

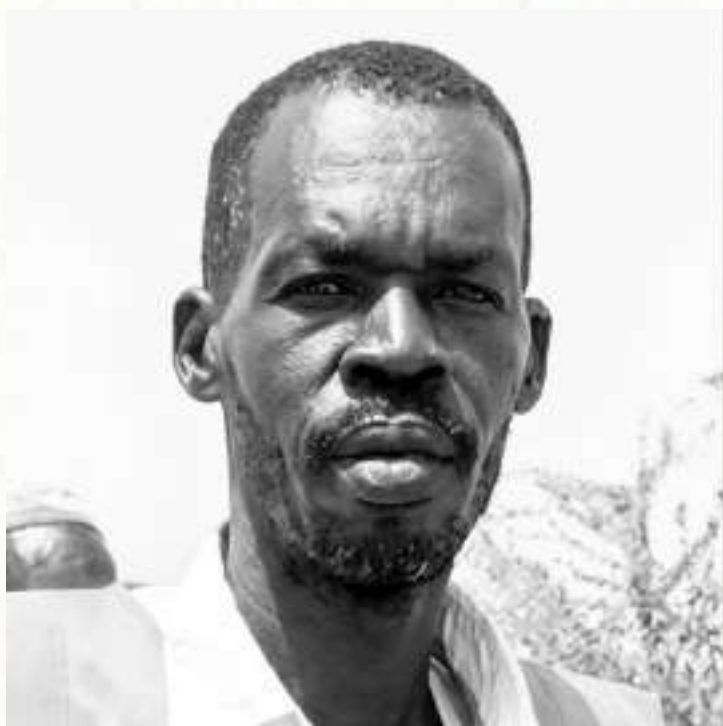


Sudan Defenders
Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition

NEWSLETTER

Sudan Defenders

Monthly Newsletter | JUNE 2026



Targeting Human Rights Defenders:
The War on Truth and Civil Society

Foreword



As the war in Sudan enters its fourth consecutive year, the constriction of civic space continues at an unprecedented pace, while violations against human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, humanitarian workers, volunteers, and civil actors escalate across the country. June 2026 reflects a continuing pattern of escalating targeting of independent rights and civic work through arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, politically motivated trials, extrajudicial killings, and sexual violence, all against a backdrop of impunity and lack of accountability.

This edition of the Sudan Defenders Coalition monthly bulletin documents 28 cases of violations across 12 Sudanese states and monitors the conditions of Sudanese defenders in Libya, Uganda, Chad, and Egypt. It also tracks the continued arbitrary and prolonged detention of a number of human rights defenders, journalists, and humanitarian workers, and reviews the most prominent rights cases that marked June, including judicial rulings, enforced disappearances, killings, and violations against humanitarian workers and religious figures.

The bulletin addresses key national and international developments, foremost among them the briefing by the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan before the Human Rights Council, which confirmed the continued commission

of grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, some of which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. It also reviews findings from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights report, which documented 546 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence across sixteen states, affecting at least 838 victims.

Despite this troubling reality, the bulletin records a number of positive developments, including the acquittal of human rights defender Ayoub Ibrahim Arabi, and the overturning of death sentences and life imprisonment against 19 individuals from Darfur, alongside the international achievements of several Sudanese journalists, affirming the continued role of Sudan's independent press in documenting truth despite the war.

This edition extends beyond mere documentation to include statistical analysis, monitoring of international developments and stances, and recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of human rights defenders, supporting accountability, and consolidating the principles of justice and the rule of law. The Coalition hopes this bulletin will serve as a reliable reference supporting monitoring, documentation, and advocacy efforts, and contribute to strengthening the protection of human rights defenders in Sudan.

Editorial

JUNE
2026



Targeting Human Rights Defenders: The War on Truth and Civil Society

As the war in Sudan enters its fourth year, the targeting of human rights defenders is no longer a mere side effect of the conflict; it has become a systematic policy aimed at silencing independent voices, undermining civil society, and denying victims their right to documentation and justice. Human rights work, independent journalism, and humanitarian action have become highly perilous activities, amid the proliferation of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, politically motivated trials, torture, and extrajudicial killings.

The briefing by the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan before the Human Rights Council on 15 June 2026 affirmed what human rights defenders have been documenting since the outbreak of war: that grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law are being committed on a wide and systematic scale, and that civilians, including human rights defenders, bear the heaviest burden of the conflict amid continuing impunity.

The cases documented in this edition clearly reflect this reality – from judicial rulings and political prosecutions, to prolonged detention, enforced disappearance, and targeting of humanitarian workers and journalists. Despite this extremely hazardous environment, defenders continue to carry out their

mission with courage, while Sudan's independent press continues to bring the truth to the world despite war, displacement, and targeting.

The protection of human rights defenders is not the responsibility of civil society alone, but a legal and moral obligation incumbent upon national authorities, parties to the conflict, and the international community. Sustainable peace, transitional justice, and genuine accountability cannot be achieved while those who defend victims and expose violations continue to be targeted.

From this standpoint, the Sudan Defenders Coalition continues to document violations, defend victims and defenders, and amplify their voices to regional and international mechanisms, renewing its call for urgent action to protect human rights defenders, release arbitrarily detained individuals, and end impunity. This bulletin is not merely a record of violations, but a testament to the resilience of human rights defenders, a message of solidarity with all who continue to defend human dignity, and a conviction that the protection of rights defenders is a fundamental step towards safeguarding Sudan's future, and that the voice of truth will remain stronger than all attempts at suppression and silencing.

Opening Editorial by the Chairperson



Violations Against Human Rights Defenders

The Judicial File – Political Verdicts and Arrest Warrants

June 2026 witnessed a series of judicial rulings that have raised widespread human rights concerns, indicating the continued instrumentalisation of the judiciary for political score-settling and the silencing of critical voices.

Al-Gadarif: Five-Year Sentence for Human Rights Defender Alaa El-Din Al-Sharif Raises Serious Concerns Over Fair Trial Guarantees and Judicial Independence

4 June 2026

The Al-Gadarif Criminal Court issued a five-year prison sentence against human rights defender and civil activist Alaa El-Din Al-Sharif, known by the nickname «Watan» (Homeland), following his conviction under Article (51) of the Sudanese Criminal Code on charges of «inciting war against the state.» Al-Sharif was arrested on 15 January 2026 by military intelligence and subjected to a period of enforced disappearance prior to his trial.

Legal sources report that the court issued its verdict without explaining its reasoning or detailing the

evidence used. Witnesses suggest that the charges mainly stemmed from Facebook posts attributed to him, reflecting a broader pattern of employing vague accusations to criminalise freedom of expression and target human rights advocates.

Serious concerns have been raised regarding the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in this case, particularly in light of reports that the presiding judge, Judge Hassan Al-Noush, is affiliated with brigades supporting the army, prompting legal and human rights organisations to question his impartiality given his connection to one of the parties to the armed conflict.

Rights organizations, such as the Committee for Justice (CFJ), have urged that the defender be allowed to exercise his right to appeal. They also advocate for an independent and thorough judicial review of all procedures related to the arrest and trial, along with ensuring fair trial



standards and freedom of expression as protected by Sudanese law and regional and international human rights agreements.

Port Sudan: One-Year Imprisonment and Fine for Journalist Rishan Oshi Over Corruption Reporting – Rights Groups Condemn and Warn of Press Freedom Restrictions

18 May 2026

A Port Sudan court issued a ruling sentencing independent journalist Rishan Oshi to one year's imprisonment and a financial fine of 10 million Sudanese pounds under Articles (25) and (26) of the Cybercrime Act. The ruling was based on a post published by Oshi on her Facebook page addressing allegations of corruption relating to the sale of Sudanese diplomatic properties.

