



“WHEN THE WAR ENDS, I WILL GO BACK HOME.”

Documenting Sexual Violence and Torture in Darfur

The Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to promoting and safeguarding human rights and fundamental liberties in Darfur and throughout Sudan. Our mission revolves around vigilant monitoring and meticulous documentation of human rights violations, extending aid to victims, and fervently advocating for transformative change within the Sudanese government and the broader international community.



At the core of our ethos lies an unwavering belief in all individuals' inherent dignity and equality. We steadfastly assert that everyone deserves to inhabit a world of peace and security, where violence and discrimination hold no sway. Through a collaborative engagement with diverse stakeholders, we are firmly committed to realising this vision, ensuring that all Sudanese citizens' human rights are acknowledged, defended, and upheld.

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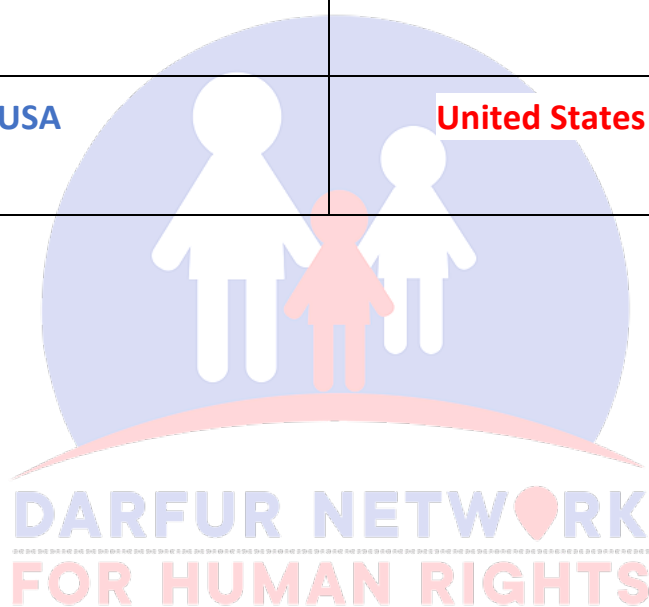


List of Abbreviations

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
CAR	Central African Republic
CAT	Convention Against Torture
DNHR	Darfur Network for Human Rights
EU	European Union
FFC	Forces of Freedom and Change
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
NCP	National Congress Party
NIAC	Non-International Armed Conflict
NISS	National Intelligence Security Services
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLFA	Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance
SLM-TC	Sudan Liberation Movement - Transitional Council

SPLM-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North
SPA	Sudanese Professionals Association
TMC	Transitional Military Council
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America



Executive Summary

The conflict that erupted between the SAF, under the leadership of Sudan's Sovereign Council Head General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary group RSF, led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (commonly known as Hemedti), on April 15, 2023, has engulfed Sudan, particularly impacting the Darfur region and the capital city of Khartoum.

The scale and organisation of the conflict classify it as a non-international armed conflict under the Geneva Conventions, governed by international humanitarian law. However, the complexity of the conflict blurs distinctions between state and non-state forces, making it challenging for the Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR) to categorise the parties involved.

This report is a culmination of research and data collected by the DNHR from January to March 2024. It includes testimonies comprising accounts of sexual violence and civilian torture by SAF-RSF. Interviews were conducted in person, primarily in Uganda, and remotely via secure channels with individuals in refugee camps in Chad, South Sudan, internally displaced camps within Sudan, and in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from January 17, 2024, to March 30 2024.

The conflict has led to the displacement of 8.1 million people within and outside Sudan, with nearly 14,000 fatalities. Over 1.4 million individuals have also sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

DNHR's documentation of sexual violence cases predominantly implicates RSF members or allied Arab militia as perpetrators, with most incidents occurring in RSF-controlled areas. Torture of civilians is prevalent in both RSF and SAF-controlled territories.

The report provides a comprehensive understanding of Sudan's recent history, from the ousting of Bashir to the formation of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the subsequent military coup in October 2021, culminating in the current conflict. It coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Darfur conflict, offering insights into the region's political landscape and human rights violations.

Legal analysis of the conflict is followed by recommendations for various stakeholders, including international communities, organisations, and all the parties involved. The UN Human Rights Council's Fact-Finding Mission, established to investigate violations, requires additional support. At the same time, State Parties to the International Criminal Court should allocate more resources for investigations in Darfur. Moreover, countries are urged to bolster humanitarian support, open borders, and provide safe pathways for Sudanese refugees, refraining from returning individuals to Sudan or any third country where they face risks.

Despite the gravity of the situation, the international response to the Sudanese conflict has thus far been inadequate. Mounting violence in Darfur and other regions threatens to revisit

the atrocities of past decades, underscoring the urgent need for heightened attention and action to protect civilians.



Methodology

This report delves into the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by parties to the Sudanese conflict since its outbreak on April 15, 2023, including instances of sexual violence and the torture of civilians. The cases highlighted here represent only a fraction of the numerous violations occurring throughout the conflict.

Compiled by the Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR), this report draws upon research and data collected from January 2024 to March 2024. It presents fourteen testimonies detailing accounts of sexual violence and civilian torture by both the SAF and the RSF. For all the testimonies mentioned in the report, the interviews were conducted primarily in Arabic and Fur language, with only two of the interviews conducted in English. A qualified translator translated the text into English to ensure accuracy. Although the prime focus of the report is to document the sexual violence and torture cases that happened in the Darfur region in the sexual violence section, one case from Khartoum is mentioned, and one case of torture by SAF from the Sennar state and two cases from Al Jazirah state as SAF effectively control these areas.

All interviews were conducted by DNHR's Human Rights Officer, Farhan Siddique, under the direct supervision of DNHR's Executive Director, Mohammed Adam Hassan. With the help of Executive Director Mohammed Adam Hassan, human rights officer Farhan Siddique also prepared this report.

No incentives were offered to interviewees, who were fully informed about the research's purpose and use of information. Oral consent was obtained for remote interviews, while in-person interviews required signed consent forms developed in English and Arabic for clarity. Personal details that could endanger interviewees were omitted, and pseudonyms were used for all except for the names of the perpetrators. The survivors themselves selected the pseudonyms.

DNHR's network of ground monitors reached survivors residing in camps in Chad, South Sudan, and Sudan's IDP camps, ensuring safety amidst communication blackouts, particularly in Darfur. DNHR verified all the testimonies before publishing them in this report through family members, neighbours, witnesses, and fellow inmates.

Contemporary Developments in Sudan

On December 19, 2018, citizens of the northern Sudanese province town of Atbara set fire to the National Congress Party's (NCP) regional office. Price increases and the elimination of subsidies for necessities set off the protest. Protesters connected President Omar al-Bashir's autocratic Inqaz (Salvation) government to these economic difficulties. Then, the turmoil spread to the whole of the country, home to 43 million people. Protesters demanded that Bashir's military-backed presidency end and that power be transferred to civilian rule.¹

Bashir had a history of responding harshly to protests and gained notoriety for suppressing them with extreme measures. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has already issued arrest warrants on March 4, 2009, and July 12, 2010, charging him with five counts of crimes against humanity: murder, extermination, forcible transfer, torture, and rape, two counts of war crimes: intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population or individual civilians not involved in hostilities, and pillaging, three counts of genocide: involving killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately imposing conditions of life intended to result in the physical destruction of the targeted groups, these crimes allegedly took place at least between 2003 and 2008 in Darfur, Sudan.²

This time, the protest took a distinctive turn. In less than four months, several hundred thousand civilians actively joined the movement, crafting their unique slogan "*freedom, peace and justice!*". They also embraced the Arab Spring mantra, "*The people want the fall of the regime.*"³ The demonstrations were orchestrated by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), a collaboration of trade unions that united various professionals such as teachers, lawyers, medical doctors, pharmacists, and other groups, opposition political parties were also part of this coalition.⁴ Notably, women participated in significant numbers in this protest.⁵ Finally, on April 11, 2019, Bashir was compelled to step down from his post.

The military founded a Transitional Military Council (TMC) after Al-Bashir was overthrown, and it ruled Sudan from April 12 to August 17, 2019. To lay out a plan for the country's transfer to civilian control, this council convened talks with the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), an opposition alliance created during the months of protest. At first, all sides decided to set up a transitional administration to rule the nation for the first 39 months. However, the TMC was dissolved on August 21, 2019, and a new Sovereign Council was named. Al-Burhan, the head of the SAF, presided over the 11-member Sovereign Council, which comprised six

¹ M. Hassan & A. Kodouda, Journal of Democracy, Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator, October 2019, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/sudans-uprising-the-fall-of-a-dictator/>

² International Criminal Court, The Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, ICC-02/05-01/09

³ M. Hassan & A. Kodouda, Journal of Democracy, Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator, October 2019, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/sudans-uprising-the-fall-of-a-dictator/>

⁴ Amnesty International, "They descended on us like rain" justice for victims of protest crackdown in Sudan, 10 March 2020, [amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/1893/2020/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/1893/2020/en/)

⁵ Royal African Society, What Will Happen in Sudan?, 19 April 2023, <https://royalafricansociety.org/what-will-happen-in-sudan/>

civilians and five military personnel. Hemedti was his deputy. Abdalla Hamdok assumed the role of Prime Minister.⁶

- **October 2021 coup d'état**

The military of Sudan overthrew a transitional government on October 25, 2021. General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the takeover leader, declared a state of emergency and dissolved the military-civilian Sovereign Council, citing the necessity of using the armed forces to maintain safety and security. He also promised to hold elections and hand over control to a civilian government chosen by popular vote in July 2023.⁷ Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was among the civilian coalition members arrested by the military. The military reinstated him in November 2021, but in January 2022, he resigned.⁸

Protests erupted in Khartoum, and on the first day, seven people were killed by gunfire, with 140 injured in clashes between soldiers and street protesters.⁹ According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), between the October 2021 coup and August 2022, Sudanese security forces killed 117 people, including 20 children and one woman, during demonstrations.¹⁰ Additionally, an estimated 7,700 protesters, including thousands of children, suffered severe injuries.¹¹

Burhan had brought back Islamists from Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP) to run the state bureaucracy since he lacked any other constituency. Other NCP loyalists reportedly occupy senior positions in the military and detest Hemedti for turning against Bashir in 2019.¹² On Dec. 5, 2022, both men inked the U.N.-backed Framework Agreement,¹³ which launched a new political process to restore Sudan's transition to democracy. Most resistance committees (played a significant role in the revolution against Bashir to mobilise all the country) opposed the settlement, arguing that Burhan and Hemedti had shown no signs of genuinely supporting a democratic process. The Framework Agreement had a number of problems from the start. It was not inclusive, had little popular support

⁶ Amnesty International, "They descended on us like rain": Justice for victims of protest crackdown in Sudan, 10 March 2020, [amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/1893/2020/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/1893/2020/en/)

⁷ Reuters, Seven killed, 140 hurt in protests against Sudan military coup, 26 October 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/military-forces-arrest-senior-civilian-figures-sudan-al-hadath-tv-2021-10-25/>

⁸ Amnesty International, "Death came to our home" war crimes and civilian suffering in Sudan, 3 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

⁹ Reuters, Seven killed, 140 hurt in protests against Sudan military coup, 26 October 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/military-forces-arrest-senior-civilian-figures-sudan-al-hadath-tv-2021-10-25/>

¹⁰ United Nations, Sudan: Justice for protesters against coup, key to ending cycle of violence, 25 October 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129862>

¹¹ Amnesty International, "Death came to our home" war crimes and civilian suffering in Sudan , 3 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

¹² News Line Magazine, In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces, 17 April 2023, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/>

¹³ OHCHR, Sudan: UN Human Rights Chief alarmed by rising tensions, urges intensified efforts to restore civilian-led Government, 8 April 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/04/sudan-un-human-rights-chief-alarmed-rising-tensions-urges-intensified#:~:text=In%20December%20last%20year%2C%20a,of%20a%20civilian%20led%20Government.>

and was overly ambitious — it promised to address key issues such as transitional justice and security sector reform in weeks, even days.¹⁴ Both issues typically require months of sensitive talks, concerted international effort, and clear mechanisms and benchmarks. Even then, efforts do not often succeed.

The most contested issue between the two forces was the RSF's integration into the army. Hemedti called for his forces to integrate in 10 years, yet Burhan wanted the RSF to integrate in two.¹⁵ The tension between the two rivals finally turned into a full-fledged war on April 15, 2023. It started in Khartoum and reached Darfur, which has been consistently in conflict.



¹⁴ News Line Magazine, In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces, 17April 2023, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/>

¹⁵ News Line Magazine, In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces, 17April 2023, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/>

Darfur: Past and Present

Darfur gets its name from the Arabic phrase "dar fur," which translates to "the land of the Fur." The Fur tribe previously governed Darfur's Islamic Sultanate until the last Sultan's demise in 1916. Presently, Darfur is inhabited by around 80 diverse tribes and ethnic groups, including both nomadic and settled communities.¹⁶ The Masalit, Fur, and other settled African farmers in Darfur have a longstanding history of land conflicts with nomadic pastoralists belonging to Arab tribes, particularly the Beni Hussein who herd camels and cattle in the Kabkabiya region of North Darfur, and the Beni Halba in South Darfur. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, rooted in laws inherited from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1898-1956), effectively managed these tensions until the 1970s¹⁷.

Over the past decades, a confluence of factors, including prolonged droughts, competition for diminishing resources, inadequate governance, a lack of democracy, and the ready availability of firearms, has intensified local conflicts, rendering them more violent and politically charged. In 1994, a comprehensive administrative restructuring by President Omar El Bashir's government in Darfur granted new positions of authority to members of Arab ethnic groups.¹⁸ The Masalit, alongside their Fur and Zaghawa counterparts, perceived this move as an effort to undermine their traditional leadership roles and diminish the influence of their communities in their native land.¹⁹

In 2003, the conflict intensified as rebel groups, specifically the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), resorted to armed resistance against the Sudanese Government. Their primary grievance was the perceived unfair allocation of economic resources.²⁰ In response, then-president Omar al-Bashir mobilised the Janjaweed, a militia initially armed and organized in the early 1980s as part of the government's efforts to extend its influence in neighbouring Chad during its ongoing civil war. The Janjaweed were deployed to quell the rebellion, leading to widespread brutality and bloodshed.

As the Sudanese army used jets and helicopters to bombard the population, the Janjaweed conducted ground operations, moving from village to village. This brutal campaign included

¹⁶ Africa Renewal, United Nations, Explainer: How Darfur became a 'humanitarian calamity and catastrophic human rights crisis, 14 December 2023, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2023/explainer-how-darfur-became-%E2%80%98humanitarian-calamity-and-catastrophic-human>

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, Darfur Destroyed Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan, 6 May 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/05/06/darfur-destroyed/ethnic-cleansing-government-and-militia-forces-western-sudan>

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, Darfur Destroyed Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan, 6 May 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/05/06/darfur-destroyed/ethnic-cleansing-government-and-militia-forces-western-sudan>

¹⁹ Damanga Coalition for Freedom and Democracy, The Hidden Slaughter and Ethnic Cleansing in Western Sudan, 9 April 1999, <http://www.damanga.org/1999hiddenslaughter.html>

²⁰ Africa Renewal, United Nations, Explainer: How Darfur became a 'humanitarian calamity and catastrophic human rights crisis, 14 December 2023, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2023/explainer-how-darfur-became-%E2%80%98humanitarian-calamity-and-catastrophic-human>

the mutilation and killing of men, the rape of women, and the abduction of children. Villages were systematically destroyed, wells were poisoned, and valuable possessions were seized.²¹

The Janjaweed faced accusations of carrying out ethnic cleansing targeting the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa peoples. The overall impact of this violence resulted in approximately 2.5 million people being displaced and an estimated 300,000 killed. In a 2015 report, Human Rights Watch characterised the Janjaweed as "men with no mercy."²² In 2005, the United Nations Security Council directed the ICC to address the situation in Darfur. Subsequently, in 2009 and 2010, the ICC issued arrest warrants against President al-Bashir on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.²³ Additionally, the ICC issued warrants for three other government officials and three leaders of armed groups involved in the conflict.²⁴

Amidst ongoing violence in Darfur, informal Masalit self-defence groups, most notably the Sudanese Alliance, have surfaced. Established in 2019, this group, led by Governor Khamis Abakar of West Darfur, consists of Masalit men²⁵. Unfortunately, Abakar was killed shortly after being taken into RSF custody on June 14, 2023,²⁶; the Sudanese Alliance is one of the signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement.

• Juba Peace Agreement

In October 2020, Sudan's Transitional Government and armed groups, including the Sudan Liberation Movement, Sudan Liberation Movement - Transitional Council (SLM-TC), Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance (SLFA), along with Egypt, Qatar, The African Union, The United Nations, The European Union, and Ambassador Khalid Abdulrahim of the Arab League as a witness, signed the 'Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan.'²⁷ This pact introduces significant changes to Sudan's governance by amending the 2019 Constitutional Charter and pre-determining elements of the upcoming permanent constitution. While it aims to establish Sudan as an asymmetric federation, outlining powers for regions like Darfur, Blue Nile, and

²¹ The Telegraph, 'Men with no mercy': The vicious history of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces, 25 April 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/sudan-unrest-militia-rapid-support-forces-janjaweed/#:~:text=Originally%20herders%2C%20the%20Janjaweed%20militias,a%20long%2Drunning%20civil%20war.>

²² Human Rights Watch, "Men With No Mercy", Rapid Support Forces Attacks against Civilians in Darfur, Sudan, September 9, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/09/men-no-mercy/rapid-support-forces-attacks-against-civilians-darfur-sudan>

²³ International Criminal Court, The Prosecutor v. Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, ICC-02/05-01/09

²⁴ ICC Darfur cases, available at icc-cpi.int/Darfur, See also- Amnesty International, "DEATH CAME TO OUR HOME" WAR CRIMES AND CIVILIAN SUFFERING IN SUDAN, 3 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

²⁵ Amnesty International, ""death came to our home" war crimes and civilian suffering in sudan, 3 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

²⁶ Guardian, Sudan: paramilitary forces blamed for assassination of West Darfur governor, 15 June 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/15/sudan-paramilitary-forces-blamed-assassination-khamis-abdallah-abbakar-government-official>

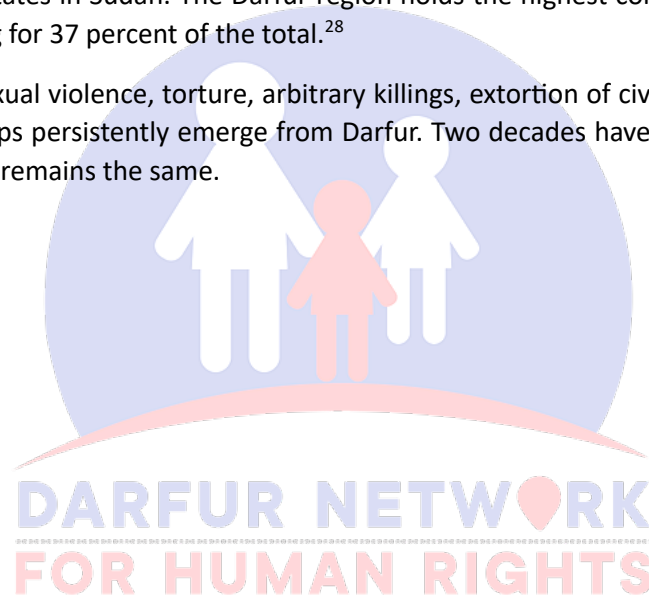
²⁷ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan, 2021, idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-juba-agreement-for-peace-in-sudan-en.pdf

Kordofan, crucial aspects such as the national government's structure and revenue sharing still need clarification, presenting a challenge for future negotiations. The Agreement also delineates the constitutional process, including a conference on the system of government, though its precise purpose remains undetermined. Additionally, the intricate network of transitional justice mechanisms precedes judicial processes over reconciliation in certain instances. The pact also addresses extensive transitional security arrangements, proposing integrating armed group members into national security forces.

- **Contemporary Situation of Darfur**

Around 8.1 million individuals have been compelled to evacuate their homes in Sudan, including 6.3 million IDPs within the country and an additional 1.8 million seeking refuge abroad. In February 2024, the number of IDPs surged by about 53,500 individuals. These IDPs are spread across 6,771 locations, encompassing all 18 states in Sudan. The Darfur region holds the highest concentration of displaced individuals, accounting for 37 percent of the total.²⁸

Reports of ongoing sexual violence, torture, arbitrary killings, extortion of civilians, and the targeting of specific ethnic groups persistently emerge from Darfur. Two decades have passed since 2003, but the situation in Darfur remains the same.



²⁸ Reliefweb, Sudan Humanitarian Update (23 February 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-update-23-february-2024-enar>

Sexual Violence cases

As mentioned in the methodology section, all the names and other personal details have been taken out of these testimonies. Only the actual names of the Perpetrators are being kept.

• Testimony 1

Amira, a resident of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, was born in 1985. She is married and a mother to five girls and two boys. On October 15, 2023, Amira found herself at home in Nyala, along with her seven children. Around 11 am, she heard a persistent knock on the door, prompting her to open it. To her dismay, four individuals in RSF uniforms and armed with guns stood before her. Asking about her husband, she told them he is not at home.

Without consent, they forced their way in, proceeding to search the entire house. Discovering fifty thousand Sudanese pounds (approximately 83 USD), they confiscated the money. When Amira protested, one of the soldiers struck her and commanded her to enter a room. Amira resisted, but two of them grabbed her and took her inside the room.

"They beat my children and forcefully ejected them from the house."

One of the perpetrators, identified as Omar Jabir, assaulted Amira, restraining her, tearing her clothes, and subjecting her to rape. The horrifying ordeal continued as others followed, with the assault lasting for one and a half hours. Throughout the heinous act, they callously remarked:

"You are black and sweet; we are doing this because your husband works for SAF."

Her neighbour entered. In a tragic turn of events, the intruders shot him in the leg and left the house. As Amira regained consciousness and processed the traumatic event, she gathered her children and sought refuge in Kalma camp, located 17 km outside Nyala.

"After the incident, I felt overwhelming guilt; I couldn't bear to stay there any longer, so I left."

Seeking medical attention in the camp, Amira faced a scarcity of medicines. Doctors advised her to purchase the necessary medications from the Nyala market but lacking both funds and the courage to go back to Nyala, she received only Penicillin injections and antibiotic tablets.

Eight days later, her husband located her in Kalma Camp. Upon seeing his family, he broke down, expressing the belief that their ethnicity played a role in the horrifying attack.

Perpetrators:

While Amira is familiar with one of the assailants, identified as Omar Jabir, approximately 45 years old and hailing from the Rizeigat tribe, an Arab ethnicity, she remains unaware of the

identities of the other three perpetrators. However, she can confirm that all four individuals involved in the act are Arabs.

Impact:

“Some of them say that the god has punished me.”

Amira, a survivor of sexual violence in Darfur, faces profound consequences across emotional, familial, and economic realms. Her 15-year-old son, unable to cope, severs ties with the family, leaving them distraught. The economic loss from the assault and looting of her home exacerbates their financial strain. Amira's mental well-being suffers greatly, compounded by guilt, stigma, and isolation within the camp. Forced displacement strips her of security and community support, deepening her emotional wounds and leading to social isolation.

Amira, despite enduring unimaginable trauma, finds solace in the fact that her daughters were spared on that fateful day, and she draws strength from her supportive husband. However, the impact of the heinous act has left her emotionally scarred and grappling with feelings of guilt and isolation within the camp.

Amira attributes the violence she experienced to her ethnicity, emphasising the perceived targeting of black individuals by the RSF. She firmly believes that such atrocities are not committed against Arab women, further underscoring the discriminatory nature of the violence she endured.

Amira feels helpless when confronted with the question of justice, citing the absence of accessible courts since the war began on April 15. Despite this, she has heard about the ICC and places her hope in its potential to bring her the justice she seeks.

• [Testimony 02](#) **RFUR NETWORK**
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Mehram, hails from Bendasi in central Darfur and was born in 1998. Mehram's life took a tragic turn during the 2003 war when the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel groups-initiated conflict against the Omar al-Bashir government. This conflict resulted in the death and displacement of numerous civilians, including Mehram's family. Subsequently, she and her family sought refuge in the Kalma Camp in Nyala, South Darfur. Karma Camp became the backdrop for Mehram's upbringing; despite the circumstances, it is what she considers home.

Before the outbreak of the war on April 15, 2023, Mehram was pursuing her graduation. On the evening of October 26, 2023, as Mehram was walking back to her home in Kalma Camp from the farm around 6 pm, a military vehicle, a Dodge, carrying soldiers from the RSF, approached her from behind. A voice from inside shouted at her to stop, but she continued walking. The vehicle stopped before her, and two soldiers stepped out, commanding her to get inside. Despite her refusal, they forcibly placed her in the car.

In the vehicle were seven soldiers, all in RSF uniforms, some armed with guns. Mehram pleaded with them, *“I requested them to leave me for the sake of god.”*, but her pleas were

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brushed aside. When she resisted, one of the soldiers slapped her and tied her hands, and she began to cry. The soldiers transported her to a house in the Kuria area near the Turkish hospital, taking an alternative route via the Al Wadi area. The house, with multiple rooms, already had other women in captivity. Mehram was ushered into one of the rooms and locked inside, where she could overhear the soldiers conversing.

"We have a new woman; it will be fun."

One soldier entered the room, attempting to force Mehram to the ground. He called for assistance despite her resistance, and another soldier arrived, delivering a harsh slap to Mehram. With her hands tied, they forced her to the ground, tore her clothes, and subjected her to a horrifying ordeal of sexual assault (rape). Five soldiers took turns assaulting her, and after four of them left, one remained in the room, subjecting Mehram to three more instances of rape over the next two days.

On October 28, the soldier locked her in the room and left, returning on October 29 with someone Mehram believes to be an RSF officer. This officer inquired about her situation, and after Mehram disclosed everything, he ordered the soldiers to return her to where they had initially abducted her.

The soldiers untied Mehram's hands, placed her in the car, and dropped her off at the exact location where they had initially picked her up. A group of women discovered her by the roadside; they were on a donkey cart, inquiring about what had happened. Mehram, lacking the courage to reveal the truth, claimed she was unwell and requested their help taking her to the Kalma camp.

"I didn't dare to tell them the truth."

The woman took her to her house in the camp, where her worried family had been searching for her everywhere. Once inside, Mehram disclosed the horrifying ordeal to her family, who urged her to see a doctor. However, she refused any medical attention.

"At that moment, I just wanted to die."

Mehram's mother bathed her and administered some injections to help her sleep. As she regained some strength, Mehram informed her family that she could not continue living with them due to the trauma and guilt. Despite their objections, on November 10, her family went to market, leaving her alone; Mehram packed her clothes and left the camp. She first went to Bleil in South Darfur, and from there, she travelled to Ed Daein, the capital of East Darfur.

"I had no money; I pleaded with taxi drivers to give me lifts."

In Ed Daein, a kind woman offered her a place to stay for the night. Mehram moved on to Al Raqabat the following day, selling her clothes to get some money.

"I bought only food with the money, as it wasn't enough for food and transportation. I walked for three days before reaching Gok Machar in South Sudan, sleeping in different villages at night."

By December 5, 2023, Mehram had arrived in Gok Machar, South Sudan. From there, she went to the Wedwill Camp for refugees in the Aweil state of South Sudan.

Perpetrators:

Mehram, unfortunately, could not identify any of the seven individuals who initially abducted her, nor could she recall the names of the five who subjected her to the horrifying acts of sexual assault. The only information she could provide was that all of the perpetrators were of Arab ethnicity, leaving their identities in anonymity.

Impact:

The traumatic incident has deeply affected Mehram, causing significant mental health challenges marked by guilt, trauma, and thoughts of suicide. Socially, she feels isolated and disconnected from her family and community, relying on the kindness of neighbours for support. Financially, she faces dire circumstances, lacking a stable income and struggling to meet basic needs.

Life in the Wedwill camp has proven to be incredibly challenging for Mehram. The camp grapples with an acute food shortage, forcing her to endure days without a proper meal. The sporadic generosity of neighbours provides some relief, but the overall conditions in the camp remain difficult. The distribution of blankets by relief agencies meant alleviating some of the hardship faced by the unfortunate fate of being looted by others in the camp.

When questioned about justice, Mehram expresses a belief in divine retribution, stating, ***"I don't know about humans, but for sure, God will punish them."*** Despite lacking faith in earthly justice, Mehram calls upon the government, aid agencies, or any entity capable of making a difference to address the pressing issue of food scarcity in the camps. Malnutrition, particularly among children, has become rampant, emphasising the urgency for concerted efforts to provide essential sustenance and support to the vulnerable population in the camp.

• Testimony 03

Fatima, a 29-year-old married woman, originally hails from Zalinge, Central Darfur, where her family resides. Following her marriage, she moved to Nyala, South Darfur, where she worked with the government. The conflict in Khartoum between the SAF and the paramilitary group RSF commenced on April 15, 2023, and rapidly spread throughout the country. Although the RSF officially gained control of Nyala on October 15, the struggle for dominance in Nyala had intensified considerably earlier, given its strategic importance as the capital of South Darfur.

Before the onset of the war, Fatima enjoyed a happy everyday life both professionally and personally. She was eagerly anticipating the arrival of her first child. However, everything changed dramatically with the outbreak of the conflict.

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"I remember the day war broke out; it was Ramadan and Saturday, and everyone was home."

Fatima, unsure of the exact timing, discovered she was pregnant in late May or early June. The news marked the anticipation of what would have been her first child. Meanwhile, the escalating war had already led to the RSF gaining control over a substantial area of Central Darfur by June, where Fatima's family resided.

On June 14, amidst the increasing turmoil, Fatima received a distressing call from her aunt in Egypt. The RSF had arrested her uncle, Khamis Abakar, the governor of West Darfur, along with 19 other relatives. The whereabouts of those detained remained unknown. With no electricity or internet connection in Nyala, Fatima and her husband, in a quest for information, decided to relocate to Wadi Bulbul, where her mother-in-law resided.

During their journey to Bulbul, her husband managed to establish an internet connection and received a heart-wrenching message on WhatsApp confirming the killing of the governor and the others.

"I lost twenty family members at once. It is still hard for me to believe it sometimes."

Devastated by the news, Fatima contemplated heading to Zalinge, Central Darfur, to be with the remaining members of her family and mourn together. However, her husband, concerned for their safety, persuaded her otherwise, and they continued their journey to Wadi Bulbul. They stayed there for fifteen days, and in the last week of June, they sought solace by visiting a gynaecologist. It was during this visit that Fatima received the heart-wrenching revelation – she had already suffered a miscarriage; the child was gone.

Even in Bulbul, the internet connection remained unreliable. Hoping to establish contact with her family in Zalinge, Fatima and her husband returned to Nyala on July 1. The city was engulfed in an intense battle, with constant shelling from both the RSF and the SAF, primarily from SAF, who had control over Nyala at that time.

The impact of the conflict hit close to home for Fatima, as her neighbour's house was air-bombed by SAF, resulting in the tragic deaths of a 56-year-old woman and her 36-year-old daughter. The continuous shelling and air bombardments forced many residents to flee Nyala, seeking refuge in rural areas. This mass exodus led to a significant increase in the number of IDPs.

By August 2023, the fight for control over Nyala had peaked, resulting in numerous casualties and injuries. All the hospitals in the city had ceased functioning, bringing life to a standstill. Tragically, Fatima's 29-year-old neighbour lost her life while attempting to deliver a child at home, succumbing to excessive bleeding.

"We tried to take her to the hospital, but in reality, there was no hospital where we could have taken her."

In the first week of September, Fatima and her husband returned to Bulbul, deeming rural areas safer than urban ones. The impact of the conflict was evident as they observed a significant increase in the taxi fare from Nyala to Bulbul, rising from two thousand Sudanese pounds (USD 3.33) before the war to six thousand Sudanese pounds (approx USD 10) at that point. During their two-and-a-half-month stay in Bulbul, they engaged in farming, cultivating onions and sorghum.

RSF officially took control of Nyala on October 26. Soon after, Fatima received distressing news from her husband's cousin, stating that RSF had looted their home in Nyala. Returning to Nyala, they discovered that all their belongings, including furniture, kitchen utensils, and clothes, had been stolen. They stayed with the cousin for two months before returning to Bulbul to check on their farm and Fatima's mother-in-law. Unfortunately, the situation in Bulbul mirrored that of Nyala. After a brief two-week stay, they returned to Nyala, where Fatima was devastated to find that the building had been destroyed where she worked.

In late November, they decided to leave Nyala for good. Opting to head to Sennar, they boarded a bus, which ran out of fuel during the journey. In a dire situation, male passengers joined forces to push the bus to the nearest petrol station while women and children remained inside. A car carrying seven RSF soldiers approached, their faces covered and armed with guns. The soldiers thoroughly searched the men, confiscating money and rings. Fatima's husband lost fifty thousand Sudanese pounds (USD 83).

Four of the soldiers entered the bus, demanding phones and money from the women. Threatening to shoot if their demands were not met, the traumatic encounter added to the ongoing hardships faced by Fatima and her fellow passengers.

"We thought we all were going to die. I started reciting Shahadah; all the children were crying. I had money and a mobile phone; I hid them in my blouse."

Amidst the harrowing encounter with RSF soldiers, fear gripped Fatima and her fellow passengers. Reciting the Shahadah, an Islamic declaration of faith, and with children crying around her, Fatima took desperate measures to protect her valuables, concealing money and a mobile phone in her blouse.

One of the soldiers menacingly suggested killing everyone, accusing them of working for SAF. Fortunately, the situation was de-escalated, and the soldiers left after seizing whatever they could, including blankets from the terrified passengers.

Upon reaching Sennar, they stayed at her husband's cousin's house for a month. However, their respite was short-lived when they learned that RSF had attacked Al Jazirah, bordering Sennar. Fearing for their safety, they moved to Renk, South Sudan, where they sought refuge at her husband's friend house for four days. By January 31, 2024, they found themselves in Juba, South Sudan. The next day, they took a bus to Uganda.

Impact:

"I don't want to go back; I have nothing to go back for; the war has taken my family, home, job, and child."

The war has left her with an emptiness that cannot be filled – a void created by the tragic loss of family members, her home, her job, and the unborn child she was eagerly anticipating. The remnants of her past life have been swept away by the relentless waves of conflict, leaving only memories tainted by sorrow.

Life for Fatima and her husband is now enveloped in uncertainty. Jobless and facing an unpredictable future, they rely on the support of their husband's brother, recognising that this support may not be sustainable in the long run.

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When questioned about justice, Fatima's response reflects the harsh reality she faces. She lacks hope, but if justice prevails, she envisions a comprehensive form encompassing legal, economic, and social dimensions. The trauma she carries is profound, leaving her in a state of uncertainty about what the future holds.

• Testimony 04

Dalal, a twenty-year-old resident of Khartoum and a fourth-year medical student, had been eagerly looking forward to her life, living with her family, and completing her degree to serve the community once she became a doctor. However, the onset of the war changed everything for her. As a resident of Khartoum, her life was affected from the first day – the university closed, and she found herself confined to her house.

Dalal is unsure about the exact date, but the incident occurred around July 10 to 15, 2023. One evening, a car followed them while they were returning home with a friend (also her neighbour) after buying bread. Dalal, living with two elder sisters aged thirty-five and twenty-nine, along with their three children, felt a sense of unease. Dalal's parents were in India visiting another sister. As they reached home, the car, containing two individuals, followed them inside.

“They came inside and asked me for money. The first thought came to me: I had to save my family. I told them to take money and mobile phone so that they would leave.”

Once inside, the perpetrators demanded money from Dalal. Fearing for her family's safety, she gave them money and her mobile phone, hoping they would leave. However, they insisted on more, stating that Dalal's family was wealthy. As one of the perpetrators searched the rooms, Dalal's sister went to seek help from neighbours. One of the perpetrators stayed with Dalal. The other perpetrator found an army hat belonging to Dalal's brother inside one of the rooms.

“My brother served in the army only for two years; he left the army for a long time now.”

The one preparator with Dalal started yelling at her, “Military is terrible, and we will take revenge on you.” Before Dalal could process anything, he removed all his clothes and then pushed Dalal to the ground, tore down her clothes, and raped her; all this time, he was carrying a gun in one of his hands. Dalal started crying, and this went on for around five minutes before her sister came back with two of her neighbours. The first thing they did was to separate Dalal from the perpetrator, and then he started crying. He cried and yelled, “I didn't want to do this, but you made me do this.” Then he ran outside the house, and the other one checking the rooms ran out behind him.

Dalal was crying, and her sister gave her some medicine, which Dalal had brought a few days ago.

“When the war started, I got to know there were rape cases in my area, so I brought medicines like antibiotics and painkillers to help others, but I could never imagine that it would happen to me, and I have to use those medicines.”

For four days, Dalal didn't speak with anyone. When her sister informed their parents in India, they advised her to leave immediately. The next day, Dalal, her sister, and her three nieces/nephews travelled to Wad Madani, where they stayed with one of her mother's friends for three days. From there, they journeyed to Kosti, crossed to Renk (South Sudan), spent two days, and then flew to Juba, where Dalal's sister's husband works. After ten days in Juba, they arrived in Uganda.

Perpetrators:

Two soldiers wearing RSF uniforms came to Dalal's house. One was not very tall and looked like he was in his early twenties. The other was taller and seemed to be in his late twenties or early thirties. They were from West Sudan, according to Dalal's assumption.

Impact:

In the aftermath of the traumatic incident, Dalal faces profound and far-reaching consequences. Firstly, her academic and professional aspirations have been abruptly halted, disrupting her journey to becoming a doctor and contributing to her community. The closure of the university, coupled with the emotional toll of the assault, has significantly impeded her ability to pursue her educational and career goals. Additionally, the violation of her home has turned it from a place of security into one associated with a horrifying experience, compelling Dalal to seek refuge elsewhere and adding to the distress of displacement. Furthermore, the assault has resulted in a painful separation from her family, who serve as her primary support system, with her parents residing in India. This isolation leaves Dalal to navigate the aftermath alone, exacerbating feelings of shame, persistent distress, and a profound loss of security. Despite her strong desire to return to Sudan, the societal stigma surrounding rape survivors presents a formidable barrier, making the prospect of a return fraught with judgment and discrimination.

“I want to go somewhere where no one knows me, and if I overcome what has happened to me, I will go back to Sudan.”

Dalal's current residence, alongside her sister, has provided some semblance of stability in the aftermath of the traumatic incident. Engaging in therapy for two months has played a crucial role in fostering acceptance and helping her realise that the assault was not her fault. However, the journey toward inner peace remains ongoing, and she acknowledges the need for more time to heal from the profound emotional wounds. Regarding the pursuit of justice, Dalal expresses a lack of hope, citing the challenging legal landscape in Sudan. Despite the hardships, her aspiration to find a place where she can rebuild her life and overcome the trauma remains strong.

• Testimony 05

Sawsan is a 36-year-old married woman with five children: Zainab, her eldest daughter, aged 17, followed by a 15-year-old boy, a 13-year-old girl, a 10-year-old girl, and the youngest, a 3-year-old boy. She resides in Nyala, South Darfur, with her retired army professional husband.

On October 26, 2023, RSF took over Nyala, and three RSF soldiers approached Sawsan's house, inquiring about the whereabouts of her husband. She informed them that he was not at home and that she did not know his current location, mentioning that he had left two days ago.

"My husband was at his brother's house, but I couldn't disclose that information, as they might have arrested him, even though he is retired from the army now."

The soldiers proceeded to ransack her home, taking the television. Sawsan attempted to intervene, leading one of the perpetrators to physically assault her, while another seized her eldest daughter, Zainab and took her to another room. Simultaneously, the remaining two perpetrators brandished their guns, threatening Sawsan. They demanded information about her husband's whereabouts, warning that failure to comply would result in harm to her and her children.

"All my children were crying, and I heard Zainab's cry for help as well; the perpetrator with her began beating her."

Sawsan attempted to rescue Zainab, but one of the assailants restrained her by grabbing her neck and forcing her to the ground. He proceeded to tear down her clothes and subjected her to a horrifying sexual assault that persisted for the next thirty minutes. The perpetrators then said, ***"tomorrow we will return, and if we don't find your husband, we will again assault you and also take your life."*** Somehow regaining her composure, Sawsan rushed to the room where her eldest daughter, Zainab, was. To her horror, she found Zainab on the ground, unclothed and bleeding; the same perpetrator who had taken Zainab into the room had also raped her.

"My daughter lay there naked, bleeding, and I didn't know what to do."

After seeking assistance from her neighbours, Sawsan and Zainab were taken to the Turkish hospital while her other children remained under the care of the neighbours. At the hospital, they received necessary medical treatment, and the following day, both were discharged, returning home around 10 am. However, their reprieve was short-lived as the three perpetrators returned, questioning the children about their father's whereabouts and issuing threats to Sawsan regarding her family's safety. They left afterwards.

On the third day, the perpetrators returned once more, demanding information about Sawsan's husband. When she reiterated her lack of knowledge, they resorted to violence, assaulting both Sawsan and her children before departing. Subsequently, a concerned neighbour named Mohammed visited Sawsan, expressing his concerns about their safety. He proposed that staying in their current location was no longer viable and suggested relocating to South Sudan with his family for safety.

"Come with us. They won't allow you to live in peace. They will torment you every day and eventually kill you."

On the morning of November 7, Sawsan, her children, and Mohammed's family left Nyala on a lorry and initially travelled to Beileil, where they stayed overnight. From there, they proceeded to Ed Daein, the capital of East Darfur, where they spent a day before heading to Al-Mujlad in West Kordofan. In Al-Mujlad, they went to the UNHCR camp in the Anaam Market, where they all registered with the UNHCR. The next day, the UNHCR transported them and other refugees to the Abyei camp in South Sudan. After spending five days there, they were transferred to the Witwil Camp.

While in Witwil camp, Mohammed informed Sawsan that her husband had been arrested by RSF on November 13 or 14 and was subjected to detention and torture. Mohammed, a businessman who frequently travels to Nyala, later updated Sawsan that her husband was released on January 6, 2024. Still, he had endured severe torture, leaving him unable to walk or sit. Once he could travel, Mohammed assured Sawsan that he would bring her husband to her.

Perpetrators:

Sawsan vividly remembers the three assailants, all armed and clad in RSF uniforms, their faces concealed by masks. Although their identities were obscured, she is confident they belonged to the Arab ethnicity. Among them, two were of shorter stature, while the third stood tall. All three appeared to be above thirty years of age.

Impact:

The impact on Sawsan and her family, mainly her eldest daughter Zainab, has been devastating. Sawsan, acknowledging her advanced age, expresses the profound repercussions of the trauma. However, she emphasises that Zainab, only seventeen years old, has her entire life ahead of her. The sexual violence inflicted upon Zainab has left her grappling with severe psychological issues, rendering her highly traumatised.

Furthermore, Sawsan has had to abandon her home, husband, and community, now finding herself living as a refugee with an uncertain future. Sawsan describes the immense difficulty she faces, exacerbated by the fact that the perpetrators subjected her to sexual violence in the presence of her children.

"It would have been better if I had died. I can't bear the shame and guilt every day."

Regarding the pursuit of justice, Sawsan asserts that once the rule of law is reinstated in Sudan, she envisions the execution of all perpetrators. She also believes that on the day of judgment, these perpetrators will have to answer for their crimes in the presence of God.

Sawsan concludes by highlighting the grim reality that, even if the war were to end, she could not return home. The community is aware of the traumatic events endured by her and her daughter, and the prevailing stigma against rape survivors in Sudanese society is a formidable barrier.

Testimonies of Torture done by the SAF

As mentioned in the methodology section, all the names and other personal details have been taken out of these testimonies. Only the actual names of the Perpetrators are being kept. There is no mention of any perpetrator in the first testimony, as the survivor couldn't recall any of them.

• Testimony 01

Khalifa is a local activist from North Darfur. He is also a dedicated volunteer teacher and bookshop owner. His active involvement in community affairs and commitment to supporting those affected by conflict have made him a respected leader in the region. The outbreak of war on April 15, 2023, between the SAF and the paramilitary group RSF in Khartoum resulted in a significant influx of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to North Darfur, exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation. In response, Khalifa dedicated himself to assisting the IDPs through his work, providing vital support and advocacy for those in need.

In June, Khalifa, accompanied by his sister and his friend Ahmed, a 28-year-old businessman, embarked on a journey to the White Nile State to facilitate Khalifa's sister's medical surgery. At approximately 11 a.m., their bus came to a halt at a checkpoint manned by the SAF in Rabak.

Upon reaching the checkpoint, several SAF officers boarded the bus and began questioning the passengers about their origins. Most passengers, including Khalifa and his companions, hailed from East Darfur.

“The SAF believes that the people of East Darfur are loyal to RSF.”

They were told to disembark, and once the passengers were outside, the soldiers commenced beating them mercilessly with sticks and rifle butts. Following the assault, the soldiers proceeded to inspect the identity cards of all the passengers. While most were permitted to continue their journey, Khalifa and his friend Ahmed were singled out and detained.

Separated from his sister, who continued her journey to Wad Madani with the other passengers, Khalifa and Ahmed were forcibly placed into a vehicle by several soldiers and transported to an unknown location. Khalifa recalls feeling disoriented and unaware of their whereabouts, as he was unfamiliar with Rabak and the surrounding area.

“I don't know where we were taken as I don't know anything about Rabak.”

After arriving at the large building, Khalifa and his friend Ahmed were taken inside, where they encountered numerous other detainees. They were subjected to further beating before being confined to a small, overcrowded room alongside eight to ten different individuals. The room lacked adequate lighting and ventilation, leaving them in perpetual darkness and

discomfort. Bare necessities such as sleeping space and sanitary facilities were scarce, forcing them to use a jerry can for urination and bathroom purposes.

Throughout his detention, Khalifa endured severe deprivation, often receiving only one meal a day or sometimes going without food for extended periods, enduring hunger and malnutrition. The following day, Khalifa was subjected to another round of interrogation. Blindfolded and surrounded by several soldiers, he was relentlessly questioned about his alleged connections to the RSF and his background, including his work and education. Despite Khalifa's insistence on his innocence and truthful responses, the soldiers continued to assault him, using the butt of their guns to inflict physical harm.

The interrogation persisted for two to three hours, leaving Khalifa physically and emotionally battered. In subsequent days, he faced further interrogation sessions focused on extracting information about the resistance committee and its members. Despite the mounting pressure, Khalifa resorted to deception, providing false information to protect himself and his associates from further harm.

“If I had spoken the truth, then it would endanger the lives of my friends and colleagues.”

Following the brutal beatings endured during his detention, Khalifa remained imprisoned without further physical violence. However, his ordeal persisted as he languished in detention, uncertain of his fate. Fortunately, Khalifa's familiarity with soldiers from his hometown provided a glimmer of hope. Khalifa communicated with officers through their intervention, asserting his innocence and emphasising his commitment to charitable endeavours and community service.

After several weeks of uncertainty, Khalifa's friend Ahmed was released in early July. It wasn't until July 14 that Khalifa himself was finally freed, thanks to the testimonies of soldiers from his hometown affirming his non-involvement with the RSF. Upon regaining his freedom, Khalifa promptly contacted his family to reassure them of his safety.

However, the lingering threat posed by the escalating conflict and the imminent takeover by the RSF cast a shadow over Khalifa's future. Recognising the potential danger, Khalifa's family urged him to depart North Darfur before the situation worsened. He spent a brief respite of twelve days at home, then went to South Sudan and finally to Uganda.

Impact:

The beatings Khalifa endured during his detention left a lasting impact on his physical and mental well-being. He continues to suffer from persistent headaches, making it difficult for him to sleep at night. Once a prominent figure in his community, Khalifa now finds himself displaced in a foreign land, separated from his parents, friends, and family, and living the life of a refugee.

Conclusion:

Khalifa attributes his ordeal to his activism and involvement with the resistance committee when asked about it. He believes that the SAF targeted him because they view the resistance committee as an enemy organisation. Despite the injustices he has faced, Khalifa remains hopeful for justice in the future. He believes the RSF and SAF will be held accountable for their actions once the war ends.

• Testimony 02

Liphar was a prominent businessman and dedicated human rights defender from Sennar state—with the eruption of the war in Khartoum, a wave of IDPs sought refuge in Sennar. In response, Liphar and other impassioned youths and activists from Sennar established an emergency facility in one of the local markets. This facility served as a lifeline for those fleeing the conflict, providing essential support such as food, medicine, and other necessities. Additionally, they collaborated with international organisations, offering crucial data on the IDPs.

On December 22, 2023, at approximately 12 pm, a convoy comprising ten vehicles representing a collaboration of SAF, National Intelligence, and the Police descended upon the Al Ashbia market. Swiftly and alarmingly, they rounded up numerous individuals, leading to the arbitrary arrest of twelve people. The authorities instructed these twelve individuals to board the vehicles, and when someone dared to inquire about the reason, the response was brutal - they were subjected to beatings with the butt ends of the guns. After releasing a few of the arrested individuals, the rest had their hands bound, were blindfolded, and forcibly placed in the vehicles.

First Detention Location - Division 17 of the Office of Military Intelligence:

The joint forces transported them to Division 17 of the Office of Military Intelligence in Singa. Subsequently, everyone, except for Liphar and another individual named Abdullah, was released. Liphar vividly recalls the horrifying ordeal upon arrival at the military intelligence office. The blindfold was removed, and he was immediately confronted by six soldiers who commenced a relentless beating. Three of them wielded plastic sticks, while another brandished a whip, subjecting Liphar to a brutal assault lasting one and a half hours.

“As I get unconscious of the beatings, they put me into a room with fourteen to sixteen other people.”

Liphar vividly describes the detention centre as a cramped room measuring three by two meters, housing fourteen to sixteen individuals. The room lacked electricity and windows, plunging the detainees into perpetual darkness. The harsh conditions extended to the daily sustenance provided, with each person receiving only one meal, half a loaf of bread, and a meagre four litres of water shared among them for the entire day.

The detainees' access to necessities, such as bathroom facilities, was severely restricted. Soldiers would escort them to the bathroom every morning, allowing a mere 30 to 40 seconds for their essential needs. Any deviation from this strict timeframe resulted in forceful interruptions by the soldiers, leading to an immediate return to the confinement of the room. In the absence of regular bathroom breaks, detainees were compelled to use jerry cans for urination on the remaining days, further exacerbating the deplorable conditions they endured.

Following the initial brutal beating, Liphar was confined to the room without further interrogation or action for the subsequent five days. However, on the sixth day, an officer from the SAF arrived and subjected Liphar to questioning regarding his involvement in aiding IDPs, the source of his funding, and allegations of providing lists of NCP leaders and SAF soldiers to the RSF. Liphar vehemently denied any knowledge or involvement in such activities, asserting that he had not provided any lists to anyone.

“It was cold. They threw water over me and then beat me almost for an hour with sticks and then put me back in the room.”

On December 29, at approximately 1 am, Liphar was abruptly taken from the detention room by soldiers. He was transported to a public area where he was subjected to further beating. The soldiers doused him with water, exposing him to the biting cold, before unleashing a relentless barrage of beatings with sticks for nearly an hour. After enduring this horrifying ordeal, Liphar was returned to the confines of the detention room.

The following morning, a few soldiers from outside arrived at the detention centre and inquired if any of the detainees had complaints. Liphar asked about the reasons and legal grounds for his detention, but his inquiries were silent as the soldiers ignored him and left. Despite the persistence of Liphar's family in seeing him, their attempts were thwarted, and they were denied access to him.

During his time in detention, Liphar became aware of three teenage boys from the Suki area of Sennar who claimed to be victims of sexual exploitation by the soldiers of the SAF. Liphar recounts a particularly harrowing incident when soldiers took him outside, displayed a bullet, and menacingly informed him that they had orders to kill him. Throughout his 19-day stay at Division 17 of the Office of Military Intelligence, Liphar endured two more beatings, resulting in severe damage to his back. Even after his transfer to another location, the lingering effects of the beatings persist, preventing him from sleeping on his back.

Perpetrators:

Liphar vividly recalls the names of individuals responsible for the atrocities at the detention centre. Colonel Tarek, whom Liphar identifies as the head of the detention centre, was the orchestrator of the orders for torture. Described as in his late 40s, overweight, and of Arab ethnicity, Colonel Tarek is rumoured to hail from the River Nile state.

Another perpetrator is Ser Al Khatim Al Khalifa, an officer responsible for administering torture. His small stature and Arab ethnicity characterise him as being in his early 40s. He actively participated in beating Liphar during his detention.

Abu Median, a soldier over 40 years old, also engaged in the torture of detainees. Abu Median, an Arab, played a role in the harrowing experiences of those detained.

Liphar also recalls another tormentor named Al Fadael Farosh, a black Sudanese soldier in his late 30s. Al Fadael Farosh subjected Liphar to beatings with sticks, contributing to the physical and psychological trauma he endured during his detention. Identifying these individuals sheds light on the perpetrators behind the human rights violations at the Division 17 detention centre.

Second Location – Headquarters of National Intelligence and Security Services in Singa, Sennar:

On January 10, 2024, Liphar was transferred to the Headquarters of National Intelligence and Security Services in Singa, Sennar, marking the beginning of a 40-day ordeal. Initially placed in a public space, he and eleven other detainees were moved to the roof. The following day, Liphar found himself in an interrogation room, facing a member of the SAF named Colonel Atta.

Colonel Atta posed familiar questions, inquiring about the source of funds for supporting the IDPs, questioning Liphar's alleged provision of lists to the RSF, and suggesting that if there was excess food, it should be directed to the SAF instead of the IDPs. In a chilling declaration, Colonel Atta stated, **"No revolution, no shalaga, no gil-adab, (meaning that there won't be any revolution or never interfere and never behave mischievously) "**, implying a stark warning or threat.

The shift to the National Intelligence and Security Services headquarters introduced Liphar to a new phase of his detention, characterised by continued interrogations and a heightened sense of coercion and intimidation.

Liphar responded to Colonel Atta's inquiries by explaining that the funds supporting their initiatives originated from community-wide crowdfunding efforts. On the same day, he faced another round of interrogation, where he was asked about his perspective on the ongoing war and whether he had been part of the dismantling committee established during the transition period to recover public funds from members of the NCP. In response, Liphar truthfully acknowledged his involvement in the community during that period and expressed his desire for the war to end promptly due to its widespread impact on civilians throughout Sudan.

Following this interrogation, Liphar experienced a significant improvement in his living conditions. He and the eleven others on the roof were relocated to an air-conditioned room with proper lighting. In this new environment, the detainees were provided with meals - lentils (addas) for breakfast at 11 am and beans for dinner at 7 pm. Notably, there was no further incidence of beating or torture during Liphar's detention in this section of the National

Intelligence and Security Services headquarters. This contrast in treatment raises questions about the motivations behind Liphar's initial detention and the variations in conditions between the two locations.

On February 10, an officer informed Liphar of his impending release, stating there were no official charges against him. However, an Islamic leader named Ahmed Ombinen, who supported the SAF, opposed Liphar's release. Liphar speculated that this opposition stemmed from his previous role as the Minister of Finance in the Sennar government, suggesting that it might be an act of revenge for his arrest by the dismantling committee post-revolution.

Four days later, on February 14, Officer Umar, who headed the political section of the National Intelligence Security Service, summoned Liphar. Umar cautioned Liphar to refrain from engaging in humanitarian or political activities and emphasised the dominance of the NCP in the country. Umar went as far as to imply that Liphar's life was at risk if he did not comply, asserting that Liphar should be grateful for his current detainment as it prevented his potential execution at the hands of others. Liphar was then returned to his room.

“This is an NCP country, and if you don’t support SAF, then you will be killed. Also, you should thank god that you are here with us; if we send you back to your previous detention centre, they will simply shoot you.”

Subsequently, on January 19, Officer Umar presented Liphar with an official document stipulating his commitment to support the SAF and refrain from aiding rebel groups, including the RSF. Liphar complied and signed the document. The next day, January 20, Liphar was informed of his imminent release and instructed to gather his belongings. He was further ordered to leave Sennar immediately. Liphar complied and relocated to Al Gadareif, where he currently resides.

Impact:

The impact of the incident on Liphar's life has been profound and devastating. The widespread rumour of his collaboration with the RSF has damaged his reputation and led to significant personal and professional repercussions. Liphar has faced a complete upheaval in his life, losing all his business and experiencing a stark shift in how he is perceived within his community.

The community's pervasive belief that Liphar provided a list to the RSF has resulted in a social boycott. People in the community no longer engage in business with him, and he experiences a palpable isolation as others avoid interacting with him. The loss of trust and social standing has left Liphar alienated from the community he once belonged to, with even simple greetings going unanswered.

Moreover, the severity of the situation has forced Liphar to leave his town, distancing himself from his people and family. The fear for his life prevents him from visiting them, adding emotional distress to the tangible consequences of the false accusations. Liphar's life, once rooted in community and familial connections, has been irrevocably altered by the repercussions of the incident, leaving him isolated and facing an uncertain future.

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Conclusion:

Liphar's scepticism regarding justice prevailing in his situation reflects his deep-seated concerns about accountability. From the governor of Sennar, Al-Mahi Muhammad Suleiman al-Mahi, to the members of the Security Committee, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and Rapid Support Force (RSF), Liphar believes that everyone involved should be held accountable for the injustices he endured. However, he doubts the local justice system's capability to address these issues and places hope in the international community's intervention.

Liphar's apprehension extends beyond his past ordeal, as he now fears for his safety at his current location due to the presence of Islamist group members. The potential threat to his life underscores the ongoing challenges he faces even after his release. His primary desire is to find a haven, highlighting the critical need for external support and intervention, particularly from the international community, to ensure his safety and seek justice for the injustices he suffered.

• Testimony 03

Talga was born in 1999 in Al Jazirah state of Sudan. Despite having a graduate degree in accounting from the National Ribat University, he makes a living by driving a rickshaw, given the limited opportunities available after graduation.

Notably, Talga was an active member of the Resistance Committee, a civil society group committed to opposing authoritarianism. His involvement included advocating for the rights of citizens, addressing various social issues, and Spreading awareness about fundamental rights. On October 28, 2023, Talga's commitment to human rights advocacy led to his unlawful detention by the SAF.

The conflict in Khartoum erupted on April 15, leading to a significant influx of IDPs seeking refuge in Hasaheisa, then under the control of the SAF. Presently, the area is under the control of the RSF. At around 11 am on October 28, Talga, acting as a supervisor for the resistance group, was at the gathering points for IDPs. He facilitated the transfer of displaced individuals to three camps set up in local schools, using his rickshaw for transportation.

While refuelling his rickshaw, Talga was approached by two SAF soldiers identified as army intelligence officers. They requested that the paperwork for Talga's rickshaw be inspected. In response, he suggested calling his brother to bring the necessary documents. Instead of waiting, the soldiers boarded his rickshaw and instructed him to drive to their office, located to the east of the police station in Al Hasaheisa.

Upon arrival, the soldiers searched, confiscating 6000 Sudanese pounds (approximately 10 USD) from Talga's pocket. Subsequently, he was taken inside the office, where one officer stated,

"We finally got you; you have created so much problem for us."

Another officer, seizing Talga by the collar, accused him of posting on Facebook that he did not fear the military and referred to all military personnel as "dogs." Talga's activism on social media, where he advocated for the rights of the marginalised and highlighted local issues and human rights violations, became a focal point of the interrogation.

"Those days, I was posting about the freedom of my friend who the SAF has detained."

Following his detention, Talga endured a series of harrowing incidents of torture. Initially, the officer in charge subjected him to physical beatings before confining him to a small, windowless room illuminated only by a small light bulb. On the same day, at 3 pm, four soldiers escorted him to a car. They transported him to the Army Intelligence headquarters in Wad Madani, now effectively controlled by the RSF. He was placed in a cramped four-by-four room with 30 other detainees.

In this grim setting, detainees were provided meagre sustenance – four small pieces of bread and Addas (lentil) served daily. The initial three days in the room, he was passed without any physical abuse or torture. However, on the fourth day, the authorities instructed him to carry heavy salt containers between different locations. After complying with various tasks, Talga reached a point where he refused to perform any further work, asserting his innocence:

"You have arrested me without any charges; I am not doing any work for you."

His refusal marked a turning point, leading to brutal retaliation. Five soldiers forcibly escorted him to an interrogation room referred to as "Karkon." There, they subjected him to beatings with whips and sticks, along with the horrifying practice of waterboarding. Upon losing consciousness, he was abandoned in the interrogation room. As he struggled to breathe, an officer, noticing his deteriorating condition, ordered the soldiers to remove him from Karkon. This brutal cycle became an everyday routine, particularly with those five soldiers who had perpetrated the initial torture.

"Whenever those five soldiers are on duty, they used to take me out of the room, make me stand with my hands up in the air if I drop my hands down, they use to beat me and sometimes even took me to karkon."

Talga was denied access to the toilet during these episodes of torture. Throughout the abuse, the soldiers persistently alleged that he was responsible for instigating the conflict and accused him of collaborating with the RSF.

On November 11, Officer Mohammed Hamdan, Imam, and another unidentified officer summoned Talga and questioned him about his connection with the resistance committee. Fearing further repercussions, he initially denied any affiliation with the committee, choosing to lie to protect himself. However, the officers confronted him with a Facebook post from the resistance committee claiming his membership. At this point, the officers presented a document stating that he would be released if he signed it. The document outlined specific conditions:

"Leave the resistance committee, cease your work for IDPs, refrain from cooperating with any civil society, and should he ever be found engaging in any of the above activities, he would be treated as a collaborator of the Rapid Support Force (RSF)."

Facing pressure, Talga signed the document, leading to his immediate release. Upon returning home, he resumed his work as a rickshaw driver. However, the aftermath of his release was marred by mockery from SAF soldiers who would taunt him, saying, *"Did you like our hospitality?"*

Despite the challenges, Talga chose to re-engage with the resistance group, albeit in a more discreet manner. He shifted his involvement to virtual platforms, continuing his advocacy work through his mobile phone, recognising the ongoing risks associated with direct physical presence in the volatile environment.

RSF takeover on Hasaheisa:

"The resistance group realised that RSF would take over Hasaheisa any day, so we prepared emergency rooms and stocked them with food and basic medicines for first aid."

On December 21, the RSF officially assumed control of Hasaheisa, initiating a crackdown on civilians. Several members of the Resistance Committee, including some identified by a pre-existing list, were arrested by the RSF. In an attempt to escape the tightening grip, Talga initially sought refuge in the emergency room. Then, he eventually made his way to his village, Rofeuti, on December 27. RSF started going from village to village, and he realised he was not safe in the village.

Talga decided to go to Kassala in Eastern Sudan on January 3, 2024, where he stayed with a friend to ensure his safety. However, on January 9, he moved to Port Sudan, where he received a text message from a SAF military intelligence officer, claiming knowledge of his location and accusing him of collaborating with the RSF. Feeling increasingly unsafe, Talga left Port Sudan on January 18 and sought refuge in Uganda.

Perpetrators:

Talga's recollections indicate that two officers were identified during his ordeal. The first, a three-star officer, was named Mohammed Hamdan, while the second, a one-star officer, was known as Imam. Importantly, these officers were not personally involved in Talga's physical assault or torture; instead, the soldiers under their leadership committed these atrocities.

Talga could only recollect two of the soldiers' nicknames: Alsheigi and Gadoura. These soldiers played a crucial part in inflicting bodily pain and torture on him.

Impact:

The harrowing experiences recounted by Talga have left a profound and multifaceted impact on his life. Physically, the severe abuse and torture he endured during his detention have resulted in lasting pain and discomfort, exacerbated by ongoing struggles with sleep

disturbances. Emotionally and psychologically, the trauma inflicted upon him has left profound scars, manifesting in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as numbness triggered by everyday stimuli. This trauma has also eroded his sense of trust and security, leading to feelings of isolation and vulnerability in social interactions. Politically, his experiences have fueled a desire for justice and accountability, driving his advocacy for a civilian-led government and institutional reforms in Sudan. Moreover, the targeting of Talga based on his tribal affiliation underscores the complex interplay of ethnicity, tribalism, and political conflict in the region, deepening his sense of identity and solidarity with marginalised communities while heightening his awareness of systemic injustices.

Conclusion:

“I told my family everything that has happened to me but not to my friends as I don’t know whom to trust anymore.”

When questioned about his perception of justice, Talga emphasised the importance of establishing a civilian government in Sudan. He believes that a government led by civilians rather than military forces would be more accountable and responsive to the needs of the people. Furthermore, he called for accountability for both the SAF and RSF for their actions, suggesting that a system of checks and balances should be implemented to prevent abuses of power. His vision for justice extends beyond his personal experience, emphasising the need for institutional changes in Sudan, including judiciary and law enforcement reforms.

Reflecting on the reasons behind the injustices he endured, Talga identified his advocacy work for the IDPs in his area as a potential catalyst for the targeted actions against him. Additionally, he acknowledged the existence of a common perception among the SAF that people of his tribe are loyal to the RSF. This perception, based on tribal affiliations, further underscores the complex dynamics and challenges faced by individuals advocating for human rights in regions marked by conflict and political instability.

“I want the world to know that SAF and RSF are the opposite faces of the same coin.”

Talga still experiences widespread body pain and struggles with sleep, reflecting the lasting impact of his traumatic detention. Everyday noises and conversations trigger a sense of numbness reminiscent of the detention centre environment.

• Testimony 04

Danagla, born in 1993 in Al Jazirah State, Sudan, is a farmer and a college dropout. He is also a member of the Resistance Committee, a civil society group committed to opposing authoritarianism. Additionally, he is part of the initiative called "Yes to Peace, No to War," primarily focused on humanitarian work for IDPs after the war of April 15.

IDPs were increasing significantly in Al Hasaheisa, and the Resistance Committee was actively engaged in addressing the humanitarian needs arising from the conflict. On October 12, Danagla was in one of the hostels at the Faculty of Education, University of Gezira, overseeing the activities of the Resistance Committee. Three soldiers from the army intelligence entered

and inquired about an organisation called "Youth for Koosh," which focused on women's healthcare. They requested Danagla to accompany them.

"As soon as they asked me to come with them, I messaged the Resistance Committee WhatsApp group that SAF was detaining me, and I uninstalled WhatsApp from my phone."

He was taken to the military intelligence office near the public transport station. There, they presented him with a warrant stating that he was a spy for the RSF and placed him in a cramped two-by-one room with nine other detainees.

"My friends came to meet me at the office with food, but the soldiers confiscated the food, stating that your friend is not here. I refrained from eating the provided food, fearing it might be laced with poison."

The following day, Danagla was transported to the headquarters of Division 1 of the Army Intelligence Unit in Wad Madani. There, he was confined to a four-by-four room with 37 other detainees, including Mobin, a member of the Resistance Committee from Khartoum. The room, characterised by a single window and fan, proved challenging for the occupants. Many detainees suffered from various diseases, predominantly asthma. The overcrowded conditions and dirty water provided for drinking exacerbated the hardships faced by those inside.

On October 14, the soldiers subjected him to solitary confinement for the next five days. On October 19, four soldiers removed Danagla from isolation and transported him to an interrogation room. There, they brutally beat him using gun butts, fists, and sticks while posing questions such as:

"How does the Resistance Committee operate, and where does it receive its funding? What is your connection with the RSF?"

The soldiers presented a document urging Danagla to sign, stipulating that he would now *"support SAF in the war of Karama, stay away from politics, and cease all volunteering work."* Refusing to sign, he endured further beatings. Subsequently, he was dragged outside by the soldiers to an area already occupied by approximately 350 detainees, where everyone was required to lie down on the ground continuously.

"We were all obligated to pray five times a day, and if they caught us not praying, they would initiate beatings."

Danagla remained on the ground until his release on October 29. During this period, he was taken to the interrogation room five times, enduring severe beatings each time. The soldiers taunted, stating, ***"You Resistance Committee members believe that you guys are the state; you do the state's work."*** On October 29, following the torture, the soldiers presented another document to Danagla and informed him that they would release him upon his signature. The document stipulated that he must leave Sudan within two months, refrain from supporting RSF, and cease all humanitarian work.

"I signed it because I was weak and couldn't take it anymore."

Around 7 in the evening, he was released. Initially, he went to his grandmother's house, where he stayed for two days. Later, he returned home, spending the next twenty-five days mostly indoors. He limited his outings to the market to sell his accumulated harvest.

On December 21, RSF took over Hasaheisa, and they searched for him at his house, issuing threats that they would kill him if he remained in Hasaheisa. Fearing for his life, Danagla decided to leave Hasaheisa on January 5, 2024. Initially, he sought refuge with his uncle, and from there, he went to his cousin's house for six days. Subsequently, on January 19, 2024, he journeyed to Port Sudan, and the next day, he flew out of the country.

Perpetrators:

He remembers that the person in charge of the facility was Mohammed Hamdan, and although he doesn't know the names of the other soldiers, he asserts that he could recognise them if he were to reencounter them.

Impact:

The traumatic experiences endured by Danagla have left a profound and multifaceted impact on every aspect of his life. Physically, the severe beatings and torture inflicted upon him during his detention have likely resulted in lasting physical pain, injuries, and potential long-term health complications. Emotionally and psychologically, Danagla's ordeal has left deep scars, manifesting in symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as flashbacks, nightmares, and emotional numbness. Moreover, the coercive tactics used by authorities have eroded his sense of trust and security, fostering feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression. Socially, Danagla's experiences have strained his relationships and interactions, as evidenced by the threats issued by RSF soldiers against his life, leading him to abandon his home and seek refuge elsewhere. The trauma of his detention has fundamentally altered Danagla's outlook on life, leaving him grappling with profound challenges as he navigates the aftermath of his traumatic experiences.

Conclusion:

"For me, leaving my country was the only viable option to save my life."

A friend from the Resistance committee, aware of Danagla's ordeal in detention and after that, is the only person acquainted with the whole story. He has chosen not to disclose everything to his family. To cope with the trauma, Danagla initially turned to heavy drinking, but he has since shifted his focus to reading, finding solace in books, particularly those on politics.

Regarding justice, Danagla believes that the citizens of Sudan deserve collective justice, considering the widespread impact of the ongoing, undesired war in the country. He admits to facing difficulties in sleeping, but the situation has gradually improved over time.

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Testimonies of Torture done by the RSF

As mentioned in the methodology section, all the names and other personal details have been taken out of these testimonies. Only the actual names of the Perpetrators are being kept.

• Testimony 01

Ahmad, a resident of Nyala, is a prominent local activist who has travelled extensively to advocate for justice for the people of Darfur, who have been subjected to violations for many years. In 2002, Ahmad travelled to Libya, where he worked with the Arabic Sudanese Committee, which focused on monitoring and reporting human rights violations in the Darfur region. In 2005, he moved to Italy, where he founded the Zaghawa Association, before travelling to Ukraine and Slovakia. In December 2005, Ahmed arrived in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, where he became involved in peace negotiations between the Sudanese government and Darfur rebel groups before relocating to Libya again. In 2008, Ahmed returned to Nyala, Sudan. However, for personal reasons, he parted ways with the committee and began living his own life, working as a driver, and becoming active in local politics.

On the morning of May 13, 2023, Ahmed found himself at a local mechanic shop, tending to repair his taxi. Then, two RSF soldiers, in their uniforms with faces covered, approached him directly, addressing him by name. Their abrupt demand for compliance startled Ahmed, prompting him to inquire about their identity and purpose. In response, one of the soldiers shouted at him not to question but to obey their command.

Ahmed hesitated, prompting the soldiers to summon additional reinforcement. Before he could fully comprehend the situation, Ahmed found himself blindfolded and his hands bound, surrounded by a total of four soldiers within the confines of their vehicle. Despite his resistance, he was swiftly taken and transported away forcefully.

“I didn’t tell them; I have my car here as I had my laptop, phone and documents, and it had sensitive information I could never give up to RSF”.

As Ahmed was blindfolded, he had no clue where the soldiers were taking him; after fifteen minutes, the car stopped, and Ahmed heard someone asking, “Did you bring him”? Then they put him in a room, hand-tied and blindfolded. After almost five hours, someone came and took Ahmed to another room. A voice ordered to untie Ahmed’s hand and remove the blindfold, and Ahmed was also ordered to sit on the table. As soon as Ahmed’s blindfold was removed, he saw the officer and instantly recognised him; his name is Absut, and he used to work with the General Intelligence Service (NISS) in Nyala earlier, but now he is working for the RSF, Absut also recognises Ahmed. Absut asked Ahmed whether he was okay and whether he knew why he had been brought here. Ahmed replied, ***I don’t know, I have no idea***. Then Absut said, you have been brought here so that you can work for us; we know everything

about you, and we know you send reports against us, but if you work for us and tell us everything in detail of what you have been doing then it will be better for you. Ahmed replied, ***"I don't work for anyone; I don't send or prepare any report; I am just a teacher and a taxi driver"***. Absut replied, ***"I know you are lying, and if you do as we say, we will release you"***.

Then Absut ordered the soldier to take him back, and the soldiers took him to a different room, a small room with the whole floor covered in urine. Inside the room, Ahmed told the soldiers he wanted to pray; the soldiers said to do whatever they wanted inside and then left. Around midnight, two soldiers came looking for him with a flashlight; they torched the flashlight on him, asked him if he was Ahmed, and took him to another room. In the room, they said, ***"Why aren't you giving us the information we need? Do you want us to deal with you in another way?"*** Ahmed replied, ***"I don't have any information to share with you."*** A third soldier also came into the room and asked Ahmed to stand up, then one of them kicked Ahmed on his chest, and he fell to the ground. Then they tied his hands and legs, hanged him upside down, and started beating him with sticks while beating the soldiers, saying, ***"Now, you will give us all the information."*** The beating continued for almost two hours; when Ahmed was unconscious, they took him down and took him back again to the room from where they had picked him up. Due to the beating, Ahmed's thumb and middle finger of the right hand have been broken, and their back is also severely injured.

The next day, around 12 noon, a soldier came to the room with a soda bottle and a sandwich; Ahmed was still unconscious from the beating.

"I couldn't even open my eyes, then he threw salted water on me, and the pain multiplied due to all the cuts my body had after the beating, and my eyes also opened due to the pain."

The soldier gave Ahmed the soda and sandwich and told him he uses that bottle for urine when he drinks soda. Ahmed recalls that it took him almost two hours to eat a piece of sandwich due to pain. Then Ahmed prayed all the prayers that he had missed just by standing in the room as the room was too small to move up and down and also full of urine, and he couldn't move his body due to pain and cuts. At that time, the RSF didn't take complete control of Nyala; from the room, Ahmed could hear the bullet firing sound. That's how he assumed that he was in the RSF control area. He stayed in the room for eight days, getting one meal a day, i.e., Egyptian peanut and one loaf of bread, having to urinate in a bottle only, and not getting to use the bathroom for eight days. After eight days, soldiers returned and took Ahmed to the Absut office.

On seeing Ahmed, Absut says, ***"How are you? I hope you can give us the information now."*** Ahmed replied, ***"I have been saying from the beginning that I don't have any information to share."*** Absut slapped Ahmed, who hit his eyes, and for that slap, Ahmed still took eye drops. Then Absut ordered the soldiers to take him back to the room. Ahmed is not sure of the date, but one day, soldiers blindfolded him, tied his hand, and took him to the car; after the vehicle stopped, he heard one of the soldiers asking, ***"Do you want him?"*** Then the soldiers brought him back; from the day of visiting Absut's office for the second time, Ahmed spent around twelve days in the room again.

On the 21st day of Ahmed's detention, soldiers took him out of the room and told him that you could pray. They also showed him a bathroom and a clean room and said that if you wanted to rest, you could sleep there. Only after thirty minutes, a soldier came and asked, **"Who took him out and who brought him in?"** another soldier replied, **"I don't know who brought him out, but he is Absut's guy."** The soldier called someone named Youssef, and Youssef said that he knew he was Absut's guy about Ahmed. Then soldiers took him back to the room; the next day, in the early morning, Ahmed was taken back to Absut's office, but this time, there was a different officer in there; first, he asked the same questions also asked him that whether does he know Nahar Usman Nahar to which Ahmed replied that yes, he is political secretary of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Then the officer said, I know you work for JEM; tell me who all the other members work with you. He also said that:

"You are a qualified man. We want you to work for us. We didn't want this war SAF did, and we also want to stop all the human rights violations happening due to war. We want you to talk to media on behalf of RSF and tell them we respect human rights".

Ahmed replied, **"I left the committee and JEM and am just a civilian."** Then the officer ordered the soldier to tell him to take this guy to his people when Absut returned; the soldiers brought Ahmed to the room, and he spent another six days there. After the soldiers returned him to Absut's office, Absut ordered Youssef to take Ahmed. Around 12, the soldiers tied his hand, blindfolded him, and put him in a car.

"I was sure they were going to kill me now; I remembered my family and started reciting Shahada; I even decided that if they asked me one more time, then I would give them all the information".

The car stopped, and Ahmed could sense that they were taking him down the stairs; two soldiers were grabbing his arms from both sides. Ahmed asked the soldiers, **"Are you Muslim?"** Immediately, the soldier threw him off the stairs, and Ahmed fell and hit a wall; he didn't even try to stand up again as he was too scared that if he tried to move, then he would be shot and killed. Someone dragged Ahmed by the legs and put him in an empty barrel upside down, where he passed away. When Ahmed gained consciousness, he sensed that he was in a room and thought he was back in the same room where he was detained. The next day, a soldier came and removed his blindfold, gave him a bottle of water, and also ordered him to use the bottle to urinate; that's also when Ahmed found out he had been shifted to another location. He spent approximately seventeen days here. Soldiers used to come and threaten him, but no torture or beating happened here. Ahmed is not sure of the exact date, but he assumes that it was June 18 when the soldiers took him to Kaas, where he spent another four days in detention. Then, one day, the soldiers took him in the car and threw him out near the fuel station; the locals found him and gave him first aid.

On June 23rd, Ahmed went to his home, but he found no one there; his neighbours informed him that his family had moved to another area at a relative's house. He met his family at a relative's house, and they decided to leave Sudan together.

Perpetrators:

Ahmed remembers two perpetrators from his ordeal. The first is Absut, a man in his mid-thirties from the Arab Zaghawa tribe. He is tall and thin. The second perpetrator is named Youssef, who is in his late twenties and of Arab ethnicity. Youssef is shorter in height compared to Absut.

Impact:

Ahmed has been deeply traumatised by his ordeal. His physical injuries, including broken fingers and bruises from beatings, are painful reminders of the violence he endured. Additionally, the emotional toll is evident as he struggles with nightmares and disrupted sleep patterns. The psychological scars run deep, making it difficult for Ahmed to imagine returning to Sudan and resuming his life there.

Conclusion:

In reflecting on his harrowing experience, Ahmed attributes the ordeal to his role as a local activist, tirelessly advocating for the marginalised. His commitment to seeking justice and speaking out against injustice made him a target for those who wished to silence dissenting voices. When asked about who is responsible for his condition, Ahmed points to Absut, noting his reputation for brutality and his affiliation with the RSF. He holds Absut and the RSF accountable for the injustice inflicted upon him.

Regarding the pursuit of justice, Ahmed emphasises the importance of accountability for all involved. He believes that each perpetrator should be held accountable in a fair trial, ensuring that justice is served for the atrocities committed. Amidst the turmoil, Ahmed finds solace in prayer, offering him peace and comfort during these trying times.

• Testimony 02

Good, a human rights lawyer with over ten years of experience in litigation both in Khartoum and Central Darfur courts, has been a staunch advocate for justice and accountability. He has tirelessly taken on various cases of human rights violations, holding perpetrators accountable and seeking justice for the victims. Good's efforts have led to the imprisonment of numerous soldiers currently working for the RSF, ensuring that they face the consequences of their actions.

The ongoing conflict between the SAF and the paramilitary group RSF erupted on April 15, 2023, starting in Khartoum and quickly spreading to Zalingei, Central Darfur. The initial confrontation between RSF and SAF occurred in the Alstad area.

"I was in my office nearby when I noticed around forty RSF vehicles heading towards the SAF headquarters,"

As RSF approached, SAF retaliated, leading to an exchange of gunfire between the two factions. The escalating violence prompted the closure of markets, with RSF responding with

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heavy weaponry. In the chaos, SAF shelled the Congomia and market areas, resulting in the tragic deaths of four civilians, including Good's acquaintance, Ahmed Khalil. Amidst the ongoing clashes, Good sought refuge in the market, hiding for an hour before finding an opportunity to escape to his home. The clashes continued until 6 pm, and later that night, a tribal group affiliated with RSF looted Zalingei's primary market.

On July 24, conflict erupted again, this time in Good's neighbourhood. A bomb struck the home of Good's neighbour, Mohammed, and Good heard screams from his house.

"I jumped the wall of Mohammed's house and found him there injured below his stomach; blood was flowing from his body."

All other members of Mohammed's household were female, so Good took immediate action, rushing him to the hospital. Good remained by Mohammed's side throughout the night, providing support and assistance. The following day, July 25, while Good was near the hospital with his friend Ahmed, they were approached by two soldiers clad in RSF uniforms, their faces covered and carrying firearms. Without warning, they seized Good, ignoring Ahmed's pleas for his release, and forcibly transported him in a vehicle to the military police station located east of the hospital.

Upon arrival, one of the perpetrators interrogated Good, inquiring about his office keys and making ominous statements about recognising him. Another assailant accused Good, stating, ***"It's because of you that I have to spend seven years in jail."***

Subsequently, Good was taken to the General Intelligence Service (NISS) office east of Zalingei. There, he was coerced into cooking meals and washing clothes for his captors. Good witnessed a constant stream of individuals coming and going during his time there.

"I recognised six of them whom I have sent to jail as they were criminals; one of them was Hamdan Deolo, whom I put up in jail in a child rape case in 2017, he is a big criminal, and none of the lawyers was ready to go against him, but I manage to put him up behind bars for twenty years."

Hamdan Deolo, another individual familiar with Good, subjected him to further threats and physical violence, exacerbating Good's already dire situation. On July 27, Deolo entered Good's confinement and accused him of inadequately performing his assigned tasks. In a display of aggression, Deolo proceeded to assault Good physically, kicking him in the chest and then using a stick to inflict further harm, all while other RSF soldiers cheered him on, revelling in Good's suffering and encouraging more violence.

However, on July 30, a glimmer of hope emerged when an officer named Issa offered Good assistance in escaping his captivity. Issa promised to aid Good in leaving Zalingei, and true to his word, Good was released on the same day after convincing the RSF authorities that he had no affiliation with the SAF. Upon regaining his freedom, Good embarked on a journey to assess the damage inflicted upon his life and livelihood. His first stop was his office, where he discovered the devastating aftermath of his detention: all his documents and papers had been

incinerated, and he had lost his prized lawyer's stamp, symbolising years of hard work and dedication.

"In Sudan, after practising for ten years, a lawyer earns a special stamp; I had just obtained mine, and now it's gone."



(marks of beating)

After his release, Good wasted no time reuniting with his family, seeking comfort and reassurance amidst the turmoil they had endured. On August 5, along with his family, Good departed Zalingei and travelled to Nyala. By October 3, Good and his family found themselves in South Sudan. Later, they came to Uganda.

Perpetrators:

Good recall the names of individuals involved in his ordeal, shedding light on their identities and affiliations. Among them is Mohammed Deolo, a member of the Rezegat Arab tribe, who Good discloses was convicted for the heinous crime of raping a child and subsequently sentenced to twenty years of imprisonment. Mohammed Deolo, described as being in his late thirties, emerges as a central figure in the events that unfolded.

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Additionally, Good remembers the names of two other individuals implicated in his detention and mistreatment. One of them is Issa, while the other goes by Altut. Both Issa and Altut are identified as belonging to the Arab tribe, further contextualising the dynamics at play within the group responsible for Good's ordeal.

Impact:

The trauma inflicted upon him by his unjust detention, mistreatment, and forced displacement has had far-reaching consequences, both personally and professionally.

Foremost among these impacts is the profound emotional trauma endured by Good. The ordeal he suffered at the hands of the RSF has left him deeply traumatised, with lasting psychological scars. The experience of being arbitrarily detained, subjected to physical violence, and humiliated has undoubtedly taken a toll on his mental well-being, leaving him with deep-seated feelings of fear, anxiety, and distress.

Moreover, the forced displacement from his home and country has upended Good's life, robbing him of his sense of security, belonging, and stability. Having been compelled to flee his homeland for safety and refuge, Good now grapples with the challenges of rebuilding his life in a new and unfamiliar environment. The loss of his home, community, and familiar surroundings has further compounded his sense of dislocation and disorientation, leaving him struggling to come to terms with the upheaval wrought by his traumatic experience.

In addition to the emotional toll, Good has also suffered significant professional setbacks because of his ordeal. The destruction of his office and the loss of all his vital documents, including his stamps, represent a devastating blow to his career and livelihood. Years of hard work, dedication, and professional achievements have been wiped out instantly, leaving Good bereft of the tangible symbols of his legal expertise and accomplishments. In particular, the loss of his stamps holds profound symbolic significance, representing the erasure of his professional identity and the extinguishing of his hopes and aspirations for the future.

Conclusion:

Despite his immense challenges and hardships, Good remains resolute in his pursuit of justice and restoration. Fueled by his unwavering commitment to truth, accountability, and human rights, Good is determined to seek redress for his injustices and hold the perpetrators accountable for their actions.

With unwavering resolve and determination, Good plans to leverage his legal expertise and professional skills to pursue legal recourse against those responsible for his ordeal. As a seasoned human rights lawyer, he is prepared to take on the formidable task of prosecuting the perpetrators and seeking justice for himself and others who have fallen victim to the atrocities committed by the RSF.

Despite the immense challenges, Good remains hopeful about the future. He firmly believes that justice will prevail, and that the day will come when he can return to his homeland,

resume his legal practice, and continue his noble mission of defending the rights and liberties of the innocent.

• Testimony 03

Faheem holds the esteemed position of Sheikh within one of the camps in Central Darfur, a role he has fulfilled since 2009. A dedicated family man, he is married to three women and is a father to nine children. Faheem's multifaceted engagement encompasses tireless work with IDPs, where he resolves their issues and undertakes advocacy efforts for the camp's situation. Furthermore, he coordinates with other camps on pressing matters and serves as a human rights defender. In addition to his advocacy work, Faheem also pursues farming.

On the morning of February 15, 2024, at approximately 10 a.m., Faheem attended a steering committee meeting in Zalingei. The meeting, attended by fellow human rights workers, humanitarian leaders, and Sheikhs, aimed to provide an update on various camps in central Darfur. ***"I attended the meeting to advocate for the dire humanitarian situation in our camp, where we were grappling with acute shortages of food, water, and medicine,"*** Faheem explained.

Arriving at the meeting via a tuk-tuk rickshaw, Faheem's presence soon took an unexpected turn. A person identifying himself as Saad Abu Bakr, an RSF security intelligence officer, approached Faheem and instructed him to accompany them to their office. Saad Abu Bakr was armed with a small gun, accompanied by another individual named Musa Gurdan, carrying a Kalashnikov. Both were in civilian attire. Initially hesitant, Faheem declined their request to go to their office. In response, they issued threats and summoned another tuk-tuk to transport the three of them to the RSF Fauj, located east of Zalingei, where the security intelligence office is situated.

Upon arrival at the RSF office, Musa Gurdan confiscated Faheem's phone and 15,000 Sudanese pounds (approximately 25 USD) from him, which he had at that time. Musa Gurdan insisted that Faheem unlock his phone, but Faheem firmly refused.

"I told him that if you have any questions for me, I can answer, but I am not going to open my phone; it's my privacy," Faheem asserted. In response, Musa Gurdan summoned three soldiers who arrived with whips. They forcibly made Faheem sit on a chair, tied his hands behind it, and began beating him with whips. Despite the resistance, they compelled Faheem to provide his thumbprint and unlock his phone and all associated social media accounts.

"I even have to give them my Gmail password."

The brutal beating persisted for an hour. While soldiers physically assaulted Faheem, Musa Gurdan examined the contents of his phone. After an hour of beating, Musa Gurdan ordered the soldiers to stop, asserting to Faheem, ***"It's us (RSF) who control Sudan now; your advocacy on social media cannot do anything. You are in contact with the Aawfi organisation, the Darfur Network, and the ICC. You are working against the RSF, and we are going to kill you."***

Following these threats, they gave Faheem a three-day ultimatum to disclose all his activities and affiliations with organisations from 2014 onwards. They demanded comprehensive information on his interaction and communication with any individual or organisation regarding the RSF. Subsequently, Faheem was confined to a room with fourteen other people.

The detention room housing Faheem and fourteen other individuals measured a mere two by six meters and was devoid of any source of light or windows. The detainees endured grim conditions, receiving only one meal per day, which the families of the detainees themselves supplied. Additionally, the RSF provided a single jerry can of water for all fifteen individuals, with this limited supply intended to last throughout the day.

The lack of proper sanitation facilities added to the hardship. Detainees were compelled to use plastic bags for their bathroom needs, storing them until evening when a soldier brought a dustbin. In this receptacle, the detainees could dispose of their waste. These deplorable conditions further underscored the challenging and inhumane circumstances faced by those held within the confines of the RSF detention centre.

Faheem was regularly taken to the office of Atahir Bashir, an RSF officer, for interrogation at 12 pm and 6 am each day. Faheem claims that Atahir Bashir had previously served in the police force but had joined the RSF at the onset of the war. The questions remained consistent throughout the interrogations, revolving around inquiries such as ***"Who else works for or with you?"*** and ***"What organisations do you work for?"***

"I didn't provide any information to anyone," Faheem explained. I told him, ***'You have seen my mobile phone; you know everything.' I saved all the numbers on my mobile phone with nicknames, not real ones. If I had given them any names, I would have put lives in danger."***

On March 5, 2024, at approximately 11 pm, seven soldiers forcibly took Faheem to an interrogation room. They drenched him in water and subjected him to severe beatings with whips led by a commander named Khalil. During the beating, Faheem was made to stand with his hands in the air. This brutal treatment persisted until 5 in the morning, causing severe damage to his back and other body parts.

Around 11 am on March 6, the RSF summoned three leaders from IDP camps. They presented Faheem with a document stipulating that he would no longer be permitted to engage in humanitarian or political work. Under duress, Faheem signed the document and provided his thumb impression, with the three IDP camp leaders acting as witnesses. Subsequently, he was released from detention.

Perpetrators:

Saad Abu Bakr, hailing from the Beni Halba Arab tribe, is approximately 50 years old and is characterised by a medium build. Musa Gurdan, an Arab of relatively young age in his late

30s, is distinguished by his short stature. Atahir Bashir, also of Arab descent, surpasses 50 years of age. Commander Khalil, the eldest among them, exceeds 60 years old.

Faheem is familiar with these names but is unaware of the identities of the junior soldiers who participated in the beatings during his detention.

Impact:

The relentless beatings inflicted upon Faheem during his detention have resulted in severe injuries to various parts of his body, including his head, back, hip bones, shoulders, and testicles. The extent of the injuries has left him unable to sleep on his back, forcing him to adopt a stomach position for rest.

The profound impact of the traumatic experience extends beyond the physical realm, affecting Faheem's mental and emotional state. He continues to grapple with the psychological aftermath, struggling to find solace even when attempting to sleep. The haunting memories of the detention centre persist, making it challenging for him to escape the traumatic events he endured entirely.



(marks of torture)



Moreover, the shame associated with the experience has limited his disclosure to only one of his wives, highlighting the deeply personal and distressing nature of the ordeal.

Conclusion:

Faheem, having endured harrowing abuse at the hands of the RSF, asserts that both the RSF and SAF are equally responsible for the egregious mistreatment of civilians. He firmly believes neither entity should govern Sudan, emphasising the deteriorating situation that continues to escalate daily, particularly in the Darfur region. Faheem urgently calls for international intervention to address the worsening conditions and protect the vulnerable population.

While acknowledging the long road to justice, Faheem is steadfast in his desire to see the RSF and SAF held accountable in a court of law for their actions. Recognising the challenges ahead, he emphasises the need for sustained advocacy efforts, especially focusing on the survivors and the profound impact of the war on civilians.

• Testimony 04

Baheer, is a 32-year-old individual from North Darfur. He worked as a driver in Khartoum and holds a diploma in accounting. On 14 June 2023, around 12 pm, while he was experiencing stomach pain, he was en route to Al Walidein Hospital in the Al Arda neighbourhood of Omdurman, Khartoum state, to obtain medicine. Before reaching the hospital, a Land Cruiser intercepted him. Six to eight soldiers belonging to the paramilitary group RSF emerged from the vehicle. They accused him of being a member of military intelligence despite his refusal. The RSF soldiers proceeded to assault him, tied his hands, and forcibly placed him in the trunk of their vehicle. Additionally, they confiscated his wallet, ring, and medical prescription.

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"For me, life was good. I love driving, and I was supporting my family. With the money I used to earn by driving, I also used to support an orphanage and local hospitals."

After detaining him, RSF also detained 4 other people from different localities. RSF took them to Al Baher in Al Arda neighbourhood, where they put them in a big hall where more than 80 people were already detained.

The RSF kept all the detainees in one big hall with no windows or any other way for sunlight to enter. The detainees used to get the leftovers of the soldiers only once a day, and only a glass or rarely two glasses of water were available for each of them in one day. With over 80 people, it was a crowded hall. The RSF didn't even allow the detainees to talk with one another; if they caught someone talking, that person would be subjected to torture. There were people from the army there, too, as detainees.

