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To the attn. of:

Ms Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

21 August 2026

Dear President von der Leyen,

THE EU MUST REDOUBLE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO SUDAN'S WAR ON CIVILIANS

We are writing to urge you to redouble European Union (EU) and member state action to protect civilians in Sudan. The [devastating conflict of over three years](#) in Sudan is a war against civilians. The EU must work to press all parties for an immediate ceasefire, disrupt the flow of weapons into the country, support the deployment of an independent and adequately resourced international protection force with a clear mandate to prevent further atrocities, and throw the full weight of the EU and its member states behind existing mechanisms for justice and accountability.

During over three years of brutal conflict, civilians in Darfur and across Sudan have been displaced, unlawfully detained, tortured, injured and killed on a massive scale. In a recently published report, [City Under Siege, Children Under Fire: Rapid Support Forces' Crimes Against Humanity in North Darfur](#), Amnesty International documents the Rapid Support Forces' (RSF's) slow and violent takeover of North Darfur and its capital, El Fasher.

El Fasher was the last major stronghold in Darfur for the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the allied Joint Forces (a coalition of local armed groups that draws heavily from the Zaghawa ethnic group). The area is of strategic importance due to its sizeable gold reserves and its geographical position linking Darfur to Libya and Chad along trans-Saharan trade routes. The RSF siege of this strategic city was made possible by the steady flow of weapons and other equipment from its foreign backers, most notably the United Arab Emirates (UAE).¹

Amnesty International concludes that the RSF committed war crimes in El Fasher and surrounding areas between mid-2024 and late 2025. Many were carried out as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population and amount to crimes against humanity under international law, including murder, forcible transfer, imprisonment, torture, rape, sexual slavery, other forms of sexual violence, enslavement and extermination.

The RSF repeatedly used derogatory and dehumanizing language while attacking civilians in El Fasher and surrounding areas, most of whom belonged to non-Arab ethnic groups. Amnesty International concludes that the RSF committed the crime against humanity of persecution on the basis of ethnicity in North Darfur.

Amnesty International further finds that the pattern of destroying villages in the Abu Zerega area, populated primarily by Zaghawa communities along with smaller numbers of other non-Arab ethnic groups, which took place between December 2024 and March 2025, is consistent with ethnic cleansing. This conclusion is reinforced by the RSF's continued control of these areas following the destruction of villages and by further preventing displaced populations from returning.

[Deep cuts to humanitarian funding](#) have compounded the crisis and worsened health risks, with Sudan's 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan still only 27% funded in early July 2026. Without urgent international action, this pattern of egregious abuses – and their devastating human impact – will continue.

¹ Amnesty International, [Sudan: Constant flow of arms fuelling relentless civilian suffering in conflict – new investigation](#), 26 July 2024; [Sudan: French-manufactured weapons system identified in conflict – new investigation](#), 14 November 2024; [Sudan: Advanced Chinese weaponry provided by UAE identified in breach of arms embargo – new investigation](#), 8 May 2025.

Over the past 18 months, the RSF have laid a partial siege on El Obeid, North Kordofan, a city home to over 500,000 people. The RSF has also carried out drone attacks in and around the city, including in the last few weeks targeting key civilian infrastructure such as power facilities, markets and hospitals, leading to civilian casualties. Without urgent international action, the people of El Obeid risk confronting the same fate as those who lost their lives and future in El Fasher.

From the October 2025 [Council Conclusions](#) on Sudan to recent [sectoral measures](#) targeting the war economy, the EU and its member states have signalled their commitment to an immediate and sustainable ceasefire, the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, justice and the respect for international law.

Together with regional and international partners, the EU and its member states must build now on their statements of concern and commitment to take concrete steps to protect civilians and break the cycle of impunity in Sudan. We call on the EU and its member states to urgently take the following actions:

- Use all available diplomatic, political and economic leverage to ensure the SAF, the RSF and their allied forces agree to and implement a nationwide ceasefire accompanied by a sustainable framework for longer-term security and stability, human rights protection, justice and accountability. Regardless of progress towards a ceasefire, immediately call on all parties to the conflict to end attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and ensure unrestricted, unhindered and immediate humanitarian access across Sudan, including in North Darfur.
- Prioritize robust actions towards protection of civilians, including by supporting efforts for the deployment of an international protection force to Sudan and joining the newly created Coalition for Atrocity Prevention and Justice for Sudan, ensuring it takes concrete action in response to ongoing violations.
- Engage the RSF with a view to preventing atrocities in El Obeid², including ending all drone strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure, allowing humanitarian aid to reach those in need and facilitating the safe passage of civilians fleeing the city.
- Call for all countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 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; in parallel, work with the UN Security Council and others to expand and enforce the arms embargo regime that currently applies to Darfur to the rest of Sudan.
- Implement any domestic laws that would restrict arms sales to countries fuelling the conflict. Implement domestic legislation to prevent arms sales to the UAE until the UAE can make credible guarantees that no weapons will be re-exported to Sudan or to other embargoed destinations, and that all its past breaches of the UN Security Council's arms embargoes are thoroughly investigated and perpetrators brought to account.
- Urgently increase funding for an inclusive humanitarian response in Sudan as well as in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, including dedicated support for child protection. This should include family tracing and reunification, psycho-social support, prevention of and response to child recruitment, sexual violence and other grave violations, reintegration for children formerly associated with armed actors, disability-inclusive and age-appropriate services, safe reporting and referral pathways, and emergency education. Child protection should be treated as a core part of the humanitarian response, not an optional add-on.
- Support and fund comprehensive, survivor-centred assistance for survivors of sexual violence, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare, clinical management of rape, psycho-social support, safe shelter and livelihood support. International partners should also fund efforts to combat stigma and provide flexible support to survivor-led groups and local women's organizations working directly with survivors.
- Exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed under international law in Sudan under the principle of universal and extraterritorial jurisdiction and open structural investigations into the systemic patterns of crimes under international law committed in Sudan; in parallel, ensure that those responsible for grave violations in Sudan do not find a safe haven in third states.
- Call for prompt, independent investigations and prosecutions of named commanders and other suspects identified in Amnesty International's [report](#), including through international and domestic mechanisms.
- Provide sustained financial and political support to the three existing accountability mechanisms for Sudan, ensuring they have adequate resources to effectively carry out their mandates – the UN Independent International

² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [High Commissioner Türk calls for strong action at the highest level to prevent atrocity crimes in Sudan](#), 3 July 2026; [European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2026 on the threat of war crimes, the escalating violations of international humanitarian law and the human rights situation in El-Obeid, Sudan](#), 9 July 2026.

Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan (FFM); the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Joint Fact-Finding Mission on the Human Rights Situation in the Republic of the Sudan; and the International Criminal Court (ICC) – and press for the expansion of the ICC's jurisdiction to international crimes committed in the whole of Sudan.

- At the UN Human Rights Council's 63rd session (7 September-9 October 2026), support a mandate extension for the Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan, in full, for two years, in line with [joint recommendations](#) from Sudanese and international organizations.
 - Ensure that the FFM has adequate resources to fulfil its mandate to investigate ongoing grave violations, collect and preserve evidence, and identify perpetrators with a view to ensuring that they are held accountable.
 - Strengthen the FFM's capacity by providing it with adequate financial resources and expertise.
 - Consider ways to further enhance the capacity of the FFM, and that of the UN system more widely, to support accountability efforts, including through the collection, consolidation and preservation of evidence on suspected perpetrators of crimes under international law, as part of a holistic approach to atrocity prevention and accountability.
- Ensure protection and assistance for people fleeing Sudan, opening safe and regular pathways, and refrain from returning Sudanese nationals to Sudan or to any third country where they would be at real risk of serious human rights violations or of being returned to Sudan. This must include refraining from interceptions at sea conducted or funded by the EU and its member states and resulting in the return of Sudanese nationals to Libya, Tunisia or any other country where they would be at real risk of being returned to Sudan.
- Redouble EU and member state engagement with the UAE up to highest level, including publicly and explicitly, on the country's role in fuelling the Sudan conflict:
 - Raise concerns on arms transfers from UAE to Sudan, including in potential violation of the UN arms embargo on Darfur.
 - Fully use the opportunity of EU negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement and linked Strategic Partnership Agreement with UAE to raise these concerns robustly and set the groundwork for continued exchanges with UAE on its role in fuelling the conflict.
 - In parallel, ensure that ongoing EU-UAE negotiations are linked to concrete and measurable benchmarks for progress on human rights both in the UAE's internal and external policy. Before concluding either agreement, the EU should conduct a human rights impact assessment – assessing both internal and external policies – and ensure due diligence requirements are fulfilled. Both agreements should include a suspensive human rights clause, grounding the agreements in respect for human rights in the parties' internal and international policy, as an essential element of the agreements and with a view to ensuring that these agreements do not contribute to ongoing violations.

Yours sincerely,



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