



# “DEATH CAME TO OUR HOME”

WAR CRIMES AND CIVILIAN SUFFERING IN SUDAN

AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



**Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and individual donations. We believe that acting in solidarity and compassion with people everywhere can change our societies for the better.**

© Amnesty International 2023

Except where otherwise noted, content in this document is licensed under a Creative Commons (attribution, non-commercial, no derivatives, international 4.0) license.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>

For more information please visit the permissions page on our website: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

Where material is attributed to a copyright owner other than Amnesty International this material is not subject to the Creative Commons license.

First published IN 2023

by Amnesty International Ltd

Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street

London WC1X 0DW, UK

Index: AFR 54/7037/2023

Original language: English

[amnesty.org](http://amnesty.org)



**Cover photo:** Smoke plumes billow from a fire at a lumber warehouse in southern Khartoum amidst ongoing fighting on June 7, 2023. Eight weeks of fighting have pitted Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan against his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo -- commonly known as Hemedti -- who commands the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). A number of broken ceasefires have offered brief lulls but no respite for residents of Khartoum, where witnesses again reported "the sound of heavy artillery fire" in the capital's northwest. © (Photo by AFP) (Photo by -/AFP via Getty Images)

**AMNESTY**  
INTERNATIONAL



# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. BACKGROUND</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 POLITICAL TRANSITION IN SUDAN	13
2.2 CYCLES OF VIOLENCE IN DARFUR	14
<b>3. DELIBERATE ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND CIVILIAN OBJECTS</b>	<b>16</b>
ATTACKS IN KHARTOUM	16
ATTACK ON A CHURCH AND CLERGY	17
3.1 RENEWED ETHNICALLY MOTIVATED ATTACKS IN WEST DARFUR	18
3.2 RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS	27
<b>4. NOWHERE SAFE – CIVILIANS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE</b>	<b>30</b>
KILLED AT HOME	30
CIVILIANS KILLED AND INJURED IN THE PLACES THEY SOUGHT SAFETY	34
DANGEROUS JOURNEYS	36
<b>5. FIGHTERS’ CO-LOCATION IN CIVILIAN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6. LOOTING AND DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIAN PROPERTY</b>	<b>44</b>
CIVILIAN HOMES AND PRIVATE PROPERTY	44
MEDICAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITIES	45
<b>7. LEGAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>8. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>51</b>
TO SAF AND RSF	51
TO ARMED GROUPS ALLIED WITH THE SAF AND RSF	51
TO THE SUDANESE AUTHORITIES, ESPECIALLY THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE	51

TO THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL	52
TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)	52
TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS	52
TO SUDAN'S NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, NOTABLY CHAD, EGYPT, ETHIOPIA AND SOUTH SUDAN	52
TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL	53
TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL	53
TO THE OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESIGNATED EXPERT	53
TO STATE PARTIES TO THE ICC	53
TO SUDAN'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE EU, KSA, UAE, UK, US AND OTHERS	53

# GLOSSARY

WORD	DESCRIPTION
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
CAT	Convention Against Torture
EU	European Union
FFC	Forces for Freedom and Change
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NPC	National Congress Party
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
TMC	Transitional Military Council
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNAMID	UN-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNITAMS	UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan

WORD	DESCRIPTION
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**“My wife and my children ran away from home when clashes broke out in our neighbourhood between the Rapid Support Forces and the army. My two youngest boys, six-year-old Hassan and eight-year-old Ibrahim, and my brother’s son Koko, aged seven, were small and could not run away fast enough. They were all killed, all three of them.”**

Kodi Abbas, a 55-year-old teacher, told Amnesty International.

The tragedy that befell Kodi Abba’s family on the afternoon of 20 April 2023 is not an isolated case. From the onset of conflict in Sudan on 15 April 2023, civilians have been killed and injured, including through deliberate and indiscriminate attacks, as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have battled each other in urban residential neighbourhoods of the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country – notably, in Darfur region in the west, as well as the North Kordofan region in the south. Some of the violations by the parties to the conflict amount to war crimes, which are crimes under international law.

As the SAF, led by Sudan’s Sovereign Council Head General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (commonly known as Hemedti), have been fighting for control of the capital and other areas, their forces and allied militias have killed and injured thousands of people. Considering the scale of the fighting and the organization of both sides, the situation qualifies as a non-international armed conflict under the Geneva Conventions. As such, the conflict is governed by international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, which seeks to protect civilians and other non-combatants in the context of armed conflict. In the context of the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan, Amnesty International considers both the SAF and the RSF to be state forces. Various non-state armed groups and militias have likewise been involved in the conflict and wider violence, at times allied to either the RSF or SAF.

This report is based on research carried out between 15 April and 26 July 2023. Most of the interviews were conducted between 23 and 29 June 2023 in refugee camps in eastern Chad where refugees from the West Darfur region have sought refuge. Other interviews were carried out remotely, via secure apps, with people inside and outside Sudan, and some interviews were carried out in person in Nairobi and London. On 21 June 2023, Amnesty International shared its initial findings with the SAF and the RSF leaders; they responded on 12 and 14 July, respectively. Details of their responses are reflected in relevant parts of the report.

Men, women, and children are caught in the crossfire, as both sides continue to engage in warfare that is already resulting in mass civilian casualties. This report also documents the placing of civilians at risk, and the use of inaccurate weapons and explosive weapons with wide area effects. Fighters, notably from the RSF, have frequently been situating themselves in, and launching attacks from, densely populated residential areas, including in and around private homes and public buildings. Both sides need to urgently take greater precautions to protect civilians.

In other incidents documented by Amnesty International, civilians were deliberately killed or injured in targeted attacks. In these incidents, survivors and other witnesses identified armed RSF members and allied militias as the perpetrators. For instance, several witnesses recounted how on the evening of 13 May, RSF members broke into the Mar Girgis (St Georges) Coptic church complex in the Bahri area of the capital and shot and injured five members of the clergy, stole large sums of money plus a golden cross, and threatened and insulted those present.

Both the SAF and the RSF have shown utter disregard for the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, which forbid the deliberate targeting of civilians; and prohibit attacks which fail to distinguish between civilians and combatants and between civilian and military objects.

Scores of women and girls (as young as 12) in and around the capital and in the Darfur, region have been abducted and subjected to sexual violence – including rape – by members of the warring sides. Amnesty International also received credible reports that some women were held for days in conditions of sexual slavery. A 25-year-old woman from the city of El Geneina in West Darfur disclosed her harrowing experience to Amnesty International, detailing how on the morning of 22 June, three armed Arab men in civilian clothes forced her into the civil records office building (Sijill al-Madani) in al-Jamarik neighbourhood, where they took turns raping her.

**“There is no safety anywhere in El Geneina. I left my home because there was shooting everywhere... and these criminals raped me. Now I am afraid I may be pregnant... I fear that, I cannot cope with that.”**

A 25-year-old woman, from the city of El Geneina in West Darfur.

In most of the cases of sexual violence documented by Amnesty International, the survivors identified RSF members or allied Arab militia as the perpetrators. Further, most of the recorded assaults occurred in areas controlled by the RSF. In a few other cases, the perpetrators were either alleged to be SAF members, or unknown persons.

According to residents, fighters, mostly RSF, engaged in widespread looting of homes, businesses, and public institutions, including hospitals, humanitarian organizations' warehouses, and banks, in the capital and in the Darfur region. Several interviewees recounted being forced out of their homes by persons they identified as RSF members, who subsequently looted and trashed their residences. In other cases, residents described unhindered looting, including by civilians, in areas controlled by the SAF and RSF.

This new escalation of violence in Sudan coincides with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Darfur conflict, which has over the years caused immense human suffering in the region. On 15 April 2023, soon after the eruption of violence in Khartoum, the conflict quickly spread to key towns and cities in Darfur, including El Fashir in North Darfur, Nyala in South Darfur, El Geneina in West Darfur, and Zalingei in Central Darfur. As the conflict continues in the Darfur region, the involvement of more militias and armed groups has been reported, some allied to the RSF. These groups, at times with support from the RSF, have targeted civilians in ethnically motivated attacks, bearing some of the hallmarks of the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Darfur since 2003.

Despite multiple ceasefire declarations since 15 April, fighting has continued and intensified.

According to the UN, as of 23 July 2023, more than 2.6 million people have been internally displaced and more than 750,000 crossed into neighbouring countries – with the majority having crossed to Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan. Those displaced include refugees from other countries, especially Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan, who had sought refuge in Sudan.

The first months of the conflict have been devastating for civilians across Sudan, and the situation continues to deteriorate, especially in Darfur. Sudan's regional partners, and the wider international community, must act swiftly and with determination to respond to the massive violations that have been committed and to prevent further atrocities. In particular, the UN Security Council should swiftly extend the arms embargo that currently applies to Darfur to the entirety of Sudan and ensure that it is enforced. The Council should also consider re-



formulating the mandate of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to enable it to respond effectively to the current situation – particularly by providing the staffing and resources needed to ensure regular human rights monitoring and reporting, including child protection and gender advisers aimed at improving protection and monitoring amid the conflict.

The UN Human Rights Council, for its part, should establish an independent investigative and accountability mechanism to monitor, collect and preserve evidence, and report on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have occurred, and continue to occur, in the context of the conflict. State Parties to the International Criminal Court should provide additional resources to investigate ongoing violations in the Darfur region.

Finally, countries should significantly increase their support for the humanitarian response, open their borders and offer safe pathways to ensure protection and support for people fleeing Sudan. States should also refrain from returning Sudanese nationals to Sudan or to any third country where they may be at risk of being returned to Sudan.

To date, the international response to the conflict in Sudan has failed to meet the scale and urgency of the situation. In Darfur, spiralling violence is raising the spectre of a repeat of the scorched earth campaign of past decades, and the escalation of violations in Khartoum and elsewhere in the country is putting a growing number of civilians at risk.

# 1. METHODOLOGY

This report focuses on how parties to the conflict in Sudan, which broke out on 15 April 2023, have committed serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, some of which amount to war crimes. The cases highlighted in this report represent a small percentage of the number of violations that have occurred during the conflict. However, Amnesty International has endeavoured to present cases that are emblematic of the types of violations currently happening in Sudan in the context of the conflict.

The report is based on research carried out between 15 April and 26 July 2023. Most of the interviews were conducted between 23 and 29 June 2023, in refugee camps in eastern Chad where refugees from the West Darfur region are sheltering. Other interviews were securely, and remotely, carried out with people inside and outside Sudan, and a few more conducted in person, in Nairobi and London. Most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic, some via interpretation, and others in English. Two Amnesty International researchers carried out the interviews, mostly separately interviewing individual interviewees one-on-one and at times together.

Amnesty International interviewed 181 people for this research. Interviewees included 59 survivors and other witnesses to human rights violations; 42 relatives of victims; 11 medical professionals who provided treatment or other assistance to some of the survivors; and 13 aid workers involved in the humanitarian response. Researchers also interviewed other experts who are responding to the ongoing crises.

With regards to the West Darfur region, Amnesty International has, been unable to investigate allegations of violations of international humanitarian law committed by armed non-Arab armed actors, notably Masalit armed groups. Amnesty International has received preliminary information that ethnic Masalit armed groups have attacked Arab communities. However, the organization has not been able to ascertain the magnitude of those attacks. The organization's researchers sought access to the West Darfur region but were only able to access the border area of Adi Kun where they met with a leader of a local RSF-allied Arab militia to understand the possibility of accessing other parts of West Darfur. Communities that may have faced abuses by Masalit armed groups have, overwhelmingly, not been displaced to eastern Chad, where Amnesty International researchers had access. To compound matters, telecommunication, in the areas of Darfur where these communities remain, has been limited or non-existent, limiting remote interviewing.

No incentive was offered to interviewees to speak with Amnesty International. Researchers informed interviewees about the research's nature and purpose and about how the information would be used. Informed oral consent was obtained from all the interviewees.

Amnesty International has included the names of certain individuals who were interviewed, based on their informed consent. Other people spoke anonymously due to security concerns, and their names and other identifying information have been withheld. In one case, pseudonyms were used to conceal the identity of two survivors and one deceased person.

In addition, Amnesty International researchers also reviewed digital evidence related to potential violations. Where possible, researchers used photos, videos, and satellite imagery to corroborate testimony details such as damage to buildings or the timeline of events. Volunteers from Amnesty International's Digital Verification Corps contributed to the discovery and verification of social media videos. In other cases, Amnesty International's Crisis Evidence Lab summarized trends in videos posted on social media and provided remote sensing analysis of

visible changes to specific towns and cities mentioned in this report. Amnesty International also engaged a forensic pathologist for an expert opinion on a video showing wounds to two deceased people.

On 21 June 2023, Amnesty International wrote to Sudan's Sovereign Council Head and the commander of the SAF, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, as well as to the Head of the RSF, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), sharing its findings and requesting information about the conduct of their forces in relation to specific allegations documented in this report.

A response was received from the SAF on 12 July, but it primarily stated its policy and commitment to respecting international humanitarian law. Details of their response are reflected in relevant sections of the report.

The RSF responded on 14 July providing responses to many of the questions Amnesty International raised about the conduct of its forces since the onset of the conflict. Details of their response are added to relevant sections of the report.

# 2. BACKGROUND

On 15 April 2023, in Sudan's capital Khartoum, intense armed clashes erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitaries. These clashes quickly spread to other parts of the country and renewed fighting in the Darfur region – in the west of the country, where an armed conflict has been ongoing since 2003. The fighting came after months of tensions between the two groups over security force reforms, proposed as part of the negotiations for a new transitional government among other issues.<sup>1</sup> The fighting initially started in the capital Khartoum but quickly spread to other parts of the country, including Darfur, North Kordofan and other states.<sup>2</sup>

The SAF is led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan – also the de facto leader of the country – and the RSF by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti). In October 2021, the two military leaders jointly overthrew Sudan's transitional government.<sup>3</sup>

Both the SAF and the RSF have a history of committing serious human rights violations in Sudan, particularly in Darfur.<sup>4</sup> The RSF traces its origins to 2013, when former president Omar al-Bashir founded the unit from Janjaweed militia – a notorious force that had since 2003 been documented to have committed various crimes under international law, among other serious human rights abuses in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan.<sup>5</sup> Even after the ouster of Omar al-Bashir in 2019 and the October 2021 coup,<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International continued to document sustained human rights violations, including the excessive use of force against protesters,<sup>7</sup> by Sudanese security forces, including the RSF and the SAF.

---

<sup>1</sup> International Crisis Group, "Stopping Sudan's Descent into Full-Blown Civil War", 20 April 2023, [crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/stopping-sudans-descent-full-blown-civil-war](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/stopping-sudans-descent-full-blown-civil-war); New Lines Magazine, "In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces", 17 April 2023, [newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/](https://www.newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/)

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Parties to the conflict must ensure protection of civilians as deaths mount", 17 April 2023, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/sudan-conflict/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/sudan-conflict/)

<sup>3</sup> New Lines Magazine, "In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces (previously cited).

