

(Translated from Arabic)

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan, Geneva

Reply to the urgent appeal concerning events in the Sudan

We have the honour to send you this preliminary response to the events in the Sudan, which began on 19 December 2018 and were organized in 15 of the 18 states of the Sudan.

1. The protests began on 19 December 2018 in the northern city of Atbara when a number of students demanded an improvement in school meals and protested against the high prices. They were then joined by a group of politicians, saboteurs and infiltrators, some of whom burned government buildings and the headquarters of the ruling party, and attacked and burned citizens' property and vehicles.
2. No protest marchers requested a permit from the competent authorities pursuant to the 2005 Transitional Constitution of the Sudan and the Code of Criminal Procedure, which guarantee freedom of peaceful assembly. The law regulates the conduct of marches and parades.
3. In response to a number of deaths due to unknown causes and the phenomenon of burning and destruction of governmental headquarters, a Fact-finding Committee chaired by the Minister of Justice was established pursuant to a decision by the President of the Republic on 1 January 2019.
4. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General established an Investigation Committee chaired by counsellor Amer Mohamed Ibrahim to investigate, as an independent authority drawn from the judiciary and the executive, the offences committed during the demonstrations.
5. The Office of the Public Prosecutor launched criminal investigations into: the killing of 35 persons, including four soldiers belonging to the regular forces; the wounding of 294 citizens, including 200 soldiers belonging to the regular forces; the destruction of 86 government vehicles and vehicles belonging to international organizations; the burning of 105 government facilities; the burning of six private vehicles; the total or partial destruction of 15 police stations; and the burning or destruction of 64 police vehicles.
6. On 23 December 2018, a cell of the United People's Front was discovered in a house in the city of Sennar, 300 kilometres south of Khartoum. Molotov and edged weapons were found in their possession.
7. On 28 December 2018, the leader of the United People's Front and a number of his companions were arrested in Khartoum. Four Kalashnikovs, 27 pistols and 1,000 rounds of ammunition were found in their possession. They admitted during the investigations that the weapons were to be used in demonstrations conducted by the rebel movement of Abdul Wahid Mohamed Nur, who confirmed in an official statement that he was associated with the group.
8. On 9 January 2019, a group of demonstrators forced their way into Omdurman Teaching Hospital and provoked the police force from within the Hospital. As this led to a number of incidents in the Hospital, the Governor of the State of Khartoum established a Committee to investigate the incident and to bring the perpetrators to account.
9. On 29 January 2019, the Office of the Public Prosecutor announced that the police would accompany both authorized and unauthorized protest marches with a view to providing direct protection for the demonstrators.
10. On 29 January 2019, a total of 186 detainees were released following a face-to-face dialogue, during which they were reminded of the importance of complying with the duties and rights enshrined in the Constitution and the law.



11. On 31 January 2019, the teacher ██████████ died in the National Security and Intelligence Service building. Mr. Amer Mohamed Ibrahim, the Chair of the Investigation Committee established by the Office of the Attorney General, declared that his death was the result of a blow to the deceased with a sharp object and requested the National Security and Intelligence Service to provide the names of the persons who had interacted with the deceased. An indictment pursuant to article 130 concerning intentional homicide was then issued against 27 members of the National Security and Intelligence Service in preparation for their trial. It should be noted that 45 lawyers announced the establishment of a body to support the indictment and to defend the rights of the deceased.

12. During the period from the beginning of the events on 19 December 2018 until 18 February 2019, the police arrested a number of demonstrators carrying unlicensed firearms and edged weapons. The police prepared 386 charges, some of which concerned acts resulting in the death or serious injury of the victim.

13. On the evening of 8 February 2019, the President of the Republic issued a decree ordering the release of all detained journalists. The decree was implemented on the morning of 9 February 2019.

14. On 16 February 2019, police officer ██████████ (a father of eight children) died of wounds sustained from stones thrown by a group of demonstrators who had set up an ambush in front of a health centre in central Khartoum. They had blocked a vital roadway with stones. When the police vehicle stopped to remove them, they attacked the police with stones and rods. It should be noted that the police officers were not carrying firearms.

15. A number of persons charged with killing the officer were arrested pursuant to articles 130 and 139 of the Criminal Code (intentional homicide and grievous bodily harm). The police force confirmed in the same context that they had not and would not deviate from the proper performance of their duties, that they were determined to perform their duties professionally and impartially, and that they would not engage in any response to the injuries suffered by their fellow officers.

16. There was a marked decline in the protests in early February. No peaceful march led to any confrontations with the police, although some demonstrators sought to provoke officers by throwing stones, closing down roads and blocking traffic in many areas.

17. A total of 35 persons died. Although you refer in your communication to reports suggesting a higher number of deceased persons, we wish to reaffirm that the total number recorded as of today, 20 February 2019, is 35 persons. If your number differs, we kindly request you to send the number with a list of names.

18. The Sudan produces 42 daily newspapers and has 19 television channels. They operate in accordance with Sudanese law, which guarantees freedom of opinion and expression. Any complaint against a publication or television channel is considered by the judiciary.

19. The Sudanese Government reiterates its commitment to its human rights obligations and to cooperating with international human rights mechanisms. The Sudan operates in accordance with the principles of the Human Rights Council, which are based on the prevention of politicization, double standards and selectivity.

20. The Sudanese Government operates within a strict legal framework that reflects the norms governing the use of force, particularly lethal force, during assemblies, including protests.

21. The aforementioned investigating bodies, i.e. the Fact-finding Committee established pursuant to a decision by the President of the Republic and chaired by the Minister of Justice, the Investigation Committee established by the Office of the Attorney General, and the Investigation Committee concerning the incidents in Omdurman Hospital established pursuant to a decision by the Governor of the State of Khartoum, operate on a daily basis, closely monitoring the facts with a view to bringing the perpetrators to account.