



# DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

## UN Human Rights Council – 36<sup>th</sup> Special Session on the human rights impact of the ongoing conflict in the Sudan

### Oral statement

*Delivered by: Hassan Shire (by video)*

Mr. President, Mr. High Commissioner,

Once again, the Human Rights Council is forced to address Sudan's human rights situation.

As was made clear earlier, the situation is dire. The absolute priority is a sustainable ceasefire, delivery of aid, restoration of medical care, and establishment of humanitarian corridors for civilians.

While the message holding this special session sends is important, the resolution proposed for adoption is not entirely satisfying. We reiterate the [call](#), endorsed by 100 NGOs in a letter, and supported by additional civil society groups, for an investigative mechanism, a step the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) also supports at the African level.

Until the fighting stops and accessing the country is reasonably safe, OHCHR, experts, and any mechanism will have to rely on remote monitoring and other tools, including interviews, gathering of testimonies, video and photographic evidence, open-source investigations, and legal analysis to document violations. The criminal accountability standard used by judicial mechanisms—especially international courts—is hard to reach. But political and moral accountability can deter violations and prevent recurrence. Establishing a strong mechanism is the message this Council should now send.

Mr. President,

Impunity allowed this to happen and systemic violations to perpetuate themselves. Without the accountability that should have been the priority of all actors after the 25 October 2021 military coup, after the 3 June 2019 massacre, and throughout the three decades of the Al-Bashir dictatorship, the violence we are witnessing will recur. Up to 15 April 2023, there was no real incentive on Sudanese political actors to refrain from using violence, and no prioritizing of accountability.

African bodies and the international community must do their utmost to help democratic forces hold those responsible for inflicting this misery on the Sudanese people criminally accountable. This starts with the command responsibility level.

The Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), Resistance Committees, and other civilian forces must come together and must be supported, as must be the Sudanese people's goal of a full civilian government.

Thank you.