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# Sudan



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## Introduction

The history of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sudan dates to the country's colonial period under Anglo-Egyptian rule, which lasted from 1899 until Sudan's independence in 1956. During this time, there were a small number of cultural, literary, and artistic societies of limited membership in Khartoum. In the mid-1940s, however, political movements started to become active in Sudan in the struggle for either Sudan's independence or, alternately, a union with Egypt. The most active organization was the Graduates Congress (in reference to the graduates of Gordon Memorial College), which was founded by political leaders who established political parties based on their social, tribal, ethnic, and regional affiliations. These new parties eventually played a role in the negotiations for the post-colonial future of Sudan and are considered to be the first CSOs in Sudan's history.

Following Sudanese independence, CSOs working on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights formed across the country, especially in Khartoum. The legal and operating environment for CSOs varied significantly throughout the subsequent years, depending on the nature of the government in power. From its independence until

2019, Sudan had three parliamentary democracies and three military governments, with CSOs tending to fare better under civilian rule. When the military government took power in a 1989 coup, the government of newly installed President Omar al-Bashir declared a state of emergency that included banning all political parties, organizations, professional associations, trades unions, societies, newspapers, and magazines.

### *2019 Formation of Transitional Military Council*

At the end of 2018, mass protests calling for an end to Omar al-Bashir's 30-year rule began, and, on April 11, 2019, then-Defense Minister and Vice-President, Lt. Gen. Awad Ahmed Ibn Auf, announced the arrest of al-Bashir and the formation of a Transitional Military Council (TMC) that would hold power for a two-year transitional period under his leadership. He further announced that the Sudanese Constitution had been suspended, declared a state of emergency for three months, and called for the release of political prisoners. Opposition parties and the international community immediately raised concerns over the composition of the TMC, however, and Ibn Auf was soon replaced by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who was the Inspector-General of the armed forces and the commander of Sudanese forces fighting in the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen.

Led by members of the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), Sudanese citizens continued protesting, calling for a civilian transitional government and structural reform of the state. The TMC, for its part, welcomed dialogue with opposition forces and protest leaders. The Forces of the Declaration of Freedom (DFC), a coalition of political and CSO actors, who advocated for democratic transition by civilian rule based on internationally agreed principles, presented their demands to the TMC. Hundreds of political prisoners, including those detained for their involvement or suspected involvement in the 2018 protests, were released.

### *2019 Constitutional Charter*

On July 17, 2019, the TMC and the DFC reached an agreement on the transitional period. The agreement envisioned three institutions: a sovereign council, government, and legislative council. The sovereign council would consist of 11 members, including five members from the military and five civilians, while the 11th member will be a civilian selected by both the TMC and the DFC. The agreement further established a rotating presidency, with the TMC appointing the chairman of the Sovereign Council for 21 months, followed by a chairman chosen by the DFC for the remaining 18 months.

On August 4, 2019, the TMC and the opposition coalition Forces for Freedom of Change (FFC) signed a Constitutional Charter that paved the way for a transitional period. The 2019 Constitutional Charter provided a governance structure for the 39-month transitional period. This power-sharing agreement incorporated both the political and constitutional agreements. The end of the transitional period was to be followed by general elections.

### *2020 Juba Peace Agreement*

On October 3, 2020, the Sudanese transitional government signed the Juba Peace Agreement with the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel coalition to end fighting in Darfur and other conflict areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The agreement envisioned a permanent ceasefire and the demobilization or integration of rebel forces in Sudan's military, police, and security services. In exchange, the government agreed to compensate people displaced by conflict, to expand resources and powers for states, and to begin processes of transitional justice. The rebel leaders were allocated legislative and executive posts; three rebel leaders were appointed as members of the Sovereign Council, while others were appointed to the Cabinet or to government offices. The transitional period was also extended by two years.

### *2021 Military Coup*

On October 25, 2021, General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, the Chairman of the Sovereign Council, dissolved the transitional government and declared a nation-wide state of emergency, stating that a general election would be held in July 2023. Sudan's military forces arrested former Prime Minister Abdulla Hamdok and several civilian figures, including members of the Sovereign Council, Cabinet ministers, state governors and government officials, political leaders, journalists, human rights defenders, and activists, who were placed under house arrest or taken to unknown locations. On November 11, 2021, General al-Burhan appointed a new governing Sovereign Council with himself as the Chair; the new 14-member council included army commanders, former rebel leaders, and new civilian members.

Since 2021, however, Sudan has been without a functioning government and a constitutional framework. Forty parties, including political parties, armed movements, professional associations, civil society, and Sudan's military, signed a Framework Agreement in Khartoum on December 5, 2022. It has remained unclear how and whether that Agreement or any other political agreements will succeed in restoring constitutional order and placing the country back on the democratic transition track.

### *2023 SAF vs. RSF Civil War*

Since April 2023, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), which are led by General al-Burhan, have been at war with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group, which is led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (“Hemedti”). The SAF tends to adhere to the Islamist ideology, while the RSF is a counter-insurgency force comprised primarily of Darfur-based *janjaweed* fighters. As of January 2024, the RSF has gained the upper hand in the fighting. Sudanese and international CSOs have [documented](#) atrocities committed by both factions, including ethnic cleansing, sexual-based violence, and other war crimes.

## At a Glance

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organizational Forms               | National voluntary organization, charitable organization, civil society organization (as defined in the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) Act).                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Registration Body                  | Ministry of Interior.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Barriers to Entry                  | Mandatory registration; Burdensome requirements (30 minimum founders required); Annual re-registration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Barriers to Activities             | Suppression of CSOs not aligned with government. However, since the negotiations between FFC and TMC were followed by the commencement of the transitional period in August 2019, there have been no further reports of crackdowns on media or CSOs.                                                                                      |
| Barriers to Speech and/or Advocacy | Fines and penalties for CSOs that publicly disagree with the government; refusal to allow CSOs to participate in “national dialogue.” However, since the negotiations between FFC and TMC were followed by the commencement of the transitional period in August 2019, there have been no further reports of crackdowns on media or CSOs. |
| Barriers to International Contact  | “Country Agreements” required for foreign CSOs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Barriers to Contact                | Nearly impossible to receive permit to hold an assembly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Barriers to Resources              | Advanced government approval for all foreign funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Barriers to Assembly               | Nearly impossible to receive a permit to hold an assembly. However, since the negotiations between FFC and TMC were followed by the commencement of the transitional period in August 2019, there have been no further reports of crackdowns on media or CSOs.                                                                            |

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## Key Indicators

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Population               | 41,984,512 (2018 est.)                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Capital                  | Khartoum                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Type of Government       | Until 2019, it was a federal republic ruled by the National Congress Party the (NCP), which came to power by military coup in 1989. Currently the country is testing a transition to greater democracy. |
| Life Expectancy at Birth | Male: 62 years<br>Female: 66 years (2015 est.)                                                                                                                                                          |

|                  |                                                             |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Literacy Rate    | Male: 83.3%<br>Female: 68.6% (2015 est.)                    |
| Religious Groups | Sunni Islam, small Christian minority                       |
| Ethnic Groups    | Sudanese Arab (approximately 70%), Fur, Beja, Nuba, Fallata |
| GDP per capita   | \$4,600 (2017 est.)                                         |

Source: [The World Factbook](#). Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency.

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### International Rankings

| Ranking Body                                            | Rank                                                                       | Ranking Scale<br>(best – worst possible)      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">UN Human Development Index</a>              | 170 (2023)                                                                 | 1 – 193                                       |
| <a href="#">Foreign Policy: Fragile States Index</a>    | Rank: 2 (2024)                                                             | 179 – 1                                       |
| <a href="#">World Justice Project Rule of Law Index</a> | 132 (2023)                                                                 | 1 – 142                                       |
| <a href="#">Transparency International</a>              | 162 (2022)                                                                 | 1 – 180                                       |
| <a href="#">Freedom House: Freedom in the World</a>     | Status: “Not Free”<br>Political Rights: -3<br>Civil Liberties: 9<br>(2024) | Free/Partly Free/Not Free<br>40 – 0<br>60 – 0 |

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### Legal Snapshot

#### International and Regional Human Rights Agreements\*

| Key International Agreements                                                              | Ratification** | Year         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)                              | Yes            | 18 Mar. 1986 |
| Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1)                                                    | No             | —            |
| International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)                  | Yes            | 21 Mar. 1977 |
| Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention                 | No             | —            |
| International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) | Yes            | —            |

|                                                                                                                       |     |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)                                    | No  | 29 Apr. 2021 |
| Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women                                | No  | —            |
| Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)                                                                           | Yes | 4 Apr. 2009  |
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) | No  | —            |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)                                                          | Yes | 4 Apr. 2009  |

### Regional Treaties

|                                                     |     |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Arab Charter on Human Rights                        | No  | —            |
| African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights | Yes | 11 Mar. 1986 |

\* On August 10, 2021, Sudan also ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

\*\* Category includes ratification, accession, or succession to the treaty

## Constitutional Framework

Article 2 of the Constitutional Charter, 2019, repeals the Interim Constitution of Sudan, 2005, and the constitutions of provinces. However, the laws enacted under the Interim Constitution remain in force unless repealed or amended. Before the end of transitional period a national constitutional conference is to be held with the expectation of adopting a new constitution. Members of the Commission in charge of the constitution-drafting and constitutional conference shall be appointed by the Sovereign Council in consultation with the Cabinet.

Chapter 14 of the Constitutional Charter, 2019, sets out the rights and freedoms. It retains rights included in the previous bill of rights under the Interim Constitution of Sudan, 2005, including:

### 56. Freedom of express and the press

- (1) Every citizen shall have the unrestricted right to freedom of expression, to receive and publish information and publications, and to access the press, without prejudice to public order, safety and morals, as defined by law.
- (2) The right to access the internet, without prejudice to public order, safety, and morals, as defined by the law.
- (3) The state shall guarantee freedom of the press and other media, as regulated by law in a democratic, pluralistic society.
- (4) All media shall adhere to the ethics of the profession and shall not incite religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural hatred, or call for violence or war.

### 57. Freedom of assembly and organization

- (1) The right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed, and every person shall have the right to free organization without others, including the right to form political parties, associations, organizations, syndicates and professional unions, or the join the same in order to protect their interests.
- (2) The law shall regulate the formation and registration of political parties, associations, organizations, syndicates and professional unions, in accordance with what is required by democratic society.
- (3) No organization shall have to right to work as a political party, unless it has the following:
  - (a) Open membership for all Sudanese, regardless of religion, ethnic origin or place of birth;
  - (b) Democratically elected institutions;
  - (c) Transparent and open sources of funding.

Article 41(2) of the Constitutional Charter states: “All rights and freedoms contained in international human rights agreements, pacts, and charters ratified by the Republic of Sudan shall be considered an integral part of this document.”

The [Interim National Constitution](#) of Sudan, 2005 (INC) followed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ([Summary](#)) of the same year, which was concluded between the Government of Sudan and the South Sudan-based Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

The INC does provide for protection of freedom of assembly and association. Article 40 of the INC states,

- (1) The right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed; every person shall have the right to freedom of association with others; including the right to form or join political parties, associations and trade or professional unions for the protection of his or her interests.
- (2) Formation and registration of political parties, associations and trade unions shall be regulated by law as is necessary in a democratic society.
- (3) No association shall function as a political party at the national, Southern Sudan, or state level unless:
  - (a) Its membership is open to any Sudanese irrespective of religion, ethnic origin or place of birth.
  - (b) It has a programme that does not contradict the provisions of this Constitution.
  - (c) It has a democratically elected leadership and institutions.
  - (d) It has disclosed and transparent sources of funding.

Article 27(3) of the INC also states:

All rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants, and instruments ratified by the Republic of the Sudan shall be an integral part of this Bill.

As Sudan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1986, Sudan is bound by the its provisions, including Article 21 on the freedom of peaceful assembly and Article 22 on the freedom of association.

## National Laws and Regulations Affecting Sector

CSOs are governed by the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) (“VHO”) Act, 2006 (“the Act”) ([Arabic version](#)), which is inconsistent with many provisions of the 2005 Interim National Constitution and the ICCPR. A key concern is Section 6 of the Act, which defines the objectives of humanitarian work narrowly, so as to include only such goals as emergency relief from natural disasters, reducing risks from disasters, directing relief aid to rehabilitation and development, reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by war or natural disasters, building local capacity of national organizations, and the execution of relief projects and services through voluntary and charitable organizations.

It is thus clear that the Act is intended for humanitarian relief and charitable work, rather than the wider scope of civil society pursuits, such as rule of law, democratic transition, justice, and fundamental human rights and freedoms. CSOs working in these fields face harassment from government officials in charge of registering CSOs, in particular from the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). The National Intelligence and Security Act, 2010, empowers the NISS to search, arrest, and detain people for varying periods without any judicial supervision or sanction.

## Pending CSO Legislative / Regulatory Initiatives

While the new transition government is being formed and new appointments in the executive are being made, there has not been movement on initiatives to amend previous laws prohibiting the work of independent civil society and the media. Statements and promises have been made by various officials, however. For example, at the 74th UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Hamdok [made a statement](#) on the state of press freedom in Sudan and the benefits it would have for promoting human rights, good governance, a culture of tolerance, dialogue, and peace. He also underscored the importance of free press in promoting accountability and transparency and fighting corruption, especially when information is made readily available to the public.

For information previous initiatives, please see the below:

1. In 2016, a new draft law regulating civil society was circulated. Although the draft appears to be broadly similar to the Sudanese Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act, 2006 currently in force, the new legislation would, in its current state, place additional burdens on civil society. A new draft of the proposed law, the Voluntary and Humanitarian Works Act, 2018, was discussed in a workshop in November 2017. Given the political changes since April 2019, it is unclear what the status of this proposed Act will be moving forward.

2. The al-Bashir regime had been in the process of preparing a new Islamic constitution, which civil society and the majority of opposition parties believed would not be suitable for a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society such as Sudan. In February 2015, President al-Bashir [said](#), “the drafting of a permanent Constitution will be preceded by a comprehensive Islamic dialogue between all sectors of society to reach a constitution acceptable to

all the people of Sudan and a model of the Islamic state.” The various political parties outside the government’s single-party system concluded in early 2017 that any “reforms” to amend the Constitution would be intended to entrench the President’s powers and increase the number of MPs in “opposition parties” who are actually supporters of the Congress Party that was in power since the 1989 coup d’état. Dialogue on such reforms was therefore discontinued.

Given the political changes since April 2019, it is doubtful there will still be a push for this new Islamic constitution. However, the TMC and the Alliance for Freedom and Change (AFC) forces, an umbrella organization for opposition and protests organizers, have been holding talks to reach an agreement on unified vision of the Constitutional Declaration, a document that will guide the country during the agreed three-year transitional period. In July 2019, the AFC rejected some of the contents in the draft Constitution developed by the TMC, including an Article that grants members of the Sovereign Council immunity from prosecution of crimes they committed, including in the June 3, 2019 crackdown. The draft Constitution also provides for the powers of the three institutions of the transitional body.

3. Lastly, a draft bill approved by the Cabinet in July 2018 seeks to bestow the Press and Publications Council with authority to suspend a journalist from writing and revoke a journalist’s practice license without a court order. The bill also provides for restrictions to online publishing that have already been addressed in the Cyber-Crimes Act, 2014. Members from Sudan’s journalist community have rejected the proposed sections to the bill due to their restrictive nature and the intention of authorities to control the press. The authorities already rely on existing laws—the National Security Act, 2010, Criminal Act, 199,1 and Press and Publications Act, 2009—to censor and curtail press freedom in Sudan. The Sudanese authorities, particularly the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), have continuously used tactics to restrict press freedom, such as summoning journalists, preventing the distribution of printed copies of newspapers without rationale, imposing “red lines” on media through telephone communications to editors-in-chief, and blacklisting journalists from publishing their work in newspapers. Newspapers, including pro-government newspapers, have been subjected to pre- and post-publication censorship, causing tremendous financial loss. Journalists have also been targeted for arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, criminal prosecution, and summons. Given the political changes in April 2019, it is unclear what the status of this proposed initiative will be moving forward.

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## Legal Analysis

### Organizational Forms

There are three organizational forms defined in Section 4 of the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) (“VHO”) Act (“the Act”):

- A “national voluntary organization” is defined as “a Sudanese non-governmental voluntary organization registered in accordance with the provisions of this Act” that is not a company registered in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 1925 or a political party.

A “charitable organization” is an “organization that may be established by citizens, groups or individuals and having the financial ability to establish and sustain charitable activities.”

- A “civil society organization” is “a civil society organization that practices voluntary and humanitarian work for not-for-profit purposes and which is registered in accordance with the provisions of [the Act].”

According to Section 4 of the Act, “voluntary and humanitarian work” means any “not-for-profit voluntary humanitarian activity carried out by any national or foreign voluntary or charitable organization registered in Sudan that aims at providing humanitarian aid, relief, public services and human rights services, protecting the environment, or enhancing the economic and social standards of the beneficiaries.”

### Public Benefit Status

There are no clear rules about tax exemptions or public benefit status in Sudan. However, according to the VHO Act, “the Minister of Finance and National Economy, upon the recommendation of the Minister [of Humanitarian Affairs],” may grant exemptions from duties, taxes, and privileges to “national, foreign voluntary organizations, or civil society organizations registered under the Act.” In addition, anyone who provides funds for “voluntary or charitable work” may be exempted from taxation (Section 29(1),(2), and (3)).



## Public Participation

With the commencement of the transition to democracy in recent years, some legal reforms and the relaxation of repressive tactics have made the civic environment slightly more favorable for the exercise of fundamental freedoms and for the increased engagement with and enabling of historically marginalized groups, such as the women's rights movement, which allows them to collectively advocate for reform. However, the October 25, 2021 coup and subsequent decisions made by the military authorities have seen the return of repressive tactics, including mass arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detentions of activists, journalists, and other civil society activists. The United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in Sudan documented at least 50 incidents of violations against journalists and media institutions since the coup, including 22 incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention.

## Barriers to Entry

There are a number of barriers to entry in the VHO Act.

*Minimum membership requirement.* In order to register a voluntary or charitable organization, the Act requires the organization to have a minimum of 30 members (Section 9(1)(a)). However, if the organization has fewer than 30 members, "the Minister [of Humanitarian Affairs] may approve the registration of an organization on condition that [the organization] establishes that it has financial capacity, sustainability, sources of funding, and is registered" (Section 9(2)).

*Requirements for foreign organizations.* A foreign voluntary organization "shall provide proof showing its financial and technical capability to carry out the activities or work it intends to carry out in Sudan and the source of those capabilities" (Section 9(2)(e)). In addition, it "shall not have its quarters or origin in any country in a state of war with the Sudan, or boycotted by [Sudan]" (Section 9(2)(d)).

*Annual re-registration requirement.* Every organization must annually renew its license "as to such conditions, as the regulations may specify" (Section 11).

*Mandatory registration.* Registration is mandatory, and unregistered organizations can be fined for not being registered. Section 23 states that "every person, or group of persons, who practice the activity of voluntary organization, without registration in accordance with the provisions of this Act" is deemed to have committed a contravention [of the Act]." Section 24 defines the penalty for contravention as a fine. As a result, Sudanese CSOs that are unregistered or were refused registration have been forced to hold their meetings in other countries, such as Ethiopia, to avoid arrest.

*Refusal of registration.* The Registrar may reject the registration of any organization where "the activities it carries out are inconsistent with the principles provided for in section 5 [of the Act]" (Section 13(1)(a)).

These "principles" include:

- Non-discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, ethnicity, political affiliation, or religious beliefs (Section 5(a));
- Having due regard for the desires of the local community at all stages of the project through the participation of local communities (Section 5(e)); and
- Non-interference of foreign voluntary organizations in the internal affairs of the Sudan in a way that may infringe on the sovereignty of the country (Section 5(f)).

The non-discrimination principle, while it may seem desirable, could violate the freedom of association. For example, an advocacy campaign to bring together [women against forced marriages](#) or to raise awareness about the human rights of a certain minority group could risk violating the provision in Section 5(a) since they could be considered "discriminatory" on the basis of gender or ethnicity.

Similarly, the interest in the participation of local communities in CSO projects in Section 5(e) and preventing foreign CSOs from "interfering" in internal affairs in Section 5(f) are not "precise" grounds for denial and do not meet the strict limitations for restricting the freedom of association under the ICCPR. Terms such as "due regard for the desires of the local community," "non-interference," and "internal affairs" are undefined in the Act, giving implementing officials substantial discretion to determine whether an organization's activities are in violation of the Act.

Furthermore, a decision to refuse registration may be appealed to the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs within fifteen days, but there is no required timetable for the Minister to respond to the appeal and there is no ability to make a subsequent appeal to an impartial body (Section 13(3)).

*Revocation of registration.* An organization can have its registration revoked if it “has contravened the provisions of this Act, the regulations or any other law in force;” if it fails, “without acceptable justification,” to perform its activities for the period of one year; or if it “uses humanitarian aid for obtaining unlawful gains” (Section 14(1)). These vague provisions leave terms such as “acceptable justification” and “unlawful gains” undefined and open the door to revocation even for minor infractions of law.

In addition, there are practical barriers to entry. For example, the [Sudan Development Initiative](#) (SUDIA) tried to open an office in Red Sea State in 2013. After waiting for over three months, SUDIA received a formal answer from the HAC notifying SUDIA that the request was declined, without stating any reason why. HAC has also been obstructing the work of other national NGOs throughout the country, even those that engage with the HAC and ensure their compliance with the HAC’s procedures and regulations.

## **Barriers to Operational Activity**

Legal barriers to operational activity in the VHO Act include the following:

*Annual re-registration requirement.* Every registered organization must renew its license annually (Section 11).

*Interference in internal affairs.* The Registrar has the authority to “supervise the elections of national organizations” (Section 22(2)(d)).

*Reporting requirements.* Every registered organization must submit to the Registrar a semi-annual report on its business, an annual report, and a copy of the annual budget “approved by a certified auditor” (Section 27(1)).

*Government harassment.* CSOs face many restrictions. The permission of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) is required prior to carrying out any proposed activity. The NISS uses its powers to prevent activities it classifies as “political,” including, for example, workshops that intend to discuss the contents of the new Constitution.

Civil society also faces a number of extra-legal pressures. In 2014, for example, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) began scrutinizing several women’s organizations, including Salmmah Women’s Resource Centre, whose Director was served with a decree signed and stamped by the Sudanese Ministry of Justice that ordered the cancellation of Salmmah’s registration license and its immediate liquidation. A five-person committee was also appointed to oversee its dissolution process, and plain-clothed individuals, who did not identify themselves, accompanied the Dissolution Committee to Salmmah’s offices and prohibited non-staff members from entering Salmmah’s premises. This has led to concerns that the HAC will continue to shut down organizations that it perceives to be working against its interests, even those that provide needed services to women.

Other incidents have illustrated extra-legal pressures on civil society:

- In November 2012, the newly formed Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations planned to hold a press conference to declare the new organization. The NISS entered the premises of Sudan Human Rights Monitor, where the press conference was to be held, and ordered the dispersal of the gathering as an unlawful meeting for which no permission was obtained, labeling the meeting a threat to a “national security.”
- In November 2012, the Sudanese Writers Union was given a warning that a workshop held on the proposed constitution was a “political” activity in which they should not engage.
- In December 2012, the Sudan Studies Centre received a letter from the Ministry of Information suspending the Centre for one year and alleging that the Centre had been engaged in activities threatening “national security.” On the same day, the Dar Alfinoon (House of Arts) was closed for the same reason.

More recently, the Seema Centre for Training and Protection of Women and Children’s Rights announced that its Khartoum office was raided by unknown individuals in the early hours of July 23, 2019. According to Seema, the contents of the office were ransacked and there are indications the raid and break-in had nothing to do with theft, but were aimed at obtaining papers and documents concerning the nature of the work of the centre.

In 2022, several incidents also demonstrated restrictions on CSO operations. For example, in October 2022, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) unlawfully cancelled the registration of Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS). The SCPS office, which is a consumers’ society/association, received a delegation of seven employees from HAC, who delivered a letter about the cancellation of registration and seizure of all SCPS’ assets. The HAC employees confiscated property, such as seals, papers, and other documents and gave SCPS an ultimatum to hand over all of its assets within 72 hours. The legal provisions provide HAC the mandate to cancel SCPS’ registration were listed in the letter and allegedly justified under article 14 (1) of the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) Act, 2006 (Violations by NGOs) and article 22 (2) (a) (Powers of General registrar to register

and cancel registration of NGOs). Article 14 (1) provides that the registrar must carry out investigations to ascertain if any violations or breaches have been committed prior to penalizing any organization. These penalties include cancellation of registration, confiscation/seizure of an organization's assets by courts of law, and freezing of an organization's accounts, among others. The procedure was not followed in this case because investigations were not carried out and no violations were committed, but HAC still went ahead and confiscated property and seized assets without receiving authorization from the courts of law.

In another incident, on October 20, 2022, a group of Sudanese Federal Police arrived in five vehicles and raided an art gallery during an exhibition of Ahmed Esam held at an NGO building in Alzhour neighborhood, Khartoum. Ahmed is a 21-year-old human rights defender. During the raid, the police officers arrested nine guest, most of whom were young artists and designers. They also confiscated art pieces. Those arrested were taken to the federal police office, where they were detained and later transferred to Northern Police Station in central Khartoum where they spent a night and eventually released on bond. They were charged with several offences, including calling for opposition to authority by use of violence (article 63), disturbance of public peace (article 69), and public nuisance (article 77) of the Sudanese Penal Code 199. The police did not return their personal property, such as cellphones, confiscated during the arrest. Ahmed's art exhibition was an expression of he had experienced in detention together with group of artists in March 2022. At that time, they were detained for 55 days and subjected to verbal abuse and torture after Ahmed and other five artists were arrested for drawing pictures of martyrs of the Sudanese revolution on walls.

## **Barriers to Speech/Advocacy**

CSOs that support the government enjoy its full backing, such as funding, customs exemptions on imports, and participation in government activities, including accompanying official delegations on travel to regional and international events. CSOs that oppose the government, however, are often harassed, threatened, and closed down if they voice a position contrary to government views. The government also refuses to allow CSOs to take part in "national dialogue" because they are perceived as opposing the government.

In the months before the presidential and parliamentary elections in April 2015, the government again cracked down on CSOs, human rights defenders, students, the media, and members of the political opposition and refused to allow CSOs to observe the elections. Some CSOs, such as Massarat, were closed down, while others, such as The Civic Forum, The Sudanese Writers Union, and Mahmoud Mohammed Taha Centre, had their licenses revoked and offices closed as a result of their political activism. In early 2015, the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) confiscated the publications of at least 16 newspapers, and the police and NISS interrogated more than 21 journalists. The crackdown continued in 2016 when the government filed capital charges against six CSO activists associated with Training and Human Development (TRACKs). TRACKs, a Khartoum-based organization, had been raided twice before by the NISS, which also confiscated its staff members' passports.

In addition, in March 2017, three human rights defenders were released on time served after a court sentenced them to one-year imprisonment and a fine for "dissemination of false information" and "possession of immoral material." They had been detained since May 2016. A few months later, Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, along with five other human rights defenders, was released on August 2017 after being detained since early December 2016. He faced six trumped-up charges, including "undermining the constitutional system" and "waging war against the state," both of which carried either the death penalty or life imprisonment. All charges against him were dropped.

In July 2018, eight charges, including crimes against the state, were added to charges against Winnie Omer. She was first targeted in December 2017 by the public order police in Khartoum, who arrested her and charged her with "indecent dress." At time of her arrest, she was wearing a long skirt, blouse and a scarf that she had worn that same morning while attending the trial of 24 women who had also been charged under Article 152 ("indecent dress") of the Sudan Criminal Act, 1991 for wearing trousers at a private party. Winnie Omer was detained for a few hours before she was released on bail in December 2017. After three additional court hearings, the public order court dismissed the charges against her and found she was not indecently dressed. However, in February 2018, Omer and three friends were arrested again during a police raid on an apartment where the group was having a meeting. During the raid, the police confiscated laptops and mobile phones. The group was detained for five days before being released on bail. They were accused of, among other things, prostitution. The reason behind the July 2018 charges against Omer is unclear, but it is believed they were related to her activism highlighting the authorities' ongoing pattern of harassment and intimidation of her and other activists.

As demonstrated in Omer's case, the authorities have disproportionately applied broadly and ill-defined criminal offences, known as "public order" offences, which forbid, inter alia, "indecent and immoral" acts against or by women and girls. The police, prosecution, and courts have broad discretion to judge whether a person has acted in "an indecent manner" or "a manner contrary to public morality" or "wears an indecent, or immoral dress, which causes annoyance to public feelings." In practice, the enforcement of public order laws by the public order police and courts has often been discriminatory and arbitrary against women and girls, especially those from marginalized religious or ethnic groups.

On December 20, 2018, the Sudanese government shut down the internet in an attempt to suppress protests. Using virtual private networks, Sudanese citizens were able to continue sharing information on various social media platforms, including updates on scheduled protests and details about the ongoing crackdown by security forces. Sudanese authorities have subjected journalists who continued to cover the protests have been subjected to physical attacks, summons and interrogations, arrests and detention, and bans from writing. For example, a journalist was dismissed from work following comments he made to the BBC about the ongoing protests. The authorities have also subjected Sudanese newspapers to post-print censorship through confiscation of print-runs. On January 21, 2018, the Sudanese authorities also withdrew the journalist license of Mr. Saad Eldien Hassan, an Al-Arabiya correspondent, thereby banning him from working as a journalist in Sudan.

The political changes since April 2019 have suggested the government will change course from previous trends. For instance, hundreds of political prisoners, including those detained for their involvement or suspected involvement in the original popular protests that broke out in mid-December 2018, have been released. They include Mohamed Hassan Alim, a political activist who was arbitrarily detained by the NISS on October 9, 2018 following his deportation from Egypt; Hisham Ali Mohammed Ali, a Sudanese blogger arbitrarily detained by the NISS in May 2018 after he was deported from Saudi Arabia; and Mohamed Naji Al-Assam and Ahmed Rabi of the SPA Secretariat, who were arbitrarily detained on January 4 and 5, 2019 in connection with the popular protests. On March 8, 2018, International Women's Day, 36 of 54 women detained in connection with the popular protests were also released following a presidential directive from the recently deposed al-Bashir. Several of them had been arbitrarily detained for two months.

Furthermore, in August 2019, the Sudanese authorities allowed al-Jazeera to re-open their offices in Khartoum after it was forced to close on May 31, 2019 and its license was withdrawn without justification and its journalists banned from carrying out any reporting on Sudan. The offices were notably shut down a few days before the violent crackdown at the sit-in protest on June 3, 2019. After that crackdown, the TMC shut down internet services for national security reasons. Telecom companies only restored the internet on July 10, 2019 after a National Court ruled in favor of a lawsuit filed by a group of lawyers challenging the internet shutdown as a violation of a constitutional right.

In addition, the Armed Forces Amendment Act, 2013, which allows military courts to try civilians for various crimes under Sudan's 1991 criminal code, including the spreading of "false news," has also been used to prosecute journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society activists. In addition, on December 26, 2021, General al-Burhan issued an emergency order granting the security forces immunity. He also restored arrest powers to the General Intelligence Service (GIS).

After the announcement of the coup in 2021, the military disrupted internet connectivity from October 25, 2021 until November 18, 2021 when it was restored following a successful suit by a group of lawyers against Telecom companies in the High Court. Since then, authorities restricted freedom of expression. For example, the GIS continued with the practice of summoning journalist for interrogation when, on November 13, 2021, the GIS of Alghadaf informed Mr. Osama Said Ahmed, a news correspondent for al-Jazeera, that al-Jazeera was not allowed to cover anti-coup rallies. In January 2022, the Sudanese Ministry of Information and Culture also withdrew the license of al-Jazeera Live and closed its office in Khartoum.

Several journalists were arrested for covering the anti-coup protests:

- On November 13, 2021, a journalist, Mr Abdul Monim Mohamed Madibo, was arrested while he was covering rallies in Nyala, South Darfur and was taken to the central police station.
- On November 17, 2021, Mr Ali Farassab, also a journalist, sustained head injuries from live bullets fired by security agencies while he was covering the November 17, 2021 anti-coup rally in Khartoum Bahari. He was denied medical attention and was instead arrested while he was bleeding and taken to al-Mogran neighborhood police station in Khartoum, while the acting governor ordered that all detainees from the November 17, 2021 rally to be sent to Suba prison in Khartoum North. Mr Ali Farassab was eventually released on November 19 without any charges.
- On November 17, 2021, Mr Abdul Reoof Taha, a journalist working for al-Jazeera in Khartoum was arrested by the military intelligence on Almaoona Street in Khartoum Bahari while he was covering the anti-coup rally. He was taken to the military intelligence offices where he was held over night before his release following day.
- On November 14, 2021, a group of military intelligence officers raided the house of Mr. Mohamed Almusalami, office director of al-Jazeera in Khartoum. He was arrested without giving any reason and taken to an unknown location. On the same day, Mr Shawgi Abdul Azim, a journalist, reported that he was also arrested by a group of military intelligence officers while he stepped out of al-Jazeera's office in Khartoum. He was then taken to an unknown place where he was blindfolded and threatened against supporting the anti-coup events. He was released after four hours.

Just like during the al-Bashir era, authorities also shut down a radio station and blocked two others from broadcasting in Khartoum without providing any reasons. The United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in

Sudan documented at least 50 incidents of violations against journalists and media institutions after the coup, including 22 incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention.

On April 4, 2022, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) passed a Resolution on Sudan and called on Sudanese authorities to respect the right to life, freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly of the people, and ensure the personal safety and security of journalists while fully lifting restrictions on access to the Internet and information platforms.

More recently, in September 2022, the authorities attacked or judicially harassed journalists during the course of their work. On September 13, 2022, police targeted two journalists and obstructed them from covering a rally in Khartoum. The first case was of Hussein Hennery, who is a Sudanese journalist and was obstructed by tear gas that was thrown at him while he was covering the rally. The second case was that of Amira Saleh, who is a Sudanese journalist working for Altar Sudan website. She was arrested by police in Khartoum while she was covering the rally and was subjected to torture by police forces, including being beaten by sticks. She was later released on the same day after the rally had ended and no charges placed against her.

On September 7, 2022, Radio FM 100 broadcast in Khartoum banned Aayah Alsabag from her radio talk show for seven days for hosting three members of the Journalists Association during a previous episode. Her supervising manager argued that her program is social in nature, and she was not supposed to discuss political issues. This demonstrates the discrimination in media coverage since the October 25, 2021 coup in Sudan.

On September 10, 2022, the security department of Khartoum International Airport filed a criminal case against Blue Nile T.V presenter Amjad Noor Eldien, who was then charged under Sudanese Penal Code, 1991. During a show, he discussed the quality of services at the airport and presented a video of poor service and the plight of the public. Amjad was arrested and released on bond. On September 10, 2022, Saif Eldien was arrested, tortured and charged with defamation over a social media post. On August 7, 2022, a group of police detectives from Zalingi in West Darfur State arrested Eldien next to popular square. While on transit to the police station, he was beaten using the butt of the automatic guns and stomped on with military shoes. He was later moved to a police office and taken to a new local government building. After being beaten, he was informed by the police that he was charged with defamation under article 159 of Sudanese Penal Code because of a post on social media about the four Christians who were arrested and charged with apostasy in Zalingi after the police raided their church. Two weeks after Eldien reported to the police station, he learned that no case was filed against him.

## **Barriers to International Contact**

There are no legal barriers that restrict the ability of domestic organizations from contacting or communicating with international counterparts. In practice, however, government authorities have limited domestic CSOs' ability to participate in international fora. In March 2016, for example, four CSO representatives were intercepted by security officials at Khartoum International Airport on their way to a high-level human rights meeting with diplomats in Geneva.

Several provisions of the VHO Act do potentially restrict the ability of foreign organizations from operating in Sudan. For example, Section 5(f) requires the "Non-interference of foreign voluntary organizations in the internal affairs of the Sudan in a way that may infringe on the sovereignty of the country." In addition, Section 9 sets forth the following registration requirements for a foreign organization:

- "Its headquarters or origin shall not be in any state in a state of war with Sudan, or boycotted by [Sudan]" (Section 9(3)(d));
- The foreign organization "shall produce what may prove its financial and technical capabilities to carry out the activities or work it intends to carry out in Sudan and the source of those capabilities"(Section 9(3)(e));
- The foreign organization "shall sign the country agreement" (Section 9(3)(g)); and
- The foreign organization shall satisfy "any other conditions, as the minister may lay down, from time to time" (Section 9(3)(h)).

These provisions have all been subject to arbitrary interpretation to prevent foreign organizations from operating in Sudan. However, the political changes since April 2019 suggest the government may reconsider the above provisions in favor of more enabling regulations.

## **Barriers to Resources**

According to Section 7(1) of the VHO Act, CSOs seeking grants or funding must have a "project instrument" approved by the government. Prior approval of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs is required for CSOs to obtain funds or grants from inside or outside the country (Section 7(2)).

A 2013 HAC policy reinforces these rules by requiring CSOs to secure HAC approval for projects and individual activities before they obtain funding from foreign sources. However, the HAC will only grant approval if the project is aimed at providing humanitarian services; advocacy activities will not receive approval. A CSO can be dissolved for receiving foreign funding without prior HAC approval.

It is unclear how the political changes since April 2019 will ultimately affect the HAC.

## Barriers to Assembly

Following the October 25, 2021 coup, Sudanese authorities have brutally cracked down on anti-coup protests. The same conduct used during the al-Bashir has been used to undermine demands for democracy. Joint security forces, including the Police forces, Central Reserve Forces, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Military Intelligence, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and Sudanese Alliances Forces (2020 Peace Agreement signatory), as well as individuals in plain clothes with masks, used excessive force against protesters, killing at least 94 people and injuring thousands. Both live and rubber bullets fired targeted the upper parts of the bodies of protesters. Some protesters were injured by teargas canisters and stun grenades.

Joint security forces relied on the Emergency framework under the Emergency and Protection of Public Safety Act, 1997 (Emergency Act) and the Criminal Act, 1991 to detain peaceful protesters. The Emergency Act empowers authorities to search any person or premises, prohibit or regulate the movement of persons or activities, and arrest persons on suspicion of committing an offence. Provisions of the Criminal Act, 1991 apply to acts that are contrary to the Emergency Act or emergency declaration. For example, in Khartoum, several detainees were sentenced to one-week imprisonment in Omdurman Women's prison and Soba prison in accordance with powers granted under article 5 of the emergency Act 1997. Protesters in East, Central and South Darfur States, meanwhile, were sentenced to three months imprisonment under the Emergency and Protection of Public Safety Act, 1997. In January 2022, 36 protesters in Khartoum, Omdurman and White Nile state were also imprisoned without trial under the Emergency Act of 1997. Peaceful protesters were further prosecuted under articles 69 (disturbance of public peace) and 77 (public nuisance) of the Sudanese Criminal Act 1991. These laws were widely used under the al-Bashir regime to repress political dissent and grant authorities wide grounds for arrest and detention and lack the requisite safeguards against arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention.

There has also been violence against and obstruction of health care by security forces. Doctors have been targeted with arrest and detention for participating in anti-coup protests. Injured protesters have been denied from accessing hospitals by security forces deployed at the hospital entrances. In October and November 2021, Sudanese authorities closed all the bridges linking the twin cities of Khartoum Bahri and Omdurman to prevent a large gathering of protesters in one location like the April 2019 sit-in. This restricted the movement of ambulances carrying injured protesters across the two cities.

Below are additional laws and practices that Sudanese authorities have used to restrict freedom of assembly:

*Excessive government discretion.* According to Section 69 of the Criminal Act of 1991, a "breach of the peace" occurs even when one person commits an act that "is likely to breach the peace or public tranquility." The consequence of a "breach of the peace" is severe: punishment with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month, or a fine, or flogging not exceeding twenty "lashes." With vague terms such as "public tranquility," this is a troublesome provision that may deter individuals from engaging in assemblies.

*Place restrictions.* Under section 127 of the INC, the Governor or Commissioner of the jurisdiction may order the prohibition or restriction of any meeting, assembly, or procession on public roads or places where a "breach of the peace" is likely. There is no right to appeal the prohibition.

*Notification.* Although the INC provides for freedom of assembly, the Government has relied on a Circular from the Minister of Interior stating that before any rally or demonstration may take place, the organizers must submit to the Minister a letter of intent, including why, where, and when they plan to assemble. The Minister must give his consent in writing before the demonstration can take place. In fact, however, no such permit is ever given.

On December 30, 2012, following a series of National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) raids on CSOs' premises and the suspension of other CSOs' activities, dozens of members of suspended CSOs decided to present a petition to the recently established National Commission on Human Rights. When these CSOs reached the premises of the Commission, security and police forces forcibly prevented them from entering and arrested two people. The Chairman and some members of the Commission intervened, arguing that it was within the Commission's mandate to admit the CSOs and receive their petition. The security forces rejected this argument, stating that they do not receive orders from the Commission, and then dispersed the crowd by force. In an unprecedented move, the Commission issued a press statement that day denouncing the security forces' actions as a denial of the constitutional rights of CSOs and an affront to the Commission's role and its immunity. The Commission also vowed to take any action necessary to ensure that such actions are not repeated in future.

*Enforcement.* Article 40 of the INC protects the right to freedom of assembly, but in practice assemblies, rallies, demonstrations, and public gatherings face suppression by the police and the NISS. National security laws adopted since the 1989 coup—the most recent being the National Intelligence and Security Act, 2010—have empowered the NISS to search, arrest, and detain people for varying periods without any judicial supervision or sanction. In particular, the NISS has prevented protest demonstrations and rallies, no matter what the purpose. Resorting to the Constitutional Court has proved futile, as the petition is always rejected when it contests the legality of suppression of the right of assembly on the basis of alleged threat to “national security.”

Since the separation of South Sudan in July 2011—and the accompanying stoppage of oil revenue, which constituted more than 75% of GDP—inflation has hit the economy very hard and affected the lives of the majority of the Sudanese population. Peaceful demonstrations spread throughout the country in July and August 2012 and again in September 2013, especially at university campuses, schools, and lower income areas of towns. The police and security organs repressed these demonstrations harshly, using teargas, electric sticks, and batons and detaining several individuals and political party leaders for weeks in solitary prison cells in secret detention houses and subjecting them to torture and inhuman treatment.

Prominent human rights defenders, human rights lawyers, and journalists have been targeted for arbitrary arrests and detention for their participation or purported participation in anti-austerity protests that started in January 2018. After January 6, 2018, the security forces arrested and detained scores of Sudanese citizens, including opposition political party leaders, human rights defenders/activists, journalists, student activists, and others for prolonged periods without charge or trial.

*Excessive Force.* During protests in September 2013, more than 200 peaceful demonstrators were killed in the streets of Khartoum and other cities. One year later, the government launched a crackdown on CSOs, including detaining 48 activists, according to the Sudan Change Now movement. In the months before the April 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections, the government again cracked down on CSOs, human rights defenders, students, the media, and members of the political opposition and refused to allow CSOs to observe the elections. Some CSOs, such as Massarat, were closed down, while others, such as The Civic Forum, The Sudanese Writers Union, and Mahmoud Mohammed Taha Centre, had their licenses revoked and offices closed as a result of their political activism. In early 2015, the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (SISS) confiscated the publications of at least 16 newspapers, and the police and National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) interrogated more than 21 journalists. This made clear that the government was not prepared to create a more enabling space for CSOs to operate and carry out their missions.

The crackdown on CSOs continued again in 2018. For example, Sudanese security officials used excessive force to respond to peaceful protests that began in mid-December 2018. The NISS and Sudanese Police Force indiscriminately fired live ammunition and tear gas into crowds of peaceful protesters, killing more than 40 civilians. Hundreds of peaceful protesters, including opposition politicians, students, doctors, advocates, activists, and journalists, were arbitrarily detained for their involvement in the protests, which were triggered by the rising prices of basic commodities.

Sudanese security officials then used excessive force to crack down on peaceful protests that began in mid-December 2018 and continued in 2019. The NISS and Sudanese Police Force indiscriminately fired live ammunition and tear gas into crowds of peaceful protesters, killing more than 40 civilians, according to the Sudanese Doctors Committee. Hundreds of peaceful protesters, including opposition politicians, students, doctors, advocates, activists, and journalists, were also arbitrarily detained for their involvement in popular protests. Protests occurred in various parts of the country including Atbara, Karima, Ed Damazin, Al Gadarif, Al Obeid, Khartoum, Omdurman, Al Fahser, Wad Madani, Port Sudan, Berber, and Sinja.

From April 2019 the TMC welcomed dialogue with opposition forces, including those behind the protests that led to the removal of Omar al-Bashir from power, and has made promises to respond to the protesters’ demands. Nevertheless, on June 3, 2019, there was a violent crackdown by the Sudanese Security Forces on pro-democracy protesters, which ended weeks of peaceful sit-ins outside the Army Headquarters in Khartoum. The National Security Forces and the government-backed paramilitary, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), including child soldiers, violently attacked protesters, bystanders, and medical workers, killing more than 100 people and injuring hundreds. Following the attack, on June 4, more than 40 bodies were recovered after security forces allegedly threw bodies into the Nile River. Hundreds of people were also arrested or disappeared and their properties were looted or destroyed.

The bloody dispersal drew sharp condemnation from the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and other international partners. On June 6, 2019 the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) suspended Sudan from participation in all AU activities until it effectively established a civilian-led transitional authority. The PSC further decided that should TMC fail to hand over power to a civilian government, punitive measures shall be imposed.

Sudanese citizens also peacefully took to the streets to denounce the coup in 2021 and call for a civilian government. Sudanese authorities, however, used excessive force, including firing of live ammunition to disperse



peaceful protests around Sudan and resulting in at least 94 deaths and several injuries of Sudanese citizens, according to the Sudanese Central Doctors Committee. Tactics that were abolished after the fall of al-Bashir were being used again by security agencies, such firing teargas inside hospitals and arresting injured protesters. Security forces on several occasions also blocked access to hospitals by deploying forces at the entrance who threatened and intimidated people trying to access hospitals, including patients and blood donors.

There were also widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions, with blatant disrespect for the rights of those arrested. Sudanese Armed Forces, Police, and Military Intelligence are relying on broad powers to arrest and detain people under the Emergency laws and Criminal Act. Arrests also took place on the streets and during raids in homes and offices. The United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in Sudan reported that more than 1,000 people were arrested for opposing the coup and its consequences between October 25, 2021 and March 3, 2022, including 148 children. In mid-April 2022, security agents carried out an arrest campaign against Resistance Committees, which are the spearhead of the anti-coup protests in the country, following their alleged refusal to participate in a dialogue with the ruling military. Many of them are still held incommunicado. Just like under the al-Bashir regime, political detainees have been tortured, including being beaten with iron bars, sticks, and horse pipe, firing of live bullets near one's feet, denial of food, and forceful shaving of hair. At least 16 peaceful protesters were reportedly also raped. Further, security forces reportedly raided office of the Investigation Committee of the June 3, 2019 massacre in Khartoum and confiscated important documents. 18 members of the Dismantle and Anti-Corruption Committee of the June 30, 1989 regime were arrested in February 2022 on charges of breach of trust, which is a criminal offense punishable by death among other penalties.

The crackdown on anti-coup protests in June and July 2022 was also characterized by arbitrary arrests and detentions, with blatant disrespect for the rights of those arrested. On June 30, 2022, for example, more than 200 protesters were arrested and detained at police stations, with at least 38 female protesters detained at Northern Police Station. They were denied bail and later transferred to Omdurman Prison. 63 protesters, including a minor, were also detained at Northern Police Station in Khartoum and their lawyers were prevented from accessing them and they were denied bail and later transferred to Suba prison in Kosti White Nile state. Additionally, nine lawyers were beaten and arrested by SAF officers and detained at SAF headquarters before they were transferred to a police Station and then released without charges. One lawyer also fractured his right hand as result of torture.

The detainees from these protests are being prosecuted under articles 69 (disturbance of public peace) and 77 (public nuisance) of Sudanese Criminal Code 1991 for participating in protests. In addition, more than 200 protesters have been prosecuted under the Criminal Act and Emergency laws. In some cases, protesters are also charged with vague or baseless charges that lack legitimacy and unduly restrict several human rights. On January 31, 2022, for example, six protesters in Kassala State were charged under articles 139 (causing intentional wounds) and 182 (criminal mischief) of the Sudanese Penal Code, 1991 after a court dismissed public nuisance (article 77) charges against them. They were reportedly beaten with water pipes and subjected to hair shaving by police officers before being released on bond. One day earlier, on January 30, 2022, the joint security forces in Kasala State arrested six peaceful protesters for participating in anti-coup rallies and detained them at Kasala Police Station, where they were charged under article 77. Although the judge dismissed the charges and ordered their release, immediately after they left the courthouse, police officers re-arrested them and took them back to the police station and levelled other charges against them under articles 139 and 182 of the Sudanese Penal Code, 1991.

Lastly, on June 30, 2022, police arrested 18 protesters and charged them under article 182 after they were accused of attacking Alryad neighborhood near Khartoum police station. The office of the prosecutor attached to North Khartoum Police Station secured bail for the detainees on condition that they pay a sum of 2 million Sudanese Pounds (\$5000). On July 6, 2022, the detainees were released after an appeal by emergency lawyers.

*Criminal penalties.* Prison terms and physical punishment are common for even minor violations of the laws on assembly, most of which are written vaguely to allow the authorities broad discretion to determine which actions are "unlawful" and warrant penalties. For instance, Section 67 of the Sudan Penal Code states, "A person shall be said to commit the offence of breach of the peace if he joins in any crowd of five persons or more, if the crowd shows force or uses terrorism or violence, or if the common intention is to achieve any of the following objects:

- To resist the execution of a provision of any law or any legal process.
- To commit the offence of mischief or criminal trespass or any other offence.
- To exercise any right or claimed right in way that may lead to a breach of public peace.
- To compel a person to do what he is legally bound to do or to omit to do what he is lawfully entitled to do."

In addition, Section 68 states, "Any person who commits the offence of 'breach of the peace' shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or with flogging which may not exceed twenty lashes. If he is carrying a weapon or any instrument which may cause death or grievous harm he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or with fine or with both."



*COVID-19.* On April 18, 2020, authorities announced a three-week lockdown in Khartoum and Omdurman. Essential services such as supermarkets and pharmacies remained open, but only for limited periods. Individuals were allowed limited movement within their neighborhoods to purchase necessities. A nighttime curfew was in effect nationwide from 8pm to 6am, and a ban on domestic travel remained in place. On March 24, 2020, the government also imposed a nighttime curfew nationwide from 10pm to 6am. The curfew followed a nationwide ban on mass gatherings, instituted on March 20.

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## Reports

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| UN Universal Periodic Review Reports                          | <a href="#">Sudan</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Reports of UN Special Rapporteurs and UN Human Rights Council | <a href="#">See here</a><br><a href="#">Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights on his visit to Sudan – Comments by the State (A/HRC/42/63/Add.1) (August 28, 2019)</a> |
| USIG (United States International Grantmaking) Country Notes  | Not available                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| U.S. State Department                                         | <a href="#">2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan</a>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Fragile States Index Report                                   | <a href="#">Foreign Policy: Fragile States Index</a>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| IMF Country Reports                                           | <a href="#">Sudan and the IMF</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| International Commission of Jurists                           | Not Available                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| International Center for Not-for-Profit Law Online Library    | <a href="#">Sudan</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| ACJPS, FIDH, IRRI                                             | <a href="#">Key Concerns and Recommendations for the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan, 2016</a>                                                                                                                                          |

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## News and Additional Resources

While we aim to maintain information that is as current as possible, we realize that situations can rapidly change. If you are aware of any additional information or inaccuracies on this page, please keep us informed; write to ICNL at [ngomonitor@icnl.org](mailto:ngomonitor@icnl.org).

## General News

### [NGOs urge authorities to facilitate humanitarian access](#) (July 2023)

More than 40 international NGOs have urged the leadership in Sudan to support and intervene in facilitating humanitarian access to thousands of civilians displaced by conflict. The group called for overcoming the critical issue of pending visa applications and travel notifications and approvals for humanitarian agencies. Fighting between Sudan's army and the Rapid Support Forces (SAF) has reportedly killed over 3,000 civilians and displaced nearly 3 million other people since April 15, amid reports that 25 million people need humanitarian aid and protection.

### **Key Date Set in Sudan Government Transition** (March 2023)

Sudan's military leaders and pro-democracy forces vowed to begin establishing a new civilian-led transitional government on April 11, a spokesperson representing both parties said. Sudan has been plunged into chaos after a military coup, led by the country's top Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, removed a Western-backed government in October 2021, upending its short-lived transition to democracy. The takeover came more than two years after a popular uprising forced the removal of Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019.

### **HAC unlawfully cancels registration on Sudanese Consumer Protection Society** (November 2022)

On October 24, 2022, the office of the Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS) received a delegation of seven employees from HAC delivering a letter of cancellation of registration and seizure of all its assets. The group confiscated property such as seals, headed paper, and other documents.

### **Nine people arrested by police during an art exhibition** (October 2022)

On October 20, 2022, a group of Sudanese Federal Police arrived in five vehicles and raided an art gallery during an exhibition by Ahmed Esam held at Civil Lap house (NGO building) located in Alzhoor neighborhood, Khartoum. Mr. Ahmed is a 21 year old Human rights defender and an artist. During the raid, the police officers arrested nine guest majority of whom are young artists, and designers. They also confiscated 9 out of 12 art pieces and damaged one art piece in the process. Those arrested were taken to the federal Police office where they were detained until 06:00pm and later transferred to Northern Police Station located in Central Khartoum where they spent a night.

### **Sudanese authorities continue to crack-down on freedom of expression** (September 2022)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) has documented several incidents where Sudanese authorities have interfered with the exercise of media freedom and free expression. The authorities attacked and/or judicially harassed journalists during the course of their work. Sudanese authorities continue to harass media make it difficult for journalists to do their work in Sudan.

### **One protester shot dead by security forces in Sudan's Khartoum** (April 2022)

One Sudanese protester was shot dead as security forces confronted anti-coup demonstrations in the state of Khartoum, said medics aligned with a movement to end military rule. The death brings the total number of protesters that have died since an October 25 coup to 94, the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors said.

### **Sudanese authorities raid offices of 2019 massacre tribunal** (March 2022)

Sudanese security forces have raided the premises of a commission investigating a June 2019 massacre of protesters in the capital city of Khartoum, forcing it to suspend operations. According to Nail Adeeb, the commission's chairperson, the building was raided by uniformed men who came in, kicked out the workers and took over the building.

### **18 members of the Dismantle and Anti-Corruption Committee detained incommunicado** (March 2022)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) has continued to monitor the continued crackdown on pro-democracy protests including arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detention of civilians and other human rights violations across Sudan since October 15, 2021. In this brief, ACJPS gives an update on various incidents resulting in serious violations of human rights of civilians that have continued to occur since our last update on the Sudan coup.

### **Women's rights leader detained in Sudan capital** (January 2022)

The head of Sudan's No to Oppression of Women initiative, Amira Osman, was detained during a raid by security forces in her home in Khartoum. Her detention has prompted condemnation from within Sudan, as well as from the United Nations mission in the country.

### **Sudan forms 11-member sovereign council** (August 2019)

Sudan's generals and protest leaders have announced a joint ruling body, formally disbanding the military council that took power after the toppling of longtime ruler Omar Bashir in April 2019 in the wake of relentless protests against his rule.

### **TMC, FFC add text on peace in Sudan to constitutional declaration** (August 2019)

The Addis Ababa document on peace agreed between the rebel umbrella Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and its political allies in the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) was officially added to the agreed Constitutional Declaration. On Friday the FFC and the Transitional Military Council (TMC) finished discussions on the fundamental law facilitating orderly change to a democratic regime during the 39 months transitional period.

### **Sudan factions initial pact ushering in transitional government** (August 2019)

Sudan's military rulers and the main opposition coalition initialled a constitutional declaration, paving the way for a transitional government following the overthrow of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir.

### **Women and Children's Rights NGO's Khartoum Office Ransacked** (July 2019)

The Sima Centre for Training and Protection of Women and Children's Rights has said that its office in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum was raided early on Tuesday. The outer door was broken, and the contents of the

office ransacked, but initial inspection suggests nothing was stolen. The centre said in a statement that all signs indicate that the raid and break-in had nothing to do with theft; but aimed at papers and documents concerning the nature of the work of the centre.

### **268 people killed during Sudan's peaceful revolution** (July 2019)

268 Sudanese were killed during the peaceful protests that led to regime change in Sudan, according to a report released by an independent group of doctors. The report is a first attempt to estimate the number of protesters killed by the former regime and the ruling military junta that has taken over power on 11 April.

### **Sudan's Mobile Internet Restored After Power Sharing Deal** (July 2019)

Sudanese authorities have restored internet services more than a month after they were cut off when the military violently broke up protests calling for civilian rule, leaving dozens dead. The loosening of media controls comes as the military and protesters are set to sign an agreement on a power-sharing, transitional government, raising cautious optimism for a peaceful solution to the stand-off.

### **The Situation Regarding the Dialogue with the Transitional Military Council** (April 2019)

Sudan's ruling Transitional Military Council (TMC) and opposition forces appeared on a collision course on Monday amid deepening differences over demands for civilian rule more than 10 days after the ouster of President Omar al-Bashir.

### **The Situation Regarding the Dialogue with the Transitional Military Council** (April 2019)

The Sudanese Professional Association released a statement in which they stated that they "categorically reject this manipulation of the dialogue process and consider it a wicked play from the political committee assigned by the TMC to run the dialogue. This committee is comprised of members who are figures from the previous regime, and its head (Omer Zain Elabdin) was the head of the National Congress Party (NCP) within the army. Zain Elabdin is trying his best to bring back the deposed regime from the window after Sudanese people rejected it in the widest popular referendum."

### **Hundreds of Peaceful protesters and activists released from detention** (April 2019)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reports that it "has received reliable information indicating that more than 800 peaceful protesters and activists have been released after spending more than 2 months in custody without charge."

### **Arbitrary arrests and detention by Sudanese authorities** (December 2018)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies has stated that it "is deeply concerned about the policing of anti-austerity protests including the use of excessive forces resulting in the death of several peaceful protestors. The Government of Sudan has responded to widespread disgruntlement over recent austerity measures by arresting and detaining opposition political party members, human rights defenders, activists, journalists, students and other individuals, censoring newspapers through prohibiting publication of information on protests and confiscation of daily- print runs prior to distribution, use of force including firing live ammunition resulting into deaths and injury of peaceful protestors."

### **Security service confirms hand over of Sudanese activist from Egypt** (November 2018)

The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) said that a political activist who went missing in Cairo last month is now under arrest in Khartoum, confirming his handover by the Egyptian security forces.

### **Sudan Journalists Protest Restrictive Press Bill** (July 2018)

A draft bill for the press and publications in Sudan has sparked extensive debate between government authorities and the media sector, the latter having described the law as being more restrictive on freedom of expression and the press. Sudanese journalists hope to remove the limitations on press freedom that are threatened with the introduction of the new law.

### **Activist Faces Trumped-Up Charges in Sudan** (July 2018)

Khartoum-based rights activist Wini Omer has long been a vocal opponent of Sudan's morality laws that criminalize "indecent dress" and other private choices, making her a frequent target for prosecution by authorities. This week authorities massively raised the stakes in their showdown with the activist, charging her with a slew of offenses, including 'crimes against the state,' which carries a possibly death penalty.

### **Sudan must release Sakharov Laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman** (February 2018)

In light of recent developments in Sudan, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Heidi Hautala and the Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee, Pier Antonio Panzeri stated: "We strongly condemn the arbitrary arrest by Sudanese forces of Salih Mahmoud Osman, Sakharov Prize Laureate and Vice President of the Darfur Bar Association, as well as arrests of other human rights defenders in Sudan. We are alarmed to learn that a crackdown on protesters, human rights defenders, student activists, journalists, attorneys and academics continues in Sudan, with the authorities using arbitrary arrests and excessive force to deal with peaceful protests against rising food prices."

## **Incommunicado detention of 8 human rights defenders and others for participating in peaceful protests**

(February 2018)

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a partnership of FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Sudan. The Observatory fears that these arrests and detentions occur in reaction to nation-wide demonstrations that began on January 6, 2018 and were set off by the announcement of Sudan's 2018 budget and the lifting of subsidies and measures, effectively tripling Sudan's U.S. dollar exchange rate and increasing the price of basic commodities. (See another "urgent appeal" at this [link](#)).

## **Sudan's human rights activist receives amnesty** (August 2017)

Sudan's human rights activist Mudawi Ibrahim was the beneficiary of a decree by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, which pardons him along with other five political activists. Nabil Adib, Mudawi Ibrahim's defence lawyer, said the decree has dropped all charges against his client, who has served nine months in detention with charges including undermining the constitutional order and inciting war against the state. Ibrahim, 59, was detained by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service last December. In March 2009, the authorities shut down Sudan Social Development Organization, which was chaired by Ibrahim, a professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Khartoum.

## **Sudanese security service arrests human rights defender** (May 2017)

The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arrested Sudanese human rights defender Mudawi Ibrahim Adam in Khartoum and took him to undisclosed location, said Amnesty International. Adam was arrested on Wednesday December 7 at Khartoum University, where he works as an engineering professor. Amnesty International said his arrest is "further proof of the government's intolerance of independent voices".

## **Opposition Leaders Barred From Flying to Paris** (January 2017)

Agents of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) prevented seven prominent opposition leaders from travelling to the French capital. They are all leading members of the Sudan Appeal, a two-page document calling for regime-change and democracy, signed by them and the rebel movements allied in the Sudan Revolutionary Front, in Addis Ababa in December 2014.

## **Sudan Activists Charged with Death Penalty Crimes** (August 2016)

Following the filing of capital charges against six civil society activists associated with Training and Human Development (TRACKs), Freedom House issued the following statement: "Authorities in Sudan have charged Khalaf-Allah Al-Afif Mukhtar, Mustafa Adam, Midhat Afifaddin Hamadan, Arwa Al-Rabie, Imany-Leila Ray, and Al-Hassan Kheiry with espionage and terrorism, charges that are preposterous and were brought against these individuals for exercising the fundamental right to free association.... The government of Sudan should either drop these absurd charges or ensure a speedy and fair trial. It should allow observers to attend all proceedings and guarantee the defendants' right to receive visitors in prison." TRACKs, a Khartoum-based organization, has been raided twice during the last two years by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services, which has confiscated the passports of staff members. In April 2015 criminal charges—some carrying the death penalty—were brought against TRACKs Director Khalafalla Alafif Mukhtar and Adil Bakheit, a human rights defender and member of the Board of Directors for Sudanese Human Rights Monitor.

## **Sudan blocks civil society participation in UN-led human rights review** (August 2016)

The efforts of the Government of Sudan to obstruct the engagement of civil society activists in a United Nations (UN)-led human rights review of the country is unacceptable and shows blatant contempt not just for human rights defenders in Sudan, but to human rights standards and the UN Human Rights Council. Four representatives of Sudanese civil society were intercepted by security officials at Khartoum International Airport on their way to a high level human rights meeting with diplomats which took place in Geneva on 31 March. The meeting was organised by the international NGO, UPR Info, in preparation for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Sudan that will take place in May.

## **Civil Society Barred From Holding Press Conference** (December 2015)

Security agents prevented a number of Sudanese civil society organisations from holding a press conference in Khartoum. In a joint statement, the organisations stated that they will adhere to their "constitutional rights of free expression and gathering". They said they will continue to organise a series of meetings in which they will express their views on "the current cultural state of affairs in the country, and the government legislations and practices that shackle any cultural and artistic activity".

## **Leading human rights defender released from prison** (April 2015)

On April 9, 2015, the Sudanese Minister of Justice announced the suspension of the case brought against Dr. Medani, President of Sudan's Confederation of Civil Society Organisations, Vice President of Civil Society Initiative, and former President of the Sudan Human Rights Monitor (SHRM). He was released, along with Mr. Faruq Abu Eissa, chairman of the opposition group, the National Consensus Forces and Mr. Farah Ibrahim Alagar, political activist. The three men were released the same day.

### **[Sudan Government stifling media and civil society](#)** (April 2015)

With the general elections fast approaching in Sudan, the government's clampdown on dissenting voices threatens the independence and freedom of action of civil society organizations, human rights defenders, students, the media and members of the political opposition, Amnesty International said in a briefing. Since January 2015, at least 16 newspapers have had editions of their publications confiscated by the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). Some 21 journalists have been interrogated by the police and the NISS. Three leading civil society organizations have been shut down, with at least five others under imminent threat of closure.

### **[Sudan Intelligence and Security Service \(NISS\) arrests civil society leaders](#)** (December 2014)

Agents of the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) detained Faroug Abu Eisa, leader of the National Consensus Forces (NCF, a coalition of opposition parties), Dr Amin Mekki Madani, chairman of the Sudanese Civil Society Initiative, and Dr Farah El Agar, senior consultant of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). The three leaders were detained at their homes in Khartoum and Omdurman, a day after returning from Addis Ababa. In Addis Ababa, they met with the AU High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) mediation team for Sudan to discuss their participation in the National Dialogue, as proposed by President Omar Al Bashir earlier in 2014. A spokesman for the ruling National Congress Party said that the civil society leaders will face criminal charges.

### **[In anniversary of September 2013 uprising, regime cracks down on freedoms](#)** (September 2014)

During the month that witnessed the first anniversary of the 'uprising' of September 2013, when more than 200 peaceful demonstrators were killed in the streets of Khartoum and other cities, the Sudanese regime continued its crackdown on political and civil liberties. The regime froze the activities of the "Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society", prevented the annual meeting of the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations and previously the "Salamah Centre for Feminist Studies" was shut down by national security agents without providing any reasons in each of these cases. Furthermore, the security agencies launched a detention campaign, during which dozens of political activists were arrested and kept in detention in unknown places.

### **[End Arbitrary Detention of Activists – Investigate Allegations of Torture, Abuse](#)** (June 2014)

### **[Sudan's VP reiterates government's determination to hold national dialogue](#)** (January 2014)

### **[Sudan ruling party dissident forms 'Reform Now Movement'](#)** (January 2014)

### **[In Sudan, Civil Society says It's Struggling to Work Around US Sanctions' Block on Tech](#)** (January 2014)

### **[UN Expert deeply concerned at mass arrests and heavy media censorship during protests](#)** (October 2013)

### **[At Least 32 Killed, 700 Arrested In Worst Unrest In Years](#)** (October 2013)

### **[Sudan to further restrict work of foreign aid groups including UN agencies](#)** (August 2013)

### **[Crackdown on civil society in Sudan emboldens hardliners](#)** (March 2013)

### **[On the closure of Al Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment and Human Development \(KACE\)](#)** (December 2012)

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## **Introduction**

The history of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sudan dates to the country's colonial period under Anglo-Egyptian rule, which lasted from 1899 until Sudan's independence in 1956. During this time, there were a small number of cultural, literary, and artistic societies of limited membership in Khartoum. In the mid-1940s, however, political movements started to become active in Sudan in the struggle for either Sudan's independence or, alternately, a union with Egypt. The most active organization was the Graduates Congress (in reference to the graduates of Gordon Memorial College), which was founded by political leaders from various sectors of society who established political parties based on their social, tribal, ethnic, and regional affiliations. These new parties eventually played a role in the negotiations for the post-colonial future of Sudan and are considered to be the first CSOs in Sudan's history.

Following Sudanese independence, CSOs working on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights formed across the country, especially in Khartoum. The legal and operating environment for CSOs varied significantly throughout the subsequent years, depending on the nature of the government in power. Until the April 2019 political changes, Sudan had three parliamentary democracies and three military governments since its independence, with CSOs tending to fair better under civilian rule. When the military government took power in a 1989 coup, the



government of newly installed President Omar al-Bashir declared a state of emergency that included banning all political parties, organizations, professional associations, trades unions, societies, newspapers, and magazines. It was an uphill battle for CSOs in Sudan after that until at least 2019, when al-Bashir was deposed.

### *2019 Formation of Transitional Military Council*

At the end of 2018, mass protests calling for an end to Omar al-Bashir's 30-year rule began, and, finally, on April 11, 2019, then-Defense Minister and Vice-President, Lt. Gen. Awad Ahmed Ibn Auf, announced the arrest of al-Bashir and the formation of a Transitional Military Council (TMC) that would seize power for a two-year transitional period under his leadership. He further announced that the Sudanese Constitution had been suspended, declared a state of emergency for three months, and called for the release of political prisoners. Opposition parties and the international community immediately raised concerns over the composition of the TMC, however, and Ibn Auf was soon replaced by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who was the Inspector-General of the armed forces and the commander of Sudanese forces fighting in the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen.

Sudanese citizens continued to remain in the streets calling for a civilian transitional government and structural reform of the state. On April 23, 2019, Mr. Salah Abdallah Mohammed Salih, also known as Salah Ghosh, resigned as Director of National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and was replaced by Lieutenant General Abu Bakr Mustafa. Salah Gosh was known for overseeing security forces' use of lethal force during the September 2013 protests. On April 16, 2019, al-Burhan dismissed the Head of Prosecution, Omer Ahmed Mohamed, and replaced him with Al-Waleed Sayyed Ahmed.

The protests were led by members of the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), which rejected Ibn Auf's announcements. The SPA instead called on protesters to continue demonstrating until a civilian transitional government is established. The Sudanese people and other CSOs have expressed solidarity and called for a peaceful and democratic transition. In addition, the African Union Peace and Security Council suspended Sudan from all African Union activities until the constitutional order is restored. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also issued its own statement urging the authorities to ensure the protection of human rights and refrain from use of violence and further stressed "the need for independent, prompt and effective investigations into the excessive use of force against protesters."

The TMC, for its part, has welcomed dialogue with opposition forces, including those behind the protests and had made promises to respond to the protestors' demands. The [Forces of the Declaration of Freedom \(DFC\)](#), a coalition of political and CSO actors, who were taking the lead in advocating for democratic transition by civilian rule based on internationally agreed principles, presented their demands to the TMC. However, on April 21, 2019, the DFC announced that it was suspending negotiations with the TMC because of issues related to doubts surrounding the actual willingness of the TMC to allow for a change of the regime.

Since April 2019, hundreds of political prisoners, including those detained for their involvement or suspected involvement in the original popular protests that broke out in mid-December 2018, have been released. They included Mohamed Hassan Alim, a political activist who was arbitrarily detained by the NISS on October 9, 2018 following his deportation from Egypt; Hisham Ali Mohammed Ali, a Sudanese blogger arbitrarily detained by the NISS in May 2018 after he was deported from Saudi Arabia; Mohamed Naji Al-Assam and Ahmed Rabi of the SPA Secretariat, who were arbitrarily detained on January 4 and 5, 2019 in connection with the popular protests. On March 8, 2018, International Women's Day, 36 of 54 women detained in connection with the popular protests were also released following a presidential directive from the recently deposed al-Bashir. Several of them had been arbitrarily detained for two months.

On June 3, 2019, the TMC called for an election within nine months. However, on July 17, 2019, following mediations between the TMC and DFC led by the AU and Ethiopia, the TMC and the DFC reached a political agreement on the political declaration of the transitional period. The political declaration included three institutions: sovereign council, government and legislative council. According to the text of the agreement, the sovereign council would consist of 11 members, including five members from the military and five civilians, while the 11th member will be a civilian selected by both the TMC and the DFC. The mediations also tackled transitional period tasks such as peace, economic reforms and humanitarian relief and reaffirmed the investigation of crimes committed against civilians after the collapse of al-Bashir's regime in April 2019. The agreement further established a rotating presidency, with the TMC appointing the chairman of the Sovereign Council for 21 months, followed by a chairman chosen by the DFC for the remaining 18 months.

On August 4, 2019 the TMC and the opposition coalition Forces for Freedom of Change (FFC) signed a Constitutional Charter that paved the way for a transitional period. Around two weeks later, on August 17, 2019, the TMC and the FCC appended their signatures to the Constitutional Charter, 2019, in the presence of regional and international envoys. The 2019 Constitutional Charter governed a 39-month transitional period. This power-sharing agreement incorporated both the political and constitutional agreements. The end of the transitional period was to be followed by general elections. The Constitutional Charter repealed the 2005 Interim National Constitution and provided a governance structure for the transitional period.

The transitional period was under the leadership of the Sovereign Council comprising five military officials and six civilians. For the first 21 months of the transitional period, the Sovereign Council was to be chaired by a military member and the last 18 months will be chaired by a civilian member. On August 21, 2019, the 11-member Sovereign Council was sworn into office with Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as the chair. Abdalla Hamdok, a prominent economist, was sworn in as Prime Minister for the transitional cabinet. An independent Transitional Legislative Council with at least 40% women's participation was to be formed within three months of the signing of the Charter.

The Constitutional Charter provided for a number of goals for reforming institutions and ensuring accountability for atrocities suffered. During the transitional period, state agencies had the duty to hold members of the former regime accountable for crimes committed against Sudanese people since 1989. The Charter also provided for the formation of a national and independent investigation committee to address the June 3, 2019 violence. On September 23, 2019, Hon. Prime Minister Hamdok announced the formation a seven-member investigation committee for the June 3 violence. Furthermore, the Constitutional Charter provided for the formation of 11 independent commissions, including a transitional justice commission.

### *2020 Juba Peace Agreement*

On October 3, 2020, the Sudanese transitional government signed the Juba Peace Agreement with the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel coalition to end fighting in Darfur and other conflict areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The agreement envisions a permanent ceasefire and the demobilization or integration of rebel forces in Sudan's military, police, and security services. In exchange, the government agreed to compensate people displaced by conflict, to expand resources and powers for states, and to begin processes of transitional justice. The rebel leaders were allocated legislative and executive posts, which they will hold until elections take place. Three rebel leaders were appointed as members of the Sovereign Council, while others have been appointed to the cabinet and others are appointed to government offices. The transitional period was also extended by two years after the signing of the agreement.

On October 25, 2021, General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, the Chairman of the Sovereign Council, dissolved the transitional government and declared a nation-wide state of emergency. He suspended articles 11, 12, 15, 16, 24(2), 71, and 72 of the 2019 Constitutional Charter. Articles 11 and 12 provide for the composition and powers of the Sovereign Council while Articles 15 and 16 provide for the composition and powers of the Transitional Cabinet. Article 24 provides for the composition of the Transitional Legislative Council which was to be constituted. General al-Burhan also stated that a general election will be held in July 2023. This coup happened one month before General al-Burhan was due to hand over the presidency of the Sovereign council to civilian representatives, as per the power-sharing agreement and Constitutional Document signed in 2019.

Following al-Burhan's announcement of the coup, Sudan's military forces arrested former Prime Minister Abdulla Hamdok and his wife and several civilian figures, including members of the Sovereign Council, cabinet ministers, state governors and government officials, political leaders, journalists, human rights defenders, and activists, who were placed under house arrest or taken to unknown locations. Several of them have been held incommunicado. Authorities also disrupted internet connectivity from October 25 until November 18, 2021.

On November 11, 2021, General al-Burhan appointed a new governing Sovereign Council with himself as the Chair. The new 14-member council has included army commanders, former rebel leaders, and new civilian members. On November 21, 2021, Prime Minister Abdulla Hamdok was released and reinstated after signing a political agreement with al-Burhan, but he resigned six weeks later on January 2, 2022. Less than one year later, on December 5, military leaders led by the Chairman of the Sovereign Council, who is al-Burhan, and 52 political and civilian leaders led by the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) [signed](#) a Political Framework Agreement, which established a new transitional period. The Framework repealed the 2019 Constitutional Document, provided for the review of decisions issued by the military leaders who took power after the October 25, 2021 coup, and affirmed that the Transitional Constitution is the supreme law of the state, which ended the supremacy of the Juba Peace Agreement.

However, since 2021, Sudan has been [without a functioning government](#) and a constitutional framework, which has been exacerbated the country's falling into civil war between two factions of the military. 40 parties, including political parties, armed movements, professional associations, civil society, and Sudan's military, still signed a Framework Agreement in Khartoum on December 5, 2022. Since then it has remained unclear how and whether that Agreement or any other political agreements will succeed in restoring constitutional order and placing the country back on the democratic transition track.

### **[At a Glance](#)**

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organizational Forms               | National voluntary organization, charitable organization, civil society organization (as defined in the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) Act).                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Registration Body                  | Ministry of Interior.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Barriers to Entry                  | Mandatory registration; Burdensome requirements (30 minimum founders required); Annual re-registration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Barriers to Activities             | Suppression of CSOs not aligned with government. However, since the negotiations between FFC and TMC were followed by the commencement of the transitional period in August 2019, there have been no further reports of crackdowns on media or CSOs.                                                                                      |
| Barriers to Speech and/or Advocacy | Fines and penalties for CSOs that publicly disagree with the government; refusal to allow CSOs to participate in “national dialogue.” However, since the negotiations between FFC and TMC were followed by the commencement of the transitional period in August 2019, there have been no further reports of crackdowns on media or CSOs. |
| Barriers to International Contact  | “Country Agreements” required for foreign CSOs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Barriers to Contact                | Nearly impossible to receive permit to hold an assembly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Barriers to Resources              | Advanced government approval for all foreign funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Barriers to Assembly               | Nearly impossible to receive a permit to hold an assembly. However, since the negotiations between FFC and TMC were followed by the commencement of the transitional period in August 2019, there have been no further reports of crackdowns on media or CSOs.                                                                            |

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## Key Indicators

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Population               | 41,984,512 (2018 est.)                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Capital                  | Khartoum                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Type of Government       | Until 2019, it was a federal republic ruled by the National Congress Party the (NCP), which came to power by military coup in 1989. Currently the country is testing a transition to greater democracy. |
| Life Expectancy at Birth | Male: 62 years<br>Female: 66 years (2015 est.)                                                                                                                                                          |
| Literacy Rate            | Male: 83.3%<br>Female: 68.6% (2015 est.)                                                                                                                                                                |
| Religious Groups         | Sunni Islam, small Christian minority                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Ethnic Groups            | Sudanese Arab (approximately 70%), Fur, Beja, Nuba, Fallata                                                                                                                                             |
| GDP per capita           | \$4,600 (2017 est.)                                                                                                                                                                                     |



Source: [The World Factbook](#). Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency.

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### International Rankings

| Ranking Body                                            | Rank                                                                       | Ranking Scale<br>(best – worst possible)      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">UN Human Development Index</a>              | 170 (2020)                                                                 | 1 – 182                                       |
| <a href="#">Foreign Policy: Fragile States Index</a>    | Rank: 2 (2022)                                                             | 179 – 1                                       |
| <a href="#">World Justice Project Rule of Law Index</a> | 125 (2022)                                                                 | 1 – 139                                       |
| <a href="#">Transparency International</a>              | 164 (2021)                                                                 | 1 – 180                                       |
| <a href="#">Freedom House: Freedom in the World</a>     | Status: “Not Free”<br>Political Rights: 0<br>Civil Liberties: 10<br>(2022) | Free/Partly Free/Not Free<br>40 – 0<br>60 – 0 |

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### Legal Snapshot

#### International and Regional Human Rights Agreements\*

| Key International Agreements                                                              | Ratification** | Year         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)                              | Yes            | 18 Mar. 1986 |
| Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1)                                                    | No             | —            |
| International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)                  | Yes            | 21 Mar. 1977 |
| Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention                 | No             | —            |
| International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) | Yes            | —            |
| Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)        | No             | 29 Apr. 2021 |
| Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women    | No             | —            |
| Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)                                               | Yes            | 4 Apr. 2009  |

|                                                                                                                       |     |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) | No  | —            |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)                                                          | Yes | 4 Apr. 2009  |
| <b>Regional Treaties</b>                                                                                              |     |              |
| Arab Charter on Human Rights                                                                                          | No  | —            |
| African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights                                                                   | Yes | 11 Mar. 1986 |

\* On August 10, 2021, Sudan also ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

\*\* Category includes ratification, accession, or succession to the treaty

## Constitutional Framework

Article 2 of the Constitutional Charter, 2019, repeals the Interim Constitution of Sudan, 2005, and the constitutions of provinces. However, the laws enacted under the Interim Constitution remain in force unless repealed or amended. Before the end of transitional period a national constitutional conference is to be held with the expectation of adopting a new constitution. Members of the Commission in charge of the constitution-drafting and constitutional conference shall be appointed by the Sovereign Council in consultation with the Cabinet.

Chapter 14 of the Constitutional Charter, 2019, sets out the rights and freedoms. It retains rights included in the previous bill of rights under the Interim Constitution of Sudan, 2005, including:

### 56. Freedom of express and the press

- (1) Every citizen shall have the unrestricted right to freedom of expression, to receive and publish information and publications, and to access the press, without prejudice to public order, safety and morals, as defined by law.
- (2) The right to access the internet, without prejudice to public order, safety, and morals, as defined by the law.
- (3) The state shall guarantee freedom of the press and other media, as regulated by law in a democratic, pluralistic society.
- (4) All media shall adhere to the ethics of the profession and shall not incite religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural hatred, or call for violence or war.

### 57. Freedom of assembly and organization

- (1) The right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed, and every person shall have the right to free organization without others, including the right to form political parties, associations, organizations, syndicates and professional unions, or the join the same in order to protect their interests.
- (2) The law shall regulate the formation and registration of political parties, associations, organizations, syndicates and professional unions, in accordance with what is required by democratic society.
- (3) No organization shall have to right to work as a political party, unless it has the following:
  - (a) Open membership for all Sudanese, regardless of religion, ethnic origin or place of birth;
  - (b) Democratically elected institutions;
  - (c) Transparent and open sources of funding.

Article 41(2) of the Constitutional Charter states: "All rights and freedoms contained in international human rights agreements, pacts, and charters ratified by the Republic of Sudan shall be considered an integral part of this document."

The [Interim National Constitution](#) of Sudan, 2005 (INC) followed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ([Summary](#)) of the same year, which was concluded between the Government of Sudan and the South Sudan-based Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

The INC does provide for protection of freedom of assembly and association. Article 40 of the INC states,

- (1) The right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed; every person shall have the right to freedom of association with others; including the right to form or join political parties, associations and trade or professional unions for the protection of his or her interests.
- (2) Formation and registration of political parties, associations and trade unions shall be regulated by law as is

necessary in a democratic society.

- (3) No association shall function as a political party at the national, Southern Sudan, or state level unless:
  - (a) Its membership is open to any Sudanese irrespective of religion, ethnic origin or place of birth.
  - (b) It has a programme that does not contradict the provisions of this Constitution.
  - (c) It has a democratically elected leadership and institutions.
  - (d) It has disclosed and transparent sources of funding.

Article 27(3) of the INC also states:

All rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants, and instruments ratified by the Republic of the Sudan shall be an integral part of this Bill.

As Sudan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1986, Sudan is bound by the its provisions, including Article 21 on the freedom of peaceful assembly and Article 22 on the freedom of association.

## National Laws and Regulations Affecting Sector

CSOs are governed by the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) (“VHO”) Act, 2006 (“the Act”) ([Arabic version](#)), which is inconsistent with many provisions of the 2005 Interim National Constitution and the ICCPR. A key concern is Section 6 of the Act, which defines the objectives of humanitarian work narrowly, so as to include only such goals as emergency relief from natural disasters, reducing risks from disasters, directing relief aid to rehabilitation and development, reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by war or natural disasters, building local capacity of national organizations, and the execution of relief projects and services through voluntary and charitable organizations.

It is thus clear that the Act is intended for humanitarian relief and charitable work, rather than the wider scope of civil society pursuits, such as rule of law, democratic transition, justice, and fundamental human rights and freedoms. CSOs working in these fields face harassment from government officials in charge of registering CSOs, in particular from the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). The National Intelligence and Security Act, 2010, empowers the NISS to search, arrest, and detain people for varying periods without any judicial supervision or sanction.

## Pending CSO Legislative / Regulatory Initiatives

While the new transition government is being formed and new appointments in the executive are being made, there has not been movement on initiatives to amend previous laws prohibiting the work of independent civil society and the media. Statements and promises have been made by various officials, however. For example, at the 74th UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Hamdok [made a statement](#) on the state of press freedom in Sudan and the benefits it would have for promoting human rights, good governance, a culture of tolerance, dialogue, and peace. He also underscored the importance of free press in promoting accountability and transparency and fighting corruption, especially when information is made readily available to the public.

For information previous initiatives, please see the below:

1. In 2016, a new draft law regulating civil society was circulated. Although the draft appears to be broadly similar to the Sudanese Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act, 2006 currently in force, the new legislation would, in its current state, place additional burdens on civil society. A new draft of the proposed law, the Voluntary and Humanitarian Works Act, 2018, was discussed in a workshop in November 2017. Given the political changes since April 2019, it is unclear what the status of this proposed Act will be moving forward.

2. The al-Bashir regime had been in the process of preparing a new Islamic constitution, which civil society and the majority of opposition parties believed would not be suitable for a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society such as Sudan. In February 2015, President al-Bashir [said](#), “the drafting of a permanent Constitution will be preceded by a comprehensive Islamic dialogue between all sectors of society to reach a constitution acceptable to all the people of Sudan and a model of the Islamic state.” The various political parties outside the government’s single-party system concluded in early 2017 that any “reforms” to amend the Constitution would be intended to entrench the President’s powers and increase the number of MPs in “opposition parties” who are actually supporters of the Congress Party that was in power since the 1989 coup d’état. Dialogue on such reforms was therefore discontinued.

Given the political changes since April 2019, it is doubtful there will still be a push for this new Islamic constitution. However, the TMC and the Alliance for Freedom and Change (AFC) forces, an umbrella organization for opposition and protests organizers, have been holding talks to reach an agreement on unified vision of the Constitutional Declaration, a document that will guide the country during the agreed three-year transitional period.

In July 2019, the AFC rejected some of the contents in the draft Constitution developed by the TMC, including an Article that grants members of the Sovereign Council immunity from prosecution of crimes they committed, including in the June 3, 2019 crackdown. The draft Constitution also provides for the powers of the three institutions of the transitional body.

3. Lastly, a draft bill approved by the Cabinet in July 2018 seeks to bestow the Press and Publications Council with authority to suspend a journalist from writing and revoke a journalist's practice license without a court order. The bill also provides for restrictions to online publishing that have already been addressed in the Cyber-Crimes Act, 2014. Members from Sudan's journalist community have rejected the proposed sections to the bill due to their restrictive nature and the intention of authorities to control the press. The authorities already rely on existing laws—the National Security Act, 2010, Criminal Act, 199,1 and Press and Publications Act, 2009—to censor and curtail press freedom in Sudan. The Sudanese authorities, particularly the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), have continuously used tactics to restrict press freedom, such as summoning journalists, preventing the distribution of printed copies of newspapers without rationale, imposing “red lines” on media through telephone communications to editors-in-chief, and blacklisting journalists from publishing their work in newspapers. Newspapers, including pro-government newspapers, have been subjected to pre- and post-publication censorship, causing tremendous financial loss. Journalists have also been targeted for arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, criminal prosecution, and summons. Given the political changes in April 2019, it is unclear what the status of this proposed initiative will be moving forward.

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## Legal Analysis

### Organizational Forms

There are three organizational forms defined in Section 4 of the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) (“VHO”) Act (“the Act”):

- A “national voluntary organization” is defined as “a Sudanese non-governmental voluntary organization registered in accordance with the provisions of this Act” that is not a company registered in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 1925 or a political party.

A “charitable organization” is an “organization that may be established by citizens, groups or individuals and having the financial ability to establish and sustain charitable activities.”

- A “civil society organization” is “a civil society organization that practices voluntary and humanitarian work for not-for-profit purposes and which is registered in accordance with the provisions of [the Act].”

According to Section 4 of the Act, “voluntary and humanitarian work” means any “not-for-profit voluntary humanitarian activity carried out by any national or foreign voluntary or charitable organization registered in Sudan that aims at providing humanitarian aid, relief, public services and human rights services, protecting the environment, or enhancing the economic and social standards of the beneficiaries.”

### Public Benefit Status

There are no clear rules about tax exemptions or public benefit status in Sudan. However, according to the VHO Act, “the Minister of Finance and National Economy, upon the recommendation of the Minister [of Humanitarian Affairs],” may grant exemptions from duties, taxes, and privileges to “national, foreign voluntary organizations, or civil society organizations registered under the Act.” In addition, anyone who provides funds for “voluntary or charitable work” may be exempted from taxation (Section 29(1),(2), and (3)).

### Public Participation

With the commencement of the transition to democracy in recent years, some legal reforms and the relaxation of repressive tactics have made the civic environment slightly more favorable for the exercise of fundamental freedoms and for the increased engagement with and enabling of historically marginalized groups, such as the women's rights movement, which allows them to collectively advocate for reform. However, the October 25, 2021 coup and subsequent decisions made by the military authorities have seen the return of repressive tactics, including mass arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detentions of activists, journalists, and other civil society activists. The United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in Sudan documented at least 50 incidents of violations against journalists and media institutions since the coup, including 22 incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention.

## Barriers to Entry

There are a number of barriers to entry in the VHO Act.

*Minimum membership requirement.* In order to register a voluntary or charitable organization, the Act requires the organization to have a minimum of 30 members (Section 9(1)(a)). However, if the organization has fewer than 30 members, “the Minister [of Humanitarian Affairs] may approve the registration of an organization on condition that [the organization] establishes that it has financial capacity, sustainability, sources of funding, and is registered” (Section 9(2)).

*Requirements for foreign organizations.* A foreign voluntary organization “shall provide proof showing its financial and technical capability to carry out the activities or work it intends to carry out in Sudan and the source of those capabilities” (Section 9(2)(e)). In addition, it “shall not have its quarters or origin in any country in a state of war with the Sudan, or boycotted by [Sudan]” (Section 9(2)(d)).

*Annual re-registration requirement.* Every organization must annually renew its license “as to such conditions, as the regulations may specify” (Section 11).

*Mandatory registration.* Registration is mandatory, and unregistered organizations can be fined for not being registered. Section 23 states that “every person, or group of persons, who practice the activity of voluntary organization, without registration in accordance with the provisions of this Act” is deemed to have committed a contravention [of the Act].” Section 24 defines the penalty for contravention as a fine. As a result, Sudanese CSOs that are unregistered or were refused registration have been forced to hold their meetings in other countries, such as Ethiopia, to avoid arrest.

*Refusal of registration.* The Registrar may reject the registration of any organization where “the activities it carries out are inconsistent with the principles provided for in section 5 [of the Act]” (Section 13(1)(a)).

These “principles” include:

- Non-discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, ethnicity, political affiliation, or religious beliefs (Section 5(a));
- Having due regard for the desires of the local community at all stages of the project through the participation of local communities (Section 5(e)); and
- Non-interference of foreign voluntary organizations in the internal affairs of the Sudan in a way that may infringe on the sovereignty of the country (Section 5(f)).

The non-discrimination principle, while it may seem desirable, could violate the freedom of association. For example, an advocacy campaign to bring together [women against forced marriages](#) or to raise awareness about the human rights of a certain minority group could risk violating the provision in Section 5(a) since they could be considered “discriminatory” on the basis of gender or ethnicity.

Similarly, the interest in the participation of local communities in CSO projects in Section 5(e) and preventing foreign CSOs from “interfering” in internal affairs in Section 5(f) are not “precise” grounds for denial and do not meet the strict limitations for restricting the freedom of association under the ICCPR. Terms such as “due regard for the desires of the local community,” “non-interference,” and “internal affairs” are undefined in the Act, giving implementing officials substantial discretion to determine whether an organization’s activities are in violation of the Act.

Furthermore, a decision to refuse registration may be appealed to the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs within fifteen days, but there is no required timetable for the Minister to respond to the appeal and there is no ability to make a subsequent appeal to an impartial body (Section 13(3)).

*Revocation of registration.* An organization can have its registration revoked if it “has contravened the provisions of this Act, the regulations or any other law in force;” if it fails, “without acceptable justification,” to perform its activities for the period of one year; or if it “uses humanitarian aid for obtaining unlawful gains” (Section 14(1)). These vague provisions leave terms such as “acceptable justification” and “unlawful gains” undefined and open the door to revocation even for minor infractions of law.

In addition, there are practical barriers to entry. For example, the [Sudan Development Initiative](#) (SUDIA) tried to open an office in Red Sea State in 2013. After waiting for over three months, SUDIA received a formal answer from the HAC notifying SUDIA that the request was declined, without stating any reason why. HAC has also been obstructing the work of other national NGOs throughout the country, even those that engage with the HAC and ensure their compliance with the HAC’s procedures and regulations.

## Barriers to Operational Activity

Legal barriers to operational activity in the VHO Act include the following:

*Annual re-registration requirement.* Every registered organization must renew its license annually (Section 11).

*Interference in internal affairs.* The Registrar has the authority to “supervise the elections of national organizations” (Section 22(2)(d)).

*Reporting requirements.* Every registered organization must submit to the Registrar a semi-annual report on its business, an annual report, and a copy of the annual budget “approved by a certified auditor” (Section 27(1)).

*Government harassment.* CSOs face many restrictions. The permission of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) is required prior to carrying out any proposed activity. The NISS uses its powers to prevent activities it classifies as “political,” including, for example, workshops that intend to discuss the contents of the new Constitution.

Civil society also faces a number of extra-legal pressures. In 2014, for example, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) began scrutinizing several women’s organizations, including Salmmah Women’s Resource Centre, whose Director was served with a decree signed and stamped by the Sudanese Ministry of Justice that ordered the cancellation of Salmmah’s registration license and its immediate liquidation. A five-person committee was also appointed to oversee its dissolution process, and plain-clothed individuals, who did not identify themselves, accompanied the Dissolution Committee to Salmmah’s offices and prohibited non-staff members from entering Salmmah’s premises. This has led to concerns that the HAC will continue to shut down organizations that it perceives to be working against its interests, even those that provide needed services to women.

Other incidents have illustrated extra-legal pressures on civil society:

- In November 2012, the newly formed Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations planned to hold a press conference to declare the new organization. The NISS entered the premises of Sudan Human Rights Monitor, where the press conference was to be held, and ordered the dispersal of the gathering as an unlawful meeting for which no permission was obtained, labeling the meeting a threat to a “national security.”
- In November 2012, the Sudanese Writers Union was given a warning that a workshop held on the proposed constitution was a “political” activity in which they should not engage.
- In December 2012, the Sudan Studies Centre received a letter from the Ministry of Information suspending the Centre for one year and alleging that the Centre had been engaged in activities threatening “national security.” On the same day, the Dar Alfinoon (House of Arts) was closed for the same reason.

More recently, the Seema Centre for Training and Protection of Women and Children’s Rights announced that its Khartoum office was raided by unknown individuals in the early hours of July 23, 2019. According to Seema, the contents of the office were ransacked and there are indications the raid and break-in had nothing to do with theft, but were aimed at obtaining papers and documents concerning the nature of the work of the centre.

In 2022, several incidents also demonstrated restrictions on CSO operations. For example, in October 2022, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) unlawfully cancelled the registration of Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS). The SCPS office, which is a consumers’ society/association, received a delegation of seven employees from HAC, who delivered a letter about the cancellation of registration and seizure of all SCPS’ assets. The HAC employees confiscated property, such as seals, papers, and other documents and gave SCPS an ultimatum to hand over all of its assets within 72 hours. The legal provisions provide HAC the mandate to cancel SCPS’ registration were listed in the letter and allegedly justified under article 14 (1) of the Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (Organization) Act, 2006 (Violations by NGOs) and article 22 (2) (a) (Powers of General registrar to register and cancel registration of NGOs). Article 14 (1) provides that the registrar must carry out investigations to ascertain if any violations or breaches have been committed prior to penalizing any organization. These penalties include cancellation of registration, confiscation/seizure of an organization’s assets by courts of law, and freezing of an organization’s accounts, among others. The procedure was not followed in this case because investigations were not carried out and no violations were committed, but HAC still went ahead and confiscated property and seized assets without receiving authorization from the courts of law.

In another incident, on October 20, 2022, a group of Sudanese Federal Police arrived in five vehicles and raided an art gallery during an exhibition of Ahmed Esam held at an NGO building in Alzhoor neighborhood, Khartoum. Ahmed is a 21-year-old human rights defender. During the raid, the police officers arrested nine guest, most of whom were young artists and designers. They also confiscated art pieces. Those arrested were taken to the federal police office, where they were detained and later transferred to Northern Police Station in central Khartoum where they spent a night and eventually released on bond. They were charged with several offences, including calling for



opposition to authority by use of violence (article 63), disturbance of public peace (article 69), and public nuisance (article 77) of the Sudanese Penal Code 199. The police did not return their personal property, such as cellphones, confiscated during the arrest. Ahmed's art exhibition was an expression of he had experienced in detention together with group of artists in March 2022. At that time, they were detained for 55 days and subjected to verbal abuse and torture after Ahmed and other five artists were arrested for drawing pictures of martyrs of the Sudanese revolution on walls.

## Barriers to Speech/Advocacy

CSOs that support the government enjoy its full backing, such as funding, customs exemptions on imports, and participation in government activities, including accompanying official delegations on travel to regional and international events. CSOs that oppose the government, however, are often harassed, threatened, and closed down if they voice a position contrary to government views. The government also refuses to allow CSOs to take part in "national dialogue" because they are perceived as opposing the government.

In the months before the presidential and parliamentary elections in April 2015, the government again cracked down on CSOs, human rights defenders, students, the media, and members of the political opposition and refused to allow CSOs to observe the elections. Some CSOs, such as Massarat, were closed down, while others, such as The Civic Forum, The Sudanese Writers Union, and Mahmoud Mohammed Taha Centre, had their licenses revoked and offices closed as a result of their political activism. In early 2015, the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) confiscated the publications of at least 16 newspapers, and the police and NISS interrogated more than 21 journalists. The crackdown continued in 2016 when the government filed capital charges against six CSO activists associated with Training and Human Development (TRACKs). TRACKs, a Khartoum-based organization, had been raided twice before by the NISS, which also confiscated its staff members' passports.

In addition, in March 2017, three human rights defenders were released on time served after a court sentenced them to one-year imprisonment and a fine for "dissemination of false information" and "possession of immoral material." They had been detained since May 2016. A few months later, Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, along with five other human rights defenders, was released on August 2017 after being detained since early December 2016. He faced six trumped-up charges, including "undermining the constitutional system" and "waging war against the state," both of which carried either the death penalty or life imprisonment. All charges against him were dropped.

In July 2018, eight charges, including crimes against the state, were added to charges against Winnie Omer. She was first targeted in December 2017 by the public order police in Khartoum, who arrested her and charged her with "indecent dress." At time of her arrest, she was wearing a long skirt, blouse and a scarf that she had worn that same morning while attending the trial of 24 women who had also been charged under Article 152 ("indecent dress") of the Sudan Criminal Act, 1991 for wearing trousers at a private party. Winnie Omer was detained for a few hours before she was released on bail in December 2017. After three additional court hearings, the public order court dismissed the charges against her and found she was not indecently dressed. However, in February 2018, Omer and three friends were arrested again during a police raid on an apartment where the group was having a meeting. During the raid, the police confiscated laptops and mobile phones. The group was detained for five days before being released on bail. They were accused of, among other things, prostitution. The reason behind the July 2018 charges against Omer is unclear, but it is believed they were related to her activism highlighting the authorities' ongoing pattern of harassment and intimidation of her and other activists.

As demonstrated in Omer's case, the authorities have disproportionately applied broadly and ill-defined criminal offences, known as "public order" offences, which forbid, inter alia, "indecent and immoral" acts against or by women and girls. The police, prosecution, and courts have broad discretion to judge whether a person has acted in "an indecent manner" or "a manner contrary to public morality" or "wears an indecent, or immoral dress, which causes annoyance to public feelings." In practice, the enforcement of public order laws by the public order police and courts has often been discriminatory and arbitrary against women and girls, especially those from marginalized religious or ethnic groups.

On December 20, 2018, the Sudanese government shut down the internet in an attempt to suppress protests. Using virtual private networks, Sudanese citizens were able to continue sharing information on various social media platforms, including updates on scheduled protests and details about the ongoing crackdown by security forces. Sudanese authorities have subjected journalists who continued to cover the protests have been subjected to physical attacks, summons and interrogations, arrests and detention, and bans from writing. For example, a journalist was dismissed from work following comments he made to the BBC about the ongoing protests. The authorities have also subjected Sudanese newspapers to post-print censorship through confiscation of print-runs. On January 21, 2018, the Sudanese authorities also withdrew the journalist license of Mr. Saad Eldien Hassan, an Al-Arabiya correspondent, thereby banning him from working as a journalist in Sudan.

The political changes since April 2019 have suggested the government will change course from previous trends. For instance, hundreds of political prisoners, including those detained for their involvement or suspected involvement in



the original popular protests that broke out in mid-December 2018, have been released. They include Mohamed Hassan Alim, a political activist who was arbitrarily detained by the NISS on October 9, 2018 following his deportation from Egypt; Hisham Ali Mohammed Ali, a Sudanese blogger arbitrarily detained by the NISS in May 2018 after he was deported from Saudi Arabia; and Mohamed Naji Al-Assam and Ahmed Rabi of the SPA Secretariat, who were arbitrarily detained on January 4 and 5, 2019 in connection with the popular protests. On March 8, 2018, International Women's Day, 36 of 54 women detained in connection with the popular protests were also released following a presidential directive from the recently deposed al-Bashir. Several of them had been arbitrarily detained for two months.

Furthermore, in August 2019, the Sudanese authorities allowed al-Jazeera to re-open their offices in Khartoum after it was forced to close on May 31, 2019 and its license was withdrawn without justification and its journalists banned from carrying out any reporting on Sudan. The offices were notably shut down a few days before the violent crackdown at the sit-in protest on June 3, 2019. After that crackdown, the TMC shut down internet services for national security reasons. Telecom companies only restored the internet on July 10, 2019 after a National Court ruled in favor of a lawsuit filed by a group of lawyers challenging the internet shutdown as a violation of a constitutional right.

In addition, the Armed Forces Amendment Act, 2013, which allows military courts to try civilians for various crimes under Sudan's 1991 criminal code, including the spreading of "false news," has also been used to prosecute journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society activists. In addition, on December 26, 2021, General al-Burhan issued an emergency order granting the security forces immunity. He also restored arrest powers to the General Intelligence Service (GIS).

After the announcement of the coup in 2021, the military disrupted internet connectivity from October 25, 2021 until November 18, 2021 when it was restored following a successful suit by a group of lawyers against Telecom companies in the High Court. Since then, authorities restricted freedom of expression. For example, the GIS continued with the practice of summoning journalist for interrogation when, on November 13, 2021, the GIS of Algardarif informed Mr. Osama Said Ahmed, a news correspondent for al-Jazeera, that al-Jazeera was not allowed to cover anti-coup rallies. In January 2022, the Sudanese Ministry of Information and Culture also withdrew the license of al-Jazeera Live and closed its office in Khartoum.

Several journalists were arrested for covering the anti-coup protests:

- On November 13, 2021, a journalist, Mr Abdul Monim Mohamed Madibo, was arrested while he was covering rallies in Nyala, South Darfur and was taken to the central police station.
- On November 17, 2021, Mr Ali Farassab, also a journalist, sustained head injuries from live bullets fired by security agencies while he was covering the November 17, 2021 anti-coup rally in Khartoum Bahari. He was denied medical attention and was instead arrested while he was bleeding and taken to al-Mogran neighborhood police station in Khartoum, while the acting governor ordered that all detainees from the November 17, 2021 rally to be sent to Suba prison in Khartoum North. Mr Ali Farassab was eventually released on November 19 without any charges.
- On November 17, 2021, Mr Abdul Reoof Taha, a journalist working for al-Jazeera in Khartoum was arrested by the military intelligence on Almaoona Street in Khartoum Bahari while he was covering the anti-coup rally. He was taken to the military intelligence offices where he was held over night before his release following day.
- On November 14, 2021, a group of military intelligence officers raided the house of Mr. Mohamed Almusalami, office director of al-Jazeera in Khartoum. He was arrested without giving any reason and taken to an unknown location. On the same day, Mr Shawgi Abdul Azim, a journalist, reported that he was also arrested by a group of military intelligence officers while he stepped out of al-Jazeera's office in Khartoum. He was then taken to an unknown place where he was blindfolded and threatened against supporting the anti-coup events. He was released after four hours.

Just like during the al-Bashir era, authorities also shut down a radio station and blocked two others from broadcasting in Khartoum without providing any reasons. The United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in Sudan documented at least 50 incidents of violations against journalists and media institutions after the coup, including 22 incidents of arbitrary arrest and detention.

On April 4, 2022, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) passed a Resolution on Sudan and called on Sudanese authorities to respect the right to life, freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly of the people, and ensure the personal safety and security of journalists while fully lifting restrictions on access to the Internet and information platforms.

Subsequently, in September 2022, the authorities attacked or judicially harassed journalists during the course of their work. On September 13, 2022, police targeted two journalists and obstructed them from covering a rally in Khartoum. The first case was of Hussein Hennery, who is a Sudanese journalist and was obstructed by tear gas that was thrown at him while he was covering the rally. The second case was that of Amira Saleh, who is a Sudanese

journalist working for Altar Sudan website. She was arrested by police in Khartoum while she was covering the rally and was subjected to torture by police forces, including being beaten by sticks. She was later released on the same day after the rally had ended and no charges placed against her.

On September 7, 2022, Radio FM 100 broadcast in Khartoum banned Aayah Alsabag from her radio talk show for seven days for hosting three members of the Journalists Association during a previous episode. Her supervising manager argued that her program is social in nature, and she was not supposed to discuss political issues. This demonstrates the discrimination in media coverage since the October 25, 2021 coup in Sudan.

On September 10, 2022, the security department of Khartoum International Airport filed a criminal case against Blue Nile T.V presenter Amjad Noor Eldien, who was then charged under Sudanese Penal Code, 1991. During a show, he discussed the quality of services at the airport and presented a video of poor service and the plight of the public. Amjad was arrested and released on bond. On September 10, 2022, Saif Eldien was arrested, tortured and charged with defamation over a social media post. On August 7, 2022, a group of police detectives from Zalingi in West Darfur State arrested Eldien next to popular square. While on transit to the police station, he was beaten using the butt of the automatic guns and stomped on with military shoes. He was later moved to a police office and taken to a new local government building. After being beaten, he was informed by the police that he was charged with defamation under article 159 of Sudanese Penal Code because of a post on social media about the four Christians who were arrested and charged with apostasy in Zalingi after the police raided their church. Two weeks after Eldien reported to the police station, he learned that no case was filed against him.

Since the fighting between the two military factions, RSF and SAF, broke out in April 2023, additional efforts to [silence](#) journalists who report critically or dissent from either faction have been seen.

## Barriers to International Contact

There are no legal barriers that restrict the ability of domestic organizations from contacting or communicating with international counterparts. In practice, however, government authorities have limited domestic CSOs' ability to participate in international fora. In March 2016, for example, four CSO representatives were intercepted by security officials at Khartoum International Airport on their way to a high-level human rights meeting with diplomats in Geneva.

Several provisions of the VHO Act do potentially restrict the ability of foreign organizations from operating in Sudan. For example, Section 5(f) requires the "Non-interference of foreign voluntary organizations in the internal affairs of the Sudan in a way that may infringe on the sovereignty of the country." In addition, Section 9 sets forth the following registration requirements for a foreign organization:

- "Its headquarters or origin shall not be in any state in a state of war with Sudan, or boycotted by [Sudan]" (Section 9(3)(d));
- The foreign organization "shall produce what may prove its financial and technical capabilities to carry out the activities or work it intends to carry out in Sudan and the source of those capabilities"(Section 9(3)(e));
- The foreign organization "shall sign the country agreement" (Section 9(3)(g)); and
- The foreign organization shall satisfy "any other conditions, as the minister may lay down, from time to time" (Section 9(3)(h)).

These provisions have all been subject to arbitrary interpretation to prevent foreign organizations from operating in Sudan. However, the political changes since April 2019 suggest the government may reconsider the above provisions in favor of more enabling regulations.

## Barriers to Resources

According to Section 7(1) of the VHO Act, CSOs seeking grants or funding must have a "project instrument" approved by the government. Prior approval of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs is required for CSOs to obtain funds or grants from inside or outside the country (Section 7(2)).

A 2013 HAC policy reinforces these rules by requiring CSOs to secure HAC approval for projects and individual activities before they obtain funding from foreign sources. However, the HAC will only grant approval if the project is aimed at providing humanitarian services; advocacy activities will not receive approval. A CSO can be dissolved for receiving foreign funding without prior HAC approval.

It is unclear how the political changes since April 2019 will ultimately affect the HAC.

## Barriers to Assembly

Following the October 25, 2021 coup, Sudanese authorities have brutally cracked down on anti-coup protests. The same conduct used during the al-Bashir has been used to undermine demands for democracy. Joint security forces, including the Police forces, Central Reserve Forces, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Military Intelligence, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and Sudanese Alliances Forces (2020 Peace Agreement signatory), as well as individuals in plain clothes with masks, used excessive force against protesters, killing at least 94 people and injuring thousands. Both live and rubber bullets fired targeted the upper parts of the bodies of protesters. Some protesters were injured by teargas canisters and stun grenades.

Joint security forces relied on the Emergency framework under the Emergency and Protection of Public Safety Act, 1997 (Emergency Act) and the Criminal Act, 1991 to detain peaceful protesters. The Emergency Act empowers authorities to search any person or premises, prohibit or regulate the movement of persons or activities, and arrest persons on suspicion of committing an offence. Provisions of the Criminal Act, 1991 apply to acts that are contrary to the Emergency Act or emergency declaration. For example, in Khartoum, several detainees were sentenced to one-week imprisonment in Omdurman Women's prison and Soba prison in accordance with powers granted under article 5 of the emergency Act 1997. Protesters in East, Central and South Darfur States, meanwhile, were sentenced to three months imprisonment under the Emergency and Protection of Public Safety Act, 1997. In January 2022, 36 protesters in Khartoum, Omdurman and White Nile state were also imprisoned without trial under the Emergency Act of 1997. Peaceful protesters were further prosecuted under articles 69 (disturbance of public peace) and 77 (public nuisance) of the Sudanese Criminal Act 1991. These laws were widely used under the al-Bashir regime to repress political dissent and grant authorities wide grounds for arrest and detention and lack the requisite safeguards against arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention.

There has also been violence against and obstruction of health care by security forces. Doctors have been targeted with arrest and detention for participating in anti-coup protests. Injured protesters have been denied from accessing hospitals by security forces deployed at the hospital entrances. In October and November 2021, Sudanese authorities closed all the bridges linking the twin cities of Khartoum Bahri and Omdurman to prevent a large gathering of protesters in one location like the April 2019 sit-in. This restricted the movement of ambulances carrying injured protesters across the two cities.

Below are additional laws and practices that Sudanese authorities have used to restrict freedom of assembly:

*Excessive government discretion.* According to Section 69 of the Criminal Act of 1991, a “breach of the peace” occurs even when one person commits an act that “is likely to breach the peace or public tranquility.” The consequence of a “breach of the peace” is severe: punishment with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month, or a fine, or flogging not exceeding twenty “lashes.” With vague terms such as “public tranquility,” this is a troublesome provision that may deter individuals from engaging in assemblies.

*Place restrictions.* Under section 127 of the INC, the Governor or Commissioner of the jurisdiction may order the prohibition or restriction of any meeting, assembly, or procession on public roads or places where a “breach of the peace” is likely. There is no right to appeal the prohibition.

*Notification.* Although the INC provides for freedom of assembly, the Government has relied on a Circular from the Minister of Interior stating that before any rally or demonstration may take place, the organizers must submit to the Minister a letter of intent, including why, where, and when they plan to assemble. The Minister must give his consent in writing before the demonstration can take place. In fact, however, no such permit is ever given.

On December 30, 2012, following a series of National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) raids on CSOs' premises and the suspension of other CSOs' activities, dozens of members of suspended CSOs decided to present a petition to the recently established National Commission on Human Rights. When these CSOs reached the premises of the Commission, security and police forces forcibly prevented them from entering and arrested two people. The Chairman and some members of the Commission intervened, arguing that it was within the Commission's mandate to admit the CSOs and receive their petition. The security forces rejected this argument, stating that they do not receive orders from the Commission, and then dispersed the crowd by force. In an unprecedented move, the Commission issued a press statement that day denouncing the security forces' actions as a denial of the constitutional rights of CSOs and an affront to the Commission's role and its immunity. The Commission also vowed to take any action necessary to ensure that such actions are not repeated in future.

*Enforcement.* Article 40 of the INC protects the right to freedom of assembly, but in practice assemblies, rallies, demonstrations, and public gatherings face suppression by the police and the NISS. National security laws adopted since the 1989 coup—the most recent being the National Intelligence and Security Act, 2010—have empowered the NISS to search, arrest, and detain people for varying periods without any judicial supervision or sanction. In particular, the NISS has prevented protest demonstrations and rallies, no matter what the purpose. Resorting to the Constitutional Court has proved futile, as the petition is always rejected when it contests the legality of suppression of the right of assembly on the basis of alleged threat to “national security.”

Since the separation of South Sudan in July 2011—and the accompanying stoppage of oil revenue, which constituted more than 75% of GDP—inflation has hit the economy very hard and affected the lives of the majority of the Sudanese population. Peaceful demonstrations spread throughout the country in July and August 2012 and again in September 2013, especially at university campuses, schools, and lower income areas of towns. The police and security organs repressed these demonstrations harshly, using teargas, electric sticks, and batons and detaining several individuals and political party leaders for weeks in solitary prison cells in secret detention houses and subjecting them to torture and inhuman treatment.

Prominent human rights defenders, human rights lawyers, and journalists have been targeted for arbitrary arrests and detention for their participation or purported participation in anti-austerity protests that started in January 2018. After January 6, 2018, the security forces arrested and detained scores of Sudanese citizens, including opposition political party leaders, human rights defenders/activists, journalists, student activists, and others for prolonged periods without charge or trial.

*Excessive Force.* During protests in September 2013, more than 200 peaceful demonstrators were killed in the streets of Khartoum and other cities. One year later, the government launched a crackdown on CSOs, including detaining 48 activists, according to the Sudan Change Now movement. In the months before the April 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections, the government again cracked down on CSOs, human rights defenders, students, the media, and members of the political opposition and refused to allow CSOs to observe the elections. Some CSOs, such as Massarat, were closed down, while others, such as The Civic Forum, The Sudanese Writers Union, and Mahmoud Mohammed Taha Centre, had their licenses revoked and offices closed as a result of their political activism. In early 2015, the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (SISS) confiscated the publications of at least 16 newspapers, and the police and National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) interrogated more than 21 journalists. This made clear that the government was not prepared to create a more enabling space for CSOs to operate and carry out their missions.

The crackdown on CSOs continued again in 2018. For example, Sudanese security officials used excessive force to respond to peaceful protests that began in mid-December 2018. The NISS and Sudanese Police Force indiscriminately fired live ammunition and tear gas into crowds of peaceful protesters, killing more than 40 civilians. Hundreds of peaceful protesters, including opposition politicians, students, doctors, advocates, activists, and journalists, were arbitrarily detained for their involvement in the protests, which were triggered by the rising prices of basic commodities.

Sudanese security officials then used excessive force to crack down on peaceful protests that began in mid-December 2018 and continued in 2019. The NISS and Sudanese Police Force indiscriminately fired live ammunition and tear gas into crowds of peaceful protesters, killing more than 40 civilians, according to the Sudanese Doctors Committee. Hundreds of peaceful protesters, including opposition politicians, students, doctors, advocates, activists, and journalists, were also arbitrarily detained for their involvement in popular protests. Protests occurred in various parts of the country including Atbara, Karima, Ed Damazin, Al Gadarif, Al Obeid, Khartoum, Omdurman, Al Fahser, Wad Madani, Port Sudan, Berber, and Sinja.

From April 2019 the TMC welcomed dialogue with opposition forces, including those behind the protests that led to the removal of Omar al-Bashir from power, and has made promises to respond to the protestors' demands. Nevertheless, on June 3, 2019, there was a violent crackdown by the Sudanese Security Forces on pro-democracy protesters, which ended weeks of peaceful sit-ins outside the Army Headquarters in Khartoum. The National Security Forces and the government-backed paramilitary, Rapid Support Forces (RSF), including child soldiers, violently attacked protesters, bystanders, and medical workers, killing more than 100 people and injuring hundreds. Following the attack, on June 4, more than 40 bodies were recovered after security forces allegedly threw bodies into the Nile River. Hundreds of people were also arrested or disappeared and their properties were looted or destroyed.

The bloody dispersal drew sharp condemnation from the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and other international partners. On June 6, 2019 the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) suspended Sudan from participation in all AU activities until it effectively established a civilian-led transitional authority. The PSC further decided that should TMC fail to hand over power to a civilian government, punitive measures shall be imposed.

Sudanese citizens also peacefully took to the streets to denounce the coup in 2021 and call for a civilian government. Sudanese authorities, however, used excessive force, including firing of live ammunition to disperse peaceful protests around Sudan and resulting in at least 94 deaths and several injuries of Sudanese citizens, according to the Sudanese Central Doctors Committee. Tactics that were abolished after the fall of al-Bashir were being used again by security agencies, such firing teargas inside hospitals and arresting injured protesters. Security forces on several occasions also blocked access to hospitals by deploying forces at the entrance who threatened and intimidated people trying to access hospitals, including patients and blood donors.

There were also widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions, with blatant disrespect for the rights of those arrested. Sudanese Armed Forces, Police, and Military Intelligence are relying on broad powers to arrest and detain people

under the Emergency laws and Criminal Act. Arrests also took place on the streets and during raids in homes and offices. The United Nations' Joint Human Rights Office in Sudan reported that more than 1,000 people were arrested for opposing the coup and its consequences between October 25, 2021 and March 3, 2022, including 148 children. In mid-April 2022, security agents carried out an arrest campaign against Resistance Committees, which are the spearhead of the anti-coup protests in the country, following their alleged refusal to participate in a dialogue with the ruling military. Many of them are still held incommunicado. Just like under the al-Bashir regime, political detainees have been tortured, including being beaten with iron bars, sticks, and horse pipe, firing of live bullets near one's feet, denial of food, and forceful shaving of hair. At least 16 peaceful protesters were reportedly also raped. Further, security forces reportedly raided office of the Investigation Committee of the June 3, 2019 massacre in Khartoum and confiscated important documents. 18 members of the Dismantle and Anti-Corruption Committee of the June 30, 1989 regime were arrested in February 2022 on charges of breach of trust, which is a criminal offense punishable by death among other penalties.

The crackdown on anti-coup protests in June and July 2022 was also characterized by arbitrary arrests and detentions, with blatant disrespect for the rights of those arrested. On June 30, 2022, for example, more than 200 protesters were arrested and detained at police stations, with at least 38 female protesters detained at Northern Police Station. They were denied bail and later transferred to Omdurman Prison. 63 protesters, including a minor, were also detained at Northern Police Station in Khartoum and their lawyers were prevented from accessing them and they were denied bail and later transferred to Suba prison in Kosti White Nile state. Additionally, nine lawyers were beaten and arrested by SAF officers and detained at SAF headquarters before they were transferred to a police Station and then released without charges. One lawyer also fractured his right hand as result of torture.

The detainees from these protests are being prosecuted under articles 69 (disturbance of public peace) and 77 (public nuisance) of Sudanese Criminal Code 1991 for participating in protests. In addition, more than 200 protesters have been prosecuted under the Criminal Act and Emergency laws. In some cases, protesters are also charged with vague or baseless charges that lack legitimacy and unduly restrict several human rights. On January 31, 2022, for example, six protesters in Kassala State were charged under articles 139 (causing intentional wounds) and 182 (criminal mischief) of the Sudanese Penal Code, 1991 after a court dismissed public nuisance (article 77) charges against them. They were reportedly beaten with water pipes and subjected to hair shaving by police officers before being released on bond. One day earlier, on January 30, 2022, the joint security forces in Kasala State arrested six peaceful protesters for participating in anti-coup rallies and detained them at Kasala Police Station, where they were charged under article 77. Although the judge dismissed the charges and ordered their release, immediately after they left the courthouse, police officers re-arrested them and took them back to the police station and levelled other charges against them under articles 139 and 182 of the Sudanese Penal Code, 1991.

Lastly, on June 30, 2022, police arrested 18 protesters and charged them under article 182 after they were accused of attacking Alryad neighborhood near Khartoum police station. The office of the prosecutor attached to North Khartoum Police Station secured bail for the detainees on condition that they pay a sum of 2 million Sudanese Pounds (\$5000). On July 6, 2022, the detainees were released after an appeal by emergency lawyers.

*Criminal penalties.* Prison terms and physical punishment are common for even minor violations of the laws on assembly, most of which are written vaguely to allow the authorities broad discretion to determine which actions are “unlawful” and warrant penalties. For instance, Section 67 of the Sudan Penal Code states, “A person shall be said to commit the offence of breach of the peace if he joins in any crowd of five persons or more, if the crowd shows force or uses terrorism or violence, or if the common intention is to achieve any of the following objects:

- To resist the execution of a provision of any law or any legal process.
- To commit the offence of mischief or criminal trespass or any other offence.
- To exercise any right or claimed right in way that may lead to a breach of public peace.
- To compel a person to do what he is legally bound to do or to omit to do what he is lawfully entitled to do.”

In addition, Section 68 states, “Any person who commits the offence of ‘breach of the peace’ shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or with flogging which may not exceed twenty lashes. If he is carrying a weapon or any instrument which may cause death or grievous harm he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or with fine or with both.”

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## Reports

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|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reports of UN Special Rapporteurs and UN Human Rights Council | <a href="#">See here</a><br><br><a href="#">Situation of human rights in the Sudan – Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights on his visit to Sudan – Comments by the State (A/HRC/42/63/Add.1) (August 28, 2019)</a> |
| USIG (United States International Grantmaking) Country Notes  | Not available                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| U.S. State Department                                         | <a href="#">2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan</a>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Fragile States Index Report                                   | <a href="#">Foreign Policy: Fragile States Index</a>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| IMF Country Reports                                           | <a href="#">Sudan and the IMF</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| International Commission of Jurists                           | Not Available                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| International Center for Not-for-Profit Law Online Library    | <a href="#">Sudan</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| ACJPS, FIDH, IRRI                                             | <a href="#">Key Concerns and Recommendations for the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan, 2016</a>                                                                                                                                              |

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## News and Additional Resources

While we aim to maintain information that is as current as possible, we realize that situations can rapidly change. If you are aware of any additional information or inaccuracies on this page, please keep us informed; write to ICNL at [ngomonitor@icnl.org](mailto:ngomonitor@icnl.org).

## General News

### [Sudanese political and civil society groups meet in a bid to end war](#) (July 2024)

Sudanese political and civil society groups met in Egypt to discuss ways to end the war engulfing Sudan. The warring parties, however, didn't take part in the Egypt-sponsored conference. Many Sudanese groups attended the conference including an alliance of pro-democracy political parties and groups led by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Also attending were some leaders of Sudanese rebel groups, including Malik Agar of the Sudan Revolutionary Front and Gibril Ibrahim of the Justice and Equality Movement.

### [NGOs urge authorities to facilitate humanitarian access](#) (July 2023)

More than 40 international NGOs have urged the leadership in Sudan to support and intervene in facilitating humanitarian access to thousands of civilians displaced by conflict. The group called for overcoming the critical issue of pending visa applications and travel notifications and approvals for humanitarian agencies. Fighting between Sudan's army and the Rapid Support Forces (SAF) has reportedly killed over 3,000 civilians and displaced nearly 3 million other people since April 15, amid reports that 25 million people need humanitarian aid and protection.

### [Key Date Set in Sudan Government Transition](#) (March 2023)

Sudan's military leaders and pro-democracy forces vowed to begin establishing a new civilian-led transitional government on April 11, a spokesperson representing both parties said. Sudan has been plunged into chaos after a military coup, led by the country's top Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, removed a Western-backed government in October 2021, upending its short-lived transition to democracy. The takeover came more than two years after a popular uprising forced the removal of Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019.



### **HAC unlawfully cancels registration on Sudanese Consumer Protection Society** (November 2022)

On October 24, 2022, the office of the Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS) received a delegation of seven employees from HAC delivering a letter of cancellation of registration and seizure of all its assets. The group confiscated property such as seals, headed paper, and other documents.

### **Nine people arrested by police during an art exhibition** (October 2022)

On October 20, 2022, a group of Sudanese Federal Police arrived in five vehicles and raided an art gallery during an exhibition by Ahmed Esam held at Civil Lap house (NGO building) located in Alzhoor neighborhood, Khartoum. Mr. Ahmed is a 21 year old Human rights defender and an artist. During the raid, the police officers arrested nine guest majority of whom are young artists, and designers. They also confiscated 9 out of 12 art pieces and damaged one art piece in the process. Those arrested were taken to the federal Police office where they were detained until 06:00pm and later transferred to Northern Police Station located in Central Khartoum where they spent a night.

### **Sudanese authorities continue to crack-down on freedom of expression** (September 2022)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) has documented several incidents where Sudanese authorities have interfered with the exercise of media freedom and free expression. The authorities attacked and/or judicially harassed journalists during the course of their work. Sudanese authorities continue to harass made make it difficult for journalists to do their work in Sudan.

### **One protester shot dead by security forces in Sudan's Khartoum** (April 2022)

One Sudanese protester was shot dead as security forces confronted anti-coup demonstrations in the state of Khartoum, said medics aligned with a movement to end military rule. The death brings the total number of protesters that have died since an October 25 coup to 94, the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors said.

### **Sudanese authorities raid offices of 2019 massacre tribunal** (March 2022)

Sudanese security forces have raided the premises of a commission investigating a June 2019 massacre of protesters in the capital city of Khartoum, forcing it to suspend operations. According to Nail Adeeb, the commission's chairperson, the building was raided by uniformed men who came in, kicked out the workers and took over the building.

### **18 members of the Dismantle and Anti-Corruption Committee detained incommunicado** (March 2022)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) has continued to monitor the continued crackdown on pro-democracy protests including arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detention of civilians and other human rights violations across Sudan since October 15, 2021. In this brief, ACJPS gives an update on various incidents resulting in serious violations of human rights of civilians that have continued to occur since our last update on the Sudan coup.

### **Women's rights leader detained in Sudan capital** (January 2022)

The head of Sudan's No to Oppression of Women initiative, Amira Osman, was detained during a raid by security forces in her home in Khartoum. Her detention has prompted condemnation from within Sudan, as well as from the United Nations mission in the country.

### **Sudan forms 11-member sovereign council** (August 2019)

Sudan's generals and protest leaders have announced a joint ruling body, formally disbanding the military council that took power after the toppling of longtime ruler Omar Bashir in April 2019 in the wake of relentless protests against his rule.

### **TMC, FFC add text on peace in Sudan to constitutional declaration** (August 2019)

The Addis Ababa document on peace agreed between the rebel umbrella Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and its political allies in the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) was officially added to the agreed Constitutional Declaration. On Friday the FFC and the Transitional Military Council (TMC) finished discussions on the fundamental law facilitating orderly change to a democratic regime during the 39 months transitional period.

### **Sudan factions initial pact ushering in transitional government** (August 2019)

Sudan's military rulers and the main opposition coalition initialled a constitutional declaration, paving the way for a transitional government following the overthrow of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir.

### **Women and Children's Rights NGO's Khartoum Office Ransacked** (July 2019)

The Sima Centre for Training and Protection of Women and Children's Rights has said that its office in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum was raided early on Tuesday. The outer door was broken, and the contents of the office ransacked, but initial inspection suggests nothing was stolen. The centre said in a statement that all signs indicate that the raid and break-in had nothing to do with theft; but aimed at papers and documents concerning the nature of the work of the centre.

### **268 people killed during Sudan's peaceful revolution** (July 2019)

268 Sudanese were killed during the peaceful protests that led to regime change in Sudan, according to a report



released by an independent group of doctors. The report is a first attempt to estimate the number of protesters killed by the former regime and the ruling military junta that has taken over power on 11 April.

#### **Sudan's Mobile Internet Restored After Power Sharing Deal** (July 2019)

Sudanese authorities have restored internet services more than a month after they were cut off when the military violently broke up protests calling for civilian rule, leaving dozens dead. The loosening of media controls comes as the military and protesters are set to sign an agreement on a power-sharing, transitional government, raising cautious optimism for a peaceful solution to the stand-off.

#### **The Situation Regarding the Dialogue with the Transitional Military Council** (April 2019)

Sudan's ruling Transitional Military Council (TMC) and opposition forces appeared on a collision course on Monday amid deepening differences over demands for civilian rule more than 10 days after the ouster of President Omar al-Bashir.

#### **The Situation Regarding the Dialogue with the Transitional Military Council** (April 2019)

The Sudanese Professional Association released a statement in which they stated that they "categorically reject this manipulation of the dialogue process and consider it a wicked play from the political committee assigned by the TMC to run the dialogue. This committee is comprised of members who are figures from the previous regime, and its head (Omer Zain Elabdin) was the head of the National Congress Party (NCP) within the army. Zain Elabdin is trying his best to bring back the deposed regime from the window after Sudanese people rejected it in the widest popular referendum."

#### **Hundreds of Peaceful protesters and activists released from detention** (April 2019)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reports that it "has received reliable information indicating that more than 800 peaceful protesters and activists have been released after spending more than 2 months in custody without charge."

#### **Arbitrary arrests and detention by Sudanese authorities** (December 2018)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies has stated that it "is deeply concerned about the policing of anti-austerity protests including the use of excessive forces resulting in the death of several peaceful protestors. The Government of Sudan has responded to widespread disgruntlement over recent austerity measures by arresting and detaining opposition political party members, human rights defenders, activists, journalists, students and other individuals, censoring newspapers through prohibiting publication of information on protests and confiscation of daily- print runs prior to distribution, use of force including firing live ammunition resulting into deaths and injury of peaceful protestors."

#### **Security service confirms hand over of Sudanese activist from Egypt** (November 2018)

The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) said that a political activist who went missing in Cairo last month is now under arrest in Khartoum, confirming his handover by the Egyptian security forces.

#### **Sudan Journalists Protest Restrictive Press Bill** (July 2018)

A draft bill for the press and publications in Sudan has sparked extensive debate between government authorities and the media sector, the latter having described the law as being more restrictive on freedom of expression and the press. Sudanese journalists hope to remove the limitations on press freedom that are threatened with the introduction of the new law.

#### **Activist Faces Trumped-Up Charges in Sudan** (July 2018)

Khartoum-based rights activist Wini Omer has long been a vocal opponent of Sudan's morality laws that criminalize "indecent dress" and other private choices, making her a frequent target for prosecution by authorities. This week authorities massively raised the stakes in their showdown with the activist, charging her with a slew of offenses, including 'crimes against the state,' which carries a possibly death penalty.

#### **Sudan must release Sakharov Laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman** (February 2018)

In light of recent developments in Sudan, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Heidi Hautala and the Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee, Pier Antonio Panzeri stated: "We strongly condemn the arbitrary arrest by Sudanese forces of Salih Mahmoud Osman, Sakharov Prize Laureate and Vice President of the Darfur Bar Association, as well as arrests of other human rights defenders in Sudan. We are alarmed to learn that a crackdown on protesters, human rights defenders, student activists, journalists, attorneys and academics continues in Sudan, with the authorities using arbitrary arrests and excessive force to deal with peaceful protests against rising food prices."

#### **Incommunicado detention of 8 human rights defenders and others for participating in peaceful protests** (February 2018)

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a partnership of FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Sudan. The Observatory fears that these arrests and detentions occur in reaction to nation-wide demonstrations that began on January 6, 2018 and were set off by the announcement of Sudan's 2018 budget and the lifting of subsidies and measures, effectively

tripling Sudan's U.S. dollar exchange rate and increasing the price of basic commodities. (See another "urgent appeal" at this [link](#)).

#### **Sudan's human rights activist receives amnesty** (August 2017)

Sudan's human rights activist Mudawi Ibrahim was the beneficiary of a decree by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, which pardons him along with other five political activists. Nabil Adib, Mudawi Ibrahim's defence lawyer, said the decree has dropped all charges against his client, who has served nine months in detention with charges including undermining the constitutional order and inciting war against the state. Ibrahim, 59, was detained by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service last December. In March 2009, the authorities shut down Sudan Social Development Organization, which was chaired by Ibrahim, a professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Khartoum.

#### **Sudanese security service arrests human rights defender** (May 2017)

The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arrested Sudanese human rights defender Mudawi Ibrahim Adam in Khartoum and took him to undisclosed location, said Amnesty International. Adam was arrested on Wednesday December 7 at Khartoum University, where he works as an engineering professor. Amnesty International said his arrest is "further proof of the government's intolerance of independent voices".

#### **Opposition Leaders Barred From Flying to Paris** (January 2017)

Agents of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) prevented seven prominent opposition leaders from travelling to the French capital. They are all leading members of the Sudan Appeal, a two-page document calling for regime-change and democracy, signed by them and the rebel movements allied in the Sudan Revolutionary Front, in Addis Ababa in December 2014.

#### **Sudan Activists Charged with Death Penalty Crimes** (August 2016)

Following the filing of capital charges against six civil society activists associated with Training and Human Development (TRACKs), Freedom House issued the following statement: "Authorities in Sudan have charged Khalaf-Allah Al-Afif Muktar, Mustafa Adam, Midhat Afifaddin Hamadan, Arwa Al-Rabie, Imany-Leila Ray, and Al-Hassan Kheiry with espionage and terrorism, charges that are preposterous and were brought against these individuals for exercising the fundamental right to free association.... The government of Sudan should either drop these absurd charges or ensure a speedy and fair trial. It should allow observers to attend all proceedings and guarantee the defendants' right to receive visitors in prison." TRACKs, a Khartoum-based organization, has been raided twice during the last two years by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services, which has confiscated the passports of staff members. In April 2015 criminal charges—some carrying the death penalty—were brought against TRACKs Director Khalafalla Alafif Mukhtar and Adil Bakheit, a human rights defender and member of the Board of Directors for Sudanese Human Rights Monitor.

#### **Sudan blocks civil society participation in UN-led human rights review** (August 2016)

The efforts of the Government of Sudan to obstruct the engagement of civil society activists in a United Nations (UN)-led human rights review of the country is unacceptable and shows blatant contempt not just for human rights defenders in Sudan, but to human rights standards and the UN Human Rights Council. Four representatives of Sudanese civil society were intercepted by security officials at Khartoum International Airport on their way to a high level human rights meeting with diplomats which took place in Geneva on 31 March. The meeting was organised by the international NGO, UPR Info, in preparation for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Sudan that will take place in May.

#### **Civil Society Barred From Holding Press Conference** (December 2015)

Security agents prevented a number of Sudanese civil society organisations from holding a press conference in Khartoum. In a joint statement, the organisations stated that they will adhere to their "constitutional rights of free expression and gathering". They said they will continue to organise a series of meetings in which they will express their views on "the current cultural state of affairs in the country, and the government legislations and practices that shackle any cultural and artistic activity".

#### **Leading human rights defender released from prison** (April 2015)

On April 9, 2015, the Sudanese Minister of Justice announced the suspension of the case brought against Dr. Medani, President of Sudan's Confederation of Civil Society Organisations, Vice President of Civil Society Initiative, and former President of the Sudan Human Rights Monitor (SHRM). He was released, along with Mr. Faruq Abu Eissa, chairman of the opposition group, the National Consensus Forces and Mr. Farah Ibrahim Alagar, political activist. The three men were released the same day.

#### **Sudan Government stifling media and civil society** (April 2015)

With the general elections fast approaching in Sudan, the government's clampdown on dissenting voices threatens the independence and freedom of action of civil society organizations, human rights defenders, students, the media and members of the political opposition, Amnesty International said in a briefing. Since January 2015, at least 16 newspapers have had editions of their publications confiscated by the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service

(NISS). Some 21 journalists have been interrogated by the police and the NISS. Three leading civil society organizations have been shut down, with at least five others under imminent threat of closure.

#### **Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) arrests civil society leaders** (December 2014)

Agents of the Sudan Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) detained Faroug Abu Eisa, leader of the National Consensus Forces (NCF, a coalition of opposition parties), Dr Amin Mekki Madani, chairman of the Sudanese Civil Society Initiative, and Dr Farah El Agar, senior consultant of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). The three leaders were detained at their homes in Khartoum and Omdurman, a day after returning from Addis Ababa. In Addis Ababa, they met with the AU High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) mediation team for Sudan to discuss their participation in the National Dialogue, as proposed by President Omar Al Bashir earlier in 2014. A spokesman for the ruling National Congress Party said that the civil society leaders will face criminal charges.

#### **In anniversary of September 2013 uprising, regime cracks down on freedoms** (September 2014)

During the month that witnessed the first anniversary of the 'uprising' of September 2013, when more than 200 peaceful demonstrators were killed in the streets of Khartoum and other cities, the Sudanese regime continued its crackdown on political and civil liberties. The regime froze the activities of the "Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society", prevented the annual meeting of the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations and previously the "Salamah Centre for Feminist Studies" was shut down by national security agents without providing any reasons in each of these cases. Furthermore, the security agencies launched a detention campaign, during which dozens of political activists were arrested and kept in detention in unknown places.

#### **End Arbitrary Detention of Activists – Investigate Allegations of Torture, Abuse** (June 2014)

#### **Sudan's VP reiterates government's determination to hold national dialogue** (January 2014)

#### **Sudan ruling party dissident forms 'Reform Now Movement'** (January 2014)

#### **In Sudan, Civil Society says It's Struggling to Work Around US Sanctions' Block on Tech** (January 2014)

#### **UN Expert deeply concerned at mass arrests and heavy media censorship during protests** (October 2013)

#### **At Least 32 Killed, 700 Arrested In Worst Unrest In Years** (October 2013)

#### **Sudan to further restrict work of foreign aid groups including UN agencies** (August 2013)

#### **Crackdown on civil society in Sudan emboldens hardliners** (March 2013)

#### **On the closure of Al Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE)** (December 2012)

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