

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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# SUDAN: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SHOULD ACT URGENTLY AND HOLD A SPECIAL SESSION

As Sudan's military intensifies a crackdown on protesters using lethal force and unlawful arrests after the military coup on 25 October 2021, decisive action is needed to protect human rights of people in Sudan.

The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) should act without delay by convening a special session and adopting a resolution requesting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to set-up a fact-finding mission to monitor, verify and report on the situation in Sudan to prevent further human rights violations, identify perpetrators and pave the way for accountability.

Before the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the HRC (13 September – 8 October 2021), Amnesty International along with other civil society organizations issued a [letter](#)<sup>1</sup> underscoring the importance of the Council extending its support to people in Sudan and maintaining scrutiny of actions by authorities. Collectively, we highlighted ongoing challenges and risks in shifting attention from the situation and encouraged member states to keep the monitoring and public reporting capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Sudan. This call went unheeded.

Two weeks after the HRC session, on 25 October, Sudan's military seized power, dissolving the country's Transitional Government, and placing the country under military leadership and a state of emergency. Human rights violations in the wake of the coup run counter to Sudan's ambitions for a future where human rights of all are respected and amount to a betrayal of the hopes and sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese people.

Security forces arrested and detained members of the civilian coalition with which the army had been sharing power since the ousting of former president Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. Those arrested included Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok who has subsequently been released under conditions tantamount to house arrest. At least 15 other civilian politicians remain arbitrarily detained in unknown locations. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Sudan's internet has been partly shut down since 25 October impeding real-time access to information, scrutiny of the crackdown, and infringing the rights of Sudanese to freedom of expression and information.

Despite this, protesters peacefully took to the streets, across the capital Khartoum and in some provincial towns, to protest the army's takeover. The Sudan Professionals Association (SPA) has called for strikes and civil disobedience. Sudanese military forces have used lethal force to try to counter this sustained wave of overwhelmingly peaceful protests. Military forces have fired teargas and live ammunition from machine guns mounted on vehicles to disperse numerous demonstrations in Khartoum. According to the Doctors' Central Committee, at least six protesters, all men, were killed with gun shots while at least 140 have been wounded, some are in a critical condition.

Given the security forces' use of lethal force, their prior history of such violations, and the ongoing internet restrictions, we fear that the conditions are set for an escalation in human rights violations. In the past, women human rights defenders (WHRDs), women journalists, and women and girl protesters have been at heightened risk of being subjected to violations and abuses.

We stand in solidarity with Sudanese civil society organizations who are calling for their rights to be respected, protected, and fulfilled, and join in their call for rapid and resolute action by the Human Rights Council.

The Human Rights Council cannot wait until its next regular session on 25 February 2022 to act. To fulfil its mandate to prevent violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies, the Human Rights Council should convene a special session at which it would:

- Urge all authorities in Sudan to respect people's right to peacefully protest, refrain from unlawful dispersal of protests, end the use of unlawful force in policing protests, withdraw the military from law-enforcement operations, ensure independent and impartial investigations into unlawful force and other serious human rights violations, release people detained arbitrarily, and restore the internet;

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<sup>1</sup> Sudan: The Human Rights Council should extend its support to, and scrutiny of, Sudan, September 10, 2021, Index No. AFR 54/4734/2021, available in English and in French at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/4734/2021/en/>

- Request the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a fact-finding mission to monitor, verify and report on the situation in Sudan with a view to preventing further human rights violations and abuses, identifying perpetrators, and ensuring accountability for these violations and abuses, and for the reporting of the fact-finding mission to be shared with the UN Security Council; and
- Request the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to publicly and regularly report on the human rights situation in Sudan, relying on both in-house expertise and the work of the OHCHR country office in Sudan, and establish interactive dialogues on the human rights situation in Sudan twice a year.