



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	Sudan
Main subject	Information on the treatment of political activists (including student activists) by the Sudanese Transitional Government established on 17 August 2019, in Darfur, Two Areas, Khartoum.
Question(s)	--
Date of completion	19 May 2020
Query Code	Q9-2020
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The information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care within a limited time frame. All sources used are referenced. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive neither conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EASO and makes no political statement whatsoever.

The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. Sources were accessed between 1 April 2020 and 19 May 2020. The answer was finalised on the 19 May 2020. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.



COI QUERY RESPONSE

Information on the treatment of political activists by the Sudanese Transitional Government established on 17 August 2019, in Darfur, Two Areas, Khartoum

Background

Since Sudan's independence in 1956, political instability prevailed, and the country experienced several military coups.¹

In January 2018, demonstrations first started in protest of high bread prices and economic conditions.² By the end of the year [2018], demonstrations dilated nationwide and turned into mass protests against president Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir's rule.³

Throughout 2019, protests continued and nearly 40 people died during mass demonstrations connected to the former presidents' state of emergency declaration in February 2019.⁴ A climax was reached on 6 April 2019 when protestors gathered in front of the military headquarter, demanding the army to support the ousting of president Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir.⁵ The Sudanese army did not always turn against the protestors, for example, on 6 April 2019, 'soldiers permitted the protestors to stay'.⁶ Less than a week later, after 30 years in office, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir was removed from office on 11 April 2019.⁷

However, the news of the replacement of president al-Bashir by General Ahmed Ibn Auf, former Defense Minister and head of military intelligence under al-Bashir's rule - who had been accused of supporting militias and perpetrating atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region -, originated protests. Activists continued to demand democracy and civilians to take over: 'a civilian is needed, not one of these army officers [...] we want a real democracy, with real freedom and human rights [and a] civilian-led transition.'⁸

Another major event during Sudan's pro-democracy movement was a crackdown on 3 June 2019, during which the security apparatus reportedly killed dozens of protestors 'and some had their bodies thrown into the River Nile',⁹ a report by Freedom House mentions 127 fatalities as a result of the 3 June 2019 crackdown on protestors.¹⁰

On 17 July 2019, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), which had been coordinating protest, and the Transitional Military Council (TMC) signed an agreement, which was followed by the completion

¹ fanack.com, Governance & Politics of Sudan, 9 September 2019, [url](#)

² BBC, Sudan profile - Timeline, 10 September 2019, [url](#)

³ HRW, Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

⁴ BBC, Sudan profile - Timeline, 10 September 2019, [url](#)

⁵ BBC, Sudan crisis: What you need to know, 16 August 2019, [url](#)

⁶ New York Times (The), Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir Is Ousted, but Not His Regime, 11 April 2019, [url](#)

⁷ Washington Post (The), Sudan's Omar Hassan al-Bashir is ousted after by military after 30 years in power, 11 April 2019, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudan protest leaders, military sign transitional government deal, 17 August 2019, [url](#)

⁸ New York Times (The), Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir Is Ousted, but Not His Regime, 11 April 2019, [url](#)

⁹ BBC, Sudan crisis: What you need to know, 16 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰ Freedom House, Sudan, 8 April 2020, [url](#)



of a Constitutional Declaration on 4 August 2019.¹¹ As envisaged by the agreement, a Sovereignty Council was established on 20 August 2019, leading to the dissolution of the TMC.¹² The Sovereignty Council also referred to as the Transitional Government, is based on a power-sharing tripartite agreement between the military, the civilians and the protest groups.¹³

The Draft Constitution Declaration outlines that:

‘The Sovereignty Council consists of 11 members, of whom five are civilians selected by the Forces of Freedom and Change, and five are selected by the Transitional Military Council. The eleventh member is a civilian, selected by agreement between the Transitional Military Council and the Forces of Freedom and Change. Over the first 21 months of the transitional period, the Sovereignty Council is chaired by someone selected by the military members, and in the remaining 18 months of the transitional period [...] it is chaired by a civilian member selected by the five civilian members who were selected by the Forces of Freedom and Change.¹⁴

The Transitional Government will rule for three years [November 2022], until Sudan’s next elections.¹⁵

The Transitional Government / Sovereignty Council¹⁶

2019

Sources mainly reported human rights violations against members of the opposition during president Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir’s rule until August 2019, while no information was found regarding the treatment of political activists since the instalment of the Sovereignty Council.

In general, according to Amnesty International, the previous year ‘[2019] was marked by [...] excessive use of force and unlawful killings by Sudanese security forces against peaceful protesters [as] security forces used live ammunition against demonstrators.’¹⁷ However, no explicit reference is made regarding the treatment of activists by the Transitional Government.¹⁸

Human Rights Watch does not mention any violations against protesters after the transition government came into force.¹⁹ Furthermore, the same sources does (also) not report on any repression against members of the opposition of the Transitional Government.²⁰ In line with previous sources consulted, Amnesty International does (also) not report on any mistreatment of members of

¹¹ Constitutionnet, Sudan Constitutional Declaration August 2019, n.d., [url](#)

¹² AfricanNews, Inside Sudan's 11-member Sovereign Council: All you need to know , 21 August 2019, [url](#)

¹³ BBC, Sudan timeline, 10 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ The Government of Sudan, Draft Constitutional Charter for the 2019 Transitional period, Chapter 4 (b), (c), 6 April 2019, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudan protest leaders, military sign transitional government deal, 17 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵ UNDP, 2020 is once in a lifetime opportunity to support Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶ The terms Transitional Government and Sovereignty Council are used interchangeable to refer to the collective head of state of Sudan until the country’s next election which are scheduled for 2022.

¹⁷ AI, Amnesty International, Human Rights in Africa, review of 2019, 2020, [url](#), p. 83

¹⁸ AI, Amnesty International, Sudan 2019, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹ HRW, Sudan events of 2019, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰ HRW, Sudan: Progress on Rights, Justice, Key to Transition, 20 February 2020, [url](#)



the opposition by the Transitional Government.²¹ USDOS does not report on repression of political activists by the current government either.²²

Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC), reporting on in their query response explicitly writes about students, political activists, human rights activists and journalists, however, they are mainly reporting on incidents that occurred before August 2019.²³

2020

On 14 January 2020, a revolt by some intelligence agency members occurred in Khartoum. The head of Sudan's Sovereignty Council, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, called it a coup and warned that the armed forces would 'confront any attempt to "destabilise security and stability and every attempt to abort revolution"'.²⁴

During 2020, several demonstrations took place, and some protests turned violent. On 20 February 2020, 53 people were injured, including 'many women and children', in anti-government protests in Sudan's capital.²⁵ Police and protestors clashed as thousands of protesters gathered asking for a restructuring of the Sudanese army, as well as the return of dismissed officers, which, according to the protestors were 'punished for showing solidarity with the anti-Bashir protests.'²⁶ The government had previously released a list of dismissed officers.²⁷

According to a media outlet, demonstrators were 'against the referral of a Sudanese army officer, 1st Lt. Muhammad Siddiq, who supported the protestors during the first sit-in in front of the army headquarters [...] the protestors are demanding that he be returned to the army.'²⁸

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella organisation for 17 Unions in Sudan, responsible for organising the protests that ousted president al-Bashir in 2019, strongly condemned the government's response during the 20 February protests, stating that 'this attitude against the protestors resembles the misdeeds of the old regime, so we demand the Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok to fire the police inspector and the interior minister.'²⁹

During protests on 12 April 2020, albeit lockdown restrictions, the police did not disperse the demonstration. However, an emergency decree was issued by the prime minister to sanction people not overserving the coronavirus lockdown measures.³⁰

Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir supporters protested on 16 April 2020 in Sudan's capital requesting the fall of the Transitional Government. In northern Sudan, pro-democracy activists and al-Bashir supporters clashed.³¹

²¹ AI, Amnesty International, Sudan 2019, n.d., [url](#)

²² USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

²³ ARC, Sudan: Query Response, The situation in Khartoum and Omdurman – An update (3rd version), 5 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁴ CNN, Head of Sudan's ruling council calls revolt by members of country's intelligence agency a 'coup', 15 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁵ Anadolu Agency, , Sudan: 53 people injured in anti-army protests, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁶ Anadolu Agency, Sudan: 53 people injured in anti-army protests, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁷ vox, Sudan just took a step backward on its path to democracy, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁸ vox, Sudan just took a step backward on its path to democracy, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁹ Anadolu Agency, Sudan: 53 people injured in anti-army protests, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

³⁰ Sudan Tribune (The), Sudan arrests Islamists for holding protests hostile to Hamdok government, 13 April 2020, [url](#)

³¹ Middle East Eye, Pro-Bashir Sudanese protestors march on army HQ despite coronavirus ban, 17 April 2020, [url](#)



There are reports of anti-corruption demonstrations held in April 2020 in South Darfur's El Radoom region, during which no violent incidents occurred. According to protestors, 'a protest like this [without violence] would have not been possible during al-Bashir's [...] rule [...] The mere fact that people can protest without fearing being slaughtered is a huge change.'³²

Another demonstration occurred on 10 May 2020, as al-Bashir's supporters rallied in Sudan's capital. Protests took place albeit the imposed lockdown measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus. The police broke up the rally and arrested several people. Demonstrations also took place in 'the states of Kassala, West Kordofan and South Darfur.'³³ According to the same source, 'the national army has been deployed in some areas in the downtown of Khartoum, closing the main roads that lead to the army headquarters [...] hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets in Khartoum and other states to demand the former president's release.'³⁴

³² OCCRP, Anti-Corruption Sit-In to Enter its Third Week in a Sudanese Town, 14 April 2020, [url](#)

³³ Anadolu Agency, Sudan police rally demanding Bashir's release, 3 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁴ Anadolu Agency, Sudan police rally demanding Bashir's release, 3 May 2020, [url](#)



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