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THE CONFEDERATION OF
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CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS

SUDAN CIVIL SOCIETY WATCH July – September 2015 (Issue #3)

Produced by the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society organizations (CSCSOs), Sudan Civil Society Watch is a quarterly bulletin concerned with monitoring and reporting on the space and flux for civil society in Sudan. The bulletin acts as an evidence base and is used to engage with policy and decision-makers to improve and expand the space for Sudanese civil society.

Data and information is collected via information and communication technologies through a network of trusted correspondents from civil society activists and organizations throughout the country. Information is also processed and analysed through focus group discussions and secondary sources.

This report presents a summary on the space for civil society, accompanied with charts and a listing of all incoming reports in relation to the space of civil society system for the period 1 July to 30 September 2015.

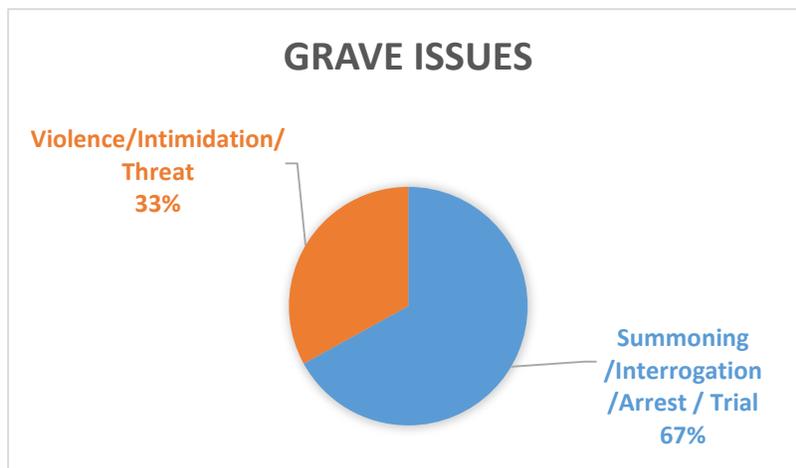
Summary on the space for civil society during this period

Unlike the previous quarter, this third quarter of 2015 was marked by a shift in the types of violations that curtail and restrict the activities of civil society in Sudan. Reports on **procedural and legal issues (renewal of registration/project approval; technical agreement; suspension of activity; travel restrictions) rose from 43% in the previous quarter to 75%** in this quarter. Reports exemplary of these types of restrictions include the refusal of the UNESCO national committee to register new organizations under its umbrella and in some cases to even renew licenses for existing registrants. This refusal was prompted by the Humanitarian Aid Commission that deemed the activities of some of these organizations as inconsistent with the mandate of the UNESCO national committee.

Grave violations (detention/closure/confiscation) dropped from 57% to 25%, however a serious incident under this category of reports involved the murder of a former judge, human rights activist and member of the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM). Mr. Abdallah Abdelgader Wad-Ageeb was murdered over what was claimed to be a land dispute during a visit to his hometown of Abbassia Tagali in South Kordofan State. In late September, an activist from the youth-led movement Shari-al-Hwadith (an initiative that organizes and mobilizes financial support for families in need of health services/medication) was detained for one-day in Gedaref state by security. He was interrogated about the initiative, their services and sources of financing and why considered themselves able to provide services better than the government.



In August and September and in both the states of Blue Nile State and South Kordufan the government continues to obstruct projects/activities of organizations that are related to human-rights issues and more specifically awareness around Resolution 1325. Security also prohibit field surveys, data collection and community mobilization activities that may be deemed necessary during any project design or formulation stages. Additionally, a TV program/episode recorded by the Blue Nile TV channel and which hosted a discussion between civil society leaders and representatives from the HAC on tissues related to civil society in Sudan and the role of the HAC was repeatedly postponed and never broadcast.



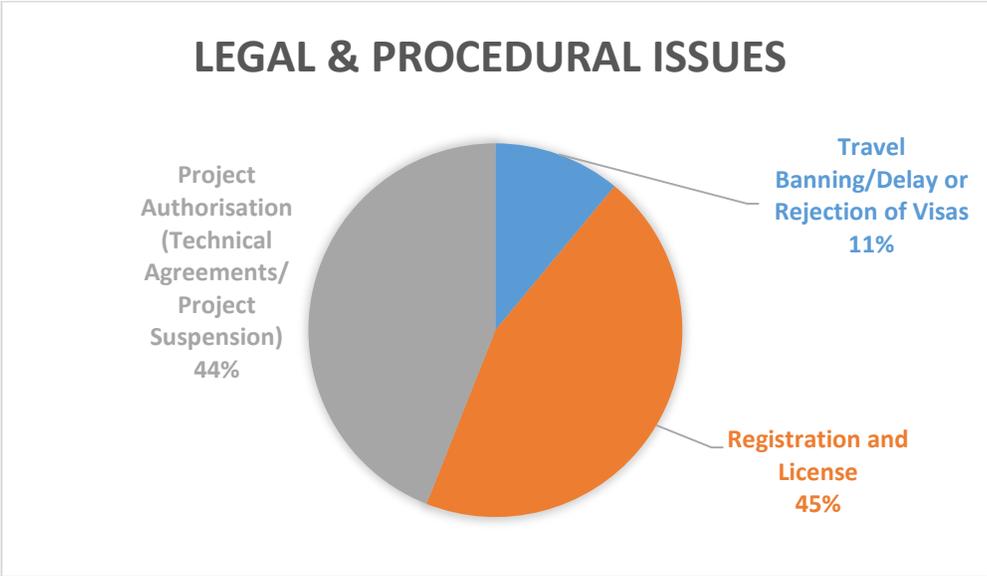
In July and August 2015, staff from Peace Bridge Association (PBA) were respectively summoned several times by the HAC and notified of HAC disapproval of them carrying out projects/activities without the prior consent of HAC (in the form of a technical agreement). The registration renewal of PBA was also due and an assessment visit to the Association was deemed necessary by HAC prior to any license renewal. *Alam* (Teach) that works in education and teachers rights is another organization that reported having its activities and programs obstructed since 2014, and is only authorized to carry out any activity only after requesting and receiving approval from the HAC.

During this period, TRACKS (a private firm providing training and consultancy services) and the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM) have futilely been trying to retrieve assets seized by the security organs during raids they carried out to these organizations in December 2014 and May 2015. SUDIA (Sudanese Development Initiative), ZORD (Zarqaa Organization for Relief and Development), and some other 40 organizations registered with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) have been denied renewal of their licenses pending an investigation by HAC.

Heavy security and intimidation/scare tactics marked a visit of a delegation from the Sudan Solidarity Committee and the European Union to some of the families of those martyred during the 2013 uprising against the government. These visits helped highlight the issues of lack of justice and failure of the state to identify the perpetrators of these heinous crimes in reports made by the Independent Expert on Human Rights for Sudan.

NIDAA organization continues to struggle with authorities (HAC) in establishing its offices and beginning its activities in Blue Nile State. Initially, the HAC nominated five local organizations of which (NIDAA) was to select one to work with as a partner. NIDAA's selection was rejected and HAC designated a specific organization for NIDAA to partner with. Further complications and delays involved differences over the projects target locations, and the reluctance of NIDAA to capitulate to the HACs insistence that the project technical agreement place NIDAA as a donor and the local partner/NGO (designated by HAC) as the executing agency.

Civil society organizations in Blue Nile State also reported that government institutions related to services (health, water, education) have created new internal departments to review and approve requests from NGOs looking to carry out projects in their relevant service area. This represents an additional layer of approvals that has the potential to disrupt and delay activities. Organizations are also anticipating the issuance of a new law for the NGO sector before the end of the year. A revised law that will place even greater restrictions and have a direct negative impact on the activities of civil society organizations.



Key national and international events that have had repercussions on civil society and the space during the third quarter of 2015 included:

August 2015 Report of the UN independent expert on the Human Rights situation in which he encouraged and recognized the important work being carried out by Sudanese civil society organizations in building capacity and advocacy around human rights programming in Sudan. The report also urged the Sudanese government to carry out a transparent investigation regarding the victims of the incidents from September 2013. The report also noted the violations being carried out against civil society organizations and activists and condemned them as contradictory to universal human rights, particularly the right of peaceful assembly and the political and civil rights.

The United Nations International Day of Democracy was this year organized under the theme "Space for Civil Society". Speaking on the occasion, Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations described civil society as the "oxygen of democracy" and that the United Nations recognizes and commends the active and critical role of the global civil society.

The 30th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights in Sudan. The Independent Expert monitors the human rights situation in Sudan, including in conflict areas, and provides technical assistance. The session was attended by a small delegation of independent civil society activists who presented testimonials on the violations experienced by the civil society in Sudan as well as their impact on the situation of human rights.

Ahead of the government's 'National Dialogue' scheduled for 10 October 2015, President Bashir declared a two-month ceasefire and amnesty for rebel groups involved in the fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States.

Summary of incoming reports

Hereunder is a summary of reports received during the period 1 July to 30 September 2015:

Grave Issues		
Category	Date	Reported Violation
Summoning /Interrogation /Arrest / Trial	26/07/2015	<i>Khartoum Airport</i> : On her return from a business trip Dr. Aisha Al-Karib (A civil Society activist and the previous director of SORD organization) was summoned by security forces and her passport was withdrawn for a short time. After half an hour she received her passport back without explanation.
	17/09/2015	<i>NSS National Security Service, Al-Gedarif State</i> : raided Jaffar Khider's house (a civil society activist & Co-Founder Al-Gadarif Initiative for Salvation), Also arrested two students: Abdullah Othman and Abbas Mustafa who were present in the house during the raid. The <i>NSS National Security Service</i> also confiscated books, papers, documents, and Jaffar's personal laptop.
Violence/ Harassment/ Threats	24/08/2015	<i>Abassiyah Tagali, South Kordofan State</i> : A group armed with fire weapons and edged weapons killed Abdullah Abdul-Gadir Wad-Ageeb and injured his companions. Abdullah is a former judge, a lawyer, a legal activist, and a member of the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor SHRM.
Legal and Procedural Issues		
Category	Date	Reported Violation

Travel Ban/Visa Issues	02/07/2015	<i>Khartoum Airport, Security Forces:</i> Al-Bagir Mukhtar Al-Afeefi (Al-Khatim Adlan Organization) was summoned and his passport withdrawn on his arrival to Khartoum airport on the grounds of not renewing his Foreigner with Sudanese Roots ID. He was also advised that he is banned from traveling and he should report to department of immigration, Ministry of Interior where his travel ban was reconfirmed and he was asked to report to the state security prosecution.
Project Authorization (Technical Agreements/ Project Suspension)	Mid July	<i>Abri, Halfa Locality, Northern State:</i> Security Forces banned The Nubian Environmental Protection Initiative (Led by a group of youth trained by SUDIA under the project: National Youth and Democracy Leadership Program) from holding a scientific symposium on the harmful usage of potassium cyanide in traditional gold mining in the northern state.
	19/08/2015	<i>Al-Faw Locality, Al-Gadarif State:</i> The locality Director suspended the fund raising activities of Shar'I Al-Hawadith attended to refurbish the locality hospital. The Initiative lead coordinator was summoned and handed a letter banning the initiative from any activities in Al-Faw Locality. Later on he was summoned again by the security forces and was interrogated for two hours. Activists who are part of the initiative confirmed ongoing monitoring by security forces.
	09/09/2015	<i>Al-Saganah, Khartoum State:</i> Without any stated reason the NSS <i>National Security Service</i> cancelled a poetic gathering organized by Al-Saganah Youth Center to launch the poems of Alla-Eldin Sanhoori titled (Hatab Fi Ghabet Al-Jorh).
	17/09/2015	<i>Baba Costa Café, Khartoum:</i> The NSS <i>National Security Service</i> cancelled a Bazar for the Supper Woman Network. The Bazar is a joint effort by Babiker Badri Association, Fendorf, SIMA Center, and Osрати Organization.
Registration and License	06/07/2015	<i>HAC Humanitarian Aid Commission, Khartoum:</i> SUDIA submitted another request to HAC following its previous requests since May 19 th to hold its general assembly to be able to renew its license. Up to date there is no confirmation from HAC to proceed with the general assembly meeting.
	08/07/2015	<i>HAC Humanitarian Aid Commission, Khartoum:</i> Following its several requests to be granted its right to hold its general assembly meeting SUDIA met with the Organizations Registrar Deputy, HAC on July 6 th . The Deputy confirmed that SUDIA file at HAC is under reassessment and its already scheduled for visits by HAC for further review.
	08/07/2015	<i>ZORD Al-Zarga For Rural Development, Khartoum Head Office:</i> Following the visit of HAC Humanitarian Aid Commission and The NSS <i>National Security Service</i> personnel to its office back in March 2015 Zord has not been able to renew its registration.
	July 2015	<i>Usratona Organization for Disabled Children, Omdurman:</i> Despite numerous efforts by the organization it failed to renew its registration, due to the fact that it has to hold its general assembly to renew its registration and for the general assembly meeting to be official it has to be attended by both the Federal and Omduramn HAC Humanitarian Aid Commission representatives. The two offices representatives did not manage to agree to attend on any day. This case is a clear evidence of the conflicting legal and procedural regulations applied by HAC.

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 report or for information on how to become a member of the Confederation, please email cscso.confederation@gmail.com