

## **Urgent Appeal on Racism and Hate Speech in Sudan**

19 April 2022

The undersigned non-governmental organizations (NGOs) once again draw attention of the international community to the growing threats of racism, hate speech and intolerance in Sudan. Hate speech and public calls for incitement to ethnic violence, particularly through Sudanese animated social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Clubhouse as outlined in our joint urgent appeal of 20 January 2022, are growing unabated in the silence of the Sudanese authorities.

However, we are utterly outraged by the racist comments made by prominent Sudanese lawyer(s) member(s) of the defense team of leaders of the disposed regime, who are currently under trial in Khartoum. This unfortunate incident, which went viral through live broadcasting by Sudan's official media outlet i.e., Sudan News Agency (SUNA), took place inside a court room in Khartoum on Tuesday, 12 April 2022. In their racist wrath, the lawyer(s) used disparaging language and uttered insult against the sanctity of Islam to show further contempt for and denigrate the outgoing Director-General of Sudan Radio and TV Corporation.

Of special concern is the absence of any response from the Sudanese authorities to this reprehensible verbale assault. The revelation of this racist insult sent shock waves across Sudan and provoked a nationwide outcry yet neither the Transitional Sovereignty Council nor the Acting Minister of Justice or the Minister of Information addressed the public and explained the official position of government on the matter, which constitutes a threat to Sudan's fragile social fabric and peace. The apathy of the Sudanese authorities towards this racist assault amounts to condoning this criminal act in flagrant violation of the country's obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to which Sudan acceded on 21 March 1977.

Sudan is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious country and any unwarranted use of racist slur and derogatory language or calls for ethnic hatred, discrimination and intolerance severely endangers its unity and may lead to social conflicts. Sudan's long years of internal wars in South Sudan, Nuba Mountains and the ongoing fighting in Darfur are graphic manifestations of the country's social ills and the proliferation of racism and intolerance. It is to be reaffirmed that any solution for Sudan's deep problems must provide for a Social Contract that celebrates and respects Sudan's ethnic and racial diversity on equal footing, and unites its people with their myriad backgrounds, as the first step to address the growing division of the Sudanese society along ethnic lines.

1. We call on the Government of Sudan to seize this opportunity to thoroughly investigate this criminal offensive and to hold the individual(s) responsible for the racist verbale assault on 12 April 2022 accountable under article 125 (Insulting Religious Creeds) and article 160 (Insult and Abuse) of the Sudan's "Criminal Act, 1991" as amended in July 2020.
2. Sudan should launch a national campaign on tolerance and peaceful coexistence and to develop and implement a comprehensive and multidisciplinary National Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination in order to fulfill its obligations under the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which were agreed upon at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Measures entailed in such Plan of Action should effectively address the ongoing injustices and heals the wounds of the past.
3. We call on the UN Expert on human rights in Sudan (Mr. Adama Dieng) and the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance to pay special attention to the proliferation of hate speech and racist rhetoric and to conduct a joint promotional mission to Sudan to assess the situation and propose solutions.

4. We call on the Sudanese civil society groups and media to mainstream issues of hate speech and ethnic and racial intolerance in their agendas, to work out advocacy plans to address the root causes of racism, discrimination, and intolerance in Sudan and to combat the growing dangers posed by the ongoing hate speech and ethnic and racial superiority propaganda.

**Signed:**

1. Africa Centre for Human Rights, Khartoum
2. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, Banjul
3. Beja Bar Association, Khartoum
4. *Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement*, Geneva
5. Civic Forces Alliance (CFA-Sudan), Khartoum
6. Community Development Association, Khartoum
7. Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organisations, Khartoum
8. Darfur Bar Association, Khartoum
9. Darfur Civil Society Forum, Khartoum
10. Darfur Network for Monitoring and Documentation, Kampala
11. Darfur Women Platform, Khartoum
12. Governance Programming Overseas, Khartoum
13. Human Rights Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND), Khartoum
14. Justice Africa – Sudan, Khartoum
15. Nubia for Prosperity (NFP), Khartoum
16. Omar Al-Mukhtar International Association, Geneva
17. Pan-African Congress (PAC-SD), Khartoum
18. Pan-African Forum on Rights and Development, New York
19. *Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO)*, Dakar
20. Save Sudan, Khartoum
21. Sudan Documentation Centre, Geneva
22. Sudan Human Rights Network, Washington
23. Sudan Linguistic Circle, Khartoum
24. Sudanese Civil Society Initiative, Khartoum
25. Sudanese Human Rights Defenders Group, Khartoum
26. Sudanese Secular Society for Human Rights, Khartoum
27. Sudanese Women against Violence, Khartoum
28. The Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society (RCDCS), Khartoum
29. Zarga Organization for Rural Development, Khartoum