

Sudan: False Accusations and Threats to Safety and Personal Integrity

Geneva, Addis Ababa, Kampala,

8 April 2024

In what appears to be a calculated coincidence, the military authority in Sudan ordered the Attorney General's Office to start criminal procedures against dozens of key members of the Coordination of Democratic and Civilian Forces (TAGADUM), which is the broadest Sudanese pro-democracy civilian coalition endeavouring to end the disastrous armed conflict in the country. Acting upon a criminal case filed by the military-controlled "National Committee for War Crimes and Violations Committed by Rebel Rapid Support Forces," the Attorney General has since issued arrest warrants against 17 members of TAGADUM's Leadership Body, including its chair and Prime Minister of Sudan's Transitional Government Dr. Abdalla Hamdok.

It is ironic that the military authority embarks on such action at a time when members of TAGADUM's Leadership Body were conducting discussions on issues of peaceful resolution of armed conflicts in Sudan and the urgent need to address the complicated humanitarian crisis, including the growing risks of famine in the country, during their recent meetings held in Addis Ababa between 2nd and 4th April 2024.

All the accused individuals are civilians and no one among them is known to have participated in, condoned, or abetted the military confrontations between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces. They are indicted under several articles of Sudan's Penal Code of 1991 as amended in 2009. These articles provide for severe punishments, including the death penalty, life sentence or prolonged imprisonment, notably article 50 (Undermining the Constitutional System), article 51 (Waging War Against the State), article 62 (Arousing the Feeling of Discontent within the Regular Force and Abetment of Committing Acts Which Disturb Order), article 186 (Crimes against Humanity), article 187 (Crimes of Genocide) and article 189 (War Crimes against the Property and other Rights).

It is widely believed that issuing arrest warrants and false accusations against members of TAGADUM's Leadership Body are politically motivated actions and therefore they should have no legal consequences. This move comes at a time when the rule of law and order is paralysed in Sudan and where the main state's institutions, especially the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary are dysfunctional. Under the circumstances the accusations labelled by the military authority against members of TAGADUM further suggest sinister plans to sabotage Sudanese efforts to end the security and humanitarian crisis in the country.

The undersigned non-governmental organizations condemn attempts of the military authority in Sudan to intimidate the pro-democracy and peace activists and to thwart their efforts to resolve the country's deep crisis. We are especially concerned about the risk to lives as well as the safety and personal integrity of TAGADUM's leading members against whom the military authority falsely placed grave criminal charges. These unwarranted charges may incite radical militant elements supporters of the military authority to target the accused individuals, which is a likely scenario due to the growing hate mongering and calls for *jihad* or holy war in the country.

Signed:

1. Africa Centre for Human Rights, Khartoum
2. African Centre for Sustainable Development, New York
3. African Organization on Rights and Development, Kampala
4. Beja Bar Association, Khartoum
5. Civic Forces Alliance (CFA-Sudan), Khartoum
6. Civil Society Initiative, Khartoum
7. Darfur Bar Association, Khartoum
8. Darfur Civil Society Forum, Khartoum
9. Darfur Network for Human Rights, Kampala
10. Darfur Victims Support Organization, Kampala
11. Dreamers for Media and Human Rights, Kampala
12. Human Rights Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND), Khartoum
13. International Media Centre, Birmingham, UK
14. Mahmoud Mohamed Taha Cultural Centre, Khartoum
15. New Horizons Foundation, Juba
16. New Sudan Women's Union, Sudan
17. Nubatia for Sustainable Development, Kamapala
18. Omar Al-Mukhtar Human Rights Institute, Geneva, Switzerland
19. Pioneers for Peace Organization for Development, Khartoum
20. Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society, Khartoum
21. Sama Foundation for Advocacy and Human Rights, Kampala
22. Sudanese Women's Initiative to Build Sustainable Peace, Kassala/Khartoum
23. The Democratic Observatory for Human Rights, Khartoum/Kampala
24. Winds for Peace and Development Organization, Kadugli, Sudan
25. Zarga Organization for Rural Development, Khartoum