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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sudan is a republic with power concentrated in the hands of authoritarian President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and his inner circle. The National Congress Party (NCP) maintained control of the government, continuing 25 years of nearly absolute political authority. The country last held national elections in 2010, the first multi-party elections since President Bashir took power. The elections, which several opposition parties boycotted, did not meet international standards.

In January the president announced a National Dialogue to discuss democratic reforms with opposition parties and members of civil society. Some key opposition parties refused to participate in the dialogue until the government demonstrated its good faith with reforms to improve the environment for civil liberties and a cessation of hostilities. Although the president announced in April the government would release political prisoners and protect press freedoms, the government arrested key political figures and restricted the operation of newspapers and journalists throughout the year. Many who protested or publicly commented on the actions of national security forces were arrested or beaten, and many individuals who aligned themselves with opposition movements were also detained without charge. Some protesters arrested in September 2013 remained in prison without trial throughout the year. The government failed to issue to the public a full report regarding the 2013 clashes between security forces and protesters. Several dozen individuals commemorating the one-year anniversary of the protests were detained and held without charge.

Government forces, government-aligned groups, rebels, and armed groups committed human rights abuses and violations throughout the year. The most serious human rights abuses and violations included indiscriminate and deliberate bombing of civilian areas and armed attacks on civilians, attacks on humanitarian targets including humanitarian facilities, and extrajudicial and other unlawful killings.

Other major abuses included torture, beatings, rape and other cruel or inhuman treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest and detention by security forces; harsh and life-threatening prisons conditions; incommunicado detention; prolonged pretrial detention; obstruction of humanitarian assistance; restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and movement; harassment of internally displaced persons (IDPs); corruption; intimidation and closure of human rights and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and recruitment of child soldiers. Societal abuses included discrimination against women, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), sexual violence, trafficking in persons, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, denial of workers' rights, and forced and child labor.

Authorities generally maintained control over the security forces, but there were instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of civilian control, especially in Darfur. The government's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), played a more significant role during the year.

The government took steps to investigate violations committed by the national police, but prosecution was rare. Authorities, however, did not investigate violations by other branches of the security forces. Impunity remained a common problem in all branches of the security forces.

Conflict between government forces and rebels in Darfur and Blue Nile as well as in Southern Kordofan states continued. Government forces and rebels committed violations and abuses in these areas. Localized violence between ethnic communities in the disputed area of Abyei continued in the form of cattle raids.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were numerous reports that government forces, rebel groups, and ethnic militia groups committed arbitrary and unlawful killings of civilians in connection with the conflicts in Darfur, Abyei, and the Two Areas (see section 1.g.).

Security forces used excessive force against demonstrators. On March 11, security forces used force and live ammunition to disperse students at the University of Khartoum protesting escalating violence in Darfur. One student, Ali Abakar Musa Idris, died of injuries he sustained during the confrontation with security forces and proregime students.

The government provided its report on the September 2013 demonstrations to the UN independent expert for Sudan in June. It did not, however, make the full report public. Local NGOs claimed the clashes resulted in the deaths of at least 185 persons. According to the government, 85 persons died during the clashes.

Armed criminal groups also committed arbitrary and unlawful killings. In July an armed group killed civilians travelling on a passenger bus from North Darfur to South Darfur. The armed group initially launched rocket-propelled grenades at the bus and then shot at passengers directly, killing several.

b. Disappearance

Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of politically or ethnically motivated disappearances in the nonconflict areas.

Government forces and rebel groups both were responsible for the disappearance of civilians in conflict areas.

According to the government, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) maintained public information offices to receive inquiries about missing or detained family members. Families of the missing or detained often reported that inquiries submitted to the NISS went unanswered.

Reports continued that military and intelligence members of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) abducted or detained civilians with connections to the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Unconfirmed reports of disappearances in West Kordofan were attributed to government actors. The SPLM-N controlled swaths of territory in the two states. Human rights groups accused the SPLM-N of abducting civilians.

Gunmen in Darfur abducted humanitarian workers and personnel of the African Union-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). For example, in three separate incidents on June 18, gunmen abducted 21 NGO workers, one UN staff member, and one contractor in Darfur. All were released by August 1.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The 2005 interim national constitution prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, but government security forces, government-aligned groups, rebel groups, and ethnic factions continued to torture, beat, and harass suspected political opponents, rebel supporters, and others.

In accordance with sharia (Islamic law), the penal code provides for physical punishments, including flogging, amputation, stoning, and the public display of a body after execution, despite the constitution's prohibitions. Traditional customary law was commonly applied to convicted defendants. With the exception of flogging, however, such physical punishment was not frequently used. Courts routinely imposed flogging, especially as punishment for the production or consumption of alcohol.

The law requires the police and attorney general to investigate deaths on police premises, regardless of suspected cause of death. Suspicious causes of death while in police custody were often investigated but not prosecuted.

According to NGOs, civil society activists in Khartoum, and former detainees, government security forces beat and tortured persons in detention, including members of the political opposition, civil society activists, and journalists. Subsequently, the government released many of these persons without charge. It did not investigate cases of torture or excessive use of force by security agents.

Former detainees reported physical and psychological torture by police, the NISS, and military intelligence personnel of the SAF. Some of those arrested were subjected to torture and other forms of mistreatment, including prolonged isolation, exposure to extreme temperature variations, electric shock, and use of stress positions. Some

female detainees alleged the NISS harassed and sexually assaulted them while in detention.

Local sources reported five deaths in Port Sudan prisons between July and August, including of Hussein Hadab and Khamis Kuku, who died while in the custody of Port Sudan police. Police detained Hadab and Kuku a week earlier for public intoxication. They died after undergoing court-ordered police floggings.

Human rights advocates reported that between April and May, three detainees died in the custody of military intelligence units in Nyala, South Darfur, and Fazugli, Blue Nile state. A fourth detainee from Nyala died in the hospital shortly after being transported from the military intelligence detention center.

Journalists were beaten, threatened, and intimidated (see section 2.a.).

The law prohibits indecent dress and punishes it with a maximum of 40 lashes, a fine, or both. Authorities applied these laws more frequently against women than men and applied them to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Courts denied some women bail, although by law they may have been eligible.

Security forces, rebel groups, and armed individuals raped women throughout the country. On June 22, three police officers allegedly gang-raped a woman in Omdurman. Rape by security forces, rebels, and armed men was especially prevalent in the conflict areas (see section 1.g.).

Security forces and police harassed suspected government opponents. On October 5-6, government security forces arrested 18 Darfuri students who refused to move out of their dormitories at the University of Khartoum. Some of those arrested reported being verbally and sexually harassed by security forces. According to eyewitnesses, security forces claimed the students supported Darfuri rebel groups. The students denied being rebel supporters.

In December security forces arbitrarily arrested and charged 77 Darfuri students from Bahri University following a confrontation between students and school authorities over school fees, from which students from Darfur are legally exempt. The government alleged the students were responsible for the destruction of university property. Students from other regions of the country were not arrested. In January a court dismissed the charges against 76 of the students.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions throughout the country remained harsh, overcrowded, and life threatening. The Prisons and Reform Directorate, a branch of the national police that reports to the Ministry of Interior, oversees prisons, but according to human rights activists and released detainees, military intelligence officials detained and held civilians in military installations, especially in conflict areas. The incidence of this practice reportedly increased during the year with the passing of amendments to the Armed Forces Act.

Rebel groups in Darfur and the Two Areas periodically detained persons in isolated locations and held them in prison-like detention centers.

Physical Conditions: In 2013 the Ministry of Interior reported 19,101 prisoners, with 3,537 awaiting trial, 356 awaiting transfer to juvenile facilities or mental health care, and 15,208 already sentenced. Authorities, however, did not release information to the public, and the Interior Ministry often declined to share other information with foreign governments or international entities. Specific information about the number of juvenile and female prisoners was unavailable.

Men and women were held separately. Convicted prisoners and pretrial detainees were held in separate areas. Reportedly, overall conditions, including food and sanitary and living conditions, were better at women's detention facilities and prisons, such as the Federal Prison for Women in Omdurman, than at equivalent facilities for men, such as Kober or Omdurman prisons. In Khartoum juveniles were not held in adult prisons or jails, but they were sometimes held with adults elsewhere in the country.

Health care was often inadequate. Some prisoners did not have access to medications or physical examinations. Authorities generally provided food, water, and sanitation to prisoners, although the quality of all three was basic. Prisoners sometimes relied on family or friends for food. Most prisoners did not have access to beds. Ventilation and lighting conditions differed among prisons, and overcrowding was a major problem.

There were reports of deaths due to negligence in prisons and pretrial detention centers, but comprehensive figures were not available. Local press reported deaths resulting from suspected torture by police. Human rights advocates reported suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of prisoners in Port Sudan. Human rights advocates reported additional deaths resulting from harsh conditions at military intelligence detention facilities such as extreme heat and lack of water.

Prisoners held in NISS custody, or detained under national security statutes, were held in separate, sometimes

unknown facilities. Authorities regularly denied them visits from family and lawyers, and, in the case of foreign prisoners, from foreign government representatives. Some former detainees reported security forces held them incommunicado; beat them; deprived them of food, water, and toilets; and forced them to sleep on cold floors.

Human rights monitors reported security forces were holding 93 civilians incommunicado throughout North Darfur.

On October 23, the Africa Center for Justice and Peace Studies called for the release of six individuals from South Kordofan detained by the NISS and held incommunicado since October 2.

Political prisoners were held in special sections of prisons. The main prison in Khartoum, Kober Prison, contained separate sections for political prisoners, those convicted of financial crimes, and others.

Administration: Prisons were professionally administered, and records were believed to be complete and accurate, although the government considered such information confidential and did not release it.

Authorities generally did not use alternatives to sentencing for nonviolent offenders.

Police reportedly allowed some visitors, including lawyers and family members, while prisoners were in custody and during judicial hearings. Visitors generally were not allowed access to prisoners held by the NISS, however. The government usually did not notify foreign missions of the detention of their citizens in a timely manner.

Authorities allowed prisoners to take part in religious observances. Prisons had locations for Islamic prayer and some, such as the Women's Prison in Omdurman, had dedicated areas for Christian observance. Christian clergy held services in prisons, but access was irregular.

There was no ombudsman or inspector general specifically designated for prisons. The police inspector general, the minister of justice, and the judiciary are authorized to inspect prisons.

Independent Monitoring: The government allowed a few restricted visits to prisons by international observers but continued to deny unrestricted access. There was no access to NISS or military intelligence detention facilities.

The Ministry of Justice occasionally granted UNAMID access to government prisons in Darfur. In February the government granted the UN independent expert for the human rights situation in Sudan access to Alhuda Prison, Omdurman Women's Prison, and Zalingi Prison in Western Darfur. The government refused requests for access to South Darfur.

In November the government requested that UNAMID suspend the activities of its human rights personnel based in Darfur who travelled to the mission's liaison office in Khartoum, asserting they were working outside the scope of their formal authorization. At year's end UNAMID remained in discussions with the government on the status of its operations in Khartoum.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The interim national constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention and requires that individuals be notified of the charges against them when they are arrested. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, however, remained common under the law, which allows for arrest without warrants and detention up to four and one-half months. Authorities often released detainees when their initial detention periods expired and again took them into custody the next day for an additional period. Authorities, especially the NISS, arbitrarily detained political opponents and those believed to sympathize with the opposition (see section 1.e.).

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

Several government entities have responsibility for internal security, including the NISS, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Defense. Civilian authorities generally maintained control of police and other security apparatuses but failed to prevent societal violence. The government attempted to respond to some interethnic fighting but was not effective in mediating peaceful solutions.

The NISS is responsible for internal security and all intelligence matters. It is independent of any other ministry. The Ministry of Interior oversees the national police, including the security police, Special Forces police, traffic police, and the combat-trained Central Reserve Police. There was a police presence throughout the country. The Ministry of Defense oversees all elements of the SAF, including the Border Guards and military intelligence units.

In late 2013 the government announced the creation of the RSF as a new element of the security apparatus. The RSF draws largely from Arab militias who previously acted as "jingawit." A former SAF general commanded the RSF, but the NISS oversaw its operations. During the year the RSF played a more significant role in the government's campaign against rebel movements. The government tightly controlled information about the RSF,

and public comment critical of the RSF often resulted in arrest or detention (see section 2.a.).

Impunity for the security forces remained a serious problem. The law provides NISS officials with legal protection for acts committed in their official capacities. The government reported it investigated some cases of police abuse; however, it infrequently lifted police immunity or pressed charges against officers. The government generally failed to investigate violations committed by other branches of the security forces.

The government reported the NISS maintained an internal court system to address internal discipline matters, and investigate and prosecute violations of the National Security Act, including abuse of power under article 59 of the act. Penalties included up to 10 years in jail, a fine, or both for NISS officers found in violation of the act. The government claimed to have closed approximately 25 cases during the year.

In 2012 public order police shot and killed Awadia Ajbna in front of her house. On November 5, a court convicted a police lieutenant with her premeditated murder and sentenced him to death, marking a rare case in which police immunity was lifted for prosecution. Six other police present during the shooting were convicted of not providing assistance to the victim and sentenced to two months in prison, already served, or a fine of 2,000 Sudanese pounds (\$350).

NGOs reported clashes between protesters and government forces in September 2013 caused more than 185 deaths. The government announced the Ministry of Justice would investigate the government's use of force. The government provided its conclusions to the UN independent expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan in June; however, it did not make its full report public. The government's findings confirmed 85 deaths and a "big number" of arrests. According to the government, perpetrators could not be identified because eyewitnesses were not present during the protests or did not wait to be questioned by police. The UN independent expert described the government's finding that it was unable to locate perpetrators as "morally and legally" unacceptable. The independent expert concluded the government's report "does not provide evidence of a thorough and independent investigation of the human rights violations that occurred during the September demonstrations."

On September 30, a judge acquitted 12 citizens of charges stemming from their participation in the September 2013 protests and ordered their release. He rejected the prosecution's case and enumerated multiple violations of the defendants' constitutional rights prior to and during the trial. The judge lent credibility to the defendants' claims that they were beaten during police investigation and determined that no confessions were provided voluntarily, constituting a violation of law. The individuals were re-arrested the same day for charges relating to the same events in 2013. A judge freed them the following day under the principle of "double jeopardy."

Although the government in 2011 named a special prosecutor from the Ministry of Justice to monitor NISS detentions, the independent expert remained concerned about weak judicial oversight of NISS arrests and detention. In numerous press statements, the independent expert expressed concern over the NISS' failure to adhere to human rights principles, including respect for the rule of law in Khartoum, Darfur, and the Two Areas.

Corruption among some police and other security force members was a problem.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

Under the National Security Act, warrants are not required for an arrest. The law permits authorities to detain individuals for three days for the purpose of inquiry. The magistrate can renew detention without charges for up to two weeks. The superior magistrate may renew detentions for inquiry weekly up to six months for a person who is charged.

The law allows individuals to be detained for up to 45 days before being charged. The NISS director may refer certain cases to the Security Council and request an extension of up to three months, allowing for detentions of up to four and one-half months without trial. Often authorities released detainees when their terms expired and re-arrested them shortly thereafter for a new detention period.

The constitution and the law provide for an individual to be informed of charges at the time of arrest and for judicial determination without undue delay, but these provisions were rarely followed. Individuals accused of threatening national security were routinely charged under the national security law, rather than the Criminal Act, and frequently detained without charge.

The law allows for bail, except for those accused of crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment. There was a functioning bail system; however, there were some reports women were not allowed bail.

The law provides for access to legal representation, but government security forces often held persons incommunicado for long periods in unknown locations. By law any person may request legal assistance and must be informed of the right to counsel in cases potentially involving the death penalty, imprisonment lasting longer than 10 years, or amputation. The government was not always able to provide legal assistance, and legal aid

organizations and lawyers partially filled the gap.

Arbitrary Arrest: The NISS, police, and military intelligence arbitrarily arrested and detained persons. Authorities often detained persons for a few days before releasing them without charge, but many persons were held much longer. The government often targeted political opponents and suspected rebel supporters (see section 1.e.).

Between September 20 and September 25, the NISS detained 85 individuals who attempted to commemorate the September 2013 protests. Among those detained were family members of those killed in the protests who planned memorial events.

NISS officials frequently denied holding individuals in their custody or refused to confirm where they were being held.

Authorities also arbitrarily arrested and detained foreign nationals without charge. In some cases authorities used intimidation and financial pressure to force foreigners to leave the country.

In November the NISS gave a Korean national 72 hours to depart the country for allegedly supporting Korean missionaries. The person had been living and working in Khartoum for several years as an engineer. He departed the country on November 5. In July the NISS, stating the school was being used to evangelize, closed a Korean-owned music school and confiscated private property. The school's director, a Korean national, denied the accusation but was given two days to depart the country.

There were several reports of individuals detained due to their actual or assumed support of antigovernment forces, such as the SPLM-N. Local NGOs reported that some women were detained because of their association with men suspected of being SPLM-N supporters (see section 1.g).

Pretrial Detention: Lengthy pretrial detention was common. The large number of detainees and judicial inefficiency resulted in trial delays. In cases involving political defendants accused of subverting national security, the accused may be held for as long as four and one-half months, with the possibility of extended detention periods, before being formally charged.

On January 16, municipal authorities in West Kordofan arrested Siddig Noreen, former secretary general of the Sudanese Congress Party (SCP). His six-month detention ended July 13. Authorities, however, renewed his term for an additional six months. Noreen was released on September 16 with other SCP members following domestic and international calls for their release.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Although the interim national constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, courts were largely subordinate to government officials and the security forces, particularly in cases of alleged crimes against the state. On occasion courts displayed a degree of independence. Political interference with the courts, however, was commonplace, and some high-ranking members of the judiciary held positions in the Ministry of Interior or other ministries in the executive branch.

The judiciary was inefficient and subject to corruption. In Darfur judges were often absent from their posts, thus delaying trials. Access to functioning courts was also a problem for residents in other remote areas.

A state of emergency in Darfur, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan allowed for arrest and detention without trial.

Trial Procedures

The interim national constitution and the law provide for a fair and public trial as well as a presumption of innocence; however, this often was not respected. Trials are open to the public at the discretion of the judge. In cases of national security and offenses against the state, trials are usually closed. Juries are not used. The law stipulates the government is obligated to provide a lawyer for indigents in cases in which punishment might exceed 10 years' imprisonment or include execution. The accused may also request assistance through the legal aid department at the Ministry of Justice or the Sudanese Bar Association.

By law criminal defendants must be informed promptly of the charges against them at the time of their arrest. Individuals arrested by the NISS were often not informed of the reasons for their arrest.

Defendants generally have the right to present evidence and witnesses, be present in court, confront accusers, and have access to government-held evidence relevant to their cases. Some defendants reportedly did not receive legal counsel, and counsel in some cases could only advise the defendant and not address the court. Persons in remote areas and in areas of conflict generally did not have access to legal counsel. The government sometimes did not allow defense witnesses to testify.

Defendants have the right to appeal, except in military trials, where there is no appeal. Defendants were sometimes permitted time and facilities to prepare their defense, although in more political cases the charges may be disclosed with little warning and can change as the trial proceeds. Defendants in common criminal cases such as theft as well as in more politicized cases were often compelled to confess guilt while in police custody through physical abuse and police intimidation of family members.

Lawyers wishing to practice are required to maintain membership in the government-controlled Sudanese Bar Association. The government continued to arrest and harass members of the legal profession whom it considered political opponents.

Military trials, which sometimes were secret and brief, did not include procedural safeguards. For example, a defendant's attorney could advise the defendant but could not address the court.

In June 2013 the National Assembly amended article (4) of the 2007 Sudanese Armed Forces Act. The new amendment subjects any civilians within SAF-controlled areas believed to be rebels or members of paramilitary groups to military trials. The NISS and military intelligence officers applied this article to detainees in the conflict areas.

Three-person security courts deal with violations of constitutional decrees, emergency regulations, and some sections of the penal code, including drug and currency offenses. Special courts composed primarily of civilian judges handled most security-related cases. Defendants had limited opportunities to meet with counsel and were not always allowed to present witnesses during trial.

Due to long distances between court facilities and police stations, local mediation was often the first resort to try to resolve disputes. In some instances tribal courts operating outside the official legal system decided cases. Such courts did not provide the same protections as regular courts.

While Islamic jurisprudence strongly influenced the law, sharia was generally not applied to Christians in domestic cases such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other family matters.

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

Throughout the year the government continued to hold political prisoners and detainees, including protesters. Due to a lack of access, the actual numbers of political prisoners and detainees could not be confirmed. Human rights monitors reported political prisoners as being in the hundreds, but the government claimed that it did not have political prisoners.

The government severely restricted international humanitarian organizations' access to political detainees. The government allowed UNAMID extremely limited access to Darfuri political detainees in Khartoum and Darfur. The NISS refused the request of the UN independent expert on the human rights situation in Sudan in June to visit detained student activist Mohammed Salah to ascertain his health.

Security forces detained political opponents incommunicado, without charge, and tortured them. Some political detainees were held in isolation cells in regular prisons, and many were held without access to family or medical treatment. Human rights organizations asserted the NISS ran "ghost houses," where it detained opposition and human rights figures without acknowledging they were being held. Such detentions were prolonged at times.

On April 6, President Bashir announced all political prisoners who had not committed criminal offenses would be released. Authorities released 24 prisoners following this announcement. Several additional political prisoners, however, were arrested or had their jail terms extended after this declaration.

The government continued to arrest members of the SCP, National Umma Party, Sudanese Communist Party, and affiliates of the SPLM-N or other opposition groups.

In May the NISS arrested Saddiq al-Mahdi, chair of the Umma Party, for accusing the RSF of human rights abuses. The government released him on June 15 but threatened to detain him again if he returned to country. On August 12, the NISS arrested Mariam al-Mahdi, daughter of Saddiq al-Mahdi and deputy chairperson of the Umma Party, as she returned from negotiations between the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF, an alliance of rebel movements) and opposition parties; she was released on September 9.

On May 12, NISS officials arrested Mohammed Salah, Taj Elsir Jaafar, and Moammer Musa Mohammed near the University of Khartoum. The three had protested the killing of a Darfuri student, Ali Abakar Musa Idris, by government security forces at Khartoum University on March 11. The government initially denied any access to the students despite international pressure. Family members, who were eventually allowed to visit the students, reported they showed signs of torture and mistreatment. Authorities released the three youths on July 11.

On June 8, the NISS arrested Ibrahim al-Sheikh, secretary general of the SCP in West Kordofan, while he was attending the SCP youth conference. The government accused al-Sheikh of violating six articles of criminal law, one of which carries the death penalty. On September 15, the Ministry of Justice ordered his release. Authorities prevented al-Sheikh from travelling abroad, however. Between June and August, authorities arrested at least 29 SCP members throughout the country.

Between October 22 and November 2, the NISS arrested five members of the Sudanese Communist Party in Blue Nile state. Authorities released one woman but charged the other four members with numerous criminal offenses against the state, including “undermining the constitutional system,” which carries the death penalty. Authorities arrested the individuals in connection with the printing and distribution of a statement by the Blue Nile branch of the Sudanese Communist Party that commemorated the 1964 October revolution in the country.

On December 6, security officers arrested Farouq Abu Eissa, 78, head of the National Consensus Forces; Amin Mekki Medani, 75, president of the Confederation of Civil Society Organizations; and SPLM-N advisor Farah Ibrahim Mohamed Alagar, 60, after they signed “Sudan’s Call,” a political declaration by a number of both armed and political opposition groups that called for political reforms and a transitional government. At year’s end the arrestees remained in detention and had not been charged.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

Those seeking damages for human rights violations had access to domestic and international courts. The judiciary, however, was not independent. There were problems enforcing domestic and international court orders (see section 5).

Regional Human Rights Court Decisions

The country is a member of the African Union and ratified the African Charter in Human and People’s Rights in 1986. Some human rights lawyers said the requirement to exhaust all national remedies before filing with the regional court presented a challenge to pursuing cases because of the lengthy and often incomplete court proceedings.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The interim national constitution and law prohibit such actions, but the government routinely violated these rights. Emergency laws in Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile states legalize interference in privacy, family, home, and correspondence.

Security forces frequently conducted searches without warrants and targeted persons suspected of political crimes. The NISS often confiscated private property, especially electronic equipment.

The government monitored private communication and movement of individuals and organizations without due legal process. A wide network of government informants conducted surveillance in schools, universities, markets, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

Under sharia a Muslim man may marry a Jewish or Christian woman. A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim unless he converts to Islam, but this prohibition was not universally enforced. Non-Muslims may adopt only non-Muslim children, a restriction which does not apply to Muslim parents.

On April 1, authorities charged Faiza Abdallah with apostasy. She was released during her trial on April 8 after she recanted her Christian faith. Her marriage to her Christian husband was subsequently annulled.

On May 15, a local court sentenced Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag to 100 lashes and death by hanging for committing apostasy and adultery by marrying a Christian man. Ishag identified herself as a Christian. The government released Ishag from custody on June 23 after the Court of Appeals overturned her conviction. Following significant international pressure, authorities allowed her to leave the country on July 23 but did not officially rescind the charges against her.

g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts

Conflicts in Darfur, and Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile (Two Areas) states continued, and the security situation in Darfur’s five states and Southern Kordofan deteriorated. Initiatives to negotiate peaceful resolutions between the government, ethnic tribes, and rebel groups were attempted throughout the year.

Killings: In Darfur and the Two Areas, government forces and government-aligned militias killed civilians, including by repeated targeting and indiscriminate aerial and artillery bombardment of civilian areas. Ground attacks often

followed aerial bombardments. Rebel forces also killed civilians during attacks.

Physical Abuse, Punishment, and Torture: All parties to the conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas were accused of perpetrating torture and other human rights violations and abuses. Government forces abused persons detained in connection with armed conflict as well as IDPs suspected of having links to rebel groups. There were continuing reports government security forces, progovernment and antigovernment militias, and other armed persons raped women and children.

Child Soldiers: The law prohibits the recruitment of children and provides criminal penalties for perpetrators. On July 21, the government enacted a law raising the age of conscription into the Popular Defense Forces from 16 to 18 years and establishing 18 as the minimum age for joining the national reserve service and the national service. In May the United Nations reported 405 children formerly associated with armed groups received reintegration support. Organizations working on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs reported that the limited implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) created a challenging environment for traditional DDR actors. Consequently, organizations working on DDR problems, such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), adjusted their programs to take a more community-based approach targeting children at risk of joining armed conflict.