The first incident of torture for Baher occurred on the first day of detention. RSF took him to a separate interrogation room and beat him with whips, sticks, and gun buttocks. Sometimes, RSF used to torture him three times a day. RSF used to take people from Al Fashir to the interrogation room, as during that time, RSF wasn't in control of any part of Al Fashir. Currently, Al Fashir is controlled by three raging factions: the north of Al Fashir is controlled by RSF, the west by the SAF, and the central by the Juba Peace Agreement group, which comprises a coalition of Sudan Liberation Movement, Sudan Liberation Movement- Minni Minnawi, Sudanese Alliance, and Justice Equality Movement. So, at that time, as per RSF, all the people of Al Fashir were supporters of or worked for SAF.



(Marks of beating)

The beatings can happen anytime, and sometimes, when the detainees are sleeping, RSF soldiers throw water on them and start beating them. In the interrogation room, they even used to fire bullets near his legs while asking questions about SAF and NCP members.

“They used to call us Ambaii, and they used to call detained army personnel Boldamgash”.

"Ambai" is a term that the Arab population uses for black Africans in a derogatory way, as RSF is predominantly an Arab group, and "Boldamagash" means not worthy of wearing an army uniform or unprofessional. While torturing, the RSF used to use these terms against the detainees constantly.

“They found some pictures from the December 2019 revolution on my phone and said, 'So you wanted to be in power, but you can never be in power because you are an Ambai.'”

The beatings have left his hand, back, knees, ankle, and lower abdomen severely injured. Whenever they used to bring in new inmates, they used to torture old inmates in front of them to instil fear in them. On July 2, RSF took Baher to the interrogation room, beating him severely, resulting in a severe injury to his right hand, causing it to bleed. However, SAF airplanes began bombing the area, accompanied by drone attacks on other RSF stations. Many RSF soldiers were killed in the attacks. The soldiers who were torturing Baher went outside in response to the attack. Seizing the opportunity, Baher, along with 20 to 30 other detainees, decided to escape from the detention centre as clashes erupted between RSF and SAF.

“I chose to die rather than being in detention and getting tortured all the time”.

Other detainees stayed out of fear of the RSF and what would happen if they were caught again. Some RSF soldiers fired towards them, prompting Baher to run towards his home despite the profound flow of blood from his hand. Along the way, a man named Ali stopped him and inquired about his condition. Baher explained that he had been detained by the RSF and had just escaped. Ali advised against returning home, warning that the RSF would likely come looking for him there. Instead, Ali took him to his own home, where Ali's daughter, a nurse, provided Baher first aid treatment. Baher stayed with them for two days until the situation calmed down.



(Baher's injured hand)

Baher asked Ali to accompany him to his home when the situation eased a bit. They approached cautiously, with Ali checking Baher's home first. Upon his return, Ali informed Baher that there was no one in his house, the doors were open, and it had been looted.

"We thought you were dead."

From Ali's house, Baher proceeded to his friend's house in Omdurman. Using his friend's phone, he called his father and was advised not to return to Al Fashir, as the RSF had already come looking for him and believed he was dead. His father instructed him to go to Kosti. Baher traveled to Kosti and stayed there for one month with a friend. Due to the severe wounds from the torture, he needed medical attention, but limited funds only allowed him to consult a traditional healer in Kosti. He took a taxi from Kosti to Rabak, then to Joda, and finally to Al Jabalayn. On August 15, he crossed the border to Renk, South Sudan.

The living conditions in the camp were deplorable. Baher learned that the living conditions for refugees in the Juba camp were better than those in the camp in Renk. He arrived at the Juba camp on August 21. The camp housed people from different tribes and nationalities, but the differences between them often led to fights. Baher observed discrimination within the camp, particularly against Sudanese refugees. The person responsible for documenting the refugees consistently favoured the Anuak tribe.

In addition to residing in the camp, Baher started working in a bakery in Juba, earning 3000 South Sudanese pounds (23 USD) per month. One day, a member of the Anuak tribe died in the camp, and they blamed a Sudanese refugee for the death, initiating attacks against them.

"We made a circle around our women and children to protect them."

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The situation in the camp became unsafe for Sudanese individuals, and the registration process was halted. In response, some refugees returned to Sudan, while others were resettled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Some, including Baher, decided to come to Uganda. On May 13, he left the Juba camp and arrived in Kampala, Uganda, where he currently resides in a room shared with three other individuals in one room.

Perpetrators:

Reflecting on the names and appearances of the perpetrators, Baher recalls that most of the RSF soldiers responsible for the torture were teenage boys. The officer in charge, Mohammed Ahmed Boldart, was a constant presence, always armed with a gun. Occasionally, Major Isha Bushara would visit the facility. Other names that he can remember include Alarzage and Ahmed Salah.

Impact:

The trauma he endured during his detention under the RSF has inflicted severe psychological wounds. The constant fear of being captured again haunts him, causing him to panic at the slightest noise or movement, as evidenced by his heightened anxiety whenever someone opens a door. This persistent state of fear has undoubtedly contributed to his difficulty in sleeping at night, exacerbating his overall sense of vulnerability and insecurity.

Physically, Baher bears the visible marks of his torture, with his hand, back, knees, ankle, and lower abdomen bearing the scars of brutal beatings inflicted upon him by the RSF soldiers. These injuries not only cause him excruciating pain but also limit his mobility, making it challenging for him to stand for long periods or perform basic tasks such as urinating. The severity of his physical wounds has likely necessitated ongoing medical attention. Yet, limited resources have hindered his ability to access proper treatment, leaving him to rely on makeshift remedies such as traditional healing methods.

Moreover, the trauma of witnessing and experiencing violence at the hands of the RSF soldiers has deeply affected Baher's sense of self and his outlook on life. He grapples with feelings of hopelessness and despair, believing that his future has been irreparably shattered by the atrocities he endured. His inability to provide for himself and his family, coupled with the constant threat of further harm, compounds his sense of helplessness and disillusionment. Additionally, the decision to withhold the truth about his ordeal from his sick mother reflects his desire to shield her from further pain, underscoring the profound emotional burden he carries.

Conclusion:

"The place where I live is a hostel, and they have a photo of Hemedti hanging there. Some of the people who live there are also members of RSF."

He continues to reside in that hostel because it is affordable, and he cannot afford another place. Whenever someone opens a door, he panics, fearing that RSF soldiers are there to take

him away. He struggles to sleep at night, cannot stand for long periods due to severe wounds from the torture, and finds it difficult to urinate.

"I pray often these days; it makes me feel better."

He constantly thinks about his family and feels that he has no future now; everything seems to have ended for him.

"I told my father everything, but we decided not to inform my mother about what happened to me as she is sick, and I don't want to cause her more pain."

He believes that the RSF should be held accountable, and if necessary, he is prepared to testify against them. Although he does not fully understand the role of the ICC, he has been told that it is the only institution that can provide justice for him and others.

• Testimony 05

Ibet Khatem, a victim, and a witness was born in El Fasher, North Darfur. He is a civil engineer. On May 17, 2023, 6 to 7 members of the RSF forcefully entered the house of Ibet Khatem in Nyala. They accused him of working for the SAF. Ibet Khatim, a civil engineer and social worker in his community, also ran a literacy program in his neighbourhood. He had documented the 2019 Sudanese revolution, which led to the ousting of President Omar Al Bashir after 30 years in power. RSF offered to collaborate during that time, but he declined, believing military outfits do not contribute positively to the community.

They entered the house of Ibet Khatem, hurling slurs and accusing him of working for SAF. They started beating him, tied his hands, and threw him into the back of their car. There, he found a woman named Munaya, approximately 40 years old, and her two daughters, aged around 20 and 14.

RSF took him to the Arab Open University in Khartoum, where he spent the next 58 days in detention, facing torture and inhumane treatment. It was one of the detention centres where he was placed with 300 other detainees in a single hall. The conditions were deplorable, with super congestion, only one window, and no toilets – necessitating the use of plastics. There was no place to sleep, and everyone's hands were tied constantly. When RSF intended to torture someone, they would take them to a three-by-three interrogation room, and the sounds of torture echoed through the hall. The hall was divided separately for army personnel, civilians, diplomats, and politicians to be detained.

"They offered me to work with them, but I kept saying NO, as no army outfit ever does any good for civilians."

The first instance of torture occurred on the same day he was arrested. RSF soldiers took him to the interrogation room. They applied a hot iron to his spine, chest, legs, and neck while asking questions about his connections with the army, police, or anyone from the NCP. He was also subjected to beatings with sticks, whips, and gun buttocks, accompanied by slurs

such as *"you are a slave," "illegitimate child,"* and *"you have to follow us as a slave."* They even melted plastics and dropped droplets on his body. There was a severe lack of food in detention, with RSF soldiers providing remnants of what they had eaten – sometimes once a day or once in two days. He also witnessed the rape and death of both men and women by the RSF during his time in detention.



(Marks of hot iron and beatings)

He endured this suffering for 58 days, sometimes facing torture two or three times a day. RSF soldiers would only stop torturing him when he lost consciousness, leaving him in the detention room. After some time, they would return to check if he was still alive. He witnessed the tragic deaths of 37 fellow detainees due to the inflicted torture. There was a designated room for execution where RSF threatened to end his life unless he agreed to work for them. Occasionally, RSF would conduct torture in front of other detainees, but most often, they took victims to the detention room. Each instance of torture was accompanied by demands to collaborate, sparing those who agreed from further beatings.



(Marks of hot iron and beatings)

The RSF soldiers primarily spoke Arabic and French, and the survivor claims to have seen Russian mercenaries entering and leaving the detention campus in their tundra cars. RSF also collected data on all detainees. As a result of the beatings, he lost five teeth. After escaping captivity, a medical examination revealed that his back tissue was broken.

One day, while disposing of plastic bags filled with urine, he noticed Red Cross workers on the campus. He learned that the Red Cross had a list of names consisting of 50 innocent civilians detained by RSF without any justification, demanding their release. He believes his name was on the list, but RSF concealed all detainees, asserting that only 50 people were detained for alleged involvement in looting, and they would soon be released. He vividly recalls an RSF soldier brandishing his gun at a Red Cross worker. Moreover, he was compelled to perform manual labour, such as carrying boxes of guns from one location to another within the facility. His location within the facility changed 9 to 10 times.

“Don’t come home; they came looking for you and took away my wife.”

On July 14, 2023, while disposing of urine and other garbage, SAF bombings began in and around the facility, causing chaos. Seizing this moment, he and six other detainees escaped. As they ran, RSF soldiers fired bullets towards them. Tragically, one detainee was hit and died, another was injured, and RSF soldiers recaptured a third.

They sought refuge in the Al Greef neighbourhood, where RSF control was weak amidst constant shelling between RSF and SAF and bombings by SAF. Taking shelter in an empty guard's quarter for a day, they headed towards his grandfather's home. Two survivors chose to go their own way from Al Greef.



(marks of hot iron and beatings)



En route to his grandfather's house, he found a phone and called his uncle, who advised him not to come home, as RSF had already been looking for him and had taken away his wife.

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Subsequently, they found a milk van willing to transport them from Khartoum to Al Hasaheisa—an area controlled by SAF at the time, now under RSF control. SAF, suspecting him of working for RSF, detained them again in a room, with a soldier keeping a close eye on them. As soon as they found a chance, both of them escaped.

From there, they headed towards Al Kamileen. From Al Kamileen, he called a friend who sent him money, enabling him to travel towards Wad Madani. There, he underwent a medical check-up, revealing broken tissues in his back. He also acquired a phone and retrieved his old SIM card number. Subsequently, he received a call from his friend Hassania, but it was RSF soldiers on the other end, threatening him with death and urging him not to run away.

From Madani, they journeyed to Kosti and then to Rabak. The other individual who escaped with him stayed in Rabak due to a lack of funds to continue the journey and a need for urgent medical attention. Moving on from Rabak, he travelled to Joda and, from there, rode a donkey to Renk (South Sudan) on November 29, 2023. At the border, the South Sudan army questioned him about his injuries, and he lied, claiming to have had an accident as he could not trust anyone. From South Sudan, he arrived in Uganda.

Perpetrators:

Recalling the names and appearances of the perpetrators, he remembers that the head of the detention centre was a man called Major Isha Bushara. Other names he recalls include Al Fadul, Aburmabuta, Abu Shabia, and Abu Tawila. Additionally, one of the most powerful commanders of RSF, Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo, also visited the facility a few times. However, most of the torture was carried out by junior soldiers.

Impact:

Throughout the comprehensive interview documenting Ibet Khatem's ordeal, his emotional distress was palpable, as evidenced by his frequent tears and emotional outbursts. Physically, Ibet Khatem bears the scars of brutal torture, with marks of hot iron and beatings etched onto his body and broken tissues in his back, serving as a constant reminder of the agony he endured while in detention. These physical wounds not only cause him immense pain but also limit his mobility and ability to perform daily tasks, undermining his sense of autonomy and well-being.

Emotionally and psychologically, he grapples with profound trauma resulting from his prolonged detention and torture. The relentless physical and psychological torment inflicted upon him, coupled with witnessing the rape and death of fellow detainees, has left deep psychological scars, manifesting in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including nightmares, flashbacks, and persistent feelings of fear and hypervigilance. His sense of security has been shattered, and he constantly lives in fear of being captured or harmed by the RSF, rendering him unable to find solace or peace of mind.

Economically, his ability to work and provide for himself has been compromised by his physical injuries and the ongoing threat posed by the RSF. The constant fear of being

discovered by RSF soldiers prevents him from rebuilding his life or pursuing his professional aspirations, trapping him in a cycle of poverty and uncertainty.

Conclusion:

I cannot sleep at night; anywhere I go, I feel unsafe; RSF is following me everywhere. I have lost my life.

His immediate priority is to restore a feeling of security. He advocates for accountability concerning the RSF's actions and envisions a peaceful resolution in the region. This would pave the way for a return to his everyday life.



Legal Analysis of the Conflict

According to the "Rapid Support Forces Act 2017" enacted by the Government of Sudan and effective from February 19, 2018, both RSF and the SAF are recognised as state actors.²⁹ Following the conflict that erupted on April 15 between them, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Chairman of the Sudanese Sovereign Council and Commander-in-Chief of the SAF, issued two decisions officially dissolving the RSF and abolishing the RSF Law of 2017.³⁰

However, it is essential to note that Al-Burhan lacks the constitutional and legal legitimacy to disband the force. Laws are not amended by decisions of the Commander-in-Chief or the President of the Sovereignty Council; it can only be done when the Sovereignty Council makes decisions either by consensus or, when consensus is not possible, by a two-thirds majority (eight members) and Burhan acted unilaterally.³¹ Consequently, there needs to be more clarity regarding whether both parties will continue to be considered state actors for the Darfur Network for Human Rights (DNHR).

The laws of war, called international humanitarian law, distinguish between armed conflicts categorised as "international" and "non-international." According to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, international conflict regulations apply to any armed conflict involving two or more states. Conversely, conflicts involving one or more non-state armed groups are labelled non-international armed conflict (NIAC).³²

Regarding the clashes that erupted in Sudan since April 15, 2023 – in Khartoum and across the country – between the SAF and the RSF, they are classified as NIAC as they meet the criteria outlined in the Geneva Conventions for NIAC. Firstly, the level of armed violence must surpass internal disturbances and tensions,³³ of which the current situation has achieved, leading to the displacement of more than 8.1 million people,³⁴ thus satisfying this criterion.

Secondly, in every NIAC, at least one side must be a non-state armed group exhibiting a certain level of organisation. Government forces are presumed to meet the criteria of organisation³⁵, and the RSF, being a paramilitary organisation controlling almost all of Darfur region and other parts of the country,³⁶ also meets this criterion. Moreover, the Geneva Conventions do not

²⁹ The 2017 Rapid Support Forces Act designated RSF as part of the national forces, Redress, 19 February 2018, redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Rapid-Support-Forces-Act-2017-English.pdf

³⁰ Sudan Tribune, Sudan dissolves paramilitary RSF, abolishes its controversial law, 6 September 2023, <https://sudantribune.com/article276941/>

³¹ Article 11.(c) of the Draft Constitutional Declaration

³² International Committee of the Red Cross, The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, Article 3, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>

³³ Geneva Academy, Non-international armed conflicts in Sudan, 15 May 2023, <https://www.rulac.org/browse/conflicts/non-international-armed-conflicts-in-sudan#collapse6accord>

³⁴ Relief Web, Sudan Humanitarian Update (23 February 2024), 23 February 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-update-23-february-2024-enar>

³⁵ Geneva Academy, Non-international armed conflicts in Sudan, 15 May 2023, <https://www.rulac.org/browse/conflicts/non-international-armed-conflicts-in-sudan#collapse6accord>

³⁶ ACLED, Sudan: The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Gains Ground in Sudan, 12 January 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/01/12/sudan-situation-update-januar-2024-the-rapid-support-forces-rsf-gains-ground-in-sudan/>

explicitly define what constitutes a "high contracting party," which refers to the state government. Since both the SAF and the RSF cannot simultaneously represent the government of Sudan, the conflict between them is categorised as a non-international armed conflict.³⁷

As mentioned earlier, the conflict in Sudan qualifies as a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) according to international law. Relevant legal frameworks encompass Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which outlines basic standards for the treatment of individuals under the control of a belligerent party, including civilians and captured or wounded combatants.³⁸ Additionally, Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions addresses non-international armed conflicts and customary laws of war governing warfare methods and means, which Sudan ratified in 2006.³⁹ Other pertinent legal instruments include the Rome Statute of the ICC for the Darfur region⁴⁰, which extends to all of Sudan under customary international law.

Sudan must adhere to various international and regional human rights agreements it has ratified. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT),⁴¹ the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR),⁴² and the ICC Rome Statute.⁴³

The principle of distinction, a fundamental aspect of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), mandates that all parties involved in a conflict must consistently differentiate between civilians and combatants. Additional Protocol II explicitly states that civilians, collectively and individually, should not be targeted.⁴⁴ They are protected from attacks unless they are directly participating in hostilities.⁴⁵ When there is uncertainty about someone's status, they should

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, Questions and Answers on Sudan and the Laws of War, 25 April 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/25/questions-and-answers-sudan-and-laws-war#Toc880734504>

³⁸ Human Rights Watch, Questions and Answers on Sudan and the Laws of War, 25 April 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/25/questions-and-answers-sudan-and-laws-war#Toc880734504>

³⁹ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), adopted 8 June 1977; See State Parties, ICRC Customary IHL Study (Protocol II) States Parties, ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/apii-1977/state-parties

⁴⁰ International Criminal Court, Darfur, Sudan, Situation in Darfur, Sudan, ICC-02/05, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur#:~:text=However%2C%20since%20the%20United%20Nations,from%201%20July%202002%20onwards.>

⁴¹ UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Ratification Status for Sudan: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=165&Lang=EN

⁴² State parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter): <https://achpr.au.int/en/states#:~:text=The%20African%20Charter%20on%20Human,Charter%20on%2023%20October%202013>

⁴³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>

⁴⁴ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), adopted 8 June 1977; See State Parties, ICRC Customary IHL Study (Protocol II) States Parties, ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/apii-1977/state-parties

⁴⁵ Protocol II, Article 13(3); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 6. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule6>

be presumed to be a civilian and shielded from direct attacks.⁴⁶ Targeting civilians who are not directly involved in hostilities constitutes a grave breach of the laws of war and is considered a war crime.⁴⁷

The **sexual violence** documented by the DNHR since January 2024 which are mentioned in this report constitutes violations of international human rights law. Rape and other forms of sexual violence infringe upon several human rights, including the rights to equality, physical integrity, and freedom from torture and other forms of ill-treatment.⁴⁸ States have a responsibility to address sexual violence in conflict, safeguard those vulnerable to it, prosecute perpetrators, and offer comprehensive support and redress for survivors.⁴⁹

Under international law, rape is defined as sexual penetration or intrusion, however slight, accomplished by force, threat of force, coercion, exploiting a coercive environment, or against a person incapable of giving genuine consent.⁵⁰ Rape is also considered a form of torture.⁵¹

Furthermore, rape and other forms of sexual violence are grave breaches of IHL and qualify as war crimes.⁵² The reported acts of rape in this context constitute war crimes, as they occurred within the framework of an armed conflict, of which the perpetrators would have been cognizant. All the sexual violence which the DNHR has presented in this report is done by the RSF or allied Arab militias.

⁴⁶ Protocol II, Article 13(3); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 6. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule6>

⁴⁷ ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 156, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule156> ; See also Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(i) <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>

⁴⁸ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Articles 2(1), 7, and 26; CEDAW, Article 1; CEDAW, General Recommendations 19 and 35 prohibit gender-based violence, including rape, as a human rights violation and set out the steps states are required to take in order to comprehensively respond. General Recommendation 30 specifically focuses on the obligations of duty-bearers in conflict, conflict prevention and post-conflict contexts and reaffirms State obligations to take action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in conflict, including rape.

⁴⁹ CEDAW, General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, 18 October, 2013,

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/GComments/CEDAW.C.CG.30.pdf>

⁵⁰ See ICC, Elements of Crimes, Element 1, Article 7 (1) (g)-1 and Article 8(2)(e)(vi)-1(2). Coercive circumstances that negate consent include circumstances created by the perpetrator, such as fear of violence, duress, detention contexts, and the abuse of power. Consent is also negated when the perpetrator takes advantage of coercive circumstances that already exist, even if they are not of their own making, such as those already inherent to an armed conflict. For more on this, see Amnesty International, Rape and sexual violence: Human rights law and standards in the International Criminal Court (Index Number: IOR 53/001/2011) March 1 2011, [amnesty.org/download/Documents/32000/ior530012011en.pdf](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/32000/ior530012011en.pdf), also see, Amnesty International, ""death came to our home" war crimes and civilian suffering in sudan, 3 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

⁵¹ See, for example, Special Rapporteur on Torture, Report: UN Doc. E/CN.4/1986/15 (19 February 1986), para. 119; UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, Report: UN Doc. A/HRC/7/3, 15 January 2008, para. 3; CAT Committee, V.L. v. Switzerland, UN Doc. CAT/C/37/D/262/2005, 22 January 2007, para. 8.10; General Comment No. 4 on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, paras 57-61, also see, Amnesty International, ""death came to our home" war crimes and civilian suffering in sudan, 3 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/7037/2023/en/>

⁵² Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(e); Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(vi); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rules 93 and 156, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule156>

Torture and ill-treatment are forbidden under IHL.⁵³ Furthermore, torture is deemed a crime of international concern, subject to universal jurisdiction, and constitutes an element of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.⁵⁴ Article 1 of CAT⁵⁵ defines "torture" as any intentional act causing severe physical or mental pain or suffering inflicted by a public official or someone acting in an official capacity for purposes such as obtaining information, punishment, coercion, or discrimination. It explicitly excludes pain arising from lawful sanctions.

The prohibition stipulates that states must abstain from participating in any acts of torture or other forms of ill-treatment and actively take steps to prevent, investigate, prosecute, punish, and provide redress for such acts.⁵⁶ Article 2 of the CAT emphasises the paramount importance of preventing torture through the implementation of "effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures." Achieving effective implementation of this prohibition necessitates state actors to undertake various legal and practical measures aimed at substantially mitigating the likelihood of torture.⁵⁷ Sudan ratified CAT on August 10, 2021, without any reservation.⁵⁸

Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states: "*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment,*"⁵⁹ to which Sudan has been a party since 1963.⁶⁰

Article 7(1) (f) of the Rome Statute designates Torture as a crime against humanity.⁶¹ Despite Sudan not being a State Party to the Rome Statute, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC through Resolution 1593 (2005) on March 31, 2005. This referral grants the ICC jurisdiction over crimes outlined in the Rome Statute committed in Darfur, Sudan, from July 1, 2002.⁶² The majority of torture cases documented by the DNHR in this report have taken place in the Darfur region, thereby providing a basis for the ICC to investigate these cases.

⁵³ See ICRC-CIHL Database, rule 90, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule90>

⁵⁴ See, arts. 5–8 CAT, arts. 6(b) (genocide), 7(1)(f) (crimes against humanity), 8(2)(a)(ii) and 8(2)(c)(i) (war crimes) ICC Rome Statute.

⁵⁵ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 10 December, 1984, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading>

⁵⁶ Ilias Bantekas and Lutz Oette, International human rights law and practice, third edition, Cambridge University Press, Pg. 375

⁵⁷ Ilias Bantekas and Lutz Oette, International human rights law and practice, third edition, Cambridge University Press, Pg. 375

⁵⁸ OHCHR, UN Treaty Body Database,

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=165&Lang=EN

⁵⁹ African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, 1981, <https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36390-treaty-0011-african-charter-on-human-and-peoples-rights-e.pdf>

⁶⁰ ACHPR, State Parties to the African Charter, <https://achpr.au.int/en/states>

⁶¹ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>

⁶² ICC, Darfur, Sudan Situation in Darfur, Sudan, ICC-02/05, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur>

Recommendations

TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL:

- The UN Human Rights Council should promptly convene an urgent special session specifically focused on Sudan to address the intensifying human rights crisis in the region.
- There is an imperative need to allocate additional resources and funding to bolster the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) established by the Human Rights Council in October under resolution A/HRC/RES/54/2. Given the severity and scale of violations occurring in Sudan, these resources are essential for the mission to effectively carry out its mandate, which may require an extension beyond one year.
- Continuous support should be provided to the Designated Expert on Sudan and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to enable them to diligently monitor and report on human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law across Sudan, focusing on the Darfur region.

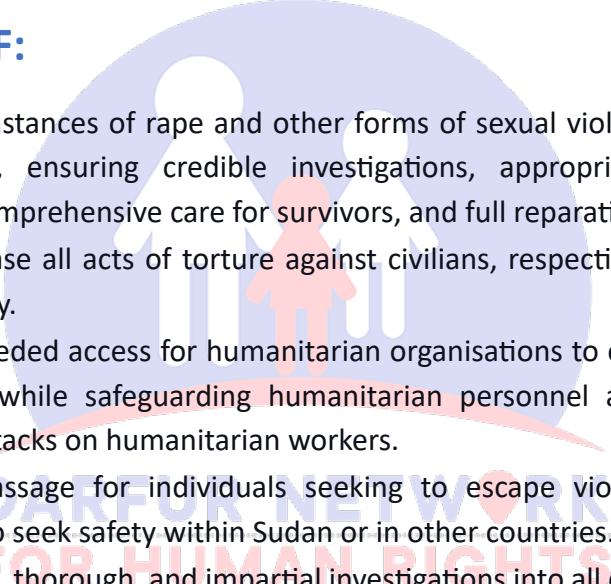
TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL:

- Uphold the arms embargo established by the UN Security Council regarding Darfur, refraining from any transfer of weaponry or ammunition to entities such as the SAF, RSF, and other armed groups.
- Extend the arms embargo beyond Darfur to encompass the entirety of Sudan, given the escalating violence and its grave impact on civilian populations. Implement a robust monitoring mechanism to prevent illicit arms transfers or international sales.
- Allocate additional resources to facilitate investigations conducted by the ICC in Darfur. Advocate for expanding ICC jurisdiction to include investigations and prosecutions of crimes perpetrated under international law throughout Sudan, not limited to the Darfur region.
- Reconsider the mandate and structure of the UN mission in Sudan to enhance its responsiveness to prevailing challenges. Provide adequate staffing and resources to ensure consistent monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, with specialised advisers focusing on child protection and gender issues to enhance overall protection and monitoring efforts amidst the conflict.

TO THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

- Urge all parties involved in the Sudan conflict to cease immediately all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, ensuring unrestricted access to humanitarian assistance.
- Advocate for the prompt deployment of a fact-finding mission by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to Sudan. This mission should conduct thorough investigations into severe violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Darfur and other regions of Sudan and deliver comprehensive reports.
- Encourage full adherence to the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Darfur by calling on all nations to refrain from transferring weapons or ammunition to entities such as the SAF, RSF, and other armed groups operating within Sudan.

TO SAF AND RSF:

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- Put an end to instances of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, girls and boys, ensuring credible investigations, appropriate punishment for perpetrators, comprehensive care for survivors, and full reparations.
 - Immediately cease all acts of torture against civilians, respecting their fundamental rights and dignity.
 - Facilitate unimpeded access for humanitarian organisations to ensure aid reaches all those in need while safeguarding humanitarian personnel and installations and discontinuing attacks on humanitarian workers.
 - Provide safe passage for individuals seeking to escape violence-affected areas, allowing them to seek safety within Sudan or in other countries.
 - Conduct prompt, thorough, and impartial investigations into all credible allegations of violations, ensuring that perpetrators, including fighters and commanders suspected of severe human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, face fair trials without resorting to the death penalty.
 - Ensure accountability for both past and recent crimes under international law and other serious violations and abuses in Sudan, including by cooperating with the International Criminal Court and surrendering wanted suspects.

TO SUDAN'S NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, NOTABLY CHAD, EGYPT, ETHIOPIA, AND SOUTH SUDAN:

- Maintain open borders and eliminate movement restrictions to ensure that individuals fleeing the conflict are not denied entry, are protected against refoulement, and can promptly access asylum procedures.

WHEN THE WAR ENDS, I WILL GO BACK HOME

Documenting Sexual Violence and Torture in Darfur

- Guarantee unobstructed humanitarian access for aid organisations and other responders assisting those displaced by the conflict in Sudan.
- Establish mechanisms to enable Sudanese nationals currently residing in these countries to remain safely without the risk of forced return to Sudan, thus upholding the principle of non-refoulement.
- Provide fleeing individuals with immediate access to humanitarian aid and expedite and impartially process asylum applications.
- Ensure unimpeded humanitarian access across borders into Sudan to facilitate the delivery of assistance to affected populations within the country.
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TO THE OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESIGNATED EXPERTS:

- Strengthen the monitoring, public reporting, and documentation of crimes and violations in Darfur and other regions of Sudan to ensure comprehensive accountability.
- Organise an immediate briefing for states on the situation in Darfur and other areas of Sudan, under the independent mandate of the High Commissioner, to raise awareness and mobilise international support for addressing human rights concerns in the country.

TO STATE PARTIES TO THE ICC:

- Allocate supplementary resources to facilitate ongoing investigations into violations occurring in the Darfur region, ensuring thorough examination and accountability for human rights abuses.

TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES AND DONORS:

- Increase assistance for the humanitarian response to the crisis, focusing on harder-to access regions like Darfur and neighbouring countries to address urgent needs effectively.

TO SUDAN'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE EU, USA, KSA, UAE AND OTHERS:

- Urge all parties involved in the conflict in Sudan to cease all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, ensuring unimpeded and immediate humanitarian access.
- Advocate for adherence to the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Darfur by refraining from transferring weapons and ammunition to the SAF, RSF, and other actors.
- Establish safe and legal pathways while providing protection and support for individuals fleeing Sudan, ensuring they are not returned to Sudan or any third country where they may face risks.
- Support initiatives to establish an independent investigative and accountability mechanism to monitor, collect, and preserve evidence of severe violations of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law occurring during the conflict.
- Increase emergency funding for humanitarian response efforts in Sudan and refugee camps in neighbouring countries, with a specific focus on implementing protection, care, treatment, and support mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence.
- Safeguard and advance the work of human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and civil society actors in Sudan, providing concrete support and emergency travel documentation for those needing to leave Sudan for safety. Additionally, proactively extend sustained support to Sudanese Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in exile to continue their crucial work. Utilise existing or provide new authority to impose targeted sanctions on leaders of the SAF and RSF and others responsible for serious abuses against civilians.

DARFUR NETWORK
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS