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3.5. Community leaders, human rights activists and lawyers

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to community leaders, including *imams*, *omda*, *amir*, and *agid*, human rights activists as well as lawyers perceived as opponents by either the SAF or the RSF and their allies.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: Country Focus 2024, 2.3.1., 2.3.2., 2.3.4., 2.5.1; Country Focus 2025, 1.1., 1.3., 2.1. (a), 2.1. (b), 2.5. (b).; COI Update 4.. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In the context of the ongoing war, political targeting has expanded beyond traditional political opponents to include community leaders, human rights activists, and lawyers who are now perceived as adversaries by both warring parties.

See also 3.3. Members of the Resistance committees (RCs) and Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs), 3.4. Members of political parties, unions and civil society organizations, 3.6. Journalists and other media workers, 3.7. Humanitarian and healthcare workers.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which persons falling under this profile could be exposed are of such a severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, killings, torture, physical abuse, arbitrary arrests and prolonged detention without access to legal representation, ill-treatment and targeting, widespread harassment, and threats by both warring parties have been reported. Additionally, sexual violence was used as a tool of repression. Masalit women who are human rights defenders, journalists, and lawyers are specifically targeted by the RSF, including through gang-rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and incommunicado detention.

Lawyers face harassment and arrest in exercising their functions by both warring parties. Additionally, it is reported that lawyers defending civilians in 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 RSF and Other Crimes, face arrest over alleged affiliation or support to the RSF. In Darfur, the RSF militias specifically target prominent Masalit community members based on their ethnicity or their public denunciation, while targeted

killings, ethnic profiling, and forced disappearances occur across Sudan.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for community leaders, human rights activists, and lawyers as they face widespread, consistent, and severe abuses by both the SAF and the RSF.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of individuals under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **(imputed) political opinion** as they are targeted due to their political activism, and their (legal) work, 'before and during the conflict'. They are monitors, advocates, and reporters against violations committed by the warring parties and are seen as critical of the relevant actor.

Moreover, for community leaders, human rights activists, and lawyers, belonging to certain ethnic groups, **race and/or nationality** is also highly likely to be a relevant ground for persecution. For example, prominent Masalit community leaders, human rights activists, lawyers, and teachers have been used as targets of systematic attacks in the context of ethnically-motivated and targeted killings by RSF and its allied militias.

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