Please cite as: EUAA, '1.4. Human rights ' in *COI Report - Sudan: Country Focus*, February 2025.

1.4. Human rights

The 2019 Constitutional declaration stipulated that all rights and freedoms contained in international human rights agreements, pacts, and charters ratified by the Republic of Sudan were an integral part of the new constitution (Article 41(2)).132 Sudan is a party to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).133 At the regional level, it is a party to, among others, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).134 Sudan has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discriminations against women (CEDAW) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The UN and HRW have documented evidence of human rights abuses, including torture and sexual violence, allegedly committed by both the SAF and the RSF.135

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) remained especially vulnerable to sexual and labour exploitation, including by criminal networks engaged in human trafficking.136

☐ (a) Extrajudicial killings

According to the UN, international human rights organisations and media, the SAF, the RSF and affiliated armed militias were responsible for widespread extrajudicial killings of civilians, including children and women.137 Both parties have engaged in extrajudicial killings and executions of SAF and RSF prisoners of war from opposing forces.138 In October 2024, mass killings of civilians attributed to the RSF were

reported in Al Jazeera,139 where eastern villages witnessed a surge of sexual violence and extrajudicial killings.140 Similar incidents were observed by residents of Khartoum. 141 The Emergency Lawyers Group identified cases of arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial killings in the same area and in Port Sudan.142 Visual evidence obtained and verified by international outlets confirmed the involvement of RSF forces in the extrajudicial killings of unarmed civilians in North Darfur in June 2023.143 For additional information see EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

☐ (b) Arbitrary arrests and detention

Sudan ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforcement Disappearance (CED) in 2021 as well as the Convention against Torture (UNCAT).144

According to Freedom House, although the interim constitution enshrined the right to due process, security forces have continued to engage in arrests and detentions145 without provision of any warrant, legal documentation or justification for the arrest. Documented arrests and detentions of civilians on suspicion of supporting the other party in the conflict took place in various locations of Khartoum, West and Central Darfur as well as River Nile state since the beginning of the conflict.146 Both the RSF and the SAF have engaged in detaining individuals based on perceived affiliations, political opinions, or ethnic origins.147 The SAF has reinforced repression through the "Law on Unfamiliar Faces," a harsh policy that arbitrarily targets individuals based on perceived social affiliations, labeling them as RSF sympathizers without evidence.148 In May and June 2024, multiple media outlets highlighted arrests and detentions without judicial orders targeting civilians and political activists across Nile River state, Northern State, North Kordofan, Sennar, White Nile, West Kordofan, Kassala and Gedaref.149 These detentions targeted activists and volunteers who stayed in their homes during the RSF's occupation.150 In October 2024, as reported by the human rights organisation Justice for Africa, Nuba members of the Sudan Christian Church in Shendi, River Nile state, were arrested and subjected to mistreatment by SAF on suspicion of collaborating with the RSF.151 For additional information see section 2. Treatment of selected profiles and groups of the population. Arbitrary arrests and detention by both parties frequently involved individuals on their way to the border. Arrests were conducted at different locations often involving the use of physical violence.152

☐ (c) Enforced disappearances

For additional information about enforced disappearances, see section 2.5.3 of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

In February 2024, the Sudanese Group of Victims of Enforced Disappearance (SGVED) confirmed the disappearances of 993 persons (897 men and 96 women) in various cities including Wad Madani, Al-Hasaheisa and in the states of Al Jazirah, North Kordofan and Khartoum.153 A report by the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) released in April 2024 indicated that in the first year of war 1 140 individuals were victims of enforced disappearance.154 The 2024 report by the UN Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances noted 177 outstanding cases for Sudan.155

In an article by Radio Tamazuj, a member of the Sudanese civil society organisation Missing People Initiative (Mafgoud) noted that enforced disappearances have increased since the beginning of the conflict.156 In RSF-controlled areas people have been forced into disappearance, with their families coerced into paying ransoms for their release. 157 In March 2024, the RSF arrested activists running soup kitchens in Khartoum while they were distributing food to civilians.158

In another report, SGVED highlighted a reduction in the monitoring, documentation and reporting of enforced disappearances due to the worsening of the conflict. On some occasions reporting was limited by families' concerns about safety and potential reprisals. In cases where women were involved, cultural and societal pressures prevented the reporting.159

As of mid-October 2024, the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa reported that 165 women and girls were missing. Additionally, the SGVED also reported a total of 149 missing women and girls.160

☐ (d) Treatment in detention and prison conditions

For more information about detention conditions, see section 2.3.1. of the EUAA Sudan report – Country Focus (April 2024).

According to the 2023 US country report on human rights practices, since April 2023, the RSF had reportedly established 44 centres for holding kidnapped persons in Khartoum and surrounding areas, while the SAF continued to operate eight detention centres. Prisoners were living in severe conditions due to overcrowding, food shortages, inadequate health care, heating, ventilation, lighting and physical abuse. Persons in these centres were reportedly subjected to starvation, sexual assault, beatings, and cruel treatment, with credible reports of deaths in custody.161 No access to detention facilities was allowed to international monitors since the beginning of the conflict in April 2023.162

By June 2024, governors of River Nile and Gedaref states endorsed policies of 'regional profiling,' resulting in the detention and mistreatment of individuals from western Sudanese states.163 In July 2024, the Sudanese Human Rights Initiative (SHRI) indicated Kober prison as one of the largest in Sudan and Al-Hadi as a newly established hosting a significant number of death row inmates. Additionally, it was indicated that a relevant number of death row inmates were hosted in another large prison in Port Sudan.164

According to the UN FFM for the Sudan, RSF intelligence officers were present in RSF detention and interrogation centres. These were established in various locations, including police stations and prisons in RSF-captured areas, former SAF installations and re-purposed civilian buildings.165 Unofficial locations and informal detention centres were used by both parties, mostly university, such as the University of Africa in Khartoum, schools, private premises, gas stations, police stations and areas or buildings close to checkpoints.166 Individuals, including children, were detained in inhuman conditions and denied access to legal assistance or judicial oversight. In some instances, these conditions led to deaths.167

Additionally, the RSF attacked national and state prisons across multiple states, seizing and looting prison property.168 These attacks led to the release of numerous prisoners, some of whom joined military operations, while others engaged in criminal activities.169 As of September 2024, 19 481 inmates have escaped from Sudanese prisons.170

Since the outbreak of hostilities, hundreds of fighters have been captured by the two parties, and most remain unaccounted for.171

☐ (e) Torture and physical abuse

Evidence of torture and ill-treatment of civilians by both parties[172] included the use of both physical and psychological violence. Torture was often used to extract information and intimidate individuals.[173] As indicated by Ayin network, multiple video sources reported instances of humiliating and degrading behaviours.[174] Whipping, beating and forcing detainees to walk on their knees on gravel roads were documented by videos uploaded on social media platforms.[175] Analysis by HRW suggested that these incidents occurred in Khartoum, Al Jazirah and North and West Kordofan.[176] Abuses included electric shocks and burns.[177] Testimonies collected by the UN FFM for the Sudan informed about sexual violence, including forced nudity, beatings on genitals and rape threats, against men and boys in detention, during or prior to their interrogation.[178] For more information see section 2. Treatment of selected profiles and groups of the population.

Sudan's Constitutional Charter for the 2019 Transitional Period prohibited torture and ill treatments with Article 50 stating that 'No one may be subjected to torture or harsh, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment, or debasement of human dignity.' [179] Despite this, the Charter retained laws from the 2005 Transitional Constitution such as the 2010 National Security Act (NSA) and 1994 Evidence Act, which exposed detainees to torture and ill-treatments. Additionally, the 2007 Armed Forces Act, 2008 Police Act, and 2010 National Security Act granted immunities to state actors, limiting accountability for such practices.[180] Legal barriers such as official immunities, statutes of limitation, and inadequate victim protection further obstructed accountability for torture.[181]

☐ (f) Death penalty

Sudan retains the death penalty for ordinary crimes.[182] Capital punishment in the country is legal under Article 27 of the Sudanese Criminal Act 1991[183] and includes offences against the state and international crimes.[184] In 2020, amendments to the Criminal Law repealed the death penalty for apostasy, previously punished by stoning to death.[185] According to the 2022 Working Group report on Universal Periodic Review on Sudan, the country abolished the use of death penalties for discretionary (ta'zir[186]) offences and retained it for extremely serious offences only (hudud[187] and qisa[188]) under Article 53. The death penalty cannot be imposed for offences committed by persons under the age of 18 years or persons aged 70 or above, except in the case of hudud and retribution (qisas).[189] The 2024 UN FFM for the Sudan emphasised that the death penalty may apply for crimes committed by children under the command of the armed forces and/or groups.[190]

