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Information on the current human rights situation

A report issued in April 2011 by the *United States Department of State* on human rights in Sudan for the preceding year, notes in an introductory paragraph that:

“The following human rights abuses occurred: abridgement of citizens' right to change their government; extrajudicial and other unlawful killings by government forces and other government-aligned groups throughout the country; torture, beatings, rape, and other cruel, inhumane treatment or punishment by security forces; harsh prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, incommunicado detention of suspected government opponents, and prolonged pretrial detention; executive interference with the judiciary and denial of due process; obstruction of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the expulsion of individuals working for humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); restrictions on privacy; restrictions on freedom of speech; restrictions on the press, including direct censorship; restrictions on freedoms of assembly, association, religion, and movement; harassment of internally displaced persons; harassment and closure of human rights organizations; violence and discrimination against women, including female genital mutilation; child abuse, including sexual violence and recruitment of child soldiers; prevention of international human rights observers from traveling to and within the country; trafficking in persons; discrimination and violence against ethnic minorities; denial of workers' rights; and forced and child labor” (United States Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Report: Sudan*).

In April 2011, referring to Sudan, a publication by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

“During demonstrations on 8 and 9 March in Khartoum, up to 84 political activists, including several prominent opposition politicians, were arrested. At least 57 persons are still in prison without charges, including 12 opposition leaders, 4 journalists and 12 civil society actors” (United Nations Security Council (12 April 2011) *Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan*, p.17).

The *International Crisis Group* in a report published in May 2011 notes on Sudan that:

“When the South officially secedes, on 9 July 2011, the North's problems will change little. The National Congress Party (NCP) has not addressed the root causes of Sudan's chronic conflicts and has exacerbated ethnic and regional divisions. Facing multiple security, political, social and economic challenges, it is deeply divided over the way forward” (International Crisis Group (4 May 2011) *Divisions In Sudan's Ruling Party And The Threat To The Country's Future Stability*, p.i).

A report published in June 2011 by *Aegis* et al comments on Sudan stating:

“For millions of northern Sudanese, the promise of democratisation, pluralism and a respect for human rights laid out under the CPA has been broken. National, regional and international commitments to civil and political rights are still routinely violated. The Government continues to impose emergency laws and uses the wide-ranging powers of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) to stifle dissent and repress civil liberties. Critical voices, including human rights defenders and journalists reporting on and denouncing human rights violations – in particular those perpetrated in Darfur – are still being targeted by the regime. They routinely face harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detentions, acts of torture and censorship. Laws that violate Sudan’s international obligations as well as its own constitution are still on the books” (Aegis et al (30 June 2011) *Beyond the Pledge: International Engagement After Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement*, p.10).

The *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* commenting on Sudan in July 2011 states:

“When Sudan adopted an interim constitution in 2005 as part of a peace deal with the south, there were high hopes that the human rights principles enshrined in it would improve the situation on the ground. Five years on, rights activists say this has not happened – the Khartoum government continues to ignore its constitutional responsibilities, and routinely tramples on human rights” (Institute for War and Peace Reporting (8 July 2011) *Rights Disregarded Under Sudan’s Weak Constitution*).

Commenting on Darfur, a report issued in March 2011 by *Amnesty International* states that:

“Without justice, serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law continue to be committed on an almost daily basis against the civilian population” (Amnesty International (3 March 2011) *Sudan: No end to impunity for human rights violations in Darfur*, p.2).

In March 2011 *IRIN News* states on Darfur that:

“Tens of thousands of people continue to flee their homes in Sudan’s western region of Darfur for the safety of internally displaced people’s camps after recent fighting between government forces and armed militias” (IRIN News (16 March 2011) *Sudan: Thousands flee fighting in Darfur*).

The *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* in April note on Darfur that:

“The Sudanese government is hampering international efforts to address chronic levels of malnutrition in camps for displaced people in Darfur, according to the country head of the United Nations children’s agency UNICEF” (Institute for War and Peace Reporting (April 2011) *International Failures Prolong Darfur’s Misery*, p.5).

A *Human Rights Watch* report published in June 2011 on Darfur states:

“As the people of Southern Sudan peacefully voted for secession from northern Sudan in January 2011, closing the book on a brutal civil war, the people of Darfur struggled to survive an armed conflict that now commands little international attention, despite renewed fighting in Darfur. Darfur’s civilians continue to bear the brunt of clashes between Sudanese government forces and the rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), an eight-year- war that has killed tens of thousands of people

and displaced two million more" (Human Rights Watch (5 June 2011) *Darfur in the Shadows, The Sudanese Government's Ongoing Attacks on Civilians and Human Rights*, p.1).

This report also states:

"There has been an upsurge in abuses by government security forces, including assault, sexual violence, looting and arbitrary arrests, often based on ethnicity. Rebel groups have been responsible for retaliatory attacks. The patterns of attack show that the Darfur conflict continues to play on ethnic divisions, with government forces targeting the communities associated with rebels and rebel groups retaliating against those communities from which the government has recruited its security forces" (ibid, p.11).

A report in June 2011 by *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* notes on Darfur that:

"The state of emergency in Darfur continues to curtail fundamental rights and freedoms" (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (10 June 2011) *Statement of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan*).

The *Council of the European Union* in June 2011 states on Darfur:

"The Council deplores the increasing violence in Darfur, especially the continued targeting of civilians, which has resulted in more than 70,000 displaced persons in 2011" (Council of the European Union (20 June 2011) *Council conclusions on Sudan*, p.2).

The *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* comments on Darfur in June 2011 stating:

"Some eight years after the beginning of the conflict, too little has changed for the people of Darfur. While it was encouraging to hear reports of returns beginning in West Darfur, many people remain displaced, and are receiving far too little assistance. They live in fear of attacks on their communities, of rape and of being arbitrarily detained" (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (27 June 2011) *UN Deputy Human Rights Chief ends mission to Sudan*).

In July 2011 *Reuters* note on Darfur:

"Though down from its peak, violence has surged since December, forcing tens of thousands more to flee. Qatar-brokered peace talks have meant little on the ground as Darfur's main rebel groups pulled out or refused to participate" (Reuters (5 July 2011) *Sudan's division echoes in war-ravaged Darfur*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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