



**Sudan Defenders**  
Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition

# RESEARCH ON THE SITUATION OF SUDANESE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AFTER THE WAR OF APRIL 15 ,2023 .



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The publication is available online in PDF format at [www.sudandefenders.org/reports/](http://www.sudandefenders.org/reports/)

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# About Sudan Human Rights Coalition (SudanDefenders)

The Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition SudanDefenders is a network of Sudanese human rights defenders' groups and individuals dedicated to strengthening the protection of Sudanese human rights defenders across Sudan. The network was established in June 2022, with 28 individuals and organisations that endorsed the Kampala declaration. SudanDefenders symbolises the voices of defenders who may not be part of the network but can contribute to its efforts. The coalition aims to ensure legal accountability by defending victims in judicial proceedings, while also challenging the impunity of perpetrators of violations, which is common in a landscape marked by censorship and repression.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
KII	Key Informant Interview
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
IHRDA	Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa
HRW	Human Rights Watch
NRC	Norwegian Refugees Council
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNHCR.	United Nations High Commission of Refugees

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research is a situation analysis conducted for the Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition SudanDefenders. The research studied the status of human rights defenders in Sudan after the crisis of April 15, 2023, war. It highlighted on violations that human rights defenders in Sudan were subjected to, also reflected their painful stories and what they were exposed to by both parties of the ongoing war of Sudan. The study also reflected stories told by defenders about the newly emerged patterns of violations, such as illegal detention, artillery shelling and airstrikes on civilians' dwellings, use of prohibited weapons, burying people alive and killing, intimidation and torture.

However, the overall objective of the research was to examine the situation of SudanDefenders during the ongoing war, inside the country and for those who find their way to flee to neighbouring countries, namely, Ethiopia, Egypt, Republic of South Sudan, Chad, Kenya and Uganda.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative research technique, where it utilized Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as tools to conduct interviews with selected groups of HRDs fled to neighbouring countries. The methodology included Desk review, where information on Sudan human rights situation, were collected from different sources, like NGOs and reliable media open sources. The field survey was carried out in 6 countries with a total sample space of 50 respondents selected randomly from HRDs communities in 6 countries of exile in addition to Sudan (Annex 1).

## RESEARCH SCOPE

The research covered communities of HRDs in the following countries: Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Republic of South Sudan and Uganda.

## KEY FINDINGS CAN BE ILLUSTRATED AS FOLLOWS

1. The April 15 revealed a new pattern of violations against civilians and human rights activists, especially inside Sudan. these patterns included intensive airstrikes, shelling, mass killing and kidnaping for ransom.
2. Hassles against HRDs derived many of them to leave the country, fortunately they found support and protection by many human rights organisations such as Front-Line Defenders, DefendDefenders, Freedom House and Amnesty International. However, still there are many of them left behind due to different reasons, those defenders are possibly to be victimized by both sides of the conflict.
3. The situation of defenders in countries of exile was not as expected and can be described as flawed and complex, as many of defenders were targeted, arrested or killed in a hideous manner.
4. Generally, the situation of HRDs in exile is extremely critical, especially for those who living in Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. This referred generally to the tense security situation, the very tight policies against human rights activism and in some countries the political stand of the country regarding the conflict in Sudan plays significant role in violations.
5. One of the most important observations was the significant record of psychological trauma among HRDs, which was obviously due to violations and pressing conditions they went through.

Finally, the research suggested a set of recommendations which were briefly highlighted on the urgency for advocacy to assist HRDs, building their capacity and resilience again, and providing them with psychological support so they regain their role again in defending human rights in Sudan.



## INTRODUCTION

The ongoing war of April 15, in Sudan is now into its second year. It is evident that this conflict, was an outcome of ultimate power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo 'Hemedti'. This devastating war had already seen the deaths of around [130,00 people](#)<sup>1</sup> so far, which contemplated as conservative estimates. Some said the conflict has killed over 150,000 to date. A further 10.2 million civilians had been displaced, both internally and to unstable areas in neighbouring like Chad, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, overrunning existing refugee camps.

Since the outbreak of war, fighting has been widespread throughout the country, a nation three times the size of France. Much of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, now reportedly "lies in rubble" and other cities have been besieged or destroyed. In a country still grappling with the legacy of events in Darfur two decades ago, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said: "Both sides in the conflict are guilty of war crimes, the RSF is accused of atrocities against civilians, including killing, rape and pillage, while SAF aircraft have reportedly bombed civilian targets and critical infrastructure" ([Radio Danga 07/12/2023](#))<sup>2</sup>.



Even before the current conflict, Sudan was also home to more than 1 million refugees—the second-highest refugee population in Africa. Now, alongside the impact of climate change on food security, the World Food Programme estimates the civil war has left half of the country—some 25 million people—in need of humanitarian assistance, creating the "world's largest hunger crisis" ([Tobin, J. 06/09/2024](#))<sup>3</sup>.

Besides the dilemma of the current war, Sudan is said to be also, one of the countries with a very ruthless track and record of human right violations, which including arbitrary arrests, torture, restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly ([IHRDA, October 23, 2004](#))<sup>4</sup>. Having said this, the recent situation of HRDs in Sudan remains at risk and challenging, often exposed to intimidation, harassment and violence because of their advocacy, monitoring and documenting human rights violation's role. However, the ongoing war scaled up this hostile environment, as a result significant numbers of HRDs and activists fled from Sudan seeking asylum and protection in neighbouring countries. Many of them found their way to East Africa, where the situation is more or less friendly and safe. They were allowed to resume their activities officially, with the right to register their organizations. In other countries, e.g. Ethiopia, Chad and Egypt, the case is different, where HRDs often face significant security concerns and other challenges, including targeted attacks – specially in refugees camps - lack of legal protection and constant

<sup>1</sup> SKYNEWS, (11/02/2024). "War of Sudan reveals 130 thousand victims".

<sup>2</sup> Dabanga, (07/12/2023). "US Sec Blinken: SAF and RSF both guilty of 'horrific' war crimes in Sudan".

<sup>3</sup> Tobin, J, (06/09/2024). "Civil war in Sudan: Is there a path to peace". House of Lords Library. UK Parliament.

<sup>4</sup> IHRDA (October 23, 2024). "IHRDA statement on human rights situation in Sudan".

surveillance. All these challenges in a way or another, end up in different forms of harassment and intimidation. Additionally, financial constraints made them very vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and challenges in meeting basic needs. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies that include legal support, advocacy, building HRDs resilience, and providing access to mental health services and financial assistance.

However, Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition (SUDANDEFENDERS) is one of organizations basically operating in human rights field, and due to war, the coalition found itself involved in emergency medical assistance as response to difficult situation created by the ongoing war. Remarkably, the war also, created a very complex security and political environment, where SUDANDEFENDERS members faced significant challenges, that made SUDANDEFENDERS continuously fighting for protection of its members and human rights activists in general, as part of its mandate to protect freedom and fundamental human rights in the country. On the other hand, lack of resources to cover basic needs and secure operational costs, impeded defenders' ability to continue their essential role. This pressing environment is additionally exacerbated by personal threats associated to their social background or political affiliations. Therefore, highlighting on the precarious nature of Sudanese defender's advocacy efforts, is an urgent need for solidarity and support by different human rights organisations around the world.

## RESEARCH OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the research was to “investigate the current situation of Sudanese human rights defender during the ongoing war, to assess challenges they faced and types of violations they were subjected to”. However, the assumption was that defenders under the current situation of war in Sudan, had been subjected to various violations, which led some of them to lose their lives, some disappeared with no trace, some still suffering in conflict zones and the rest forced to flee outside the country.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To amplify the voices of HRDs.
2. To highlight on the challenges and problems faced by HRDs at home and abroad.
3. To inform the regional and international community about risks facing HRDs.
4. To provide essential data, information and truth for advocacy.
5. To reveal types and patterns of violations HRDs were exposed to during the war.
6. To explore possible opportunities available.

## METHODOLOGY

### DESK REVIEW

Data of desk review obtained from different sources, included reports of human rights organisations, books and credible media open sources.

## FIELD SURVEY AND TOOLS

The research utilized two research tools, Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focused Group Discussion (FGD), in addition observations and testimonies from selected HRDs victims. For KII a questionnaire was developed and distributed to the targeted participants.

## SAMPLING STRATEGY

A sample space of 50 individuals were selected from a sample frame of the HRDs in 6 countries and Sudan. However, although the sample frame was enclosed in HRDs, but selection for interviews was randomly selected out of the frame (See table below).

Country	KII Interviews	FGD sessions	Male/female segregation	
			Male	Female
South Sudan	13	0	9	4
Egypt	3	0	2	1
Kenya	11	2	6	5
Ethiopia	6	2	4	2
Uganda	12	0	6	6
Chad	5	0	4	1
Total	50	4	31	19

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study covered communities where HRDs were mainly existed, they were found in refugees camps over 6 countries; namely, (1) Chad, where it covered (Adre), (Tanqi), (Allash) and (Madji) camps (2) Egypt; (3) Uganda, where it covered (Biali) and (Kiryandongo) refugees camps and Kampala (4) Kenya (5) Ethiopia and (6) Republic of South Sudan, where it covered (Wadoel) camp in (Aweil) in State of (Bahar Algezal) and (Gorom) camp in Juba. The time frame of this research was from 21 May to 15 July 2024.

## ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The study followed thematic analysis for the 50 samples to explore patterns of violations against human rights defenders and verify the research assumptions.

## LIMITATIONS

The research withstood different limitations:

1. Security situation in Sudan and other countries, which limited access to conduct interviews with defenders, and getting information as well.

2. Communication was significantly a great limitation, especially with defenders still inside Sudan in conflict zones.
3. Limited resources.

## HRDS SITUATIONS IN SUDAN AND COUNTRIES OF EXILE

### OVERVIEW

After the eruption of April 15 war in Sudan, many HRDs were either displaced internally or exiled in neighbouring countries. However, what they experienced varies from one country to another. As general observation, many of them are still living under very high security risk inside Sudan. Fortunately, some of them managed to escape seeking for protection in neighbouring countries, either single or together with their families. Unfortunately, life in exile was not as expected, most of them had to go through many difficulties and challenges, started by suffering hard conditions as refugees in countries of exile and ended up with serious violations. However, to many of them livelihood hardship was not the only standing challenge, direct threats, like detention, killing, robbery and attacks by outlaw groups in some countries, said to be the highest risk. Accordingly, the need for protection to them is undyeable.

Fig (1) Male and Female segregation

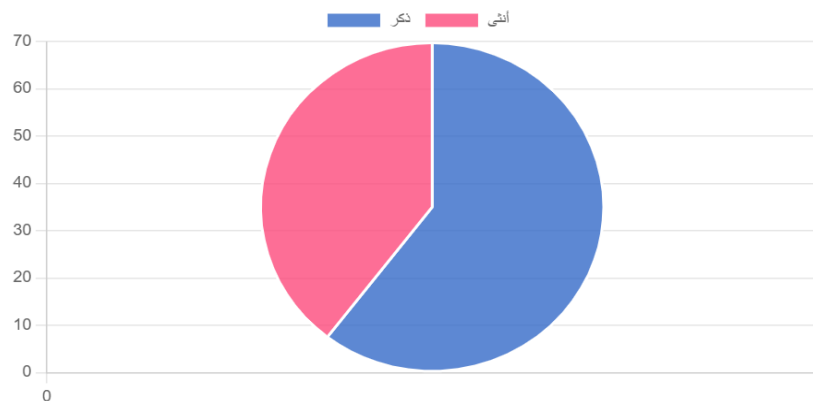
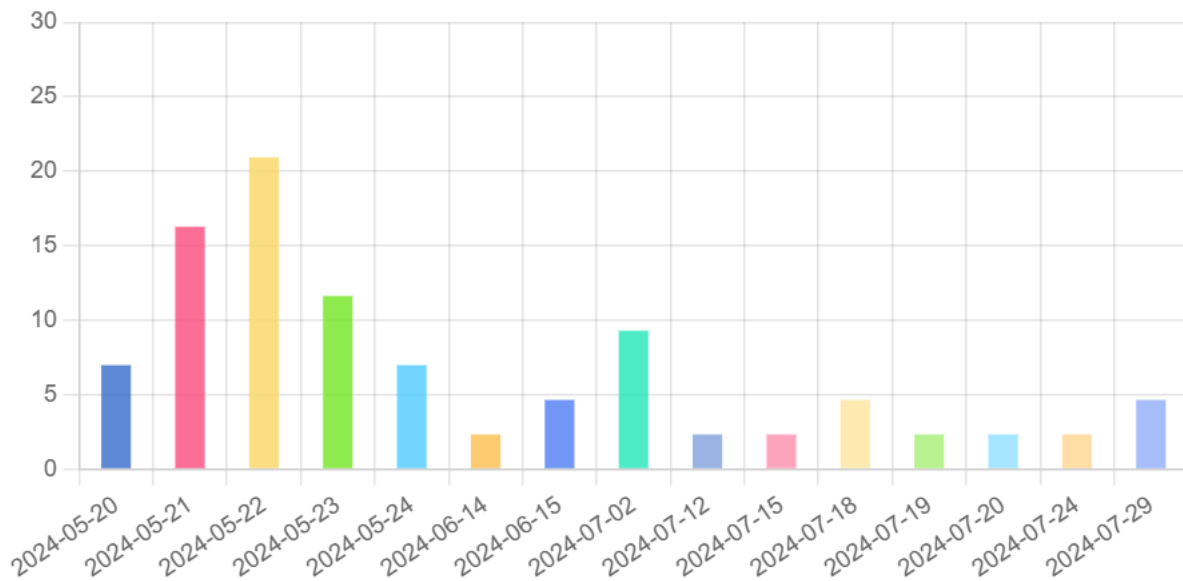


