95. **There are concerns that the conflict has been building on past discrimination and inequalities, often along ethnic and tribal lines. This poses a significant risk for the future stability of the country and for peace and security in the subregion.**

96. **The High Commissioner calls upon the parties to the conflict:**

(a) **To engage in negotiations and mediation efforts in good faith and reach an immediate cessation of hostilities;**

(b) **To comply with their obligations under international human rights and international humanitarian law and to take specific measures for the protection of civilians in line with their commitments, including by issuing and enforcing strict command orders to end the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence in conflict;**

(c) To prevent and punish violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law;

(d) To end arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, release, immediately and unconditionally, all persons arbitrarily detained and halt all attacks on, threats against and harassment of civil society representatives and members of the media;

(e) To ensure the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief and the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian organizations to all areas under their control;

(f) To cooperate with his Office, his Expert and the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan.

97. The High Commissioner urges the Sudanese authorities:

(a) To pursue investigations and accountability for violations of international human rights law, in line with international human rights standards, as a matter of priority;

(b) To ensure that the declarations and implementation of states of emergency comply with international human rights law;

(c) To respect the right to a fair trial and due process and refrain from the use of the death penalty;

(d) To ensure the unimpeded access of victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, to medical services, including sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial and legal services;

(e) To refrain from restricting civic space and the work of civil society representatives, human rights defenders, inclusive of women human rights defenders, and journalists, including on the basis of states of emergency and emergency orders;

(f) To approve the long-standing requests for visas for OHCHR international staff.

98. The High Commissioner recommends that the international community:

(a) Continue to engage in and support coordinated efforts to reach a cessation of hostilities and to collectively work on a unified road map for the resolution of the conflict, ensuring the centrality of human rights and accountability considerations;

(b) Support a broad-based inclusive dialogue that reflects the diversity of the Sudanese population and paves the way for a transition to a civilian-led Government, putting an emphasis on the specific role of women and young people;

(c) Support local civil society and other relevant actors by providing resources and strengthening their capacities on the protection and promotion of human rights, and by supporting the provision of comprehensive services to survivors of human rights violations;

(d) Encourage the Sudanese authorities and neighbouring countries of the Sudan to cooperate with the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan;

(e) Ensure that accountability measures are pursued at different levels, including in international and national forums;

(f) In the light of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), take strict measures to implement the arms embargo in Darfur;

(g) Consider expanding the arms embargo and jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over the whole of the Sudan.