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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**

**Joint written statement* submitted by International
Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial
Discrimination, Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and
Immigration, International-Lawyers.Org, Meezaan Center
for Human Rights, non-governmental organizations in
special consultative status, International Educational
Development, Inc., World Peace Council, non-governmental
organizations on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



The Sudan: Women's and Children's Rights, Internally Displaced Persons, and Access to Food

Introduction

It has been two years since the outbreak of war in the Sudan and the human rights issues within the country remain at risk. The conflict which commenced in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has left millions of people in mass food scarcity in different areas of the country. The non-international armed conflict between the two groups plunged the country and its people in turmoil, displacing millions, with some facing acute hunger issues and sexual violence being used as a method of war. As the war continues, people of Sudan continue to lack access to basic rights such as food, education, and healthcare.

Women and children's rights remain gravely violated as the different forces continue to incite violence against these vulnerable groups. Women remain targets for gender-based violence while children lack access to numerous basic rights such as food, shelter, education, and access to healthcare while being forced to partake in the hostilities.

It is recognized that the council has made great strides such as the establishment of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to investigate human right violations. However, during this session, it is important to further illuminate these issues such as to find appropriate solutions to efficiently promote the de-escalation of the crisis and efficiently aid those affected by the conflict.

Internally Displaced Persons and Human Rights Issues

The conflict in the Sudan has left millions of the population without homes and without security forcing them to flee their homes in search for sanctuary. The Sudan continues to face a growing crisis of internal displacement, with the number of internally displaced persons now exceeding 11.6 million. The RSF and related militias continue to attack displacement camps and continue to target civilians which directly infringes on the policies on international humanitarian law.

Four million people have been forced to flee the Sudan due to the ongoing violence and the fear for their lives within the country. Pertaining to the safety of people within the country, there is a lack of security for civilians as they continue to be targeted by the different militias. Over 18,000 people have been killed, many of whom are civilians and over 30,000 injured. There is a growing use of explosives in civilian populated areas that further infringes on the safety of local habitants and their livelihoods.

Concerning human rights, the special rapporteur highlights that the population of the Sudan continues to live through extreme violence. There has been an increase in summary killings, torture and enforced disappearances since the beginning of the war. Additionally, there has been a disregard to the protection of persons including the lives of journalists. Journalists continue to face threats from both groups thus jeopardizing their independent reporting on the war. In May 2025, the killing of the prominent journalist Hassan Fadl Al-Mawla Mousa by the Rapid Support Forces in Al Nuhud has prompted calls for investigation into whether the attack was targeted and renewed demands for the protection of press freedom.

Access to Food

The people of the Sudan are facing some of the most record-breaking levels of food scarcity leaving millions unable to have access to the necessary nutrition needed for a healthy life. Over 600,000 people are facing catastrophic hunger denying them the basic right to adequate food. It is further reported that famine has been confirmed in at least five areas in the Sudan and that it is anticipated to strike additional nearby areas leaving the habitants susceptible to starvation.

Additionally, there is restriction of the access to humanitarian aid which in turn has left more people unable to access basic access to food. As a result of this, over 80% of community kitchens have been closed leaving millions at risk for acute starvation and malnutrition.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

There continues to be a rise in gender-based violence and the use of sexual violence against women and children as a method of war. According to the UN Gender Alert No. 2, women and girls are being abducted at alarming rates during raids. These women are subject to sexual violence including rape and conditions that amount to sexual slavery. As a result of this, there is an exponential rise in the numbers of unwanted pregnancies among the women and young girls in the Sudan. It was found that there were rape cases of girls as young as 8 years old and women as old as 75 years old. Moreover, there is an overall rise of 288% in the number of gender-based violence survivors seeking support.

The majority of the reports of these were largely located in the areas of the greater Khartoum region and the Darfur area as well. In addition to the violence against women, women and children are being forced to flee their homes due to the fear of persecution from the war. Most of these women have either experienced or witnessed abductions, assault, and different forms of gender-based violence.

It is also important to recognize that although most of this violence is perpetrated against women, there have also been reports of men and boys being victims of sexual violence during the war.

Children's Rights

It is currently reported that both the SAF and RSF have made grave devastating impacts on the lives of children in the Sudan. The two forces continue to incite violence in children's lives either by killing, abducting, torture and even recruiting them which further subjects them to unnecessary violence. Both parties continue to attack schools leaving children without access to education and forcing children to flee from their homes in fear of violence. The government of the Sudan continues its undertaking of maintaining the minimum age for voluntary service at 18 but there remain reports of children younger than 18 serving in these groups. As it pertains to the RSF, these reports are mainly located in the areas of El-Geneina, Ardamanta, alongside the borders of Chad and in and around Khartoum.

Airstrikes continue to cause harm to the people of the Sudan as they destroy neighborhoods and take the lives of hundreds of children. There is a lack of application on the principle of distinction leaving civilian property including residential homes and schools destroyed while also taking the lives of children and women. In March 2024, it is reported that the SAF bombed Hadra Elementary school which killed 11 children and the RSF bombed a school in El Fasher which killed 34 people who were mostly children. These examples further highlight the dire situation in the Sudan.

Additionally, these groups use sexual violence against children as a method of war highlighting the grave breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Health

It is a general right that all persons should have access to healthcare when necessary and therefore, it is important that access to these facilities is readily available at this dire time. However, there is a growing crisis in the access to healthcare and a decline in the availability of healthcare facilities accessible to people. Since the beginning of the war, there have been over 80 reported cases of healthcare workers being targeted and killed. There is a collapse of the national healthcare system which in turn, it is estimated that 3 million people are at risk of deadly epidemics.

Overall, there is a medical crisis in the Sudan and there is an urgent need for access to medical aid and medical facilities for the injured and for those who are in need.

Recommendations

With the aim of mitigating the human rights and humanitarian crises in the Sudan due to the ongoing war, it is important for the Human Rights Council and the international committee to consider the following recommendations:

1. Continue to highlight the issues in the Sudan to ensure that they do not become a forgotten crisis:

Although matters of the Sudan are in discussion, it is important to keep discussing the issues surrounding the conflict to ensure the effects of the conflict are not minimized and in hope for resolution in the future.

2. Call for action against the use of sexual violence as a method of war:

Further emphasize the crime of the use of sexual violence as a method of war especially against women and children, as well as, the use of such violence on men.

3. Call for the immediate end of recruitment of children in war and emphasize the importance of the protection of children's rights:

Highlight the importance of the basic needs of children especially education, food and shelter while also calling for the immediate end of the inclusion of children in war. Furthermore, call for the immediate end of shelling and bombing of civilian property including schools.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Arab Lawyers Association-UK, Human Rights Defenders (HRD), Brussels Tribunal, Iraqi Committee for Human Rights (ICHR), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRD), Organization for Justice & Democracy in Iraq (OJDI), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.