

End of mission statement by Mr. Radhouane Nouicer, the designated Expert on human rights in Sudan of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

GENEVA, 5 August 2025

I have just concluded a visit to Port Sudan from 27 to 31 July 2025, my second to the country since the start of the conflict in April 2023, to continue to assess the human rights and humanitarian situation in Sudan, to further engagement with the authorities at different levels and share our concerns in relation to the deterioration of the human rights situation in the country, and to encourage further attention to the population affected by the military conflict.

Prior to my visit to Port Sudan, I undertook virtual meetings with representatives of civil society organizations, including women-led organisations, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists.

I would like to express my appreciation to the authorities for their cooperation and for facilitating my visit. During the visit, I met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Justice and National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up, Attorney General, the Governor of Darfur region, as well as the Chair and Commissioners of the National Human Rights Commission.

I also met with United Nations officials and humanitarian partners to hear their views about the most critical concerns in Sudan. In the context of this visit, I also exchanged with civil society actors, and I commend their continued commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights in such a challenging environment.

I had the opportunity to visit a gathering site for internally displaced persons (IDPs) hosting female-headed households, including from Khartoum and Darfur, and meet with displaced women to gather first-hand information on the impact of the conflict on the lives of people who have been forced to flee. I was saddened by the conditions in which these displaced people continue to live - for instance, I met with women and children, including some with disabilities, living in tents under scorching temperatures, with humanitarian assistance and services such as food, water, sanitation, hygiene, and health care suspended months ago due to funding cuts. The coming raining season will further exacerbate the crisis for millions of displaced persons, turning an already dire situation into a disaster.

I reiterated the key human rights concerns [that I addressed during my last visit in July 2024](#), and which continue to require immediate attention, including the protection of civilians, facilitation of humanitarian aid, supporting space for civil society actors to carry out their work, and accountability. Whilst the discussions with authorities were frank and transparent, I indicated that very limited concrete progress was noted in regard to these key issues since my last visit, and I repeatedly reaffirmed that the protection of civilians is primarily the responsibility of the Sudanese authorities and that impunity has been one of the drivers of the ongoing conflict.

In relation to the **protection of civilians**, I am deeply troubled by the escalating violence in North Darfur state and Kordofan region, in particular RSF attacks directed against civilians and indiscriminate attacks, killing and injuring civilians and destroying civilian objects, including essential infrastructure, as well as the use of sexual violence and forced displacement. The consequences for civilians of the continued siege of El Fasher city remain particularly grave.

During my engagements, I underlined concerns regarding horrific sexual violence against women and girls, including during displacement, mostly perpetrated by the RSF. OHCHR in Sudan has documented over 390 cases of sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, since the beginning of the conflict. The scale is much higher, as sexual violence continues to be underreported due to fear of stigma and retaliation, among others. In this context, I welcomed the very positive move by the Sudanese authorities in signing with the UN a revised Framework of Cooperation on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Conflict in April 2025, reflecting the will to address and prevent sexual violence in conflict, provide comprehensive services to victims of conflict-related sexual violence and ensure that effective accountability measures are in place.

I also raised concerns at the attacks carried out by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on civilian residential areas, including recent airstrikes in Darfur and Kordofan regions, and recall that parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks may only be directed against military objectives and constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects.

I addressed with particular concern the increasing reports of hate speech in many areas of Sudan. I underscored the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity that characterizes and significantly shapes Sudan's social fabric. This should be preserved

to avoid further fragmentation, including on the basis of territorial, tribal and ethnic identities.

In relation to the **rule of law and accountability**, I highlighted concerns and called for attention to increasing reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, and the high number of harsh sentences, including death sentences, handed down for alleged “collaboration” with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). This raises significant human rights and protection concerns, particularly in contexts where due process and fair trial guarantees are severely compromised. I urged the review of such sentences, in particular death sentences, and appealed to halt their execution.

In my discussion with the Attorney General, he briefed on the progress made by the National Committee for Investigating Crimes and Violations of National Law and International Humanitarian Law and confirmed that over 120,000 cases have been filed. The Attorney General stated that over 300 cases have been filed against the regular forces, including the SAF, accompanied by the lifting of immunity from prosecution for some SAF personnel. This is a welcome development.

In relation to **civic space**, I raised serious concerns regarding the shrinking space for civil society actors, including undue restrictions, harassment and arbitrary detention. I emphasized the critical role of civil society actors in the response to the crisis in Sudan. I also regretted that steps taken by authorities to revise emergency legislation before the conflict broke out in April 2023 have since stalled and insisted on the need to review the emergency legislation as it provides nearly unlimited powers to local and federal authorities, particularly to arrest and detain without judicial oversight. In this regard, I welcome the positive response by the Minister of Justice to activate the committee designated to review the said legislation.

With regard to the **humanitarian response and access**, we exchanged on challenges in providing assistance to returning IDPs and refugees. I underscored the importance of the voluntariness and safety of returns, and ensuring accessibility to basic rights, such as food, water, health care and education, to support reintegration. I further drew attention to the deportation of some Sudanese from Egypt and further stressed that the authorities must stand against such deportations, as part of their protection responsibilities.

I raised the issue of the Adre border crossing between Chad and Sudan, highlighting the importance of this lifeline to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, and underscored

the need to keep it open beyond the current deadline of 15 August, in view of facilitating humanitarian convoys.

I also highlighted issues about restricted access to regions in dire need of humanitarian assistance, such as El Fasher, North Darfur state, and the Kordofan region, where intense hostilities have worsened the protection and humanitarian situation for civilians, where famine has been confirmed in some locations with warnings of risk for other areas. I am also troubled at the underfunding for the humanitarian response, and I call on donors to urgently increase funding and uphold financial commitments made in London on 15 April of this year. I also encouraged the authorities to speed up the administrative processes for issuing visas and stay permits to UN and other humanitarian staff.

In light of the RSF rejecting a humanitarian pause in El Fasher, North Darfur, proposed by the UN Secretary-General, I am particularly concerned at the humanitarian and protection situation, including in Abu Shouk IDP camp, which have come under repeated attacks by the RSF in recent months, leading to a rapid deterioration of the already dire humanitarian situation, and forced displacement.

I met with the National Human Rights Commission and extended my congratulations for the appointment of the remaining members of the Commission. I urged them to uphold the highest standards of impartiality, independence, and transparency in all actions and decisions, as a national body entrusted with the protection and promotion of human rights.

Regrettably, meetings with the recently appointed Prime Minister and members of the Transitional Sovereignty Council did not take place as initially planned. Further, meetings with the leadership of the RSF and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North led by Abdelaziz Al Hilu (SPLM-N) as parties to the conflict did not proceed as planned in Nairobi, Kenya. The RSF nominated a delegation representing the Sudan Founding Alliance "Ta'sees", which I declined, leading to the cancellation of the meeting. The SPLM-N did not confirm their meeting.

The debriefing with the Minister of Justice was constructive. During the meeting, the Minister expressed willingness to continue cooperating on human rights with my mandate and OHCHR Sudan Country Office, including through capacity building.

The war in Sudan is severely compounding an already fragile economic situation. Prices of essentials like food, fuel, and medicine are skyrocketing, amid deteriorating humanitarian conditions. The Sudanese Pound (SDG) is currently trading at over 2,500 SDG/USD, compared to around 500 SDG/USD before the conflict, marking a 500% depreciation.

In every armed conflict, it is civilians, especially women and children, who bear the greatest burden, enduring displacement, loss, and unimaginable suffering. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected and among the most vulnerable, yet their needs are too often overlooked. In my exchanges with persons with disabilities, they highlighted the enormous difficulties faced whilst fleeing conflict areas, and the lack of accessible services in areas of displacement. I call on authorities and humanitarian organizations to prioritize disability-inclusive support, including access to assistive devices, medical care, mental health support, and accessible shelter and evacuation.

Every day the conflict continues, innocent lives are lost, communities are torn apart, and trauma will continue to haunt generations. The ongoing war devastates civilian lives, violating fundamental human rights and turning daily survival into a constant struggle. I reiterated that the war would lead to no resolution of the crisis, and that only peaceful resolution through dialogue will alleviate the suffering, end the violence, return children to their schools, ensure a safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees to their homes, and save the Sudan's harmony and peaceful cohabitation of its diverse communities.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the expression of my good wishes to the newly appointed civilian Prime Minister and cabinet, hoping this will be a step towards forming a broad-based technocratic government, contributing to a pathway to peace, and strengthening the links between the Sudanese people and their authorities. I once again emphasize the importance of inclusive consultations with civic actors, with a prominent place for women's participation, silencing the guns, delivering essential services and achieving a sustainable solution for Sudan, grounded on advancing human rights for all.

Finally, the path forward demands more than ceasefires and peace talks. It requires a sustained commitment to justice, accountability, and inclusive governance. The international community must not merely observe but act with urgency to enforce

the arms embargo, support local peacebuilders, and ensure unhindered humanitarian access. At the same time, parties to the conflict must place the well-being of civilians above their personal or political gain, embracing a future built on reconciliation and human rights.

The outcome of this visit will contribute to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' annual report on the human rights situation in the Sudan, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its 61st session.

I thank once again all those who took the time to meet with me in the context of my visit.

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