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المجتمع المدني  
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THE CONFEDERATION OF  
**SUDANESE**  
CIVIL SOCIETY  
ORGANIZATIONS

## Announcement

### ON THE LAUNCH OF THE 7+7 PROCESS FOR “NATIONAL DIALOGUE” IN SUDAN

Since more than a year and following the President’s announcement of his initiative in January 2014 and desire to initiate a national dialogue, civil society organizations have remained, watchful of the political and security situation, and the developments that have accompanied attempts to establish a national dialogue in Sudan. One that would be democratic, transparent, and that would involve all sectors of the Sudanese people, without discrimination, and without exclusion. However, the developments during this period have reflected clearly a decline in confidence between the government and political parties, and its continued approach of exclusion. Furthermore, the government has insisted on preparing and managing for national dialogue with no recognition or attention to the sincere voices of other actors and their insistence on the need to first demonstrate seriousness and bridge the gap of trust and credibility by meeting the prerequisites of a national dialogue.

Through its 7+7 mechanism, and in convening the opening session of the general conference at the Friendship Palace in Khartoum on 10 October 2015, the government is insistent on proceeding with its own process for national dialogue and without the participation of most of the opposition parties nor civil society. This insistence coincides with a huge deterioration in the humanitarian and security situation across large parts of the country. Conflict continues in all of Darfur states, Kordofan and Blue Nile leaving a catastrophic situation in its wake, where necessities for living a dignified life are lacking, and access by civil society organizations to provide life-saving and humanitarian assistance is being hampered. Moreover, reports released by civil society have shown the continued policy of the government and ruling party of confiscation of newspapers, arrest of activists, and restricting the activities of political parties, and which has sapped credibility of any efforts towards a “national dialogue”, “democratic transformation”, and “peace”. Continuing along this approach poses a major threat to the future of Sudan, and negates the current requirements of the need to build peace, coexistence, democracy and social wellbeing.

The Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, as a legitimate representative of a wide cross-section of active Sudanese civil society, conscious of the dangerous realities facing the country and its national interest, and aware of the need to establish a favourable environment for greater consensus around national dialogue and its processes has been holding wide consultations with civil society across the different regions of the Sudan. These consultations have reaffirmed the need for building trust and confidence through specific measures communicated through previous meetings held with the Sudanese parliament in June 2014, and which included among other things -

- Achieving a cease-fire agreement along all fronts and ensuring unfettered access to humanitarian aid by civilians whose lives are under threat;
- Securing public freedoms, and guaranteeing freedom of movement and freedom of association (for political, social, cultural, professional, civil society and media organization);

- The release of all political detainees, including those convicted on political grounds;
- Reinstating civil society organizations that have been forcibly closed and/or suspended and allowing them to continue their work unhindered;
- Amending and reforming laws relating to public freedoms, including those laws that restrict civil society, the media and political activism;
- Opening access to public forums and state media platforms for civil society organizations, political parties, and different perspectives to ensure a truly public dimension to the dialogue.

However, more importantly these consultations have reached consensus that **the current 7+7 process is a flawed process that will not produce the desired results from a national dialogue**. In addition, only when all stakeholders including civil society are able to sit together to discuss relevant process issues can there be a process that is agreeable to all and more likely to produce the desired outcomes.

The government's insistence on proceeding with its 7+7 Process for "national dialogue", and without providing the necessary democratic conditions for dialogue represents a gross negligence of our nations needs during this critical stage, and an attempt to leapfrog over necessary steps. It will only result in further complications and accentuate the existing political and tribal polarization leading to further instability and worsening the economic and humanitarian situation across the country.

Accordingly, the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations announces that **what has been declared as the launch of a "national dialogue" on 10 October 2015, does not reflect the understanding nor aspirations of civil society of dialogue**.

Social peace, justice and equality being corner stones of the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, and based on a conviction that dialogue represents the surest, most efficient and least costly way towards achieving peace and stability in the country, we call on the government to invest its time, efforts and resources in service of the requirements of a genuine national dialogue. One that would accommodate all contributions, including those of civil society, and not squander these resources in fuelling conflict and devastation, emphasizing exclusion, and gross violations of human rights.

The public interest requires an objective and sincere examination of the current reality, without arrogance nor negligence of the some of the honest voices. The public interest requires clear inclusion of the priority issues of the Sudanese people, and involvement of all their representatives in the process of establishing dialogue, determining its conditions and mechanisms along lines that inclusive, free and transparent. For only under these circumstances will civil society institutions, as a representative of the Sudanese people and their concerns, have a true opportunity to participate in such a dialogue with all the other actors.

*Khartoum on 9 October 2015*

*The Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations is a coalition of independent civil society organizations working to safeguard its members and strengthen their capacities in realizing a democratic community with good governance in Sudan through innovative approaches to capacity building, advocacy, networking and building knowledge.*

*For any enquiries about this release or for information on how to join the Confederation, please email [cscso.confederation@gmail.com](mailto:cscso.confederation@gmail.com)*