



TEXTS ADOPTED

Provisional edition

P8_TA-PROV(2019)0034

Sudan

European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2019 on Sudan (2019/2512(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Sudan, including those of 31 May 2018¹, 15 March 2018², 16 November 2017³ and 6 October 2016⁴,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which the Republic of Sudan has been a state party since 1986,
- having regard to the awarding of its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to human rights defender Salih Mahmoud Osman in 2007,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Sudan of 19 November 2018,
- having regard to the statement by the Troika (the United States, Norway and the United Kingdom) and Canada of 8 January 2019 on the response to continuing protests in Sudan,
- having regard to the statements by the Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 24 December 2018 and 11 January 2019 on the ongoing protests in Sudan,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- having regard to the Constitution of Sudan of 2005,
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement signed by the Sudanese Government in 2005,
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- having regard to the interactive dialogues on the situation of human rights in Sudan held

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0233.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0080.

³ OJ C 356, 4.10.2018, p. 50.

⁴ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 33.

by the UN Human Rights Council on 11 December 2018,

- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in mid-December the Government of Sudan announced an end to subsidies on staple goods in response to spiralling inflation; whereas the country's inflation, at around 122 %, is now the second highest in the world¹;
- B. whereas since 19 December 2018, demonstrators have been taking to the streets across Sudan to protest price increases, cuts in subsidies on basic commodities and fuel shortages; whereas these protests have spread from towns and villages to the capital, Khartoum;
- C. whereas the demonstrations widened and tens of thousands more people took to the streets, reflecting a broad cross-section of Sudanese society against the authoritarian regime and calling on President Omar al-Bashir, in power for 29 years, to step down;
- D. whereas 22 political parties have withdrawn from government in solidarity with the demonstrators; whereas the protests are backed by some of the President's former allies and members of his ruling party, who are seen as a serious challenge to President al-Bashir who seeks to amend Article 57 of the Constitution in order to obtain a life mandate;
- E. whereas on 1 January 2019, 22 opposition political parties and groups demanded that President al-Bashir transfer power to a 'sovereign council' and a transitional government that would set a 'suitable' date for democratic elections; whereas the next presidential elections in Sudan are scheduled for 2020; whereas according to the Constitution of Sudan, President al-Bashir is not permitted to stand again when his present term ends; whereas some lawmakers in Sudan have announced their willingness to amend the constitution to extend presidential term limits, allowing President al-Bashir to seek re-election in 2020;
- F. whereas the Sudanese authorities deployed national security forces, the police and paramilitary forces, which used excessive force to disperse unarmed protesters, beating them with batons and firing live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas;
- G. whereas President al-Bashir is the only sitting head of state wanted for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide committed during his campaign of ethnic cleansing in Darfur, with two outstanding arrest warrants issued on 4 March 2009 and 12 July 2010 by the International Criminal Court (ICC); whereas although Sudan is not a state party to the Rome Statute, UN Security Council resolution 1593 (2005) requires it to cooperate with the ICC; whereas despite his arrest warrant, President al-Bashir continued his crimes with impunity, expanding his bombings and attacks against civilians beyond Darfur to those in the Sudanese states of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan;
- H. whereas according to international human rights organisations, the death toll had reached 45 by 1 January 2019; whereas the Sudanese Government only reports 24 deaths; whereas three more protesters were killed on 9 January 2019 during an anti-

¹ Calculations by Professor Steve H. Hanke, Johns Hopkins University.
<https://allafrica.com/stories/201807230267.html>

government demonstration in Sudan; whereas on the same day, the first-ever rally in support of President al-Bashir was taking place in Khartoum;

- I. whereas according to the Sudanese Government, police have arrested 816 people in three weeks of protests, but according to civil society, the actual number is much higher; whereas several faculty members from Khartoum University were arrested after they joined the protests; whereas a number of opposition leaders, journalists, human rights defenders, university professors and students, including those with severe injuries, remain in detention without visits from family, lawyers or doctors;
- J. whereas on 8 January 2019, Salih Mahmoud Osman, a Sudanese human rights lawyer and 2007 Sakharov Prize laureate, was arrested in his law office; whereas authorities have confirmed that he is in custody, but have not disclosed where he is being held; whereas Mr Osman's family is particularly worried about his detention on account of his hypertension and diabetes, which require medical follow-up;
- K. whereas the wave of arrests has involved many human rights defenders and a number of opposition members;
- L. whereas on 8 January 2019, former Vice-President Ali Osman Taha warned opponents of the government that militia 'brigades' would defend the country;
- M. whereas a free, independent and impartial media constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society; whereas the government has blocked access to social media sites, and several newspapers have refrained from going to press after the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) issued restrictions on publishing information related to the protests; whereas widespread use of VPNs has enabled people to share graphic pictures and videos of protesters who have been wounded or killed; whereas Sudan is ranked 174th out of 180 countries on the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index 2018; whereas on 13 January 2019, the Association of Sudanese Professionals, which includes, among others, doctors, professors and engineers, issued a call to protest in the capital, Khartoum, and other cities such as Madani (east), Kosti (south) and Dongola (north) on the occasion of 'a week of uprising'; whereas for the first time, a call to protest in Nyala and Al-Fasher, in the Darfur conflict region, has also been launched;
- N. whereas according to human rights defenders, people from the Darfur region in particular have been harassed and arrested all over the country, even if they have not participated in demonstrations;
- O. whereas Sudan is yet to ratify other key universal human rights treaties, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women;
- P. whereas the Troika made up of the US, Norway and the UK, and supported by Canada, has publicly condemned the brutal repression of the demonstrations in Sudan;
- Q. whereas the EU maintains high-level contact with the Sudanese Government, including visits from Commissioners to Sudan;
- R. whereas Sudan has been ranked the fourth worst country in which to be Christian in the 2018 World Watch List drawn up by Open Doors International; whereas the situation

for other religious minorities or non-believers is just as challenging;

1. Strongly condemns the excessive use of force by the NISS during ongoing popular protests and the ongoing repression by the authorities in Sudan, which continue to target activists and human rights defenders, as well as lawyers, teachers, students and doctors;
2. Calls on the Sudanese Government to put a stop to the deadly use of force, arbitrary arrests and the detention of peaceful protesters and to prevent more bloodshed and the use of torture; stresses that all law enforcement and security bodies should act under its direct control and in accordance with Sudan's constitutional and international commitments;
3. Extends its condolences to the victims of the violence that began with the start of the popular protests, and to their families;
4. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Sakharov Prize laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman and urges the Sudanese authorities to guarantee him urgent medical care and unhindered access to his lawyer and family;
5. Asks the Government of Sudan to respect people's right to voice their concerns and allow all human rights defenders in Sudan to carry out their legitimate work in defence of human rights without any restriction or reprisal;
6. Is particularly worried about the fate of 32 university students of Darfuri origin arrested on 23 December 2018 by Sudanese authorities, who have been paraded before the media, reportedly accused of being trained in Israel and blamed for the ongoing protests;
7. Demands that the Government of Sudan immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders, journalists, political opposition leaders and other protesters currently in detention without charge or trial and allow those facing trial full access to legal representation; calls on the Government of Sudan to make their whereabouts known;
8. Calls on the Government of Sudan to promptly investigate all allegations of torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention and of excessive use of force against people detained by the police and the NISS, including the denial of necessary medical treatment, and to hold those responsible to account in fair trials, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
9. Believes that free, independent and impartial media constitute one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, where open debates play a crucial role; calls for the EU to intensify its efforts to promote freedom of expression through its external policies and instruments, including in Sudan;
10. Calls for an immediate end to restrictions imposed on access to the internet and the curtailing of freedom of expression through the censorship of newspapers, and urges Sudan to undertake reforms to guarantee freedom of expression, in accordance with its constitutional obligations and international commitments, including the Cotonou Agreement as first amended in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005;
11. Deplores state-endorsed persecution against Christians, other religions and non-

believers, and the closing and demolition of churches; reaffirms that freedom of religion, conscience or belief is a universal human right that needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone;

12. Emphasises the importance of upholding the electoral calendar, but notes with concern that the process of changing the Sudanese Constitution to allow President al-Bashir to stand as presidential candidate once more has begun;
13. Reiterates its demand that President al-Bashir comply with international law in accordance with the conventions and treaties to which his government is party; further supports the role of the ICC in pursuing the charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against him;
14. Recalls the statement of 31 May 2018 made by Commissioner Stylianides in the European Parliament, in which he said that the EU would continue to make use of the different means at its disposal to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls in Sudan, including by enhancing their access to quality education and healthcare services and raising awareness of their rights among communities, in particular with a view to reducing harmful practices such as female genital mutilation;
15. Urges the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the Member States to ensure that 'migration management' and counter-terrorism actions do not undermine support for human rights; is concerned that EU and individual Member States' cooperation with Sudan on migration is used by the regime as an excuse and to reinforce its ability to control and oppress people, for example by strengthening surveillance capacities, including at borders, and by supplying equipment, such as biometric equipment; calls for the EU and its Member States to therefore ensure complete transparency with regard to projects involving Sudan in the field of security, including all planned activities and beneficiaries of EU and national funding;
16. Reiterates its call for an EU-wide ban on the export, sale, update and maintenance of any form of security equipment that can be or is used for internal repression, including internet surveillance technology, to states with deplorable human rights records such as Sudan;
17. Takes note of the statements made by the European External Action Service spokesperson in the context of the ongoing protests; calls on the VP/HR to publicly condemn the alarming situation in Sudan and to use all means of influence at her disposal to pressure the Sudanese authorities to put a stop to ongoing violence and repression, mass arrests and killings, and to encourage them to respect their commitments to international norms and laws;
18. Underlines the EU's engagement in providing humanitarian aid and in supporting civil society organisations in Sudan and encourages the EU and its Member States to continue their efforts in these fields; urges the Commission to further strengthen financial support to human rights defenders and civil society organisations in Sudan under the European Development Fund;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of Sudan, the African Union, the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament.