



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

DefendDefenders Geneva
Rue de Varembe 1 | 5th floor
1202 Geneva | Switzerland

geneva@defenddefenders.org
+41 798 134 991 | +41 229 197 116

DEFENDDEFENDERS.ORG

[f /defenddefenders](#) [t @DefendDefenders](#)

Sudan: new modalities for UN engagement, continued focus on human rights

Geneva-Kampala, 6 October 2020 — DefendDefenders welcomes the adoption of a UN Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution on Sudan, which is a further step in the right direction. As Sudan's Transitional Government attempts to consolidate the progress achieved and prevent setbacks, it is critical for the UN to keep a focus on the country's human rights situation and ensure that it will continue to be publicly discussed.

"Today's resolution is evidence of both positive signals sent by the Sudanese government and the HRC's willingness to exercise its responsibilities," said Hassan Shire, Executive Director, DefendDefenders. **"At this critical juncture for Sudan, the entire UN system should beef up its engagement and support human rights reforms in the country."**

The resolution adopted today maintains Sudan on the HRC's agenda while defining new modalities for scrutinizing the country's human rights situation. It terminates the mandate of the Independent Expert on Sudan and requests the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to report on progress made and ongoing challenges in Sudan.

The resolution salutes the "exemplary, non-violent and inspiring popular uprising of the Sudanese people" that led to a fundamental change in the political and human rights situation and welcomes positive developments since 2019. These include legal reform, advancement of women's rights, the signature of a peace agreement, cooperation with the OHCHR and opening of a country office, and the government's efforts to create a more open civic space, including for human rights defenders, civil society organisations, and the media.

It also stresses the need for the international community to support the country to further improve respect for human rights, as worrying signs multiply. Sudan is facing a multi-faceted crisis, with economic, social, human rights, humanitarian, and health dimensions. Amid deadly floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, violence against civilians is increasing, especially in Darfur. The influence of the military side of the executive branch is also a major reason for concern. Justice and accountability for the egregious violations committed under the 30-year Al-Bashir dictatorship and by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), whose commander, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo "Hemedti," sits on the new Sovereign Council, remain elusive.

"Sudan must bridge the accountability gap, including for the 3 June 2019 massacre and international crimes committed in relation to decades of civil conflict," said Estella Kabachwezi, Advocacy, Research and Communications Manager, DefendDefenders. **"The HRC should stand ready to set up an independent inquiry should domestic processes and institutions fail to deliver justice."**

Secretariat of the Pan-African
Human Rights Defenders Network
(AfricanDefenders)

Secretariat of the East
and Horn of Africa Human
Rights Defenders Network
(EHAHRD-Net)

Board of Directors:
Sophie Kyagulanyi,
Dorothe Appels,
Faiza Jama Mohamed,
David Kaggwa,
Zahara Nampewo,
Vital Nshimirimana,
Hassan Shire (E.O.)

Centre for Refugee Studies
York University 4700
Keele Street Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

DefendDefenders Geneva
Rue de Varembe 1 | 5th floor
1202 Geneva | Switzerland

geneva@defenddefenders.org
+41 798 134 991 | +41 229 197 116

DEFENDDEFENDERS.ORG

 /defenddefenders  @DefendDefenders

Today's resolution addresses expectations of Sudanese, African, and international human rights organisations, which highlighted the need for the HRC to keep a focus on Sudan's human rights situation. Ahead of the Council's 45th session (14 September-7 October 2020), they jointly **called**¹ on the Council to extend its support to, and scrutiny of, the country.

"This is not the time to relax international scrutiny of Sudan's situation," said Nicolas Agostini, Representative to the UN for DefendDefenders. **"Monitoring and reporting on the situation go hand in hand with technical support. They are complementary tools to ensure that Sudan further improves its human rights record."**

Human rights developments in Sudan will be examined at the HRC's 48th session, in September 2021. Sudan has been on the agenda of the Council and its predecessor, the UN Commission on Human Rights, for nearly three decades. The resolution adopted today follows the opening of an OHCHR country office in Sudan, as per an Agreement signed in September 2019.

— ENDS —

For more information, please contact:

Hassan Shire

Executive Director, DefendDefenders

HassanS@defenddefenders.org or +256 772 753 753 (English and Somali)

Estella Kabachwezi

Advocacy, Research and Communications Manager, DefendDefenders

EstellaK@defenddefenders.org or +256 782 360 460 (English)

Nicolas Agostini

Representative to the United Nations, DefendDefenders

NicolasA@defenddefenders.org or +41 79 813 49 91 (English and French)

¹ DefendDefenders et al., "The Human Rights Council should support systemic human rights reforms in Sudan," 9 September 2020, <https://defenddefenders.org/the-human-rights-council-should-support-human-rights-reforms-in-sudan/> (accessed on 6 October 2020).