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Fresh evidence of government-sponsored crimes in Darfur shows drawdown of peacekeepers premature and reckless", 11 June 2019, [amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/06/sudan-fresh-evidence-of-government-sponsored-crimes-in-darfur-shows-drawdown-of-peacekeepers-premature-and-reckless/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/06/sudan-fresh-evidence-of-government-sponsored-crimes-in-darfur-shows-drawdown-of-peacekeepers-premature-and-reckless/); Amnesty International, *Scorched Earth, Poisoned Air: Sudanese Government Forces Ravage Jebel Marra, Darfur* (Index no. AFR 54/4877/2016), 29 September 2016, [amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/4877/2016/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/4877/2016/en/)

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Fresh evidence of government-sponsored crimes in Darfur shows drawdown of peacekeepers premature and reckless" (previously cited); Amnesty International, *Scorched Earth, Poisoned Air: Sudanese Government Forces Ravage Jebel Marra, Darfur* (previously cited); See Foreign Policy, "The Man Who Terrorized Darfur Is Leading Sudan's Supposed Transition", 14 May 2019, [foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/14/man-who-terrorized-darfur-is-leading-sudans-supposed-transition-hemeti-rsf-janiawe-ed-bashir-khartoum/](https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/14/man-who-terrorized-darfur-is-leading-sudans-supposed-transition-hemeti-rsf-janiawe-ed-bashir-khartoum/)

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Release prime minister and all those arbitrarily arrested", 25 October 2021, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/10/sudan-release-prime-minister-and-all-those-arbitrarily-arrested/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/10/sudan-release-prime-minister-and-all-those-arbitrarily-arrested/)

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Investigate the killings of people after military crackdown against protesters", 24 November 2021, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/sudan-investigate-the-killings-of-people-after-military-crackdown-against-protesters/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/sudan-investigate-the-killings-of-people-after-military-crackdown-against-protesters/)

## 2.1 POLITICAL TRANSITION IN SUDAN

### DEPARTURE OF OMAR AL-BASHIR

In April 2019, following a popular uprising by the Sudanese people, army officials removed President Omar al-Bashir and his government from power.<sup>8</sup> The military then formed a Transitional Military Council (TMC) that ruled the country until August 2019. On 17 August 2019, following negotiations between the TMC and the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) – a coalition of Sudanese civil society and the political opposition that led the protests – a Constitutional Declaration was signed. The parties agreed to form a transitional government to lead the country for an initial period of 39 months (about 3 and a half years).<sup>9</sup> On 21 August 2019, the TMC was dissolved, and a new Sovereign Council was appointed. The Sovereign Council comprised 11 members (six civilians and five military officials). Al-Burhan, the leader of the SAF, became the leader of the Sovereign Council and Hemedti became his deputy. Abdalla Hamdok was appointed Prime Minister.<sup>10</sup>

### OCTOBER 2021 COUP

On 25 October 2021, led by al-Burhan and Hemedti, Sudan's military dissolved the Transitional Government and seized power. The army placed the country under military leadership and imposed a state of emergency. They also arrested and detained members of the civilian coalition, including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.<sup>11</sup> The military reinstated Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok in November 2021, but he resigned in January 2022,<sup>12</sup> which effectively left the military in full control of the government. Outraged by the military's action, Sudanese protesters went to the streets, demanding full transition to civilian rule. Security forces responded to the protests using lethal force against protesters<sup>13</sup> and committed grave human rights violations. According to the UN, between the October 2021 coup and August 2022, 117 people, including 20 children and one woman, had been killed by Sudanese security forces during demonstrations.<sup>14</sup> An estimated 7,700 protesters, including thousands of children, were seriously injured.<sup>15</sup>

### DECEMBER 2022 POLITICAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

While protesters continued to demand justice and an end to military rule, tensions surfaced between al-Burhan and Hemedti. Hemedti accused al-Burhan of bringing back al-Bashir's former National Congress Party (NCP) loyalists to run state bureaucracy, while al-Burhan viewed Hemedti and RSF as a threat to the SAF.<sup>16</sup>

On 5 December 2022, the two military leaders and a coalition of civilian groups signed a political framework agreement that would have created a new two-year civilian transitional authority.<sup>17</sup> The transitional authority would be led by a prime minister, elected by civilian leaders. The agreement started a political process to restore a transition to democracy in Sudan but was opposed by many Sudanese actors, including resistance committees and some civil society members, who viewed the military leaders to be unconcerned by their demands for justice, human rights, and the upholding of tenets of democracy.<sup>18</sup> While the agreement contained general principles for

---

<sup>8</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Military authorities must break with al-Bashir's assault on human rights", 11 April 2019, [amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/04/sudan-military-authorities-must-break-with-al-bashir-assault-on-human-rights/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/04/sudan-military-authorities-must-break-with-al-bashir-assault-on-human-rights/)

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, "They descended on us like rain": Justice for victims of protest crackdown in Sudan (Index no. AFR 54/1893/2020), 10 March 2020, [amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/1893/2020/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/1893/2020/en/)

<sup>10</sup> Amnesty International, "They descended on us like rain": Justice for victims of protest crackdown in Sudan (previously cited).

<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Release prime minister and all those arbitrarily arrested", 25 October 2021, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/10/sudan-release-prime-minister-and-all-those-arbitrarily-arrested/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/10/sudan-release-prime-minister-and-all-those-arbitrarily-arrested/)

<sup>12</sup> Deutsche Welle, "Sudan's prime minister resigns amid deadlock", 3 January 2023, [dw.com/en/sudan-abdalla-hamdok-resigns-as-prime-minister/a-60313528](https://www.dw.com/en/sudan-abdalla-hamdok-resigns-as-prime-minister/a-60313528)

<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Investigate the killings of people after military crackdown against protesters", 24 November 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/sudan-investigate-the-killings-of-people-after-military-crackdown-against-protesters/>

<sup>14</sup> UN News, "Sudan: Justice for protesters against coup, key to ending cycle of violence", 25 October 2022, [news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129862](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129862)

<sup>15</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan 2022", April 2023, [amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/); "Sudan: Justice for protesters against coup, key to ending cycle of violence" (previously cited).

<sup>16</sup> New Lines Magazine, "In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces", 17 April 2023, [newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/](https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/)

<sup>17</sup> Reuters, "Sudan generals and parties sign outline deal, protesters cry foul", 6 December 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudanese-civilian-parties-sign-framework-deal-new-political-transition-2022-12-05/>

<sup>18</sup> New Lines Magazine, "In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces", 17 April 2023, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/in-sudan-a-deadly-reckoning-for-rival-forces/>

the formation of the transitional institutions and commitments to promote rights and accountability, it lacked clear benchmarks and time frames for justice, truth, and reparation, as well as security sector reforms.<sup>19</sup>

The tension between the SAF and the RSF escalated in early 2023 as each feared losing power to the other in a restored transitional government. The central issue of disagreement was around the time frame in which the RSF would be integrated into the army.<sup>20</sup> In April 2023, this tension escalated to a non-international armed conflict across the country, between the SAF and RSF. This has also reignited other conflicts in Darfur that date back to 2003.

## 2.2 CYCLES OF VIOLENCE IN DARFUR

Since 2003, civilians in Darfur have been subjected to extreme violence.<sup>21</sup> Civilian populations, of specific ethnic groups, accused of supporting armed insurgent groups, have previously been targeted by the Sudanese government.<sup>22</sup> Amnesty International previously documented crimes under international law committed in Darfur.<sup>23</sup> These include large-scale violations and abuses, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In 2005, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC).<sup>24</sup> In 2009 and 2010, the ICC issued arrest warrants for President al-Bashir for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.<sup>25</sup> The ICC has also issued arrest warrants for three other government officials, and three leaders of armed groups.<sup>26</sup> In April 2022, the trial of Ali Kosheib (believed to be the principal leader of the Janjaweed militia) began at the ICC.<sup>27</sup> However, Sudan has not sufficiently cooperated with the ICC; in particular, it has yet to transfer former President al-Bashir and several other government officials to the ICC.<sup>28</sup>

Despite Sudan's Transitional Government and representatives of several armed groups signing the 'Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan' in 2020,<sup>29</sup> fighting and mass human rights violations continued to occur in Darfur. The failure of the Sudanese security forces to protect civilians, and the premature withdrawal of the UN-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2020, exposed civilians in West Darfur to more violence.<sup>30</sup> Arab militias, supported by RSF fighters, targeted members of the Masalit and other non-Arab tribes in West Darfur.<sup>31</sup> Attacks resulted in unlawful killings, sexual violence, looting, and the burning of villages.<sup>32</sup>

As violence has continued to ensue in Darfur over the years, informal Masalit self-defense groups as well as at least one Masalit armed group, known as the Sudanese Alliance, have emerged.<sup>33</sup> The Sudanese Alliance, which was formed in 2019, consists of men from the Masalit community<sup>34</sup> and was led by the Governor of West Darfur,

---

<sup>19</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan 2022" (previously cited).

<sup>20</sup> International Crisis Group, "Stopping Sudan's Descent into Full-Blown Civil War" (previously cited).

<sup>21</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: New conflict escalation exacerbates 20 years of suffering for civilians in Darfur", 24 April 2023, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/sudan-new-conflict-escalation-exacerbates-20-years-of-suffering-for-civilians-in-darfur/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/sudan-new-conflict-escalation-exacerbates-20-years-of-suffering-for-civilians-in-darfur/)

<sup>22</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: New conflict escalation exacerbates 20 years of suffering for civilians in Darfur", (previously cited)

<sup>23</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Fresh evidence of government-sponsored crimes in Darfur shows drawdown of peacekeepers premature and reckless", 11 June 2019, [amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/06/sudan-fresh-evidence-of-government-sponsored-crimes-in-darfur-shows-drawdown-of-peacekeepers-premature-and-reckless/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/06/sudan-fresh-evidence-of-government-sponsored-crimes-in-darfur-shows-drawdown-of-peacekeepers-premature-and-reckless/); Amnesty International, *Scorched Earth, Poisoned Air: Sudanese Government Forces Ravage Jebel Marra, Darfur* (Index no. AFR 54/4877/2016), 29 September 2016, [amnesty.org/en/documents/af/54/4877/2016/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/af/54/4877/2016/en/); Amnesty International, "Sudan: New conflict escalation exacerbates 20 years of suffering for civilians in Darfur" (previously cited).

<sup>24</sup> UN, "Security Council Refers Situation in Darfur, Sudan, to Prosecutor of International Criminal Court", 31 March 2005, [press.un.org/en/2005/sc8351.doc.htm](https://www.un.org/en/2005/sc8351.doc.htm)

<sup>25</sup> ICC, "Al Bashir Case: Trying individuals for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression", [icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir](https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir)

<sup>26</sup> ICC Darfur cases, available at [icc-cpi.int/darfur](https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur)

<sup>27</sup> UN News, "Darfur war crimes suspect appears before International Criminal Court", 5 April 2022, [news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115612](https://www.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115612)

<sup>28</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: New conflict escalation exacerbates 20 years of suffering for civilians in Darfur" (previously cited); see Amnesty International, "Sudan 2022" (previously cited).

<sup>29</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan, 2021*, [idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-juba-agreement-for-peace-in-sudan-en.pdf](https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/the-juba-agreement-for-peace-in-sudan-en.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Horrific attacks on displacement camps show UN peacekeepers still needed in Darfur", 1 March 2021, [amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2021/03/sudan-horrific-attacks-on-displacement-camps-show-in-darfur/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2021/03/sudan-horrific-attacks-on-displacement-camps-show-in-darfur/)

<sup>31</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Horrific attacks on displacement camps show UN peacekeepers still needed in Darfur" (previously cited) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2021/03/sudan-horrific-attacks-on-displacement-camps-show-in-darfur/>; See also, HRW, "Sudan: Darfur Town Destroyed", 11 July 2023, [hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed)

<sup>32</sup> Amnesty International, "Sudan: Horrific attacks on displacement camps show UN peacekeepers still needed in Darfur", (previously cited); Amnesty International, "Sudan: New conflict escalation exacerbates 20 years of suffering for civilians in Darfur" (previously cited).

<sup>33</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Sudan: Darfur Town Destroyed" (previously cited).

<sup>34</sup> Interviews in person with three Sudan experts, Nairobi, Kenya, June 2023.

Khamis Abakar – killed hours after having been taken into RSF custody on 14 June 2023.<sup>35</sup> The Sudanese Alliance is one of the signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Amnesty International, “Sudan: Civilians at grave risk amid escalating violence in West Darfur,” 19 June 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/sudan-civilians-at-grave-risk-amid-escalating-violence-in-west-darfur/>

<sup>36</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan* (previously cited).

# 3. DELIBERATE ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND CIVILIAN OBJECTS

Since April 2023, civilians have been repeatedly targeted in the context of the ongoing armed conflict. In the cases of deliberate attacks on civilians documented by Amnesty International, the RSF and allied militias have been the main perpetrators, in various parts of the country. Violence to life and person, including murder of civilians not directly participating in hostilities, is a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime,<sup>37</sup> as is “[I]ntentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities.”<sup>38</sup>

## ATTACKS IN KHARTOUM

Peter Kiano, a 60-year-old math and engineering teacher from South Sudan, who had lived and worked in Khartoum for many years, was shot dead on 19 May 2023 at about 1pm, outside a restaurant where he had just had breakfast in Souq (market) Abu Hamama, on the southern outskirts of Khartoum.<sup>39</sup> A witness to the killing told Amnesty International:

**“The area was quiet. Peter had breakfast and then tea at a small restaurant where there were also other customers. A small group of RSF soldiers came into the restaurant and ate. Someone must have warned the army that the RSF were present because shortly after, the army arrived in the area and shots were heard in the distance as they were clashing with another RSF group further away. The RSF told people in the restaurant to lie down and meanwhile a larger group of RSF came.**

---

<sup>37</sup> Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions prohibits “violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds” of civilians and persons *hors de combat*. [Under IHL, persons *hors de combat* include anyone who is in the power of an adverse party; anyone who is defenceless because of unconsciousness, shipwreck, wounds or sickness; or(c) anyone who clearly expresses an intention to surrender, provided they abstain from any hostile act and do not attempt to escape.] All four Geneva Conventions list “willful killing” of protected persons as a grave breach, and murder is also specified as a war crime under the Statute of the International Criminal Court with respect to both international and non-international armed conflicts. See ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rule 89. Violence to Life, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule89#title-2>; Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(c)(i).

<sup>38</sup> Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(i).

<sup>39</sup> Interviews by voice call with two witnesses, 22 and 23 May 2023.



**Peter tried to run away but he was a big man and he moved slowly. One RSF soldier told him to stop and then shot him three times, hitting him twice at the back of the head and once at the back of the neck. He collapsed and died instantly. Only those three shots were fired, which killed Peter.”<sup>40</sup>**

In another case, a journalist was shot and injured by RSF members in the afternoon of 1 May. He told Amnesty International that he was taking photos with his phone on the northern side of the Sharq al-Nil/Manshia bridge when he was stopped by some RSF members who accused him of spying on them:

**“I told them that I am just an ordinary citizen and am not spying on them. They took me down to where they were camped under the bridge, pushed me to the ground, and beat me with sticks; there were six of them around me. One of them shot me with a pistol. The bullet went into my back and lodged in my abdomen. After they checked my papers and verified that I am not a soldier and have no relation with the military, they let me go. I walked on my own to a relative of mine who lives nearby. I did not go to a hospital as the situation of hospitals is difficult. A doctor took out the bullet which was lodged in my abdomen and said that I am lucky because the bullet did not cause any internal damage.”<sup>41</sup>**

Another journalist from Khartoum witnessed the RSF shoot a boy who tried to run after refusing to surrender his phone. The journalist told Amnesty International:

**“During the first week of fighting, I witnessed the RSF shoot a young boy. Two young boys were walking on the street in the Hamad neighbourhood. RSF stopped them and asked them for their phones. One gave them the phone and the other refused and ran away. They shot him and injured him from the back. I know the boy who was shot. He goes to a Quranic school near my home. I assisted the injured boy and took him to a hospital [name redacted for security reasons] in Khartoum North. He is now recovering from the injuries.”<sup>42</sup>**

## **ATTACK ON A CHURCH AND CLERGY**

RSF members broke into the Mar Girgis (St Georges) Coptic church complex in the Bahri area of Khartoum in the late evening of 13 May. Two survivors of the attack told Amnesty International that the RSF members shot and injured five members of the clergy and stole large sums of money and a gold cross.<sup>43</sup> They threatened and insulted those present and demanded to know where the orphan girls were, seemingly with the intention to sexually assault them.<sup>44</sup> They also used threatening and insulting language when they addressed the congregation gathered in the church complex (the witnesses recalled hearing, “You Egyptian dogs, get out of here for good!”), which may imply political motivations for the attack.<sup>45</sup>

One of the survivors told Amnesty International:

**“There were some 12 to 15 shooters, in a pick-up vehicle like those used by the RSF and wearing a mix of RSF uniforms and civilian clothes and carrying Kalashnikov type rifles. Specifically, they stormed the church itself and the bishop’s and the clergy’s accommodations. They were shouting and insulting us – saying things like, ‘Egyptian dogs and sons of dogs’ – and asking for money and gold and wanted to know where the girls were who live in the orphanage in the compound. Thankfully, the girls managed to hide and are now in a safe place. One of the men spoke a language which was neither Arabic nor English.**

**They beat some of us with their rifle butts and shot and injured five others, four in the legs and one in the abdomen. They trashed the place, stole phones and a gold cross, and a considerable sum of money. We left the compound the following day and since then neighbours have informed us that RSF fighters have gone back to the compound several times and have continued to loot. On 23 May they also broke into the monk’s monastery in our**

---

<sup>40</sup> Interview by voice call with a witness to the killing, 22 May 2023. The second witness interviewed by Amnesty International provided a similar account of what happened. Interview by voice call, 23 May 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Interview by voice call with the journalist, 15 May 2023. Name withheld for security reasons.

<sup>42</sup> Interview by voice call with a journalist from Khartoum, 10 April 2023. Name withheld for security reasons.

<sup>43</sup> Interviews by voice call with two survivors, 23 May 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Interviews by voice call with two survivors, 23 May 2023.

<sup>45</sup> Interviews by voice call with two survivors, 23 May 2023.

compound and on 22 May they broke into the Mar Mina Coptic church. Similar attacks have also targeted other churches.”<sup>46</sup>

## 3.1 RENEWED ETHNICALLY MOTIVATED ATTACKS IN WEST DARFUR

Since 15 April, the West Darfur town of El Geneina and surrounding areas have been hit by waves of attacks and violence – pitting the RSF and allied Arab militia against the SAF-backed Sudanese Alliance armed group and Masalit armed fighters. This has resulted in the death and injury of hundreds of civilians – most being the Masalit; and the destruction and looting of homes and key civilian infrastructure and facilities such as El Geneina Teaching Hospital,<sup>47</sup> and the main markets in El Geneina and other towns, including Misterei and Tandelti.<sup>48</sup>

The specific cases below primarily focus on attacks that have been intentionally directed at civilians. Ethnically targeted violence is observed in the Darfur region, directed at ethnic Masalit men and older boys. The documented cases of violence also include direct attacks between warring factions, with civilians (women, men, and children of all ages) being often caught in the crossfire. The killing and injuring of civilians during clashes, in attacks that may constitute indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, is discussed in more detail below, in Chapter four.

### EL GENEINA

People who had fled El Geneina for eastern Chad told Amnesty International that the town had been attacked from different directions by heavily armed Arab militias, supported by RSF fighters. Some of these attacks took place in the context of armed clashes between the two sides.<sup>49</sup> Witnesses identified the attackers as Arab militias, with support from RSF fighters, based on their attire<sup>50</sup>, appearance, the dialect they spoke, as well as from past interactions with these groups. According to these residents, the Arab armed militias and the RSF targeted certain members of the Masalit community. Except for a case of three young men who were shot – one of them fatally – by Masalit fighters after being accused of siding with the Arab community, in all the El Geneina cases documented in this report, those killed and injured were from the Masalit community.

Some of the worst attacks in El Geneina took place over several days between 23 and 27 April, 12 and 15 May, and 14 and 16 June 2023.

The first wave of violence in El Geneina started with armed confrontation between the SAF and the RSF on 23 and 24 April. Ibrahim Adam Mohamed, aged 52, and his brother Mohamed, 45, were shot on 25 April, while sitting outside their home in the Bouhaira neighbourhood.

---

<sup>46</sup> Interview by voice call with a member of the clergy who was present during the attack, 23 May 2023. Amnesty International interviewed a second member of the clergy who was present during the attack, who gave a highly consistent description of what happened. Interview by voice call, 23 May 2023. Names withheld for security reasons.

<sup>47</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), “Sudan: MSF denounces looting of El Geneina Teaching Hospital”, 28 April 2023, [doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/sudan-msf-denounces-looting-el-geneina-teaching-hospital](https://doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/sudan-msf-denounces-looting-el-geneina-teaching-hospital)

<sup>48</sup> Interviews by voice call and in person with four human rights monitors, including two who fled El Geneina following the 15 May attacks and one who fled El Geneina on 28 April; interviews by voice call with two journalists monitoring the violence in West Darfur, May and June 2023; and interviews in person with more than 20 residents of El Geneina, Tandelti and Misterei carried out in refugee camps in eastern Chad, including Adre, Koufroun, Gaga and Farchana, 23-29 June 2023.

<sup>49</sup> Interviews in person with dozens of residents of El Geneina in refugee camps in eastern Chad, 23-29 June 2023, and interviews by voice call and in person with four human rights monitors, including two who fled El Geneina following the 15 May attacks and one who fled El Geneina on 28 April, and with two journalists monitoring the violence in West Darfur, May and June 2023.

<sup>50</sup> In particular, the witnesses described the attackers wearing kadmoul, a long piece of cloth worn by men around the head and face in a particular manner, at times partially hiding the face, as well as jellabiya, a long loose-fitting traditional garment. Witnesses also positively identified RSF through their uniforms.



← ⓘ Ibrahim Adam Mohamed, 52, was shot and injured in the abdomen by Arab militias while sitting outside his home in the Bouhaira neighbourhood in El Geneina, West Darfur on 25 April. ©Amnesty International, 23 June 2023.

Ibrahim told Amnesty International:

**“The Arab militias were all over the neighbourhood that day. A group of them wearing jellabiyas and kadmoul shot and injured both me and my brother. I was hit in the abdomen and was taken to a house in the Madaris neighbourhood, where a local doctor removed the bullet. I later managed to come to Adre on 19 June 2023. I do not know if my brother survived or not. The last time I saw him was when we were both shot.”<sup>51</sup>**

On 14 May, Dr. Adam Zakaria Is'haq, a 38-year-old medical doctor and human rights defender working with the Darfur Network for Human Rights, was killed together with 13 other people at the Markaz al-Inqadh al-Tibbi (Medical Rescue Centre) – a health clinic in the Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina. Two of the doctor's colleagues told Amnesty International that an armed Arab militia had entered the clinic where Dr. Adam was treating sick people and shot and killed him together with 13 patients.<sup>52</sup>



← ⓘ Dr. Adam Zakaria Is'haq, 38, a medical doctor and human rights defender, killed together with 13 other people at a Medical Rescue Centre in El Geneina, West Darfur on 14 May. ©Private

One of the colleagues, who had also spoken with one of Dr. Adam's relatives after he had identified the doctor's body that day, said:

**Dr. Adam was one of our human rights monitors... His work was to document human rights violations in West Darfur and particularly in El Geneina. He was treating sick people at a small clinic when he was killed because**


<sup>51</sup> Interview in person with Ibrahim Adam Mohamed, 23 June 2023, Adre, Eastern Chad.

<sup>52</sup> Interviews by voice call with two colleagues of Dr. Adam Zakaria Is'haq, 15 May 2023. Names withheld for security reasons.

**the main hospital in El Geneina was destroyed by the same armed militia and RSF in late April. He was shot in the chest. He left behind his wife and two young boys aged four and six.”<sup>53</sup>**

A 23-year-old recent graduate from a university in Khartoum told Amnesty International that he was shot, several times, by RSF members, while walking in the Jabal neighbourhood on the afternoon of 9 June 2023. He explained that at the time, he and other people were trying to escape to safety after fighting intensified between the two belligerent forces. An RSF member deliberately shot him at close range, injuring him in the right arm and in the abdomen.



←  A 23-year-old, recent graduate from a university in Khartoum, was shot several times on 9 June 2023 in El Geneina, West Darfur, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. ©Amnesty International, 25 June 2023.

**“One of the bullets hit me in the stomach and went through to my back, leaving me paralysed from the waist down. Several other people who were also running away near me were also deliberately shot by the RSF.”<sup>54</sup>**

On 14 June 2023, the Governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abakar, was killed. He had been taken into custody by RSF fighters earlier that day. Abakar was also the leader of the Sudanese Alliance armed group. A video verified by Amnesty International shows a group of RSF fighters, including the RSF West Darfur Area Commander, General Abdul Rahman Juma, forcing Khamis Abakar off a vehicle and into a building – later geolocated by Twitter users to a military compound in El Geneina,<sup>55</sup> and identified by sources interviewed by Amnesty International as the main RSF headquarters.<sup>56</sup> In the verified video, Khamis Abakar is walking into a building with the inscription “Commander’s Office” written in Arabic above the door. Based on the sun’s position, this video appears to have been filmed in the afternoon, between 2:00 and 4:00pm. A second video, filmed at night, which surfaced some hours later, shows Khamis Abakar brutally killed.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Interview by voice call with a colleague of Dr. Adam Zakaria Is’haq, 15 May 2023. Name withheld for security reasons.

<sup>54</sup> Interview in person, 25 June 2023, Adre, eastern Chad.

<sup>55</sup> See Twitter video, 15 June 2023, [twitter.com/Toowavy7/status/1669380350437359617?s=20](https://twitter.com/Toowavy7/status/1669380350437359617?s=20)

<sup>56</sup> Sources interviewed by Amnesty International identified the building as the main RSF headquarters.

<sup>57</sup> See footnote 55.



Above: A video posted to social media shows General Abdul Rahman Juma (left) escorting Governor Khamis Abakar (right) into a building marked “Commander’s Office” at the RSF headquarters in El Geneina<sup>58</sup>.

Amnesty International received an additional video from a confidential source, showing the lifeless bodies of the governor and one of his bodyguards. The video, filmed at night, shows the two bloodied bodies lying on the ground, face up. The placement of both men’s bodies suggests that they were moved prior to filming. As the camera pans between the two bodies another person illuminates their bodies more clearly with a light. Governor Khamis has an entry wound from a bullet to the left side of the head.<sup>59</sup> A forensic pathologist consulted by Amnesty International assessed the cause of death to be certainly one or more gunshots to the head, although there may be other wounds to the torso.<sup>60</sup>

In a video posted on social media on 19 June, General Abdul Rahman Juma stated that he tried to protect the governor after the initial arrest, explaining that a large armed mob, not under his command, subdued him – killing two of his guards in the process, and took the governor. He asserted that he did not see the governor again until he was found dead.<sup>61</sup>

However, a man who worked with Khamis Abakar told Amnesty International that he witnessed the governor being taken into RSF custody and provided a description that indicated his continued detention until his death:

**“The governor was called to the headquarters of the Central Reserve Police, CRP [a heavily armed division of the Sudanese police force], for a meeting.<sup>62</sup> I was among those who accompanied him. I waited outside. Shortly after his arrival at the CRP headquarters, the RSF took him and one of his bodyguards, Abdul Aziz Mohamed Abu Bakr, away to the RSF headquarters. I followed them, but when I reached the market, the road was blocked and I could not go any further, so I went to the top of a nearby building from where I could observe the RSF compound.**

**At about 6pm, I heard gunfire and celebration from the RSF compound, and I understood that they had killed the governor. Later, we sent an RSF member who cooperated with us to the RSF compound to check what had happened to the governor, and he shared a video he had filmed inside the compound showing the bodies of the governor and his bodyguard Abdul Aziz Abu Bakr.”<sup>63</sup>**

<sup>58</sup> See Twitter video, 14 June 2023, [twitter.com/waleedtherapy/status/1669028166365585410](https://twitter.com/waleedtherapy/status/1669028166365585410)

<sup>59</sup> Video on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>60</sup> Forensic pathologist report, on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>61</sup> Rapid Support Forces, Facebook post, 19 June 2023, [facebook.com/www.rsf.gov.sd/videos/1209295466455579/?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://facebook.com/www.rsf.gov.sd/videos/1209295466455579/?_rdc=1&_rdr)

<sup>62</sup> For more on the CRP, see for example, Redress, *SUDAN: CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE*, March 2022, [redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Briefing-Central-Reserve-Police.pdf](https://redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Briefing-Central-Reserve-Police.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Interview in person with a staff member of the governor, 27 June 2023, Adre, Eastern Chad. Amnesty International reviewed the video of the bodies, both of which had been brutally battered.

The RSF did not respond to questions from Amnesty International relating to the circumstances of the killing of Governor Khamis Abakar.<sup>64</sup>

The killing of the governor prompted an exodus of many members of the Masalit community to eastern Chad.<sup>65</sup> Videos posted to Twitter show crowds of hundreds of people travelling on foot along the roads out of El Geneina, in the days following the Governor's death.<sup>66</sup> Amnesty International spoke to dozens of those who fled who said that they were attacked by Arab militias, and many were robbed of their possessions as they fled. They also reported that dozens of civilians, many more, were killed and injured.<sup>67</sup> A video posted to Twitter shows people having their possessions searched by Arab militia members.<sup>68</sup> Some of those fleeing were escorted by armed Masalit men and gave an account of clashes that took place between them and the Arab militias. Survivors and other witnesses told Amnesty International that some Masalit men were deliberately targeted by the Arab militias and many others were killed or injured by stray bullets.<sup>69</sup>

An 11-year-old girl, Nada Mohamed Abdallah, was shot dead and four of her relatives – two women, a 17-year-old boy and a man – were injured when their vehicle was shot at near the border village of Adi Kun on 15 June 2023. Four other women travelling in the same vehicle were also killed. Nada's cousin, Mohamed, aged 17, told Amnesty International:



← © Mohamed, 17, shot on the right ankle on 15 June. ©Amnesty International, 29 June 2023.

**“We were 20 people in our vehicle, 12 from my family and eight others. We were travelling with other vehicles in a convoy escorted by armed Masalit men. Our vehicle overturned near Adi Kun, and we were left behind. When we got back on the road, Arab militiamen on motorbikes and wearing plain clothes fired at our vehicle from the right side. My cousin Nada and four other women were all killed. My cousin, Osman, 40, who was driving, was shot in the neck and his sister Ilham, 20, and cousin Zeinab, 27, were both shot in their rights arms, and I was hit in the right ankle. The bullet went through my ankle from the right to the left side. We**

<sup>64</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>65</sup> UN News, “Sudan: OHCHR calls for ‘urgent action’ to end militia attacks on people fleeing El Geneina,” 24 June 2023, [news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138072](https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/06/1138072) (“The civilian exodus from the city intensified following the killing of the state governor on 14 June just hours after he accused the RSF and militias of ‘genocide’...”).

<sup>66</sup> See example of video available at: [https://twitter.com/Thms\\_Pointer/status/1669444729015005191?s=20](https://twitter.com/Thms_Pointer/status/1669444729015005191?s=20)

<sup>67</sup> Interviews in person, 23-29 June 2023, four locations in eastern Chad.

<sup>68</sup> Twitter post, 18 June 2023, [twitter.com/AdamSiddiq7/status/1670383311741411329?s=20](https://twitter.com/AdamSiddiq7/status/1670383311741411329?s=20). Based on the terrain, language, and clothing visible, this video appears to show people leaving West Darfur around the same time other videos were posted in the areas outside El Geneina, however, the precise location of this video is unclear.

<sup>69</sup> Interviews in person in four locations in eastern Chad, 23-29 June 2023.

**escaped on foot across the border to Adre, leaving the bodies of my cousin Nada and the four women in the vehicle.”<sup>70</sup>**

Aladdin Mohamed Abboud, 23, who was shot in the left knee on the afternoon of 27 April near his home in the al-Madaris neighbourhood of El Geneina, told Amnesty International that Arab militias forced a man and a 15-year-old boy, with whom he was fleeing to Chad on 15 June, to lie on the ground and then shot them dead near Shukri village, around 10km (about 6.21 mi) west of El Geneina:

**“Babo Mohamed Zakariya and Abdo Karameddin Adam, aged 15 and 27, respectively, were among those who were killed. There were also others, but I do not know their names. The three of us came together, with other people from the city. When we were stopped by Arab militias, many people scattered and ran away and hid, and some could not escape and were made to lie down. This is what happened with Babo and Adam. I was a little bit away from them and managed to hide.”<sup>71</sup>**

Amnesty International also received allegations that members of Masalit armed groups have deliberately targeted civilian members of the Arab community or individuals whom they suspected of siding with the Arab community. In one case, relatives of a 27-year-old man whose mother is Arab and whose father is from a non-Masalit African tribe told Amnesty International that he had been repeatedly pressured by members of a Masalit armed group to cooperate with them and provide information on the activities of Arabs living in his neighbourhood and that, when he refused to do so, he was repeatedly threatened.<sup>72</sup> On 27 May, members of a Masalit armed group went to look for him at his home and eventually found him at the place where he was staying. He died several hours later, after having told his family that members of the armed group shot him, according to those interviewed by Amnesty International.<sup>73</sup>

Two other young men from non-Masalit communities who were with him were also shot and injured in the same incident. Relatives of one of them told Amnesty International that they too had been pressured by Masalit armed men into providing information about the whereabouts and activities of Arab residents of the neighbourhood.<sup>74</sup> One of those who was present told Amnesty International:

**“When a neighbour warned us that the Masalit fighters were coming to attack us we tried to escape but it was too late. They caught up with us as we were in the courtyard, by the gate. We scattered. They fired more than 100 bullets. [‘Abdi’] was the most seriously injured. [‘Adam’] and [‘Ali’] were near him and were lucky to survive. The rest of us were further behind and managed to scatter and avoided being hit. I thought we were all going to die.”<sup>75</sup>**

Responding to Amnesty International’s questions as to what RSF has done to prevent its forces and those affiliated with them from carrying out ethnically motivated attacks in West Darfur, the RSF stated:

“Before the outbreak of the war, the RSF has been actively involved in reconciliation efforts among tribes in Sudan, particularly in Darfur... The RSF Commander General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo... was himself in El Geneina last year for two months for this same reason – to mediate between the Arab and Masalit tribes.”<sup>76</sup>

The RSF added: “At the start of the war, the RSF and the SAF each controlled part of El Geneina. Both forces maintained their respective positions within the city and were not engaged in fighting. However, the SAF Military Intelligence began opening arms warehouses very early on and handing out weapons to the Masalit tribes to fight the ethnic Arabs. Hence, from the very first days of this war, a tribal conflict has ensued in the city. Because of the war, the RSF and local communities were not able to mediate between the sides.”<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Interview in person with Mohammed, 29 June 2023, refugee camp in eastern Chad. His sister Ilham was also interviewed at the same time and provided additional details about the incident.

<sup>71</sup> Interview in person, 24 June 2023, refugee camp in Adre, eastern Chad. Aladdin also said that when he was shot in the knee on 27 April, there were clashes in the area and that three other men from the neighbourhood were killed.

<sup>72</sup> Interviews in person with relatives of the man, 26 and 27 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>73</sup> Interviews in person with relatives of the man, 26 and 27 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>74</sup> Interview by voice call with relative of victim and survivor of the attack, 26 July 2023.

<sup>75</sup> Interview by voice call with relative of victim and survivor of the attack, 26 July 2023. The names in the testimony have been changed to pseudonyms, to protect the individuals’ identity and security.

<sup>76</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>77</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

Amnesty International was not able to independently verify the RSF's allegations that the SAF had handed out weapons to the Masalit tribes.

## TANDELTI

Tandelti, a small town north-west of El Geneina, close to the Chadian border, has also seen repeated episodes of inter-ethnic violence which have claimed the lives of civilians, some of whom were caught in the crossfire while others were deliberately targeted.<sup>78</sup> Several residents told Amnesty International that the recent escalation of violence followed an incident on 24 March 2023, in which two Arab men were lynched to death by non-Arab residents who accused them of killing a prominent businessman the previous day.<sup>79</sup>

The conflict between the SAF and RSF on 15 April in Khartoum exacerbated existing tensions in the Darfur region. In the early morning of 17 May, two men, one Arab and one Tama, were attacked and injured by armed men.<sup>80</sup> Following this incident, Arab armed men attacked the Masalit armed groups and clashes ensued. Seven Masalit civilians, including a woman, were killed, some of them in deliberate attacks, while others were killed by stray bullets.<sup>81</sup>

Witnesses told Amnesty International that Abderrahman Ibrahim Ahmed, a 45-year-old farmer, and Ali Is'haq Ali Bashir, a 27-year-old farmer, were deliberately shot and killed while trying to cross the river to Chad on 17 May.<sup>82</sup> Five other civilians, including Mariam Mohamed Ahmad, in her early 40s, and her cousin Hassan Ibrahim, 27, were killed in the same incident.<sup>83</sup> Amnesty International was not able to establish whether the five civilians were deliberately targeted or were killed by stray bullets. At least one of them was in the company of an armed Masalit man who was also killed, according to several witnesses.

A similar incident occurred on 14 June 2023, when at least eight people were killed, and 15 others were injured. Among those killed was Yassin Ibrahim Omar, a 27-year-old baker. His father told Amnesty International that Yassin was shot dead near the Chadian border as he was returning to the refugee camp in Koufroun: "I asked Yassin to go back home to El Geneina to retrieve a container that he could use to prepare the dough. Our bakery back home in El Geneina was burned down and we wanted to restart the bakery here in the refugee camp but had no equipment. Instead, I got back my son's body. He was shot in the head and right flank and died."<sup>84</sup> The father said he learned about how Yassin was killed by those who were returning to Chad with him.

A 43-year-old shopkeeper told Amnesty International that he and his 27-year-old brother Abdelkarim were deliberately shot at by Arab militias in the Tandelti market while trying to collect materials from their shop. Abdelkarim was shot in the head and died on the spot, while Daoud was shot in the right thigh.<sup>85</sup> Amnesty International was not able to establish the identity of others killed or injured that day, or the exact circumstances of the events.

---

<sup>78</sup> Interviews in person with residents of Tandelti, 23 and 26 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>79</sup> Interviews in person with residents of Tandelti, 23 and 26 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>80</sup> The Tama people are a non-Arab tribe that live in the Darfur region of Sudan and across the border in eastern Chad.

<sup>81</sup> Interviews in person with residents of Tandelti, 23 and 26 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>82</sup> Interviews in person with two relatives of the two men killed, 26 June 2023, Koufroun refugee camp, eastern Chad.

<sup>83</sup> Interview in person, 26 June 2023, Koufroun refugee camp, eastern Chad.

<sup>84</sup> Interview in person, 26 June 2023, Koufroun refugee camp, eastern Chad.

<sup>85</sup> Interview in person, 25 June 2023, Adre, eastern Chad.





← © A 43-year-old shopkeeper, shot and injured by Arab militias in the Tandelti market 14 June 2023. His brother who was with him was killed. ©Amnesty International, 25 June 2023.

## MISTEREI

On 28 May 2023, dozens of civilians were killed in Misterei [a town south-west of El Geneina close to the Chadian border] when armed clashes broke out in the early hours of the morning between RSF and allied Arab militias on one side, and Masalit armed groups on the other. Three residents of the town told Amnesty International that they buried 58 bodies, including three women, killed on that day. They and other residents said that some of those killed and injured were deliberately targeted while others were caught in the crossfire.<sup>86</sup>

In one single family, five brothers, including a 13-year-old boy, were shot dead in their home. A 27-year-old mother of two, told Amnesty International:

**“Six RSF members broke into our home at 8am and went into the room where my husband and his four brothers were and shot them all dead. They shot my husband, Al-Haj Mohamed Abu Bakr, in the abdomen... and [he] died instantly. His four brothers, who were students and were living with us, were all killed with him. The RSF then came to the room where I was staying with my children and 12 other women and children and asked if there were men with us. They beat us with sticks and whips and asked, ‘Where are the guns?’ and then stole our phones.”<sup>87</sup>**

Another resident of the town told Amnesty International that RSF members shot dead five men in front of her, in the boys’ school in the al-Salam neighbourhood, where she and many other residents had taken shelter from the heavy clashes which were ongoing in the town, between the warring sides:

**“We left home because there was heavy shooting all around and bullets were coming from everywhere. We went to the nearby boy’s school. I was with my husband and our two young daughters. Members of the RSF in uniform came into the school and killed two injured men and three other men who were assisting them. They shot them all dead.**

<sup>86</sup> Amnesty International interviewed several residents of Misterei who were either themselves injured or whose relatives had been killed or injured on 28 May 2023. Interviews were conducted in person in three refugee camps in eastern Chad, 23-29 June 2023. Also see, Human Rights Watch, *Sudan: Darfur Town Destroyed. ‘ICC Should Investigate Killings, Looting by Rapid Support Forces, Arab Militias’*, 11 July 2023, [hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed)

<sup>87</sup> Interview in person, 28 June 2023, Farchana refugee camp, eastern Chad.

**Heavy shooting continued all around. I left the school, and I was injured in the abdomen by a stray bullet. I was nine months pregnant at the time and my baby was killed.”<sup>88</sup>**

A 19-year-old student, who also lived in the town, told Amnesty International that RSF members killed his 32-year uncle. They broke into Isma'il al-Tahir Yaqub house in the early morning of 28 May and shot him dead. He had bullet wounds in his right arm.<sup>89</sup>

Many other residents, including women and children, were killed, or injured in the crossfire of the fighting between the two sides.<sup>90</sup>

Despite evidence indicating the coordination between RSF and Arab militias in West Darfur, including that presented in this report,<sup>91</sup> the RSF in its response to Amnesty International said they are not allied to any militia in West Darfur.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Interview in person, 23 June, Adre, eastern Chad.

<sup>89</sup> Interview in person, 29 June 2023, Gaga refugee camp, eastern Chad.

<sup>90</sup> See chapter on civilians caught in crossfire.

<sup>91</sup> See also, Human Rights Watch, “Sudan: Darfur Town Destroyed,” 11 July 2023, [hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed); and, OHCHR, “Sudan: At least 87 buried in mass grave in Darfur as Rapid Support Forces deny victims decent burials”, 13 July 2023, [ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/07/sudan-least-87-buried-mass-grave-darfur-rapid-support-forces-deny-victims](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/07/sudan-least-87-buried-mass-grave-darfur-rapid-support-forces-deny-victims)

<sup>92</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

## 3.2 RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Reports of abduction, as well as rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls, emerged during the first few days of the conflict and have continued as the conflict has spread, with cases reported in the Darfur region and in and around the capital, Khartoum. Rape, sexual slavery, and other forms of sexual violence committed in the context of armed conflict are serious violations of international humanitarian law and are war crimes under international law.<sup>93</sup>

A 25-year-old woman told Amnesty International that, on the morning of 22 June, three armed Arab men in civilian clothes assaulted her and forced her into the Civil Records building in al-Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina, where they took turns raping her. She said:

**“There is no safety anywhere in El Geneina. I left my home because there was shooting everywhere but had to go back home to get a blanket for my daughters, and these criminals raped me. Now I am terrified that I could be pregnant. [...] Now I fear that, I cannot cope with that.”<sup>94</sup>**

The father of two girls, aged 16 and 17, told Amnesty International that two RSF members stormed into his home in Omdurman, forced him out at gunpoint and raped his daughters at around 6pm on 19 April 2023:

**“Two men wearing RSF uniforms, with their faces partially covered by scarves and carrying Kalashnikov-type rifles with telescopes, came to my home. There was just me and my daughters... The two men pointed their rifles at me and threatened to shoot me and my daughters if I did not go outside. Outside there was another RSF member in a four-wheel-drive vehicle waiting for them.**

**The two men stayed in my home for two hours and 20 minutes – from 6pm to 8.20pm. When they left, my daughters were in bad condition. There was no functioning hospital near us, and it was too dangerous to try to go around the city. There was fighting everywhere. So, the girls could not receive any medical care. We left the city and went to stay with a relative in a safer area outside Khartoum, where the RSF are not in control.”<sup>95</sup>**

Amnesty International has spoken to medical professionals who have provided medical care and psycho-social support to more than 30 women and girls who have been raped since 15 April 2023.<sup>96</sup> In most cases, the survivors allege that those who abducted and assaulted them were members of the RSF or its allied militias.<sup>97</sup>

Survivors include girls as young as 12.<sup>98</sup> A medical professional told Amnesty International that she had been contacted by the family of a 12-year-old girl who was raped by two men in RSF uniform carrying weapons in the Sharq al-Nil area of Khartoum – which has been under RSF control since early in the conflict.<sup>99</sup> According to the medical professional, the girl had gone to buy provisions from a grocery store only meters from her home and was assaulted there by the two men, who took her and threatened to shoot the shop-owner. In another case, the

---

<sup>93</sup> Rome Statue, Article 8(e)(vi). For more analysis, see the legal chapter below.

<sup>94</sup> Interview in person, 26 June 2023, refugee camp in eastern Chad. The woman had received medical assistance and was awaiting the results of pregnancy tests at the time of the interview. Amnesty International also interviewed the medical practitioner assisting her. Interview in person, 26 June 2023, eastern Chad. Chadian law allows for abortion in case of rape. See WHO, Global Abortion Policies Database, Country Profile: Chad, [abortion-policies.srhr.org/country/chad/](https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/country/chad/)

<sup>95</sup> Interview by voice call, 8 June 2023.

<sup>96</sup> Amnesty International is not making public details of incidents that could lead to the identification of the survivors to respect their privacy and safety. Many of the survivors continue to live in areas controlled by the forces whose fighters assaulted them.

<sup>97</sup> Information received from medical and other professionals who have interacted with the women and girl survivors of rape, and from relatives of the survivors, as detailed in each individual case. According to information made available to Amnesty International by the Sudanese Government Combating Violence Against Women Unit on 3 July 2023, the Unit had documented a total of 88 cases of sexual violence – 42 in Khartoum, 25 in Nyala and 21 in El Geneina. In all the cases in Nyala and El Geneina and most of the cases in Khartoum the perpetrators were reportedly members of the RSF. As of 21 July 2023, the Combating Violence Against Women Unit had recorded 56 cases in Khartoum, 31 cases in Nyala and South Darfur, and 21 cases in El Geneina; see: [facebook.com/cvawSudan](https://facebook.com/cvawSudan)

<sup>98</sup> Medical and other professionals and activists have told Amnesty International that they have assisted survivors as young as 12, both in the Khartoum area and in the Darfur region. Interviews in person with three professionals and activists in Chad, 17-26 June 2023, and by voice call with nine professionals and activists, 3 May to 3 July 2023.

<sup>99</sup> Interview by voice call, 4 and 6 June 2023.

medical professional assisted a family in which a woman and her four daughters, two of them girls under the age of 18, had been raped in their home, by RSF members, in an area of Khartoum under RSF control.<sup>100</sup>

Most of the survivors are Sudanese, and some are nationals of other countries.<sup>101</sup> They were abducted and subjected to sexual violence in their homes or when they went out to look for food or other necessities. In one case, a group of 24 women and girls were abducted by RSF members near a location where many people displaced by conflict in previous decades live and were taken to a hotel where they were held in conditions amounting to sexual slavery for several days during which they were raped by several RSF members.<sup>102</sup>

Amnesty International interviewed 13 medical professionals and activists who helped survivors. However, in many cases the survivors have not had access to the necessary medical and psycho-social support because at present there are limited, if any, protection, rehabilitation, and livelihood services available to survivors of sexual violence. Many health facilities have been damaged and looted in the conflict, and medical personnel have fled. Time-sensitive post-rape care has been limited or non-existent because survivors have been unable or too afraid to report the assault and seek medical care, as communication networks are weak or cut off in some areas and movement is severely restricted by the conflict.<sup>103</sup>

Treatment and support for survivors of sexual violence is thus difficult to obtain as many are unable to access any kind of service – whether health care or legal services – because of the conflict and for fear of stigmatization and reprisals. The conflict has also dismantled other support and response systems that were previously available, such as health facilities, protective services, and local police.<sup>104</sup> Lawyers told Amnesty International that at present police stations are not functioning in the conflict-affected areas and there is nowhere to file complaints for the purpose of pressing charges.<sup>105</sup>

The head of the Ministry of Social Welfare's Unit for combating violence against women and children, Dr Suleima Is'haq, told Amnesty International that the Unit records cases that it receives directly from survivors and from civil society organizations and activists, and it tries to connect the survivors with medical and legal professionals, but that often only remote connection is possible because medical professionals are not available in the area where the survivors are, and because the survivors are unable to venture out for fear of further attacks.<sup>106</sup> Because of the numerous challenges mentioned above, it is likely that the number of women and girls who have been subjected to sexual violence is considerably higher than those recorded by the Unit for combating violence against women and children, and by activist networks.<sup>107</sup>

Responding to Amnesty International's questions on allegations of sexual violence, the RSF said "it is committed to safeguarding individuals from all forms of crime, including sexual assaults... condemns all unethical actions and rejects these accusations against our forces."<sup>108</sup>

Regarding the measures that the RSF has taken to investigate such allegations and ensure accountability for those responsible, the RSF stated: "To ensure accountability and address violations, the RSF has formed investigation committees to probe allegations of sexual violence and other violations. It established a committee specialized in resolving impunity and negative phenomena, with a field court to try individuals involved in crimes against citizens. The RSF has also initiated cooperation with citizens and formed focal points in residential neighborhoods to prevent crimes and ensure the security of civilians."<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Interview by voice call, 4 and 6 June 2023.

<sup>101</sup> Medical and legal professionals told Amnesty International they had aided three women from Ethiopia and Eritrea who had been raped by RSF members in mid-May 2023 in Khartoum. Interviews by voice call, 18-20 May 2023. An Ethiopian human rights activist told Amnesty International they had been contacted by some of their female co-nationals who had been sexually assaulted by armed men believed to be RSF members in Khartoum and on the way as they fled to the Ethiopian border. Interview by voice call, 3 June 2023.

<sup>102</sup> Interviews by voice call with two medical professionals who assisted the survivors, 20, 21 and 23 May 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Details received from medical professional, on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>104</sup> Article 135 of Sudan's Criminal Act 1991 allows abortion within 90 days if the pregnancy is the result of rape. The Criminal Act 1991, available at [www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/80450/118284/F-1325877900/SDN80450%20Eng.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/80450/118284/F-1325877900/SDN80450%20Eng.pdf). However, getting access to medical facilities and professionals has been very difficult and often impossible for rape survivors because many health facilities are not functioning or only functioning partially, and many medical professionals have left the areas where the survivors are or have left the country altogether.

<sup>105</sup> Interview by voice call, 20 May 2023.

<sup>106</sup> Interviews by voice call, 16, 19, 20 May and 4, 5, 6, 12 and 26 June 2023.

<sup>107</sup> Updated figures as of 21 July were: As of 21 July 2023, the Combating Violence Against Women Unit had recorded 56 cases in Khartoum, 31 cases in Nyala and South Darfur, and 21 cases in El Geneina; see [facebook.com/cvawSudan](https://www.facebook.com/cvawSudan)

<sup>108</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>109</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

The RSF has not provided details of any ongoing or concluded investigations against its members related to allegations of sexual violence, including those documented in this report, and whether any of its members were prosecuted at the said field court.

# 4. NOWHERE SAFE – CIVILIANS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Civilians have been enduring most of the consequences of the fighting between the SAF and the RSF from day one. Since 15 April 2023, it has been extremely difficult for civilians to find safety anywhere in places where the SAF and the RSF have been fighting. Civilians have been killed and injured in their homes, while out looking for necessities such as food and water, and while trying to flee to safety. Many residents told Amnesty International that they had remained in their homes because they feared getting caught in the fighting raging all around.<sup>110</sup>

Throughout the conflict, fighters from both sides have been seen recklessly shooting their weapons, such as rifles and machine guns, in populated residential areas. Shooting in such a manner in populated areas creates great risks of civilian casualties. In addition, both sides have used explosive weapons with wide area effects, which, when used in populated civilian areas, increase risks to civilians and civilian objects.

Other civilians have feared getting attacked and robbed by fighters and bandits on the road or worried that, if they left their homes, these would be taken over and looted by fighters or bandits.<sup>111</sup> Others have still been unable to leave because they either have no relatives or friends who can host them in safer regions of the country, cannot afford the increasingly inflated cost of transport out of frontline areas, or must stay to look after sick relatives who cannot travel.<sup>112</sup> Many residents also lost contact with the outside world as they have no electricity and no internet connection, or no phone charge. Hence, they have no way of obtaining updated information about shifting frontlines, safer locations and routes and transport options.<sup>113</sup>

## KILLED AT HOME

Ala' Fawzi al-Mardi, a 26-year-old doctor, was killed in her family home – a first floor apartment in Hay al-Manara in Omdurman – on 15 April, the first day of the clashes. Her mother, Zeinab Ahmad Othman, aged 56, was gravely injured in the attack. Ala's father, Fawzi al-Mardi, told Amnesty International:

---

<sup>110</sup> Interviews by voice call, throughout May and the first half of June 2023.

<sup>111</sup> Many interviewees from the Khartoum area told Amnesty International researchers that they were forced to stay in their homes because they feared being attacked or robbed in the road.

<sup>112</sup> For example, travel from the Khartoum area to the Egyptian border can take a whole day on roads which are increasingly unsafe and once at the border it can take several days to cross into Egypt, during which people are stranded in dire condition. See Al Jazeera, "Sudanese face 'shocking' delays, no aid at Egypt border", 28 April 2023, [aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/28/sudanese-face-shocking-delays-no-aid-at-egypt-border](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/28/sudanese-face-shocking-delays-no-aid-at-egypt-border)

<sup>113</sup> Interviews by voice call, throughout May and the first half of June 2023, and interviews in person, 16-29 June 2023, Chad.



← © Ala' Fawzi al-Mardi, a 26-year-old doctor, killed by a stray bullet in her family home in the capital on 15 April 2023 – the first day of the clashes. The bullet that killed her also gravely injured her mother. ©Private.

**“That morning we woke up to hell. The sound of shooting and bombing was everywhere, relentless. We did not know what to do. We are civilians. What could we do other than to avoid being outside? I was worried about my daughter Ala’ who had gone to work at the hospital. She managed to get home just after 1pm.**

**A few minutes after she had arrived home, a bullet came through the living room window, and it hit my wife in the face. It went through the right side of her face and neck, and then it hit Ala’ in the chest, killing her instantly. That one single bullet destroyed our family in the space of a few seconds. With the fighting raging outside I was worried about Ala,’ who was at work; I was anxious for her to come home, and as soon as she arrived home, where she should have been safe, death came to our home.”<sup>114</sup>**

Fawzi al-Mardi, Ala’s father, suffered a stroke and died in Sudan, on 6 May.<sup>115</sup>

At the time when the home of the al-Mardi family came under fire, there were intense armed clashes all over the city and Amnesty International was not able to establish which side fired the bullet that killed Ala’ and injured her mother Zeinab, nor whether there was a military objective nearby at the time.

At the time of publication, Zeinab Ahmad Othman remained in a critical condition, unable to move the right side of her body because of nerve damage caused by the bullet.<sup>116</sup>

In another case, on 24 April 2023, Suhair Abdallah al-Bashir, a 67-year-old lawyer, and her two brothers-in-law, Mohammed, and Omar al-Rayeh, in their early 70s and late 60s respectively, were killed by explosive ordnance. The munition struck near their vehicle just as they were stepping out of their home in the centre of Khartoum, near the Foreign Affairs Ministry, and were getting ready to leave the capital at around midday, at a time when there seemed to be a lull in the fighting.<sup>117</sup> They had been hunkering down in their house with one of Suhair’s daughters since the fighting began, surviving on whatever food they had and with no electricity or means of communication. Suhair’s daughter, 38-year-old Hiba, told Amnesty International that she and her family had

<sup>114</sup> Interview by voice call with Fawzi al-Mardi, 4 May 2023. The account was further supported by additional interviews with Fawzi al-Mardi and other members of the family who survived the strike. Interviews by voice call with Ahmad Fawzi al-Mardi and with other relatives, throughout May and early June 2023.

<sup>115</sup> Interview by voice call with Fawzi al-Mardi’s son, 7 May 2023.

<sup>116</sup> She was unable to receive the necessary medical treatment in Sudan for several weeks, given that most hospitals are either not functioning or only functioning partially since the outbreak of the conflict. She was eventually evacuated to another country at the end of May. Interview by voice call, early June 2023.

<sup>117</sup> Interview by voice call with Hiba al-Rayeh, a survivor of the attack, 4 and 5 May 2023, and with other relatives; 2 May and early June 2023.

found themselves surrounded by heavy fighting from the first day of the conflict and remained trapped in the house for 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks):

**“Since 15 April we had no electricity and had only limited possibility to charge our phones. Initially we used our car and laptops to charge our phones but as the days passed, we had no more charge and no TV and so little news about what was happening in the city and beyond. On 24 April my sister, who since the first day of the fighting had been staying with relatives near where she worked, took advantage of a lull in the fighting to come to get us and we set out to leave at once. My mother and uncle Omar were about to get into the car, which was parked on the street in front of the house, and my sister and my uncle Mohammed and I had just sat in the back of the car when we were hit. I did not hear the explosion, only a whizzing sound and there was dust everywhere.”<sup>118</sup>**

Hiba’s mother and two uncles suffered fatal shrapnel wounds and died, and Hiba and her sister were injured. Amnesty International was not able to establish which side fired the munition or identify the type of munition used. According to the survivors, RSF fighters were stationed nearby, as they arrived at the scene within minutes, and took the survivors to a building they were occupying, less than 70 meters from the house. There were other public buildings nearby also occupied by RSF fighters.<sup>119</sup> This area had been the scene of intense clashes between the two sides since the first day of the conflict.

In the Mayo neighbourhood of Khartoum, near the Sita Market (Suq Sita), a witness told Amnesty International that in the late evening of 19 April 2023, he saw the bodies of a woman and her two children who were killed when their home was hit by a shell and partially destroyed.<sup>120</sup> The witness subsequently left Khartoum on 22 April. Photos and videos taken at the scene show fragments of the munition that struck the house.<sup>121</sup> An Amnesty International weapons investigator identified the fragment as a piece of a rocket, a 122mm (about 4.8 in) Grad or similar variety, an inherently inaccurate weapon that should not be used in civilian residential areas. Amnesty International was not able to ascertain which side fired the munition that killed these three individuals.

---

<sup>118</sup> Interview by voice call with Hiba al-Rayeh, 4 and 5 May 2023. The account is further supported by interviews with other relatives, 2 May, and early June 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Interview by voice call with Hiba al-Rayeh, 4 and 5 May 2023.

<sup>120</sup> Interview by voice call with a 28-year-old man who was a witness to the incident, 26 May 2023.

<sup>121</sup> Photo and video material on file with Amnesty International. Relevant information also comes from the interview by voice call with a 28-year-old man who was a witness to the incident, 26 May 2023.






© ↑ Fragment of a piece of a rocket that killed a mother and her two children in their home in the Mayo neighbourhood of Khartoum on 19 April 2023. ©Private

In El Geneina, in West Darfur, civilians have been repeatedly killed and injured in their homes because of armed clashes between the RSF and allied Arab militias on one side, and the Sudanese Alliance and other Masalit armed groups on the other side. For all the incidents below, Amnesty International was not able to determine which side fired the munition that caused the civilian casualties.

Halima Jumaa Mohamed, 53, lost three of her children, two male aged 28 and 26, and one female aged 24, when a projectile struck her home, in al-Madaris neighbourhood, in the afternoon of 3 June. Three of her other children, one male aged 23, one female aged 30 and a 15-year-old girl, were injured in the strike.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Interview in person, Adre, Chadm, 23 June 2023.



←  A 15-year-old girl was injured when a projectile struck her home in El Geneina on 3 June 2023. © Amnesty International, 23 June 2023.

In one single day, 14 June 2023, when heavy clashes again took place in El Geneina, dozens of civilians were killed and injured, many of them women and children. Among them was 31-year-old Gamra Mustafa, who was hit by two bullets while inside her home in the al-Madaris neighbourhood on the morning of 14 June. She sustained devastating injuries to her abdomen and left thigh. A third bullet killed her nine-month-old baby boy, Amin, who was breastfeeding at the time.<sup>123</sup>

On the same day, in the nearby neighbourhood of Hay al-Riadh, seven-year-old Adnan Is'haq was killed inside his home by a stray bullet which struck him in the chest. Adnan's 12-year-old cousin Safa Is'haq was injured in her left calf by a second bullet, and his aunt Mariam Adam Yaqub, 37, was injured in her left leg by a third bullet.<sup>124</sup>

Also injured on the same day was 55-year-old Khamisa Suleiman Sharfeddin, who lost her left arm when she was struck by a bullet inside her home in al-Madaris neighbourhood.<sup>125</sup>

## CIVILIANS KILLED AND INJURED IN THE PLACES THEY SOUGHT SAFETY

Repeated strikes with ground-launched projectiles killed and injured dozens of civilians, many of them women and children, in and around the El Geneina University female dorms, where many residents were sheltering after fleeing their homes in neighbourhoods where there was fighting. On 6 June, several shells struck in and around the female dorm compound. Rawda Abdallah Mohamed, 25, and Safa Zakariya Ibrahim, 20, were among those injured by shrapnel while they were in the courtyard of the dorm's compound at 8am on 14 June. Safa lost her right eye, and Rawda was injured in the abdomen and had to have part of her intestine removed.<sup>126</sup>

Days earlier, Kalthouma Daoud, 70, was injured in her legs in another explosion in the courtyard of the El Geneina University female dorms.<sup>127</sup> Other projectiles struck and around a nearby secondary school, where civilians were also sheltering at the time.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Interview in person with Gamra Mustafa, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>124</sup> Interview in person with Mariam Adam Yaqub, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>125</sup> Interview in person with Khamisa Suleiman Sharfeddin, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>126</sup> Interview in person with Rawda Abdallah Mohamed and Safa Zakariya Ibrahim, 23 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>127</sup> Interview in person with Kalthouma Daoud, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>128</sup> Interviews in person with two survivors, 23 and 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

On 21 May 2023, at least seven people were killed and 12 injured in one strike on the Ministry of Agriculture, in the northern part of the al-Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina, where many residents had taken refuge after leaving their homes, according to two witnesses interviewed by Amnesty International.<sup>129</sup> Hajja Mohamed Ahmed, a 27-year-old woman with two children, was injured in her left leg in the strike, and identified to Amnesty International several other civilians who were injured, including Fathiya, a 28-year-old woman, Mohamed Musa, 35, and Haija's neighbours Jamal and Mohamed, aged 30 and 40, respectively.<sup>130</sup>



  El Geneina, Sudan: False color, near-infrared imagery shows the Ministry of Agriculture on 20 May and 2 June 2023. Vegetation appears in red hues and recently burned areas appear black in the image. Many small structures are visible within the compound on 20 May 2023 (top). On 2 June 2023, the compound and surrounding areas appear heavily burned (bottom). Environmental sensors aboard NASA satellites detected fires on 21 May 2023.

<sup>129</sup> Interviews in person with two witnesses to the strikes, Adre, 25 June 2023, Chad.

<sup>130</sup> Interview in person with Hajja, Adre, 25 June 2023, Chad.

Residents who fled their homes in El Geneina also sheltered in schools that were then hit by stray bullets and shrapnel, killing, and injuring displaced people. A three-year-old girl, Makarim Hussein Mohamed, was killed, and her mother, Hawaya Mustafa, 30, was severely wounded when shrapnel hit the school where they were sheltering in May 2023. Hawaya Mustafa told Amnesty International:

**“We lived in the Jabal neighbourhood but because of the shooting in our area we went to stay in the old boys’ school in al-Madaris neighbourhood. But there was an explosion near the school and my daughter was killed and I was badly injured. I had five children before the war and now I only have two left. My daughter was killed, my baby girl Miral got ill and died because there was no medical care available for her, and I lost my 11-year-old son Mujahid. I lost him when me and my daughter were hit, and I lost consciousness and the people in the school ran away. It has been a month, and I still have not found him and I do not know if he is dead or alive.”<sup>131</sup>**

In the border town of Misterei, where clashes between the warring sides took place on 28 May, several residents told Amnesty International that they were injured and that their relatives were killed or injured while sheltering in several schools.<sup>132</sup>

## DANGEROUS JOURNEYS

On the first day of the fighting, on 15 April, three humanitarian workers with the World Food Programme (WFP) were killed and two others were injured in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, while they were carrying out humanitarian work. One of those injured was 34-year-old Mohamed Yaqub Osman Abubaker. His brother, Abdul Hafiz, told Amnesty International that Yaqub and his WFP colleagues were travelling in a WFP convoy delivering aid to internally displaced people in the Kabkabiya area:

**“Fighting was ongoing ahead of them, they decided to go back, and they were caught in the crossfire of intense fighting between the SAF and the RSF. My brother was injured in the attack and died 10 days later.”<sup>133</sup>**

The following day, on 16 April, the WFP issued a statement stating that it was appalled and heartbroken by the tragic deaths of its three employees on 15 April in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, while carrying out lifesaving duties. The statement also added that two other WFP employees were injured in the same incident.<sup>134</sup> Humanitarian relief personnel and objects receive specific protections under international humanitarian law and must be protected by parties to a conflict.<sup>135</sup>

In another case, Sara Adel Abbas Said, a 26-year-old lawyer, and her brother-in-law Mos’ab Abdessamih Shannan, a 21-year-old university student, were both killed, and Sara’s husband, Ahmad Abdessamih Shannan, 32, was injured, on the morning of 19 April as the family tried to leave Khartoum to go stay with relatives in Shendy, in the hope of finding safety there. Sara’s husband, Ahmad, told Amnesty International:

**“We had just left our home and were heading north on Street 60. We had just stopped to wait for other relatives as it is safer to travel in convoy. My father was driving and next to him was my mother with my son on her lap. My wife, Sara, was sitting behind the driver and I was sitting next to her, with my two sisters to my right. My brother Mos’ab was sitting behind Sara in the back row with the luggage. Suddenly a shell exploded behind our car to the left side. That is why the ones who were most impacted were Sara and Mos’ab who were sitting on the left side of the car. They suffered large shrapnel wounds and they both died instantly. I was injured in both legs.”<sup>136</sup>**

Amnesty International could not establish what type of munition exploded near the Shannan family’s vehicle or which side fired it.

---

<sup>131</sup> Interview in person, 25 June 2023, Adre, eastern Chad.

<sup>132</sup> Interviews in person with survivors and witnesses, 25 and 29 June, eastern Chad.

<sup>133</sup> Interview by voice call with Abdul Hafiz, 9 May 2023.

<sup>134</sup> World Food Programme (WFP), “Statement by WFP Executive Director on developments in Sudan,” 16 April 2023, [wfp.org/news/statement-wfp-executive-director-developments-sudan](https://wfp.org/news/statement-wfp-executive-director-developments-sudan)

<sup>135</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary IHL Study, Rules 31 and 32.

<sup>136</sup> Interview by voice call with Ahmad Abdessamih Shannan, 3 May 2023. Amnesty International also interviewed Ahmad Abdessamih Shannan by voice call on 2 and 4 May 2023, and two other relatives who described the attack, between 2- 4 May 2023.

As the fighting spread and intensified, areas which had been spared in the first days became engulfed in violence. In the Defeinat area of the Kalakla neighborhood, in the southern outskirts of Khartoum, residents told Amnesty International that the situation was mostly quiet, with shops and markets open and people going about their daily chores, until fighting broke out in the area on 20 April 2023. Robert Mayo, a local resident, told Amnesty International: “Suddenly there was intense and loud shooting and people started to run away. The area is not really under the control of either side but sometimes they clash there.”<sup>137</sup>

The clashes had devastating consequences for the family of six-year-old Hassan Kodi Abbas, his eight-year-old brother Ibrahim, and their seven-year-old cousin Koko. According to Hassan’s and Ibrahim’s parents, the three children were all killed as they were running away from their home and from the immediate area around their home.<sup>138</sup> The children’s father, Kodi Abbas, a 55-year-old teacher, told Amnesty International:

**“My wife and my children ran away from home when clashes broke out in our neighbourhood between the RSF and the army, but my two youngest boys, six-year-old Hassan and eight-year-old Ibrahim, and my brother’s son Koko, aged seven, were small and could not run away fast enough. They were all killed, all three of them. Hassan was hit twice in the back and in the right arm, Ibrahim once in the head and Koko twice in the chest. Ibrahim and Koko died immediately, and Hassan was still breathing when he fell but died after less than an hour. I do not know who shot them. The war killed them. At the time, the RSF was occupying that area, while the SAF was on the other side of Sharq Street.”<sup>139</sup>**

Amnesty International has not been able to ascertain which side fired the shots that killed the three children.

In Misterei, in West Darfur, several civilians were killed and injured in crossfire on 28 May, during clashes between RSF and allied Arab militias on one side, and Masalit armed groups on the other. Among those injured was Ashta Suleiman Daoud, aged over 70, who sustained devastating injuries in both her thighs when she was hit by a stray bullet as she was looking for a safe place to shelter in the early morning of 21 May.<sup>140</sup> Halima Musa Ibrahim told Amnesty International that her husband, Ibrahim Mohamed Adam, was shot dead as they were walking to a school near their home in the hope that they would be safer there: “My husband stopped at his shop to get something and was hit in the abdomen and died immediately.”<sup>141</sup>

In El Geneina, a 17-year-old boy, Malik Mohamed Ismail, was seriously injured in the abdomen by a stray bullet in the late morning of 7 June, as he was going to his father’s house in al-Madaris neighbourhood.<sup>142</sup>

Several civilians were killed and injured when they were trying to reach the Ardemata neighbourhood, on the north-east edge of El Geneina, where the headquarters of the SAF is located, believing that they would be safer there because the neighbourhood has mostly been spared the violence which has affected other areas of the city. On and around 14-15 June, many residents fleeing the intense clashes which broke out after the abduction and killing of the governor were caught in the crossfire as they were trying to reach Ardemata. Among them were 12-year-old Widad Ismail, who was hit by a stray bullet in her left leg, 12-year-old Samira Fadhel Abdallah, who was hit by a stray bullet in her right foot, and Fatuma Abu Bakr Omar, a 37-year-old mother of nine who was hit in her abdomen.<sup>143</sup>

Civilians have been killed and injured when they ventured out of their homes to get necessities such as food, water, and medicines. On 30 May, an 18-year-old first year university student at the Faculty of Medicine of al-Obeid University was killed as he went out to buy groceries near his home in al-Obeid, in the North Kordofan region of Sudan. His name is being withheld for security reasons. His father told Amnesty International that he had gone to the grocery store some 150 metres from the family home to get some food and, as he was walking

---

<sup>137</sup> Interview by voice call with Robert Mayo, 11 June 2023.

<sup>138</sup> Interview by voice call with Kodi Abbas and his wife, the latter of whom was a direct witness, 8 June 2023.

<sup>139</sup> Interview by voice call, 8 June 2023.

<sup>140</sup> Interview in person with Ashta Suleiman Daoud, 23 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>141</sup> Interview in person, 29 June 2023, Gaga refugee camp, eastern Chad.

<sup>142</sup> Interview in person with Malik’s mother Zahra, 23 June 2023, Adre, eastern Chad.

<sup>143</sup> Interviews in person, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad. Samira Fadhel Abdallah’s mother also told Amnesty International that her son Yahia, aged 25, who was driving the rickshaw in which the family was travelling when Samira was injured, went missing at the time when Samira was hit and has not been found. Interview in person, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

back, an explosive weapon landed nearby, fatally injuring the right side of his body. He suffered massive internal injuries to the liver, kidney, and abdominal aorta, and died on the spot.<sup>144</sup> Amnesty International has not been able to ascertain which side launched the attack or to identify the exact type of munition which killed the student, except that it was a ground-launched shell of the kind used by both sides.<sup>145</sup> The area was under SAF control during the attack but has seen frequent armed clashes between SAF and RSF members trying to take control of the area.

Zahra Mohamed Adam, 22, and her 14-month-old son, whom she was carrying on her back, were both injured by a stray bullet in the Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina on 9 June. She told Amnesty International:

**“It was quiet that morning and I went out to look for food because we had nothing to eat at home. I went to a small local market near to my home but while I was there, armed clashes broke out in the area and bullets were flying all around. It was about 12 noon. I was carrying my baby boy, Ihab Mahmoud, on my back and he was injured by a bullet which went through his right elbow. I was hit by a bullet which hit me in the right flank and travelled through my abdomen, damaging my internal organs, and went out from the left flank. I was taken by people to the female students’ dorms nearby, where there were some nurses who provided some medical care for me and my son.”<sup>146</sup>**

Another woman, Gamra Adam Zakariya, lost her left eye due to a bullet injury she sustained when she went out to fetch water near her home in the al-Madaris area of El Geneina on 1 June. “I think the bullet came from far, because I did not hear any sounds of shooting near me,” she told Amnesty International.<sup>147</sup>

The SAF, responding to Amnesty International, stated: “The SAF established a cell based in the main center of the Armed Forces’ operations... to determine and select the targets to be attacked and subject them to the standards and principles of international humanitarian law... calculating the percentage of accidental risks and losses, and modifying or canceling attacking targets in these cases to avoid causing accidental losses greater than the tangible and direct military advantage expected from the attack. A number of targeting operations have been canceled in this context... and alerting the civilian population to evacuate or move away from some of the targets to be attacked, in which the presence of civilians in their vicinity could pose a threat to their lives, in coordination with the Media Action Cell.”<sup>148</sup>

An assessment of the SAF’s claim of having alerted the civilian population to evacuate or move away is beyond the scope of this report, but in the interviews Amnesty International has undertaken, no resident mentioned any such alert. However, Amnesty International received credible information of the SAF bombing civilian populated residential areas in Khartoum.

The SAF did not address any of the other specific questions sent to them or provide further information requested by Amnesty International about the conduct of its forces in the conflict-affected areas since 15 April 2023.

---

<sup>144</sup> Interview by voice call, 1 and 2 June 2023. Names and exact location withheld for security reasons.

<sup>145</sup> The boy’s father said it was a Katyusha type of rocket, but Amnesty International was not able to confirm that.

<sup>146</sup> Interview in person, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>147</sup> Interview in person, 25 June 2023, eastern Chad.

<sup>148</sup> SAF response received on 12 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International. The SAF response was in Arabic and has been translated by Amnesty International.

# 5. FIGHTERS' CO-LOCATION IN CIVILIAN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

Fighters on both sides of the conflict have based or otherwise positioned themselves in or launched attacks from densely populated civilian areas, including in and around civilian homes.<sup>149</sup> This practice has increased the risk of harm to civilian residents, especially as both sides use inaccurate weapons, and weapons with wide area effects in areas with concentration of civilians.


Hekma Hamed Guma Khater, a woman from Nyala, South Darfur, told Amnesty International that her 59-year-old mother, Khadija Mustafa Osman Said, and her two brothers, Haydar Hamed Guma Khater, 42, and Hameid Hamed Guma Khater, 27, and their neighbour, Mustafa Ali Hamdan, were killed when a munition hit their house in the Imtidad neighborhood, near the center of Nyala city, South Darfur, on 18 May, at exactly 6:29pm.<sup>150</sup> Hekma, who sustained injuries to her eyes and arms during the incident, told Amnesty International that she is lucky to survive but is devastated by the loss of her mother and brothers:

---

<sup>149</sup> Amnesty International has received frequent reports about mostly RSF fighters locating themselves in civilian homes and other civilian property in densely populated residential areas of Khartoum, whereas in the Darfur region the organization has received reports about fighters from all sides operating in civilian property in residential areas.

<sup>150</sup> Interview by voice call with Hekma Hamed Guma Khater, 30 May 2023 while in El Daein, Darfur, and 17 June 2023 while in one of Sudan's neighbouring countries.



←  *Damage to Hekma's family's home which may be consistent with damage from a mortar attack. ©Private*

**“My mother and my two brothers were killed in a cruel manner. The four of us were at home that evening. There was very intense fighting in Nyala that day between the SAF and the RSF. Our house was hit by a shell. My mother Khadija and my older brother Haydar died instantly in the house because they sustained bad injuries. My younger brother Hameid and our neighbour Mustafa, who was with him in our courtyard, were both injured in their legs and rushed to Abrar Hospital. Both died there following the amputation of their legs. All four of them were buried the following morning at the Kongo graveyard.”<sup>151</sup>**

Hekma said the RSF were momentarily hiding in Khalid Bin Walid High School which is north-west of their house: “I believe the munition that killed my family members came from the SAF side because they were probably targeting the RSF who were hiding in a school near our house.”<sup>152</sup> Following the incident, Hekma and the rest of her family members who were not at home at the time of the attack fled to another city within Sudan and later to one of Sudan’s neighbouring countries. A family member provided Amnesty International photos of damage to the home which may be consistent with a damage from a mortar attack.<sup>153</sup>

Since 15 April, Khartoum, and its surrounding areas, including the city of Omdurman, have often experienced intense fighting in densely packed civilian neighbourhoods, with fighters taking up positions around these areas, including in or near civilian homes. Amnesty International was not able to determine the lawfulness of individual military positions or attacks, but both sides need to take greater precautions to protect civilians. Numerous residents of the capital told Amnesty International that they were afraid that their area would be attacked and that they would be harmed because RSF fighters had based themselves and/or were launching attacks from near their homes.<sup>154</sup>

A 30-year-old man was killed on the evening of 27 May outside his home in Omdurman. His niece told Amnesty International that RSF fighters were right next to her uncle’s house at the time he was hit by the bullet or shrapnel

<sup>151</sup> Interview by voice call with Hekma Hamed Guma Khater, 30 May 2023 while in El Daein, Darfur, and 17 June 2023 while in one of Sudan’s neighbouring countries.

<sup>152</sup> Interview by voice call with Hekma Hamed Guma Khater, 30 May 2023 while in El Daein, Darfur, and 17 June 2023 while in one of Sudan’s neighbouring countries.

<sup>153</sup> Photos on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>154</sup> Interviews by voice calls, 1 May to 8 June 2013.



from a projectile that killed him.<sup>155</sup> She said that the RSF fighters had been staying in the neighbourhood regularly and at times clashed with the SAF:

**“They do what they want; nobody can tell them anything. That is why we have left now. It is too dangerous. My uncle was killed outside the house. He has left behind three young daughters who are now orphans. My other uncle was injured inside the house. There is no safety. If you stay home, you get killed and if you go outside, you get killed.”<sup>156</sup>**

Another resident of the capital told Amnesty International that he and some of his neighbours had resorted to digging deep ditches in their neighbourhood’s street to prevent access by RSF vehicles:

**“We saw residents of other areas do this on social media and so we also started to dig ditches in the streets inside our neighborhood to stop the RSF coming into the little street between our houses with their pick-up vehicles and fire their anti-aircraft machine guns at the SAF from behind our houses. Their actions endanger us, the residents, because if the army tries to bomb them, we will be killed too.”<sup>157</sup>**

Shortly after the conflict broke out in Khartoum, RSF fighters took control of the Sharq al-Nil hospital, one of the capital’s main hospitals, which was subsequently bombed twice by the SAF.<sup>158</sup>

On 1 May, an SAF air strike hit the area immediately outside the hospital. Damage to the area, including an apparent crater from the bombing, was captured in several videos posted to Twitter.<sup>159</sup> The Guardian reported that the air strike “killed at least three tea vendors as well as a child, leaving behind only a crater”.<sup>160</sup> On 15 May, a video posted to Twitter shows an SAF aircraft flying over Sharq al-Nil area near the hospital around the time that the hospital was hit by another air strike.<sup>161</sup> Several videos were posted to Twitter showing sections of the hospital that was heavily damaged including parts of the building still on fire.<sup>162</sup> Satellite imagery from 18 May confirms damage to the south side of the hospital.

---

<sup>155</sup> Interview by voice call, 3 and 4 June 2023. Name withheld for security reasons.

<sup>156</sup> Interview by voice call, 3 and 4 June 2023. Name withheld for security reasons.

<sup>157</sup> Interview by voice call, 19 May 2023. Name withheld for security reasons. Also see Twitter post, Citizens of Khartoum state close the internal streets to prevent the entry of Hemmedti’s mercenaries and terrorist rebel militias from taking shelter in their homes, 21 May 2023, [twitter.com/9klid/status/1660351429020622851?s=20](https://twitter.com/9klid/status/1660351429020622851?s=20) (original Twitter post in Arabic).

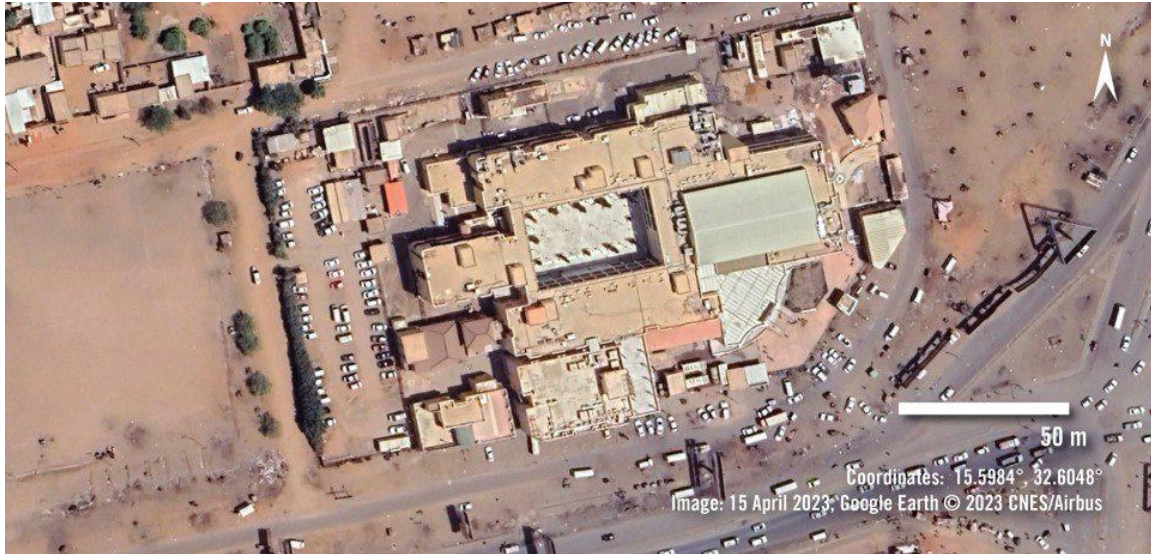
<sup>158</sup> BBC News, “Sudan conflict: Hospital attacks potential war crimes, BBC told”, 26 May 2023, [bbc.com/news/world-africa-65718968](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65718968)

<sup>159</sup> See for example Twitter video, 2 May 2023, [twitter.com/YASIR\\_MOS91/status/1653298452455911424?s=20](https://twitter.com/YASIR_MOS91/status/1653298452455911424?s=20)

<sup>160</sup> See for example the article from The Guardian, “Khartoum hospitals being hit as Sudan fighting intensifies”, 2 May 2023, [theguardian.com/world/2023/may/02/khartoum-hospitals-being-hit-as-sudan-fighting-intensifies](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/02/khartoum-hospitals-being-hit-as-sudan-fighting-intensifies)

<sup>161</sup> See Twitter video, 15 May 2023, <https://twitter.com/ItssAaliyaah/status/1658018485958590469?s=20>

<sup>162</sup> See Twitter video footnote 160; and Twitter video, 15 May 2023, [twitter.com/SLinnoinen/status/1658063623455907841?s=20](https://twitter.com/SLinnoinen/status/1658063623455907841?s=20)



↑ Khartoum, Sudan: Satellite imagery from 15 April 2023 (top) shows the Sharq al-Nil hospital in east Khartoum.



↑ On 18 May 2023, imagery shows the south side of the hospital has been heavily damaged.

In its letter to the RSF leadership, Amnesty International asked questions about how its forces were making decisions about where to locate themselves when operating in densely populated areas, and about what precautions they were taking to protect civilians from the dangers of their locations and of their operations more generally.

In their response, the RSF said: “The control, leadership, and decision-making process regarding RSF fighters positioning are conducted in accordance with a hierarchical order that follows established military protocols. Each level is assigned specific authorities as determined by applicable laws, regulations, and the nature of the mission. The RSF strictly adhere to their designated positions, ensuring they are stationed away from civilian areas to prevent any harm or inconvenience to the local population. We prioritize minimizing civilian casualties

and collateral damage, and we have made every effort to avoid positioning our forces in areas where their presence could endanger the local population or disrupt the delivery of essential services to civilians.”<sup>163</sup>

As detailed in this and other sections of the report, witnesses described to Amnesty International specific incidents in which RSF fighters have been based in, and times fired from, densely populated civilian areas.

Several residents of El Geneina, in West Darfur, who have since fled, told Amnesty International that Masalit fighters with armed groups such as the Sudanese Alliance and certain Masalit defence groups shot at the RSF and their allied Arab militias from inside densely populated residential neighbourhoods, including those whose population is predominantly non-Masalit, such as the al-Zuhur neighbourhood, to the west of the predominantly Arab al-Dweim neighbourhood.

A 22-year-old resident of the al-Zuhur neighbourhood told Amnesty International: “Masalit armed men often came to our neighbourhood, which is mostly Bargo, with machine guns mounted on pick-up trucks and shot at the nearby al-Dweim neighbourhood, where Arabs live. This put us in danger. Eventually some Arabs told people in our neighbourhood to leave because it would become a war zone.”<sup>164</sup> Another resident of the same neighbourhood also told Amnesty International that Masalit fighters often launched attacks from the neighbourhood towards the Arab neighbourhood to the east: “I do not know if they do it because that is the best place to shoot from or because they want the Arabs to shoot back into al-Zuhur and create problems that way. In any case it caused a lot of destruction in our neighbourhood.”<sup>165</sup>

A 20-year-old student was severely injured in her left leg by three bullets in the morning of 9 June in the al-Madaris neighbourhood of El Geneina. She told Amnesty International:

**“From the morning, armed clashes were raging in our neighbourhood, so me and my mother and grandmother left our home and went to look for a safer place but soon we found that in the street it was even worse, and it was too dangerous to stay outside, so we went into a random house. It was inside that house that I got injured by three bullets which hit my leg. We did not know who the house belonged to, but a Masalit man with a rifle was shooting at the RSF from the house. He was also hit by the bullets which came into the house and [he] died.”<sup>166</sup>**

---

<sup>163</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

<sup>164</sup> Interview in person, 26 June 2023, Adre, eastern Chad.

<sup>165</sup> Interview by voice call, 26 July 2023.

<sup>166</sup> Interview in person, 25 June 2023, Adre, eastern Chad. Name withheld for security reasons.

# 6. LOOTING AND DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIAN PROPERTY

Since the eruption of fighting in April 2023, members of the parties to the conflict have looted and destroyed or damaged civilian property, including people's homes as well as health and humanitarian facilities. Most of the specific cases of looting documented by Amnesty International involved members of the RSF, but there is credible reporting of looting by both sides. Some cases may amount to pillage, which is a war crime.<sup>167</sup> International humanitarian law affords specific protections to humanitarian personnel and to objects used for humanitarian relief operations,<sup>168</sup> and intentional attacks on such personnel or objects, or on health facilities or medical units, amount to war crimes.<sup>169</sup>

## CIVILIAN HOMES AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

Several civilians have told Amnesty International that their homes were broken into and looted by RSF members or people who operated in areas controlled by the RSF, without the latter taking any measures to stop such practices.<sup>170</sup> In some cases, RSF members raided homes or otherwise pressured the owners to leave and subsequently looted the places.<sup>171</sup>

On 16 May, for example, RSF members stormed the home of Ali Shamo, a 90-year-old former culture and information minister in several of Sudan's past governments; he previously held other high public offices, including President of the Press and Media Council and President of Administration of Jezira University.<sup>172</sup> The RSF forced him and his family to leave their home and subsequently looted and trashed it. Ali Shamo told Amnesty International:

**“RSF members first broke into our home in the early morning of 16 May. There were three of them wearing uniforms and they pointed their rifles to my son’s chest and one of them hit my son with his rifle butt. They took the keys to our vehicles which were parked in the courtyard. I tried to reason with them but to no avail. They came back the following day and returned the keys to our cars and made it clear that we should leave the house.**

---

<sup>167</sup> Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(v). See also ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rule 52. Pillage.

<sup>168</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rules 31 and 32.

<sup>169</sup> Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(ii) and (iii). See also the legal chapter for this report, below.

<sup>170</sup> Interviews by voice call and in-person with several residents of the capital and of El Geneina, 18 May-29 June 2023.

<sup>171</sup> Interviews by voice call and in-person with several residents of the capital and of El Geneina, 18 May-29 June 2023. Also see individual cases mentioned below.

<sup>172</sup> Interviews by voice call with Ali Shamo and his relatives, 23 and 24 May and 3 June 2023.

**I did not want to leave. Me and my family remained in our home for 34 days without water or electricity, but they left us no choice.**

**We left our family home in the early evening of 18 May and the following morning at 6am they returned to our home, broke in and started to loot. They first took our four vehicles and various other items. Neighbours told us that RSF members kept going back to our home and taking away large amounts of our properties. Our relatives were able to go to our home two weeks later to check and found that much of it had been looted and trashed, including historic books and other property which are part of our country's national heritage.”<sup>173</sup>**

Another resident of the capital told Amnesty International how RSF members looted her relatives' family home after forcing the family to leave:

**“My family had no option but to leave their home because the constant presence of RSF members was both threatening and dangerous as their presence could attract SAF strikes on the building. For these reasons most of my family had left the house but my uncles and cousin remained to protect the house because we knew that the moment the house was left empty it would be taken over and looted.**

**In the end the situation deteriorated fast, and it became too dangerous, and everybody had to leave suddenly. The following day RSF members had taken over the whole place and were looting and trashing it. It was heartbreaking to watch and learn that they were rampaging through our home, soiling, and destroying our most cherished memories – photographs, books, items of high emotional value that cannot be replaced. They trashed everything.”<sup>174</sup>**

## **MEDICAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITIES**

The looting of hospitals, other medical facilities and humanitarian warehouses has been widespread, both in the capital and in other parts of the country, notably in the Darfur region. The looting of desperately needed medical and humanitarian supplies has made an already dire situation worse, as even if supplies can enter Sudan, it has been extremely difficult or outright impossible to safely transport them to the conflict-affected areas, where they are most needed.<sup>175</sup> On 2 June 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that it had verified at least 46 attacks on health care facilities that led to eight deaths and 18 injuries.<sup>176</sup>

The humanitarian organization, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), stated on 23 May 2023: “Staff and patients are repeatedly facing the trauma of armed groups entering and looting MSF premises, with medicines, supplies and vehicles being stolen. This shocking disregard for humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law has impeded our ability to provide healthcare to people at a time when it is desperately needed.”<sup>177</sup> Previously, on 12 May 2023, MSF reported the looting of El Geneina Teaching Hospital pharmacy, X-Ray department, and the blood bank on 26 April. MSF has supported this hospital since 2021.<sup>178</sup>

On 2 June 2023, the World Food Programme (WFP) strongly condemned the looting of one of the agency's logistics hubs in south-central Sudan, lamenting that the attack on its warehouses in El Obeid put food assistance for 4.4 million conflict-affected people at risk, adding: “This is not the first time that food and humanitarian assets

---

<sup>173</sup> Interviews by voice call with Ali Shamo, 23 and 24 May and 3 June 2023. Amnesty International also interviewed several relatives of Ali Shamo, who provided accounts consistent with his description.

<sup>174</sup> Interview by voice call, name withheld for security reasons, 27 May 2023.

<sup>175</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, for example, has stated, “Our scale up efforts have been continually hampered by violence, aggressive armed incursions, looting or armed occupation of our premises, as well as administrative and logistical challenges”; MSF, “MSF facilities looted, medical activities impeded by violence in Sudan,” 23 May 2023, [msf.org/msf-facilities-looted-medical-activities-impeded-violence-sudan](https://www.msf.org/msf-facilities-looted-medical-activities-impeded-violence-sudan); See also World Food Programme, Statement on the looting of humanitarian warehouses in Sudan, 2 June 2023, [wfp.org/news/statement-looting-humanitarian-warehouses-sudan](https://www.wfp.org/news/statement-looting-humanitarian-warehouses-sudan)

<sup>176</sup> World Health Organization, Twitter post, 2 June 2023, <https://twitter.com/WHO/status/1664613172475486210?s=20>

<sup>177</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “MSF facilities looted, medical activities impeded by violence in Sudan” (previously cited).

<sup>178</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “El Geneina Teaching Hospital, West Darfur: 5 key points on the recent violence and humanitarian needs,” 12 May 2023, [msf.or.ke/en/magazine/El-Geneina-El-Geneina-El-Geneina-teaching-hospital-west-darfur-5-key-points-recent-violence-and-humanitarian](https://www.msf.or.ke/en/magazine/El-Geneina-El-Geneina-El-Geneina-teaching-hospital-west-darfur-5-key-points-recent-violence-and-humanitarian)

belonging to WFP and our partners have been attacked and looted. WFP alone has so far recorded losses estimated at more than US\$60 million, since violence broke out on April 15.”<sup>179</sup>

Civil society organizations have likewise been targeted. Dr. Abdel Mitaal Gershah, who is the Director of the Regional Centre for Training and Development of Civil Society, told Amnesty International that on 15 May 2023, at 9am, their office which is in Street 53 of the Amarat neighbourhood of the capital, was broken into by RSF members who also looted several houses nearby.<sup>180</sup>

Staff members of at least three other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) told Amnesty International that their organisations’ premises – two in the capital and one in Darfur – had been broken into and looted by the RSF.<sup>181</sup>

Banks and other public buildings have likewise been looted by the RSF and by others in areas under their control.<sup>182</sup> A video posted to Twitter shows RSF fighters taking bags holding money from inside Bank of Khartoum in Omdurman and placing them in the back of a car in early May. The conditions in which the RSF procured this money are unclear.<sup>183</sup> This video has been geolocated by Twitter users and confirmed by the Amnesty International’s Crisis Evidence Lab.<sup>184</sup>

Responding to Amnesty International’s questions as to what measures RSF have taken to prevent RSF fighters from looting civilian homes, businesses, and public institutions – including hospitals, humanitarian organizations’ offices, banks, and other civilian facilities – the RSF stated: “Under the leadership of RSF Major General Essam Sale Fadil, the RSF Committee for Addressing Violations and Misconduct has been appointed to investigate any reported infringements. Additionally, a field court has been established to effectively address and adjudicate cases related to these violations.”<sup>185</sup>

The RSF has not provided details of any ongoing or concluded investigations against its members in relation to allegations of looting and destruction of civilian property, including for those incidents documented in this report, and whether any of its members was prosecuted at the said field court.

---

<sup>179</sup> WFP, “Statement on the looting of humanitarian warehouses in Sudan”, 2 June 2023, [wfp.org/news/statement-looting-humanitarian-warehouses-sudan](https://wfp.org/news/statement-looting-humanitarian-warehouses-sudan)

<sup>180</sup> Interview by voice call, 19 May 2023.

<sup>181</sup> Interviews in person and by voice call, May 2023.

<sup>182</sup> Twitter video, 8 May 2023, [twitter.com/BAlkammawa/status/1655442080401874944?s=20](https://twitter.com/BAlkammawa/status/1655442080401874944?s=20)

<sup>183</sup> Twitter video, 21 May 2023, [twitter.com/abazr93/status/1660137753953071104?s=20](https://twitter.com/abazr93/status/1660137753953071104?s=20)

<sup>184</sup> Twitter video, 2 May 2023, [twitter.com/BenDoBrown/status/1653332295363837954?s=20](https://twitter.com/BenDoBrown/status/1653332295363837954?s=20)

<sup>185</sup> RSF response received on 14 July 2023, on file with Amnesty International.

# 7. LEGAL ANALYSIS

A non-international armed conflict has existed in parts of Sudan, notably the Darfur region, since 2003. Considering the intensity of the fighting and the level of organization of both parties to the conflict, the fighting that erupted in Sudan since 15 April 2023 – in Khartoum and across the country – between the SAF and the RSF constitutes a non-international armed conflict.

Both the SAF and the RSF have been state forces in Sudan for many years.<sup>186</sup> In 2021, as discussed above in the Background, they together carried out the coup that overthrew the transitional government. In the context of the ongoing conflict, Amnesty International considers both the SAF and RSF to be state forces as defined under international humanitarian law. Both parties are also allied to militias and other armed groups, which operate under varying levels of control and influence of the RSF or SAF.<sup>187</sup>

International humanitarian law (IHL) rules that regulate non-international armed conflicts apply to the current conflict in Sudan. These includes Common Article 3 to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, regulating the treatment of persons who are not taking active part in hostilities, namely civilians, members of armed forces who have laid down their arms, or sick, wounded or detained fighters; Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions on non-international armed conflicts, which Sudan ratified in 2006;<sup>188</sup> and the rules on the conduct of hostilities, codified in Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, cited in this report have come to reflect customary IHL, including in non-international armed conflicts; and most of these rules have been included in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) study of customary IHL. Even though Sudan is not a state party, the provisions of the Rome Statute of the ICC are also applicable as codifications of crimes under customary international law.

**The principle of distinction** is one of the cornerstones of IHL. It requires all parties to the conflict to distinguish, always, between civilians and fighters. Additional Protocol II provides: “The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack.”<sup>189</sup> Civilians enjoy protection against attacks, “unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities.”<sup>190</sup> The parties to the conflict must also distinguish between “civilian objects” and “military objectives;” accordingly, attacks “may only be directed against military objectives,” and “must not be directed against civilian objects.”<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> The 2017 Rapid Support Forces Act designated RSF as part of the national forces, Redress, 19 February 2018, [redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Rapid-Support-Forces-Act-2017-English.pdf](https://www.redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Rapid-Support-Forces-Act-2017-English.pdf); The RSF was also a signatory to the Juba Peace Agreement. See also, for example, Human Rights Watch, “Men with No Mercy”: Rapid Support Forces Attacks against Civilians in Darfur, Sudan, September 2015, [hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/sudan0915\\_insert\\_lowres\\_with\\_cover.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/sudan0915_insert_lowres_with_cover.pdf); and Amnesty International, *Sudan: Scorched earth, poisoned air: Sudanese government forces ravage Jebel Marra, Darfur* (AFR 54/4877/2016) 29 September 2023, *Scorched Earth*, [amnesty.org/en/documents/af/54/4877/2016/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/af/54/4877/2016/en/), p. 12.

<sup>187</sup> Several Arab militias are allied with the RSF, and armed groups such as the Sudanese Alliance and the SPLM-North (Agar) are allied with the SAF.

<sup>188</sup> Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), adopted 8 June 1977; See State Parties, ICRC *Customary IHL Study* (Protocol II) States Parties, [ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/apii-1977/state-parties](https://www.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/apii-1977/state-parties)

<sup>189</sup> Additional Protocol II, Article 13(2); ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 1.

<sup>190</sup> Protocol II, Article 13(3); ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 6.

<sup>191</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 7. See also Rules 8-10.

In cases of doubt, individuals should be presumed to be civilians and immune from direct attack.<sup>192</sup> Making the civilian population, or individual civilians not taking a direct part in hostilities, the object of attack (direct attacks on civilians) is a war crime.<sup>193</sup> As detailed in Chapter three, Amnesty International has documented a number of attacks directed against civilians, in particular carried out by the RSF and allied Arab militias.

All parties to the conflict have a further obligation to adopt necessary **precautions in attack**, which entails taking “constant care... to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects.”<sup>194</sup> Additional Protocol II states: “The civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against the dangers arising from military operations.”<sup>195</sup> More particularly, IHL requires that the parties to the conflict take “[a]ll feasible precautions... to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.”<sup>196</sup>

**Indiscriminate attacks** are prohibited.<sup>197</sup> An attack is indiscriminate when it is “of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction,” particularly when it is “not directed at a specific military objective,” or when it employs “a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective” or “a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited as required by international humanitarian law.”<sup>198</sup> Launching an indiscriminate attack resulting in death or injury to civilians is a war crime.<sup>199</sup>

**Disproportionate attacks** are also prohibited. An attack is disproportionate when it “may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.”<sup>200</sup> Launching “an attack in the knowledge that it will cause excessive incidental civilian loss, injury or damage” constitutes a war crime.<sup>201</sup> The Commentary on the Additional Protocols makes clear that the fact that the proportionality calculus requires an anticipated “concrete and direct” military advantage indicates that such advantage must be “substantial and relatively close, and that advantages which are hardly perceptible and those which would only appear in the long term should be disregarded.”<sup>202</sup>

Many cases examined in this report, especially in Chapters four and five, involved attacks that struck homes or other civilian objects, killing and injuring civilians. These attacks have been carried out by all parties to the conflict, including the RSF, the SAF and allied groups. Documented attacks involved gunfire, indirect fire, air strikes and ground-launched strikes with imprecise explosive weapons, such as “Grad” rockets, which should never be used in the vicinity of civilian concentrations. In some of the documented cases, civilians were killed and injured in attacks that may have been aimed at fighters located nearby. Such attacks may have been indiscriminate attacks or may have disproportionately harmed civilians and could constitute war crimes. Amnesty International has not been able to fully assess the lawfulness of certain individual strikes without additional information. However, the consistent pattern throughout the conflict and the enormous civilian toll it has wrought shows, at a minimum, that the parties to the conflict are failing to take adequate precautions, and strongly suggests that some of these attacks were unlawful and may amount to war crimes.

IHL prohibits the parties to the conflict from engaging in acts of pillage, which is forcible appropriation of private property for personal use,<sup>203</sup> destruction or seizure of property of an adversary not justified by military

---

<sup>192</sup> See ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 6, which explains: “...it is fair to conclude that when there is a situation of doubt, a careful assessment has to be made under the conditions and restraints governing a particular situation as to whether there are sufficient indications to warrant an attack. One cannot automatically attack anyone who might be dubious.” The Study notes that (at the time) the issue of doubt in non-international armed conflicts had hardly been addressed in State practice but concludes that the same approach seems justified.

<sup>193</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 156; See also Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(i).

<sup>194</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 15.

<sup>195</sup> Additional Protocol II, art. 13(1).

<sup>196</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 15. See also Rules 16-21.

<sup>197</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 11.

<sup>198</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 12.

<sup>199</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 156.

<sup>200</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 14.

<sup>201</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 156.

<sup>202</sup> Yves Sandoz, Christophe Swinarski, Bruno Zimmermann, Commentary on the Additional Protocols, ICRC, 1987 § 2209.

<sup>203</sup> Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(g); ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 52; Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(v).



necessity,<sup>204</sup> making medical or religious personnel or objects the object of attack, and attacking hospitals and other medical units “unless they are used to commit hostile acts.”<sup>205</sup> Serious violations of these rules constitute war crimes.<sup>206</sup> As detailed in Chapters three and six, Amnesty International has documented a number of such cases, primarily involving the RSF and allied militias.

Sudan is also bound by the international and regional human rights treaties it has ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT),<sup>207</sup> and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR).<sup>208</sup>

The **sexual violence** documented by Amnesty International since 15 April (see Chapter three) amounts to violations of international human rights law by the RSF and SAF, both of whom have been state actors in Sudan, as well as by other, non-state actors, including Arab militia groups. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are a violation of a number of human rights, including the rights to equality and non-discrimination, to physical integrity, and to the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment.<sup>209</sup> States are required to act to end sexual violence in conflict, protect those at risk, bring perpetrators to justice, and provide comprehensive services and reparation for survivors.<sup>210</sup> Rape is defined under international law as sexual penetration or “invasion,” however slight, when committed by force, or by threat of force or coercion, by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or against a person incapable of giving genuine consent.<sup>211</sup> Rape constitutes torture.<sup>212</sup>

Rape and other forms of sexual violence are also serious violations of IHL that amount to war crimes.<sup>213</sup> The acts of rape set out in this report amount to war crimes, as they occurred in the context of an armed conflict which the perpetrators would have been aware of.

The scale and circumstances of civilian deaths and injuries in the context of the conflict in Sudan – thousands of people have been killed and injured since 15 April<sup>214</sup> – are indicative that the parties to the conflict in Sudan have been acting in disregard of the most fundamental provisions of IHL. Although some individual incidents of civilian harm, including some of those documented in this report, could be the result of mistakes, a malfunctioning weapons system, or the incidental result of a lawful attack, the scale of the civilian harm, over an

---

<sup>204</sup> ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rule 50.

<sup>205</sup> Additional Protocol II, Article 11(1); ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rules 28-29.

<sup>206</sup> Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(iv), (v) and (xii).

<sup>207</sup> UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Ratification Status for Sudan:

[http://internet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=165&Lang=EN](http://internet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=165&Lang=EN). Regrettably, Sudan has not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

<sup>208</sup> State parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Charter):

<https://achpr.au.int/en/states#:~:text=The%20African%20Charter%20on%20Human,Charter%20on%202023%20October%202013>; Also see Guidelines on Combating Sexual Violence and its Consequences in Africa, [achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2021-09/achprengguidelinesoncombatingsexualviolenceanditsconsequences.pdf](http://achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2021-09/achprengguidelinesoncombatingsexualviolenceanditsconsequences.pdf); Sudan has signed, but regrettably not yet ratified, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, [au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37077-sl-PROTOCOL%20TO%20THE%20AFRICAN%20CHARTER%20ON%20HUMAN%20AND%20PEOPLE%27S%20RIGHTS%20ON%20THE%20RIGTHS%20OF%20WOMEN%20IN%20AFRICA.pdf](http://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37077-sl-PROTOCOL%20TO%20THE%20AFRICAN%20CHARTER%20ON%20HUMAN%20AND%20PEOPLE%27S%20RIGHTS%20ON%20THE%20RIGTHS%20OF%20WOMEN%20IN%20AFRICA.pdf) (list of state parties).

<sup>209</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Articles 2(1), 7, and 26; CEDAW, Article 1; CEDAW, General Recommendations 19 and 35 prohibit gender-based violence including rape as a human rights violation and set out the steps states are required to take in order to comprehensively respond. General Recommendation 30 specifically focuses on the obligations of duty bearers in conflict, conflict prevention and post-conflict contexts, and reaffirms State obligations to take action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in conflict including rape.

<sup>210</sup> See, for example, CEDAW, General Recommendation 30.

<sup>211</sup> See ICC, Elements of Crimes, Element 1, Article 7 (1) (g)-1 and Article 8(2)(e)(vi)-1(2). Coercive circumstances that negate consent include circumstances created by the perpetrator, such as fear of violence, duress, detention contexts, and the abuse of power. Consent is also negated when the perpetrator takes advantage of coercive circumstances that already exist, even if they are not of their own making, such as those already inherent to an armed conflict. For more on this, see Amnesty International, *Rape and sexual violence: Human rights law and standards in the International Criminal Court* (Index Number: IOR 53/001/2011) March 1 2011, [amnesty.org/download/Documents/32000/ior530012011en.pdf](http://amnesty.org/download/Documents/32000/ior530012011en.pdf)

<sup>212</sup> See, for example, Special Rapporteur on Torture, Report: UN Doc. E/CN.4/1986/15 (19 February 1986), para. 119; UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, Report: UN Doc. A/HRC/7/3, 15 January 2008, para. 3; CAT Committee, *V.L. v. Switzerland*, UN Doc. CAT/C/37/D/262/2005, 22 January 2007, para. 8.10; General Comment No. 4 on the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, paras 57-61.

<sup>213</sup> Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(e); Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(vi); ICRC *Customary IHL Study*, Rules 93 and 156.

<sup>214</sup> See, for example, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Sudan: After 100 days of fighting, attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers must stop”, 25 July 2023, [https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-after-100-days-fighting-attacks-civilians-and-humanitarian-workers-must-stop-statement-clementine-nkweta-salami-humanitarian-coordinator-sudan-enar?\\_gl=1\\*2i2k5y\\*\\_ga\\*MTAYMIQ20TI5MC4xNjYyNiQwMjU1\\*\\_ga\\_E60ZNX2F68\\*MTY5MDM4NzA2MS41My4xLiE2OTAzODcwNiEuNiAuMC4w](https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-after-100-days-fighting-attacks-civilians-and-humanitarian-workers-must-stop-statement-clementine-nkweta-salami-humanitarian-coordinator-sudan-enar?_gl=1*2i2k5y*_ga*MTAYMIQ20TI5MC4xNjYyNiQwMjU1*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*MTY5MDM4NzA2MS41My4xLiE2OTAzODcwNiEuNiAuMC4w)

extended period, indicates that the parties to the conflict are failing to take adequate precautions to protect civilians. In some instances, such as deliberate killings of civilians, sexual violence against women and girls, and indiscriminate attacks in densely populated civilian areas documented in this report, there have been clear serious violations of IHL, including war crimes.

Based on its on-the-ground investigations on the Chad-Sudan border related to violations in Darfur, as well as remote research that has documented violations across the country, Amnesty International's evidence indicates that many more civilians have been killed and injured than the cases which the organization has been able to document. Civilians have been killed and injured in crossfire as the fighting has raged in populated residential areas, where combatants have often located themselves, and because of the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, which cannot be used in areas with concentrations of civilians in a manner that complies with the rules of IHL.

# 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

## TO SAF AND RSF

- Immediately end deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian objects as well as indiscriminate attacks and attacks disproportionately affecting civilians and civilian objects, including the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, including imprecise projectiles, in the vicinity of civilians.
- Stop rape and other sexual violence against women and girls and ensure there are credible investigations, adequate punishment of perpetrators, treatment, and full reparation for survivors.
- End looting and destruction of civilian property including hospitals, schools, markets, and other residential, community, and humanitarian facilities.
- Allow and facilitate rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to ensure aid reaches all those in need, as well as protect humanitarian relief personnel and facilities, and end all attacks on humanitarian workers.
- Ensure safe passage for people wanting to leave areas affected by violence and allow safe exit for those fleeing violence to seek safety and protection inside Sudan and in other countries.
- Ensure prompt, effective, thorough, independent, impartial, and transparent investigations into all credible allegations of violations and other incidents of civilian harm documented in this report, and wherever there is sufficient admissible evidence, ensure that fighters and commanders suspected of being criminally responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses and IHL violations are brought to justice in fair trials without recourse to death penalty.
- Ensure accountability for past and recent crimes under international law and other serious violations and abuses in Sudan, including by surrendering the suspects wanted by the International Criminal Court.

## TO ARMED GROUPS ALLIED WITH THE SAF AND RSF

- Immediately cease targeting of civilians and civilian objects, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, and refrain from launching attacks from civilian populated residential areas.

## TO THE SUDANESE AUTHORITIES, ESPECIALLY THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE

- Ensure credible independent investigations and, where sufficient admissible evidence is found, prosecutions of suspected perpetrators of crimes documented in this report as well as of perpetrators of other international human rights and humanitarian law violations committed in the context of the conflict, in civilian courts adhering to international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty. Ensure that such investigations include an examination of command responsibility for such violations.

- Ensure support for protection, care, treatment, and psycho-social support mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

## **TO THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

- Call on all parties to the conflict in Sudan to end all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and ensure unhindered and immediate humanitarian access.
- Call on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to dispatch a fact-finding mission to Sudan to conduct investigations and report on serious abuses and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that have occurred and continue to occur in Darfur and the rest of Sudan.
- Call for all countries to respect the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Darfur by refraining from transferring weapons and ammunition to the SAF, the RSF and other actors.
- Support efforts at the UN Human Rights Council to establish an independent investigative and accountability mechanism to monitor, collect and preserve evidence, and report on serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law that have occurred and continue to occur in Darfur and the rest of Sudan.

## **TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)**

- Call on all parties to the conflict in Sudan to end all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and ensure unhindered and immediate humanitarian access.
- Take concrete steps to fully implement the IGAD communiqué of 10 July, in which IGAD “commits to work closely with the international community to put in place a robust monitoring and accountability mechanism that will be instrumental in bringing perpetrators to justice.” Specifically, IGAD should support efforts at the Human Rights Council to establish an independent investigative and accountability mechanism to monitor, collect and preserve evidence and report on serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law that have occurred and continue to occur in Darfur and the rest of Sudan.

## **TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

- Dispatch a fact-finding mission to Sudan to conduct investigations and report on serious violations and abuses of international human rights law, and violations of international humanitarian law that have occurred and continue to occur in Darfur and the rest of Sudan.

## **TO SUDAN'S NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, NOTABLY CHAD, EGYPT, ETHIOPIA AND SOUTH SUDAN**

- Keep the borders open and remove movement restrictions and ensure those fleeing the conflict are not rejected at the borders, are protected against refoulement, and have prompt access to asylum procedures.
- Ensure unimpeded humanitarian access for aid organizations and others that are responding to those fleeing the conflict in Sudan.
- Establish mechanisms to enable Sudanese nationals, currently in the respective countries, remain and not be at risk of being forced to return to Sudan in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.

## **TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**

- Call for all countries to respect the UN Security Council's arms embargo regime on Darfur by refraining from transferring weapons and ammunition to the SAF, the RSF and other armed actors.
- Expand the arms embargo regime that currently applies to Darfur to the rest of Sudan – given the significant escalation of the violence and its impact on civilians, as parties to the conflict commit crimes under international law and other serious violations and abuses. The expansion of the arms embargo must be accompanied by an effective mechanism to monitor international sales or prevent illicit transfers of arms to Sudan.
- Considering the current conflict, provide additional resources to the ICC investigations, and expand the Darfur conflict referral to the ICC to also include investigation and prosecution of crimes committed under international law, in the rest of Sudan.
- Consider re-formulating the UN mission in Sudan to enable it to respond more effectively to current challenges, by providing staffing and resources needed to ensure regular human rights monitoring and reporting, including child protection and gender advisers aimed at improving protection and monitoring amid the conflict.

## **TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

- Respond to the IGAD communiqué of 10 July “commit[ment] to work closely with the international community to put in place a robust monitoring and accountability mechanism that will be instrumental in bringing perpetrators to justice” through the urgent establishment of an independent investigative and accountability mechanism to monitor, collect and preserve evidence, and report on serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law that have occurred and continue to occur in Darfur and the rest of Sudan, including on their possible gender dimensions and integrating a gender perspective in its work.
- Continue supporting the mandate of the Designated Expert on Sudan and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor and report on human rights and international humanitarian law violations in Darfur and the rest of Sudan.

## **TO THE OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESIGNATED EXPERT**

- Enhance the level of monitoring, public reporting, and documentation of evidence of crimes and violations occurring in Darfur and the rest of the country.
- Convene an urgent briefing to states on the situation in Darfur and the rest of Sudan, under the independent mandate of the High Commissioner.

## **TO STATE PARTIES TO THE ICC**

- Provide additional resources to investigate ongoing violations in the Darfur region.

## **TO SUDAN'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE EU, KSA, UAE, UK, US AND OTHERS**

- Call on parties to the conflict in Sudan to end all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and ensure unhindered and immediate humanitarian access.
- Call for all countries to respect the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Darfur by refraining from transferring weapons and ammunition to the SAF, RSF and other actors.

- Open safe and legal pathways and ensure protection and support for people fleeing Sudan.
- Refrain from returning Sudanese nationals to Sudan or to any third country where they may be at risk of being returned to Sudan.
- Support efforts to establish an independent investigative and accountability mechanism to monitor, collect and preserve evidence, and report on serious violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law that have occurred and continue to occur during this conflict.
- Increase emergency funding for humanitarian response in Sudan, as well as in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Ensure specific support for putting in place protection, care, treatment, and support mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence.
- Protect and promote the work of human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and civil society actors still in Sudan and at risk of attacks and violence. This should include concrete support and emergency travel documentation for those who need to leave Sudan for their safety. In parallel, pro-actively foster contact and ensure longer-term support to Sudanese Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in exile to be able to continue their important work.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.  
WHEN INJUSTICE HAPPENS  
TO ONE PERSON, IT  
MATTERS TO US ALL.**

#### CONTACT US



[info@amnesty.org](mailto:info@amnesty.org)



+44 (0)20 7413 5500

#### JOIN THE CONVERSATION



[www.facebook.com/AmnestyGlobal](https://www.facebook.com/AmnestyGlobal)



[@Amnesty](https://twitter.com/Amnesty)

# “DEATH CAME TO OUR HOME”

## WAR CRIMES AND CIVILIAN SUFFERING IN SUDAN

Since 15 April 2023, thousands of people in Sudan have been killed and injured in deliberate and indiscriminate attacks, as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have been battling each other in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country – notably in the Darfur and Kordofan regions. Scores of women and girls have been raped by members of the warring sides. Some of the violations by the parties to the conflict, including non-state armed groups and militias at times allied to either side, amount to war crimes.

Thousands of men, women and children have been caught in the crossfire, as the warring sides often use inaccurate weapons and explosive weapons with wide area effects, with fighters locating themselves in, and launching attacks from, densely populated residential areas. Looting and trashing of public and private property, including medical and humanitarian facilities, by the warring sides has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation. More than 2.6 million people have been internally displaced and over 750,000 have crossed into neighbouring countries. Amnesty International is calling on regional and international powers, notably members of the UN Security Council and UN Human Rights Council as well as state parties to the ICC, to take concrete measures to respond to the scale and urgency of the Sudan conflict.