

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE STUDIES



Northern State: Sudanese authorities restrict access to justice by imposing hefty fees on services offered by the Attorney General's office

The African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) condemns the recent actions taken by Sudanese authorities in the Northern State to introduce hefty fees for the services offered by the Attorney General's office. This action limits and obstructs citizens' access to justice and contravenes international principles that require justice to be affordable for victims to access it. ACJPS urges the responsible authorities to review this decision and act in accordance with international human rights standards.

On February 5, 2025, the regional Ministry of Finance issued a letter to the office of the Attorney General in Northern Sudan State, introducing new fees for services provided by the latter. According to the letter, the Attorney General's Office is required to collect, record, and remit the newly introduced fees to the regional Ministry of Finance monthly.

ACJPS has obtained a copy of the new fees that affect 22 legal services provided by the Attorney General's office. These include; filing cases, appeals, complaints, reports of lost documents, certificate applications, and other litigation matters.

Below is a list of some of the services offered by the Attorney General's office that have attracted new filing fees. ACJPS focused primarily on services relevant to the current human rights situation and access to justice. Notably, most fees have increased by more than 2,000 Sudanese Pounds.

- √ Filing cases under the Sudanese Criminal Code of 1991: 10,000 Sudanese Pounds
- √ Withdrawal of complaints in commercial matters: 40,000 Sudanese pounds.
- √ Application fees for amnesty under the Sudanese Penal Code: 10,000 Sudanese Pounds
- √ Application for issuance of a certificate regarding a missing/lost document: 18,000 Sudanese Pounds
- √ Applications submitted during the trial processes: 8,000 Sudanese Pounds
- √ Request for the publication of a fugitive or accused: 10,000 Sudanese Pounds
- √ Application for a copy of any regulation issued by the Office of the Attorney General in any case: 10,000 Sudanese pounds.

- √ Submission of appeals to the Office of the Attorney General: Between 10,000 and 60,000 Sudanese Pounds
- √ Submission of appeals against resolutions issued by the Attorney General's office: 100,000 Sudanese pounds.

This action by the authorities comes at a time when the ongoing war has undermined the integrity of the justice system, creating a fertile breeding ground for impunity where perpetrators are not held accountable for their actions and victims are denied justice. The introduction of these new fees will further hinder access to justice, particularly for vulnerable victims of the ongoing widespread human rights violations, whose already precarious economic situation has been worsened by the war.

Human rights mechanisms such as the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights have, through resolutions on the human rights situation in Sudan, repeatedly condemned the belligerents and other allied parties, including the National Congress Party (NCP), for ongoing violations. Furthermore, their calls for an end to the employment of human rights violations as instruments of war have gone unheeded, and unfortunately, access to justice at the national level has remained elusive despite their numerous demands for accountability.

Previously, the services provided by the Attorney General's office were free, as they were funded annually through the national state budget. This guaranteed the office's independence, as it remained free from interference from other government agencies and officials at both national and regional levels. However, this directive is likely to affect their independence and access to justice, especially now that millions of victims of human rights violations need their services.