

## **Joint Forces must end Military Presence in Zamzam Camp**

Kampala/Addis Ababa

16 November 2024

The undersigned organizations once again express their profound concern about the unbearable suffering of civilians in Sudan due to the ongoing fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and its allied armed groups on the one hand, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on the other. Massive mobilization of civilians and armament of likely volunteer fighters, with light and heavy weapons, fuel the fighting further and provides the warring parties with additional pretexts to consider civilian areas as military targets.

We draw attention to the dramatic development in Zamzam Camp, which is one of the largest gathering points of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Darfur. The densely populated camp is located at about 15km south of El Fasher, North Darfur State. Reports indicated that the Joint Forces – a coalition of former insurgent groups from Darfur that supports SAF's war efforts – is increasing its military presence in Zamzam Camp. A statement issued by the Coordination of IDPs in Zamzam Camp indicated that on 12th and 13th November 2024, the Joint Forces have deployed tanks, military vehicles, drones as well as middle range and heavy weapons in the Camp. They have installed Starlink satellite devices and started building military checkpoints and digging trenches for combat purpose.

The use of IDP camps for military purpose exposes civilians and non-combatants to the dangers of military operations and retaliation from the belligerent parties. Such practice puts the IDPs, the most vulnerable civilians, at the risk of violations of article 3 which is common to the 4 Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol II applicable to the protection of civilians and non-combatants during armed conflicts not of an international character.

It is unacceptable that all efforts for ceasefire for humanitarian purposes failed due to the intransigence of SAF and its refusal to engage with the international community in the ceasefire talks convened in Geneva (Switzerland) last summer. In this respect, we recall relevant resolutions adopted by the African Union's Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the UN Security Council, notably Communiqué (PSC/HoSG/COMM.1218(2024)) adopted by AUPSC at the level of Heads of State and Government on 21 June 2024 as well as resolution (S/RES/2736(2024)), which expressed concerns over RSF's siege over El Fasher and called on SAF and the RSF to de-escalation and agree on immediate cessation of hostilities, leading to sustainable resolution to the armed conflict through dialogue.

We recommend that:

1. The warring parties refrain from deploying troops and military equipment in Zamzam Camp and end military presence in the IDPs settlements all over Darfur.
2. The warring parties should put immediate halt to all military operations notably the use of heavy artillery and aerial bombardment in civilian areas and that they fully engage in a transparent discussion on matters of protection of civilians.
3. The African Union should take the lead in guiding the international community in its efforts to protect civilians in Sudan and to force the warring parties to reach a negotiated settlement of this devastating armed conflict.

1. Africa Centre for Human Rights, Khartoum
2. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, Banjul
3. African Centre for Sustainable Development, New York
4. African Organization for Rights and Development, Kampala
5. Afro-European Organization for Humanitarian Action and Development, Paris
6. Al-Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development, Kampala
7. American African Foundation against Torture, New York
8. Civic Forces Alliance (CFA-Sudan), Khartoum
9. Civil Society Initiative, Khartoum
10. Community Development Association, Khartoum/Adré
11. Darfur Bar Association, Khartoum/Kampala
12. Darfur Civil Society Forum, Khartoum
13. Darfur Initiative for Justice and Peace, Kampala
14. Darfur Victims Support Organization, Kampala
15. Development Hub Organization (Kampala)
16. Dreamers Network for Media and Human Rights, Kampala
17. Future Perspective Organization, Khartoum
18. Human Rights Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND), Khartoum
19. Human Rights Institute of South Africa, Johannesburg
20. International Media Centre, Birmingham, UK
21. Inspiring Women for Peace and Development, Kampala
22. Justice Africa Sudan, Khartoum/London
23. Kordofan Women for Human Rights, Kampala
24. Lawyers for Justice, Khartoum
25. Legal and Human Rights Committee (TAGADOM)
26. Madarat Al-Salam Organization for Development, Khartoum/Kassala
27. New Horizons Foundation, Juba
28. New Sudan Women's Union, Sudan
29. Nubatia Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, Khartoum
30. Nubatia for Sustainable Development, Kampala
31. Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society, Khartoum
32. Rise for Rights and Justice Centre, Kampala
33. Sama Foundation for Advocacy and Human Rights, Kampala
34. Sudan Democracy First Group, Khartoum, Kampala
35. Sudan Knowledge Centre, Geneva, Switzerland
36. Sudan Unlimited, New York
37. Sudanese Alliance for Rights, Khartoum/Kampala
38. Sudanese Centre for Democratic Media, Kampala
39. Sudanese Humanitarian Initiative, Kampala
40. Sustainable Dialogue Center, Kampala
41. The Nubian Centre for Peace and Democracy, Kampala
42. The United International Sudanese Council, Canada
43. Youth Citizens Observers Network, Kampala
44. Youth Rights Movement, Kampala
45. Zarga Organization for Rural Development, Khartoum

**For Media Contact:**

1. Mr. Adam Mousa Ishag +249 9 27 57 50 05 WhatsApp, E-mail [adam.mousa@darfurvs.org](mailto:adam.mousa@darfurvs.org)
2. Mr. Abdelrahman Gasim +251 9 96 33 74 61 and +256 751 90 77 77 WhatsApp