

## MILITARY COUP IN SUDAN Call for Action Ahead of the 30 October 2021 Protests

### Actions for International Allies of Sudan:

- Call on the Sudanese military to immediately end the arbitrary detention of all detained political leaders, journalists, and human rights activists, and refrain from torture and other forms of violence against protestors.
- Impose targeted sanctions on those responsible for the coup and associated human rights abuses.
- Coordinate an immediate response through multilateral institutions, including a special session at the UN Human Rights Council.
- Provide support to civil society documenting human rights violations, to ensure collection of evidence for future accountability processes.

### WHAT TO WATCH FOR ON 30 OCTOBER

Since Monday October 25, decentralised protests have been held throughout Sudan, demanding a return to a civilian-led democratic transition, and plans have been made for a “march of millions” on Saturday 30 October. Despite an ongoing Internet blackout, protests been organised through neighbourhood resistance committees, including through the distribution of [paper leaflets](#) and widespread graffiti.

The heavy presence of Rapid Support Forces vehicles and army forces on the streets of Khartoum (and throughout Sudan), continuous dismantling of barriers and blockades erected by protestors, and ongoing human rights violations since Monday suggest that protestors on 30 October will be met with significant force. Recent precedent, including the events of the past week, and historic patterns in Sudan (eg, 3 June 2019) that resulted in gross human rights abuses demonstrate Sudan’s reliance on military forces for crowd control and suppressing dissent. Consequently, it is critical that international observers are attentive to the following possible violations:

- The use of excessive and lethal force**, including tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition.
- Arbitrary detentions and/or enforced disappearance**: under al-Bashir and the subsequent Transitional Military Council, the then-named National and Intelligence Service (NISS) regularly arrested and kept in incommunicado detention activists, students, lawyers, doctors, human rights defenders, and perceived government critics; early indications over the past week suggest a return to these tactics. Sudanese authorities should issue clear instructions to all security and intelligence forces to prohibit arrests on trumped-up or baseless charges; those detained must be kept in official detention centres and their arrests registered. Detained individuals must also be provided access to legal representatives, and permitted contact with family members, as guaranteed under Sudan’s Criminal Procedure Act 1991.
- Torture and other forms of ill-treatment**: early reports of methods of torture and other forms of ill-treatment are highly concerning; individuals subjected to arbitrary and/or incommunicado detention are at very high risk of torture and ill-treatment.
- Blockades of medical centres and/or attacks on medical professionals**: during the 3 June 2019 sit-in dispersal, security forces [attacked makeshift clinics](#) and Khartoum-area hospitals, including by preventing access to care for injured protestors and severely restricting the flow of medical supplies and health workers. Similar attacks may be anticipated on Saturday.
- Sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV)**: security forces have long used multiple forms of SGBV against protestors and detainees, including rape, sexual assault, and offensive language or harassment. SGBV is often underreported in Sudan.

### ABOUT REDRESS

REDRESS is an international human rights NGO that has [worked in Sudan](#) for over two decades to combat violations of human rights and seek justice for victims of torture and other abuses. For more information, contact Charlie Loudon, International Legal Adviser at REDRESS, at [charlie@redress.org](mailto:charlie@redress.org) and Emma DiNapoli, Legal Fellow at REDRESS, at [emma@redress.org](mailto:emma@redress.org).

## RESPONSE FROM INTERNATIONAL ALLIES OF SUDAN

In light of the above risks, foreign embassies in Khartoum and the foreign ministries of Sudan's international allies should take the steps set out below.

### Call for an end to ongoing violations

The protestors who have gathered in Khartoum and throughout Sudan since the military coup on Monday, 25 October 2021 have been met with excessive, sometimes lethal force by security forces; there are also additional reports of beatings, whippings, and street harassment of protestors. On Thursday, social media accounts detailed incidents of other violations, including the [forcible shaving](#) of protestors' heads and removal of head scarves; these tactics are a throwback to the al-Bashir regime, when authorities used [similar methods](#) of intimidation. Reports that RSF and other security forces are using unmarked vehicles throughout Khartoum to detain and arrest individuals are also reminiscent of the al-Bashir era.

While arriving at an accurate estimate is difficult, given limited access to Internet and phone services, [preliminary figures](#) suggest that several hundred protestors have been injured; perhaps a [dozen individuals](#) have been killed since Monday. Similarly, more than [40 activists](#), journalists and government officials have been arrested since Monday, with a sharp spike in arrests on Tuesday and Thursday evening. At least one journalist, [Fayez Selik](#), was arrested within an hour of publicly condemning the coup. Initial accounts suggest that some individuals have been subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including Minister of Cabinet Affairs Khalid Omer Yousif and Sovereign Council member Mohamed al-Faki, both of whom have reportedly been [transferred to a military hospital](#).

These patterns of violations are consistent with Sudan's long and extensively documented history of abuses against protestors, human rights defenders and activists, and perceived political opponents. Sudanese forces have regularly used excessive force, including beatings, tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition, against protestors, including during this transitional period. Despite some [limited reforms](#) made by the transitional government, a [lack of accountability](#), immunities provisions, and a failure to properly train law enforcement and security forces have facilitated ongoing abuses.

Widespread, systematic attacks on protestors may constitute crimes against humanity. It is crucial that Sudan's allies call on the military to immediately end the arbitrary detention of all detained political leaders, journalists, and human rights activists, and refrain from torture and other forms of violence against protestors.

### Impose targeted sanctions

Magnitsky and other forms of targeted sanctions are available to a range of governments, including the United States, United Kingdom, and the EU. Asset freezes and travel bans may be applied against individuals and entities responsible for serious human rights abuses or violations. While these regimes vary, sanctionable offences include crimes against humanity, torture and other ill-treatment, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearance of persons, and arbitrary arrests or detentions.

### Hold a UN Human Rights Council Special Session

Very few domestic prosecutions concerning violations against protestors under al-Bashir and during Sudan's revolution have moved forward under the transitional government, despite apparent political will from the civilian component—fewer than a dozen cases. In light of this reality, and given the obviously diminishing prospects for accountability under a possible military regime, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should be authorised to set up an adequately-resourced fact-finding mission to monitor, verify and report on the situation in Sudan. See here for a [joint NGO letter](#) calling for a special session of the UN Human Rights Council for this purpose.

### Support Civil Society Documentation

Internet shutdowns hinder access to information and communications needed for daily life and provide cover for human rights abuses. Internet restrictions make documenting human rights violations more difficult, increasing the likelihood of their occurrence – particularly “invisible” violations such as arbitrary and/or incommunicado detention and torture during detention.

Given these challenges, it is particularly critical that the international community provides material and technical support to civil society documenting the ongoing human rights violations in Sudan. This is essential to ensure that current violations are identified, and to facilitate the collection of evidence for future accountability processes.