



**'Don't ask about him':**  
**Detention facilities and practices in Khartoum State**  
**in the context of the conflict in the Sudan**

## Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Legal framework</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>A. International legal framework</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>B. National legal framework</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>A. RSF-controlled places of detention and detention practices</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>B. SAF-controlled places of detention and detention practices</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Conclusion and recommendations</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Annex I: Satellite imagery analysis of possible burial sites</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Annex II: Map of Khartoum and places of detention</b>	<b>21</b>

## I. Introduction

1. Khartoum city, the capital of the Sudan, with a pre-war population exceeding nine million,<sup>1</sup> rapidly became the epicentre of the conflict that erupted on 15 April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The outbreak of hostilities followed tensions between these two entities as a result, *inter alia*, of their disagreement on proposals for security sector reform,<sup>2</sup> and escalated into a devastating conflict marked by gross violations and abuses of international human rights law, as well as serious violations of international humanitarian law, including unlawful killing, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, and forced displacement. The impact on civilians in Khartoum State has been catastrophic, with large-scale displacement,<sup>3</sup> destruction of infrastructure critical to the survival of the civilian population,<sup>4</sup> and an escalating humanitarian crisis. Urban warfare – characterised by the launch of indiscriminate attacks, including through use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, and often without any prior warning, on residential neighbourhoods and other populated areas – have rendered once-vibrant neighbourhoods uninhabitable, leaving civilians with limited access to clean water, food, healthcare, or shelter.

2. Since mid-2023, the RSF has controlled most of Khartoum State, consolidating its presence in urban centres and transforming civilian infrastructure – including private homes, schools, and places of worship – into makeshift military bases and detention facilities. Meanwhile, the SAF has maintained pockets of control, particularly in key strategic locations across the city, often engaging in intense fighting to repel RSF advances. In September 2024, the SAF have launched a series of offensives to regain control of critical areas in Khartoum State, leading to intensified clashes.

3. The present report examines detention practices by both parties to the conflict in Khartoum State, with a particular focus on detention facilities used by the RSF and the SAF. Through victim and witness accounts, it highlights the human rights violations and abuses, as well as the violations of international humanitarian law, that have taken place inside these facilities. The dynamics of territorial control within Khartoum State have shifted frequently as the intensity of hostilities fluctuates, resulting in a complex and unpredictable environment. This fluidity means that civilian areas and critical infrastructure, including potential detention sites, can fall under the authority of either party as the conflict progresses.<sup>5</sup> However, for the purpose of this report, the focus remains on the existence of and conditions in these detention facilities, as described by the victims, irrespective of any subsequent changes in control. The existence of these sites, regardless of which party controls the territory at any given time, underscores the pervasive risks civilians face amid hostilities and the lack of concrete and consistent oversight to protect their rights. The report covers the period between 15 April 2023 to June 2024.

## II. Methodology

4. On 26 September 2019, the Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Government of the Republic of the Sudan signed an Agreement to establish an OHCHR Country Office in the Sudan. Pursuant to this Agreement, and in accordance with the High Commissioner's global mandate under UN General Assembly resolution 48/141, the OHCHR Sudan Country Office monitors and reports on the human rights situation in the Sudan.

5. The findings of this report are based on the regular human rights monitoring conducted by OHCHR and on 34 interviews with individuals (31 men and 3 women) directly affected by detention practices in Khartoum State. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted with former detainees, and five were conducted

---

<sup>1</sup> See [OCHA Sudan: Khartoum State Profile \(March 2023\) | OCHA](#).

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/55/29, para. 6.

<sup>3</sup> According to the International Organization of Migration (IOM), 33 per cent of all internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sudan reportedly originated from Khartoum State, followed by South Darfur (19 per cent), and North Darfur (15 per cent) states. See [DTM Sudan Mobility Update \(10\).pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 70 to 80 per cent of healthcare facilities in areas worst affected by the conflict, such as Al-Jazirah and Khartoum states, as well as the Darfur and Kordofan regions, and about 45 per cent of health facilities in other parts of the country are now barely operational or closed.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in March 2024, the SAF announced the recapture of the Broadcasting buildings in Omdurman, and at the beginning of October 2024, the SAF also regained control of parts of Halfaya neighbourhood in Khartoum North (Bahri). These are two locations where OHCHR corroborated information about detention facilities previously controlled by the RSF during their period of control in these areas.

with witnesses and family members of victims. Of those interviewed by OHCHR, 26 testimonies detailed experiences within RSF-controlled places of detention,<sup>6</sup> while eight focused on SAF detention facilities. The former detainees interviewed provided detailed accounts of their conditions while in detention, the treatment and the abuses they endured or witnessed. These testimonies were cross-referenced to identify detention facilities and consistent patterns of human rights violations and abuses, and to substantiate findings across various locations and facilities. Additionally, OHCHR received consistent and reliable reports from other reliable independent sources regarding detention practices and detention facilities in Khartoum State. Corroborated information from these reports has been included to further substantiate the findings in this report.

6. Due to the ongoing conflict and limited access to the country, OHCHR faced significant challenges, including the inability to access detention sites physically, risks of reprisals against individuals who were interviewed, and difficulties in monitoring detention practices in real-time.

7. Satellite imagery analysis was conducted to verify both the locations of alleged detention facilities, as indicated in the testimonies, and five burial sites possibly associated with these detention facilities. The imagery provided an additional layer of corroboration, supporting victims' accounts and helping to corroborate the existence and condition of these sites as well as specific geographical markers tied to detainees and witnesses' reports.

8. In gathering, assessing and analysing information collected, OHCHR's standard methodology on human rights monitoring, including the principle of "do no harm", was applied. Information gathered was corroborated using multiple independent sources, to establish facts and analyse violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law in the context of the ongoing hostilities. OHCHR employs a "reasonable grounds to believe" standard<sup>7</sup> in its assessment of incidents and considers the credibility and reliability of the sources, taking into account their nature and objectivity. It draws conclusions in its assessment of documented incidents only when that standard has been met.

### **III. Legal framework**

#### **A. International legal framework**

9. A non-international armed conflict is ongoing in the Sudan between the SAF and the RSF, supported by their respective allied armed movements and militias since 15 April 2023. Consequently, in this situation, international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL) apply concurrently.<sup>8</sup>

10. The Sudan is party to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). Consequently, Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 as well as Protocol II, in addition to the rules of international customary law, apply to the situation.<sup>9</sup> These obligations are also binding on the parties to the armed conflict, including associated non-State actors and armed groups taking part in hostilities.

11. IHRL continues to apply in situations of non-international armed conflict. As a party to a number of international human rights treaties,<sup>10</sup> the Sudan must respect and ensure the human rights established therein to all individuals in its territory and subject to its jurisdiction. This entails the State's obligation to exercise due diligence and do everything in their capacity to protect all persons who may be within their territory and

---

<sup>6</sup> OHCHR notably interviewed 13 victims who were detained in the Al-Riyadh complex, Eastern Khartoum, between May and December 2023. Additionally, OHCHR interviewed a family member of a detainee who reportedly died in custody at the facility in June 2024. OHCHR also interviewed 11 victims formerly detained at Soba facility. Interviews with victims detained in Soba suggested that the RSF began using the facility to house individuals transferred from other detention sites, such as Al-Riyadh, by mid-2023.

<sup>7</sup> Meaning that factual information has been collected that would satisfy an objective and ordinarily prudent observer that the incident has occurred as described with a reasonable degree of certainty.

<sup>8</sup> The applicable legal framework is set out in annual reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council: see [A/HRC/55/29](#) and [A/HRC/50/22](#).

<sup>9</sup> [A/HRC/55/29](#)

<sup>10</sup> [A/HRC/50/22](#), para. 5.

all persons subject to their jurisdiction against threats to the enjoyment of human rights posed by non-State actors and armed groups. Where armed groups and other non-State actors exercise government-like functions and control over territory, they must also respect human rights standards when their conduct affects the human rights of individuals under their control.

### ***Deprivation of liberty***

12. The prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of liberty is enshrined in international human rights treaties, including in article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Sudan is a State party.<sup>11</sup> Under IHRL, detention is considered arbitrary and amounts to a violation of the right to liberty when it is unlawfully imposed and does not follow the permissible grounds and the procedures established by law, including access to legal counsel and to family.<sup>12</sup> Arrests conducted on discriminatory grounds, such as the origin or ethnicity of the person, violate international human rights law. The detention of children is only permitted as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time.<sup>13</sup>

13. Customary IHL also prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of liberty.<sup>14</sup> While rules of IHL may be relevant for the purposes of the interpretation of the concurrently applicable article 9 of the ICCPR, both spheres of law are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Security detention authorized and regulated by and complying with IHL is, in principle, is not arbitrary. Detention other than for reasons and in circumstances permitted under IHL however amounts to arbitrary detention.<sup>15</sup> In order to avoid arbitrariness, the grounds and procedures for any detention for imperative security reasons must be clearly and lawfully defined, and an effective review procedure established.

### ***Enforced disappearance***

14. Under IHL, parties to the conflict are required to take steps to prevent disappearances, including through the registration of persons deprived of their liberty.<sup>16</sup> They are also required to take all feasible measures to account for persons reported missing as a result of the armed conflict and to provide their family members with information they have on their fate.<sup>17</sup>

15. Enforced disappearance is prohibited by international human rights law, including by the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED) to which Sudan is a State party. Enforced disappearance constitutes a continuing offence that does not end until the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared person are clarified.<sup>18</sup> According to the UN Human Rights Committee, enforced disappearance constitutes a single, integrated group of acts that represents a continuing violation of various rights recognized in the ICCPR, including the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the right to liberty and security of the person.<sup>19</sup>

16. Arbitrary detention, accompanied by multiple transfers of an individual between locations, increases risks of enforced disappearance. A person deprived of their liberty is entitled to notify or require the authority to notify family members and other appropriate persons of the arrest, detention or imprisonment, or after each transfer.<sup>20</sup> The State is also obliged to investigate all allegations of enforced disappearance including those committed by non-State actors.

---

<sup>11</sup> Article 9(2) of the ICCPR explicitly requires that detainees shall be informed, at the time of the arrest, of the reasons for the arrest, and shall also be promptly informed of any charges against them.

<sup>12</sup> ICCPR Article 9.

<sup>13</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 37(b).

<sup>14</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law Database* (CIHL), Rule 99.

<sup>15</sup> CIHL Rule 99; see also Human Rights Committee, *General Comment no. 35*, para. 64.

<sup>16</sup> CIHL Rules 98 and 123.

<sup>17</sup> CIHL Rule 117.

<sup>18</sup> CED, Art. 8(1); *Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*, A/RES/47/133, Art. 17(1). For a fuller listing of the rights violated in enforced disappearances, see United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, “Enforced Disappearances: Fact Sheet No. 6, Rev. 4”, fact sheet, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> CCPR/C/135/D/3321/2019, para. 8.3; CCPR/C/113/D/2000/2010, para. 11.3.

<sup>20</sup> See Thematic Consultation of Government Experts on Conditions of Detention and Particularly Vulnerable Detainees <https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/files/2014/detention-background-doc-2014.pdf>, and also principle 16 of the [Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment](#).

### ***Torture and ill-treatment***<sup>21</sup>

17. A number of international human rights treaties, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), to which Sudan is also a State party, and ICCPR, prohibit torture and other forms of ill-treatment under any circumstances, obligations which are not subject to any permissible derogation<sup>22</sup>. Allegations of torture and cruel or inhuman treatment must be investigated.

18. IHL also prohibits acts of torture and cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity and other humiliating and degrading treatment.<sup>23</sup> Relevant acts include, for example, severe beating, prolonged denial of sleep, lack of access to available food, hygiene and medical assistance, as well as threats of torture or other ill-treatment. The physical or mental health and integrity of persons in detention should be protected.<sup>24</sup> The obligation to investigate and prosecute persons alleged to have committed crimes under international law, such as torture, is found in a number of treaties that apply to acts committed in non-international armed conflicts.<sup>25</sup> Any deaths occurring in their custody should be investigated. Armed groups are responsible for the acts committed by persons forming part of such group.<sup>26</sup>

19. Solitary confinement and incommunicado detention are forms of deprivation of liberty that can be particularly harmful to a person's physical and mental well-being, and may amount to ill-treatment or even torture.<sup>27</sup> The right to life of a detained person is also violated if authorities fail to take available steps to duly protect it, including cases of deaths caused by poor prison conditions or neglect, such as by denial of medical care to detainees in need.<sup>28</sup> Non-State actors must equally protect the lives of persons in places of detention under their control.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Work conditions and safeguards in detention and the recruitment and use of children***

20. According to article 5(1)e of the Additional Protocol II, to which Sudan is a State party, persons who were deprived of their liberty for reasons related to the armed conflict shall, if made to work, have the benefit of working conditions and safeguards similar to those enjoyed by the local civilian population.<sup>30</sup> Children who have not attained the age of 15 years must neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities.<sup>31</sup> The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>32</sup> to which Sudan is also a State party, explicitly prohibits armed groups to recruit or use in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years. Children who had been recruited in violation of applicable international law by armed forces and armed groups and were accused of having committed crimes during armed conflicts should be treated primarily as victims of violations of international law.

21. IHRL protects all persons from forced labour and grants them the right to just and favourable conditions of work.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, all work exacted under a threat or intimidation and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily may amount to a violation of human rights.<sup>34</sup> Under IHRL, children have the

---

<sup>21</sup> Ill-treatment refers to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

<sup>22</sup> ICCPR Article 4(2), CAT Article 2(2).

<sup>23</sup> Common Article 3; AP II Article 4; CIHL Rule 90.

<sup>24</sup> AP II Article 5(2)(e).

<sup>25</sup> CIHL Rule 158.

<sup>26</sup> CIHL Rule 149; ICCPR Articles 2(1) and 6(1).

<sup>27</sup> CCPR General Comment No. 20, para. 6, General Comment No. 35, para. 56.

<https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/hrc/1992/en/11086>, and Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (A/63/175).

<sup>28</sup> ICCPR Article 2; The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners [the Nelson Mandela rules] (SMR) Rule 71; Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (A/61/311), para. 49 – 52.

<sup>29</sup> Common Art. 3; APII Article 4(2)(a). 1

<sup>30</sup> See also CIHL Rule 95.

<sup>31</sup> AP II Article 4(3)(c) and (d); CIHL Rule 136.

<sup>32</sup> Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Article 4.

<sup>33</sup> ICCPR Article 8(3); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 7.

<sup>34</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO): Forced Labour Convention, Article 2. Sudan, as a member of the ILO, is bound by the Convention.

right to be protected from child labour.<sup>35</sup> Recruitment for use in an armed conflict and work of a harmful nature to the health, safety or morals of children constitute prohibited forms of child labour.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Conditions of detention***

22. During armed conflict, persons not or no longer taking a direct part in hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention or any other cause, shall in all circumstance be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction.<sup>37</sup> In this vein, they should be provided inter alia with food and drinking water, in sufficient quantities and of adequate quality, and provided with medical attention.<sup>38</sup>

23. Persons deprived of their liberty must be held in premises which are not close to the combat zone and be afforded safeguards as regards health and hygiene and protection against the rigours of the climate and the dangers of the armed conflict.<sup>39</sup> Such persons shall also be evacuated when their places of detention become particularly exposed to danger arising out of the armed conflict.<sup>40</sup>

24. Children who are deprived of their liberty must be held in quarters separate from those of adults, and women also must be held in quarters separate from those of men, except where families are accommodated as family units.<sup>41</sup> When children are deprived of liberty, they should be separated from adults and be treated in accordance with age-related needs.<sup>42</sup> The State assumes responsibility to provide appropriate care for the women and their children in prison. Children should remain with their imprisoned mothers if it is in their best interest.<sup>43</sup>

25. All places of deprivation of liberty, including temporary locations, should be designated as an official place of detention and authorities must still comply with their obligations regarding the treatment of persons detained.<sup>44</sup>

26. Under IHRL, all persons deprived of their liberty, regardless of the place of detention, are entitled to be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity.<sup>45</sup> Lack of adequate accommodation, including inadequate space and means to provide for personal hygiene, lack of adequate food and water, lack of access to adequate medical services, and the denial of communication with the outside world are all examples of situations that typically amount to inhuman conditions of detention, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, or even torture. Prolonged exposure to particularly inhuman conditions of detention, when inflicted intentionally, is tantamount to torture.

27. Detention conditions should comply with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules).<sup>46</sup> Overcrowding in prison cells of inadequate size,<sup>47</sup> inadequate ventilation and natural light,<sup>48</sup> dirty and unhygienic facilities,<sup>49</sup> as well as inadequate sanitary facilities<sup>50</sup> can constitute violations of a range of human rights. Particularly poor conditions of detention may reach the threshold of ill-treatment or, in severe cases when inflicted intentionally, torture.<sup>51</sup> This can include when individuals are singled out for

---

<sup>35</sup> CRC Article 32 provides that work hazardous, harmful or exploitative to the child's development would be a violation to human rights.

<sup>36</sup> ILO: Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, Article 3.

<sup>37</sup> Common Art. 3; AP II Articles 2 and 4.

<sup>38</sup> Common Art. 3; APII Articles 4 – 5.

<sup>39</sup> CIHL Rule 90; AP II Article 5 (1)(b) and 5(2)(c).

<sup>40</sup> AP II Article 5 (2)(c).

<sup>41</sup> CIHL Rules 19 and 20.

<sup>42</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 37(c); ICCPR Articles 10(2)(b) and (3); SMR Rule 11.

<sup>43</sup> CRC Article 3(1).

<sup>44</sup> ICCPR, Art. 7, 10; CRC, Art. 37; CED Art. 17; SMR [the Nelson Mandela rules].

<sup>45</sup> ICCPR Article 10 (1); Human Rights Committee, [General Comment No. 21](#), para. 2.

<sup>46</sup> In December 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the “United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners”. The Human Rights Committee has affirmed that compliance with these rules is necessary to meet international detention standards.

<sup>47</sup> SMR, Rule 14(a).

<sup>48</sup> SMR Rules 13 and 14.

<sup>49</sup> SMR Rules 16 and 17.

<sup>50</sup> SMR Rule 15.

<sup>51</sup> Human Rights Committee, [General Comment No. 20](#), paras. 4-6.



harsh treatment or punishment, for example by being held in solitary confinement, or by being denied family visits or medical treatment.

28. All persons deprived of their liberty, in any form, have the right to receive adequate food and drinking water,<sup>52</sup> as part of their right to be treated humanely and with respect for their inherent dignity.<sup>53</sup> Access to adequate healthcare is also a key element of their rights while in detention.<sup>54</sup>

## **B. National legal framework**

29. The 2019 Constitutional Document<sup>55</sup> requires the Sudan to respect all rights and freedoms enshrined in international and regional human rights treaties ratified by the Sudan,<sup>56</sup> including its commitment to protect all persons from arbitrary arrests and forced labour, and their entitlement to humane treatment and respect of their dignity while in detention.<sup>57</sup> The Document also provides for the protection of all persons from torture and ill-treatment, and entails special protection for children.<sup>58</sup>

30. The Sudanese Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) of 1991 governs arrest and detention, including requiring that detainees be presented before a judicial authority within 24 hours of arrest,<sup>59</sup> with the need to inform them of the reason for the arrest and be brought immediately before the prosecutor or a judge.<sup>60</sup> The CPC stipulates that the arrested person shall be treated humanely and with respect for their dignity, shall not be subjected to any physical or moral abuse, shall be given access to their legal counsel and provided with medical care.<sup>61</sup>

31. In addition, the Regulation of Prisons and Treatment of Inmates Act (PTIA) of 2010 aims to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners with special provisions relating to the treatment and care afforded to women and children, in addition to the separation of prisoners and the rehabilitation of juveniles.<sup>62</sup> Prisoners are also to be provided with medical care, food and drinking water, and shall be permitted to have access to family visits and legal counsel.<sup>63</sup>

## **IV. Findings**

32. The findings of this report reveal gross violations and abuses of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law by both the RSF and the SAF in detention facilities across Khartoum State. Both parties have engaged in arbitrary detention of civilians, often holding them indefinitely without charges, without access to legal representation or without being presented before a court. Detainees were subjected to severe forms of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, with the RSF typically using beatings and electric shocks. Both parties have kept detainees in inhumane conditions of detention, characterized by extreme overcrowding, poor ventilation, and insufficient sanitation. In RSF-controlled facilities, inadequate food and water led to malnutrition and preventable deaths, while denial of medical care resulted in high death rates from untreated illnesses and injuries.

---

<sup>52</sup> SMR Rule 22.

<sup>53</sup> ICCPR Article 10(1); ICESCR Article 11(1). Violations have also been found where food is of poor quality, of insufficient quantity or not prepared hygienically, as well as when the detained person was denied access to clean drinking water.

<sup>54</sup> ICESCR Article 12(1); SMR Rules 24-35.

<sup>55</sup> The Constitutional Document is also referred to as the Constitutional Declaration. It was amended in October 2020 to incorporate the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan. On 25 October 2021, the Sudanese military, led by the Chair of the Transitional Sovereignty Council and the Chief in Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, launched a military coup against the civilian government, announced a nationwide state of emergency and suspended Articles 11, 12, 15, 16, 24 (3), 71 and 72 of the Constitutional Document, which remain suspended until now, and dissolved the Sovereignty Council and the Council of Ministers ([A/HRC/50/22](#)).

<sup>56</sup> Constitutional Document Article 42 (2).

<sup>57</sup> Constitutional Document Articles 46 and 47.

<sup>58</sup> Constitutional Document Articles 50 – 51.

<sup>59</sup> CPC, Article 79.

<sup>60</sup> CPC Articles 72 and 75.

<sup>61</sup> CPC Articles 83 and 135.

<sup>62</sup> Regulation of PTIA of 2010, Articles 10, 11, 13, 15 and 17.

<sup>63</sup> PTIA Articles 21, 22 and 28.



33. The RSF reportedly repurposed civilian infrastructure into places of detention. Both the RSF and the SAF were found to have detained children, with the RSF reportedly recruiting children as guards. Detention based on ethnicity and torture were widespread in both the RSF and the SAF places of detention, and detainees were frequently held incommunicado, with no records or family notification. Psychological torture, death threats, and labour – including transporting military supplies under harsh conditions – were prevalent in the RSF facilities. Women and children were held in degrading conditions, and outbreaks of diseases due to poor sanitation further endangered detainees' health. Reports of extrajudicial killings and threats of execution were also documented, particularly in cases of attempted escapes from the RSF facilities.

## **A. RSF-controlled places of detention and detention practices**

34. OHCHR corroborated information about the existence of and detention practices in 39 RSF-controlled places of detention where, for the period covered by this report, an estimated 10,000 individuals were being detained. Reports and victims' accounts consistently indicated that persons deprived of liberty in these sites included civilians, police personnel and persons hors de combat, illustrating the broad profiles of detainees held by the RSF. Victims consistently reported that the RSF's largest facilities include Soba prison<sup>64</sup> and a compound in the Al-Riyadh<sup>65</sup> area, east of Khartoum. Beyond these two major sites, OHCHR corroborated information verifying that the RSF has repurposed a variety of civilian infrastructure – including residential buildings, government facilities, police stations, schools, a courthouse, two universities, a kindergarten, a shop and a factory – as places of detention. OHCHR further corroborated information about three military bases used for detention purposes, including for the detention of civilians.

35. Of the 39 places of detention corroborated by OHCHR, 17 were in Khartoum city, 13 in Khartoum North (Bahri), and 9 in Omdurman<sup>66</sup>. OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that the RSF operates a significantly larger number of detention sites than it was able to corroborate.

36. The RSF, according to numerous and consistent testimonies, have employed a systematic approach to detention beginning at checkpoints throughout Khartoum State and continuing through transit holding facilities. These checkpoints, scattered across areas under their control, serve, inter alia, as the initial sites of detention where civilians, security personnel, and even families travelling together are stopped, interrogated, and often subjected to physical harm. Transit holding facilities are then used as interim detention sites, where detainees are frequently transferred after being processed at checkpoints. Conditions in these facilities reflect severe disregard for the well-being of detainees, with widespread reports of torture, overcrowding, and deprivation of access to basic necessities. Victims described Al-Riyadh complex and Soba Prison as the final destinations for detainees, where they are subjected to prolonged arbitrary detention under severe and inhumane conditions.

---

<sup>64</sup> The Soba prison in Khartoum was inaugurated in 2021, as a penal institution with an initial capacity to hold approximately 3,600 inmates. Following the outbreak of the conflict in the Sudan, this facility was transformed by the RSF into a *de facto* detention centre. As early as April 2023, videos circulated on social media showing inmates fleeing the prison, reportedly because of the intensified fighting, lack of basic provisions, and the intervention of RSF members who allegedly opened the gates. As the conflict worsened, Soba expanded to become the largest detention centre in the capital, with estimates indicating that over 6,000 individuals may have been held there by June 2024, including civilians, SAF soldiers and officers, both in service and retired, as well as other individuals perceived as threats by the RSF. RSF fighters serving disciplinary sentences are reportedly among the detainees.

<sup>65</sup> The detention complex in Al-Riyadh, located along Obaid Khatim Street in eastern Khartoum, consists of several adjacent buildings, including an RSF military base formerly known as the Special Operations Unit of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Multiple locations within this block are reportedly used as places of detention, such as the basement of a building belonging to a security force, a university building, and the basement of another site opposite the General Administration of Forensic Evidence's building. This sprawling complex is estimated to hold over 3,000 detainees, making it second only to Soba prison in size. Victims and witnesses consistently reported a diverse detainee population, including SAF personnel, police officers, civilians, including women and children, foreigners, and individuals perceived as opposing the RSF. The layout, as consistently described by victims interviewed by OHCHR, reflects an organized and systematic approach to detention by the RSF, with detainees segregated according to perceived affiliations. Within the military base section, combatants and individuals suspected of SAF ties are reportedly kept in a two-storey building, with soldiers on the ground floor and officers on the upper floor. Civilians are confined to a large hangar-like structure nearby.

<sup>66</sup> Three of these detention places are located in areas in Omdurman that were later re-captured by the SAF in March 2024, and one in Khartoum North that was captured after the reporting period in January 2025.

*i. Deprivation of liberty*

37. Victims' accounts consistently mentioned the checkpoints function as primary control points where the RSF personnel systematically stopped individuals for detention. Victims reported that these stops were often accompanied by physical abuse, threats, and intimidation. In one case, a detainee recounted being detained at a checkpoint near his home, where RSF members entered his house and questioned his family members before blindfolding and handcuffing him. He was then transferred through a series of checkpoints, each time handed over to a new group of RSF members who beat him severely, often while accusing him of being associated with the SAF. RSF officers accessed his phone, contacting individuals from his contact list to expose his private conversations and intimidate his associates through threats and blackmail. Another victim reported being stopped on his way to the Friday prayers. Despite explaining that he was a police assistant with no military affiliation, RSF members forced him into a vehicle, blindfolded him, and interrogated his contacts over the telephone. He was driven around Khartoum, shown RSF-controlled areas, and repeatedly told to comply under threat of violence.

38. One testimony described a group of around 40 individuals, including women and children, detained at a checkpoint near a hospital south of Khartoum. They were ordered to kneel and were beaten with leather whips, subjected to verbal insults, and had their personal belongings confiscated. The ill-treatment lasted several hours, with RSF members focusing on detainees perceived to be connected to the police or the SAF. In another instance, a police officer was publicly identified by an RSF-affiliated individual, leading to severe beatings at the checkpoint. Refusing to kneel, the officer informed OHCHR that he was struck with a gun butt and eventually transported to a detention facility north of Omdurman by motorcycle in a semi-conscious state. Testimonies illustrate the RSF's use of checkpoints not only to detain but also to publicly punish and humiliate individuals and confiscate their personal belongings, reflecting a broader pattern of intimidation and control over the civilian population.

39. OHCHR received consistent reports of the RSF detaining women in both transit and major facilities. From victims' accounts, the number of women detained is estimated to be at least 100. Former detainees interviewed by OHCHR noted that in some cases, children as young as two years old were detained alongside their mothers, without consideration to their special needs, and forced to endure the same inadequate food, water, and sanitation. In several detention centres, children as young as 13 years old were reportedly held alongside adult men, exposing them to the same conditions and risks. OHCHR received one eyewitness account of alleged sexual violence against female detainees in one detention facility in Jabal Awlia locality, south of Khartoum, and another account of sexual exploitation in a facility in Al-Mamoura, eastern Khartoum.

40. Access to the outside world for persons deprived of liberty in RSF-controlled detention facilities was consistently reported by former detainees as virtually non-existent, with only one person interviewed by OHCHR reporting a family visit, which occurred at Soba prison. The overwhelming majority of detainees indicated that their families had no information about their fate or whereabouts. One victim recounted "My sister insisted I send her a picture when I called saying I was released; someone had told them I was dead." Another victim told OHCHR, "when I was released, I went to my family home in Omdurman, only to find the entire neighbourhood was empty. I found one neighbour still in the area. I was barefoot and wearing the same clothes I had on eight months ago when I was arrested. She gave me clothes but she did not have money for me to go access the internet. I stayed with her for three days before her family sent her money. When I contacted my family, I learned that they had all left for a neighbouring country after they had received information that I had died in detention. My mother was diagnosed with heart problems and high blood pressure as a result." Victims indicated that detainees with connections to high-ranking RSF officials sometimes received family visits, though these were brief and heavily supervised interactions. In some cases, detainees paid substantial sums for conditional freedom, often facilitated by intermediaries with RSF ties. "People who had relatives within the RSF had some hope, but for most of us, there was nothing," another detainee shared.

*ii. Torture and other forms of ill-treatment*

41. Across both transit and major detention facilities, RSF practices reveal a consistent pattern of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Testimonies detailed frequent beatings with hoses and whips, electric shocks, and other methods seem to be intended to dehumanize detainees, which may amount to torture. Many detainees reported that guards intentionally withheld food, water, and medical care believed to be part of a broader strategy to humiliate and degrade them.

42. During transit, detainees were often restrained and occasionally subjected to violence, creating an atmosphere of fear even as they were moved between facilities. Detainees transferred between RSF detention facilities described being blindfolded, lined up, and subjected to physical abuse during the process. For example, victims recounted being moved at night in vehicles, including pickup trucks, with minimal space, forcing them to endure the journey in tightly packed and uncomfortable conditions. Other victims also described being blindfolded and beaten repeatedly before being loaded into a truck, with guards shouting insults and threats, and being transported alongside other 40 detainees, packed tightly, blindfolded and in severe discomfort, with no knowledge of their destination, amplifying their sense of fear and helplessness. “When we arrived at the destination, many of us fell because we couldn’t see the truck steps. They whipped us the entire way with severe insults,” the victim explained.

43. OHCHR received numerous accounts of severe forms of torture and ill-treatment within RSF-controlled transit places of detention. Victims described being subjected to physical and psychological abuse, including severe beatings with whips, metal rods, and hoses; electric shocks; and suspension in painful positions. Many detainees were allegedly deliberately ill-treated based on their suspected affiliations, with RSF personnel using derogatory language to humiliate and dehumanize them. In several testimonies, victims recounted threats of execution, mock executions, and the use of intimidation tactics to extract information or confessions.

44. In one testimony, a detainee described being taken to a hotel building in Al-Fitihab, Omdurman. Upon arrival, RSF personnel demanded that he lead them to the homes of SAF officers or wealthy civilians, under threat of continued detention. When he could not comply, he was subjected to severe beatings with hoses, gun butts, and electric shocks until he lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness, he found himself in a crowded room where he observed the lifeless bodies of detainees who had not survived the beatings. He said “when I woke up, my body was soaked in blood, my left eye could not see, and my left ear could not hear. My leg was swollen and my entire body was in pain”. He added, “the man beside me warned me, ‘do not lift your head as they will take you upstairs and torture you again’. The victim further reported that the RSF employed cruel methods of assault, such as hanging gas cylinders and pushing them to hit detainees in the chest and face if they denied affiliation to the SAF, leading to serious injuries. The victim described an environment of intense suffering, where detainees were beaten until unconscious, and the dead bodies were callously discarded. The victim said that due to the extreme methods of torture used, many civilian detainees claimed to be military personnel to avoid further suffering. Those who survived were left with visible injuries, swollen limbs, and impaired senses due to the lack of medical care.

45. Another detainee recounted his experience in another detention facility, a residential building in Al-Fitihab, Omdurman, saying that “the torture intensified as they beat me with leather whips on every part of my body. For over an hour, they bound my hands and feet behind my back, suspended me from the ceiling, and beat the soles of my feet, asking if I was ready to confess. My fingernails had been completely removed, and I could not walk as my face and back were swollen”. The victim witnessed other detainees returning from interrogation, who also often bore marks of severe beatings. In another example, a detainee, who was held in a residential building in Al-Kalakla, south of Khartoum, recounted that he was subjected to brutal beatings, and witnessed RSF personnel torturing detainees collectively in what guards called Matara Sabat, i.e., “the rain fell,” which means that detainees would receive hits from all directions. The victim further told OHCHR that guards used metal rods and leather whips, and he saw several detainees lose consciousness and others severely injured, with no medical care provided. He reported seeing other detainees he recognized from his neighbourhood, including SAF soldiers and police officers, who had endured similar beatings and suffered from untreated injuries.

46. Another victim recounted his harrowing experience in a detention facility, a residential building in East Nile locality, where he was subjected to severe physical abuse upon arrival. Six RSF personnel took turns beating him with leather whips, leaving his body covered in welts and open wounds. Similar brutal treatment was inflicted on all new detainees, fostering a pervasive climate of fear and suffering. Held in a crowded room of 16 square metres with approximately 15 to 20 other detainees, he endured untreated injuries and continued abuse during interrogations and at random intervals during his detention.

47. Based on the corroborated information collected, OHCHR found that torture and other forms of ill-treatment were systematically used within the Al-Riyadh complex, where detainees described brutal physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by RSF personnel. For example, a victim recounted being lined up, blindfolded, and subjected to mock executions. “They told us to hold on to the person in front of us, and if anyone moved, they would shoot us, then they beat us for hours,” said the victim. Amid the dire conditions

of Al-Riyadh complex, a victim described being forced into a filthy basement with over 200 detainees, including older persons, persons with disability, and children. He added “we were beaten if we tried to move or pray without their permission.”

48. Torture techniques in Al-Riyadh complex included severe beatings and other cruel and degrading methods, often coupled with discriminatory treatment based on ethnicity or perceived affiliations to SAF. In one compelling example, a detainee described being subjected to a five-hour interrogation, during which he was severely beaten and threatened with death. “They accused me of being affiliated to SAF just because of my tribe,” he recounted. “They took everything from me, and as I refused to cooperate, they made my life hell.” Another victim recounted that those considered from African tribes from Darfur or Kordofan regions faced particular brutality, and that he could hear the sounds of beatings and their cries for help all night. He added that guards used sticks and rifle butts randomly. In the same complex, psychological torture further compounded the suffering of detainees. A released detainee reported that the guards laughed at them, calling them worthless, while beating others in front of them.

49. Among several cases of ill-treatment against detainees documented in the Al-Riyadh complex, a detainee recounted that they were sprayed multiple times with urine from the buckets located in their cell whenever the SAF defeated the RSF in a battle, with guards mocking, “we are not going to kill you, but we will finish you off this way.” Moreover, a former detainee reported to OHCHR that he witnessed the death by beating of a person with a mental disability who was tortured for attempting to escape the Al-Riyadh complex.

50. Similarly, victims consistently reported that acts amounting to torture and other forms of ill-treatment were the prevailing practices by the RSF in Soba prison, often starting as soon as detainees arrived. According to numerous testimonies obtained by OHCHR, physical abuse typically occurred at the reception area, where detainees were subjected to severe beatings with sticks and leather whips. A victim recounted that “we were taunted and beaten as they divided us into groups before taking us to the cells.” Such practices reportedly aimed to instil fear and submission among detainees.

51. In addition, solitary confinement was also reportedly used as a punitive measure in Soba prison. A detainee recounted being accused of planning a riot, so he was placed in a solitary cell measuring around 0.75 square metres, where he was severely beaten and kept in solitary confinement without adequate food and water. Another victim described the psychological toll of hearing the screams of others being tortured, saying “while some of us were beaten, others were treated kindly, but the constant screams of those being tortured haunted us.”

52. Detainees also recounted to OHCHR several incidents where detainees were beaten or ill-treated en masse as punishment for alleged complicity in escape attempts or riots in Soba prison. Based on detainees’ accounts, after two detainees were caught escaping, the guards accused other detainees of aiding them and randomly beat them, including older persons. On two documented occasions, in August 2023 and January 2024, detainees who attempted to escape Soba prison were summarily executed. Following these two incidents, the entire prison population was deprived of food. Victims reported that following the 2023 escape attempt, food was withheld for two days, leading to increased deaths in custody due to malnutrition, including a man in his seventies, who reportedly died of starvation during those days. In the 2024 escape attempt, food was withheld for one day, with an RSF officer reportedly telling detainees “you must have been strong enough to try to escape, so you do not need to eat.”

### *iii. Conditions of work and the use and recruitment of children*

53. Testimonies indicated that the RSF has deployed children as young as 14 to serve as armed guards within detention facilities under their control, notably in Soba prison, where they reportedly used untrained guards, including children, allegedly living in a slum near the prison. A released detainee told OHCHR that detainees had to deal with those child guards, tasked with patrolling and controlling detainees, who reportedly often resorted to violence and intimidation. Another detainee recounted the day when the guards, all of whom were children, began beating and insulting detainees in his ward after a failed escape attempt by other detainees, during which an older man, in his late seventies, pleaded with the guards, saying “please stop the insults, I am the age of your grandfather”, before he was shockingly shot dead in front of them. He further said, “they beat us severely, even those who could barely stand”. Several detainees reported that some of these children were intoxicated while on duty.

54. A witness recounted to OHCHR seeing South Sudanese children as young as 14 years old, the majority of whom were allegedly homeless, reportedly forcibly taken from the central market in Khartoum, being exploited to fetch water and fill barrels in a building within the Al-Riyadh complex.

55. OHCHR received reports describing a context of harsh labour conditions at the Al-Riyadh complex, with detainees subjected to physically demanding and degrading tasks under constant threat of violence. Detainees were routinely forced to clean the facility, prepare meals, wash RSF members' uniforms, and dig latrines. A detainee recounted being ordered to prepare food for the entire building and carry heavy items under RSF supervision. In another incident, a detainee was forced with other detainees to dig approximately 10 latrines, with no regard for the physical toll this labour took on already weakened detainees.

56. Beyond the confines of the Al-Riyadh complex, OHCHR documented incidents where detainees at the complex were forced to transport dead bodies, looted goods, ammunitions, and food supplies to RSF-controlled areas across Khartoum, Khartoum North (Bahri), and Omdurman. For instance, a victim described how they were made to load trucks with ammunitions and weapons seized from the Central Reserve Police headquarters, saying "we worked under heavy security, and those who slowed down were beaten." Another detainee reported being forced at gunpoint to move supplies from shops in Khartoum.

*iv. Conditions of detention*

57. Transit detention facilities under RSF control were marked by severe overcrowding, as well as deprivation of access to basic provision of services. Detainees, including civilians, security personnel, and those suspected of affiliations with the SAF, reported being held in cramped spaces with minimal ventilation, inadequate water supply, and limited access to sanitation. These facilities, often repurposed residential buildings or commercial spaces, served as interim sites for processing detainees before being transferred to larger detention centres. Conditions within these sites were reportedly intentionally punitive.

58. In Al-Riyadh complex, victims reported to OHCHR that they were held in severely overcrowded conditions, with spaces ill-suited to accommodate large numbers of detainees. Testimonies described detainees crammed into basements, storerooms, and large buildings within the complex, with some spaces housing over 1,000 individuals. One detainee described being held in a basement hall measuring approximately 1.5 metres wide and 20-30 metres long, with no ventilation. He said, "we slept on the floor with no space to even stretch our legs", adding that the lack of oxygen and poor hygiene led to outbreaks of lice and skin diseases. In another section of the same facility, over 700 detainees were crowded into a building with no adequate sleeping arrangements, forcing detainees to lie or sit on filthy floors. Detainees reported that the constant overcrowding not only caused physical discomfort but also heightened the spread of diseases.

59. Similar conditions of overcrowding existed in Soba prison, which was not equipped to accommodate the number of detainees brought there following its transition to an RSF detention facility. OHCHR received reports that each ward in the prison, initially designed to hold 90 inmates, was quickly overwhelmed, with numbers swelling between 120 and 190 per ward, forcing detainees to sleep on concrete floors with little or no personal space. Released detainees described the situation by saying "we were crammed into every available corner. There were so many of us that some had to sit or stand for hours because there simply was not enough room," indicating the suffocating conditions and noting the unbearable heat and lack of ventilation within the overcrowded cells. According to multiple victims interviewed by OHCHR, the sheer volume of detainees made it impossible for RSF personnel to manage the facility with any semblance of order or human dignity, leading to what has been described as a "living hell" by those who survived their time there.

60. OHCHR received reports that detainees held in RSF transit detention facilities consistently faced severe deprivation of food, water, and sanitation, exacerbating their physical and psychological suffering. Victims described receiving sporadic and inadequate food supplies, often consisting of small portions of bread, lentils or plain rice, sometimes served after days without eating. One detainee recounted being held for six days in a residential apartment in Jabra, southern Khartoum, during which he alleged to have received three meals only. He added that they had survived on dry breadcrumbs found on the floor and, eventually, had to drink from the toilet tank after water supplies ran out.

61. In Al-Riyadh complex, consistent reports of insufficient and nutritionally inadequate meals were received. Most detainees were given only one meal a day, consisting of small portions of asida (porridge), lentils, or pasta cooked with flavoured cubes. Food distribution was irregular, with meals often served at unpredictable times, leaving detainees in a perpetual state of hunger. A detainee in the complex said "the

portions were so small, it felt like they were designed to keep us alive but weak”. Water access was equally dire and was brought in buckets to the gate, leaving those unable to secure their share, due to age or illness, dehydrated.

62. Sanitation facilities in the Al-Riyadh complex were reported as grossly inadequate, further compounding the inhumane conditions. Makeshift latrines and buckets served as toilets, often left unemptied for extended periods of time. For example, a detainee described the situation by saying “the smell was unbearable, and the buckets overflowed, attracting swarms of insects.” Other detainees reported being allowed to use a proper toilet only twice a day, if at all, with long lines forming and guards enforcing strict time limits. Showers were a rarity, according to the detainees who reported spending months without being able to bathe, leading to widespread infestations of lice and other skin diseases. Another detainee said “We were filthy. Our clothes stuck to our bodies, and any attempt to clean ourselves was futile.” Some detainees resorted to using stagnant water for basic hygiene, but this only exacerbated the risk of infection. Detainees indicated that the lack of hygiene facilities directly contributed to gastrointestinal illnesses, respiratory infections, and the deterioration of detainees’ overall health.

63. In Soba prison, the lack of adequate food, water, and sanitation created conditions of deprivation for detainees, severely undermining their dignity and fundamental rights, and further exacerbating the physical and psychological strain resulting from their detention. Reports received by OHCHR from former detainees revealed that basic needs were systematically denied, with detainees left to survive on minimal food rations, limited and often contaminated water, and severely unsanitary conditions that bred disease. Detainees interviewed by OHCHR described severe scarcity of food, with one to two meals served per day, consisting primarily of rice and lentil soup in small portions. Detainees reported receiving as little as half a cup of rice mixed with a quarter cup of lentil soup per person, which was insufficient to meet basic nutritional needs. They further stated that on many occasions, the rice would be served uncooked. This severely inadequate food, in terms of quantity, quality, and nutritional value, led to widespread malnutrition among the detainees, manifesting in rapid weight loss, weakened immune systems, and visible signs of hunger.

64. One detainee described to OHCHR that in Soba prison “the food portions were so small, we would argue over every last scrap. The detainees were constantly weak, dizzy, and thinking only about when the next meal would come”. Another detainee recounted the day when he was among a group of detainees transferred to a section previously used for RSF personnel who were serving disciplinary sentences, saying, “at the entrance of the section, we found rice covered in green mould on the floor, all of us were fighting over it, we took it to the ward, washed the mould off and ate it.” Another former detainee recalled that detainees’ bodies had weakened severely, and people began collapsing. He added that swelling appeared in detainees’ legs and faces, making it extremely difficult to move, and many had to be carried to the bathroom. He concluded by saying people in the prison started dying from watery and bloody diarrhoea, falling into comas, and anaemia and testicular swelling became common. Detainees further indicated that access to food was even worse during the month of Ramadan.<sup>67</sup> A former detainee of Soba prison recalled Ramadan of 2024, saying, “At maghrib (sunset), they brought us one jug of juice for the entire ward [which accommodated 167 persons], and the iftar meal came at 10 p.m. The food portions and times remained the same. So if you were fasting, you had to save your meal for maghrib. At around 11 p.m., they brought a bucket half-filled with rice and milk, for suhoor.” He concluded by saying, “we lost many people during Ramadan, 23 detainees died from our ward alone”.

65. Access to water was reported as a persistent issue in Soba prison, exacerbated by the irregular water supply and deteriorating infrastructure. Victims reported that by December 2023, the situation worsened significantly, allegedly due to the mismanagement and lack of maintenance of the prison. The water system depended on electric pumps, but no electricity supply was available, and the pumps were operated only at night using a generator, creating dire shortages during the day. Testimonies revealed the extreme measures detainees took to access water in Soba prison. Buckets and barrels used to fetch water were not clean, with lack of proper containers, and the competition between detainees for access to water often left the sick and older detainees without drinking water for the entire day. Detainees described the struggle by saying, “water came in barrels, and if you were strong, you could fight for it, but the elderly struggled”.

---

<sup>67</sup> Ramadan is the holy month of fasting observed by Muslims, during which they abstain from food, drink, and other physical needs from dawn (fajr) to sunset (maghrib). The first meal to break the fast at sunset is known as “iftar,” while “suhoor” refers to the pre-dawn meal consumed before the fast begins.

66. Sanitation facilities at Soba prison were described by detainees as grossly inadequate, with conditions deteriorating to hazardous levels due to severe overcrowding, lack of maintenance, and chronic water shortages. Toilets and bathrooms were located within the overcrowded wards, compounding the filth and pervasive stench. Victims consistently reported that the influx of detainees far exceeded the prison's actual capacity, rendering the sanitation facilities overwhelmed and largely unusable. This lack of hygiene not only limited access to bathrooms but also led to waste accumulating within the wards, creating unbearable odours and attracting pests like flies and lice, and increasing the spread of water-borne diseases among detainees.

67. Detainees interviewed by OHCHR highlighted the impact of these conditions on their health. Overcrowding exacerbated the spread of skin infections, respiratory illnesses, and lice infestations. Swelling, rashes, and open sores reportedly became common, with no medical care provided to treat these conditions. All these systemic failures by the RSF demonstrate a failure to provide detainees with food, water and sanitation, undermining their dignity and leaving them in constant physical discomfort and psychological distress.

68. According to reports received by OHCHR, denial of medical care was pervasive in both major detention facilities run by the RSF, with detainees denied treatment for both injuries sustained from torture or the battlefield, and chronic health conditions that deteriorate in unsanitary conditions. Victims consistently mentioned that medical care was provided by detainees with minimal qualifications such as first aid training. They further mentioned that in the first three months of the conflict, the RSF sporadically provided the makeshift clinics within these facilities with several types of medications, allegedly looted from hospitals and pharmacies. The supply eventually became scarce with only intravenous fluid and some antibiotics supplied. Reports included cases of detainees suffering from diabetes, hypertension, respiratory issues, and other chronic illnesses who were denied medication and ultimately died in custody. A detainee described how the absence of medical care compounded inhumane conditions such as being crammed with others in a room lacking ventilation and basic cleaning facilities, leaving detainees to suffer from heat and worsening health conditions. Witnesses reported seeing fellow detainees succumb to preventable illnesses due to the lack of medical care, underscoring the RSF's disregard for the well-being of the detainees.

69. Accessibility, availability, and quality of healthcare in the Soba prison was severely inadequate, operating from a makeshift clinic within the prison's vocational training centre. According to testimonies received by OHCHR, the clinic was entirely managed by detainees with minimal healthcare experience, demonstrating neglect in the provision of healthcare. Supplies were limited to saline drips and occasional antibiotics. A detainee recounted being told that "the only medicine we have is the sun. Go sit under the sun so your body can recover." Another detainee reported witnessing detainees with watery diarrhoea left in the yard, unable to move or access care, until they died.

70. Testimonies further highlighted the compounded health crisis caused by malnutrition, contaminated water, and unsanitary conditions in Soba prison. Chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension went untreated, worsening rapidly. Sick detainees described extreme weakness, malnutrition-related oedema, and widespread outbreaks of diseases such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections. Lice infestations exacerbated the suffering, causing sores and infections. Deaths from malnutrition, untreated illnesses, and infections were consistently reported by interviewees. Former detainees described dead bodies left unattended for hours before removal.

v. *Death in custody and burial sites*

71. Released detainees consistently reported limited knowledge about the burial processes of dead detainees in RSF detention facilities. For example, in the Al-Riyadh complex, detainees stated they would notify guards of a death, after which the guards often delayed responding for over 12 hours, allowing decomposition to set in. In the Soba Prison, interviewees reported that daily death rates ranged from 4 to 10, and on some the daily death toll reached up to 80, mostly due to malnutrition and treatable diseases. Victims reported that bodies were usually gathered in the prison's clinic, where a truck would arrive daily to collect the corpses. The detainees reported that they were unaware of the burial locations. One former detainee who worked at the clinic of Soba prison described how he and others were tasked with washing and shrouding the dead using any available materials, including COVID-19 protective gear. "We used whatever we could find to shroud the bodies. Sometimes it was just pieces of cloth," he recounted.

72. OHCHR interviewed a family member of a detainee who died in custody in the Al-Riyadh complex in mid-2024. The family member recounted the harrowing ordeal of trying to locate their relative after he



was taken by RSF intelligence from their home in the east of Khartoum in January 2024. Despite repeated inquiries, the family was met with vague reassurances and outright refusals to provide information. “They kept saying, ‘don’t ask about him,’ but they allowed us to send medication and clothes only once”. The detainee’s mother reportedly visited a nearby RSF checkpoint daily, pleading for news about her son’s fate. Her persistence was allegedly met with indifference, and she was repeatedly told that he would be released eventually but given no timeline or clarity about his condition. The family later reached out to an RSF high ranking officer living in the same neighbourhood, who reiterated the same vague response: “Don’t ask about him.” Friends and colleagues of the detainee also attempted to gather information by paying RSF personnel stationed at the facility. These payments secured sporadic updates, which consistently claimed that the detainee was in good health. “We believed them because they told us he was fine. But we later learned that for two months when they were reassuring us, he had already passed away,” the family member explained.

73. OHCHR corroborated the existence of five burial sites potentially linked to RSF detention facilities through the analysis of satellite imagery. This includes two adjacent burial sites near the Al-Riyadh complex that have been used from as early as June 2023 (see Annex I), and two sites located near military bases in Khartoum and Khartoum North (Bahri). Analysis of satellite imagery further indicated significant expansion within a cemetery in close proximity to Soba prison. OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that at least one additional burial site may be associated with Soba prison, although this has not been able to be verified.

#### *vi. Release of detainees*

74. Victims frequently referenced incidents of ad hoc releases, reportedly secured by detainees by informing RSF of properties with valuables for RSF personnel to loot, or families would pay significant amounts. Additionally, OHCHR learned, based on interviews conducted and other reports, that some organized releases took place, particularly for detainees on “medical lists” due to severe illness or advanced age. OHCHR corroborated information on the release of 537 detainees, primarily police personnel, in mid-2024, reportedly facilitated by religious leaders as part of an initiative.

## **B. SAF-controlled places of detention and detention practices**

75. OHCHR corroborated information about seven detention facilities across Khartoum State managed by SAF, all of which were military bases, with the primary location reportedly being a military prison within the Karari Military Base in Omdurman. Additional detention facilities controlled by the SAF included one in Omdurman, three in Bahri and two in south Khartoum. OHCHR received information about numbers of detainees in some of these facilities, but was not able to estimate the overall number across all detention facilities.

#### *i. Deprivation of liberty*

76. OHCHR received credible reports, including victims’ accounts, indicating that SAF also used checkpoints as holding areas. One victim told OHCHR that he was lured by an acquaintance to an apartment in Omdurman: “Shortly after our arrival forces from the SAF and the Military Intelligence raided the apartment and took us to a SAF checkpoint near a police station in Omdurman. Suddenly, a crowd gathered around us, and I was beaten on the street by passers-by, who took photos and posted them on social media, accusing me of being a member of the RSF”. The detainee was held at the SAF checkpoint for two days before being transferred to a military prison. OHCHR further received consistent accounts that SAF detention facilities held, among others, RSF members, SAF personnel detained for disciplinary offences, and civilians accused or perceived of supporting the RSF or opposing SAF operations. Arresting authorities reportedly include the Military Intelligence, the Security Police,<sup>68</sup> and a special security cell<sup>69</sup> established in 2024 to increase internal security measures.

77. Consistent victims’ accounts and reports indicated prolonged incommunicado detention and deprivation of basic rights of detainees in SAF facilities. Many detainees were held incommunicado, cut off from any form of external contact with the outside world. This isolation was accompanied by verbal threats, contributing to the detainees’ mental anguish. Detainees were also denied legal representation.

<sup>68</sup> Security Police is a department within the Sudanese Police Forces.

<sup>69</sup> The Security Cells in Khartoum state were officially established by virtue of Emergency Order No. (2/2024) issued by the Governor of Khartoum in May 2024 [أمر طوارئ بتكوين الخلية الأمنية بالعاصمة السودانية – صحيفة التغيير السودانية . أخبار السودان](#).

ii. *Torture and other forms of ill-treatment*

78. Testimonies collected by OHCHR indicated that detainees in SAF-controlled facilities were subjected to torture, with common methods of abuse including beatings with hoses, rifle butts, and electric shocks, often leaving detainees with untreated injuries and significant physical trauma. Those originating from the Darfur and Kordofan regions reported being subjected to more frequent or prolonged torture and other forms of ill-treatment. A victim described to OHCHR how he was taken from his home by four individuals in civilian clothing, blindfolded, handcuffed and transported to a military base south of Khartoum. During five days of interrogation, he reported enduring severe torture, including beatings with hoses, kicks, slaps, and electric shocks, particularly on the soles of his feet, which left him unable to walk for 15 days. Another detainee recounted his transfer across multiple SAF detention facilities, where he observed the ill-treatment of numerous individuals, including particular groups from certain regions who faced accusations of RSF affiliation based solely on their perceived ethnicity, while experiencing extensive isolation and verbal harassment.

79. One former detainee described being held for several days in a SAF detention facility where he was subjected to torture, including repeated beatings and verbal abuse. According to the victim, the torture took place while he was interrogated by SAF personnel about his alleged involvement in the killing of a civilian and his supposed affiliation with the RSF. He reported that dozens of detainees were held with him, many of whom were from particular regions, commonly associated with RSF-held territories. During his time in detention, he witnessed multiple deaths in custody, resulting from torture or ill-treatment, through denial of medical care.

80. In another example, a released detainee reported to OHCHR that he was detained by the SAF in December 2023 for 13 days at a military camp in Omdurman, where he was allegedly tortured and held incommunicado. He, along with other detainees from Darfur, were accused of collaborating with the RSF due to their ethnic origin. Upon his release, he estimated that around 100 detainees, mostly from the Darfur and Kordofan regions, were held in the facility. He further reported witnessing nine deaths in custody at the camp, and allegedly learned that detainees were forced to dig graves for the deceased near the facility.

81. Another detainee reported similar experiences in another SAF detention facility south of Khartoum, describing repeated beatings, especially on the soles of his feet, which left him unable to walk for an extended period. He noted that detainees in the facility were kept in cramped, unventilated cells with limited access to food and water, leading to the deterioration of their physical health. By the time of his release, he had witnessed 11 deaths among detainees, the majority of whom suffered from untreated injuries or illnesses.

82. In another example, a human rights activist was detained in a Military Intelligence building in Omdurman and subjected to isolation and mistreatment. During his detention, he was accused of collaborating with the RSF, allegedly due to his advocacy work and was held in crowded cells with other detainees showing clear signs of torture.

iii. *Conditions of detention*

83. Victims interviewed by OHCHR consistently described the conditions across SAF detention facilities as overcrowded, unsanitary, and lacking basic necessities, with detainees often confined in close quarters without sufficient ventilation, sanitation or access to clean water. Testimonies and reports corroborated by OHCHR provide reasonable grounds to believe that ethnic profiling was common, with individuals from Arab tribes from Darfur and Kordofan being adversely affected based on assumed RSF affiliation tied to their regional origins. Many detainees reported being arrested solely on the basis of their ethnicity, experiencing cruel and degrading treatment due to their perceived affiliation with RSF-controlled areas.

84. A victim reported that he was confined to an overcrowded cell in a block comprising eight cells, each measuring approximately 2 by 2 metres, designed to hold far fewer detainees than the seven or more forced into each cell. At its peak, the facility reportedly held 102 detainees, all civilians, with 11 deaths occurred during his confinement due to torture, illness, and lack of medical care. The victim further recounted that detainees were subjected to deplorable conditions, receiving only two cups of water and two small pieces of bread with watery lentil soup daily, sometimes receiving just one meal per day. Hygiene facilities were nearly non-existent, with no water for toilets or bathing, and ventilation was limited to small openings in the block,

exacerbating the suffering of over 90 people. The victim reported that detainees, most of whom shared his tribal affiliation, were presumed RSF supporters due to their origins in western Sudan.

85. Medical neglect was reported as a pervasive issue within SAF detention facilities, with detainees frequently denied necessary treatment for injuries and illnesses, leading reportedly to preventable deaths in custody. Testimonies recounted that SAF guards routinely ignored requests for medical assistance, even for detainees with visible injuries or urgent health needs. For instance, a detainee reported witnessing multiple deaths due to untreated injuries from torture and ill-treatment, and associated deteriorating health resulting from insufficient food and unsanitary conditions. The detainee noted that those who died were left without care or attention. Another detainee observed medical neglect across multiple SAF detention facilities, where several detainees who suffered from injuries inflicted during torture were denied medical care, many of whom experienced malnutrition and dehydration.

## V. Conclusion and recommendations

86. OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that both the RSF and the SAF have engaged in arbitrary arrest and detention, in contravention of international norms and standards on the right to liberty and security, and to due process. Both parties to the conflict detained individuals – including civilians, including children and women, and persons hors de combat – often without formal charges, access to legal representation or to their family. Testimonies indicate that children as young as 13 were detained with adults and, in some instances, deployed as guards within RSF-controlled facilities, including in Soba prison.

87. OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that RSF is responsible for enforced disappearances. Many individuals were detained without notification to their families and subsequently held incommunicado, denying their families information about their fate or whereabouts.

88. OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that both the RSF and the SAF are responsible for acts of torture and other forms of ill-treatment against persons deprived of liberty in multiple facilities under their control. Testimonies consistently reveal that these persons were subjected to severe physical abuse, including beatings, electric shocks, and labour in inappropriate conditions in contravention to international standards. Conditions in RSF-controlled Soba prison, where over 6,000 detainees have been held in severely overcrowded conditions, led to daily death rates reportedly ranging from 4 to 80 deaths per day. Detainees were subjected to extreme deprivation of food, water, and health care, leading to preventable deaths.

89. OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that both the SAF and the RSF have subjected persons deprived of liberty to conditions of detention that amount to, at a minimum, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Testimonies reveal that detainees were held in overcrowded and unsanitary facilities; access to food and water was severely restricted, leading to malnutrition and dehydration; and medical care was denied or grossly inadequate, resulting in preventable deaths from untreated illnesses and injuries. In RSF-controlled facilities, the lack of proper sanitation facilities, coupled with limited or no access to hygiene materials, contributed to outbreaks of diseases, lice infestations and gastrointestinal illnesses, further exacerbating detainees' suffering.

90. Based on the findings of the present report, the following recommendations are proposed, with a focus on ceasing practices of arbitrary detention, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, improving detention conditions, and facilitating access to justice, effective remedy and reparation for victims.

91. **OHCHR calls on the parties to the conflict to:**

**a. Fully and immediately comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and ensure the application of international norms and standards relating to the deprivation of liberty, treatment of persons deprived of liberty, enforced disappearances and the prohibition of torture and other forms of ill-treatment;**

**b. Ensure that all persons acting under their instructions, direction or control abide by obligations and commitments under international law; and**

**c. Investigate and punish serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations and abuses of international human rights law committed by their members or associated personnel.**

92. To the SAF:

- a. Immediately end arbitrary arrests and detention, especially based on ethnic or tribal affiliations, and ensure due process, including access to legal representation.
- b. Inform families of detainees' fate, whereabouts and conditions, and facilitate regular family visits, especially for children and other groups at risk.
- c. Ensure detention conditions and the treatment of prisoners fully comply with the Mandela Rules, with independent monitoring to ensure compliance and accountability;
- d. Ensure timely access to adequate food, water and healthcare in places of detention. Consider specific measures to support detainees with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and older persons.
- e. Take all necessary measures to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- f. Ensure that allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, and other violations are subject to prompt, impartial, thorough, effective and transparent investigations, that perpetrators are held to account, and victims are provided with a full reparation.

93. To the RSF:

- a. Immediately end arbitrary detention, especially based on ethnic or tribal affiliations, and cease the practice of incommunicado detention. Facilitate access to legal representation and family notification for all detainees, in accordance with international law;
- b. Establish and maintain comprehensive records of all individuals detained, including those who have gone missing in their custody, and ensure these records are accessible to families, legal representatives, and relevant authorities.
- c. Facilitate independent investigations into cases of enforced disappearances, and ensure transparent communication with affected families.
- d. Cease the recruitment and use in its forces of children, release all children held in RSF-controlled facilities and transfer them to appropriate care providers to ensure their physical and psychological rehabilitation.
- e. Ensure the humane treatment of all persons deprived of liberty, and take all necessary measures to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and other violations and abuses in places of detention.
- f. Ensure timely access to adequate food, water and healthcare in places of detention. Consider specific measures to support detainees with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and older persons.
- g. Ensure that allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, deaths in custody of any cause, use of children and other violations are subject to prompt, impartial and transparent investigations, and that perpetrators of violations are held to account.

94. To the international community:

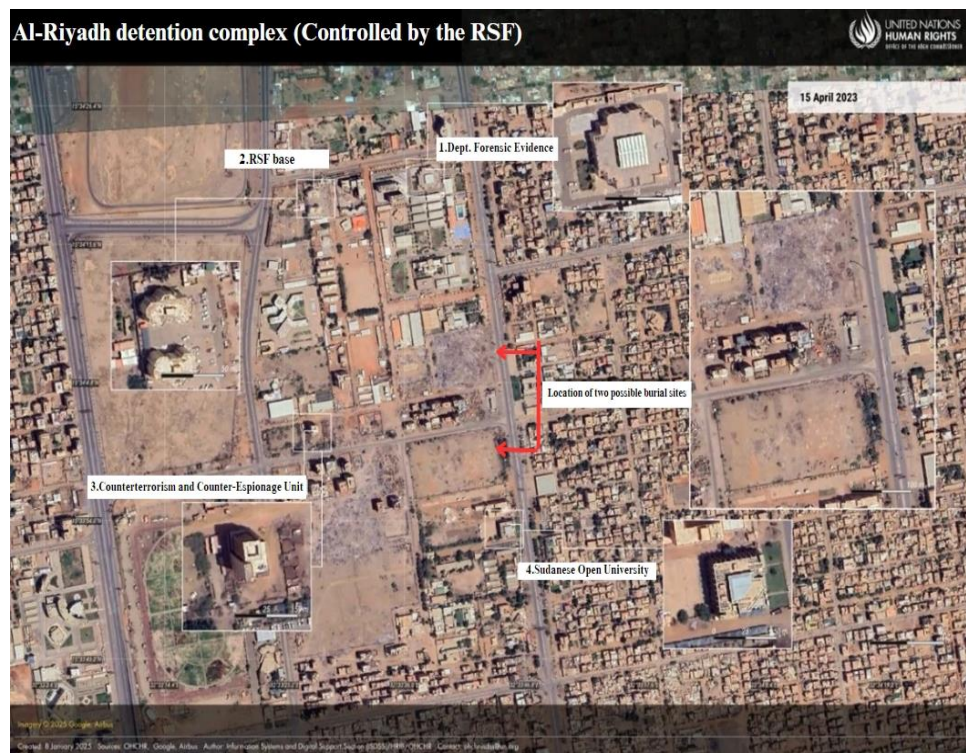
- a. Engage with both the SAF and RSF to address and put an end to the widespread practices of arbitrary arrests and detention and other related human rights violations and abuses;
  - b. Facilitate support for victims of arbitrary detention and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including through access to psychosocial support and medical assistance, rehabilitation and redress.
  - c. Provide technical and financial assistance to strengthen national and international efforts to trace and identify missing persons, and advocate for the RSF and the SAF to cooperate fully with such mechanisms, including providing access to detention records and facilities.
-



## VI. Annex I: Satellite imagery analysis of possible burial sites

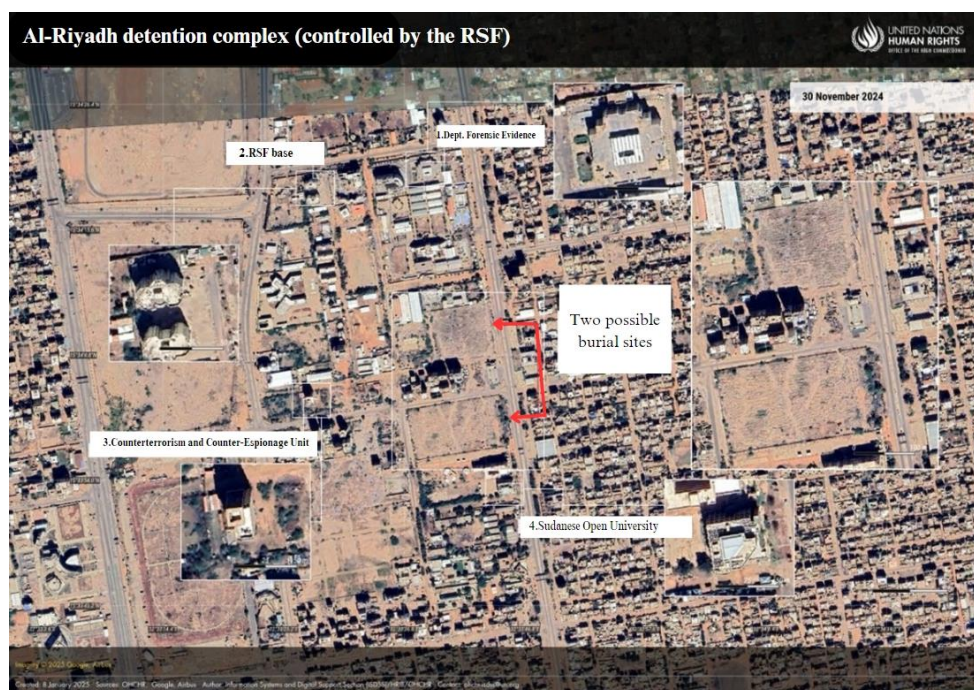
Satellite imagery of Al-Riyadh detention complex (April 2023)

Imagery indicates two sites near the Al-Riyadh complex that were used as possible burial sites. Indications are that the northern block was used as a burial site from as early as June 2023.



Satellite imagery of Al-Riyadh detention complex (November 2024)

Analysis indicates expansion of the two possible burial sites as at November 2024. Graves can be seen on the eastern edge of the southern site, and disturbed soil is present throughout the southern site. The northern site appears to be full.



## VII. Annex II: Map of Khartoum and places of detention

