



The Sudan Consortium
African and International Civil Society
Action for Sudan

Civil society calls for strong AU support for civilian transition in Sudan

29 April 2019

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Excellencies, Representatives of the AU Peace and Security Council Member States,
H.E. Chairperson Mr. Moussa Faki, African Union Commission,

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned Sudanese and African civil society organizations write to urge the African Union to take a strong stand with the people of Sudan, demanding an expeditious transfer of governmental authority from the current Transitional Military Council and setting up comprehensive mediation and support mechanisms that will support a sustainable transition to democratic rule.

The Sudanese people have been calling for this transition for several months. Protests began country wide in December 2018, and escalated in April 2019 with a sit-in at the military headquarters in Khartoum. The key demands of the people of Sudan are the removal not only of former president Omar Al Bashir but also the regime that sustained his abusive power.

Over his 30 year tenure, the regime President Bashir led oversaw the waging of several wars that have primarily targeted civilians in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, severe repression of political opposition and civil society, shrinking of civil society space, the secession of South Sudan and severe economic crisis. Addressing these challenges will require bold leadership and new ideas which are unlikely to come from leaders who were embedded in the ideology and reality of the former regime. That said, as the protesters remain in the streets, the risk of violence continues as interest groups affiliated with the previous regime may have incentive to lash out to maintain their position and may seek to agree to only superficial changes in an effort to retain centers of power, for example, in the national security services. Reported clashes between the military and security which have already claimed an estimated 15 of lives are an alarming indication of how this violence could escalate if not addressed.

In this context, we welcome the strong statements by the AU Chairperson, Moussa Faki, on 11 April that “military take-over is not the appropriate response to the challenges facing Sudan and the aspirations of its people,” and by the AU Peace and Security Council which in its 15 April communique which “strongly condemns” the coup, “reaffirms the imperative of a civilian-led and

consensual transition in Sudan,” and “demands that the Sudanese military step aside and hand over power to a transitional civilians-led political authority, in accordance with the will of the people and constitutional order, within a maximum period of fifteen (15) days.” More recently, several AU heads of state met in Egypt at the invitation of President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi and recommended to the AU Peace and Security Council that the deadline be extended to 90 days. We are concerned that this recommendation is not in line with AU principles, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance. We are also concerned that the extended delay in applying AU resolutions on the matter may embolden the TMC to consolidate its hold on power and impose on the Sudanese another military rule behind a powerless civilian cabinet that the TMC is declaring it is willing to constitute.

We therefore call upon your Excellencies to support the aspirations of the Sudanese people by urgently:

- 1- Reaffirming the AU PSC’s resolution at its 840th meeting held on 15 April 2019 rejecting the coup and demanding transition to a civilian authority and following through on its threat to apply Article 7(g) of its protocol suspending Sudan in all the AU’s activities until constitutional order is restored and rejecting the call by heads of state for a deadline extension;
- 2- Calling on member states to impose bi-lateral sanctions including visa denials, restrictions of government-to government contacts, and trade restrictions if power is not expeditiously turned over to civilian hands;
- 3- Inviting opposition forces such as the Sudan Professionals Association and the Forces for Freedom and change to address the council with a view to deepening your understanding of their perspectives and ambitions;
- 4- Reiterating African solidarity in support of the Sudanese People and of their internationally guaranteed human rights of freedom of expression and association and to peace and security, and the right to choose their own government;
- 5- Working hand in hand with the national human rights commission and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights to ensure that human rights are respected in the transitional period;
- 6- Advising the *de facto* authorities to engage meaningfully with the pro-democracy opposition representing the protesters’ concerns and warning further sanctions should violence be used; and
- 7- Proposing a comprehensive package of political and material support for transition to a new civilian transitional government once this is constituted.

This is a critical moment in Sudan’s history. Protesters have achieved a change in government that seemed inconceivable just a few months ago, but sustained effort is needed to ensure that the voices of the protesters are heeded and progress is sustained through transition to civilian rule and more long term to democratic transformation. If the African Union does not stand strong, the risk that the country will revert to the control of military and security actors bent on continuing repression is great.

Yours sincerely,

1. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
2. Ajaweed Organization
3. Al Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment (KACE)
4. Arab Coalition for Sudan (ACS)
5. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

6. Civic Forces Alliance (CFA) (a platform of 78 civil society, women's, youth, ethnic organizations, trade unions, demand groups and notable figures)
7. CSW
8. Darfur Bar Association
9. Darfur Civil Society Forum
10. Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre
11. Democratic Thought Project, Sudan
12. Euro-African Forum on Rights and Development
13. Horn of Africa Civil Society Forum (HOACS)
14. Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA)
15. International Refugee Rights Initiative
16. Justice Centre for Advocacy and Legal Consultations
17. Kenya Human Rights Commission
18. Nuba Women for Education and Development Association
19. Nubsud Human Rights Monitors Organization (NHRMO)
20. Omar Al-Mukhtar International Association
21. Regional Center for Training and Development of Civil Society (RCDCS)
22. Strategic Initiative for Women in The Horn of Africa (SIHA Network)
23. Sudan Consortium
24. Sudan Democracy First Group
25. Sudan Unlimited
26. Sudanese Lawyers for Justice
27. Sudanese Rights Group (Huqooq)