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Sudan: Killings in Ardamata



From

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Location

Geneva

We are extremely alarmed by reports that Rapid Support Forces and their allied Arab militia killed hundreds of ethnic Masalit civilians in Ardamata town earlier this month, in yet another ethnically motivated mass attack on non-Arab Masalit civilians in West Darfur in just a few months.

Preliminary information we have obtained from survivors and witnesses suggests Masalit civilians suffered six days of terror at the hands of the RSF and its allied militia after they took control of the Sudanese army's base in Ardamata on 4 November. The base is just outside El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur. Some of the victims were summarily executed or burnt alive.

Many of those killed were young Masalit men and relatives of Sudanese soldiers remaining in Ardamata, after the troops fled the town.

Women and girls were reportedly subjected to sexual violence in the Ardamata IDP camp and in some homes.

Thousands have been displaced, some crossing the border to Chad.

Focusing on two IDP camps – Ardamata and Dorti – and the Al-Kabri neighbourhood, which are majority inhabited by the Masalit, the RSF and its allied militias reportedly looted property, tortured IDPs, and executed many of them before leaving their bodies unburied in the streets.

On 5 November alone, 66 Masalit men were summarily executed in three separate incidents. In Al-Kabri district, men were separated from women and killed. Hundreds more men were arrested and taken to various RSF-run detention camps. Their fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

The Ardamata attack is the second reported mass attack by the RSF and its allied Arab militia against Masalit civilians in a matter of months. Between May and June 2023, hundreds of Masalit men, women, and children – including the governor of West Darfur – were killed. Many of them were buried in mass graves while the bodies of others were left in the streets. Such attacks may constitute crimes under international law.

There are also serious allegations that in revenge attacks, some Arab civilians were reportedly attacked by some members of the Masalit militias. All violations must stop immediately, and those responsible must be brought to justice following thorough, independent and impartial investigations.

We restate the call by High Commissioner Volker Türk in June on the RSF leadership to unequivocally condemn and stop the killings, other violence and hate speech targeted at civilians, based on their ethnicity.

Amid worrying reports of an imminent RSF assault on El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, we remind them and all other parties to the conflict to respect their international humanitarian law obligations to ensure protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.