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Sudan crisis deepens amid rising civilian casualties, growing ethnic violence and grim humanitarian situation – UN report

19 September 2025

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GENEVA – The conflict-driven crisis in Sudan intensified in the first half of the year, a [report](#) by the UN Human Rights Office shows, citing a significant rise in civilian killings, including summary executions, amid growing ethnic violence and a worsening humanitarian situation.

Between 1 January and 30 June, UN Human Rights documented the deaths of at least 3,384 civilians in the context of the conflict, mostly in Darfur, followed by Kordofan and Khartoum. This represents nearly 80 per cent of all civilian casualties (4,238) documented during the whole of 2024. The real toll of casualties is likely to be significantly higher.

Seventy per cent of casualties (2,398) occurred during the conduct of hostilities, as the parties continued to launch attacks in densely populated areas, using artillery shelling, airstrikes and drones. Several major offensives and mass casualty incidents were particularly deadly. In April, an offensive by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on El Fasher and other areas in North Darfur resulted in at least 527 deaths, including over 270 in Zamzam and Abu Shouk camps for displaced people. In March, airstrikes by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on Tora market in North Darfur killed at least 350 civilians, including 13 members of one family.

The report also documents the unlawful killing of at least 990 civilians outside the conduct of hostilities, including through summary executions. Between February and April, the number of such killings tripled, due in large part to a surge in summary executions, primarily in Khartoum, after SAF and allied fighters recaptured territory previously controlled by the RSF in late March, and campaigns of apparent reprisals against alleged “collaborators” ensued.

One witness who observed SAF search operations in civilian neighbourhoods in East Nile, Khartoum between March and April, said that he saw children as young as 14 or 15 years of age, accused of being RSF members, summarily killed. RSF also carried out summary executions in Khartoum, as SAF and allied fighters closed in on their positions. On 27 April, video footage obtained by UN Human Rights shows the summary execution by RSF fighters of at least 30 males in civilian dress, including some who appeared to be children, in Al Salha, Omdurman, after they were accused of affiliation with SAF.

The report also points to “recurring patterns of conflict-related sexual violence, used as a weapon of war as part of wider attacks involving other violations”.

Attacks directed against civilians and wilful killings are serious violations of international humanitarian law and of the right to life under international human rights law. “Sudan’s conflict is a forgotten one, and I hope that my Office’s report puts the spotlight on this disastrous situation where atrocity crimes, including war crimes, are being committed,” UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said.

The conflict has led to the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, with 24.6 million people facing acute food insecurity amid rising risk of famine, 19 million lacking access to safe water and sanitation, and a continuing cholera outbreak. Yet, in this dire context, the report documents continued attacks on civilian objects and infrastructure, including health facilities, markets, energy infrastructure, water sources and humanitarian convoys. At least 30 humanitarian and health workers have been killed in the six-month period covered by the report, including in targeted attacks.

Other documented trends identified in the report include widespread arbitrary detention, often targeting individuals accused of collaborating with the opposing side, and involving ethnic profiling. Civil society figures, including local humanitarian volunteers, have also been subjected to arbitrary detention, restrictions and attacks. At least seven journalists and media workers were reportedly killed in the first half of 2025.

“This violence, in all of its vile forms, must end. Impunity continues to drive cycles of violations and abuses. To stop this, accountability is critical to hold those responsible to account,” the High Commissioner said.

In light of numerous incidents involving hate speech and incitement to violence, Türk warned, “the increasing ethnicisation of the conflict, which builds on longstanding discrimination and inequalities, poses grave risks for longer-term stability and social cohesion within the country”.

“States must collectively face up to the grim reality of what has now evolved into a wider – and alarming – protection crisis and use their influence to end this conflict. Many more lives will be lost without urgent action to protect civilians and without the rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid.”

To read the full report, click here:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/human-rights-situation-sudan-1-january-30-june-2025>

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