

**79th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.**  
May 2024 - Banjul, The Gambia

**Item 6 - Activity Reports of the Members of the Commission & Special Mechanisms  
(Special Rapporteur on Women)**

**Speaker: Angela Chukunzira, International Service for Human Rights (53)**

*This is a joint statement by the International Service for Human Rights, the Regional Coalition of WHRDs in the Middle East and North Africa and the Sudanese Women Rights Action.*

Thank you Honourable Commissioner for the presentation of your report.

On the first anniversary of the violent war between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Sudan has the largest displacement crisis in the world, Immediate humanitarian and ceasefire measures are urgently needed to save the lives of women and girls in Sudan and protect them from the daily horror of Gender Based Violence.

Since 15 April 2023, the ongoing conflict between SAF and RSF has created a major humanitarian and human rights crisis on multiple levels with intersecting issues. These include GBV resulting in pregnancies, where victims/survivors have no access to medical care, where termination attempts lead to their death, famine, trafficking and recruitment of children by both warring parties, health catastrophes, including the spread of several pandemics, closure of health and medical facilities, scarcity of medicine and medical care, scarcity of clean drinking water, suspension of telecommunications, in addition to the arbitrary arrest, killing and enforced disappearance of activists, journalists, medical staff, and human rights defenders including WHRDs. Moreover, the complete communication shutdown on 7 Feb 2024 caused the inability of WHRDs to document and report atrocities and hindered women rights groups' access to mobile banking apps that facilitate money transfers to operate and secure the protection of WHRDs.

GBV in Sudan is a daily practice by both belligerents. Survivors have limited to zero access to medical and psychological support. Dozens of cases were reported across Sudan, including Darfur, Khartoum, Aljazeera, Nuba Mountains, and Kordofan, including the recent rape of women medical staff and responders in Alhasahisa and Al Jazeera in front of people last March.

To date, numbers documented, and published by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, in addition to feminist, women's rights and human rights groups amount to<sup>1</sup>: over 180 GBV crimes against women and girls, 104 women and girls were kidnapped and are believed to face slavery and trafficking, 18 million face famine, 10.7 million internally Displaced, 15,000 deaths, and more than 10 million children have been robbed of any chance to continue their education, due to the destructions of school buildings.

---

<sup>1</sup><https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ethnic-killings-one-sudan-city-left-up-15000-dead-un-report-2024-01-19/>,  
<https://www.whrdmena.org/2024/03/01/a-war-on-womens-bodies-in-sudan-campaign-numbers-internally-displaced-persons-disease-outbreaks-missing-people-famine/?lang=en> and <https://www.whrdmena.org/2024/03/05/a-war-on-womens-bodies-in-sudan-campaign-gbv-and-trafficking/?lang=en>

Subsequently, we urge the African Commission to call on the warring parties in Sudan to protect civilians and uphold their responsibility under international law, in particular, by:

1. Declaring an immediate **ceasefire** and the prompt creation of safe corridors for humanitarian aid organisations and groups, and to guarantee the safety of their operations;
2. Restoring **telecommunications** across the country;
3. Ceasing attacks on **health** facilities, medical supplies, and health workers, and uphold obligations under international humanitarian law;
4. Disclosing the whereabouts of the disappeared and release detainees, and to urgently address the issue of enforced disappearances and grave violations in detention centres, including gender-based violence;
5. Reinforcing and protecting medical staff in accordance with international humanitarian law;
6. Cooperating and collaborating with the UN Human Rights Council Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to share information of atrocity crimes in Sudan.

We urge the Commission to declare its support for joint civil society calls on:

The African Union to:

1. Increase its efforts and to put pressure on the warring parties to stop the war, protect civilians, ensure gendered humanitarian aid to civilians;
2. Ensure the participation of civil society in particular women's rights groups and women peace activists in peace talks at the African Union

The international community to:

1. Create an immediate long-term protection program for WHRDs;
2. Cooperate with and provide support for the UN Human Rights Council Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) including the necessary resources to carry out its work, and support the renewal of its mandate
3. Support local initiatives providing humanitarian support to local communities as well as support services to victims, and support civil society's documentation and reporting efforts so that the evidence obtained can be used for future judicial proceedings.

Thank you.