The verdict was implemented immediately upon issuance, with the journalist detained and imprisoned. As of 30 June 2026, no judicial developments have been recorded that would overturn the verdict or suspend its effects. The case has raised widespread human rights concerns regarding the use of cybercrime laws to restrict press freedom and investigative journalism, with rights organisations viewing the invocation of defamation and

libel charges in publication cases as part of an escalating trend towards muzzling the media and imposing self-censorship on journalists, thereby limiting the role of the press in exposing corruption and holding officials accountable.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and a number of rights organisations have called for the immediate release of Rishan Oshi, the annulment of criminal penalties associated with publication, and the guarantee of respect for the right to freedom of expression and press freedom in accordance with international human rights standards.

Singa, Sinnar State: Continued Detention of Lawyer and Human Rights Defender Abubakr Mansour Abdalla Under Death Sentence – 582 Days in Detention

30 June 2026

Lawyer and human rights defender Abubakr Mansour Abdalla continues his detention in Sinnar State, serving a death sentence issued against him on 5 October 2025, in a case that has attracted widespread human rights criticism and is viewed as an example of the erosion of fair trial guarantees in Sudan.

Mansour was arrested on 25 November 2024 in Singa city, following the Sudanese Armed Forces' recapture of the city. Human rights reports indicate that he was subjected to beating and ill-treatment, and held incommunicado prior to his trial on charges relating to cooperation with the Rapid Support Forces, under Articles (50) and (51) of the Sudanese Criminal Code.

According to legal and human rights sources, the trial witnessed fundamental violations of justice guarantees. The death sentence was delivered in a surprise session without notification to the defence team, at a time when the head of the defence team, lawyer Abubakr Al-Mahi, was himself detained by security agencies – thereby depriving the accused of effective legal representation. Reports also indicate that the Court of Appeal had reconsidered certain aspects of the case before the ruling was reissued under circumstances described as lacking procedural transparency.

Sudanese and international human rights organisations, including Front Line Defenders, the International



Association of Democratic Lawyers (OIAD), and the Committee for Justice (CFJ), have considered the case a model of the instrumentalisation of the judiciary to target human rights defenders and peaceful opponents, within a broader context of violations including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and restriction of rights work through security-related charges.

These bodies have called for the annulment of the death sentence and the guarantee of a retrial consistent with international fair trial standards, or immediate release should adequate legal evidence not be forthcoming.

Khartoum: Arrest Warrant Issued Against Journalist Sabah Mohammed Al-Hassan in State Security Cases

Early May 2026

The Public Prosecution for Crimes Against the State issued an arrest warrant against columnist Sabah Mohammed Al-Hassan in connection with public interest and state security cases, as part of stringent legal measures associated with matters classified by the authorities as threats to national security.

According to the issued order, the journalist faces charges under the Sudanese Criminal Code of 1991,



including undermining the constitutional system and inciting war against the state under Articles (50) and (52), in addition to charges of inciting sedition and disseminating false news under Articles (63) and (66). The decision also authorised security agencies to execute the arrest and to subject her to interrogation before Assistant Investigator Mohammed Al-Bashir Al-Hindi for the completion of legal procedures.

Arbitrary Detention – Days of Isolation and Oblivion:

Prolonged arbitrary detention represents the most prevalent pattern of human rights violations against defenders, with a number of colleagues continuing to spend their days behind bars without clear charges or fair trials. These cases bear witness to the collapse of the rule of law and the persistence of impunity.

Port Sudan, Red Sea State: Continued Arbitrary Detention of Lawyer and Human Rights Defender Mohamed Ezzeldin – Day 417 Without Fair Trial

30 June 2026

Security authorities and the Public Prosecution in Port Sudan continue to detain lawyer and human rights defender Mohamed Ezzeldin for the 417th consecutive day since his arrest on 10 May 2025, without a fair trial or judicial resolution of his case, in one of the longest cases of arbitrary detention targeting a human rights defender in Sudan since the outbreak of conflict.

Documented information indicates that Ezzeldin was subjected, during the early stages of his detention, to enforced disappearance and transfer between multiple detention centres. Reports from the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IAPL) and Sudan Defenders indicate that he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including electric shocks and beatings, leading to a deterioration in his health, particularly given his pre-existing diabetes, high cholesterol, and

other conditions contracted during detention, amid an absence of adequate medical care.

Despite the repeated renewal of his detention, he has not been afforded a trial meeting the guarantees of justice, while charges have subsequently been brought against him under provisions of the Criminal Code carrying penalties up to and including execution. Local and international human rights organisations continue to call for his immediate release, or his submission to an independent trial meeting international standards, alongside guarantees of necessary medical care and investigation into allegations of torture and ill-treatment, with accountability for those responsible.



**Omdurman: Writer and Historian
Khalid Bahairi – Continued Detention
Day 365, Life Imprisonment Day 168,
Following Arbitrary Arrest and Enforced
Disappearance**

30 June 2026

Prominent Sudanese writer, historian, and former Minister of Information Khalid Bahairi (70 years old) continues his detention inside Al-Huda Prison in Omdurman for the 365th day since his arbitrary arrest on 30 June 2025, having also served 168 days since the life imprisonment sentence was issued against him on 13 January 2026.

Bahairi was arrested without a legal warrant and subjected to enforced disappearance for several months inside military intelligence detention centres in Wad Madani prior to his appearance before the judiciary, during which he was denied contact with his family and lawyers, in violation of fundamental fair trial guarantees. The Wad Madani Criminal Court convicted him on charges relating to «cooperation with the Rapid Support Forces,» based on provisions of the Sudanese Criminal Code, in a trial described by rights organisations as lacking judicial independence and due process standards, before he was transferred on 9 February 2026 to Al-Huda Prison to serve his life sentence.

Rights reports indicate that the case was marred by grave violations, including prolonged arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and absence of procedural guarantees, amid growing concerns for his life due to his advanced age and his suffering from kidney failure, heart disease, and other chronic conditions, with reports of his being denied regular medical care and essential medication.

Human rights defenders view Bahairi's prosecution as arising from his past political activity supporting the December Revolution, alongside his civil and humanitarian work in supporting those affected by war in Wad Madani, rather than from acts constituting recognised criminal offences. Sudanese and international rights organisations continue to demand the annulment of the verdict and his immediate release, or his retrial before an independent and impartial judiciary adhering to international fair trial standards, considering his continued detention to embody an escalating pattern of targeting intellectuals, writers, human rights defenders,



and civil sector workers during the armed conflict in Sudan.

**Port Sudan: Humanitarian Volunteer Brir
Al-Tom – Continued Arbitrary Detention
Day 311 Without Charge or Trial**

30 June 2026

The joint security cell and security authorities in Port Sudan continue to detain humanitarian volunteer and Red Sea Emergency Room member Brir Al-Tom for the 311th consecutive day since his arrest on 24 August 2025, without any formal charge being brought or referral to a competent court, in a continuing violation of the right to liberty and personal security and fair trial guarantees.

Al-Tom was arrested from in front of his home by security cell operatives without an arrest warrant or explanation of the reasons for his detention, before being taken to security detention facilities and subsequently transferred to the public prison, where he remains in detention. Reports from Port Sudan Resistance Committees indicate he was subjected to beating and torture during the early days of his detention, and suffers from deteriorating health amid denial of adequate medical care and regular contact with his family and lawyers.

