



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 56th regular session

Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Independent International
Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan

Oral statement

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Mr. President, dear Members of the FFM,

We thank you for your update. We also welcome the UN Security Council's adoption, last week, of an important [resolution](#) on Sudan. 14 months on, the armed conflict continues. Since fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their affiliated forces, thousands of people have lost their lives and millions have been displaced. Unspeakable atrocities have been, and are being, committed. They include targeting of civilians, sexual violence, and ethnically motivated attacks.

As this Council meets in Geneva, escalating violence in and around El-Fasher, North Darfur, raises the risk of identity-based mass atrocities and famine. The utmost priority is to protect civilians and to compel the RSF to halt their assault. Those who support the paramilitary group, as well as any party fuelling the war or blocking food relief, must stop.

Mr. President,

In October 2023, the Council's [establishment](#) of a Fact-Finding Mission was a milestone for accountability. Since then, however, the UN's liquidity crisis has worsened as a record number of states keep failing to pay their membership dues in full. The crisis has had an impact on the FFM, which has faced delays in getting its secretariat staffed.

In light of these developments, 80 NGOs [have urged](#) states to adopt a resolution to extend the FFM's mandate for at least one year and make clear that the Council will remain actively seized of the matter. If this does not happen at HRC56, it *must* happen at HRC57.

Failing to do so, or changing the Council's approach (for instance by focusing on technical assistance to wholly inadequate national processes or bodies, like in the infamous 2021 Yemen precedent), would be more than a mistake; it would be an unforgiveable dereliction of duty.

Thank you for your attention.