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2.1. Perceived political opponents

Sources indicated that political opponents continued to be targeted by both the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).199 In an interview with EUAA, a human rights analyst with in-depth expertise on the country indicated that in areas controlled by the RSF, political activists are considered collaborators of the SAF, whereas in areas controlled by the SAF, they are arrested if they come from RSF-controlled areas.200 Freedom House indicated that '[p]olitical detainees, activists, and journalists have been held incommunicado without access to legal representation and have likely been subject to torture and inhumane treatment'.201 The UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated, in September 2024, that states of emergency are relied upon throughout the country to curtail activities by civil society organisations, journalists, and the political opposition.202 For additional information see section 1.3(e) Policing the rule of law and the new state of emergency.

A human rights analyst interviewed by EUAA pointed out to cases of individuals going to court and sentenced to the death penalty after being accused of collaborating with the RSF, in what the source described as a 'worrying trend' with no due process.203 Sudan Tribune reported that, according to a local lawyer, 250 people were sentenced to death or life in prison in various locations, including Al Damazin and Blue Nile state, for supporting the RSF.204 For additional information on the rule of law and the administration of justice, see 1.3 Rule of law and administration of justice.

An October 2023 report by the UN FFM for the Sudan205 (UN FFM) indicated that sexual violence has been reportedly used by the SAF and security forces to repress activists, members of the political opposition, and pro-democracy protesters.206 Sexual violence also took place due to the perceived or real affiliation of their relatives with opposition parties or for documenting human rights violations.207 The UN FFM for the Sudan documented cases of women and girls who were raped in Khartoum by the RSF for allegedly supporting the previous regime or the SAF, and in Darfur for being human rights defenders and activists.208

Both the SAF and the RSF are accused of conducting arbitrary and illegal detentions of individuals accused of supporting the other party to the conflict.209 The RSF, for example, reportedly use unofficial and clandestine detention centres in Khartoum and Darfur in locations such as universities, schools, private houses, buildings, gas stations, police stations, and areas near checkpoints, whereas the SAF reportedly have illegal detention centres in Khartoum.210 Sudan War Monitor reported in May 2024 that the RSF conducted a 'campaign of mass arrests' of perceived political opponents, detaining over 80 during the period of two weeks.211 Al

Jazeera reported that, according to the UN and local sources, the SAF has been accused of arbitrarily detaining and summarily executing persons it perceives as political opponents when it retook Khartoum.212

The UN FFM report from October 2024 noted, based on one witness's testimony, the systematic targeting of civil society, particularly individuals who remained neutral or opposed the war.213 According to the same source, this has forced numerous professionals to flee the country.214

A May 2024 COI report on Sudan produced by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, covering the period between August 2022 and 26 May 2024, indicated that, based on confidential sources, 'there have been few, if any, demonstrations'.215 Oral sources consulted similarly indicated that, according to their knowledge, there have not been protests recorded in Sudan in 2024.216 The Dutch COI report indicated that, based on confidential sources, it is 'quite risky for individuals to speak out publicly against the war. The warring parties interpreted protests against the war as expressions of criticism directed towards themselves. Both the RSF and SAF-affiliated intelligence agencies rounded up peace demonstrators'.217

☐ (a) Community leaders, lawyers, and human rights activists

For background information, see Section 2.3.2. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

The UN FFM for the Sudan indicated that community leaders, lawyers, and human rights activists continued to be targeted by warring parties.218 It documented 'multiple incidents of threats, intimidation, harassment, attacks and reprisals against human rights defenders, lawyers and activists documenting human rights violations, and members of civil society, by both the SAF and RSF'.219 The same source provided the examples of a human rights activist who was arrested and tortured in El Geneina for documenting human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by the RSF and its allies, and another who was abducted and tortured by the RSF in Omdurman in early 2024 accused of being a SAF spy due to his activism.220

The UN FFM for the Sudan indicated that female human rights defenders and activists have been targeted with sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and torture, and although they did not know the perpetrators, the perpetrators reportedly knew the activities of their victims and they were looking for them specifically.221

Regarding the situation of lawyers, the UN FFM for the Sudan provided the following:

'lawyers are facing difficulties in exercising their functions, due to continued harassment, monitoring, targeting, and scrutiny by security actors. They also face challenges in providing adequate legal defense to the complex criminal cases brought forward by the authorities as part of the National Committee of Investigation on Human Rights Violations, War Crimes, and Violations by the Rebel Rapid Support Forces and Other Crimes, in SAF controlled areas since the start of the conflict. Lawyers providing legal assistance to civilians in such cases may reportedly face arrest over alleged affiliation or support to the RSF'.222

☐ (b) Resistance Committees (RCs) and Emergency Response Rooms (EERs)

For background information, see Section 2.3.3. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

Sources reported that members of Resistance Committees (RCs) and Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs)223 continued to be detained and/or attacked on suspicion of collaborating with rival parties.224 Reuters reported that both the SAF and the RSF suspect members of RCs and EERs for having led the pro-democracy protests that toppled the al-Bashir regime in 2019.225 The UN FFM for the Sudan indicated that SAF's military intelligence routinely targets these individuals and subjects them to arbitrary detention due to their perceived association with the Forces for Freedom and Change and for allegedly being RSF collaborators.226 A human rights analyst interviewed by EUAA indicated that, despite the barriers to operate, RCs have 'managed to function' but that they also become the target of rival groups.227 When they operate in RSF areas, for example, they become the target of the SAF.228

The UN FFM for the Sudan indicated that ERR volunteers have been subjected to sexual violence while performing their duties, as well as torture and arbitrary detention.229 Al Jazeera similarly reported that, in areas controlled by the RSF, ERR volunteers are exposed to arbitrary detention and physical and sexual violence due to lawlessness, and in areas controlled by the SAF, volunteers have been targeted by military intelligence and the 'Kizan', members of Sudan's political Islamic movement that ruled alongside al-Bashir and now support the SAF and target civil society organisations 'in revenge' for overthrowing them in 2019.230 Al Jazeera reported that, according to an ERR spokesperson, after the SAF recaptured neighbourhoods in Omdurman from the RSF in March 2024, several ERR volunteers had to flee as the SAF and SAF-affiliated

militias reportedly started to search for people who were part of pro-democracy protests in the past.231

Instances of targeting of RCs and EER volunteers, as reported by sources, include:

- In November 2024, The New Humanitarian reported that, according to the coordinator of a women's ERR in Khartoum, '21 women from a cooperative were recently detained, beaten, sexually harassed, and had their money stolen by members of the RSF'.232
- On 13 May 2024, Sudan War Monitor reported that, according to a local political activist, since April 2024, security forces arrested more than 50 people in En-Nahud, North Kordofan, with some of them being released while others still in detention; most of the detainees are political activists from the RCs who were calling to stop the war. 233
- On 7 April 2024, Sudan Tribune reported that SAF's military intelligence was conducting an arrest campaign across Sennar state for several weeks, targeting members of political parties, RCs, and humanitarian workers, and that on that day, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) and the General Intelligence Service (GIS) arrested a 'prominent' member of the Communist Party and a member of the RC. Both detainees had been arrested and released the month prior after spending three months in detention.234

Additional information on these and other events could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

☐ (c) Political party members and other perceived opponents

For background information, see Section 2.3.4. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

In October 2023, the Coordination Body of Civilian Democratic Forces (Taqaddum) was established as a large coalition of Sudanese civil society organisations and political actors,235 including the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), with the objective of 'finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Sudan'.236 In late 2023, Taqaddum reached out to both SAF and RSF; only the RSF accepted Taqaddum's invitation and a 'declaration of principles' was signed between Taqaddum and RSF in December 2023. 237 The SAF and its supporters rejected the declaration and started to consider

members of Taqaddum as RSF 'allies' and its 'political wing'.238 According to Chatham House, 'Taqaddum has also been relentlessly demonized by Islamist propagandists and Bashir regime supporters who regard them as the main threat to their ambition to return to power. These accusations have gained traction among many Sudanese in the context of heinous atrocities committed by the RSF and growing social polarisation between supporters of SAF, RSF and the anti-war campaign'.239 The SAF also accuse the FFC of not condemning the human rights violations and war crimes committed by the RSF.240

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) indicated that political parties and personalities in Sudan are 'irrelevant'241 because they do not have the power to mediate between the two main warring forces, the SAF and the RSF,242 and do not have the popular appeal they once had.243 ACLED added that the only political party that stands somehow neutral is the Sudanese Communist Party, which, despite not having influence in Sudan, continues to be popular with unions, students and state employees.244

Freedom House indicated that since the onset of the conflict in April 2023, 'civilian political parties have effectively been unable to operate in Sudan'.245 The same source added that despite the call to establish anti-war coalitions, the 'significant' fragmentation of political parties, their lack of coordination, and military interference have prevented them from establishing such coalitions.246 Radio Tamazuj reported that, according to the Sudanese Congress Party, government authorities in Port Sudan have been confiscating identity cards of its members, which prevents holders from renewing their passports among others.247 Radio Dabanga also reported that the National Umma Party (NUP) indicated that three of its members were detained on 6 September 2024 by the RSF.248 Additional information on the three members of the NUP could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

According to a human rights analyst interviewed by EUAA, the role of Islamists is 'exaggerated' and rather 'limited'; they use the opportunity of global mobilisation and try to influence the army, but the army continues to be independent.249 Additional information on Islamists within the reference period could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

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  Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024: Sudan, February 2024, url; UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 165

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  Human rights analyst, interview with EUAA, 10 December 2024

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  Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024: Sudan, February 2024, url

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  OHCHR, Sudan: This tragedy needs to end, now, urges Deputy High Commissioner, 10 September 2024, url. See also: Sudan War Monitor, Sudan reinstates sweeping powers for intelligence service, 15 May 2024, url.

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  Sudan Tribune, Mass death sentences and life terms issued for alleged RSF support, 31 December 2024, url

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  The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan was established by the UN Human Rights Council in October 2023 and composed of three independent experts, Mohamed Chande Othman (Tanzania) (Chairperson), Mona Rishmawi (Jordan/ Switzerland), and Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (Nigeria). The UN FFM produced the report based on information collected between January and July 2024 through, inter alia, field missions to Chad, Kenya, Switzerland and Uganda; submissions by stakeholders; reports of international, regional and non-governmental organizations; and interviews and consultations with experts, regional non-governmental organizations, Sudanese civil society organizations, and victims. UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, paras. 1, 2, 11, 17-23

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 165

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 172

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 172

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UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, paras. 241, 246; Sudan War Monitor, Rapid Support arrest more than 80 people in South Darfur, 15 May 2024, url; Radio Dabanga, RSF detain three Umma party leaders in West Kordofan, 10 September 2024, url

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  Al Jazeera, Is Sudan's army regaining ground lost in the civil war?, 19 October 2024, url

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 312

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 312

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  Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan, May 2024, url, p. 52

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  Human rights analyst, interview with EUAA, 10 December 2024

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  Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan, May 2024, url, p. 52

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 275

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UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 275

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, paras. 184, 196, 266

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, paras. 184, 196, 266

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 314

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  Resistance committees created Emergency Response Rooms (EERs) at the onset of the conflict in April 2023 to administer first aid in conflict areas. Over time, ERRS became distinct from resistance committees and solicited aid from abroad to feed their communities. Al Jazeera, Are Sudan's civil society activists being targeted by both warring sides?, 1 April 2024, url

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  Reuters, Sudan's warring sides target local aid volunteers fighting famine, 8 October 2024, url; Al Jazeera, Are Sudan's civil society activists being targeted by both warring sides?, 1 April 2024, url; Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Sudan, May 2024, url, p. 54

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  Reuters, Sudan's warring sides target local aid volunteers fighting famine, 8 October 2024, url

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  UN, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, url, para. 243

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  Human rights analyst, interview with EUAA, 10 December 2024

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  Al Jazeera, Are Sudan's civil society activists being targeted by both warring sides?, 1 April 2024, url. See also: Reuters, Sudan's warring sides target local aid volunteers fighting famine, 8 October 2024, url

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  Sudan War Monitor, Sudanese military intelligence murder lawyer affiliated with anti-war party, 13 May 2024, url

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  Chatham House, A strong civilian coalition is vital to avert Sudan's disintegration, 21 June 2024, url; CMI, The Sudan war: The potential of civil and democratic forces, April 2024, url

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  Sudan Tribune, FFC condemns human rights violations by Sudanese belligerents, 3 March 2024, url

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  Radio Tamazuj, Sudanese Congress Party accuses authorities of nullifying its members' nationality cards, 26 July 2024, url

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  Radio Dabanga, RSF detain three Umma party leaders in West Kordofan, 10 September 2024, url

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  Human rights analyst, interview with EUAA, 10 December 2024

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