Al-Tom is known for his prominent role in humanitarian work, having contributed since the establishment of the Red Sea Emergency Room to receiving displaced persons, managing shelters, and coordinating the distribution of humanitarian assistance, in addition to his participation in responding to those affected by floods and torrential rains in eastern Sudan.

The Committee for Justice (CFJ) and Port Sudan Resistance Committees have condemned the continuation of his detention, considering the case a model of arbitrary detention and targeting of humanitarian workers, calling for his immediate and unconditional release, guarantee of his physical and psychological safety, and an end to the use of prolonged detention outside legal frameworks against activists and volunteers.

**Nyala, South Darfur State: Continued
Arbitrary Detention of Four Women
Human Rights Defenders – Day 118
Without Charge or Trial in Rapid Support
Forces Intelligence Detention Facilities**

30 June 2026



Rapid Support Forces intelligence continues to detain four women human rights defenders – Amina Ishaq, Salma Adam Abd Al-Rahman, Hiba Musa Ismail, and Rana Yaqoub Mohammed – for the 118th consecutive day since their arrest on 5 March 2026 in Nyala, without any formal charges being brought or their production before a competent judicial authority.

An intelligence force raided their homes simultaneously following their participation in a training workshop on women’s rights and empowerment, before taking them to an unknown place of detention and subsequently transferring them to Nyala prison, without production of arrest warrants or clarification of the legal basis for their detention. As of 30 June 2026, the four defenders remain in arbitrary detention, continuing to be denied regular contact with their families and lawyers, amid reports of harsh detention conditions raising serious concerns for their physical and psychological safety.

The case exemplifies the targeting of women human rights defenders for their peaceful activism in the field of women’s rights, and constitutes a violation of the right to liberty and personal security, fair trial guarantees, and international obligations to protect human rights defenders, amid continuing rights-based calls for their immediate release or submission to independent judicial proceedings consistent with international standards.

Nyala, South Darfur: Journalist Moammer Ibrahim – Continued Arbitrary Detention Day 248 Without Charge or Trial

30 June 2026

Rapid Support Forces continue to detain Sudanese journalist Moammer Ibrahim for the 248th consecutive day since his arrest on 26 October 2025, following his detention while attempting to leave Al-Fasher city, before his transfer to Dikris Prison in Nyala, South Darfur, where he remains detained without formal charges or referral to a competent judicial authority.

Available information indicates that he continues to be denied regular contact with his family and lawyers, in violation of fundamental fair trial guarantees and the rights of detainees under international human rights law. Concerns are escalating regarding his physical safety after the Sudanese Journalists’ Union confirmed that he has suffered serious health deterioration due to lack of medical care and necessary examinations inside the detention facility, threatening his life. The Union had held the Rapid Support Forces fully responsible for



his safety, calling for his immediate and unconditional release, while the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) expressed grave concern over the continuation of his detention in the absence of any independently verifiable information regarding his conditions or legal status.

Moammer Ibrahim’s case exemplifies the persistence of patterns of arbitrary detention and systematic violations against journalists in conflict zones, including deprivation of liberty, absence of due process, and restriction of the right to communicate with the outside world, undermining press freedom and contravening binding international standards for the protection of journalists during armed conflicts.

Kaoda, South Kordofan (Nuba Mountains): Continued Arbitrary Detention of Humanitarian Worker Nagwa Musa Kenda – Day 91 Without Charge or Trial in Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North Intelligence Detention Facilities

30 June 2026

Sudan People’s Liberation Movement–North intelligence continues to detain humanitarian worker Nagwa Musa Kenda, an employee of Saferworld associated with United Nations programmes, for the 91st consecutive day since her arrest on 1 April 2026 in the Topo area, before her transfer to an undisclosed place of detention in Koya, west of Kaoda, South Kordofan State.

As of 30 June 2026, she remains detained without formal charges, production before a competent judicial authority, or ability to challenge the legality of her detention, in violation of fair trial standards, the right to liberty and personal security, and the protections afforded to humanitarian workers under international humanitarian law. Available information indicates that she continues to be held incommunicado, with severe restrictions on communication with her family and lawyers – only one family visit was permitted on 13 April, and that under close surveillance. Concerns are escalating regarding her safety amid reports of deteriorating health and lack of regular access to medical care and adequate food.

The continued detention without legal process, despite the humanitarian nature of her work, raises increasing rights concerns, amid calls for her immediate release or referral to independent judicial proceedings consistent with international standards, and the guarantee of respect for and protection of humanitarian workers during armed conflicts.



Enforced Disappearance – Forced Absence

Enforced disappearance represents one of the most brutal forms of violation, where the human rights defender vanishes without trace and all means of communication are severed, leaving their family in a state of terror and ignorance as to their fate.

Al-Damazin, Blue Nile State: Continued Enforced Disappearance of Journalist Hassan Hamid Hamad – 47 Days Since Arrest by Army-Affiliated Security Cell

Security and military authorities in Blue Nile State continue to conceal the whereabouts of journalist Hassan Hamid Hamad, a presenter of programmes in local languages at Blue Nile State Radio, since his arrest on 13 May 2026 from within his workplace in Al-Damazin city by an army-affiliated security cell, without production of an arrest warrant, formal charges, or disclosure of his place of detention. His enforced disappearance has entered its second month amid the absence of any information about his fate or legal status.

The Emergency Lawyers Group and the Committee for Justice (CFJ) have condemned the incident, describing

it as arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance constituting grave violations of the Sudanese Constitution, national law, and international obligations relating to the right to liberty and personal security and fair trial. The organisations noted that the arrest was carried out outside legal frameworks and without oversight by the Public Prosecution or judiciary, and that his continued incommunicado detention raises serious concerns for his physical and psychological safety and exposes him to the risk of torture and ill-treatment.

As of 24 June 2026, no official body has announced his place of detention or the legal basis for his deprivation of liberty, despite repeated demands for immediate disclosure of his fate, enabling communication with his family and lawyers, and his release unless charges recognised by law are brought against him and all fair trial guarantees are afforded.

This case comes against a backdrop of escalating violations against journalists and media professionals in Sudan, including arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, and the direct threat they pose to press freedom and freedom of expression.

Targeting of Humanitarian Workers and Religious Figures

Those working in the service of humanity have not been spared the violence of the conflict, with humanitarian workers and religious figures killed in separate incidents during June, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

Al-Obeid, North Kordofan: Killing of Volunteer Ahmed Yaqoub Othman While Performing Humanitarian Duties

15 June 2026

Volunteer Ahmed Yaqoub Othman, a volunteer with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society, was killed while performing a humanitarian mission on the outskirts of Al-Obeid city, North Kordofan State, on 15 June 2026, according to a joint statement issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society. The statement indicated that the victim was affiliated with the Central Unit under the Rahad Abu Dukna Supervision, and lost his life while carrying out his humanitarian duty, without disclosing the circumstances of the incident.

The ICRC described the incident as a tragic loss for humanitarian workers, affirming that the continued targeting of or risks to humanitarian workers threatens

the delivery of life-saving assistance to civilians affected by the conflict. It called upon all parties to the conflict and bearers of arms to respect and protect humanitarian workers and guarantee their safety, in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law.

Kaoda, South Kordofan: Killing of Three Clergymen in Armed Attack on Catholic Church – Allegations of Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North Involvement

20 June 2026

Father Yohanna Al-Amin Niaroum, pastor of St Vincent’s Parish, was killed alongside Yohanna Marcos and John Adam, both church servants, following an armed attack targeting the Catholic Church in Kaoda city, South Kordofan State, on 20 June 2026. According to eyewitness accounts, an armed group travelling in combat vehicles stormed the church in the early hours and opened heavy fire inside the building, resulting in the deaths of the three victims.

