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## **Sudan: Security forces must stop using live rounds against demonstrators**

Sudanese security forces must stop shooting protesters with live ammunition, Amnesty International said after confirming that at least eight demonstrators killed on Tuesday had bullet wounds in their chests, some inflicted at close range.

At least 10 people, many of them high school students, were killed on July 31 when Security services and paramilitary police opened fire in Nyala, South Darfur, during a demonstration against fuel prices and the cost of living. Dozens more were injured.

Medical staff at Nyala Public Hospital told Amnesty International that the wounds inflicted on the eight bodies admitted to their morgue were consistent with those caused by 5.56mm and 7.62mm automatic rifles.

“Any individual members of the security forces involved in the events that caused this bloodbath must be suspended immediately,” said Paule Rigaud, Amnesty International’s Africa program director.

“The Sudanese government must investigate why protesters were directly targeted by the security force personnel who opened fire on them with live bullets.”

The Sudanese authorities have routinely used excessive force against mostly peaceful demonstrations which have occurred regularly in Sudan’s major cities since mid-June.

According to the United Nation’s Basic Principles of the Use of Force, live ammunition should not be used, either directly against demonstrators or as warning shots, unless it is absolutely necessary and only after less extreme means have proved ineffective.

The security forces also fired Dushka-type heavy machine-guns in the air, which injured residents in their homes as bullets fell down from the sky.

“The Sudanese security forces must not be allowed to police demonstrations in such a reckless manner and with flagrant disregard for human life,” said Rigaud.

“Sudanese citizens must be allowed to express their opinion peacefully without experiencing systematic repression. Attacks against peaceful protesters are an unacceptable violation of their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association.”

Amnesty International is also concerned that injured protesters may have been denied medical care following eye witness reports some were arrested and that plain clothes National Security Service personnel were deployed within Nyala General Hospital.

Amnesty International has documented a pattern in recent weeks of injured protesters being denied medical treatment in Khartoum.

Police forces have used batons, tear gas and rubber bullets at close range against demonstrators.

And, in response to the protest movement, the National Security Services (NSS) arrested hundreds of known political and civil society activists, regardless of their involvement in demonstrations. Many told Amnesty International they had been tortured with sticks, water hoses and fists, and made to stand under the scorching sun all day.

In some cases individuals who had been injured in demonstrations or as a result of torture and ill-treatment by security forces told Amnesty International that they preferred not to seek treatment in hospitals because they feared arrest and intimidation.

Dozens of activists remain in administrative detention.

Notes to Editors

- Security forces involved in the Nyala shootings include the Central Reserve Police – a combat-trained paramilitary police - and plainclothes agents of the National Security Services (NSS).