



SUDANESE HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR (SHRM)

Some Elements of our Strategy Plan 2025 - 2027

January 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Vision Statements

We envision a Sudan where human rights and the rule of law are upheld, and where all individuals enjoy their fundamental rights within a framework of justice and equality, in accordance with international standards.

1.2 Mission Statement

Our mission is to protect, promote, and advocate for human rights in Sudan without discrimination, in accordance with international standards. We are committed to supporting human rights defenders (women and men) while working towards building a just society where rights are respected, and the rule of law prevails.

1.3 Situational Analysis: Political and Human Rights Context

In recent years, Sudan has undergone significant changes. In 2019, long-time President Omar Elbashir's regime was overthrown after a popular uprising beginning in December 2018 (the December Revolution). The protests instigated senior military and security officers to form a Transitional Military Council (TMC) in April 2019, which assumed control of power after dismissal of Elbashir, and began power-sharing negotiations with the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), a coalition of professional, civil society and political opposition associations. After lengthy negotiations, the TMC and FFC signed a Political Agreement and Constitutional Declaration in August 2019, establishing a civilian-led transitional government and a hybrid – civilian/military Sovereign Council. However, in October 2021, a military coup ousted the civilian government and disrupted Sudan's fragile transition to democracy.

The October coup, which was met from the outset with resistance from civil groups and activists, failed to gain legitimacy. This led to a year-long stalemate until the December 2022 Framework Agreement between the military and FFC, proposing a civilian-led transitional period with military and security sector reforms. However, war broke out on 15 April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), escalating into a full-scale humanitarian crisis.

Background of the April War

The current conflict builds on Sudan's long history of bloody internal conflicts. Under Elbashir's 30-year rule, Sudan faced political repression and widespread human rights violations, including mass atrocities in Darfur and the South. The regime's violent response to uprisings and rebellion exacerbated the situation further and created new grievances. In 2005 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was concluded between the Sudan Government, and the rebel group, Sudan Liberation Army/Movement, which ended the civil war in the South and eventually allowed for South Sudan's independence in 2011.

Despite the CPA, violence continued in Darfur. Elbashir's regime armed militias such as the Janjaweed, which committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide—leading the ICC to issue arrest warrants against several regime leaders, including President Omar Elbashir. In 2013, Elbashir formalized a faction of the Janjaweed militia as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which has since grown into a powerful force and a key player in the current conflict. The SAF and the RSF,

under the respective leadership of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo (Hemedti), have continued to engage in brutal military campaigns, fueling the ongoing violence.

Human Rights Context and War Implications

Sudan has a poor record of human rights protection, particularly under Elbashir's regime, which was marked by mass violations and a limited commitment to international human rights standards. Despite the adoption of the 2005 Interim Constitution (which included a Bill of Rights), the regime undermined the independence of the judiciary and repressed civil society, thereby hindering the improvement of human rights institutions. The brutal response to protests and uprisings culminated in the Darfur genocide and in the atrocities committed during the 2019 massacre at the sit-in outside the military headquarters.

The demand for justice and accountability, encapsulated in the 2019 revolution's slogan "Freedom, Peace, and Justice," has remained central in the aftermath of 2021 coup. Although the Transitional Government took initial steps toward transitional justice, including adoption of a law to set up a Transitional Justice Commission in 2021, the military coup reversed most human rights gains and introduced new violations that also require redress.

The Impact of Conflict on Human Rights

The ongoing conflict has severely impacted human rights in Sudan. The warring parties have committed widespread atrocities, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and forced displacement and torture. As of December 2024, nearly 29,700 civilians have died, and approximately 14.6 million people have been displaced within Sudan, the largest displacement crisis globally. Both SAF and RSF have been accused of committing gross violations against civilians, with the RSF facing allegations of genocide in West Darfur. The destruction of infrastructure and essential services, such as healthcare facilities, schools, and key resources, has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis..

The conflict has also undermined Sudan's legal and constitutional framework, weakened the rule of law and eroded the country's judicial and law enforcement institutions. The deterioration in provision of essential services and the destruction of livelihoods, have left millions vulnerable.

1.4 Possible Scenarios

1. **Worst-case Scenario:** The war continues with a devastating impact in 2025. Civil war intensifies, with mass casualties based on political, regional, and ethnic lines. Armed groups resume fighting in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. The rule of law collapses entirely, and widespread human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings, escalate. A military takeover by SAF or RSF completes the collapse. The rationale for this scenario is that both factions have failed to end the war, resulting in economic collapse, political polarization, and a lack of international support.
2. **Better-case Scenario:** A temporary ceasefire collapses, followed by short-term violence. However, after national and international pressure, the SAF and RSF agree to a renewed ceasefire. This scenario is marked by a partial failure in addressing political and economic crises and a lack of effective national or international mediation.
3. **Optimistic Scenario:** SAF and RSF sign a lasting ceasefire and peace agreement. National and international pressures lead SAF and RSF to accept relinquishing political and economic power, even if only nominally. The peace process includes steps toward economic recovery,

justice, and accountability, with a new transitional government established. Despite ongoing political polarization, the country avoids a return to war. This scenario reflects partial success in the peace process and the continuation of international support for the transitional government.

What Should We Do?

- **Scenario 1 (Worst-case):** In the event of continued conflict, SHRM will adopt a low-profile approach, focusing on monitoring, documenting, and reporting human rights violations. We will engage in national and international campaigns and support human rights defenders (HRDs) in advocating for their rights.
- **Scenarios 2 & 3 (Better-case and Optimistic):** In addition to monitoring, we will take on a more proactive advisory and advocacy role. Our organization will continue to conduct research, workshops, training, and advocacy within Sudan to support the protection of human rights and promotion of transitional justice.

Regardless of the likely scenario, a post-conflict phase will require significant attention to restoring law and order, rebuilding infrastructure, and establishing a political settlement. Justice and accountability will remain crucial in post-conflict political and constitutional debates. SHRM should actively participate in these debates, advocating for a victim-centered transitional justice process.

3. Strategic priorities for 2025-2027

3.1. Monitoring and Documentation

The focus on documentation and monitoring involves recording human rights violations, particularly those involving violence against persons, such as killing, rape, forced disappearance, and torture. Conducting field research and studies is crucial to gather accurate data. Developing methodological tools for monitoring and reporting will enhance the reliability of information. Establishing protection policies and programs for local human rights monitors and defenders is also a priority to ensure their safety and continued operation.

3.2. Advocacy, Networking, and Communications

Developing networks and partnerships is vital for effective advocacy. Building and strengthening connections with human rights defenders within Sudan and enhancing synergies with professional and specialized organizations will strengthen efforts. A comprehensive advocacy and communications strategy will guide these activities. Establishing a permanent platform for human rights awareness and engaging with international and regional human rights mechanisms are crucial steps. Continuation of our newsletter 'Al Rasid Al Sudani' and other forms of publications and managing a social media presence and branding will help maintain visibility, engagement and credibility.

3.3. Justice and Transitional Justice

Documenting grave human rights violations and supporting the prosecution of criminals in regional and international courts are central to justice and transitional justice efforts. Providing training on strategic litigation processes, both locally and internationally, will empower stakeholders to pursue justice effectively.

3.5. Capacity Building and Professional Development

A key strategic priority is to implement advanced skills training programs that focus on documentation methodologies, information gathering, and security. This includes developing a comprehensive human rights guidance manual to enhance the capabilities of staff. Creating professional development paths and knowledge exchange platforms is essential for building internal staff capabilities. Additionally, documenting best practices and lessons learned, along with prioritizing research and field studies, will contribute to continuous improvement and effectiveness.

3.5. Institutional Strengthening a governance

To ensure strong and viable institutional operations, developing comprehensive institutional policies and implementing internal governance frameworks and codes of conduct are essential. Establishing financial management systems, including both manual and electronic systems, will enhance accountability and transparency. Support mechanisms for field monitors, including financial and technical support, are crucial to sustain their vital work on the ground.

4. Detailed Strategic Plan:

5.1. Monitoring and Documentation

Objective (1):

Strengthen the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations to ensure accountability and protection of human rights.

Expected Results:

- Sustainable network of field monitors and researchers
- Comprehensive documentation of human rights violations.
- Enhanced methodological tools for monitoring and reporting.
- Established protection policies for local human rights monitors.

Activities:

- Recruit, train and organize a network of field monitors and researchers
- Conduct field research and studies to document violations on individuals such as killings, rape, and torture.
- Develop and refine tools and methodologies for effective monitoring.
- Implement protection programs and policies for monitors and defenders.

5.2. Advocacy, Networking, and Communications

Objective (2):

Build strong networks and communication strategies to amplify human rights advocacy efforts.

Expected Results:

- Strengthened networks with local and international human rights defenders.
- Increased visibility and awareness of human rights issues.
- Effective engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms.

Activities:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive advocacy and communications strategy.

- Establish a permanent platform for human rights awareness and engagement.
- Produce publications and manage a dynamic social media presence.
- Foster partnerships with professional and specialized organizations.

5.3. Justice and Transitional Justice

Objective (3)

Promote justice and accountability for human rights violations through strategic litigation and documentation.

Expected Results:

- Documented evidence of crimes to support prosecutions.
- Enhanced capacity for strategic litigation among stakeholders.

Activities:

- Document crimes, support the prosecution process and monitor the work of courts.
- Provide training on strategic litigation, both locally and internationally.
- Collaborate with legal experts to strengthen prosecution efforts.

5.4. Capacity Building and Professional Development

Objective (4):

Enhance the skills and capabilities of human rights defenders to effectively document and advocate for human rights.

Expected Results:

- Improved documentation and reporting skills among staff.
- Established professional development paths and knowledge exchange platforms.
- Increased research output and field study initiatives.

Activities:

- Implement advanced skills training programs focusing on documentation methodologies and security.
- Develop and distribute a comprehensive human rights manual.
- Create platforms for knowledge exchange and document best practices.
- Conduct regular research and field studies to inform practices.

5.5. Institutional Strengthening

Objective (5):

Develop strong institutional frameworks and support mechanisms to ensure sustainable operations.

Expected Results:

- Established governance frameworks and financial management systems.
- Enhanced support mechanisms for field monitors.
- Improved institutional policies and codes of conduct.
- Increase the participation of SHRM members

Activities:

- Develop and implement comprehensive institutional policies and governance frameworks.
- Establish and maintain financial management systems.
- Provide financial and logistical support to field monitors.
- Hold regular internal meetings and workshops for the different levels of the organization.