Humanitarian sources reported that the attack was carried out using advanced military vehicles which, according to the source, are available only to the Sudan People’s Liberation Army affiliated with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North. The Movement announced the formation of an independent investigation committee, affirming that all accounts would be subject to verification.

The incident comes amid escalating security tensions and armed clashes in the Kaoda and Heiban areas since late May, which have resulted in civilian casualties and displacement. Church sources indicated that the crime may be linked to Father Yohanna reporting the theft of medicines that the church was storing for distribution as humanitarian aid. The church has called for an independent and transparent investigation and accountability for those responsible for the attack, as a serious violation of the right to life and the protection of places of worship and religious workers during armed conflicts.





Sudan Defenders Activities

Sexual Violence in Sudan: Sudan Defenders Coalition Calls for Ending Impunity and Strengthening Justice for Victims

Kampala | 19 June 2026

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Sudan Defenders Coalition organised a virtual seminar via the Zoom platform on 19 June 2026, discussing the escalating use of sexual violence as a weapon during the armed conflict in Sudan, and ways to strengthen accountability and ensure victims' access to justice.

The seminar featured Ahmed Al-Zubair, Director of the Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development and former researcher at Amnesty International, and Nun Kashkoush, Director of Al-Jazeera Human Rights Observatory, with the session facilitated by journalist Mariam Hamid from Kayan Organisation.

Speakers reviewed the latest rights reports, foremost among them the report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which documented 546 conflict-related sexual violence incidents across 16 Sudanese states during the period from April 2023 to mid-April 2026, affecting at least 838 victims, including 539 women, 284 girls, eight men, and seven boys.

The report indicated that violations included individual and gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced prostitution, sexual torture, and trafficking in persons for purposes of sexual exploitation. It also revealed

that approximately one quarter of cases involved gang rape, including cases committed by a large number of perpetrators against girls, and documented the detention of at least 85 women and girls in conditions amounting to sexual slavery. The violations resulted in pregnancy or childbirth for 59 women and girls as a result of rape, in addition to the documentation of at least 13 deaths, most occurring following brutal gang rapes.

The report attributed the violations to both parties to the conflict – the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces and their allies. Participants affirmed that conflict-related sexual violence constitutes a crime under international law, is not subject to statutes of limitation, and that continued impunity encourages the repetition of violations and undermines prospects for peace and justice. They called for independent and impartial investigations, accountability for all those responsible for these crimes, and effective remedies for survivors, including legal, psychological, and social support, as well as strengthening transitional justice mechanisms to guarantee redress and non-repetition of these grave violations.



Defenders in Exile

Compounded Risks

Violations have not been confined to within Sudan, but have extended to neighbouring countries where defenders have sought refuge from war, only to face new risks in countries of asylum.

Libya: Escalating Threats Against Sudanese Journalists and Human Rights Defenders – Calls for Urgent Protection and an End to Hate Speech

17 June 2026

Risks facing Sudanese refugee journalists and human rights defenders in Libya are escalating amid the rise of hate speech, discrimination, and violations targeting foreigners and migrants, including direct threats of violence, harassment, attacks, and restrictions on freedom of movement and work, exacerbating their humanitarian and security conditions.

During the first week of June 2026, the Sudanese Journalists' Union documented testimonies from 39 journalists who were compelled to flee Sudan due to war and violations. Of these, 28 are registered with the UNHCR, while 11 remain outside the registration framework, exposing them to increased risks including

arrest, deportation, and denial of legal protection.

Documented testimonies indicate that attacks and hate speech against Sudanese nationals are no longer isolated incidents but have become a systematic pattern that has created a hostile environment limiting the ability of journalists and defenders to work freely and safely. A number of victims reported living in a state of forced isolation akin to «open house arrest» due to fear of targeting or attack, while professional communication with the local community or continuation of media and rights activity has become fraught with risk.

Testimonies confirmed that many Sudanese refugees face a stark dilemma: return to Sudan may expose them to risk of arrest or killing due to their professional or rights activities, while remaining in Libya exposes them to daily threats arising from escalating hatred and discrimination against foreigners, especially in areas experiencing security fragility.

Human rights organisations and the Sudanese Journalists' Union have called upon Libyan authorities to take urgent measures to guarantee the protection of all residents on its territory without discrimination, to confront hate speech, and to open effective investigations into threats and attacks targeting journalists and human rights defenders. They have also appealed to the UNHCR to strengthen emergency protection mechanisms, accelerate resettlement procedures for the most vulnerable cases, and provide legal protection for unregistered journalists and defenders, to ensure respect for their fundamental rights and safety.

Uganda, Kiryandongo: Sudanese Refugees in Biali Camp Reject Military Commander's Visit and Warn Against Politicisation of Refugee Camps

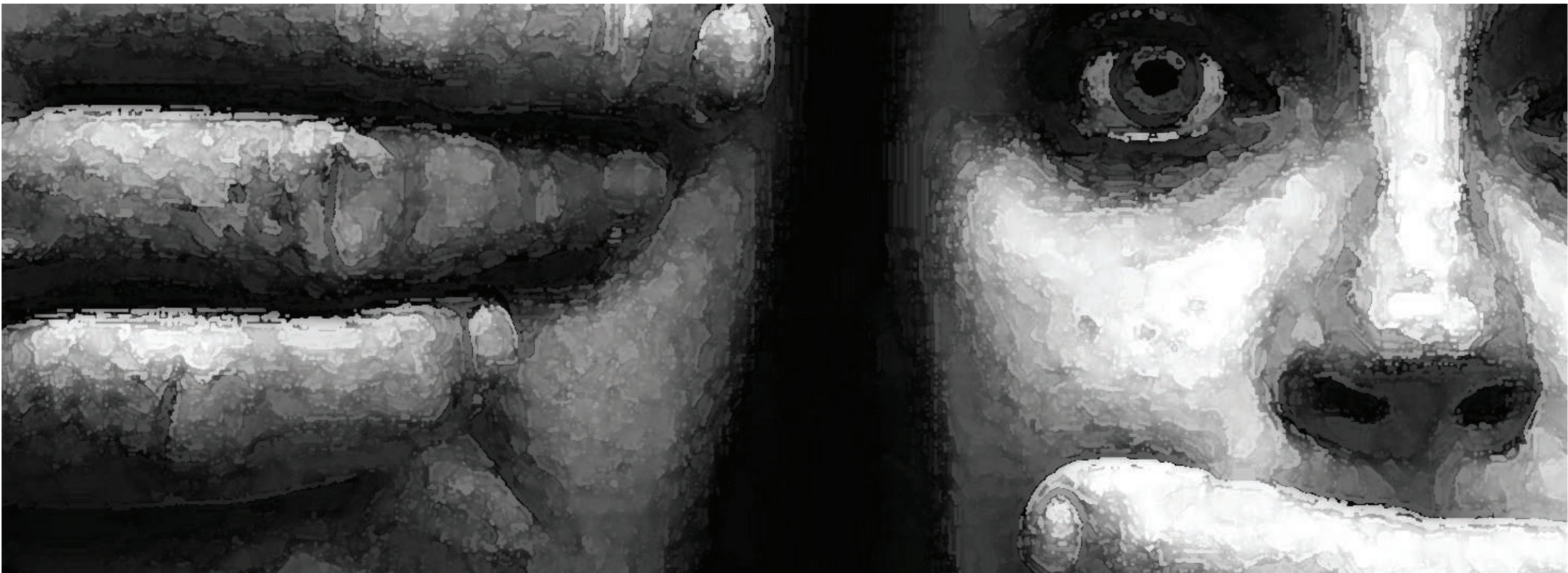
19 June 2026

The leadership office of the Sudanese refugee community in Biali Camp, Kiryandongo District, Uganda, announced its categorical rejection of the visit announced by Al-Misbah Abu Zeid Talha, commander of the Al-Baraa bin Malik Islamic brigades loyal to the Sudanese Armed Forces, to the camp, warning that the visit could threaten

the security and stability of refugees and lead to tensions within the camp.

In a statement issued on 19 June 2026, the office explained that Sudanese refugees fled war and violations in Sudan seeking security and protection, and that the presence of any figure associated with parties to the conflict within refugee camps, regardless of the stated nature of the visit, could undermine the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps and provoke fears among refugees, many of whom remain affected by the repercussions of the conflict.

The statement affirmed that refugee camps must remain safe, neutral zones free from any political or military activities or manifestations, consistent with regulations governing refugee affairs and international principles guaranteeing the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee sites. The leadership office held the Ugandan authorities and UNHCR responsible for taking necessary measures to maintain camp security and prevent any steps that might endanger refugees or undermine their stability, calling for respect for the will of the refugee community and the continued provision of protection to them away from the repercussions of the conflict in Sudan.



Eastern Chad: Investigation Reveals Sexual Exploitation of Sudanese Refugee Women Within Humanitarian Projects – 18 Staff Dismissed

14 June 2026

Médecins Sans Frontières announced on 14 June 2026 the dismissal of 18 staff members and their prohibition from future employment, following an internal investigation that documented 59 allegations of harassment, exploitation, and sexual violations in the organisation's projects in eastern Chad on the border with Sudan – a case that raised serious concerns regarding the protection of Sudanese refugee women and accountability of humanitarian workers.

The investigation, which began in late 2024 and whose findings were published by the Associated Press, revealed that a number of local and international staff exploited the vulnerable situation of Sudanese women and girls within refugee camps. Some refugees, including minors, were subjected to sexual extortion in

exchange for food, water, or work opportunities, while others reported sexual assaults and threats of losing their jobs if they refused to comply with demands from supervisors or colleagues.

The investigation revealed indications of repeated patterns of sexual exploitation, amid reluctance on the part of many victims and refugee community leaders to report violations for fear of losing humanitarian assistance, facing reprisals, or losing employment opportunities – highlighting the challenges facing reporting and protection mechanisms in humanitarian settings.

This case underscores the need to strengthen measures for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse within humanitarian operations, ensure independent and transparent investigations, hold all those responsible accountable, provide safe and confidential reporting mechanisms, and ensure survivors' access to protection and legal and psychological support, in line with humanitarian principles and international human rights standards.

Breaches in the Wall of Repression:

Judicial Acquittals Confirm That Defender Resilience and Rights Pressure Make a Difference

Despite the harshness of the rights landscape and the continued instrumentalisation of the judiciary in some cases as a tool for political revenge and silencing independent voices, June carried limited but significant indicators; it proved that the resilience of defenders, solidarity of victims, and continued rights and media pressure can achieve breakthroughs, however partial, in the face of injustice. These developments affirm that justice may stumble, but it is not defeated as long as advocacy and accountability efforts continue.



Atbara: Acquittal of Human Rights Defender Ayoub Ibrahim Arabi After More Than Eight Months of Detention Over Humanitarian Work

Nile River State – 25 June 2026

On 25 June 2026, the judicial authorities in Nile River State concluded the detention of human rights defender and Director of Tabashir Humanitarian Aid Organisation, Ayoub Ibrahim Arabi, with a ruling acquitting him of the charges against him, after more than eight months of detention on allegations of cooperation with the Rapid Support Forces.

The authorities had arrested Arabi alongside the organisation's finance director, Samar Suleiman, following a complaint relating to the organisation's humanitarian activities in Al-Fasher city and the Zamzam and Abu Shouk camps. Throughout the proceedings, the organisation affirmed that their work was limited to providing humanitarian assistance to women, children, the elderly, and displaced persons affected by the conflict, in coordination with UN agencies, without any

connection to military or political activities.

Arabi described the acquittal ruling as confirmation that providing humanitarian assistance to civilians affected by war is not a crime but a humanitarian and moral duty, announcing his determination to continue humanitarian work despite the detention and lengthy legal procedures he endured. He noted that his continued detention for more than eight months had disrupted a number of relief programmes and deprived thousands of beneficiaries of services and humanitarian assistance they urgently needed, and expressed gratitude to the rights organisations, media, activists, and individuals who continued advocacy and demands for his release throughout his detention.

This case highlights the growing risks facing humanitarian workers and human rights defenders in Sudan, including exposure to detention and criminal prosecution for their humanitarian activities, and the consequent direct impact on the delivery of assistance to civilians affected by the conflict.

Dongola: Court of Appeal Acquits 19 Civilians from Darfur and Overturns Death and Life Imprisonment Sentences After More Than Two Years of Detention

Northern State – 16 June 2026

The Court of Appeal in Dongola city issued a ruling on 16 June 2026 acquitting 19 civilians from Darfur and annulling the sentences issued against them, which included death and life imprisonment, in a case in which they were accused of cooperation and collusion with the Rapid Support Forces. The court ordered the criminal case to be struck out and their immediate release unless they were wanted in other cases, ending more than two years of detention and judicial proceedings.

Saif Al-Din Adam Saleh, head of the Legal Committee for the Release of Darfur Residents from Detention Centres and Prisons, stated that the ruling was the culmination of a legal battle lasting more than two years, resulting in the release of 21 individuals from Darfur, after the

defence team succeeded in overturning the rulings issued by the trial court, which had imposed death and life imprisonment sentences on a number of defendants. The case, from the outset of its proceedings, raised human rights concerns regarding respect for fair trial guarantees, particularly in light of the imposition of extremely harsh penalties which the Court of Appeal ultimately annulled entirely, reflecting the importance of guaranteeing the right to defence, the presumption of innocence, and the subjection of rulings to effective judicial review. The case also highlighted concerns regarding the use of geographical or ethnic affiliation as a basis for suspicion or criminal prosecution, after judicial proceedings concluded with the acquittal of all defendants from Darfur.

This ruling affirms the importance of upholding the principle of equality before the law and ensuring that criminal prosecutions are not based on regional or ethnic affiliation, but on sufficient legal evidence meeting fair trial standards.



Despite Repression and Risks

Sudanese Defenders Receive International Recognition



Washington, USA: Sudanese Journalist and Rights Defender Zeinab Mohammed Salih Wins Knight International Journalism Award for Documenting War Violations and Defending Media Freedom – 2026

Independent Sudanese journalist Zeinab Mohammed Salih won the 2026 Knight International Journalism Award, presented by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), in recognition of her courage in covering the armed conflict in Sudan and her contribution to documenting violations and the humanitarian crisis despite the security risks facing journalists. The ICFJ praised her work in documenting war-related atrocities and bringing them to international public attention through global media outlets including The Guardian, Financial Times, The Economist, and BBC. ICFJ President Sharon Moshafi affirmed that Zeinab's

reports helped to shed light on a humanitarian crisis that had suffered from poor media coverage, while her investigations had a practical impact in stimulating the response of international relief organisations, including the World Food Programme and Médecins Sans Frontières, following her publication of reports on humanitarian conditions in the Tawila area of North Darfur. Zeinab Mohammed Salih is among Sudan's most prominent independent journalists and participated in founding the Sudanese Journalists' Network to support correspondents during the war. Her receiving this award comes amid continued risks and violations faced by journalists and media workers in Sudan, reflecting the importance of protecting press freedom and ensuring journalists can perform their work without intimidation or targeting.



