



## **ATTAINING AN EFFECTIVE FACT-FINDING MISSION IN SUDAN**

The ongoing conflict in Sudan, which erupted in April 2023, has resulted in a devastating humanitarian crisis. The conflict, primarily between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has displaced millions of people within Sudan and forced many to flee to neighboring countries. The violence has also led to widespread human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and sexual violence.

The international community has responded to the crisis with a range of measures, including humanitarian aid, diplomatic efforts, and investigations into human rights violations. Both the UN and ACHPR in the recent months have been increasingly active in their efforts to address the crisis in Sudan. For example, they have both issued several statements condemning human rights abuses and calling for an end to the violence, they have also established a mechanism to receive and document complaints of human rights violations from victims in Sudan. The United Nations and the African Union (AU) have both established fact-finding missions to investigate the conflict and document human rights abuses.

The [UN Fact-Finding Mission](#) in Sudan was established in May 2023 with a mandate to investigate and report on violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in Sudan since April 15, 2023. The mission is also tasked with identifying perpetrators and making recommendations for accountability.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights ([ACHPR](#)) has recently also established a fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Sudan. Their mission is to gather evidence, identify perpetrators, and make recommendations to prevent future violations and ensure justice.

To ensure that the UN and AU fact-finding missions are working effectively and efficiently, it is important to identify areas of overlap and complementarity between their mandates. This will help to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the situation on the ground. By working together, the UN and AU can play a critical role in promoting peace, justice, and human rights in Sudan.

Fact-finding missions in Sudan face significant challenges, including security risks, restricted access, and the potential for retaliation against witnesses. To overcome these obstacles, it is imperative to:

- √ Conduct thorough risk assessments, establish strong security protocols, and collaborate with local communities and organizations to gain intelligence and protection.
- √ Engage with all parties to the conflict to secure safe passage and access to affected areas, ensuring the safety of mission personnel and interviewees.
- √ Implement robust confidentiality measures, establish witness protection programs, and create safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences without fear of reprisal.

Neighboring countries can also significantly enhance the effectiveness of fact-finding missions in Sudan. By providing logistical support, such as transportation and accommodation, they can alleviate operational challenges. Additionally, sharing intelligence and facilitating access to affected areas through diplomatic channels can greatly assist in gathering information and ensuring the safety of mission personnel. Furthermore, neighboring countries can play a vital role in supporting humanitarian efforts by providing aid and assistance to displaced populations, thereby alleviating the suffering of those affected by the conflict.

Effective fact-finding missions in Sudan should

- √ Engage with Local Communities: Seek input from local communities to understand their experiences, needs, and perspectives.
- √ Document Evidence: Collect and preserve evidence of human rights violations, war crimes, and other atrocities.
- √ Advocate for Accountability: Use the findings of the missions to advocate for justice and accountability.
- √ Inform Policy Development: Provide recommendations to governments, international organizations, and civil society actors to inform policy decisions and responses.

By addressing these challenges and seizing opportunities, fact-finding missions can play a vital role in shedding light on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

**By: Ms. Christine Kirabo**  
**Legal Program Officer (ACJPS)**