

Joint Statement: Genocide Returns to Darfur

(16 April 2025) On 13 April 2025, the UAE-backed RSF captured Zamzam, Sudan's largest camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs), after three continuous days of massive ground assault. These attacks marked a significant escalation in targeted violence against civilians in the North Darfur region and coincided with days of intense shelling of Abu Shouk IDP camp and attacks on El Fasher city, including RSF drone attacks. The RSF killed at least 27 civilians and injured 25 in Abu Shouk, including women and children, on 10 April 2025.

The RSF is systematically obstructing humanitarian assistance as well as targeting hospitals and local humanitarians. Despite these challenges, thousands of civilians who fled from Zamzam to El Fasher and Tawila are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. [MSF reports](#) that over 10,000 people have arrived in Tawila in less than 48 hours. This population was already experiencing famine conditions and had been multiply displaced, facing severe shortages of food and water and a lack of shelter - footage abounds of civilians sleeping in the streets of El Fasher with not even a mat or blanket.

Continued Attacks Expected

The situation on the ground is rapidly evolving. The [UN](#) already acknowledged that the death toll is in the [hundreds](#) but reports from the ground indicate that the figure may be in the thousands.

Based on satellite images analyzed by the [Yale Humanitarian Research Lab](#) (HRL), RSF forces are deliberately burning Zamzam to the ground. So far, the "area of damage is equivalent to 165 standard football pitches". Satellite imagery and ground sources corroborate that the RSF is now restricting freedom of movement by preventing civilians from fleeing the camp. The RSF attacked the camp on 11 April using approximately 200 vehicles, and Yale assesses that the force is "highly likely positioned to launch an imminent assault on El Fasher."

Serious Violations of International Law

Genocide and atrocity crimes are being committed now in North Darfur. The RSF is engaged in the mass killing of civilians and will likely continue this if/when they reach El Fasher. The RSF has imposed an ongoing telecommunications blackout on the area, obstructing information sharing about the full scope and scale of what is happening. Starlink is the only connection between North Darfur and the outside world, and the RSF [ordered](#) Starlink devices to be shut down as they moved north from Nyala in preparation for their attack on Zamzam.

The RSF is systematically destroying critical civilian sites and infrastructure including markets, hospitals, schools, and children's centres:

- On 11 April, The RSF executed nine humanitarian workers from INGO [Relief International](#) who were operating the final functioning hospital in Zamzam camp. The RSF also summarily executed over 52 civilians in Um Kadada, North Darfur on [10 April](#) and targeted the Um Kadada Hospital, killing medical staff and patients.
- The RSF burned down the community kitchen operated by the Sudanese American Physicians Association (SAPA) in Zamzam] which had provided 630,000 meals to displaced families and children since [August 2024](#).

- The RSF killed the manager of SAPA's [Hope Oasis Center](#), a safe space for children in Zamzam camp.

The deliberate targeting of civilians is prohibited under international humanitarian law (IHL). Medical staff and facilities also enjoy specific protections under IHL. These attacks by the RSF are war crimes and crimes against humanity and must be independently investigated with accountability for the perpetrators, including those with command responsibility.

The attacks began a day after the International Court of Justice began hearing Sudan's case against the United Arab Emirates for alleged breaches of the Genocide Convention. This points to the RSF's abject disregard for the international system and any notion that their methods for conducting war can be curtailed by international law.

The warning signs of the large-scale assault were present, yet the international community, as well as parties to the conflict, failed for months to take action to protect civilians. On the day the attack started, [Human Rights Watch](#) warned that the same indicators were present ahead of the RSF's attacks on Ardamata. The international community must act now or accept that they allowed yet another genocide to happen on their watch.

Establishing Genocidal Intent

The [Genocide Convention](#) recognizes certain actions as genocide, if committed with "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

There are clear indicators of the RSF's ongoing genocidal intent against non-Arab populations in Darfur, including the [Zaghawa and Fur](#). Yale HRL's satellite imagery analysis shows the RSF forces approached Zamzam from multiple directions, cutting off all roads in and out of the camp. Additionally, RSF troops have [filmed themselves](#) using racial slurs against the non-Arab population and have publicly shared videos of civilians' bodies lying on the ground in the camp.

The RSF is inflicting serious bodily harm on the population, perpetrating [sexual and gender-based violence, abductions, and mass killings](#). Witnesses said the roads in Zamzam and those leaving the camp are [littered with corpses](#). Civilians are being [hunted and executed](#) in the streets, and [pregnant women](#) and targeted and killed.

The systematic destruction of medical facilities, including the last remaining hospital in Zamzam that also provided maternal and women's reproductive health services, demonstrates the intent of the RSF to prevent the civilians of North Darfur from accessing life-saving medical care. This includes medical care necessary for women to give birth safely and to preserve the lives of infants.

The estimated [1.5 million](#) people in the El Fasher area now depend entirely on the Saudi Maternity Hospital in El Fasher which has been [attacked multiple times](#) during the conflict and is experiencing critical shortages of medicines, major trauma kits, and surgical equipment.

The RSF is also inflicting conditions calculated to bring about the destruction of the people of North Darfur by attacking vital food supplies. Yale HRL has documented the complete destruction of the central market in Zamzam. Famine had previously been declared in Zamzam, Abu Shouk, and El Fasher in [2024](#). The UN Independent [Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan](#) highlighted survivors' testimonies that livestock and food supplies had been looted in the recent attacks. The Relief International team shared that their supplies of therapeutic food for the treatment of severe acute malnourishment had also been looted in the attack on their hospital in Zamzam-A. The women's community kitchen supported by the [Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa](#) (SIHA) was similarly razed in attacks on 12 April - SIHA has confirmed the death of four volunteers. By destroying markets and targeting humanitarian operations in areas where famine is already in effect, the RSF has left no option for civilians except to starve.

The deliberate intent behind these acts can be determined not only by the impact they are having but also by reference to the RSF's own words. These acts target and primarily impact civilian populations. Despite false claims by the RSF, Zamzam is a camp housing internally displaced people, not a military camp. IHL provides protections for internally displaced people prohibits parties to an armed conflict from forcibly displacing civilians, and protects civilians against the risk of secondary displacements.

The acts documented above are consistent with patterns of violence that have previously been found to constitute genocide in Darfur. The [United States Department of State](#) determined that the RSF had committed genocide in Sudan in January 2025, noting, in particular, the RSF's violation of commitments to "[allow the unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief](#)". Similarly, an independent inquiry conducted by the [Raoul Wallenberg](#) Centre for Human Rights found that the RSF was committing genocide against the Masalit population in West Darfur. Each further act of genocide does not require a fresh determination.

Recommendations

The international community is obligated to prevent and punish genocide and must take action to save civilian lives in Darfur. Without concerted and coordinated action, this could be the largest mass casualty event the world has seen in recent history. The international community has the chance to protect civilians through the provision of humanitarian assistance, diplomatic engagement, and the breaking of the telecommunications blackout.

Humanitarian

- Support the immediate scale-up of humanitarian assistance to North Darfur, with unfettered access via both cross-line and cross-border routes. Delivery through existing local networks should be supported.
- Conflict actors must cease attacks on civilians and aid workers and fulfill their obligations under IHL to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and facilitate aid access.
- Belligerents must also allow civilians safe passage if they choose to flee.

Telecommunications access to support human rights

- Restore telecom access across all of Sudan to enable the timely and accurate documentation of serious violations of human rights. Telecoms access should be restored through an independent technical assessment team, with security guarantees. This includes guarantees for safe transportation and delivery of fuel and equipment to sites. Towers must be protected from attacks and access must be restored equitably and without discrimination based on political or social factors.
- Accountability for these serious violations, including through renewing the mandate of the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan, expansion of the ICC's mandate to include all of Sudan

Diplomatic engagement

- The UN Security Council should enforce the UN arms embargo on Darfur by publicly condemning violators of the arms embargo and taking urgently needed measures to sanction individuals and entities that are violating the embargo.
- Provide protection assistance to Sudanese civil society, including emergency evacuation support, as the RSF is targeting humanitarians and human rights documenters.

Signed:

Advocacy Network for Africa (AdNA)

African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies

Al Fasher Emergency

Alliance for Peacebuilding

Avaaz

AWAFY Sudanese Organization

Education for Global Peace

Equality for Empowering and Developing Women Organization

Gadirat Kabkabiya Initiative

Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect

Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (I-GMAP), Binghamton University

Journal of Social Encounters

London For Sudan

Madaniya SDG

Mama Africa Organization for Humanitarian Services

Montréal Institute for Global Security

No Business with Genocide

PAEMA

Pax Christi USA

PEN International

Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights

Refugees International

Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society

Sennar Observatory Human Rights

Stop Genocide Now
Sudan Human Rights Hub
Sudan Peace Coalition
Sudan Rights Watch Network
Sudan Transnational Consortium
Sudan Unlimited
Sudan Updates
Sudanese Diaspora Network
Sudanese Youth Network SYN
Tamad Organisation for Peace and Development
The Steering Committee of the North Darfur Bar Association
The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
Woman Human Rights Defender Coalition in Darfur