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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
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**HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE THE COUNCIL'S ATTENTION**

**Written statement\* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples,  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 May 2009]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

### **Warrant against President al-Bashir and its aftermath**

On March 4, 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant against Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir on the grounds of two counts of war crimes – intentionally directing attacks on civilians and pillage – and five counts of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and torture. ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo had requested the warrant in July 2008. On April 27, 2007 the ICC had issued arrest warrants for Ahmed Haroun, the deputy Interior Minister of Sudan in 2003 and 2004, and the Janjaweed-Commander Ali Kushayb for 51 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur. For four years the Sudanese government has systematically refused to work with the ICC. For almost two years now it has been covering the present Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmed Haroun, and the militia leader Ali Kushayb. Two years have now passed since the issue of a warrant for their arrest. The Sudanese authorities gave Minister Haroun false documents to enable him to take part in a pilgrimage to Mecca. Both men are accused of crimes against humanity.

Regarding Ali Kushayb, a judge at Sudan's Supreme Court said, there is still ongoing investigation to determine whether he will be charged. The three cases are clear evidence that the Government of Sudan is not committed to end impunity in Darfur. After the issuing of the warrant against al-Bashir, the Sudanese government ousted 13 aid groups working in Darfur, accusing them of cooperation with the ICC. Since their eviction water shortages, cholera and polio outbreaks have affected the internally displaced persons (IDPs). The World Food Programme (WFP) has started distributing emergency food supplies for May in areas most affected by the Government's expulsion of 13 international NGOs.

### **Ongoing violence in Darfur**

At least 160 people die every month as a result of the ongoing violence in Darfur. In April 56 women were raped. Girls and women and girls living in displaced persons camps, towns, and rural areas remain extremely vulnerable to sexual violence in the context of continuing attacks on civilians, and during periods of relative calm. The perpetrators are men from the Sudanese military, Janjaweed militias and rebel groups. 136 people were detained by security forces in April. More than 300,000 people have been driven out since January 2008. The total number of displaced people in Sudan rose to 4.9 million. It is the country that has more displaced people than any other worldwide. In the Darfur region, over 2.7 million people are displaced. Around 400,000 people have lost their lives since the genocide began in 2003. The inadequately equipped peace-keeping forces of the United Nations and the African Union have been failing for 20 months to provide proper protection for the civilian population. The fighting continues: On 13 May UNAMID-peacekeepers said they saw Sudanese government aircraft bombing suspected rebel positions in the western Darfur region on Wednesday, days after negotiations between Khartoum and rebels groups resumed.

According to the Darfur Consortium, a coalition of more than 50 NGOs, during the course of the Darfur conflict “many hundreds of people have been abducted (...), but the true figure is likely to be in the thousands.” The abducted allegedly were forced into sexual slavery and forced labour. According to the Darfur Consortium, there were reports of abductions and forced labour from Zalinkai, around Coroly, Bundisi and Um Dukhun, Kubra, Dunbar, in the area extending from Wadi Toro to Abata, the area of Tuwal, in Kabkabiya, Saraf Umra and Alsiraif Banu Hussain in North Darfur.

## **Media oppression**

Sudanese authorities harassed those who criticize the government or those who speak out supporting the ICC arrest warrant against President al-Bashir. A daily newspaper, Ajas al-Hurriya, has been repeatedly censored about its coverage of the debate about the draft press law that promotes strict media registration rules and unclear reporting prohibitions. The National Press Council is dependent on the government. It has far-reaching powers of regulation and uses high fines and criminal sanctions for media outlets and reporters. Security services are dispatched at night to review newspapers before they are published and have the power to remove any articles and in some cases ban entire edition for days.

## **Crackdown on human rights defenders and humanitarian NGOs**

The crackdown on human rights defenders and humanitarian NGOs has intensified. On April 11, 2009, Sudan's National Intelligence State Security (NISS) arrested Mohamed Al Mahgoub at his house in Al Fashir. Six days later he was released without charge. He had been detained incommunicado, without access to his lawyers or family. In March Sudanese authorities had closed the Amel Centre – Al Fashir and Nyala branch and the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO). The two organisations operated in Darfur. The Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KCHRED) was closed as well. All three organisations provide support to victims of human rights violations, especially victims of torture and of the ongoing Darfur conflict.

## **Violence in Southern Sudan**

The situation in Southern Sudan remains highly volatile. Due to activities of the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and clashes between different ethnic groups up to 1,000 people were killed and more than 100,000 uprooted from their homes since January in seven states in Southern Sudan. The UN says 187,000 Southern Sudanese were displaced by tribal fighting last year. Currently 24 humanitarian organisations work in 7 of the 10 states of Southern Sudan. On 8 May two rival ethnic groups, the Lou Nuer and Jikany clashed in the village of Torkech, in Jikmir Payam, Nasir County. At least 66 people were killed, and reportedly 57 people wounded, the majority of them children with some in critical condition. At least 1,550 were forced from their homes.

## **Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the Human Rights Council to:**

- condemn the crimes against humanity committed by the Sudanese army and its allied Janjaweed militia, the abuses of the civilian population as well as the violations of the humanitarian ceasefire agreement,
- extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Sima Samar for a year
- call on the Sudanese government to end impunity for crimes committed in Darfur and to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court in The Hague,
- urge the Sudanese government to ensure free access and protection for aid agencies
- call on the international community to strengthen its political pressure on the Sudanese government in order to stop crimes against humanity in Darfur.

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