

MILITARY COUP IN SUDAN

Call for Action Ahead of UN Human Rights Council's Special Session

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.
- Establish an independent UN fact-finding mission to monitor and report on the situation in Sudan.
- Call for the immediate lifting of restrictions on the Internet and all telecommunications networks.

ONGOING COMMISSION OF SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The members of the UN Human Rights Council have an urgent responsibility to prevent and respond promptly to ongoing human rights violations, including through the upcoming special session on Sudan, scheduled for [Friday 5 November 2021](#) (as called for by 48 countries on 1 November).

Since Monday [25 October 2021](#), when Sudan's military announced the dissolution of the joint civilian-military transitional government and detained several key civilian leaders (including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok), military and security forces have increasingly demonstrated a willingness to use the repressive tactics favoured by former president Omar al-Bashir. In particular, attention should be paid to the following violations:

The use of excessive and lethal force against protestors, including tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition:

Despite clear warnings from international partners, at least three individuals were killed during protests on 30 October 2021 after security forces opened fire; while exact numbers remain unknown as a result of the ongoing Internet [blackout](#), the [Central Committee of Sudan Doctors](#) (CCSD) has also tallied a number of other injuries, including paralysis arising from beatings with the butt of guns, suffocation from tear gas, and protestors being run over by "Thatcher" vehicles (Land Cruiser pickups, historically used by NISS and the RSF). In the days since 30 October, CCSD has continued to report the use of live fire by security forces to disperse localised protests (eg, at least [four protestors](#) were injured in Omburman on the evening of 1 October).

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 halt the use of excessive or lethal force against protestors.

Arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearance:

As REDRESS and the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) have previously [documented](#), the al-Bashir regime frequently used arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearance to silence perceived government critics and human rights defenders, though the true magnitude of this practice is difficult to assess because Sudanese authorities have historically denied its occurrence.

Sudan's transitional government acceded to the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in August 2021, and the treaty entered into force on 9 September 2021. However, despite making a legally binding commitment to prevent, prosecute, and remedy cases of enforced disappearance, military authorities have by all indications returned to the use of arbitrary, incommunicado detentions. For example, organisations tracking incidents since the coup, including [ACJPS](#), have documented several high-profile cases, including the arrests of activist Nazim Sirag, journalist Alhaj Warag, and Yasir Arman, the deputy chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (and his brother, Mujib). The family of Yasir and Mujib has noted in two [statements](#) that the "coup military leadership and national intelligence apparatus both adamantly deny having carried out" arrests of

the brothers, though “eyewitness accounts verify that eighteen (18) uniformed military personnel stormed Yasir Arman’s residence in the early hours of Monday October 26th 2021.”

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:

Any reports 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. 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](#).

RESPONSE FROM INTERNATIONAL ALLIES OF SUDAN

In light of the above violations, members of the UN Human Rights Council and Sudan’s other international allies should take the steps set out below in the upcoming special session. In particular, we urge the relevant parties to support and co-sponsor at the upcoming session a resolution that accurately reflects the gravity of the situation in Sudan and provides a framework for clear monitoring and reporting on ongoing violations.

Call for the immediate lifting of restrictions on the Internet

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.

Establish an independent fact-finding mission

As REDRESS and other organisations have highlighted, 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. Similarly, long-promised investigations, including government reporting on the 3 June 2019 sit-in dispersal, have been delayed for opaque reasons. 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. Such a mechanism would allow for monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses, including grave crimes under international law, and to assist in holding accountable those suspected of criminal responsibility.

For the same reasons, it is also critical that the international community provides material and technical support to civil society organisations currently 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.

Request progress updates from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Though the UN Human Rights Council did not adopt a Sudan-focused resolution in its 48th session, which closed on 11 October 2021—ending the monitoring and public reporting capacity of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)—it may still now authorise a fact-finding mission (see above) and request enhanced regular reporting on the human rights situation to the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies. Enhanced monitoring of the unfolding situation in Sudan will allow international allies to identify the steps needed to address and deter current and future rights violations, and to develop rapid response capability as necessary.

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. and Emma DiNapoli, Legal Fellow at REDRESS, at emma@redress.org.