London, United Kingdom: Sudanese Journalist Mohammed Amin Wins «Journalist of the Year» Award for Documenting War Violations in Sudan – 2026

Independent Sudanese journalist Mohammed Amin (Maraya) won the 2026 «Journalist of the Year» award presented by One World Media, in recognition of his field coverage of the armed conflict in Sudan and his documentation of human rights violations and the humanitarian crisis, particularly in Al-Fasher city and Darfur regions.

The organisation praised his journalistic work through which he continued to convey facts from one of the most dangerous journalistic environments in the world, despite the security risks faced by journalists inside Sudan. Mohammed Amin is among Sudan's most prominent independent journalists specialising in covering armed conflicts and human rights issues in Sudan, and is known for his coverage of the December 2018 Revolution, the October 2021 military coup, and violations associated with the current war.

In a related context, Amin was unable to attend the award ceremony in London after British authorities refused to grant him a visa, justifying the decision on the basis of lack of conviction that he would leave the

United Kingdom following the visit. Amin described the decision as discriminatory and reflecting double standards, affirming that he had previously visited Britain in 2022 to receive a journalism award and had returned to his place of residence on the scheduled date. This drew criticism from the organising institution and a number of media and rights bodies.

This international recognition comes amid continuing grave challenges facing Sudanese journalists and rights defenders, and reflects the importance of independent journalism in documenting violations, strengthening accountability, and keeping Sudan's humanitarian crisis within international priorities.

Berlin, Germany: Sudanese Journalist Hiba Abdel Azim Wins Green Panther Environmental Journalism Award for Addressing Climate and Sustainability Issues 19- June 2026

Sudanese journalist Hiba Abdel Azim won the 2026 Green Panther Environmental Journalism Award for her creative work «The New Sudan: When the Banks of the Yellow Nile Flourish 2050,» as part of a regional competition involving 25 journalists from 16 Arab countries. The work presents a forward-looking vision of climate change impacts on Sudan and possibilities for transformation towards sustainable development and

a green economy, within the framework of journalistic treatment of environmental and climate issues.

This recognition comes as part of a regional programme launched by the German taz Panter Stiftung to support environmental journalism in the Middle East and North Africa, at a time when Sudanese journalists face increasing challenges due to war and restrictions on the media work environment. Hiba Abdel Azim's win reflects the growing presence of Sudanese women journalists on international platforms, and the role of independent journalism in highlighting environmental and developmental issues linked to human rights.



Berlin, Germany: Sudanese Journalist Malaz Hassan Al-Badawi Wins taz Panter Award for Investigation Highlighting Women's Role in Confronting War Impacts in Sudan – 19 June 2026

Sudanese journalist Malaz Hassan Al-Badawi won the 2026 taz Panter Award for her journalistic work «Can Women Save Sudan?» which documents the pivotal role of Sudanese women in humanitarian response, supporting affected communities, and strengthening peacebuilding efforts during the armed conflict.

The recognition comes as part of the environmental journalism and independent media programme implemented by the German taz Panter Stiftung for women journalists in the Middle East and North Africa, reflecting appreciation for the role of Sudanese women journalists in documenting the impacts of war and highlighting women's issues and human rights. This achievement adds to the series of international awards won by Sudanese journalists during 2026, affirming the continued contribution of Sudan's independent press to conveying truths despite the risks and violations facing media workers.



Sudan Under the International Microscope: **Escalating Warnings and Renewed Calls for Accountability**

Monitoring of Key International Positions and Actions Regarding Human Rights in Sudan – June 2026

Geneva, Human Rights Council | 15 June 2026

UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan

UN Fact-Finding Mission: Arbitrary Detention and Torture Have Become Systematic Tools of War in Sudan
The United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan presented its oral update before the 62nd session of the Human Rights Council on 15 June 2026, revealing a wide and systematic pattern of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and ill-treatment perpetrated by parties to the conflict, foremost among them the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces, against civilians – particularly human rights defenders, journalists, humanitarian

workers, political activists, and civil society leaders.

The Mission affirmed that mere movement between areas under the control of different parties had become sufficient grounds for arrest, amid frequent accusations of cooperation with the other side, noting that «freedom of movement has become criminalised» in large parts of the country. The Mission explained that detainees are frequently denied fundamental legal guarantees, including knowledge of the reasons for their detention, contact with lawyers or family members, and appearance before an independent judicial authority. It documented cases of prolonged detention in harsh conditions, including torture by electric shock, severe beatings, degrading treatment, and denial of medical care, food,

and clean water, whether in military intelligence facilities under the Armed Forces or in detention sites managed by the Rapid Support Forces, exposing detainees to the risk of disease and ill-treatment.

The Mission also revealed the continued use of detention for financial extortion, explaining that the Rapid Support Forces had, in some cases, demanded that families of detainees pay up to 25 million Sudanese pounds for the release of their relatives. It further expressed grave concern about the arrest of at least 70 people in El-Geneina in May 2026, including humanitarian workers, without disclosing their places of detention or legal status, or allowing their families and lawyers to visit them.

The Mission considered these practices to reflect a systematic policy using arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture as tools for controlling and terrorising civilian populations, and called upon all parties to the conflict to immediately release arbitrarily detained individuals, disclose the fate of those forcibly disappeared, guarantee respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and hold those responsible for grave violations accountable.

United Nations Warns of Escalating Drone Attacks and More Than 1,000 Civilian Deaths

Geneva | 15 June 2026

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk warned during the 62nd session of the Human Rights Council of the sharp escalation in the use of drones in Sudan, confirming that more than 1,000 civilians had

been killed during the first five months of 2026 as a result of airstrikes targeting residential areas, civilian infrastructure, and vital facilities. Türk affirmed that the expanding scope of these attacks exacerbates risks to civilian populations and raises serious concerns regarding respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, calling upon all parties to the conflict to take effective measures to protect civilians and halt indiscriminate attacks.

European Union Reaffirms Support for Fact-Finding Mission and Calls on Parties to Cooperate

Geneva | 15 June 2026

The European Union, in a statement before the Human Rights Council during the interactive dialogue with the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan, reaffirmed its full support for the continuation of the Mission’s work, calling upon all parties to the conflict to cooperate with it and enable it to access victims, witnesses, and information necessary for the fulfilment of its mandate. The statement stressed the importance of ensuring accountability for grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law as a fundamental condition for providing justice to victims and combating impunity.

International Coalition Warns of Risk of Mass Atrocities in Al-Obeid City

Geneva | 18 June 2026

An international coalition including Norway, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and other international partners warned during the Human Rights Council





proceedings of escalating risks of mass atrocities against civilians in Al-Obeid city, North Kordofan State, as military operations approach densely populated residential neighbourhoods. The countries called upon warring parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and take urgent measures to protect civilians and prevent the recurrence of the widespread violations witnessed in other parts of Sudan.

United Kingdom Affirms Support for International Accountability for Violations in Sudan

Geneva | 18 June 2026

The United Kingdom, in a statement before the Human Rights Council, reaffirmed its support for the UN

Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan, stressing the need to ensure accountability for grave violations and prevent impunity for those responsible. It also called for the continued documentation of violations and protection of victims and witnesses as an essential part of any future transitional justice process.

United States and International Partners Call for Protection of Civilians and Resumption of Political Process

June 2026

The United States and a number of international partners expressed, in a joint statement, their profound concern over the continued humanitarian and security deterioration in Sudan, stressing the need to protect civilians, ensure unimpeded humanitarian access, and resume a comprehensive political process leading to an end to the conflict. The statement affirmed that respect for international humanitarian law and human rights constitutes the foundation for any sustainable political settlement.

United Nations Warns of Worsening Famine and Expanding Hunger Crisis in Sudan

17 June 2026

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that Sudan has become one of the world's most dangerous hunger hotspots, with increasing risks of famine in several areas due to continued conflict, large-scale displacement, disruption of agricultural production, and restrictions on humanitarian access. The agencies affirmed that millions of civilians are facing critical levels of food insecurity, calling for urgent facilitation of humanitarian access and respect for legal obligations relating to the protection of civilians and guarantee of relief access.





Bulletin Analysis – June 2026

The June 2026 edition of the Sudan Defenders bulletin reveals five key trends characterising the situation of human rights defenders during the month:

First: Continued Instrumentalisation of the Judiciary as a Tool of Targeting.

The bulletin documented ongoing arrests and trials based on vague charges of cooperating with one party to the conflict, in the absence of fair trial guarantees, reflecting the continued utilisation of the justice system in some cases to restrict rights and humanitarian work.

Second: Escalating Security Risks.

June saw an escalation in the risks of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and attacks on civilians, alongside the expanded use of drones, further deepening the fragility of the environment in which human rights defenders operate.

Third: Expanding Targeting Beyond Sudan.

Risk is no longer confined to the interior but has extended to countries of asylum, with the bulletin documenting increasing threats to Sudanese refugees, including journalists and human rights defenders in Libya, in addition to protection challenges for refugees in Uganda and Chad.

Fourth: Continued Effectiveness of Rights Pressure.

Despite the scale of violations, June saw a number of judicial acquittals and the release of defenders and humanitarian workers following advocacy campaigns and legal pressure, confirming that documentation and advocacy remain effective tools for curbing violations.

Fifth: Growing International Attention.

The month was characterised by renewed international support for the Fact-Finding Mission, heightened UN warnings regarding the protection of civilians, and expanding calls for international accountability and an end to impunity.

Risk Pattern	Level of Severity	Trend
Arbitrary Detention and Prolonged Detention	Very High	Increasing ↑
Unfair Trials and Death Sentences	High	Increasing ↑
Torture, Ill-Treatment and Enforced Disappearance	Very High	Increasing ↑
Conflict-Related Sexual Violence	Very High	Increasing ↑
Restrictions on Humanitarian Work	High	Increasing ↑
Targeting of Lawyer Defenders and Journalists	High	Increasing ↑
Threats Against Refugees and Defenders in Neighbouring Countries	High	Increasing ↑
Hate Speech and Discrimination	High	Increasing ↑
Airstrikes and Drone Attacks	Very High	Increasing ↑
Releases and Judicial Acquittals	Limited Improvement	Increasing ↑

Bulletin Recommendations

Sudan Defenders (June 2026)

Based on the above risks, Sudan Defenders calls upon all national, regional, and international parties to take the following actions:

First: To Parties to the Conflict

- Immediate cessation of all violations against civilians and human rights defenders.
- Release of all arbitrarily detained individuals and disclosure of the fate of those forcibly disappeared.
- Respect for international humanitarian law and guarantee of protection for humanitarian and media workers.

Second: To Sudanese Judicial Authorities

- Guarantee of judicial independence and prevention of its use to target human rights defenders.
- Review of cases relating to rights and humanitarian work and release of detainees held without sufficient evidence.
- Guarantee of fair trials in accordance with international standards.

Third: To the United Nations and the Human Rights Council

- Extension and strengthening of the Fact-Finding Mission's mandate and provision of necessary resources for its work.
- Establishment of more effective mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders, witnesses, and victims.
- Support for efforts to document violations and preserve evidence.

Fourth: To the International Community

- Increased political and financial support for independent

Sudanese civil society organisations.

- Expansion of protection and resettlement programmes for defenders and journalists at imminent risk.
- Use of targeted sanctions instruments against those responsible for grave violations.

Fifth: To UNHCR and Host Countries

- Strengthening of legal protection for Sudanese refugees, particularly human rights defenders and journalists.
- Acceleration of registration and resettlement procedures for the most vulnerable cases.
- Adoption of effective measures to prevent hate speech, exploitation, and violations within refugee camps.

Sixth: To Sudanese Civil Society Organisations

- Strengthening of coordination in monitoring, documentation, and information sharing.
- Provision of legal and psychological support to victims and defenders.
- Development of early warning and risk monitoring systems, with particular attention to women defenders, journalists, and humanitarian workers.

Conclusion

The June 2026 bulletin reveals that the targeting of human rights defenders in Sudan has become more diverse and organised, extending beyond arrest to include the instrumentalisation of the judiciary, sexual violence, restrictions on humanitarian work, and cross-border threats. In parallel, judicial acquittals, releases, international awards, and heightened international attention confirm that advocacy, documentation, and rights pressure continue to achieve tangible results, and that the protection of defenders and strengthening of accountability must remain at the forefront of national and international priorities.



**leading voices
in defending the
rights of women
and marginalised
groups affected
by armed conflict**



A Model of Intellectual and Field Feminist Leadership in Sudan

Dr Aisha Khalil Al-Karab

Dr Aisha Khalil Al-Karab – widely known as «Issha Al-Karab» – is one of Sudan's most prominent academics, researchers, and feminists, and a leader who has made significant contributions to the development of human rights and gender justice discourse, linking women's issues to democracy, peace, sustainable development, and transitional justice. She has combined academic expertise with civil society work, dedicating her professional life to gender justice, equity, and women's empowerment in Sudan, becoming one of the country's leading voices in defending the rights of women and marginalised groups affected by armed conflict.

Birth and Upbringing

Dr Aisha Khalil Al-Karab was born in the village of Wad Al-Barr, east of Madani city – a village founded by her great-grandfather – and is the fourth of her siblings. Her family moved to Hantoub when she was two years old, primarily in search of better educational opportunities.

Early Education

She attended Hantoub Primary School, which admitted some girls, in a family environment that valued formal education for girls. She studied at Hantoub and then at

Madani schools, entering the girls' boarding school at the age of ten, where she excelled academically and was active in theatre and cultural societies. During secondary school, she founded the «Socialist Thought Society» with her peers and, early on, became involved in the Sudanese Women's Union, inspired by pioneers such as Nafisa Ahmed Al-Amin and Alawiya Hussein, establishing a branch in Hantoub.

University and Higher Education

She specialised in agricultural economics and graduated with first-class honours. She then pursued postgraduate studies in the United Kingdom, earning a doctorate in production economics.

Academic and Professional Career

Academic Experience

She worked as a researcher at the Agricultural Research Corporation, one of only five women researchers at the time across Sudan. She later moved to the University of Khartoum to teach agricultural economics, combining academic research with field work in rural and agricultural settings.

From Economics to Rights Work

Dr Aisha's interest was not confined to academic and

research practice; her direct engagement with social reality led her to civil and research work. She recognised that the challenges facing women are closely linked to poverty, discrimination, armed conflict, and weak public policies. From this standpoint, she moved into development and human rights work, contributing to the design and implementation of programmes aimed at empowering women, enhancing their participation in public life, and improving conditions for local communities, with a focus on areas affected by war and fragility.

Civil and Institutional Work

Sudan Organisation for Research and Development (SORD)

Dr Al-Karab is a pivotal figure in the founding and management of the Sudan Organisation for Research and Development (SORD), having served as Executive Director for several years and later as Chairperson of the Board of Directors and Strategic Adviser. The organisation has played a prominent role in advocating for women's issues, including efforts to amend the Personal Status Law and address child marriage. Since its founding, she has led the organisation to become a leading research and development institution, implementing dozens of studies and programmes on women's rights, local development, governance, social justice, peacebuilding, legal reform, and community empowerment, with particular attention to women, youth, and communities affected by conflict.

Gender Centre for Studies and Training

In the latter half of the 1990s, she participated in founding the Gender Centre for Studies and Training with other colleagues, making it a pioneer in disseminating gender concepts and women's rights in Khartoum and across Sudan's various states (Kordofan, Darfur, Al-Jazirah, White Nile), and even into South Sudan.

Sudanese Civil Society Initiative

Dr Aisha emerged as a leading figure in the Sudanese Civil Society Initiative led by the late Amin Mekki Madani, one of the most significant national initiatives aimed at unifying the voice of Sudanese civil society and defending democracy, rule of law, and human rights.

Political and Feminist Activity

Early Feminist Consciousness

Her feminist consciousness began to form early, particularly when she observed the phenomenon of her brilliant female peers dropping out of school due to early marriage, raising questions about why the paths of talented women were so easily cut short.

Political Activity

She was influenced by her politically active father and attended seminars and election campaigns from an early age. She formally joined the Democratic Front and was later nominated to the Communist Party



during her university studies. However, from 1982 she decided not to belong to any political party except one that embraced feminist principles, seeking broader intellectual space.

Sudanese Feminist Movement

Dr Aisha Khalil Al-Karab is one of the most prominent intellectual and organisational leaders of the Sudanese feminist movement. Over decades, she contributed to the development of a progressive feminist discourse linking women’s issues to human rights, democracy, social justice, sustainable development, and peacebuilding. She played a pivotal role in founding and supporting numerous feminist networks, alliances, and civil society organisations, leading extensive advocacy and legal reform efforts aimed at reviewing discriminatory legislation, combating all forms of gender-based violence, enhancing women’s political and economic participation, and consolidating their presence in decision-making positions.

She paid particular attention to the issues of women in rural and marginalised areas, displaced and refugee women, and women affected by armed conflict, believing that achieving justice and equality begins by listening to the voices of the most marginalised women and involving them in shaping public policies, peace processes, and state-building.

Dr Aisha acquired exceptional field knowledge of Sudan through her continuous visits to more than 200 cities and villages across the country’s various regions, providing her with a deep understanding of the cultural, social, ethnic, and economic diversity that characterises Sudanese society. This field experience was clearly reflected in her research, intellectual vision, and development approaches, which were characterised by sensitivity to local community specificities and linked scientific research, field work, and public policy formulation. This direct engagement with Sudanese communities became one of the most important sources of her intellectual and practical strength, consolidating her position as one of the researchers and feminist leaders most familiar with Sudan’s reality, complexities, and transformations.

Her Feminist Vision

Dr Aisha believes that feminism is not merely a slogan but a «transformative intellectual and political project.» She observes that the feminist movement in Sudan has often been a «reaction to violence and war» rather than a movement founded on clear theory, and she advocates for feminist peace as the foundation for any genuine peace in Sudan.

She emphasises that feminist unity does not mean merging into a single entity – women are not homogeneous – but that a shared vision can be built around peace, justice, and the construction of a civil

state. She calls for an intellectual feminist movement that produces its own leadership and embraces diversity, rather than formal unity.

She also notes that the war in Sudan has unleashed three new feminist forces: the force of collective solidarity among women in displacement, the force of individual support among women, and the internal force of adaptation and decision-making, considering these building blocks upon which a new Sudanese feminist movement can be constructed.

Defence of Women During War

Since the outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023, Dr Aisha has emerged as one of the most prominent rights voices documenting the impact of conflict on women and girls, highlighting the crimes of sexual violence, forced displacement, and violations committed against civilians.

Drawing on survivor testimonies and field research, she has affirmed that sexual violence is used as a method of warfare, not as an isolated behaviour. She has also highlighted the stigma faced by survivors, which prevents many from seeking medical and psychological care, while perpetrators operate without fear of accountability.

She has participated in monitoring and documentation efforts, provided briefings and analyses to international mechanisms, and called for accountability, protection of women and women human rights defenders, and the provision of legal, psychological, and social support for survivors of violations.

Regional and International Presence

Dr Aisha has maintained a prominent presence in regional and international forums, participating in conferences, meetings, and workshops organised by the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, and international academic and human rights institutions. She has delivered briefings and interventions on the situation of women and human rights in Sudan, contributing to building partnerships with regional and international organisations to support Sudanese civil society and enhance the presence of Sudanese women’s issues on the international agenda.

Building Feminist Leadership

Among Dr Aisha’s most significant contributions is her investment in building new generations of young feminist leaders, through training and mentoring programmes, strengthening the capacities of researchers and activists, and transferring experience in advocacy, research, monitoring, programme management, and institutional leadership. This role has been reflected in the emergence of numerous women leaders who have continued to work in Sudanese and regional civil society organisations.



Intellectual Vision

Dr Aisha Al-Karab’s vision is grounded in the conviction that sustainable development cannot be achieved in the absence of social justice, and that women’s rights are not a sectoral issue but a fundamental pillar for building a state of citizenship and the rule of law.

She believes that scientific research must serve as a tool for social change and policy-making, and that an independent civil society represents one of the most important guarantees for protecting rights and freedoms, enhancing popular participation, and consolidating democracy.

She poses fundamental questions about Sudan’s future, affirming that no peace can be achieved without genuine feminist justice, and that the war itself must be situated within a broader historical context of state-building failure, fragmentation of national identity, normalisation of violence, and marginalisation of women as being «outside politics.»

Legacy

Dr Aisha Khalil Al-Karab is a model of intellectual and field feminist leadership in Sudan, combining specialised academic research with institutional civil work, dedicating her life to deconstructing the roots of discrimination and violence against women, and advocating for a civil state founded on justice and equality.

Her name is associated with the development of social and rights-based research addressing women’s issues, conflict, and political transformations in Sudan, making her one of the most prominent intellectual and practical references in the Sudanese feminist movement – a model to be emulated in combining theoretical struggle with field work, and national engagement with international presence.

June 2026

About Sudan Defenders

Sudan Defenders: It is the civil alliance of human rights defenders in Sudan, first established in 2009 and re-established in June 2022 in Kampala, Uganda, through the adoption of the Kampala Declaration. The alliance currently includes 47 rights organizations and works to empower and protect human rights defenders through legal, psychological, and logistical support, training, research, monitoring and documentation of violations, and advocacy at national, regional, and international levels. The alliance carries out its activities according to values of independence, transparency, respect for human dignity, and promotes collective action and solidarity among human rights defenders in Sudan and abroad. Its headquarters is located in Kampala, Uganda.



Sudan Defenders
Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition



Sudan Defenders

Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition

Contact: للتواصل:

🌐 Head Office: Human Rights House, Plot 1853, John Kiyingi Road, Nsambya, Kampala.

📍 sudandefenders.org

✉ info@sudandefenders.org

📱 @SudanDefenders