

Statement at 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Sudan

03 March 2023

Speaker: Salma El Hosseiny (in person)

Italics not read

*Thank you Mr. President. This is a joint statement.*¹

The situation of women's rights and civil society in Sudan is unprecedentedly disastrous. The military coup increased the militarization of the State and threatened fundamental freedoms. In the absence of the rule of law, and the complete impunity granted to the military forces, women in Sudan are under attack everyday. Recently, women's presence in public spaces, and participation in basic life activities such as going to work, has become a mounting challenge.

Since the coup, hundreds of women protesters have been arrested, with more than 9 suffering eye injuries and at least 3 losing sight in one eye. Over 50 women had to go through extreme medical interventions including complicated surgeries. At least 23 have been raped since October 2021. Some have been gang raped.

Women's rights to freedom of association and expression have been under attack since the military coup. The continuous crackdown on protests and media outlets closed civic spaces for women. Women's rights groups and defenders face continuous smear campaigns and surveillance of their work and movement. Journalists and *social media* activists have been arrested and prosecuted, dozens received threats or were dismissed from their jobs *due to their activism*. Women leaders and members of professional and trade unions have been threatened with dismissal because of their support for the protest movement against the coup. Women civil society groups and WHRDs are under serious threats amid these circumstances. Urgent actions must be taken to ensure stable democratic transition that provides justice, peace and respect of human rights for Sudanese people.

We call on the Sudanese government to immediately end the violence against WHRDs, women's rights groups and women protesters and protect the rights of WHRDs to advocate and promote women and human rights. We urge the Sudanese political actors and international community to prioritize justice and accountability in any upcoming political solution. We call on the OHCHR and the designated expert on Sudan to conduct an immediate investigation of the violations and gender-based violence against women protesters and WHRDs, and engage in inclusive and wide consultations with civil society including women human rights defenders.

¹ International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), Sudanese women rights action, Alharisat Organization, Nora Centre for combating sexual violence, WHRDMENA Coalition, Sudan Doctors for Human Rights.