

To Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (Geneva, Switzerland)

26 June 2026

Sudan: the Human Rights Council should urgently address the situation in and around El Obeid, North Kordofan, and take bold steps towards atrocity prevention and accountability

Your Excellencies,

In light of the situation in and around El Obeid, North Kordofan, which after 18 months of siege-like conditions appears at risk of an imminent ground offensive by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their allied forces, credible reports of risks of atrocity crimes, and risks of further violations throughout Sudan, the Human Rights Council should convene an urgent debate during its 62nd regular session or hold a special session at the earliest opportunity.

The Council should request the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) for the Sudan to conduct an urgent inquiry into the situation. To prevent further atrocities, advance accountability for all violations committed in Sudan, and end the impunity of perpetrators and those backing and enabling them, the Council should unequivocally condemn external actors supporting the warring parties, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Council should also ensure that the IFFM has adequate resources to identify all actors responsible for atrocity crimes with a view to ensuring that they are held to account, in line with its mandate, including as part of an effort to encourage the IFFM to report on external actors fuelling violations in Sudan.

On 18 June 2026, following a significant troop build-up by the RSF and their allied forces around El Obeid, accompanied by intensifying drone strikes and artillery shelling, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, issued a “stark warning” that “an imminent offensive risked fresh commission of serious international crimes [...]” Referring to atrocities committed in North Darfur in 2025, and “patterns of serious violations of international law,” he said: “We have seen this playbook before. We know where it led then, and cannot allow a repeat of the preventable atrocities we documented in El Fasher and Zamzam IDP camp [...]” Violations include summary executions, abductions, arbitrary detentions, widespread sexual violence against women and girls, and other violence against civilians, including ethnically motivated violence, as well as the use of starvation as a weapon of war.¹

In North and South Kordofan, civilians continue to be targeted, including through drone attacks and artillery shelling. The city of Dilling, South Kordofan faces a humanitarian catastrophe as a result of RSF/SPLM/N attacks on essential life-sustaining services.²

On 20 June 2026, the UN Security Council adopted a statement in which members expressed concern over the “imminent risk of mass atrocities” and demanded that the RSF immediately halt their assault on El

¹ Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “Sudan: Imminent offensive on El Obeid must be halted – Türk warns of catastrophic impact on civilians,” 18 June 2026, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/06/sudan-imminent-offensive-el-obeid-must-be-halted-turk-warns-catastrophic> (accessed on 24 June 2026). See also DefendDefenders et al., “Sudan: civil society calls for a UN Human Rights Council special session on El Fasher,” 3 November 2025, <https://defenddefenders.org/sudan-call-for-hrc-special-session-elfasher/>; DefendDefenders, “El Fasher atrocities under UN spotlight, but accountability gaps remain in Sudan,” 14 November 2025, <https://defenddefenders.org/el-fasher-atrocities-under-un-spotlight/> (accessed on 24 June 2026).

² See Sudanese Women Rights Action, “Urgent Action: End Systematic Targeting of Civilian in North and South Kordofan,” 24 June 2026, <https://suwra.org/blog/2026/06/24/urgent-action-end-systematic-targeting-of-civilian-in-north-and-south-kordofan/> (accessed on 24 June 2026).

Obeid. They called for “all abuses and violations to be investigated and for those responsible to be held accountable.”³

Both the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Security Council have urged external actors to stop interfering in Sudan, the former highlighting that “States with influence have the duty to exercise it now to stop this madness,” and the latter urging “all UN Member States to refrain from external interference that could fuel conflict and instability.” As Human Rights Watch has reported, “[t]hroughout the conflict, the RSF has received military support from the UAE,” which has directly backed the paramilitary group and facilitated the recruitment of hundreds of private military contractors on its behalf. Human Rights Watch highlighted that leaders from across the globe should “break their silence on the insidious role of the UAE in fueling this conflict.”⁴ Civil society organisations have repeatedly called on the international community to call out and condemn the role of the UAE in fuelling the Sudan conflict.

Other external actors backing the RSF or other warring parties in Sudan, including the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), should also be condemned and held to account for the violations they have either committed or enabled, some of which amount to crimes under international law.

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The Human Rights Council should not content itself with reacting to one atrocity crisis after another. Keeping in mind that the FFM has concluded that massacres committed by the RSF and their allied forces in El Fasher in 2025 bore the “hallmarks of genocide,” the Council should make full use of its prevention mandate and act to prevent the commission of crimes under international law, in and around El Obeid and throughout Sudan.

We urge all States Members and Observers of the Human Rights Council to:

- (a) Support the convening of an urgent debate or special session on the situation in and around El Obeid, North Kordofan;**
- (b) Request the FFM to conduct an urgent inquiry into the situation and present its report to the Council between its 63rd and 64th session, to be followed by an interactive dialogue;**
- (c) Request the FFM to update the Council on the progress made on its inquiry at the Council’s 63rd session, allocating adequate time to enable the FFM to do so, in addition to the presentation of the comprehensive report requested by resolution 60/3; and**
- (d) Take additional steps towards accountability in Sudan, among other things by explicitly condemning external actors supporting the warring parties, including the United Arab Emirates, and ensuring that the FFM has adequate resources to identify all actors responsible for violations with a view to ensuring that they are held to account, in line with its mandate, including as part of an effort to encourage the FFM to report on external actors fuelling violations in Sudan.**

The FFM should continue coordinating and sharing information, as appropriate, with other independent international and regional mechanisms, including the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights-mandated Joint Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to the Republic of Sudan and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Security Council should expand the jurisdiction of the ICC to cover investigations of international crimes committed across the entire territory of Sudan. Additionally, the General Assembly should submit all reports of the FFM to the Security Council for its consideration and appropriate action.

We thank you for your attention to these pressing issues and stand ready to provide your delegation with further information as required.

³ UN News, “Sudan: Security Council warns of mass atrocity risk in El Obeid,” 20 June 2026, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/06/1167773> (accessed on 24 June 2026).

⁴ Human Rights Watch, “Robust Global Action Is Key to Curbing Sudan Atrocities,” 22 June 2026, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/06/22/robust-global-action-is-key-to-curbing-sudan-atrocities> (accessed on 24 June 2026).

Sincerely,

1. African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)
2. AfricanDefenders (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network)
3. Amnesty International
4. Burkinabè Human Rights Defenders Coalition (CBDDH)
5. Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Benin (CDDH-Bénin)
6. Connection e.V.
7. CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)
8. Darfur Women Action Group
9. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
10. Federation of African Journalists (FAJ)
11. Geneva for Human Rights – Global Training & Policy Studies
12. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
13. Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD)
14. Governance Programming Overseas (GPO)
15. Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
16. Human Rights Watch
17. Institut des Médias pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (IM2DH) – Togo
18. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
19. International Practice of Human Rights (IPHR)
20. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
21. InterReligious Task Force on Central America
22. Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) – Sudan
23. MIR Italy (Italian branch of International Fellowship of Reconciliation)
24. Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples (MRAP)
25. Network of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in North Africa (CIDH AFRICA)
26. Nigerien Human Rights Defenders Network (RNDDH)
27. Preventing and Ending Mass Atrocities (PAEMA)
28. The Reckoning Project
29. REDRESS
30. The Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in South West Asia and North Africa (WHRDMENA)
31. Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO)
32. The Strategic Initiative for the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
33. Sudanese Women For Peace UK (SWP)
34. Sudanese Women Rights Action
35. Sudan and South Sudan Forum e.V.
36. Togolese Human Rights Defenders Coalition (CTDDH)
37. Women of Change Organization
38. Youth Citizen Observer Network (YCON Sudan)

(Initial list as of 26 June 2026. List of signatories to be updated on a rolling basis until 29 June 2026, C.O.B.)