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Sudan: UN expert calls for end to attacks on critical civilian infrastructure amidst intensifying drone strikes

GENEVA – The designated Expert on human rights in Sudan of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Radhouane Nouicer, on Monday expressed deep concern at the recent intensification of drone strikes and the expansion of the conflict to Red Sea state in eastern Sudan. The reported availability of advanced long-range drone technology marks a dramatic escalation which has taken the conflict to a new level, further exacerbating conditions for civilians.

Since the onset of the conflict in April 2023, Port Sudan, in Red Sea State, has served as a lifeline for humanitarian operations and a safe haven for internally displaced people (IDPs). However, an unprecedented escalation in drone strikes targeting critical civilian infrastructure in the city since 4 May, allegedly attributed to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has endangered civilian lives and jeopardized enjoyment of rights and access to basic services.

Critical infrastructure targeted has included the city's main electricity substation and fuel and gas storage facilities, as well as the international airport - a key access point for humanitarian operations and civilian movement. Many of the attacks have occurred near densely populated areas, and IDPs have once again been forced to move in search of safety.

"The recurrent attacks on critical infrastructure place civilian lives at risk, worsen the humanitarian crisis, and undermine basic human rights. The magnitude of these drone attacks represents a major escalation in the

conflict, with alarming implications for civilian protection," warned Nouicer.

The designated Expert expressed profound concern at the resulting widespread power outages and impact on fuel supplies, which disrupt access to essential rights, such as the right to food, safe drinking water, and health care — noting that some medical facilities in Port Sudan and Kassala have already been forced to work at reduced capacity.

The recent strikes in Port Sudan are part of a pattern of increasing attacks, allegedly by the RSF, on critical infrastructure, including power plants in Northern, River Nile and White Nile states.

"Civilian infrastructure is protected under international law and must not be a target. It is devastating to see the continued destruction and damage to the infrastructure and social services in Sudan," Nouicer stressed.

The designated Expert called on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which include refraining from deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian objects and respecting the principles of proportionality and precaution.

ecoi.net description:

Red Sea state: UN expert expresses concern on recent intensification of the armed conflict and its expansion into the city of Port Sudan, where civilian infrastructure has been damaged in drone strikes

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