

Silence is not an option: African leaders must act now to prevent further bloodshed in Sudan

The deadly violence witnessed against peaceful protesters in Sudan by security forces demands an immediate response from African leaders in the strongest possible terms.

At least 100 people are reported to have been killed, hundreds injured, and three cases of rape reported during an attack on the sit-in as protesters were sleeping, and subsequently pursued into their homes and into hospitals. Many are reported missing or detained.

These actions are the latest in a series of attacks against peaceful protestors, despite calls by the African Union Peace and Security Council for all parties to exercise maximum restraint, to respect the rights of citizens and to avoid actions that would complicate the situation in the country and negatively affect regional security and stability. As the Chairperson of the African Union has stated, it is the responsibility of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) to protect civilians from harm. The recent attacks by the security forces and announcement from the TMC that they are dissolving all agreements with the opposition, call into question the commitment of the military to a peaceful transition. It highlights the risk of further political polarization and of mass violent confrontation if urgent action is not taken in support of a peaceful transition to civilian rule.

The time is now to prevent the escalation of violence. African leaders cannot afford to wait or to stay silent; the consequences of chaos in Sudan for stability in neighbouring states, the wider region, and global security are far-reaching and profound. No support should be provided for elections in Sudan until a transitional civilian government is in place.

We therefore urge:

- The African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC), which has been supportive of a peaceful transition, to follow up their condemnation of all violence in Sudan with actions to sanction violators, and urgently send an independent mission to investigate incidents of human rights violations during the transitional period. The PSC should also push back on restrictions on the media.
- The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to call for an immediate extraordinary summit on Sudan to determine a cohesive regional response and demand a stop to violence.
- The Panel of the Wise and FemWise to urgently call on their membership to use their influence to prevent further bloodshed and mediate where appropriate.

African leadership has a responsibility to use all the tools at their disposal to protect protesters from violence and to ensure a peaceful transition to a civilian-led government within the sixty day deadline as directed by the African Union. We urge Africa's leaders to act now before it is too late.

Signed,

Act for Sudan, Eric Cohen, Co-Founder, USA
African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
Africa Initiative for Media and Journalists Safety
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Christian Aid

CSW

Darfur Bar Association

Defend Defenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)

Enough Project

Eshraga Ahmed, Activist

Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO), Kampala

International Refugee Rights Initiative

Investors Against Genocide, Susan Morgan, Co-Founder, San Francisco, CA, USA

Journalists for Human Rights - JHR - Sudan

Justice Centre for Advocacy and Legal Consultations

Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur, William Rosenfeld, Director, Boston, MA, USA

MENA Rights Group

Never Again Coalition

Najlaa Ahmed, Human Rights Lawyer

Stop Genocide Now

Sudanese Rights Group (Huqooq)

SUDO UK