

REDRESS

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

IN HISTORIC MOVE, SUDAN RATIFIES KEY INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON TORTURE, JOINING 171 OTHER STATES

(12 August 2021) REDRESS welcomes today's historic news that Sudan's transitional government has officially joined the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and the International Covenant for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (ICPPED) by depositing the required instruments of ratification with the UN Secretary-General on 10 August 2021. This development follows years of advocacy efforts by Sudanese activists and international partners, including the recent [joint call](#) issued by REDRESS, ACJPS and over twenty other civil society organisations.

By depositing the required [instruments of ratification](#), Sudan becomes the 172nd State Party to UNCAT. In ratifying UNCAT without substantive reservations, Sudan has demonstrated its absolute commitment to preventing, prosecuting and remedying cases of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. The transitional government must now take the necessary legislative, policy and institutional measures to ensure the implementation of UNCAT and ICPPED's provisions. This includes the criminalisation of torture and enforced disappearances in Sudan's domestic laws, and reforming the policies and practices of the police, intelligence services and armed forces.

The transitional government has entered reservations concerning dispute resolution and the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for both UNCAT and ICPPED. Both treaties will enter into force on 9 September 2021.

Reacting to the news, Rupert Skilbeck, director of REDRESS, said: "We congratulate the transitional government on making this important commitment. By joining the UN Convention against Torture, Sudan now stands alongside the international community in rejecting torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Sudan can now benefit from the expertise of other States, and the Committee against Torture, in implementing the key provisions of this international treaty."

REDRESS also urges Sudan's transitional government to now ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), which forms the basis for the establishment of National Preventative Mechanisms to strengthen the protection and prevention of torture and ill-treatment, and for independent inspections of places of detention. States may sign or ratify the OPCAT at any time.

For 30 years the Bashir regime in Sudan used torture and enforced disappearances to silence its critics and terrorise communities. The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), Rapid Support Forces (RSF), police and armed forces targeted in particular [women](#), [minorities](#), [human rights defenders](#), [protestors](#), [populations in conflict zones](#), [political opponents](#) and [journalists](#).

Sudanese activists and their international supporters have worked for decades to pursue the ratification of UNCAT and ICPPED. REDRESS and ACJPS reiterated calls for ratification in their 2019 report '[A Way forward? Anti-Torture Reforms in Sudan in the Post-Bashir Era](#)', and coordinated a [joint advocacy letter](#) by over twenty civil society organisations in December 2020. Ratification also fulfills a key demand of several cases brought by REDRESS and ACJPS before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, including that of [Safia Ishaq](#), who was raped by members of the NISS in 2011 after participating

in a demonstration; and [Mariam Yahia Ibraheem](#), who was tortured and sentenced to death in 2014 after marrying a Christian man.

Building on the momentum from today's news, REDRESS also calls upon the transitional government to ratify other key human rights treaties and their optional protocols, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

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