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STATEMENT - THE OBSERVATORY

Paris-Geneva, November 18, 2021 – *The military coup of October 25, 2021 in Sudan, has led to multiple arbitrary arrests of political figures and an escalation of violence in Khartoum and the Darfur region against a broad peaceful movement that opposes it. Civic space has severely been affected by the coup, with several human rights defenders detained incommunicado in the capital and in Darfur. The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (FIDH-OMCT) is highly concerned by the situation in Sudan and calls for an immediate international reaction.*

On October 25, 2021, Sudan military forces, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan^[1], [seized power in Sudan](#). General al-Burhan and his forces dissolved the Sovereign Council, a joint military and civilian council that governed the country since August 2019, declared the state of emergency and arrested several members of the legitimate civilian authorities, including Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok. Moreover, the military authorities imposed a complete Internet shutdown in the whole country since the coup, which is affecting, among others, civic space, and this is despite a court judgment calling for restoration of Internet services.

In reaction, thousands of people took to the streets all over the country to protest peacefully against this coup and call for civil disobedience. The protesters are calling, among other things, for the end of the targeting of journalists, the restoration of Internet services and for a full civilian government. Protesters organised rallies across the country, set up barricades in the streets of the capital, Khartoum, in the neighbour cities of Omdurman and Bahri, and other areas of the country, as well as called multiple times for a general strike in all sectors. By using live ammunition, joint security

forces violently repressed these demonstrations notably on November 13 and 17, resulting in the death of at least 22 people. More than 400 people have been injured in Khartoum since the coup and attacks by joint security forces targeted a number of medical centers in Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman. Reports by the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors (CCSD) of non-conventional munitions being used by the military are particularly worrying and in breach of international law.

In this context, numerous human rights defenders, civil society activists, resistance committee members, government officials and politicians have been arbitrarily arrested and held incommunicado under the Emergency law, most notably in Blue Nile State and the Darfur regions, since October 25, 2021.

Among the human rights defenders and civil society activists held incommunicado are:

- Mr. **Mohamed Alfaki Suleiman**, journalist, member of the Sudanese Severna Council and chairman of the Anti-Corruption and dismantle committee, arbitrarily arrested on October 24, 2021, held in Khartoum and admitted at Suba hospital because he contracted Covid-19;
- Mr. **Maheir Abu Algoukh**, journalist for Sudan TV, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held at detention center in Khartoum North;
- Mr. **Faiz Elshikh**, journalist, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held at detention centre in Khartoum North;
- Mr. **Faisal Mohamed Saleh**, journalist and Media Adviser to the Sudanese Prime Minister, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held at detention centre attached to headquarter of Sudanese Military Army, Khartoum;
- Mr. **Mohamed Elryah Alsulimi**, lawyer, South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur;
- Mr. **Ahmed Mohamed Abdullah**, lawyer, South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur;
- Mr. **Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Algasim**, lawyer, South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur;
- Mr. **Adil Adullah Nasur Eldien**, lawyer in South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur;
- Mr. **Mohamed Younis Adullah**, lawyer in South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur;
- Mr. **Abu Zar Masood**, journalist in South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 25, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur;
- Mr. **Adam Sharif**, lawyer, human rights defender and Chairperson of the Sudanese Democratic alliance of South Darfur, arbitrarily arrested on October 26, 2021, held incommunicado at detention centre attached to Nyala prison of South Darfur.

The Observatory expresses its utmost concern over the deteriorating security situation in the country and the arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detentions of the above-mentioned human rights defenders in Sudan, which are at high risk of ill-treatment and torture.

The Observatory urges the military forces to put an immediate end to the violent repression of all peaceful protesters in the country and to immediately and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained human rights defenders and to guarantee in all circumstances their physical integrity and psychological well-being.

The Observatory further calls on the military forces to resume the Internet, to guarantee the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as enshrined in human rights instruments ratified by Sudan, notably in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Finally, the Observatory underlines the urgency for the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union to put in place all preventive measures to avoid the commission of crimes against humanity in compliance with article 4-h of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the corresponding articles in the Peace and Security protocol. The Observatory further requests the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all human rights defenders and civil society activists arbitrarily detained in Sudan.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (the Observatory) was created in 1997 by FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The objective of this programme is to prevent or remedy situations of repression against human rights defenders. FIDH and OMCT are both members of [ProtectDefenders.eu](https://www.protectdefenders.eu), the European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism implemented by international civil society.

[1] General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan was the head of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) that was established after the fall of President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. In August 2019, under popular pressure, the TMC accepted to share power with the civilian representatives of the Forces of Freedom and Change in a Transitional government for 39 months before elections were held. This Transitional government was composed of the Sovereign Council, a military and civilian body led by General al-Burhan, and the Civilian Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.