



Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre

Assault against Students from Darfur in Sudan

Geneva, 20 July 2017

The Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre (DRDC) notes with concern the ongoing assault against students from Darfur in universities and higher education institutions in Sudan. The most recent incident in this respect has been reported at the University of Bakht Alruda, Al-Dewaim Town (White Nile State), where more than one thousand students from Darfur were forced to submit their resignations and abandon the university campus in protest of a series of abuses and maltreatment they have reportedly suffered in the hands of the university administration and the security forces. The students accused the university administration and the local authorities of harassment and intimidation, disruption of life and studies as well as systematic exclusion, discrimination and physical and verbal abuses, including the use of disparaging language and racist slur against them. The ongoing crisis degenerated on 18 May 2017 when the students from Darfur collectively decided to submit a memorandum to the university administration demanding, among other things, reinstatement of their colleagues who were dismissed from the university in the aftermath of May 2017 protest. The university administration refused to meet the students and rejected the memorandum and its contents.

The current crisis dates to May 2017, when students' protests turned violent and two policemen were killed while attempting to contain the protest. It appears that students from all regions of Sudan studying at the University of Bakht Alruda at that time took part in the protest in May 2017. However, students from Darfur were reportedly singled out as the instigators of the protest and were accused of killing the policemen. In what appears to be a flawed process that lacked proper investigation and transparency, Bakht Alruda University dismissed 14 students from Darfur. Since then, expulsion from university campus, ill-treatment and daily summons of students from Darfur by the security forces intensified. On 18 July 2017, the Vice-Chancellor of Bakht Alruda University (Mr. Jadallah Abdallah Al-Hassan) issued a statement confirming the decisions taken in May 2017, warned all students that the university shall continue classes as usual and that the year-end examinations will be conducted on time as scheduled. In a related measure, the security forces ordered all private vehicles not to transport the disgruntled students out of Al-Dewaim town, which forced the latter to carry their belongings and walk for long distances. Furthermore, the security forces prevented all students that reached the environs of Khartoum from entering the city and ordered them to return to Al-Dewaim. This illegal measure forced many students to spend the night and the day in the open air without shelter. The defiant and insensitive posture by the administration of Bakht Alruda University and the local authorities is short sighted and demonstrates total indifference to the plight of the students from Darfur. It affirms their accusation that they have, indeed, been systematically abused and discriminated against by the authorities.

DRDC is disturbed that multiple forms of aggressions against students from Darfur in universities across Sudan has been reported regularly. These aggressions, include, but not limited to, killings, torture and ill-treatment, arrest and detention without judicial orders, dismissal from universities,

deprivation of their rights to exemption from tuition fees, ethnic-profiling, discrimination against and unfair trials. On 28 June 2016, Mr. Mohamed Bagari Hasaballa a student at East Nile University in Khartoum North and hails from the Utash Camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Darfur State, had been sentenced by the Criminal Court in Khartoum North to death in a questionable retrial in a judicial process widely believed to be politically motivated, flawed and inconsistent with universal human rights standards where confessions extracted under duress were used as evidence to convict him for a crime that carry the death penalty.

In recent years, DRDC documented 24 cases of university students, including 17 from Darfur, that were assassinated, frequently in captivity under severe torture by the security forces or by pro-government students in universities across Sudan. The victims were killed due to their political opinions, ethnic origin or perceived roles in support of the armed opposition groups in the war-torn Darfur. Examples to illustrate this situation are the killing in December 2012 of four students from Darfur at Al-Gezeria University (Mohamed Younis Nil Hamid, Adel Mohamed Ahmed, Al-Sadig Abdalla Yaquob and Nu'man Ahmed) who were reportedly tortured to death by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) students wing. In March 2013, Ali Abakar Musa, a third-year student at the Faculty of Economics, University of Khartoum, was shot dead by the security forces inside campus. In February 2014, Mohmaed Suliman Ibrahim a 20-year old student at the University of Nyala was abducted by security agents and two weeks later his dead body was found in the environs of Nyala. In April 2015, Ms. Khansa'a Mohamed Adam a student at El-Fasher University was shot dead by the security forces. In January 2015, Mr. Al-Tayeb Salih, a student at East Nile University and member of Umma National Party was kidnapped and later killed by pro-government students. In April 2016, two students (Abubakr Hassan M. Taha, University of Kordofan and Mohamed Elsadig Weyo Omdurman Ahlia University) were killed by security forces and pro-government students respectively. On 27 June 2016, the security forces killed Mr. Hashim Al-Sanousy, a student at El Ginenea University and Secretary of Zalengi Students' Association who was shot dead in his hometown of Zalengi. No one has been investigated, convicted or sentenced for the murder of these students despite eyewitness accounts and enough evidence that clearly points to and names the killers.

DRDC calls on the Government of Sudan to:

1. End all sorts of discrimination and targeting of university students from Darfur based on their ethnic origin and conduct public investigation of the reasons that provoked the students protest at the University of Bakht Alruda.
2. Fully respect the rights of the students from Darfur and all Sudanese citizens to freedom of movement within the national territory, which is a human rights concept guaranteed under regional and international human rights treaties to which Sudan is a state party.
3. Undertake immediate measures to end violence in university campus, in particularly by dismantling the *Jihadist* Units run by NCP students in universities and put an end to all sorts of ill-treatment and ethnically motivated killings of students from Darfur.
4. Embark on judicial reform to bring its laws in conformity with international human rights standards. Judicial reform in Sudan should abolish all provisions in the 2010 National Security Act (2010 NSA), which grant the security agents extensive powers and immunity to arrest and detain individuals and to search and seize without judicial oversight as well as provisions that ordain the use of torture to extract confessions, particularly Article 10(I) of Sudan's Evidence Act of 1993, which authorizes courts of law to admit evidence extracted through improper procedures as a basis for conviction, including on crimes that carry capital punishment.