

The Chairperson and members of the AU Peace and Security Council
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki, Chairperson, African Union Commission,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

29 April 2019

Sub: Transfer of political power to civilian-led Transitional Authority in Sudan

As you are aware, the Sudanese people persistently protested and bravely stood against the former regime until its downfall on 11 April 2019. During the last four months of the Sudanese uprising, one of the key demands of the protesters has been the peaceful and immediate handover of political power to the pro-democracy political forces that led the uprising and the establishment of civilian rule after 30 years of military dictatorship. This demand was clearly articulated by the protesters and the Forces of Freedom and Change which orchestrated the demonstrations from 13th December 2018 until today. The Sudanese people consider the transfer of political power from the military to a civilian-led transitional authority as an assurance that their aspirations for freedom, peace and justice will be met.

The Transitional Military Council (TMC), which currently rules the country is, in fact, using all pretexts to entrench itself in Sudan's political scene and to retain political power in its hands against the will and aspirations of the protesters. The resistance of the TMC to the demands for immediate transfer of political power to civilians is provoking the Sudanese people to continue protesting in front of the military headquarters in Khartoum.

We support the statement made by the Chairperson of the AU Commission H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat on 11 April 2019 that: *“a military take-over is not the appropriate response to the challenges facing Sudan and the aspirations of its people.”* Equally, we fully support Communiqué No. PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXL) adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council at its 840th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 15 APRIL 2019, especially the Council's demand that *“the Sudanese military step aside and hand over power to a transitional civilian-led political authority, in accordance with the will of the people and constitutional order, within a maximum period of fifteen (15) days from the date of the adoption of the present communiqué, failing which, Council will automatically apply Article 7(g) of its Protocol, in particular the suspension of the participation of the Sudan in all AU's activities until the restoration of constitutional order.”* However, we are deeply concerned by the recommendation made by African leaders in their meeting held in Cairo on 23 April 2019 suggesting that the ultimatum placed by AUPSC on the TMC in Sudan be delayed three months, according the TMC more time to hand over power to a civilian-led authority. We believe that extension of the ultimatum is counter-productive as it sends the wrong signals to all sides in Sudan, TMC and the Forces of Freedom and Change. Such an extension will whet the appetite of the former for more time to rule the country while discouraging the latter, possibly pushing them to abandon their peaceful approach.

In this respect we urge the AUPSC to retain its position. Giving more time to the TMC defeats the object of Communiqué No. PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCCXL) in letter and spirit. We believe that this recommendation is not in line with AU principles and the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance. Furthermore, the Solemn Declaration of the AU's 50th Anniversary under its section on Democratic Governance point (ii), states that: "Retreat our rejection of unconstitutional change of governments including through any attempts to seize power by force, but we recognize the right of our people to peacefully express their will against oppressive systems."

We trust that the AU political and executive organs, including the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and AUPSC will not turn against its agreed upon principles and instruments which work for the best interest of the people of Sudan.

Yours Sincerely,

1. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
2. Darfur Bar Association
3. Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre
4. Euro-African Forum on Rights and Development
5. Omar Al-Mukhtar International Association
6. Nubsud Human Rights Monitors Organization (NHRMO)