Many children lacked documents verifying their age. Children's rights organizations believed armed groups, including the SAF, exploited this lack of documentation to recruit or retain children. The SAF continued to deny recruiting children and having children in its ranks.

During the year the Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM), issued a command prohibiting child recruitment within its ranks. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) claimed to continue abiding by a similar command issued in 2012. Former jingawit leader Sheikh Musa Hilal issued a similar order to nomadic communities not to use children in conflicts. Eyewitness reports, however, indicated both the government and rebel groups employed child soldiers in conflict. Armed groups reported they did not actively recruit child soldiers; however, they did not prevent children who volunteered from joining their movements. The armed groups stated the children were primarily stationed in training camps and were not used in combat.

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

Other Conflict-related Abuses: All parties to the Darfur and Two Areas conflicts obstructed the work of humanitarian organizations, UNAMID, and other UN agencies, increasing the displacement of civilians and abuse of IDPs. Violence, insecurity, the denial of visas, and refusal of access to international organizations reduced the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide needed services.

Despite a joint communique released by the government and the United Nations, government forces frequently harassed NGOs that received international assistance. The government restricted or denied permission for humanitarian assessments, refused to approve technical agreements, changed operational procedures, copied NGO files, confiscated NGO property, questioned humanitarian workers at length and monitored their personal correspondence, delayed issuance of visas and travel permits, restricted travel, and publicly accused humanitarian workers of aiding rebel groups. Rebels and armed groups also targeted humanitarian workers for kidnapping and ransom.

Darfur

In Darfur fighting involving government forces, rebels, and ethnic militias continued. Fighting was often along ethnic lines. These armed groups, including the RSF, which the NISS controlled, killed and injured civilians, raped women and children, looted properties, targeted IDP camps, and burned villages in South, East, and North Darfur. These acts resulted in the displacement of approximately 400,000 persons by August. An increase in common forms of criminality also contributed to a deterioration of overall security in Darfur.

All states in Darfur were under states of emergency, although provisions of the emergency status varied by state.

Government forces primarily provided support, including training, weapons, and ammunition, to the RSF. The government seldom took action against government forces that attacked civilians. Rebel forces received financial support from foreign sources.

On December 23, the press reported the government and Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) finalized security arrangements for 2,085 former LJM combatants from South and East Darfur. Eligible candidates were to be considered for integration into government security forces.

Reports claimed ethnic militias affiliated with government security forces, including the Border Guards and Central Reserve Police, supported their ethnic kin in intercommunal conflicts, further increasing the number of deaths. Sources documented attacks by progovernment militia on civilians in areas controlled by both rebels and the government including east Jebel Marra and Giraida, South Darfur.

Tensions between North Darfur governor Yousef Kibir and former Arab militia leader Sheikh Musa Hilal effectively divided the state into two warring parties. Intertribal tensions between the Rezeigat, Ma'alia, and Beni Hussein ethnic groups also contributed to North Darfur's deteriorated security situation. In September the Rezeigat signed separate peace agreements with the Beni Hussein tribe and the Zaghawa ethnic groups. Peace and reconciliation talks between the Ma'aliya and Rezeigat ethnic groups fell short of a peace agreement.

Intercommunal violence continued. In September the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported more than 300 individuals died in mid-August clashes between Ma'alia and Rezeigat tribesmen. In addition to deaths attributed to intercommunal clashes, many deaths continued to be attributed to the SAF and militia groups. Security deteriorated in North Darfur, and violence, including indiscriminate SAF aerial and artillery bombardments, continued in the Jebel Marra area in Darfur.

The government took few actions to implement provisions of the chapter on justice and reconciliation of the DDPD. Inadequate funding for the Darfur Regional Authority's (DRA's) Commission on Justice, Truth, and Reconciliation hindered the commission's work. On May 25, the DRA created the Justice Committee and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The committees are charged with determining compensation for Darfur's victims and formulating recommendations for resolving Darfur's conflict. As of October the committees had limited engagement in peace negotiations for Darfur.

The general prosecutor for crimes in Darfur informed UNAMID that in February and March, an estimated 1,000 complaints had been registered in North and South Darfur, six of which had been referred to the Special Court for Serious Crimes in Darfur. According to UNAMID the majority of cases brought forward to the court largely involved public crimes, such as theft rather than substantive war crimes or crimes against humanity, which is the court's mandate.

As of August the African Union (AU) and the United Nations had not named observers for the Special Court for Crimes in Darfur. The seven JEM members sentenced to death in El Fasher in March 2013 remained in detention.

Killings: Security in the Darfur region deteriorated due to the rise in interethnic conflict, as well as continued clashes between the government and rebel factions, and attacks by the government's RSF forces on unarmed civilians in South, North, and East Darfur. SAF raids resulted in civilian casualties.

Clashes between the government forces, government-armed militias, and Darfur rebel movements, notably the SLA/MM, Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction (SLA/AW), and Justice and Equality Movement/Jibreil (JEM-Jibreil), resulted in significant deaths on all sides.

On March 18, the SAF's bombing of villages in West Darfur resulted in a number of civilian casualties and the displacement of more than 15,000 civilians.

UNAMID reported 54 cases and 88 victims of unlawful killings in Darfur between April and July. As of August an estimated 628 persons died as a result of clashes between government and antigovernment forces in Darfur.

On May 25, a UNAMID peacekeeper from Rwanda was killed and three others injured in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, while attending a mediation meeting between two disputing ethnic groups.

On June 14, the Sudan Liberation Army/Justice and the SLA/AW attacked two military convoys in Jebel Hireiz, North Darfur, killing 17 government soldiers and destroying seven military vehicles.

On October 6, elements belonging to the SLM/AW reportedly killed 16 government troops in an attack on the military garrison town of Guldo, Central Darfur. On October 30, the SAF bombarded villages in East Jebel Marra, killing a father and his four children as well as dozens of heads of livestock.

There were reports of several incidents involving JEM, the SLM-MM, and the SLM-AW that resulted in civilian casualties and the displacement of an estimated 3,000 civilians from rebel-held areas in Kabkabiya and Tawila, North Darfur.

On October 16, in Korma, North Darfur, a group of unidentified armed men killed three UNAMID military personnel on patrol and seriously injured one.

In late December the government's RSF carried out a number of operations in the East Jebel Marra region of North and Central Darfur. Reports indicated numerous civilians killed, entire villages and crops burned, livestock raided, and upwards of 20,000 civilians displaced as a result of these attacks.

Abductions: Attacks by armed militia on UNAMID increased. Militia groups carjacked UNAMID vehicles and abducted UNAMID staff for ransom (see section 1.b.). As of August the United Nations reported 25 cases of kidnapping involving humanitarian aid workers, compared with 10 cases in the previous year.

On March 9, armed individuals abducted a UNAMID peacekeeper from Nyala, South Darfur, and kept him in captivity for 54 days. On March 11, unknown assailants abducted a UNAMID contractor from El Fasher, North Darfur. The contractor was released after 94 days.

On June 18, armed militia kidnapped for ransom three members of an international aid organization, including its country director, and 14 members of a Sudanese aid organization near Kutum, North Darfur. All were released the same day.

On October 16, several witnesses reported four gunmen attacked seven peacekeepers near the UNAMID base in Korma, North Darfur. The gunmen seized the UNAMID vehicle and the four peacekeepers, which resulted in the death of three peacekeepers.

In May the UN special representative of the secretary general (SRSG) for children and armed conflict reported the United Nations had documented 15 cases of child abductions in Darfur.

Physical Abuse, Punishment, and Torture: Sexual and gender-based violence continued throughout Darfur. In her June presentation to the UN Security Council, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) noted an increasing pattern of gang rapes of women and girls. Authorities often obstructed access to justice for rape victims. IDPs reported perpetrators of such violence were often government forces or militia members. Assailants assaulted, raped, threatened, shot, beat, and robbed women.

Between April and July, UNAMID documented 209 cases of human rights violations affecting 484 victims. Among the 209 cases, 54 cases involved unlawful killings, 95 cases involved violations of the right to physical integrity, and two cases pertained to arbitrary arrest and detention. The majority of perpetrators were members of government security services or armed groups. UNAMID reported 96 of the 209 cases to government authorities. The government initiated investigations in 39 cases, leading to 15 arrests.

Between April and May, UNAMID also identified 58 cases of sexual and gender-based violence involving 103 victims, including 27 minors. Of the 58 cases documented by UNAMID, 30 reportedly were perpetrated by government security forces. The government initiated investigations in 19 cases, leading to 10 arrests. The majority of the victims were IDPs.

Between July and November, UNAMID recorded 66 cases of sexual and gender-based violence involving 99 victims, among them 30 minors. Rape accounted for 55 cases and 88 victims, including 28 minors. In 21 cases, involving 32 victims, the perpetrators were alleged to be members of the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Separately, the UN SRSG for children and armed conflict reported in May at least 62 girls were raped in 40 separate incidents in Darfur. In Darfur it was believed most rape victims did not report incidents, and the actual number of rapes was likely much higher. Perpetrators included government forces in at least three cases and SLA-MM forces in at least one case.

On September 18, the Special Court for Darfur prosecuted three individuals in North Darfur responsible for an attack on UN peacekeepers. One of the accused was acquitted; three others were found guilty of armed robbery, sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and ordered to compensate the victims. One of those found guilty was also convicted of rape and sentenced to an additional five years' imprisonment and 100 lashes. This case marked the first time the government prosecuted perpetrators in a UNAMID attack.

UNAMID reported that on November 5, an SAF soldier was found guilty of abducting and raping a 13-year-old girl in February. The soldier was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and fined 5,000 Sudanese pounds (\$875), which included 2,000 Sudanese pounds (\$350) for the victim.

Radio Dabanga, a media outlet, reported SAF soldiers belonging to the military garrison near El Fasher, North Darfur, raped approximately 200 women and girls from Tabit village on October 31. The government rejected the allegations and delayed for several days UNAMID's request to travel to Tabit to investigate the allegations. In December the government submitted to the UN Security Council a report by the special prosecutor for crimes in Darfur documenting the government's investigation into the case. The report stated the special prosecutor's team interviewed 88 individuals, including 54 women, in a four-hour period and concluded no rapes had occurred. Local observers believed the heavy presence of security forces during interviews might have intimidated possible victims from speaking openly. Humanitarian and human rights groups reported cases of sexual abuse; however, they were unable to determine the scale or nature of the attacks.

In the last week of February and third week of March, the RSF attacked, burned, and looted properties and livestock, raped women, and destroyed villages in North and South Darfur, displacing 250,000 civilians to major IDPs camps around Nyala, El Fasher, Korma, Milleit, and Kutum.

On March 22, government forces raided the Khor Abeche IDP camp in South Darfur. The attackers completely burned and looted the camp, forcing 4,000 IDPs to seek refuge at a nearby UNAMID base. In August, UN and local

sources reported government forces raided Al-Salam and Direige IDP camps in South Darfur.

On September 1, SLA/AW chairman Abdul Wahid Mohammed Nur issued directives for the execution of eight of his top commanders, including the chief of staff. As of October the executions had not been carried out, and seven of the eight commanders remained in an SLA/AW detention center in Jebel Marra.

On September 4, government police entered Kalma IDP camp. Clashes between government forces and IDPs on September 5 led to one civilian death and injury to three individuals. The NISS detained and later released eight persons in connection with the clashes.

Child Soldiers: The UN SRSG for children and armed conflict reported four confirmed cases of recruitment by the SAF and 14 cases of recruitment by the Border Guards. Additional reports cited 17 cases of children allegedly recruited by the SAF, Border Guards, and the SLA-AW.

In October, Sheikh Musa Hilal initiated a community-based strategic plan to end the use of child soldiers in interethnic and intraethnic fighting. Leaders from the Abbala, Beni Hussein, Fur, Tamma, Gimir, and Awlad Janoub tribes in Kabkabiya, El Sereif, Saraf Umra, Al Waha, and Jebel Si in North Darfur endorsed the plan.

Other Conflict-related Abuses: Fighting, insecurity, bureaucratic obstacles, and government and rebel restrictions reduced the ability of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers to access conflict-affected areas. Armed persons attacked, killed, injured, and kidnapped peacekeepers and aid workers. Humanitarian organizations often were not able to deliver humanitarian assistance in conflict areas, particularly in Jebel Marra, South Darfur.

According to UNAMID, from January to March the government denied 72 land movements and 72 (of 4,386) planned flights for UNAMID and humanitarian organizations to access sites in Darfur. Restrictions were highest in East Darfur. In April-June the government restricted land movements on 21 occasions and denied 15 of 3,432 flights. In July the government approved 49 access requests and denied two for Adila and Abu Karinka in East Darfur. Despite increased access to some areas of Darfur, humanitarian access to critical areas remained very limited. Access limitations and fear of government retribution continued to inhibit reporting on human rights violations, especially sexual and gender-based abuses, and on humanitarian situations.

The government initially denied access to UNAMID to investigate allegations of a mass rape by the SAF in the Darfur village of Tabit on October 31. The government granted access on November 9, but only under close observation of security officials. The government then denied a subsequent visit by UNAMID on November 16. On December 4, UNAMID reported that its inquiry into mass rape allegations was inconclusive, owing in part to the heavy presence of military and police, and required additional investigation. The government did not grant UNAMID additional access to Tabit to continue its investigation.

Humanitarian organizations and NGOs continued to face challenges in accessing populations in Darfur. The Humanitarian Aid Council (HAC) continued to require NGOs to refrain from interviewing or selecting staff unless they used a five-person government selection panel with HAC officials present. This requirement significantly delayed the hiring of new staff in Darfur. The HAC also continued to impose additional requirements on humanitarian organizations on an ad hoc basis, often at the state level.

In May the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) departed the country after the HAC suspended its activities between January and April. During the same period, the government also expelled Merlin (a British health-focused NGO working in Darfur), Doctors without Borders (MSF) working in East Darfur, and ACTED (a French humanitarian NGO) from Darfur. On August 28, the government and the ICRC signed a new headquarters agreement in Geneva, and on September 23, the government lifted its ban on ICRC activities in conflict-affected areas. The government and the ICRC signed a new cooperation agreement on November 4 to allow for the resumption of ICRC activities in the country.

UN agencies also experienced constraints regarding access, although the government granted some travel permits to Central, South, and West Darfur. Police and government security forces frequently declined to provide escorts for UN agencies to areas affected by fighting and at other times cited continued instability to restrict the movement of UN-sponsored fuel, food, and nonfood supplies to areas outside of major population centers.

The UN independent expert on the human rights situation in Sudan requested permission to visit Khor Abeche IDP camp in South Darfur and other sensitive areas during his June visit to the country; however, the government denied permission, citing security and administrative constraints.

In contrast with 2013, the government renewed work permits for some international staff of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in South and West Darfur. It denied work permits for international staff in El Fasher, North Darfur. Approved work permits for international staff were limited to less than six months' validity. According to the UNHCR, requirements to renew permits frequently impeded work in the region.

According to UNAMID, assistance for an estimated 27,000 persons was suspended at the end of May in Bilel camp

in South Darfur due to looting of health facilities by armed men. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) temporarily suspended verification activities in Al Salam camp in South Darfur for security reasons. A two-month road blockade prevented the movement of humanitarian supplies to El Siref.

Attacks on humanitarian and UNAMID convoys increased. Bandits obstructed humanitarian assistance, regularly attacked the compounds of humanitarian organizations, and seized humanitarian aid and other assets, including vehicles. Instability forced many international aid organizations to reduce their operations in Darfur.

Unlike in the previous year, there were reports of attacks on IDP camps by armed militias and individuals. There were several reports of government forces raiding IDP camps.

On June 28, armed gunmen abducted 25 humanitarian workers in three separate incidents near Kutum. All of the victims were released in August. On July 6, gunmen abducted an IOM staff member in Nyala, who was released after 20 days.

On October 9, armed Rezeigat elements of the RSF searched and raided a train in El Daein, East Darfur, which the Rezeigat suspected was providing arms to Ma'alia tribesmen. RSF elements killed an SAF lieutenant and severely beat a brigadier general whose units attempted to protect the train. Following the incident the government imposed a state of emergency in East Darfur State.

On October 29, unidentified armed men with vehicle-mounted machine guns shot and wounded three UNAMID peacekeepers on patrol in Kutum, North Darfur.

On November 25, a group suspected to be a government-aligned militia opened fire on a truck transporting civilians, killing 15 and injuring 11, near the village of Hamada, South Darfur. The victims were reportedly visiting family members who had recently returned to Hamada. Some local sources believed the attack was intended to deter IDPs from returning to the area.

In September OCHA reported approximately 351, 000 newly displaced IDPs in Darfur. The new IDPs joined the two million IDPs living in Darfur as of 2013. According to the UNHCR, approximately 362,771 Sudanese refugees from Darfur remained in Chad and 2,700 Sudanese refugees from Darfur remained in the Central African Republic.

Some groups claimed Darfur-based rebel groups, such as JEM-Jibreil and the SLA/MM, committed attacks in other regions of the country, especially the Two Areas.

Largely unregulated artisanal gold-mining activities continued to expand in all of the Darfur states and to be a source of tension between communities. Claims to land rights continued to be mostly tribal in nature. Clashes sometimes resulted from conflicts over land rights, mineral ownership, and use of gold mining areas, particularly in the Jebel Amr area in North Darfur. Those clashes were believed to have resulted in significant numbers of deaths and displacements.

The illicit transport of conflict minerals across the country's borders could not be confirmed. There were unconfirmed reports gold was smuggled across international borders, in particular into Chad, Libya, and Egypt. Some of that gold was likely sourced from conflict areas, particularly North Darfur.

Two Areas

Heavy fighting between the SAF and the SPLM-N continued in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Both the government and rebel fighters were accused of using excessive force and targeting civilians. The government's announced artillery and aerial bombing campaign surge, particularly in May, June, and October, resulted in significant damage to infrastructure and civilian casualties.

In April peace negotiations concerning the Two Areas collapsed between the government and the SPLM-N convened under auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel. A new round of talks began on November 12, but were inconclusive and adjourned until January 2015.

According to the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, the humanitarian wing of the SPLM-N, the three-year conflict had displaced nearly one million civilians from Southern Kordofan and an estimated 100,000 from Blue Nile. Approximately 400,000 residents of Southern Kordofan fled their homes for refuge in other parts of the state. Many of the IDPs faced chronic food shortages and inadequate medical care. Significant numbers of farmers were prevented from planting their fields due to the conflict, leading to near-famine conditions in parts of Southern Kordofan.

The SAF and the SRF, a coalition of both armed and unarmed opposition groups, conducted indiscriminate and targeted attacks on civilians in the Two Areas.

The government granted international humanitarian organizations limited access to government-controlled areas of

Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, but access to rebel held areas remained extremely limited.

Killings: SAF air raids resulted in civilian deaths and the destruction of agricultural grounds and impeded the planting of crops for harvest throughout Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Women and children accounted for most of the victims. Air raids also destroyed homes, schools, churches, mosques, and other civilian structures.

Between January and June, air raids on the villages of Soda, Yabus, Kondol, and Chali in Blue Nile killed at least 12 civilians and injured 16 others.

October 16, the SAF bombed Heiban Market, killing at least six persons, including children, and injuring two others.

Rebel groups reported that the SAF dropped nine bombs on the villages of Karkaraia and Atmor in Southern Kordofan on October 26, injuring at least two individuals and destroying several farms.

Ground attacks by SAF forces and government-backed militias often followed aerial bombardments. Rebel forces also killed civilians during attacks. Attacks resulted in civilian displacement.

The SRF conducted indiscriminate attacks on civilians in the Two Areas.

Shelling by the SPLM-N killed at least seven civilians and injured a dozen others in Kadugli between February and March.

On June 7, fighting between the SAF and the SPLM-N in Atmor, Southern Kordofan, killed at least 100 individuals from both sides and injured dozens more.

On June 28, shelling of Kadugli, Southern Kordofan, by the SPLM-N, a member of the SRF, killed two and injured at least 10 others.

According to local human rights advocates, military intelligence arrested and summarily executed four civilians: Khatir Hassan (arrested on August 12), Tariq Khatir (arrested on August 12), Humaidan Mohammed Kurtikaila Atron (arrested on July 17), and Abdel Rahman Alti (arrested on July 5), in Dilling, Southern Kordofan. The victims were arrested in Kurgul and transferred to Dilling for execution.

Abductions: International organizations were unable independently to verify reports of disappearances due to lack of access to the region.

Between April and November 2013, government forces captured and imprisoned 10 men from various SPLM-N-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan. Authorities accused the men of supporting rebel forces and tried them in a court-martial. One of the individuals, suffering from poor health, was acquitted and released. In September the military court sentenced the remaining nine civilian men to seven years' imprisonment. Human rights defenders reported similar trials that followed this pattern.

Human rights defenders reported that in September military intelligence arrested five individuals: Eisa Abbas, Gibriel Abbas, Abdalla Khamis, Abboud Obeid, and Abboud al-Tijani in Allaggori village, Southern Kordofan. Military intelligence accused the detainees of being SPLM-N supporters or affiliates. The detainees were transferred to Dilling. As of October they remained in detention without charge.

Physical Abuse, Punishment, and Torture: The SAF and government-aligned forces reportedly burned and looted villages in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. There were reports of physical abuse and violent interrogations of SPLM-N-affiliated individuals in Kadugli prison and military installations.

Human rights advocates reported security forces arrested al-Sadig Hassan and three other activists in Fazugli, Blue Nile, on May 3, and sent them to Dem Sa'ad military base on suspicion of supporting the SPLM-N. Human rights advocates believe Hassan died from torture while in detention on May 19. Authorities released the other three activists the same week.

Government forces killed and maimed civilians during repeated aerial or artillery bombardment. The SAF also repeatedly bombed cultivated land, thereby disrupting planting cycles, which, coupled with forced displacements and the denial of humanitarian assistance, resulted in near famine-like conditions. NGOs accused the government of using the denial of food as a weapon of war.

On December 14, Human Rights Watch reported government forces and allied militias raped, detained, tortured, and arbitrarily killed civilians in government-controlled areas of Blue Nile.

Child Soldiers: The United Nations recorded the recruitment and use of 40 child soldiers in Southern Kordofan and two children in Blue Nile between January and May. It also reported the Popular Defense Forces recruited 14 children--five in Blue Nile and nine in Southern Kordofan. The United Nations also reported the SPLM-N recruited

at least 26 children, including 10 from Southern Kordofan, and that three children reported receiving military training in Blue Nile after being recruited by SPLM-N from South Sudan.

The government's DDR commissioner for Southern Kordofan claimed there was no longer active recruitment of child soldiers in Southern Kordofan.

Other Conflict-related Abuses: All parties to the Two Areas conflicts obstructed the work of humanitarian organizations, increasing the displacement of civilians and abuse of IDPs. Violence, insecurity, and the denial of visas and refusal of access to international organizations reduced the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide needed services.

Despite the joint communique released by the government and the United Nations, government forces frequently harassed NGOs that received international assistance. The government restricted or denied permission for humanitarian assessments, refused to approve technical agreements, changed procedures, copied NGO files, confiscated NGO property, questioned humanitarian workers at length and monitored their personal correspondence, delayed issuance of visas and travel permits, restricted travel, and publicly accused humanitarian workers of aiding rebel groups.

In contrast with the previous year, there were reports of humanitarian aid workers and centers, including hospitals, being targeted in the Two Areas.

On May 1-2, the SAF dropped 11 bombs near the Mother of Mercy Hospital in Gidel, in Southern Kordofan, causing a moderate number of casualties.

On June 16, the SAF dropped six bombs near Farrandalla. The MSF reported two bombs hit the hospital it operated, damaging the hospital compound and injuring six. The MSF reported that its hospital was clearly marked and that it had conveyed its location to authorities in Khartoum. It also reported being the target of a second aerial bombardment on August 10.

The UNHCR did not have a presence in SPLM-N-controlled areas and was unable to verify the scope of civilian displacement in the area.

In October the United Nations estimated there were 1.7 million IDPs and severely affected inhabitants in the Two Areas. This figure included 940,000 in government-controlled areas and 800,000 in SPLM-N-controlled areas.

There were reports the government provided support to antigovernment rebels in South Sudan, especially following the December 2013 violence.

There were unconfirmed reports conflict minerals, including gold, were illicitly traded across borders in the Two Areas.

Abyei

Introduction: Abyei is a disputed region between Sudan and South Sudan that, according to agreements between the two governments, is to be jointly administered until a referendum on the final status of the area is held. After conflict in 2011 between Sudanese and South Sudanese forces, the United Nations established the UN Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA). The security situation in Abyei was tenuous throughout the year. Relations between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities remained tense after the May 2013 killing of the Ngok Dinka paramount chief, Kuol Deng Koul. The AU had yet to release a report following its investigation into the May 2013 killings of the Ngok Dinka paramount chief, one Ethiopian UN Interim Security Force in Abyei peacekeeper, and 16 Misseriya tribesmen. The Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee completed an investigation into the incident but had yet to release the results.

The year was characterized by escalated levels of violence between the two communities, mostly involving cattle raiding.

Several humanitarian aid NGOs continued to provide mobile outreach services in Abyei from their bases in South Sudan.

Killings: According to the May report by the UN secretary-general on the situation in Abyei, fierce fighting between Misseriya and Ngok Dinka in Abyei killed at least 110 persons (10 Misseriya and 100 South Sudanese) and injured 37 others in March. The Abyei Joint Oversight Committee attributed the fighting to a dispute over rights to the use and ownership of land and other resources.

On June 28, renewed Misseriya intratribal fighting between Awlad Omran and Zued in West Kordofan killed at least 80 persons and injured several dozen. The two clans signed a peace agreement on November 19. On November 22, however, clashes between the two clans resumed, and on November 22-26, nearly two hundred persons were

killed.

On December 7, unidentified assailants shot and killed four Ngok Dinka in Leu village in southeastern Abyei. On December 9, in Mijak, Abyei, unidentified assailants conducted a cattle raid, and killed two Ngok Dinka and injured three.

Other Conflict-related Abuses: UNISFA also reported occasional Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) incursions into southern Abyei, including an attempted robbery at a market in Agok on July 20 carried out by SPLA soldiers based in Unity State. On September 13, SPLA deserters set up illegal roadblocks in the south of Abyei and attempted to extort taxes from passing traffic.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The interim national constitution provides for freedom of thought, expression, and of the press "as regulated by law," but the government restricted these rights.

Freedom of Speech: Individuals who criticized the government publicly or privately were subject to reprisal, including arrest. The government attempted to impede such criticism and monitored political meetings and the press. The government arrested opposition political leaders, including the chair of the National Umma Party, Saddiq al-Mahdi, and the secretary general of the SCP, Ibrahim al-Sheikh, for alleging the RSF committed human rights abuses (see section 1.e.).

Press Freedoms: The interim national constitution provides for freedom of the press, but authorities prevented newspapers from reporting on problems deemed sensitive. Those measures included direct prepublication censorship, confiscation of publications, legal proceedings, and denial of state advertising. Confiscation in particular inflicted financial damage on newspapers that were already under financial strain due to low circulation. The government announced "red line" topics that could not be reported on in the press, such as corruption, government security services, and government action in the conflict areas. Authorities ordered the confiscation of newspapers that reported on these topics.

The government also influenced radio and television reporting through the granting or denial of radio and television permits.

The government controlled the media through the National Council for Press and Publications, which administered mandatory professional examinations for journalists and oversaw the selection of editors.

Violence and Harassment: The government, including the NISS, continued to arrest, harass, intimidate, and torture journalists and vocal critics of the government. The NISS required journalists to provide personal information, such as details on their tribe, political affiliation, and family.

On July 18, armed assailants attacked Osman Mirghani, editor in chief of *Al-Tayyar* daily newspaper, and looted the newspaper's headquarters. The assailants left Mirghani unconscious, and he required hospitalization for his injuries. In August the government arrested several suspects. Despite reports of incriminating evidence including videotapes of the incident, they were never formally charged or prosecuted in connection with the attack, which was not pursued further. Human rights activists and political observers strongly suspected government involvement. The government claimed youths and an extremist religious organization known as the Abu Hamza Group were responsible.

The government released Darfuri blogger Tajeldin Arjaa on May 14 after nearly five months in detention. Authorities had arrested Arjaa in December 2013 for criticizing the Sudanese and the Chadian presidents for the conflicts in Darfur.

Censorship or Content Restrictions: The government continued to practice direct prepublication and prebroadcast censorship of all forms of media throughout the year. Journalists also practiced self-censorship.

On September 22, the second vice president and minister of interior announced the government would suspend exceptional measures, including prepublication censorship, imposed by the NISS on print media. The government also announced a court specializing in media problems and "newspaper irregularities" would be established.

The government confiscated printed publications on at least 45 occasions between January and July. The editions confiscated were of *Al-Jareeda*, *Al-Ayam*, *Al-Sahafa*, *Al-Meghar-Al-Siassi*, *Al-Youm-Al-Tali*, *Al-Intibaha*, *Akhir Lahza*, *Elaph*, *Al-Sudani*, *Al-Ahram Al-Youm*, *Al Hurra*, and *Assayha*.

Between July and September, the NISS confiscated six newspapers on eight different occasions. Confiscated newspapers included *Al-Tayyar*, *Al-Khartoum*, *Al-Akhbar*, *Al-Youm Al-Tali*, and *Al-Jareeda*. The newspapers attributed their confiscations to their coverage of government corruption, political opponents, rebel leaders, and government security forces.

Libel Laws/National Security: The NISS initiated and continued legal action against journalists for stories critical of the government and security services.

On May 19, the presidency issued a message to journalists warning them to stay within “red lines” and accused journalists of threatening national security by reporting on the military and other government matters.

On May 20, the NISS closed the independent daily newspaper *Assayha* indefinitely for running articles related to corruption. The government accused the newspaper’s journalists, including its editor in chief, of crimes against the state. The suspension was lifted on July 1 but reimposed on July 6. In October the NISS lifted the ban on the newspaper but confiscated copies of the newspaper again on October 28.

Internet Freedom

The government regulated licensing of internet and telecommunications companies through the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC). The NTC blocked some websites and most proxy servers judged offensive to public morality, such as those purveying pornography. There were few restrictions on access to news and information websites, but authorities sporadically blocked access to YouTube, as well as “negative” media sites. On September 18, the Southern Kordofan-based NGO Nuba Reports had its website taken down. The NGO claimed the government was responsible for the cyberattack that came two days after the NGO showed a film at the UN Human Rights Council that was critical of the government’s human rights record. The website was restored by October.

Reporters Without Borders stated the NISS established a “Cyber-Jihadist Unit” with a mandate to crack down on “internet dissidents” in 2011. According to outside reports, the unit monitored social media accounts and electronic communications, especially of those persons believed to be critical of the regime.

According to the International Telecommunication Union, 22.7 percent of individuals used the internet in 2012, an increase from 21 percent in 2013.

In November, Freedom House ranked the country as “not free” in its annual internet freedom report, covering May 2013-May 2014.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

The government restricted academic freedom and association at cultural and academic institutions. It determined the curriculum and appointed the vice chancellors responsible for administering public institutions. It continued to arrest student activists, cancel student events, and deny permits for some student events. Youth activists reported that some universities discouraged students from participating in antigovernment rallies and showed favorable treatment towards NCP students. Some professors exercised self-censorship. Security forces used tear gas and other heavy-handed tactics against largely peaceful protests occurring at universities or involving university students. The Public Order Police continued to monitor public gatherings and cultural events, often intimidating women and girls, who feared police would arrest them for “indecent” dress or actions.

Clashes between student activists and progovernment students at the University of Khartoum led to armed interventions by security forces in March and May. Classes were partially suspended in May and again between May and September. In September the vice chancellor of the University of Khartoum suspended student activities (political, cultural, and social) inside university premises and began requiring preapproval from the dean of students before holding events.

In July authorities stopped the third day of an interfaith workshop at the Sudan University of Science and Technology. The university administration claimed an international Christian NGO presenting at the workshop did not have the necessary permits from the HAC to participate in the conference and accused the NGO of evangelizing.

On September 1, authorities closed the Iranian cultural center and required the departure of its staff within 72 hours. The government did not provide an official explanation for the closure.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of Assembly

Although the interim national constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly, the government severely restricted this right. The criminal code considers gatherings of more than five persons without a permit to be illegal. Organizers must notify the government 36 hours prior to assemblies and rallies.

In March security forces employed live ammunition, tear gas, and physical force to disrupt gatherings and intimidate protesters at the University of Khartoum, resulting in the death of one student.

Between September 20 and September 25, the NISS detained approximately 85 individuals throughout Khartoum attempting to organize memorial events for those killed in the September 2013 protests. As of November at least one individual was still detained.

The government continued to deny permission to Islamic orders associated with opposition political parties, particularly the Ansar (Umma Party) and Khatmiya (Democratic Unionist Party), to hold large gatherings in public spaces, but parties regularly held opposition rallies on private property. Government security agents occasionally attended opposition meetings, disrupted opposition rallies, or summoned participants to security headquarters for questioning after meetings.

In April authorities briefly softened their restrictions on public gatherings organized by political parties and allowed some parties to hold outdoor events. In late May security officials resumed denying permits to political parties for public assemblies. Authorities refused the Reform Now Party's applications for rallies in Khartoum and Gedaref states in May. In June local security authorities disrupted a youth conference organized by the SCP in Western Kordofan.

Authorities disrupted or prevented SCP meetings in private homes and offices. Police surrounded branch offices in al-Nihud, prevented party members from entering, and ordered the branch office temporarily closed on June 28. On July 4, police surrounded the al-Nihud branch office again since a party symposium was scheduled. Police arrested three party members and confiscated equipment.

Police use of excessive force to disperse demonstrators resulted in deaths and injuries (see section 1.a.).

Authorities reportedly took limited action against security force members who used excessive force. As of October only one case from the September 2013 protests had gone to trial. On May 25, a Khartoum North court acquitted an army officer charged with the shooting of Sarah Abdelbagi outside of her home during the September 2013 protests. The acquittal drew significant attention due to the decision of the court of first instance to acquit the defendant despite significant evidence against him. On June 30, the court of appeals overturned the ruling, returned the case to the court of first instance, and ordered the arrest of the accused. The new trial was set to begin on September 25, but the defendant's lawyers appealed the court of appeal's decision to the High Court, where it remained as of October. The defendant's whereabouts were unknown.

According to human rights defenders, other victims of the 2013 protests and their families faced difficulties in bringing their cases to trial.

Freedom of Association

The interim national constitution and law provide for freedom of association, but the government severely restricted this right. The law effectively prohibits political parties linked to armed opposition groups. Unlike in the previous year, the government closed civil society organizations or prevented their registration. Government and security forces continued arbitrarily to enforce provisions of the NGO law, including measures that strictly regulate an organization's ability to receive foreign financing and register public activities.

In April the government announced permits for new churches to be allowed and which to be demolished, claiming that the latter did not comply with zoning codes and permit requirements. There were no reports of mosques or Islamic schools being demolished, closed, or confiscated. See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/.

On December 22, the NISS raided offices of the Sudan Human Rights Monitor in Khartoum during a training workshop. Security authorities had detained the organization's president, Amin Mekki Medani, two weeks earlier following his signing of a political document prepared by opposition groups.

On June 24, the Ministry of Justice revoked the registration of the Salmamah Women's Resource Center without providing a reason.

On September 10, without providing a reason, the NISS raided the Center for Civil Society Development in Khartoum and confiscated property, including laptops and documents. In October the property was returned and the center resumed operations.

Security agents prevented a meeting of the Confederation of Civil Society Organizations that was due to elect the

independent body's new executive committee on September 13.

In April judicial authorities transferred to the High Court the case against the Alkhatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment and Human Development, which was closed in 2012.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The interim national constitution and law provide for freedom of movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government restricted these rights. The government enacted a new asylum act during the year.

The government impeded the work of UN agencies, including the UNHCR, and delayed full approval of their activities throughout the country, particularly in the Two Areas. NGOs also alleged the government impeded humanitarian assistance in the Two Areas.

In-country Movement: The government and rebels restricted the movement of citizens as well as UN and humanitarian organization personnel in conflict areas (see section 1.g.). While the government claimed refugees had freedom of movement within the country, it required they formally register and be granted travel permits before leaving refugee camps. According to authorities, registration of refugees helped with accountability.

Internal movement was generally unhindered for citizens outside conflict areas. Foreigners needed travel permits for domestic travel outside Khartoum, which were often difficult to obtain. Foreigners were required to register with the Ministry of Interior's Alien Control Division within three days of arrival and were limited to a 15.5-mile radius of Khartoum. Once registered, foreigners were allowed to move beyond the 15.5-mile radius, but travel outside of Khartoum State required official approval.

The government delayed issuing humanitarian visas to UN and NGO staff and generally denied access to conflict areas, with exceptions made for Darfur IDP camps. The government also delayed issuing travel permits to nonconflict areas.

The government's encampment policy requires asylum seekers and refugees to stay in designated camps. The government did not allow the establishment of formal IDP or refugee camps in White Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile, but it assisted new arrivals from South Sudan in holding sites in White Nile State.

Foreign Travel: The government requires citizens to obtain an exit visa if they wish to depart the country. Issuance was usually pro forma, but the government used the visa requirement to restrict some citizens' travel, including members of professions such as medical doctors, and persons of political or security interest. To obtain an exit visa, children must receive the permission of both parents.

On August 6, the NISS prevented the deputy for communications of the National Umma Party and chairman of the Darfur Bar Association, Mohamed Abdalla El Duma, from travelling to Paris to attend discussions with opposition parties and rebel groups. On September 26, authorities prevented his travel to Nairobi.

On September 4, Siddig Yousef, external affairs secretary of the National Consensus Forces, was prevented from traveling to Addis Ababa for talks with the SRF. Authorities detained Hassan Babiker of the same entity upon his return from the meetings in Addis.

Exile: The government observed the law prohibiting forced exile; however, it warned political opponents of their potential arrest if they returned. Opposition leaders and NGO activists remained in self-imposed exile in northern Africa and Europe, and other activists fled the country during the year.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Large-scale displacement continued to be a severe problem. During the year fighting in Darfur prompted the displacement of more than 457,000 new IDPs. As of October the United Nations reported 940,000 IDPs in government-controlled sections of the Two Areas and 800,000 IDPs in SPLM-N-controlled regions. More than 20,000 remained displaced in Abyei.

IDPs in Darfur had significant humanitarian needs. Government restrictions and security constraints continued to limit access to affected populations and impeded the delivery of humanitarian services, including by the ICRC (see section 1.g.).

Government restrictions, harassment, and the threat of expulsion resulted in the continued interruption of gender-based violence programming. While such programming was included in humanitarian efforts, reporting and outreach were limited (see section 1.g.). Some UN agencies were able to work with the Darfur governor's advisers on women and children to raise awareness of gender-based violence and response efforts.

There were numerous reports of abuse committed by government security forces, rebels, and armed groups against IDPs in Darfur, including rapes and beatings (see section 1.g.).

Outside of IDP camps, insecurity restricted IDP freedom of movement, and women and girls who left the towns and camps risked sexual violence. Insecurity within IDP camps was also a problem. The government provided little assistance or protection to IDPs in Darfur. Most IDP camps had no functioning police force. International observers noted criminal gangs aligned with rebel groups operated openly in several IDP camps.

As in previous years, the government refused to establish formal IDP or refugee camps in Khartoum or the Two Areas.

The UNHCR did not have a presence in SPLM-N-controlled areas and was unable to verify the scope of civilian displacement in the area.

Protection of Refugees

In September the UNHCR reported approximately 264,000 refugee and asylum seekers in Sudan, primarily from Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and South Sudan. It estimated 87,000 Eritrean and 3,000 Ethiopian refugees lived in eastern Sudan. New refugees often stayed in camps for two to three months before moving to Khartoum or other parts of the country. According to the UNHCR, the government hosted approximately 63,000 refugees in Khartoum as of September. The government continued to restrict access in eastern Sudan for international humanitarian NGOs.

In September the UNHCR estimated between 300,000 and 350,000 persons of South Sudanese origin remained in the country following South Sudan's independence. Approximately 200,000 of this older caseload of South Sudanese lived in Khartoum. Many integrated into the urban population. An estimated 40,000 lived in shantytowns, informal settlements known as "open areas." The government did not officially recognize this population as refugees or IDPs and restricted access to these areas by humanitarian organizations such as the UNHCR and the IOM. Many "open areas" lacked basic services such as water, electricity, and sewage systems. The government worked with the UNHCR throughout the year to develop plans to relocate approximately 17,000 South Sudanese living in inadequate dwellings throughout Khartoum's "open areas" as well as new arrivals fleeing the conflict in the south.

Few individuals of South Sudanese origin who remained in the country after 2011 reacquired their Sudanese citizenship or obtained South Sudanese nationality documentation following South Sudan's independence. The legal framework on nationality in the two countries remained unclear despite signed agreements, and it was applied inconsistently in Sudan. The governments of Sudan and South Sudan signed a framework agreement in September 2012, known as the "four freedoms" agreement, which allows citizens of both states to enjoy freedom of residence, movement, economic activity, and property ownership, but it was yet to be fully implemented. There was a lack of clarity on how individuals of South Sudanese origin residing in Sudan could regularize their status. Both governments were slow to process residence permits or recognize claims of Sudanese citizenship for individuals of South Sudanese origin.

Access to Asylum: In March the government adopted new asylum legislation that provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status and requires asylum applications to be submitted within 30 days of arrival in the country. The government granted asylum to many asylum seekers, particularly from Eritrea, Syria, Somalia, and Ethiopia, but it sometimes considered individuals registered as asylum seekers in another country as migrants. Government officials routinely took up to three months to approve individual refugee and asylum statuses, but it worked with UN agencies to implement status determination procedures in eastern Sudan and Darfur and attempted to reduce the backlog of status determination cases. In Khartoum the government implemented status determination procedures for Syrian asylum seekers. The law requires asylum seekers to register both as refugees with the Commission for Refugees and as foreigners with the Civil Registry (to obtain a "foreign" number).

Refoulement: The government provided protection to asylum seekers in most instances but also returned asylum seekers to countries where their lives or freedom could be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Human rights groups reported that on May 1, authorities handed over 30 Eritreans, including six registered refugees, to Eritrean officials. On May 4, the local media reported authorities arrested approximately 600 Sudanese nationals and refugees or migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia attempting to cross the Libyan border. According to local sources, a court in Dongola charged the individuals with immigration violations and deported all of the Eritreans back to Eritrea. On June 30, the government returned 74 Eritreans through the Laffa border crossing point. The asylum seekers had been convicted on charges of illegal entry into the country. The government attempted to apply the principle of "first

country of asylum” to return the asylum seekers to Ethiopia. In July the UNHCR issued a public statement expressing concern over increased arrests and forced returns of Eritreans.

Refugee Abuse: Asylum seekers were vulnerable to arbitrary arrest, harassment, and beatings outside of camps, because applicants did not receive identification cards while awaiting government determination of refugee status. Refugees and asylum seekers also were subject to arrest due to the government’s encampment policy, which makes it illegal to move from assigned camps without prior government authorization. Although the new asylum act makes naturalization possible for refugees for the first time, the law was not fully implemented.

There were abuses, including gender-based violence, in the camps. The government attempted to work with the UNHCR throughout the year to provide greater protection to refugees.

Human rights advocates claimed the delay in granting legal status was one reason why some new refugees left camps before registering with the UNHCR. Refugees often relied on human smuggling networks to leave camps. Traffickers routinely abused and tortured refugees if ransoms were not paid. The UNHCR reported an increase in kidnappings around refugee camps in the eastern region in the last quarter of the year.

On December 25, police arrested 450 residents of Shagarab refugee camp following clashes between camp members and surrounding villages. Fighting ensued after members of the refugee camp kidnapped local villagers in retaliation to what they believed had been kidnappings of refugees earlier in the week by members of the Rashaida tribe. The initial reports of kidnapping by the Rashaida tribe could not be confirmed.

See the Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

Employment: The government allowed refugees to work but was slow to grant work permits. In 2013 the government announced it would issue approximately 100,000 work permits to Eritrean refugees in Kassala in the eastern region as part of a joint UNHCR/UN Development Program (UNDP) “Transitional Solutions Initiative.” The program was suspended at the beginning of the year and not reinitiated. Some refugees in eastern states were able to find informal work as agricultural workers or laborers in towns. Many women in camps resorted to producing alcohol in camps and were subject to arrest and harassment by police.

Temporary Protection: The government maintained an open border with South Sudan and stated South Sudanese refugees fleeing the conflict in the south would enjoy the same status as Sudanese citizens. As of December the UNHCR estimated 113, 000 individuals had crossed into the country from South Sudan since December 2013. The majority sought refuge in White Nile State, while approximately 30 percent travelled to Khartoum.

The government generally provided first asylum/ temporary protection to individuals who might not qualify as refugees. The government did not recognize individuals fleeing from South Sudan as refugees following December 2013 fighting in South Sudan, but it allowed some national and international organizations to assist them. On December 21, the UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior’s Commission for Refugees and Directorate General of Passports and Immigration signed a memorandum of understanding on the registration and documentation of 500,000 South Sudanese in Sudan, including those that fled the conflict in South Sudan in December 2013.

Section 3. Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The country continued to operate under the interim national constitution of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The interim constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully. Post-CPA provisions relating to this right include providing for a referendum on the status of Abyei and popular consultations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. In Abyei the Ngok Dinka held a unilateral referendum in October 2013, which the international community did not recognize. No popular consultations were held during the year in either Southern Kordofan or Blue Nile.

In January, President Bashir announced the National Dialogue, an initiative designated to engage all political parties, including the opposition, civil society, and others, in a planning framework intended to recommend, initiate, and implement democratic reforms. The government also described the dialogue as a mechanism for resolving conflicts throughout the country and determining a constitutional framework. Several key opposition parties withdrew from the dialogue early in the year, and many independent civil society representatives claimed only government-sponsored groups were allowed to participate.

On August 9, members of the Seven Plus Seven Group, representing seven members of the government and seven members of the opposition, signed a roadmap framework for the National Dialogue. Simultaneously, rebel groups and some opposition parties developed an independent roadmap known as the Paris Declaration, which the ruling NCP rejected. On November 2, a forum of political parties presided over by President Bashir adopted a

structure and agenda for the National Dialogue, aiming to start discussions by the end of the month.

The country's executive leadership consists of a three-member presidency, which includes a president, first vice president, and second vice president.

The CPA interim constitution also provides a formula for allocating seats in the bicameral legislature (composed of a postsecession 354-member National Assembly and 30-member Council of States) and cabinet prior to the elections. The formula reserves 52 percent of the positions for the NCP and 14 percent for northern opposition parties, including those from Darfur. During the year the NCP held 316 (89 percent) seats and the opposition held 38 (11 percent).

Several parts of the CPA designed to clarify the status of southern-aligned groups remaining in the north following South Sudan's secession continued to be the subject of negotiations between the governments of Sudan, South Sudan, and rebel groups. Peace negotiations for the Two Areas and Darfur stalled while fighting between government and antigovernment forces continued. Neither Sudan nor South Sudan progressed toward a resolution on the final status of Abyei.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: The national- and state-level executive and legislative elections, held in 2010, did not meet international standards.

In 2010 the country held its first multi-party national- and state-level executive and legislative elections in more than 24 years. The elections, which several opposition parties boycotted, did not meet international standards. Observers noted numerous problems with the pre-election environment. The legal framework did not protect basic freedoms of assembly, speech, and press. Security forces restricted the actions of opposition parties and arrested opposition members and supporters. There was insufficient voter information, and logistical preparations for the vote were not adequate.

President Bashir announced the government's intention to engage with opposition parties through the National Dialogue in January. On April 6, the president promised to release all "political detainees" and ease restrictions on opposition parties and the media. On April 15, however, the president issued a decree that forbids political parties from organizing meetings in private venues without prior government approval and requires permission for public meetings 48 hours in advance. Beginning in May authorities arrested key political leaders, canceled rallies, and confiscated or shut down newspapers following the issuance of the decree. The summer was marked by the confiscation of several newspapers and arrest of citizens who sought to commemorate the September 2013 protests.

On August 15, the UN independent expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan denounced the detention of political prisoners. He called on the government to make the National Dialogue inclusive.

In August the National Election Commission (NEC) announced leaders for local election committees and did not act on suggestions needed to undertake greater reforms in response to criticisms of the 2010 elections. Opposition parties repeatedly denounced what they claimed to be the ruling party's continuing, inappropriate influence over the NEC's decision making. The NEC began a two-month voter registration process on October 28.

Political Parties and Political Participation: The NCP dominated the political landscape, controlling all of the regional governorships and holding a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. Various other parties held the remainder, with the SPLM-Peace Wing holding eight seats and the Popular Congress Party and Democratic Unionist Party each holding four.

The number of registered political parties increased from 52 to 83. The Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party were not registered with the government. The Reform Now Party registered as a political party during the year. The government continued to harass some opposition leaders who spoke with representatives of foreign organizations or embassies. While the NCP dominated the political institutions, opposition parties created an unofficial umbrella organization, the National Consensus Forces.

The Political Parties Advisory Council oversees the registration of political parties. It is under the control of the ruling party and is not an independent body. In May the council refused to register the Republican (Jamhuri) Party, which opposes Islamic fundamentalism and promotes secularism. The party leader condemned the decision and filed a complaint in the constitutional court.

Authorities monitored and impeded political party meetings and activities, restricted political party demonstrations, used excessive force to break them up, and arrested opposition party members. In the first half of the year, authorities detained at least 25 members of the SCP, including key leadership figures, and canceled events at local branch offices on several occasions (see section 1.e.). In September the NISS raided the Khartoum headquarters

of the Sudanese Communist Party. Between October 31 and November 2, the NISS detained five members of the Communist Party in Blue Nile, including the secretary general of the Blue Nile branch.

Participation of Women and Minorities: Women have the right to vote. In July the National Assembly increased from 25 to 30 percent the proportion of seats in the national and state assemblies drawn from state-level women's lists. Women held 87 of the 354 seats in the National Assembly, five of 30 seats in the Council of States, and seven of 56 cabinet positions.

Religious minorities participated in government. There were prominent Coptic Christian politicians within the national assembly, Khartoum city government, and Khartoum state assembly. A member of the NEC was Coptic. A female Anglican served as the state minister of water resources and electricity.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The government passed money-laundering legislation. Despite generally stringent legislation, government corruption, at all levels, was widespread. The government made few efforts to enforce legislation aimed at preventing and prosecuting corruption.

Corruption: According to the World Bank's most recent Worldwide Governance Indicators, corruption was a severe problem. The law provides the legislative framework for addressing official corruption, but implementation was weak, and many punishments were lenient. For example, officials found guilty of corrupt acts could often avoid jail time if they returned ill-gotten funds. Officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices. Journalists who reported on government corruption were sometimes intimidated, detained, and interrogated by government security services.

A special anticorruption attorney investigates and tries corruption cases involving officials, their spouses, and their children. Punishments for embezzlement include imprisonment or execution for public service workers, although these sanctions were almost never carried out. All bank employees are considered public service workers.

In his National Dialogue speech on January 27, President Bashir pledged to address government corruption. A noticeable rise in media articles on corruption and a limited increase in prosecutions of private sector and government officials accused of corruption followed that pronouncement. In April, two employees of the Khartoum State governor's office were charged with running a massive embezzlement scheme. As of year's end, the two men remained free, and the trial against them appeared to have been postponed indefinitely. By the early summer, reporting on corruption was considered a "red line" set by the NISS and a topic authorities prohibited newspapers from covering.

Financial Disclosure: The Financial Disclosure and Inspection Committee is responsible for inspecting the financial assets of cabinet ministers and other constitutional officers. The law requires high officials, as well as their spouses and children, to disclose publicly income and assets. There are no clear sanctions for noncompliance, although the commission possesses discretionary powers to punish violators. The Financial Disclosure and Inspection Committee and the Unlawful and Suspicious Enrichment Administration at the Justice Ministry both monitor compliance. Despite two different bodies ostensibly charged with combating official corruption, there was no effective enforcement or prosecution of offenders.

During the year the government, with input and technical assistance from the International Monetary Fund, amended the law to bring it up to international standards. The government charged the Central Bank of Sudan with overseeing the financial sector.

Public Access to Information: No laws provide for public access to government information, nor did the government provide such access.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

The government was uncooperative with, and unresponsive to, domestic human rights groups. It restricted and harassed workers of both domestic and international human rights organizations.

According to international NGOs, government agents consistently monitored, threatened, prosecuted, and occasionally physically assaulted civil society activists. The government arrested NGO-affiliated international human

rights and humanitarian workers, including in Darfur (see section 1.g.).

NGOs must register with the HAC, the government entity for regulating humanitarian efforts. The HAC obstructed the work of NGOs including in Darfur, the Two Areas, White Nile State, and Abyei. The HAC often changed its rules and regulations without prior notification.

The government continued to use bureaucratic impediments to restrict the actions of humanitarian organizations, contrary to provisions in the 2007 joint communique between the government and the United Nations. These included delaying the issuance of visas and travel permits to humanitarian workers and limiting their validity to less than six months.

While UNAMID reported increased cooperation in obtaining visas for military and police personnel, the UNHCR reported the government continued to deny travel to East Darfur and severely limited travel to South Darfur. Some travel to Central, North, and West Darfur, as well as eastern Sudan and White Nile state was granted. More than half of the UNHCR's international staff were not granted travel permits for Darfur, severely restricting its operational capabilities.

The United Nations or Other International Bodies: The government remained uncooperative with UN Security Council Resolution 1593 and failed to comply with the ICC arrest warrants for President Bashir; Ahmad Muhammad Haroun, former minister for humanitarian affairs and current governor of Northern Kordofan; Ali Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Hussein, former senior Jingawit commander who supported the government against Darfur rebel groups; and Defense Minister Abd al-Rahim Hussein on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his actions while serving as the president's special representative in Darfur. On September 11, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Abdallah Banda Abakar Nourain, a commander in chief of the Justice and Equality Movement Collective Leadership, who was charged with war crimes committed during an attack on AU peacekeepers in Darfur in 2007. In December the ICC announced it would suspend its investigation into crimes committed in Darfur due to insufficient information for the investigation.

On December 25, the government expelled two senior UN officials--the UN resident coordinator and UNDP country director. The government alleged the UN resident coordinator's statements to a Norwegian newspaper critical of the government called into question his neutrality. The UNDP country director was required to depart the country within 72 hours. The UN resident coordinator was granted an extension for his departure until January 31, 2015.

The government is a party to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, overseen by the AU. The government last submitted a report to the commission in 2011. On June 4, the commission released its decision regarding a 2009 case filed against the government by three IDPs. The three victims alleged they were arrested without charge in 2005, tortured by security forces, and prevented from seeking legal counsel. The court ordered the country to pay adequate compensation to the victims, initiate an investigation into the circumstances of the arrest and detention, amend legislation incompatible with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and train security officers on the prohibition of torture. The government did not implement the court's decision.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The government's Advisory Council for Human Rights is responsible for advising the government on necessary reforms and preparing the government's official human rights reports, as required by the United Nations. The advisory council did not respond to requests by international organizations to investigate human rights violations and did not provide lists of detained individuals to the international community.

In June 2013 the advisory council released the National Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights 2013-23 in Sudan. The plan discussed human rights education, civil and political rights, legal reform, and capacity building for international human rights and humanitarian law. In August the government reported it was implementing the action plan through the Federal Ministry of Education, especially concerning promoting human rights education.

The National Human Rights Commission is a 15-member independent body to monitor human rights in the country, receive grievances from citizens regarding human rights violations, and assess the government's compliance with international human rights treaties. In March the commission launched its Strategic Plan 2014-18. By year's end, however, the commission did not have an approved budget and lacked the authority to hire staff. As a result the entity remained inactive throughout the year.

In September the chair of the National Human Rights Commission resigned. As of October a new commissioner had not been named.

Security forces prevented NGOs and human rights advocates from submitting grievances to the commission on several occasions. On August 17, security forces prevented activists from handing a memorandum to the commission citing human rights violations, including the freedom of expression. Security forces detained members of the opposition National Consensus Forces who were trying to pass the memorandum to the commission. The commission issued press statements condemning the security forces' interference with the commission's work and the public's access to them.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The interim constitution states, “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religious creed, political opinion, or ethnic origin to the equal protection under the law.” Other articles of the constitution encourage tolerance between different tribes and provides protections for women and persons with disabilities. The law provides safeguards for children. The government worked to promote the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities. It did not always provide protections to persons of different religious groups. There were no protections for persons based on their sexual orientation or identification.

Women

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Women, and Child Affairs is responsible for matters pertaining to women. The Violence against Women Unit oversees branch units in 17 states and is responsible for overseeing the National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women. It monitors and reports on women’s problems and works with civil society and other stakeholders.

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law treats any sexual contact outside a legally recognized marriage as a crime. The penalty for violating this law is 100 lashes if the offender is not married (fornication) and stoning to death if the offender is married (adultery). Both men and women can be prosecuted, but women made up the vast majority of the accused offenders and of those found guilty.

On May 15, a court sentenced Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag to 100 lashes and death by hanging for allegedly committing adultery and apostasy by marrying a Christian man.

The law does not address spousal rape. In most rape cases courts made convictions a matter of public record. Observers believed sentences often were less than the legal maximum. Because there was no official tracking of rape cases, no information was available on the number of persons prosecuted, convicted, or punished for rape. Instances of rape of women and girls continued to be a serious problem throughout the country, especially in conflict areas. International agencies and government agencies assisting rape victims estimated that rape cases were underreported due to victims’ fear of reprisal and stigmatization. Investigative and prosecuting authorities often obstructed access to justice for rape victims. By law a woman who accuses a man of rape and fails to prove her case may be tried for adultery. Victims sometimes refused to report their cases to family or authorities due to fear they would be punished or arrested for “illegal pregnancy” or adultery.

While the law prohibits violence in general, it does not specifically prohibit domestic violence. Violence, including spousal abuse, against women was common. There were no reliable statistics on its prevalence. Women who filed claims of domestic violence were subjected to accusations of lying or spreading false information, harassment, and detention. Consequently, many women were reluctant to file formal complaints, although such abuse constituted grounds for divorce. Police normally did not intervene in domestic disputes. Statistics on the number of abusers prosecuted, convicted, or punished were not available.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): There is no national law prohibiting FGM/C. The states of South Darfur and Red Sea passed laws prohibiting FGM/C as a harmful practice affecting the health of children (see section 6, Children--Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting).

Other Harmful Traditional Practices: The interim constitution obligates states to combat harmful customs and traditions that undermine the dignity and status of women. Nonetheless, harmful traditional practices, such as honor killings, continued.

Sexual Harassment: No law specifically prohibits sexual harassment, although the law prohibits gross indecency, which is defined as any act contrary to another person’s modesty. Authorities generally enforced the statute. The penalty for gross indecency is imprisonment for up to one year and 40 lashes. There were frequent reports of sexual harassment by police.

Reproductive Rights: Couples were able to decide freely on reproductive problems. Contraception, skilled medical attendance during childbirth, and obstetric and postpartum care were not always accessible in rural areas. The UN Population Division estimated that 12 percent of girls and women ages 15-49 used a modern method of contraception in 2012. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in 2013 that the maternal mortality rate was 216 deaths per 100,000 live births and skilled health-care personnel attended 31 percent of births. The high maternal mortality rate stemmed in large part from lack of access to reproductive health and emergency obstetric care, particularly in rural areas, lack of access to family planning services, poor sanitation, and chronic undernourishment in poorer areas. The leading causes of maternal death were infection, malaria, anemia, and

hemorrhage.

Discrimination: The law, including many traditional legal practices and certain provisions of Islamic jurisprudence as interpreted and applied by the government, discriminates against women. In accordance with Islamic judicial interpretation, a Muslim widow inherits one-eighth of her husband's estate; of the remaining seven-eighths, two-thirds goes to the sons and one-third to the daughters. Depending on the wording of the marriage contract, it is often much easier for men than women to initiate legal divorce proceedings. In certain probate trials, the testimony of women is not considered equivalent to that of men; the testimony of two women is required. In other civil trials, the testimony of a woman equals that of a man.

A Muslim woman cannot legally marry a non-Muslim unless he converts to Islam. This prohibition usually was neither observed nor enforced among certain populations. During the year, however, a woman who married a non-Muslim was sentenced to death by hanging for apostasy after she refused to recant her Christian faith and declare herself a Muslim. She was sentenced to 100 lashes for the charge of adultery since her marriage was not recognized; the penalty was not ultimately enforced.

Various government institutions required women to dress modestly according to Islamic or cultural standards, including wearing a head covering. In Khartoum Public Order Police occasionally brought women before judges for allegedly violating Islamic standards. Islamic standards for dress were generally not enforced for non-Muslims.

In addition to housing and education discrimination, women experienced economic discrimination in access to employment, equal pay for substantially similar work, credit, and owning or managing businesses.

Children

Birth Registration: The law grants citizenship to children born to a father who is a Sudanese national by descent. The interim national constitution states persons born to a Sudanese mother or father have the right to citizenship. Although the interim constitution eliminated gender discrimination in conferring nationality on children, the law does not grant gender equality in the passing of citizenship to children.

Most newborns had access to birth certificates, but some in remote areas did not. Registered midwives, dispensaries, clinics, and hospitals could issue certificates. A birth certificate does not automatically qualify a child for citizenship. Failure to present a valid birth certificate precludes enrollment of children in school. Access to health care was similarly dependent on possession of a valid birth certificate, but many doctors accepted a patient's verbal assurance that he or she held the proper documentation.

Education: The law provides for tuition-free basic education up to grade eight, but students often had to pay school, uniform, and examination fees to attend. In Darfur few children outside of cities had access to primary education. In public schools boys and girls are educated separately in urban areas but often together in rural areas, where resources are more limited.

In 2013 the government reported that female enrollment in school increased to 68.7 percent, exceeding that of boys, as the result of a national education strategy targeting girls.

Child Abuse: Child abuse and abduction for ransom were widespread in conflict areas. Child abuse was less prevalent in nonconflict areas. The government tried to enforce laws criminalizing child abuse. Some police stations included family and child protection units that were "child friendly" and provided legal, medical, and psychosocial support for children. NGOs reported social stigma and lack of cooperation from some families prevented cases from being referred to police authorities.

Early and Forced Marriage: The law establishes the legal age of marriage at 10 for girls and 15 or puberty for boys. There were no reliable statistics on the extent of child marriage, but child advocates reported it remained a problem, especially in rural areas. According to UNICEF estimates, 12 percent of women ages 20 to 24 were first married or in a union before they were 15 and 34 percent were married before reaching 18.

Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C): There is no national law prohibiting FGM/C. The states of South Darfur and Red Sea passed laws prohibiting FGM/C as a harmful practice affecting the health of children.

FGM/C is traditionally practiced in the country. According to UNICEF and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the national prevalence of FGM/C among girls and women 15-49 years old was 88 percent. Within the country prevalence varies geographically and depends on the custom of local ethnic groups. The 2010 Sudan Household Health Survey indicated considerable variations in the practice of FGM/C from one region to another, from 99.4 per cent in the Northern State compared with a rate of 68.4 per cent in Western Darfur.

Girls are generally cut when they are five to 11 years old. Comprehensive figures were not available for the year. The government and UNICEF reported a shift in attitudes towards FGM/C and observed downward trends in the

prevalence of FGM/C between the household health surveys in 2006 and 2010. The 2010 survey concluded 34.5 percent of girls ages five to nine were cut, as compared with 41 percent in 2006. Of girls and women ages 15-19, 37 percent favored FGM/C in 2010, compared with 73 percent in 2006.

The government attempted to curb the prevalence of FGM/C and made public awareness campaigns on the subject a top priority. In 2008 the National Council on Child Welfare, with support from UNICEF, launched the National Strategy to Abolish FGM/C in Sudan (2008-18). Under the strategy the government introduced “Saleema,” a public awareness campaign to counter FGM/C, which received significant attention through local media.

The government agreed to a three-year program with UNICEF, the UNFPA, and the WHO to seek to end FGM/C in the country. In October the government hosted a conference in Khartoum to promote the “Saleema” campaign and anti-FGM/C initiatives.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: Penalties for offenses related to the sexual exploitation of children vary and can include imprisonment, fines, or both. Sexual exploitation of children was less prevalent in nonconflict areas. The government tried to enforce laws criminalizing sexual exploitation of children; but NGOs reported that social stigmas prevented many families from pursuing legal cases against perpetrators. Some police stations included protection units that were “child friendly” and provided legal, medical, and psychosocial support for children.

There is no minimum age for consensual sex or statutory rape law. There were occurrences of nonconsensual sex with children who were forced into early marriage. Pornography, including child pornography, is illegal. Statutes prescribe a fine and period of imprisonment not to exceed 15 years for offenses involving child pornography.

Child prostitution also remained a problem, although the government denied the phenomena exists in the country.

Child Soldiers: Armed groups continued to recruit and deploy child soldiers in internal conflicts (see section 1.g.).

Displaced Children: Internally displaced children often lacked access to government services such as health and education due to their inability to pay related fees. In June UNICEF reported approximately 70 percent of IDPs were children. In North Darfur more than 265,000 of the 379,000 IDPs affected were under 18 and more than 66,000 were children under five. Of the 161 children recorded as unaccompanied, 11 were reunited with their families. More than 50 percent of the new arrivals from South Sudan who arrived after December were children (see section 2.d.).

Institutionalized Children: Police typically sent homeless children who had committed crimes to government camps for indefinite periods. Health care, schooling, and living conditions were generally very basic. All children in the camps, including non-Muslims, had to study the Quran. The government granted international and domestic humanitarian NGOs access to the camps. The NGOs sometimes assisted the government with certain aspects of camp operations.

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Anti-Semitism

A very small Jewish community remains in the country, predominantly in the Khartoum area. While there were no reports of anti-Semitic acts, societal attitudes were not tolerant of Jewish persons. Government officials made statements and government newspapers featured articles and opinion pieces with anti-Semitic overtones.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

Persons with Disabilities

According to the 2008 National Sudan Census Survey, the estimated prevalence of disability among the public was 4.8 per cent. According to these figures, approximately 720,000 children under the age of 18 had a disability.

Although the law, including the interim constitution, provides protection for persons with disabilities, social stigma and a lack of resources hindered the government from enforcing compliance with the law. The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities, but it stipulates, “The state shall guarantee to persons with special needs the enjoyment of all the rights and freedoms set out in the constitution, access to suitable education [and] employment, and participation in society.”

In November 2013 the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women, and Child Affairs and the National Council for Persons

with Disabilities launched an initiative to improve access to public sector jobs and encourage respect for the constitutional rights of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Education also established a special education department. Children with disabilities attended public schools, and there were some other educational institutions for persons with disabilities, including two schools for the blind. In November 2013 the Ministry of Education launched a national education strategy for 2013-16 that included special provisions for children with disabilities.

Social stigma and lack of resources often prevented government and private entities from accommodating persons with disabilities in education and employment. Appropriate supports were especially rare in rural areas.

In July the governor of Khartoum announced the city would allocate 5 percent of government jobs to 211,000 persons with special needs and issue persons with special needs health insurance cards. The Ministry of Social Development stated it would provide financial assistance to 3,000 persons with disabilities and supply hearing aids to 50 persons monthly. Social stigma and official apathy towards the needs of persons with disabilities, however, often limited the resources allocated to those facilities, and accommodations for persons with disabilities were rare in most rural areas.

The government had not enacted laws or implemented effective programs to provide for access to buildings for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities reported it was difficult to access or afford necessary equipment, such as wheelchairs.

Several NGOs advocated on behalf of persons with disabilities. From November 3 to November 5, local NGOs participated in a workshop to develop an advocacy strategy for women with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The population is a multi-ethnic mix of more than 500 ethnic groups, speaking numerous languages and dialects. Many of these ethnic groups self-identify as Arab, referring to their language and other cultural attributes. Other tribes self-identify, or are identified by the broader society, as African. Northern Muslims traditionally dominated the government. Interethnic fighting in Darfur was between Muslims who considered themselves either Arab or non-Arab and between different Arab tribes.

Some ethnic groups, such as the Beja in the eastern region, promoted a hierarchical social structure within their own ethnic groups that discriminated against persons of certain tribes. The Zaghawa ethnic group in Darfur maintained a caste system that discriminated against persons of lower castes.

The Muslim majority and the government continued to discriminate against ethnic minorities in almost every aspect of society. Citizens in Arabic-speaking areas who did not speak Arabic experienced discrimination in education, employment, and other areas (see section 7.d.).

The government announced that persons fleeing the conflicts in South Sudan should be considered “brothers and sisters” and thus not subjected to discrimination. Many South Sudanese returning to Sudan were able to reintegrate successfully back into their old Sudanese communities. In conflict areas there were reports that persons of South Sudanese origin experienced societal discrimination. Security forces often suspected persons of South Sudanese origin of supporting antigovernment forces in Abyei and the Two Areas.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons are not considered a protected class under antidiscrimination laws. The law does not specifically prohibit homosexuality but criminalizes sodomy, which is punishable by death. Antigay sentiment was pervasive in society. LGBT individuals expressed concern for their safety and did not identify themselves publicly. A few LGBT organizations existed but operated underground due to fear of official and societal discrimination. Several LGBT persons felt compelled to leave the country due to fear of persecution, intimidation, or harassment.

There were no reports of official action to investigate or punish those complicit in LGBT-related discrimination or abuses.

HIV and AIDS Social Stigma

There was societal discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS. The conservative nature of society made discussion of sex out of wedlock and related issues difficult, particularly for activists and members of the international community addressing these topics.

Promotion of Acts of Discrimination

The government, government-supported militias, and rebel groups reportedly promoted hatred and discrimination, using standard propaganda techniques. The government often used religiously charged language to refer to suspected antigovernment supporters.

The government did not take measures to counter hate speech.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

The law provides that employees of companies of more than 100 workers can form and join independent unions. Other employees can join nearby, pre-existing unions. The law establishes a single national trade union federation and excludes police, military personnel, prison employees, legal advisers in the Justice Ministry, and judges from membership. In some cases membership in international unions was not officially recognized. The Sudan Workers' Trade Union Federation (SWTUF), a government-controlled federation of unions that consisted of 17 state unions and 22 industry unions, is the only official umbrella organization for unions.

The law denies trade unions autonomy to exercise the right to organize or to bargain collectively. It defines the objectives, terms of office, scope of activities, and organizational structures and alliances for labor unions. The government's auditor general supervised union funds because they are considered public money. A government-appointed and -controlled tripartite committee of representatives drawn from the government, employers, and the SWTUF sets salaries and wages for public workers. A similar tripartite committee sets the minimum wage for the private sector.

The law provides unions the right to conduct legal strikes. Some unions have bylaws that self-restrict their right to strike. It does not specifically prohibit strikes in nonessential sectors, but it requires all strikes to receive prior approval from the government after satisfying a set of legal requirements. Specialized labor courts adjudicate standard labor disputes, but the Ministry of Labor has the authority to refer a dispute to compulsory arbitration. Disputes may be referred to arbitration if indicated in the work contract.

The law does not prohibit antiunion discrimination by employers. Labor laws apply to migrant workers with legal contracts and protect all citizens, regardless of regional or tribal identity.

Bureaucratic steps mandated by law to resolve disputes within companies may be lengthy. In addition court sessions may involve significant delays and costs when labor grievances are appealed.

The government did not effectively enforce applicable laws. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining were not respected. There were credible reports the government routinely intervened to manipulate professional, trade, and student union elections.

According to the International Trade Union Confederation, in oil-producing regions police and secret service agents, in collusion with oil companies, closely monitored workers' activities. There were no reports of killings, arrests, threats, or unfair dismissal of union leaders and members by government or employers.

The government restricted the right to strike. Police could break up any strike conducted without prior government approval. In September secondary school teachers in El Fasher held a 10-day strike over nonpayment of federally mandated wage increases. The government deployed riot police and arrested several strikers. The teachers' committee, the organizing body behind the strike, eventually reached a deal with the West Darfur governor to implement the pay increases.

Migrant workers and some ethnic minorities were unaware of their legal rights, suffered from discrimination, and lacked ready access to judicial remedies. The IOM established a migrants' reception center in Khartoum that included workshops on workers' rights and the hazards of migration.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor. The government, however, did not effectively enforce the law. Resources, inspections, and remediation were inadequate, and penalties for violations were insufficient to deter violations. Enforcement proved difficult in rural areas and areas undergoing conflict.

The government stated it investigated and prosecuted cases of forced labor, but it did not compile comprehensive

statistics on the subject. Some government actors claimed that forced labor had been eradicated and denied reports that citizens were engaged in this practice.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) continued to urge the government to address continuing violations of forced labor. The ILO also expressed concern over the lack of accountability of perpetrators and insufficient victim rehabilitation measures.

In October the government announced it would launch the International Labor Standards Committee, a high-level coordination mechanism involving multiple government agencies.

The forcible recruitment of persons into armed groups continued (see section 1.g.).

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The interim national constitution mandates that the state protect the rights of children as provided in international and regional conventions ratified by the country. The law defines children as persons younger than 18 but does not explicitly prohibit child labor. According to the Child Act, 12 is the minimum age children can be engaged in "light work." The Ministry of Social Welfare, Women, and Child Affairs is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.

The law prohibits the employment of young persons in hazardous industries and jobs, in jobs requiring significant physical effort, or that are harmful to their morals. The law also prohibits the employment of young persons between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., although authorities may exempt young persons ages 15 and 16 from this restriction. It is illegal to employ children under the age of 12, except in state vocational training schools and training workshops and jobs performed under apprenticeship contracts. Work supervised by family members that does not include nonfamily members, such as on family farms, is also excluded from these provisions.

The law allows minors to work for seven hours a day broken by a period of one paid hour of rest. It is illegal to force minors to work more than four consecutive hours, work overtime, or work during weekly periods of rest or on official holidays. The law prohibits employers from waiving, postponing, or reducing annual leave entitlements. The government did not always enforce such laws due to inadequate resources to monitor work areas and societal complicity.

Child labor was a serious problem, particularly in the agricultural sector where the practice was common. Most child labor occurred in the informal sector, including in menial jobs for which the government lacked the resources to monitor comprehensively. Children were engaged in shining shoes, washing and repairing cars, collecting medical and other resalable waste, street vending, begging, agricultural work, construction, and other menial labor. Child welfare advocates maintained that some street children seen begging along city intersections were trafficked from West Africa.

The use of child soldiers and child trafficking were problems (see section 1.g. and the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/).

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment or Occupation

Law and regulations prohibit discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, disability, tribe, and language. They do not protect classes according to sexual orientation and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases, or social status. The government did not always effectively enforce those laws and regulations.

Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred based on gender, religion, and ethnic, tribal, or party affiliation. Ethnic minorities often complained that government hiring practices discriminated against them in favor of "riverine" Arabs from northern Sudan. Ethiopians, Eritreans, and other suspected refugees or migrants were often exposed to exploitative work conditions. Due to their uncertain legal status, many refugees and migrants did not report cases of discrimination or abuse due to concerns of imprisonment or repatriation.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The minimum wage for public sector workers was 425 Sudanese pounds (\$74). Normally the High Council of Salary in the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs sets the minimum wage for the public sector. The minimum salary in the private sector is set by agreements made between individual industries and the High Council of Salary and it varies among industries. Citizens whose monthly wages are below 700 Sudanese pounds (\$122) pay no personal income tax. An estimated 46 percent of citizens lived below the poverty line of 12 Sudanese pounds (\$2.10) per day.

The law limits the workweek to 40 hours (five eight-hour days, which does not include a 30-minute to one-hour daily

break), with days of rest on Friday and Saturday. Overtime should not exceed 12 hours per week or four hours per day, although some persons worked more than this on occasion. The law provides for paid annual leave after one year of continuous employment and paid holidays after three months.

The laws prescribe occupational safety and health standards. It does not recognize the right of workers to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without loss of employment. Any industrial company with between 30 and 150 employees must have an industrial safety officer. A larger company should have an industrial safety committee that includes management and employees. Committees and officers are required to report safety incidents to the Ministry of Labor. The law requires the owner of an industrial company to inform workers of occupational hazards and provide means for protection against such hazards. Management is also required to take necessary precautions to protect workers against industrial accidents and occupational diseases. Some heavy industry and artisanal mining operations, notably gold extraction, reportedly lacked sufficient safety regulations.

Safety laws do not apply to domestic servants; casual workers; agricultural workers other than those employed in the operation, repair, and maintenance of agricultural machinery; enterprises that process or market agricultural products such as cotton gins or dairy product factories; jobs related to the administration of agricultural projects including office work, accountancy, storage, gardening, and livestock husbandry; and family members of an employee who live with the employee and who are completely or partially dependent on him for their living.

Confronted by an unemployment rate of 14.8 percent and considerable surplus labor, workers were reluctant to remove themselves from hazardous work or harsh working conditions. There were no expectations the government would intervene to enforce work condition standards, particularly in the informal and agricultural sectors.

Representatives of the Eritrean and Ethiopian community in Khartoum stated undocumented migrants in the capital were subject to abusive work conditions. They also reported many undocumented workers did not report abuse due to fear authorities might deport them to Eritrea because of their illegal status.

The Ministry of Labor, which maintained field offices in most major cities, is responsible for enforcing these standards. There were various types of labor inspectors, including specialists on labor relations, labor conflicts, and vocational, health, and recruitment practices. They operated on both federal and state levels.

Standards were not effectively enforced. Although employers generally respected the minimum wage law in the formal sector, in the informal sector wages could be significantly below the official rate. Since enforcement by the Ministry of Labor was minimal, working conditions generally were poor. Inspection efforts and enforcement were generally minimal in both the formal and informal sectors.

Wage, overtime, and occupational safety and health standards violations were common in the industrial and informal labor sectors, especially in areas of agriculture and pastoral work. Foreign migrant workers, youth, and female workers typically faced the most exploitative working conditions. A significant number of workers were in the informal economy, with an estimated 60 percent of the workforce directly engaged in the informal sector, according to the *2012 Africa Economic Outlook*. There was no credible data on workplace fatalities and accidents.