Since the beginning of the conflict, people rejecting the war and refusing to side with the army, faced charges of spying for the RSF or being 'sleeper cells'. As explained by Radio Dabanga, these charges are punishable by death.191 In Khartoum 'the execution of so-called death sentences (by field trials) continued and has brought civilians and the military together and is greatly supported by calls for incitement despite the catastrophic circumstances the city is witnessing.'192

While courts in Sudan were not known to have sentenced people to death in 2023,193 between May and July 2024 six sentences were issued by courts in SAF-controlled areas,194 followed by hundreds in December 2024 in various locations under army's control. These sentences were issued under article 50 and 51 of the Criminal Law ('undermining the constitutional system' and 'waging war against the state') against civilians accused of supporting the RSF militia or opposing the war.195 According to the UN FFM report, as of October 2024 ten RSF members had been sentenced to death by hanging.196 Additionally, another source reported that 17 RSF fighters were sentenced to death in September.197

In RSF-controlled areas, houses holding execution rooms were found in Khartoum.198 For additional information on extrajudicial killings see 1.4.(a) Extrajudicial killings.

- 132

  Policing Law, Sudan profile, 2021, url

- 133

  OHCHR, Ratification of 18 International Human Rights Treaties, Status of ratification, n.d., url

- 134

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 35

- 135

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url; HRW, Sudan: Fighters Rape Women and Girls, Hold Sex Slaves, 15 December 2024, url

- 136

  Freedom House, Freedom in the world 2024, February 2024, url

- 137

USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan, 22 April 2024, url; GCHRAGD, Human Rights Council 57th session, 10 September 2024, url; OHCHR, Situation of human rights in the Sudan, A/HRC/55/29, 4 March 2024, url, para 36

- 138

  USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan, 22 April 2024, url

- 139

  BBC, New wave of mass killings in Sudan alarms UN, 27 October 2024, url

- 140

  ISHR, Sudan: Protect civilians, end war crimes against them, 11 November 2024, url

- 141

  Radio Dabanga, Malnutrition and extrajudicial killing reported by Khartoum residents, 22 October 2024, url

- 142

  Radio Dabanga, Sudanese condemn ‘extrajudicial killings of young men’ in Khartoum Bahri, 2 October 2024, url; Emergency Lawyers Facebook Page, 4 October 2024, url

- 143

  Lighthouse reports, the Kutum massacre, 9 September 2024, url

- 144

  OHCHR, Ratification of 18 International Human Rights Treaties, Status of ratification, n.d., url

- 145

  Freedom House, Freedom in the world 2024, Sudan, February 2024, url

- 146

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 240, 246, 255

- 147

  OHCHR, Situation of human rights in the Sudan, A/HRC/55/29, 4 March 2024, url, para 57, 58

- 148

The Sudan Times, Al-Burhan's SAF attacks civilians in Sennar State, RSF reports, 27 November 2024, url

- 149

  Radio Dabanga, National Umma Party condemns arbitrary detentions by Sudan Military Intelligence, 12 June 2024, url; Radio Dabanga, Unlawful detentions and extrajudicial killings of activists continue in war-torn Sudan, 12 May 2024, url

- 150

  Radio Dabanga, Justice Africa Sudan: Fleeing Nuba Christians detained by Military Intelligence, 14 October 2024, url

- 151

  Justice Africa Sudan, Urgent alerts, 13 October 2024, url; Justice Africa Sudan, Press release, 16 October 2024, url

- 152

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 242

- 153

  Sudan Tribune, Sudan sees surge in enforces disappearances as clashes expand, 16 February 2024, url

- 154

  ACJPS, A Report on Enforced Disappearances. One Year into Sudan War, 27 April 2024, url

- 155

  OHCHR, Enforced or involuntary disappearance, A/HRC/57/54, 26 July 2024, url

- 156

  Radio Tamazuj, Alarm over rise in enforced disappearances in Sudan war, 8 July 2024, url

- 157

  Radio Tamazuj, Alarm over rise in enforced disappearances in Sudan war, 8 July 2024, url

- 158

  Al Jazeera, Are Sudan's civil society activists being targeted by both warring sides?, 1 April 2024, url

- 159

OHCHR, inputs to the Report of the Secretary-General on Missing Persons, Joint submission by Mafgoud (Missing) Initiative and Wadaitohom Wain (Where are they!) Campaign. The status of enforced disappearance in Sudan, 8 October 2024, url; Radio Dabanga, ACJPS: Enforced disappearances in Sudan 'systematic and escalating', 30 October 2024, url

- 160

SIHA Network, Where is Roqia? The story of Siham Ishaq Hassan: A Mother's search for her Missing Daughter amidst the Sudanese conflict, 28 November 2024, url

- 161

USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan, 22 April 2024, url

- 162

USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan, 22 April 2024, url; REDRESS, Serious human rights violations perpetrated in the context of mass civilian detention in Sudan, 30 September 2024, url

- 163

Ayin Network, Sudan Conflict Monitor # 14, 30 June 2024, url

- 164

DPRU, DPRU Q&As: Elshareef Ali Mohammed, Sudanese Human Rights Initiative (SHRI), Sudan: Part Two, 11 July 2024, url

- 165

OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 98

- 166

OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 98, 241

- 167

OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 255; ACJPS, Sudan War: Arbitrary Arrest, Torture, and Ill-treatment Behind Closed Doors, 14 March 2024, url

- 168

OHCHR, Note verbale dated 15 June 2024 from the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the President of the Human

Rights Council, 26 September 2024, A/HRC/56/G/4, url, p. 29

- 169

  OHCHR, Note verbale dated 15 June 2024 from the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council, 26 September 2024, A/HRC/56/G/4, url, p. 29

- 170

  OHCHR, Note verbale dated 15 June 2024 from the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council, 26 September 2024, A/HRC/56/G/4, url, p. 29

- 171

  OHCHR, Situation of human rights in the Sudan, A/HRC/55/29, 4 March 2024, url, para 53

- 172

  ACJPS, Sudan War: Arbitrary Arrest, Torture, and Ill-treatment Behind Closed Doors, 14 March 2024, url

- 173

  REDRESS, Serious human rights violations perpetrated in the context of mass civilian detention in Sudan, September 2024, url, p.6

- 174

  Ayin Network, Torture and murder – the horrors endured by military prisoners in Sudan's war, 1 August 2024, url

- 175

  HRW, Sudan: Warring Parties Execute Detainees, Mutilate Bodies, 28 August 2024, url

- 176

  HRW, Sudan: Warring Parties Execute Detainees, Mutilate Bodies, 28 August 2024, url

- 177

  Irregular warfare, Unlawful Detention and Torture in Sudanese Conflict: Urgent Need for International Action, 18 April 2024, url

- 178

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 171

- 179

OMCT, Briefing on Torture in Sudan, p.4, July 2020, url

- 180

  OMCT, Briefing on Torture in Sudan, p.4, July 2020, url

- 181

  OMCT, Briefing on Torture in Sudan, p.4, July 2020, url

- 182

  AI, Death sentences and executions 2023, p. 42, May 2024, url

- 183

  REDRESS, The Criminal Act 1991, English, url

- 184

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para 299

- 185

  Al Jazeera, Changes in criminal law as Sudan annuls apostasy death sentence, 12 July 2020, url

- 186

  In Muslim law, Ta'zir are discretionary punishments that can range from a harsh warning from the judge to corporal punishment such as flogging, imprisonment and exile.

- 187

  In Muslim law, hudud are the penalties explicitly established by the Koran and the Sunnah.

- 188

  In Muslim law, qisas are proportionate retaliation for intentional bodily harm or murder.

- 189

  OHCHR, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Sudan, 20 April 2022, url, para.67

- 190

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, p.71

- 191

Radio Dabanga, Unlawful detentions and extrajudicial killings of activists continue in war-torn Sudan, 12 May 2024, url

- 192

  Radio Dabanga, Sudanese condemn ‘extrajudicial killings of young men’ in Khartoum Bahri, 2 October 2024, url

- 193

  AI, Death sentences and executions 2023, p. 11, May 2024, url

- 194

  ISHR, Sudan: Protect lives, stop death sentences and execution of civilians, 4 July 2024, url

- 195

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

- 196

  OHCHR, Findings of the investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, 23 October 2024, A/HRC/57/CRP.6, url, para. 317

- 197

  Sudan Tribune, Death sentence in Port Sudan highlights crackdown on RSF sympathizers, 4 October 2024, url

- 198

  ISHR, Sudan: Protect lives, stop death sentences and execution of civilians, 4 July 2024, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu