

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers

Ref.: UA SDN 4/2025
(Please use this reference in your reply)

10 October 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/4, 53/4 and 53/12.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **the death sentence issued against Mr. Abubakr Mansour Mohamed Hamza**, a Sudanese lawyer and human rights defender, on 5 October 2025, and **the arbitrary arrest and detention of his defense counsel Mr. Abubakr Elmahi** from 1 to 8 October 2025.

Mr. Abubakr Mansour Mohamed Hamza is a lawyer and human rights defender based in Singa, Sennar State. He is part of a volunteer network engaged in humanitarian and human rights work. He has provided legal assistance to other activists and human rights defenders.

Mr. Abubakr Elmahi is a lawyer and head of the legal defense team that represents Mr. Mansour.

Special Procedures mandate holders have raised concerns regarding death sentences, executions, and arrests of human rights defenders and lawyers in previous communications to your Excellency's Government ([SDN 2/2022](#), [SDN 5/2022](#), [SDN 4/2023](#), [SDN 4/2024](#), [SDN 1/2025](#)). We regret that we have not received a reply from your Excellency's Government yet.

According to the information received:

On 27 April 2025, the General Court of Singa sentenced Mr. Mansour to twenty years in prison and a fine of 10 million Sudanese pounds under articles 50 and 51 of the 1991 Penal Code. The sentence was based on Mr. Mansour's alleged collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), yet the evidence and testimonies presented at his trial reportedly indicate that these are unsubstantiated allegations that remain under scrutiny. Mr. Mansour's lawyer at the time stated that the sentence was in retaliation for his work on human rights by the Sudanese Allied Forces (SAF). Mr. Mansour remained in Singa and distributed medicine to residents after the RSF took control of the city, yet there is no evidence of collaborating with the RSF.

Mr. Mansour's legal defense team appealed this sentence before the Court of Appeals, which dropped several charges and subsequently referred the case to

the General Court of Singa for the review of additional evidence.

On 1 October 2025, Mr. Elmahi, one of the lawyers on Mr. Mansour's legal defense team, was arbitrarily arrested by a joint force unit of the Sudanese security and intelligence services, generally referred to as "Security Cell" that reportedly targets activists. Mr. Elmahi's arrest was part of a wider arrest campaign conducted by security forces targeting numerous humanitarian activities and human rights defenders accused of collaborating with RSF. Mr. Elmahi was transferred to a detention facility operated by the 'Security Cell' in Singa, where he was detained until 8 October. Consequently, Mr. Elmahi has been prevented from working on the defense of Mr. Mansour and communicating with his client during this period.

On 5 October, while Mr. Elmahi was detained, the Sennar Criminal Court sentenced Mr. Mansour to death. The sentence hearing was unexpectedly moved from 9 October to 5 October without prior notification to the defense counsel preventing them from presenting additional evidence before the General Court of Singa. Mr. Mansour is currently held in the death row section of Singa Prison, which is reportedly overcrowded, and he has reportedly been subjected to ill-treatment and denied access to adequate medical care.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of the received information, we express our serious concern over these allegations, which, if confirmed, constitute serious violations of international human rights law, including the right to life, liberty, and security of person. We are particularly concerned over the reported targeting of Mr. Mansour and Mr. Elmahi due to their profession as lawyers and human rights defenders. As they appear to have been sentenced and arrested due to their legitimate and peaceful protection and promotion of human rights, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the fundamental norms set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Declaration on Human Rights Defenders). In particular, we would like to refer to articles 1 and 2 which declare that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has the primary responsibility and duty to protect, promote and fulfil all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, article 12, paragraphs 2 and 3, stipulates that the State shall ensure the protection of everyone from violence, threats, retaliation, discrimination, denial in law or in fact, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the Declaration.

The death sentence of Mr. Mansour is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Sudan on 18 March 1986. Article 6 of the ICCPR provides for the right to life and restricts the application of the death penalty to the "most serious crimes" meaning intentional killing. The sentencing of Mr Mansour to death for alleged collaboration is therefore illegal and, if implemented, would amount to arbitrary deprivation of life. Further, article 3 of the UDHR provides that every individual has the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

We also highlight that under international law, **a death sentence may only be imposed in respect of “the most serious crimes” in cases which involve intentional killing.** We also note, based on the long experience of this mandate, and a careful review of studies and evidence, that the death penalty has never been proved to be an effective deterrent for crimes ([A/HRC/42/28](#), paragraph 10).

We are also concerned over the reported violation of article 14 of the ICCPR, which stipulates that “everyone shall have the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal established by law.” In this context, the Human Rights Committee stated in its general comment No. 32 that “lawyers should be able to advise and represent persons charged with a criminal offense in accordance with generally recognized professional ethics, without undue restriction, influence, pressure, or interference from any party.”

The reported arrest and detention of Mr. Mansour and Mr. Elmahi also constitute a violation of article 9 of the ICCPR, which states that one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

We are concerned that the death sentence of Mr. Mansour and the detention of Mr. Elmahi may have a chilling effect on all lawyers and human rights defenders in Sudan attempting to carry out their functions and we would like to express our serious concern over information describing actions that appear to seek to impede the work of legal professionals.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response as soon as possible on the initial steps taken by your Excellency’s Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned persons in compliance with international instruments.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would also be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please clarify what measures have been taken or are envisaged to guarantee the right to life and security of person of Mr. Mansour, and how you intend to ensure that his judicial process is fair and independent. Please explain if he had access to legal counsel of his choice during his trial.
3. Please provide specific information on the measures taken to investigate the arbitrary arrest and detention of Mr. Elmahi, and if no measure has been taken, please explain why. Please also indicate how you intend to ensure that his judicial process is fair and independent.

4. Please indicate what measures have been taken to ensure that lawyers, especially those working on human rights issues, are able to carry out their legitimate work in a safe and enabling environment without fear of threats or acts of intimidation and harassment of any kind.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that Mr. Mansour's case is reviewed in an independent and fair judicial process.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issue/s in question.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Mary Lawlor
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Morris Tidball-Binz
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Margaret Satterthwaite
Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers