



Sudan Dared to Be Free, Then the Military Arrived

By The Elephant



We stand in solidarity with the people of Sudan and we demand more resolute action from the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations (UN)

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, are deeply concerned about, and strongly condemn, the military coup in Sudan and the subsequent purported suspension of several provisions of the Constitutional Declaration; dissolution of the Sovereign Council, the Cabinet and of the Transitional Government of Sudan. We further condemn the arrest and detention of the Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, his wife, five ministers and other government officials and leaders as well as civil society actors. These actions violate the AU Shared Values and specific provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance regarding unconstitutional changes of government. We note that the military takeover has negative consequences for Sudan's transition into a democracy, a journey that had a major turning point in 2019 when civilians got rid of dictator Omar Hassan Al-Bashir through a peoples' revolution.

We also note with concern the switching off of the Internet and other communications channels, which has made it difficult for the Sudanese people to receive and send information within and outside of Sudan. We are also greatly troubled by the closure of the Sudanese airspace and land

borders, and suspension of all flights. This has meant that no one can travel into or out of Sudan. These limitations on the rights and freedoms of the Sudanese people as well as other nationalities present in Sudan is in stark violation of both the Sudanese Constitution as well as African and International Human rights norms.

We are aware that many Sudanese, committed to democratic ideals that they relentlessly fought for, have taken to the streets to peacefully protest the military takeover. We are, however, alarmed by reports appearing in a section of the media of the killings, torture and injuries of some of the protesting civilians by sections of the military.

As African citizens and institutions from across the continent and its diaspora, we demand that:

1. General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan and the parts of the military leadership under his control immediately and unconditionally release Prime Minister Hamdok, his wife, the ministers, other government officials and members of civil society;
2. This impugned military leadership transfers the leadership of Sudan back to the transitional government to operate as per the terms of the Political Agreement and the Constitutional Declaration of 17 July 2019 and 4 August 2019 respectively, and further that the entire provisions of Constitutional Declaration be respected and implemented;
3. Patriotic soldiers, battalions and garrisons desist from participating in or supporting the illegal martial government in any way, and certainly refrain from interfering with or harming peaceful protestors.
4. We call for the protection of civilians and the upholding of their right to protest and further call on the security forces to act with restraint in managing the public order situation in the Sudan. Specifically, we call on security forces to desist from use of force on civilians, as this is contrary to international law and also the various legal instruments created by the African Union;
5. We demand that this military leadership also lifts the restrictions on Internet access and use to enable people to communicate freely and access information;
6. We further demand that this military leadership also immediately opens up the airspace to enable travel into and out of the country without restrictions.

We note that the unconstitutional change of government that was perpetrated in Sudan has had a long build up, whose signs include the failed coup of 21 September 2021. The position of the African Union on Unconstitutional Change of Government is very clear, and requires an uncompromising rejection of such unconstitutional changes, the immediate suspension of the Member State in question, and immediate engagements, based firmly on AU law to reinstate democratic and legitimate government. We note with concern that, in the face of clear danger, the AU has dithered to implement this hard letter of the law on a few occasions in the last few years, a fact that might have encouraged the current situation in Sudan. While we are grateful that both the AU and IGAD provided initial public statements on the situation in Sudan, their statements were not strong enough. We also acknowledge that the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU-PSC) held a Session on Sudan and has suspended its Government in line with the applicable AU law. This is a positive first step. We reiterate that speaking clearly and strongly against the unconstitutional change of government is the only way in which large-scale violence and related human suffering can be averted.

As African citizens and institutions from across the continent and its diaspora, we therefore demand that AU and IGAD:

1. Follow up on their initial Statements with more robust Statements that demonstrate the actions they have taken in the first 48 hours after the coup and that clearly lay out the

- obtaining law and the processes that they propose to take in the next few days;
2. Confirm unequivocally to the people of Africa and the international community that Sudan currently stands suspended from the AU, pending these processes;
 3. Urgently convene the AU Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) and take the necessary follow-up measures.

We note that the Horn of Africa is already very volatile and that should Sudan be allowed to succumb to military-instigated conflict against a resistant citizenry, not only will there be unnecessary bloodshed and human suffering, but this would also have profound regional peace and security repercussions, affecting neighbours like the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and the rest of the East African region. We note the strong Statements already issued by the United Nations Secretary General and several members of the international community. We also acknowledge that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has convened a Session on Sudan. We call upon the United Nations (UN) to: -

1. Prioritise discussion and action on Sudan, respecting the aspirations and demands of the Sudanese people, and bearing in mind the potential ramification for the Horn and East Africa region.

As African citizens and institutions from across the continent and its diaspora, we will continue to be actively seized of this matter and will be making additional interventions and actions in the coming days. More importantly, we call upon all people around the world to unite and stand together with the brave Sudanese people to save and preserve their democratic transition and protect their human and peoples' rights. We urge for peaceful demonstrations and protests outside Sudanese Embassies across the continent and worldwide.

Signatories

A - Institutions

1. Advocacy Network for Africa, Washington DC, USA
2. AfricanDefenders (Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network)
3. African Union Watch, Banjul, The Gambia
4. African Women and Youth Initiative
5. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)/ Réseau de Développement et de Communication des Femmes Africaines
6. African Women Leaders Forum (AWLF), Zimbabwe
7. Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA), Kampala, Uganda
8. Chapter One Foundation, Lusaka, Zambia
9. Coalition for an effective African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACC), Arusha, Tanzania
10. Coalition Togolaise des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CTDDH), Lomé, Togo
11. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
12. Disability Amalgamation Community Trust (DACT), Zimbabwe
13. DITSHWANELO - The Botswana Centre for Human Rights, Gaborone, Botswana
14. Eastern Africa Youth Empowerment on Peace and Security
15. Echoes of Women in Africa Initiatives, Nigeria
16. HUDO Centre, Kampala, Uganda
17. Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA)
18. Institut des Médias pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (IM2DH), Lomé, Togo
19. Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD), Zimbabwe
20. International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), Kampala, Uganda

21. Inuka Kenya Ni Sisi!, Nairobi, Kenya
22. Kamma Organization for Development Initiatives (KODI), Sudan
23. Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Nairobi, Kenya
24. Nawi - Afrifem Macroeconomics Collective, Nairobi, Kenya
25. Network of Independent Commissions for Human Rights in North Africa
26. Nubsud Human Rights Monitors Organization (NHRMO), Sudan
27. OnetoAll Foundation, Meru, Kenya
28. Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), Johannesburg, South Africa
29. Oromo Legacy Leadership and Advocacy Association
30. Oromo Professionals Group (OPG), Washington DC
31. Rape Hurts Foundation, Uganda
32. Pan African Citizens Network (PACIN)
33. Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU), Arusha, Tanzania
34. Pan African Law and Justice Initiative, Kenya
35. Panos Institute Southern Africa
36. Plateforme de la Diaspora Tchadienne en Amerique
37. Southern Defenders (Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network)
38. Wakiso District Human Rights Committee , Uganda
39. Yearning Voices Foundation (YVF)
40. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Harare, Zimbabwe

B - Individuals

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 35. Siphosami Malunga, Executive Director, Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
 36. Tiseke Kasambala, Chief of Party, Freedom House, Johannesburg, South Africa
 37. Vusumuzi Sifile, Lusaka, Zambia
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