Fig (2): shows dates of arrival of HRDs neighbouring countries

Figure below shows dates of the defenders' departure from Sudan. Notably, most of them left at close times, under dire circumstances and extremely complex conditions.



## SUDAN

Besides the long-depraved track and record of Sudan in human rights file, the situation during the ongoing war was even worse. The war created a hostile security condition, where systematic targeting of civilians and HRDs became a daily habit, people's life is unfortunately becoming valueless. Despite the arguments about the relative tight space of freedom under the areas controlled by either SAF's military intelligence or the RSF, the reality remain that this space is not friendly to HRDs in any aspects. They are extremely being threatened, arrested, disappeared and exterminated. In such conditions human rights monitoring activities are severely debilitated by both sides. However, the fact is that; people were killed inside their homes, or while desperately searching for food and other necessities. Others were killed and injured while fleeing the violence to places where they had sought safety. In most cases, it was difficult to identify which side fired the guns that killed and injured civilians ([AMNESTY, 2023](#))<sup>5</sup>. In other areas like Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains, the case remains the same, and despite the limited space of freedom and public movement, human rights work remains severely troubled by local authorities. In such circumstances, HRDs cannot perform their duties in areas controlled by parties of the conflict, because they directly exposed to risks.

## MAIN CHALLENGES FACING HRDS IN SUDAN

1. HRDs in conflict zones face violations like beatings, torture and arrests, often perpetrated by military personnel of the two sides.
2. They are very vulnerable due to lack of protection, limited resources.

<sup>5</sup> AMNEST, (2023). Sudan report.

3. They are highly exposed to different types of atrocities including killings, sexual violence etc.
4. Chances of getting protection is significantly deteriorating over time especially for those still in areas under the control of both conflicting parties.
5. Female defenders are extremely vulnerable and mostly abused by both sides.

After all, detention, disappearances and extermination are observed as a common practice in areas under controlled by both sides. In addition to this pressure HRDs found themselves without any support, which forced most of them to flee or go underground, leaving behind their families vulnerable. Most of HRDs lost their properties and equipment's due confiscation, robbery or being destroyed. In an interview with the artist who at the same time a HRD under conflict zones in Sudan he said:

“Before the war, there used to be many cultural and social initiatives established, youth were full of hope to work in defending human rights, social and cultural activities. Their dreams were to build a healthy society so that future generations could live decently. The “Naqara” project, which works to re-mend the social fabric and define the cultural and legal aspects of local communities in Sudan was considered as one of the influential projects after December 19, 2019, revolution. It was a space of freedoms that contributed to raising awareness of rights and facilitated the observers to work in a good way. There was now institutional protection, and the concerns became common, as the defenders before the war began to feel solidarity until 2021. The threat of arrest forced me to flee to South Sudan, where I am living now. There is clear persecution against Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa communities in areas controlled by the RSF, and I have previously received threats without the knowledge of protection organisations. To ensure safety and support of human rights defenders, advanced tools, training and interventions are urgently needed to stop the ongoing conflict, monitor violations and allow fact-finding missions to operate freely. Given the difficult conditions in conflict-affected areas, where defenders face severe risks including arrest and violence, the establishment of comprehensive networks, databases and support systems is vital to their survival and effectiveness”.

## REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

The Republic of South Sudan is a long-suffering country from political instability and socio-economic harshness. This volatile context, however, was not sincerely friendly to HRDs fled to country. Most of defenders who fled Sudan to SOUTH SUDAN were advised to use pseudonyms as protection measure. Many cases recorded from interviews testified that they were not allowed to participate in resilience training or any other activities related to their role as exiled defenders. Therefore, any activities on human rights issues or even dialogue on peace in Sudan, must be inclusive and comprehensive to ensure the safety and protection of HRDs.

However, interviews with HRDs in SOUTH SUDAN revealed many violations against them in different areas, especially in refugees' camps. In general, most of civilians fled the war to SOUTH SUDAN were exposed to severe repression, particularly HRDs and activists, who faced threats such as killing, imprisonment and torture, in addition to looting. Indeed, the political environment - among other resilience factors - represents the major

constrains for them to monitor and document these violations, but somehow their cases disclosed. In short, the political landscape of SOUTH SUDAN remains very restrictive before HRDs, with limited opportunities for civic engagement which was often truncated told his experience in SOUTH SUDAN said:

“I had been interrogated many times and had subsequent difficulties in exercising my profession due to military surveillance and insecurity. My needs include urgent protection and resources to earn a living since I lost my property, and support from human rights organisations to monitor the situation and provide training”.

Another example of a HRDs member at Al-Qorom camp in SOUTH SUDAN described in the situation by saying:

“Authorities in the camp restricted movement and communications for HRDs, further complicating their efforts to monitor and document violations against them, and in most cases, they are subjected to harassment by government personnel and looting by unknown groups”.

## ETHIOPIA

Significant number of HRDs fled to Ethiopia among other civilians, who were settled in a refugee camp closed to the boarders with Sudan. These camps located in an area with longstand of tensions and conflicts between ethnic Amhara and Qemant communities and an increasing robberies and abductions for ransom. Civilian access to humanitarian aid remained severely constrained ([HRW, Nov 10,2024](#))<sup>6</sup>. However, these tensions affected refugees and HRDs as well by unlawful attacks and assaults that normally and frequently happen. On the other hand, Ethiopian authorities restricted humanitarian activities even inside shelters and unexpectedly opportunities for protection and assistance were limited to men! The HRD described the situation in Ethiopia in his testimony below:

“The poor reception of refugees left negative psychological repercussions, there was lack of guidance and information about the general situation and absence of any assistance like capacity building to integrate refugees with their new environment. The biggest threat to defenders is the deteriorating security in addition to situation economic situation and insecurity. All HRDs suffering because of the war that forced many defenders to seek refuge in neighbouring countries in search of safety for themselves and their families. Unfortunately, we are now in exile suffering from miserable economic conditions in terms of our income. We have lost all our properties and sources of income, and now we have obligations to the state, which is \$100 per month for accommodation, housing, living and treatment. There is no entity that contributes to providing these needs.”

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<sup>6</sup> HRW, (Nov 10,2024). “Ethiopia: Fighting, Abuses Putting Sudanese Refugees at Risk”.

## KENYA

In Kenya HRDs situation might be a little bit better, most of them treated as urban refugees. Challenges were often around limited employment opportunities, which narrow down to those who have obtained legal status. Therefore, most of defender started to involve in alternative jobs to survive and support their families. Also, defenders in Kenya doesn't have health coverage, facing problem of housing/accommodation and significantly many of them suffering from psychological distress and anxiety. There is a need for legal aid, trauma healing programs and building their resilience in Kenya.

## UGANDA

Like the situation in Kenya, HRDs in Uganda is better compared to other countries. Generally, Sudanese fled to Uganda were categorized in two refugees' categories, urban refugees settled mainly in Kampala and other cities and camp-based refugees, who were mainly settled in Keryandingo refugee camp. Regarding processing legal status as a refugee, Ugandan authorities considered as one of the best compared to other countries. Therefore, Sudanese refugees and HRDs in most cases did not suffer in getting legal status. Unlike the case in Ethiopia, Egypt and Chad, where getting a legal status as a refugee is a nightmare.

Challenges facing refugees and HRDs, especially for those who reside in the camps, were around problems of food shortage and limited medical services, as the concerned UN agencies adopted new policy of cash payments instead of direct food distribution. However, cash proved insufficient to meet even basic needs of refugees in most cases. Urban refugees living in Kampala, including HRDs are technically out of UNHCR coverage in some ways, facing difficulties of limited income, if not available, and this due to limited opportunities of employment. As a result, they opt to depend on connections with their extended families abroad to sustain their lives.

Concerns of human rights violations against them was minimal compared to other countries. But however, there were great concerns from conflict at home to be transferred to Sudanese refugee's communities in Uganda, as the presence of intelligence activities of both warring parties in Sudan is obvious. These concerns always emerge in forms of divisions among communities and civil societies.

Fortunately, many Sudanese civil societies managed to register in Uganda and resume their activities. These organizations provided help in a way or another to HRDs and refugees in general, but still in very limited scale. Also, HRDs in Uganda, benefited from the good coordination between Sudanese organizations Ugandan authorities as a result, the Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Organization conducted a training session on legal framework of Uganda, as part of accommodation policy for refugees in Ugandan communities. In an interview with an HRD he said:

“Life for HRDs in Uganda is better, but also there are challenges facing them, especially livelihood. Generally, the situation of human rights



defenders in East Africa, especially in Kampala is not risky in terms of violations, the challenge is the limited sources of income, due limited employment opportunities. In addition to that, trauma symptoms started to appear among many defenders, which need psychological support. I think the lives of some defenders are at stake, especially youth, because most of them are passing through difficult financial circumstances. These conditions made most of the actors get to involve in abusive activities and isolation”.

## EGYPT

The situation of HRDs in Egypt considered the worst. Most of refugees including HRDs suffered from many human rights violations committed by Egyptian authorities. According to a report posted by [HRW](#), that Sudanese women, men and children fleeing the armed conflict and seeking safety across the border into Egypt, are being rounded up and arbitrarily detained in deplorable and inhumane conditions before being unlawfully extradited back to Sudan. The report documented in detail, the ordeals of 27 Sudanese refugees who were arbitrarily arrested with about 260 others between October 2023 and March 2024 by Egypt’s Border Guard Forces operating under the Ministry of Defence, as well as police operating under the Ministry of Interior. It further documented how the authorities forcibly returned an estimated 800 Sudanese detainees between January and March 2024 who were all denied the possibility to claim asylum, by accessing UNHCR, or to challenge deportation decisions. Detention environment is also inhuman, where Sudanese refugees and HRDs were transferred to police stations or the Central Security Forces camps, an unofficial detention place, in Shallal region and military site inside Abu Simbel and a horse stable inside another military site near Nagaa Al Karur before being forced into buses and vans and driven back to the Sudanese border<sup>7</sup>.

Additionally, process of application for refugees status in Egypt significantly taking very lone time – may be months - and since Egypt dose not have refugees camps as such, automaticaly all refugees are considered urban ones. So until then, there is no legal denfintion for those who fled to Eyygpt, and accordingly subjected to any legal action by the government without any consideration. Some defenders were very suspicious about the policy of deportation adopted by the Egyptian authorities saying it might not be law abiding issue, it might be a kind of deal between them and authorities in Sudan!

For those who maged to legalize their status and, started over, any activties, especially in huam rights protection is resitricked by Egy[tian authorities and defenders might be subjected to extradition to Sudan.

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<sup>7</sup> HRW, (19 June 2024). “Egypt: Authorities must end campaign of mass arrests and forced returns of Sudanese refugees”

## CHAD

HRDs situation in Chad like Ethiopia and SOUTH SUDAN. Most of refugees were basically settled in camps in eastern Chad. According to [Action Contre La Faim](#) more than 620,000 found refugees in Chad, notably in Adre, in the Ouaddaï province<sup>8</sup>. The arrival of refugees has exacerbated the needs of the local population and created tensions in the town, as some families have been settled on lands that the people of Adre can no longer cultivate. According to [NRC](#) in Chad, many horrifying testimonies of deliberate violence and atrocities were recorded. Families fleeing neighbouring Darfur witnessed executions, rape, indiscriminate shelling, burning of camps, and massacres, and yet, many survivors had been utterly abandoned. They were forced to live in desperate, undignified conditions, under make-shift tents, lacking even basic assistance. How is it that these survivors have been so forgotten?<sup>9</sup>

However, the interviews conducted with HRDs forced to flee to Chad assured the refugees crisis revealed by iNGOs, adding more highlights through their testimonies. An HRD said:

“I witnessed all kinds of violations. In all areas, civilians were killed and many injured. Civilians were arrested, especially human rights defenders, number of rape cases were recorded. Defenders in the area where I worked, were killed, arrested, tortured, prevented movement or engagement in any activities. In Chad any activates like awareness-raising workshops require a permit, even movement from one place to another. The role of this alliance is useful because protect human rights defenders and providing opportunities to support them and strengthen their capabilities”.

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<sup>8</sup> Action La Faim, (September 13,2024). “Refugees in Chad: the forgotten victims of the sudan crisis”.

<sup>9</sup> NRC, (Feb 14, 2024). “Survivors of Sudan’s brutal war have been forgotten”.

## FINDINGS

1. In addition to the known violations and atrocities like detentions, torture, limitation on movement, freedom of press and gathering killing etc, the April 15 war revealed a new pattern of threats and violations against civilians and human rights activists, especially inside Sudan. This pattern included kidnapping for ransoms, mass killing by aerial bombardment, forced evacuation and shelling.
2. Hassles against HRDs derived many of them to leave the country, fortunately they found support and protection by many human rights organisations, such as Front-Line Defenders, DefenderDefenders, Freedom House and Amnesty International. However, still there are many of them left behind due to different reasons, those defenders are possibly to be victimized by both sides of the conflict.
3. Generally, the situation of HRDs in exile is extremely critical, especially for those who living in Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. This could be referred to the tense security situation or the political stand of the country regarding the conflict in Sudan, in addition to the very restrictive policies adopted against human rights activism in countries of exile.
4. One of the most important observations was the significant record of psychological trauma among HRDs, which was obviously due to the history of violations and pressing conditions they went through.
5. Most of HRDs lost their gears and equipment's either in Sudan, or in their way out to exile, accordingly, they lost communication with concerned human rights organizations.
6. The common challenge for HRDs in countries of exile, is how to sustain their live, this because most of them are living as urban refugees, accordingly they have to cover their living expenses in countries where limited employment opportunities is the main feature.

## CONCLUSION

This study was dedicated mainly to understand the HRDs situation in Sudan and countries of exile after the meth of April 15 war. To fulfil this objective KII 50 interviews were conducted in Sudan and 6 countries of exile, in addition to 4 FGD. The research concluded to that, HRDs facing serious threats and challenges, both inside Sudan, and in the 6 neighbouring countries of exile. Inside Sudan the situation is extremely worst, they were exposed to very serious violations that can reach to extermination, based on different allegations like acquisitions by supporting one side of the warring parties. Also, as the war expanded, the way out for defenders - especially those who still living in the conflict zones - is increasingly diminishing and shrinking their chances to survive.

Situation of HRDs at countries of exile varies from one country to another. East Africa is generally friendly with challenges in livelihood with relatively good civic space for Sudanese organizations to operate. There were no serious violations as such to be recoded. In Egypt, Ethiopia and Chad HRDs were critically exposed to risky situations, e.g. in Chad, SOUTH SUDAN and Ethiopia, many of them residing in refugees' camps, where the main concern goes to the tense security situation. In Egypt, they are under the threat of deportation and handed over to Sudanese authorities.

Based on the findings and conclusion HRDs need urgent solidarity and advocacy for protection and support. HRDs are calling for an increased international support and attention to address the incidents and violations they faced, and making their voices heard on global platforms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Priority protection should go to HRDs inside Sudan, especially in conflict zones and to facilitate safe exit for those at risk.
2. Initiating a mechanism to support should be provided for HRDs in countries of exile in form psycho-support programs, advocacy for protection with related UN agencies especially in countries like Ethiopia, Chad, SOUTH SUDAN and Egypt.
3. Providing support and capacity building for Sudanese human rights organization such as SUDANDEFENDERS to develop strategies and plans for recovery to resume their activities.

### PECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Providing training on specific issues, such as protection, advocacy, access to legal status as refugees, digital and personal security, modern technical training for monitoring and documentation, and securing funding opportunities for human rights defenders in exile.
2. Providing psychological and therapeutic support for HRDs in countries of exile, specifically in East Africa.
3. Create a monitoring and registration mechanism to support for HRDs in exile.

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