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Technical assistance and capacity-building

Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Mashood A. Baderin*

Summary

Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 24/28, the present report provides an appraisal of the human rights situation in the Sudan over the period October 2013 to July 2014. It focuses principally on the need to improve the practical protection of human rights in the Sudan and the effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Independent Expert's previous report (A/HRC/24/31) presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2013. The present report assesses the implementation of the previous recommendations, outlines the subsisting human rights challenges in the country and highlights a list of communications sent to the Government of the Sudan during the reporting period. The report also identifies technical assistance and capacity-building needs and provides a list of recommendations, addressed to the Government and other stakeholders, necessary for addressing the human rights challenges in the country.

* Late submission.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 24/28 of 8 October 2013, in which the Council renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan and requested him to continue his engagement with the Government of the Sudan and to submit a report to the Council at its twenty-seventh session in September 2014. The Council also urged the Government to continue its cooperation with the Independent Expert, including by granting him access to the entire country, in particular the States of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, in order to assess and verify the human rights situation in the country, determine the technical assistance needs and report on his findings.

2. The report covers the period from October 2013 to July 2014. It provides an appraisal of the human rights situation in the Sudan during the reporting period, focusing principally on the need to enhance the protection of human rights on the ground and the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Independent Expert's previous report (A/HRC/24/31) presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2013. It gives a list of communications sent to the Government during the reporting period, assesses the implementation of the recommendations contained in the previous report and outlines the subsisting human rights challenges in the country. It also identifies necessary technical assistance and capacity-building needs and provides a list of recommendations, addressed to the Government of the Sudan, the international community, civil society organizations and the armed movements in the Sudan, for the improvement of the human rights situation in the country.

3. In compliance with the code of conduct for special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, a draft of the report was shared with the Government of the Sudan to provide it with the opportunity to comment on the findings and observations of the Independent Expert.¹

4. The Independent Expert thanks the Government of the Sudan for its cooperation and support in the implementation of his mandate. During the reporting period, the Government granted access and facilitated the Independent Expert's visits to Khartoum, North Darfur, East Darfur, Central Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Although the Independent Expert requested to visit the Khor Abeche internally displaced person (IDP) camp in South Darfur and Kassala State in East Sudan during his mission in June 2014, travel authorizations to those areas were not granted by the Government owing to security and administrative constraints.

5. The Independent Expert also thanks the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other United Nations agencies and international relief organizations operating in the Sudan, members of the diplomatic community, civil society organizations and all other groups and individuals who provided assistance and shared information with him.

II. Methodology and engagements

6. The Independent Expert undertook two missions to the Sudan during the reporting period. He visited Khartoum, Kadugli in South Kordofan State, El-Fasher in North Darfur

¹ See A/HRC/27/69/Add.1.

State, El-Daein in East Darfur State, Zalingei in Central Darfur State and Ed-Damazin in Blue Nile State. During the visits, he held meetings with senior government officials, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, representatives of United Nations and international relief agencies, members of the diplomatic community, civil society organizations, leaders of different opposition political parties, tribal leaders, human rights defenders, professional groups and other interlocutors, and received reliable information about the general situation of human rights in the country.

Khartoum

7. In Khartoum, he held meetings with senior government officials including the Minister of Justice, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Welfare and Social Security, the Minister of Education, the Under-Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Assistant to the President of the Sudan and Head of the Sudan delegation to the negotiations on the conflict in the “Two Areas” of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and the Government’s Chief Negotiator for Peace in Darfur. The Independent Expert was briefed about the Government’s efforts to improve the human rights situation in the country and he advised the Government to intensify its practical efforts, highlighting the need for the Government to fully implement the recommendations made in his previous report. He also held meetings with senior officers of relevant institutions including the Advisory Council for Human Rights, the judiciary — including the Constitutional Court, the National Intelligence and Security Service, the Humanitarian Affairs Commission, the National Commission for Human Rights, the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly, the Commission for Refugees, the Unit for Combating Violence against Women and Children, the Family and Child Protection Unit of the Police Force, the General Prosecutor, and the Special Prosecutor for Crimes in Darfur.

8. The Independent Expert met with professional groups including the Sudanese Bar Association, the Union of Sudanese Journalists, the Sudanese Independent Journalists Network, the Khartoum International Centre for Human Rights, different independent civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and individuals alleging human rights violations and their families who shared their personal experiences with him. He also met with members of the diplomatic community, leaders and representatives of different opposition political parties, the Vice-Chancellor and senior officers of the University of Khartoum as well as academics from different universities in the Sudan, who shared with him valuable information on the human rights situation in the country. He further visited the Al-Huda Prison and Reformatory Centre and the Omdurman Female Prison to assess the conditions of the prisons and talk to the inmates therein. Both prisons had excellent facilities and reformatory programmes for the inmates. The Al-Huda Prison was of very high international standard.

Darfur

9. In North Darfur, the Independent Expert met the Governor of the State and members of his Cabinet, the Chairman of the Darfur Regional Authority, the Special Prosecutor for Crimes in Darfur, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, and civil society organizations. He also met with the Joint African Union-United Nations Special Representative and Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur and Head of UNAMID and members of the UNAMID senior management team to discuss the human rights and humanitarian situation in Darfur. The issue of armed conflicts generally and the consequent civilian displacements was identified as a major factor of human rights violations in the State. The poor conditions in the IDP camps, the safety of IDPs and returnees, protection of civilians

in the conflict areas, lack of security, general escalation of crime, and the impunity of some offenders were also mentioned as serious human rights issues in the State.

10. In East Darfur the Independent Expert met with the Deputy Governor of the State and members of his cabinet, the Humanitarian Affairs Commission officers in the State, the Chief Prosecutor, and civil society organizations. East Darfur is a new State where poverty and underdevelopment have had an adverse impact on the human rights situation. There is an urgent need to promote economic and social rights in the State, to alleviate poverty and enhance the protection of human rights. Civil society groups in the State complained about the poor human rights situation, and the lack of an independent human rights office in East Darfur. This concerned the need for the establishment of branch offices of the National Commission for Human Rights at the grass-roots level. The Independent Expert has advised the human rights section of UNAMID in El-Daein, the State capital, to enhance its collaboration with local civil society groups in the State, pending the establishment of a branch office of the Commission in East Darfur. There is a large number of IDPs in East Darfur and the Independent Expert was informed that a village for IDP returnees, with facilities to encourage voluntary returns, was being developed near El-Daein with funding from the Government of Qatar.

11. In Central Darfur the Independent Expert met the Governor of the State and members of his Cabinet, the Chief Prosecutor and the Speaker of the House of Assembly of the State. He also visited the Zalingei prison to inspect the facilities and conditions of the inmates. The situation in the male section of the prison was deplorable. The inmates complained about lack of water and poor sanitary conditions. There were a few apparently under-aged inmates in the prison and an inmate who had been awaiting trial for 33 months. There was also a young inmate who was held in shackles inside a cell. The female section of the prison had, however, been well refurbished to a reasonable standard with the assistance of international aid agencies. The Independent Expert raised concerns about the deplorable condition of the male section of the Zalingei prison and urged the Government to improve the conditions there. Central Darfur State further suffers from the problem of armed conflicts, which continues to affect the human rights of civilians. There are a great number of IDPs and very large IDP camps in the State, some of which are infiltrated by members of armed movements and are, thus, a potential source of conflict.

12. The problem of unexploded ordnances exists across the five Darfur States and as a result there have been reports of civilian casualties. The Independent Expert received a briefing on ordnance disposal operations conducted by UNAMID in different parts of Darfur in June 2014, and commends UNAMID for its efforts in that regard. Recorded crimes and general insecurity are still very high in Darfur.

South Kordofan

13. In South Kordofan, the Independent Expert met the Governor and other senior officials of the State. He also held meetings with the legislative assembly of South Kordofan, tribal leaders from the Greater Kadugli locality, the Chief Prosecutor of the State, United Nations agencies, international aid organizations, civil society organizations and human rights defenders operating in the State. He had discussions with the different interlocutors about the human rights challenges in the State. The Governor expressed concerns about rebel attacks there and highlighted the need for peace for the realization of human rights in the State.

14. South Kordofan State has adopted a social peace initiative through which members of armed movements who voluntarily laid down their arms were given amnesty and re-absorbed into their former posts in the civil service of the State. The State is collaborating with UNDP for the practical realization of human rights through development projects in

the five areas of education, health, water, poverty alleviation and social peace. This initiative of linking development to human rights, particularly in the rural areas of the Sudan, is commendable and should be effectively sustained and replicated in other parts of the country.

15. It was evident that armed conflicts continued to be a major cause of human rights violations in South Kordofan State. The problem of unexploded ordnances and the need for demining in the conflict areas was emphasized by the United Nations representatives in the State, who reported civilian casualties from unexploded ordnances. The Independent Expert has called the attention of the Government of the Sudan and relevant United Nations mine action teams to help in addressing this problem.

Blue Nile

16. In Blue Nile State, the Independent Expert held meetings with the Governor and other State officials, including the head of the Humanitarian Affairs Commission in the State. He also had discussions on the humanitarian situation with United Nations agencies, international relief organizations, and civil society organizations working in the State. The conflicts in Blue Nile State have also adversely affected the situation of human rights there. Representatives of civil society organizations emphasized the need for peace to facilitate real improvement in the human rights situation in the State. The problem of landmines also exists in the conflict areas of Blue Nile State and needs to be urgently addressed.

17. Outside the Sudan, the Independent Expert attended the 3rd Civil Society Forum on Sudan and South Sudan held in Addis Ababa from 20 to 22 January 2014, where he met and discussed the human rights situation in the Sudan with different civil society representatives. He also met with representatives of Sudanese civil society and other international civil society organizations in London, and had useful engagements with the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva during the reporting period.

18. In his engagements with the Government of the Sudan and all other stakeholders, the Independent Expert aimed at assessing the Government's efforts towards the practical improvement of the situation of human rights on the ground, as recommended in his previous report. To that end he reiterated the need for the Government to adopt a result-oriented approach to its human rights obligations, and offered technical advice to the Government on the necessary steps it needed to take in that regard.

III. Appraisal of the human rights situation

19. In his previous report, the Independent Expert mentioned that the Government of the Sudan had adopted relevant legislation and policies aimed at improving the human rights situation in the country. This remains the case during this reporting period. Two notable examples are the passage of a new Human Trafficking Act in January 2014, which is a welcome step towards combating the increasing problem of human trafficking in the country, and the adoption by the National Commission on Human Rights of a promising four-year national strategic plan for 2014 to 2018. However, implementation still remains protracted and there have been no significant visible improvements in the protection of human rights on the ground since 2013.

20. In its engagement with the Independent Expert, the Government insisted that it was making every effort, within the prevailing political and conflict situation, to improve the practical situation of human rights on the ground. While he acknowledged the Government's commitment and openness to a constructive dialogue during his visits, the

Independent Expert raised concerns about the subsisting human rights challenges raised in his previous report, which the Government has still not addressed.

21. There have, regrettably, been many encroachments on human rights in the country that have attracted considerable international concern within the reporting period. They included fatal shootings and injuries during the September 2013 oil-subsidy demonstrations in Khartoum; the fatal shooting of a University of Khartoum student during a rally on the university campus on 10 March 2014; the arrests and detentions of opposition political leaders and youth activists between March and June 2014; the apostasy case of Meriam Ibrahim (aka Abrar al-Hadi) and its effect on the right to freedom of religion in the Sudan; confiscation of newspapers by security agents; and escalation of armed conflicts resulting in major displacements of civilians in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. The Independent Expert received written and oral complaints from individuals, civil society organizations, international agencies and the diplomatic community about those incidents, which he raised in his discussions with the Government of the Sudan.

22. In their discussions with the Independent Expert, representatives of possible donor States and international institutions continually highlighted the need for the Sudan to redress those human rights encroachments to encourage positive responses to requests for technical assistance and capacity-building from the international community.

IV. Written communications sent to the Government of the Sudan

23. During the reporting period, the Independent Expert along with other concerned special procedures mandate holders sent four jointly signed urgent appeals (on 17 October 2013, 6 November 2013, 29 November 2013 and 14 May 2014) and two allegation letters (on 7 May and 10 July 2014) to the Government of the Sudan with respect to different complaints and information received from individuals and groups raising specific human rights concerns.

24. The Government did not respond formally to any of the above communications during the reporting period. The Independent Expert raised concerns with the Government about its non-response to those communications. Issuance of urgent appeals and allegation letters under the United Nations special procedures system enables mandate holders to verify information about specific allegations of human rights violations received, and also provides the Government with the opportunity to respond to such allegations. The Independent Expert urges the Government to be responsive to future communications as required under the special procedures system.

V. Follow-up on the implementation of previous recommendations

25. As requested by the Independent Expert, in June 2014 the Government submitted to him a report listing the steps it had taken towards implementing some of his previous recommendations. The report indicated that the Government's national plan to implement the recommendations of the universal periodic review was ongoing with support from UNDP. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 24/28, had encouraged continued support by UNDP, but the Government indicated that the support of UNDP for its universal periodic review implementation plan was currently being threatened by depletion of its funds for that purpose. As UNDP support is indispensable for sustaining the implementation plan of the review recommendations by the Government, the Independent

Expert urges the international community to assist UNDP with the necessary funds to enable it to continue supporting the Government in that regard.

26. The Government has established a National Committee for the implementation of its 10-year National Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights, as recommended by the Independent Expert. It is now in the process of creating State and local committees for coordinating the implementation of the Action Plan at the grass-roots level. A human rights adviser has also been assigned to the Minister of Education to advise on the inclusion of human rights in the educational curriculum, with a high-level committee established in the Ministry of Education to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan at national level. The Ministry has requested technical expertise from the international community to take that process forward. The Independent Expert commends that positive step by the Government and urges the international community to support the Ministry with technical assistance in that regard. Inculcating human rights into the educational curriculum in the Sudan is imperative for the future and long-term integration of a human rights culture in the society.

27. Regarding steps taken on the Independent Expert's recommendation for transparency and inclusiveness in the country's constitutional and political process, the Government referred to the reform agenda presented by the President of Sudan in January 2014 proposing a national dialogue including all political groups. This was followed by a presidential decree in April 2014 providing for the release of political detainees, permitting political parties to operate freely and guaranteeing freedom of the press. However, two front-line opposition political party leaders were regrettably arrested and detained in May and June 2014 for making public statements considered by the Government as crossing set "red lines". The arrests had a negative impact on the national dialogue process, casting public doubt on the Government's sincerity towards that initiative. The Independent Expert raised concerns about that drawback and urged the Government to guarantee essential civil liberties to facilitate an enabling environment for a meaningful national dialogue and political process.

28. In response to the Independent Expert's recommendation that the Government should ensure that its armed forces complied fully with humanitarian laws in their engagement with rebel forces, the Government claimed that it had a duty to defend the State against the armed movements which had been targeting the security of the State and attacking civilians in cities and villages. Nevertheless, the Government has an obligation to abide by the principle of proportionality in its armed response to attacks by the armed movements and avoid indiscriminate killing or displacement of civilian populations.

29. There is no mention of steps taken by the Government in respect of other recommendations of the Independent Expert such as: (a) amend the 2010 National Security Act to ensure that the powers of the National Intelligence and Security Service are in conformity with international human rights obligations of the Sudan; (b) cease arbitrary curtailment of the activities of civil society organizations, press censorship and arbitrary arrests and detentions; (c) fully respect the right to freedom of religion without discrimination; (d) uphold the guarantee of the rights of women and children, and take necessary steps to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Government should take the necessary steps to implement all the remaining recommendations.

30. Regarding the Independent Expert's recommendation to the international community for technical assistance to the Sudan, it is encouraging to note the recent decision of the European Union to enhance its support for projects relating to peacebuilding in the Sudan over the next three years. The Independent Expert also acknowledges the support provided within the reporting period to the Sudan by other international entities, such as UNAMID and UNDP, as outlined in section VII below.

VI. Subsisting human rights challenges

31. The practical human rights challenges identified in the Independent Expert's previous report are still subsisting to a great extent. The situation was compounded by other notable human rights encroachments that occurred during the reporting period. To realize the necessary improvements to the human rights situation on the ground, the Government needs to fully address all the following human rights challenges effectively.

A. Human rights violations during the September 2013 demonstrations

32. In September 2013, there were oil-subsidy demonstrations across Khartoum State, which resulted in fatal shootings, injuries and destruction of property, leading to the arrest and detention of many demonstrators. The international community called for a thorough investigation of the human rights violations that had occurred during the demonstrations. On enquiry, the Independent Expert was informed by the Government in December 2013 that it had set up two committees to investigate the September incidents. During his mission to the Sudan in February 2014, the Independent Expert had urged the Government to release the report of its investigations on time. Consequently, the Government presented the Independent Expert with a written report at the end of his mission to the Sudan in June 2014. A summary of the report is provided below with, for accuracy, specific quotations from relevant sections.

33. The report was prepared and issued by the Office of the Chief Prosecutor of Khartoum State and entitled: "A brief report on the acts of violence of September 2013". It consists of an introduction and four main sections entitled, "What happened?", "How did the public prosecution manage the fallouts of the incidents?", "Cases of death", "Why the investigation is yet to identify the shooters?", and a "Conclusion". The members of the investigating committee are not disclosed in the report.

34. The introduction states how the prosecutor prepared for possible demonstrations following the economic reform measures taken by the Government. Measures taken aimed to: (a) "secure and escort the demonstrations until the end of the manifestations of expression of protest"; (b) "ensure the protection and safety of public facilities in case of any potential threat to such facilities"; and (c) "ensure not to resort to the use of force save in case of necessity, exercise the utmost self-control and not respond to instances of provocation that might be made by some demonstrators". In the "What happened?" section, the report gives information about how the protests started and suddenly turned violent with demonstrators attacking and destroying public and private properties. It then states that:

The police dealt with those serious developments to the extent that could protect the individual and private and public property. The result of that was as follows: (1) Occurrence of loss of lives amounted to 85 dead. (2) Infliction of heavy damage on public and private ownerships. (3) Many injuries amongst individuals and security organs personnel. (4) A big number of suspects were arrested under charges of criminal mischief and theft (sections 69, 77, 182, and 174 of the Criminal Act 1991).

35. The section entitled "How did the public prosecution manage the fallouts of the incidents?" provides information on the visit of prosecution attorneys to the two mortuaries in Khartoum "to assume the exercise of the preliminary procedures which include issuing orders of post-mortem, delivery of bodies of the deceased to their kindred and examining complainants and witnesses, where applicable". The prosecution attorneys also visited places of custody to supervise the situation of detainees who were classified into three categories:

Category One, which includes minors under the age of 18, were immediately released on personal guarantees by their guardians. They were all released within a few hours following their arrest. Category Two, includes adults against whom no adequate evidence was available in relation to acts of sabotage and looting. They were released on ordinary bail. Category Three, which includes the persons against whom there was prima facie evidence to their involvement in acts of theft, looting and sabotage. The public prosecution decided to keep them in custody pending completion of investigation and estimation of the financial bail for their release.

36. The section on “Cases of death” consists of 10 paragraphs and is fully reproduced for accuracy as follows:

(1) The public prosecution immediately initiated preliminary investigations pursuant to section 51 of the Criminal Procedure Act (death in mysterious circumstances) for each case. (2) Post-mortem order forms were issued for all of the dead bodies, and the public prosecution received the reports of the two mortuaries in relation to all the bodies. (3) The public prosecution examined the complainants and some witnesses who were present at the time of the incident or who helped in the ambulance operation. (4) The public prosecution designed a uniformed formula in which all the information pertaining to the deceased persons, places of the incidence, causes of death ... etc. were registered. Such forms were consolidated in one report to the Prosecutor-General. (5) The public prosecution summoned the relatives of deceased persons to appear before the investigating authorities and to submit any information which might assist in the investigation. (6) Through the review of the death cases it is evident that the deceased persons represented 31 ethnical groups from the various Sudanese tribes. Deceased women were three. One security officer was among the deceased. (7) The number of bodies taken to hospitals and mortuaries without identifying the circumstances surround[ing] their death or being availed of medical service were 25. (8) In 5 cases witnesses have identified the persons who fired at deceased persons. Though the testimony of those witnesses was hearsay, the public prosecution gave it considerable attention. (9) During post-mortem, firearm bullets were found in 7 bodies of the deceased. The bullets were sent to the criminal laboratory for inspection. (10) There was one case in which investigation was concluded and referred to trial by the competent court. The court, after hearing the case, made its judgement acquitting the accused for lack of sufficient evidence. The prosecutor in charge filed an appeal to the Court of Appeal.

37. The section on “Why the investigation is yet to identify the shooters?” answers that question in three paragraphs as follows:

(1) In all the cases there is no any eyewitness who could specifically identify the person who fired, whether by recognizing [t]his person, the plate number of his vehicle, the number of the patrol or the force commander, where regular forces were allegedly the shooter. What complicated the matter even more was that the police and security forces were moving throughout sporadic areas of Khartoum State according to the need for dealing with cases of violence, looting and sabotage, therefore, we have been encountered by a difficulty in identifying the forces operating in the location concerned. (2) There were about 25 casualties found in hospitals and mortuaries most of them had been transferred there by demonstrators who did not wait to be questioned. (3) There were certain cases of persons who did not take part in the demonstrations but were hit by stray bullets.

38. The conclusion of the report was that:

(a) The demonstrations referred to, cannot be described as peaceful protests because the demonstrations targeted public and private property causing damages,

destruction and looting incidents. (b) The intervention of the police was limited to the protection of the people and only where there are possible or actual damage to the individuals or the property of the State or the citizen and where there is a threat to the national security and stability in the country. (c) Accordingly, numbers of suspects were arrested not because of being part of the demonstrations but because of committing acts that constitute crimes under the Criminal Act 1991. (d) The legal proceedings pertaining to deceased persons are ongoing, and the Prosecutor General appealed to every individual who has information concerning the incidents to provide it to any prosecution office.²

39. During his missions to the Sudan in February and June 2014, the Independent Expert received representations from some of the family members of deceased victims of the September demonstrations, who expressed hopelessness in their quest for justice in respect of their deceased relatives. It is imperative that justice must be seen to be done in this case in order to deter arbitrary violations with impunity of the fundamental right to life.

40. After careful consideration, the Independent Expert is of the view that the report does not provide evidence of a thorough and independent investigation of the human rights violations that occurred during the September demonstrations. The finding in the report that it was difficult to locate any of those who shot and killed so many people in broad daylight during the demonstrations is unacceptable both morally and legally. While the Government's report put the number of lives lost at 85, there are alternative reports from within the Sudan listing a higher number of deaths and injuries from gunshots during the demonstrations. The report gives no indication of how the shooters would be brought to justice or how the serious human rights violations would be redressed. Considering the high number of lives lost during the demonstrations and the need for accountability, it is both morally and legally imperative that there should be an independent judicial enquiry into the killings and other human rights violations that occurred during the September 2013 demonstrations.

41. In the interest of accountability, justice, prevention of impunity and respect for human rights, the Independent Expert urges the Government of the Sudan to quickly institute an independent judicial public enquiry into the killings and other human rights violations that occurred during the September 2013 demonstrations in Khartoum. It is recommended that the public enquiry should be chaired by a retired senior Sudanese judge with a panel of independent experts selected from academia, civil society, forensic experts and other relevant professional bodies in the Sudan and a nominee each from the African Union and the League of Arab States as regional members of the panel.

B. Fatal shooting of a third-year University of Khartoum student

42. On 10 March 2014, Ali Abakar Musa Idris, a third-year economics student at the University of Khartoum, was killed by gunshot and several other people were arrested during a students' rally on the university campus in protest against attacks on civilians in Darfur. In his meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Khartoum, the Independent Expert raised concerns and requested information about the incident. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University had completed its investigations into the incident and had submitted its findings to the Sudanese police for further investigation. The Independent Expert urges the Government of the Sudan to ensure that the incident is fully

² A similar report was presented by the Government of the Sudan when it was reviewed by the Human Rights Committee in July 2014, as part of the additional information to its fourth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

investigated and its findings made public in the interest of protecting the fundamental right to life and ending impunity for arbitrary deprivation of lives in the country.

C. Meriam Ibrahim (aka Abrar al-Hadi) apostasy case

43. The case of Meriam Ibrahim (aka Abrar al-Hadi) who was convicted on allegations of apostasy under article 126 of the Sudanese Criminal Act (1991) by a criminal court in Khartoum on 15 May 2014 attracted a lot of international attention during the reporting period. The Independent Expert received numerous complaints about the case, which he raised with the Government during his mission to the Sudan in June. At his request, the Independent Expert was granted permission by the Government to visit Ms. Ibrahim on 21 June in Omdurman Female Prison where she had been detained while awaiting the decision of the appeal lodged against her conviction. During the prison visit the Independent Expert had a private meeting with Ms. Ibrahim to discuss her case and concerns. The Independent Expert had earlier raised questions about the handling of the case in his meeting with the Advisory Council for Human Rights. After meeting with Ms. Ibrahim, he had further discussions with relevant senior government officers and received assurances that the judicial consideration of her appeal against her conviction would be expedited in the interest of justice. The conviction was subsequently overturned by a Court of Appeal in Khartoum on 23 June and Ms. Ibrahim was released from prison. The Court of Appeal's ruling overturning the decision of the lower court in this case is commendable in the interest of justice from the perspective of both Islamic law and that of international human rights.

44. It must be recalled that in its second periodic report on its implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights submitted to the Human Rights Committee in 1997, the Government of the Sudan had stated with reference to article 126 of the Sudanese Criminal Act (1991) that the "Act does not make conversion from Islam an offence, but only the manifestation of such conversion if such manifestation adversely affects public safety".³ Both the National Commission for Human Rights and the Sudanese Bar Association declared in their statements issued on 17 and 18 May 2014 respectively, that Ms. Ibrahim's case raised important legal questions about the scope of the right to freedom of religion and belief in the Sudan, which needed to be re-examined. The Independent Expert urges the Government to review, as a matter of priority, article 126 of the Act in the light of its constitutional and international human rights obligations. He also commends, and recommends international support for, the proposal of the Sudanese Bar Association to organize workshops to debate the scope of article 126 of the Act in order to address its apparent conflict with the Sudanese Constitution and the international human rights obligations of the Sudan.

45. The Government has an obligation to uphold the right to freedom of religion and belief as guaranteed both in the Sudanese Constitution and in article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of which the Sudan is a State party. The Meriam case highlights the need for appropriate judicial training in the Sudan especially at the lower bench of the judiciary, which is closer to the population. The Independent Expert urges the international community to help in providing the necessary technical assistance for appropriate training of the Sudanese judiciary in relevant human rights jurisprudence.

³ CCPR/C/75/Add.2 of 13 March 1997, para. 127.

D. Arrests and detentions of political opponents and youth activists

46. On 17 May and 8 June 2014 respectively, two leading opposition political figures, Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the National Umma Party, and Ibrahim al-Sheikh, leader of the Sudanese Congress Party, were arrested and detained by the Government for making public statements against attacks conducted in Darfur by the Government's Rapid Support Force. The Independent Expert raised concerns about the arrest and detention of the two political leaders with the Government during his mission in June and requested that they should either be released or charged to court. Subsequently, Mr. Al-Mahdi was released on 15 June without charges, while Mr. Al-Sheikh and other members of the Sudanese Congress Party are currently still being detained. In compliance with the State's obligation to respect and ensure the right to liberty and freedom of individuals, the Independent Expert urges the Government to release Mr. Al-Sheikh and all other political detainees forthwith or charge them to court if there are any legitimate charges against them.

47. Some youth activists, including Muhammad Salah, Taj Elsir Jaafar and Muammer Musa Muhamed, were arrested and detained by the National Intelligence and Security Service for months without charges. On the basis of reports received by the Independent Expert alleging torture of the detained youths, he requested, during his mission in June, to see Mr. Salah in prison to verify his condition. Regrettably, his request was refused by the Service. In a briefing note to the Independent Expert on 24 June, the Service alleged that Mr. Salah was being detained and investigated for "instigating hatred and abetting the breach of order and advocating for toppling the constitutional regime by use of force and violence". The Independent Expert then urged the Service to either charge him to court or release him forthwith. The three youth activists were subsequently released on 11 July without any charges. The Independent Expert urges the Government to order the release of all other youth activists currently being detained by the Service or charge them to court if there are any established charges against them.

48. The fear of arbitrary arrests and detentions by the National Intelligence and Security Service continues to be a major cause of intimidation of political opponents and other civil activists in the Sudan. This creates an impediment to the full enjoyment of the right to liberty and security as guaranteed under article 29 of the Sudanese Constitution and article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Sudan is a State party. The Independent Expert urges the Government and its security agents to desist from arbitrary arrests and detentions and to fully respect and ensure the right to liberty and freedom of individuals.

E. National dialogue and constitutional/political process

49. The President of the Sudan issued a reform document on 27 January 2014 which specified a four-point national agenda, focusing on: (a) peace and security — aimed at reaching a sustainable peace agreement with rebel groups through dialogue that would be incorporated in the new constitution; (b) political reforms and democratization — aimed at pursuing democratic reforms to ensure civil liberties; (c) economic reforms — aimed at poverty reduction to eliminate claims of marginalization; and (d) national identity — aimed at resolving the country's identity problem and making citizenship the basis of all rights. This document led to the so-called "national dialogue" to move the constitutional and political process in the Sudan forward.

50. During the Independent Expert's mission to the Sudan in February 2014, the Minister of Justice and other senior government officials stressed that the national dialogue and four-point agenda proposed by the President would be effectively pursued by the Government as a means of improving the political, social and human rights situation in the

country. The main opposition political parties also expressed support for the national dialogue, but emphasized the need for a transparent and fully inclusive process to make it sustainable. This raised general optimism for an open all-inclusive national dialogue towards finding a lasting solution to the political, social and human rights problems facing the country.

51. The leaders of the National Umma Party and the Sudanese Congress Party, who were supposed to be front-line participants in the proposed national dialogue, were regrettably arrested in May and June 2014 respectively. Consequently, the various opposition political parties and other stakeholders developed distrust of the Government's proposed national dialogue. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged by most stakeholders that a meaningful national dialogue still needed to take place subject to necessary assurances that the Government would allow an enabling environment, free of intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detentions. Civil society organizations also requested their formal recognition by the Government as legitimate participants in the proposed national dialogue.

52. The Independent Expert supports the need for effective confidence-building measures and assurances by the Government to demonstrate its good faith in taking the national dialogue forward transparently. A recommended option would be to have regional observers from the African Union and the League of Arab States to support the national dialogue process. Almost all relevant stakeholders supported such a measure, when asked by the Independent Expert during his mission to the Sudan in June 2014.

53. Apart from registered political parties, it is also necessary to include representatives of armed movements, civil society organizations, academia, women and youth groups as formal participants in the national dialogue to ensure maximum inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders. The University of Khartoum has already established a Forum for National Dialogue and Policies, which can contribute beneficially to the success of the national dialogue.

F. Continued curtailment of activities of civil society organizations

54. There is commendable commitment on the part of local civil society organizations towards the improvement of the human rights situation in the Sudan, but the Government's curtailment of their activities remains a matter of serious concern. The Independent Expert received complaints of continued intimidation of civil society organizations by government security agents. On 24 June 2014, while winding down his second mission to the Sudan, the Independent Expert received information about the Government's closure, without giving a reason, of Salmah Women's Resource Centre, a women's civil society organization in Khartoum focusing on gender-related issues. Since then, the Independent Expert has received expressions of concern from other organizations in the Sudan who are apprehensive of also being closed down by the Government for their work on the promotion of women's rights in the Sudan.

55. The promotion of women's rights is one of the most important aspects of human rights globally today, so civil society organizations working on the promotion of women's rights should be protected and encouraged by the State rather than being restricted. It would be difficult for civil society organizations to operate under intimidating conditions and apprehension. The Independent Expert reiterates his call on the Government to grant civil society organizations the necessary space to operate legitimately and to ensure that its security agents stop curtailing the legitimate activities of civil society organizations in the country.

G. Continued press censorship

56. Direct closure of newspaper houses by government security agents declined relatively during the reporting period. It was confirmed that only one newspaper, *Al-Sayha*, remained suspended as at June 2014. The Independent Expert raised this with the National Intelligence and Security Service during his mission in June and the suspension was subsequently lifted on 23 June.

57. The Sudanese Constitutional Court declared in March 2014 that a National Intelligence and Security Service order that had suspended the *Al-Tayyar* newspaper since June 2012 was illegal, and thus revoked the order. In the same month, the Sudanese Court of Intellectual Property acquitted a reporter from the *Al-Sudani* newspaper on charges of “harming the morale of the armed forces”, brought against him for critiquing activities of the Sudanese Armed Forces in a newspaper article.

58. Despite those commendable judicial decisions, post-publication censorship continued unabated and government security agents seized printed newspapers for allegedly crossing publication “red lines” set by the National Intelligence and Security Service. Between March and June 2014 printed editions of different newspapers, such as *The Citizen*, *Al-Hurra*, *Al-Sudani*, *Al-Watan*, *Al-Youm Al-Tali*, *Al-Jareeda* and *Al-Aswaq*, were confiscated by government security agents without them stating specific reasons. Also, some journalists have been banned permanently by the Service from writing. Such press censorship continues to create fear of arrest for journalists and publishers, which consequently impedes on press freedom and the right to freedom of opinion and expression in the Sudan.

59. As the guarantee of press freedom is essential for facilitating the national dialogue proposed by the Government, the Independent Expert urges the Government to ensure that its security agents stop press intimidation to enable a conducive environment for the national dialogue and ensure a vibrant constitutional and political process for the country.

H. National Security Act of 2010

60. The National Security Act of 2010 continues to be an enabling legislation for the National Intelligence and Security Service to encroach on civil and political rights in the Sudan. The Act empowers security officers to detain individuals for a maximum period of four and half months without judicial authority,⁴ which is often used to justify the detention of individuals by the Service. To ensure that the Service operates in compliance with the human rights obligations of the Sudan, the Government should either revoke or amend the Act to bring it into conformity with the country’s constitutional and international human rights obligations.

I. Escalation of armed conflicts and increase in civilian displacements

61. There was a significant upsurge in armed conflicts perpetrated by both State and non-State actors in the conflict areas during the reporting period, leading to further displacement of civilians in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, particularly between February and June 2014. This contributed to the deterioration of the humanitarian and human rights situation in conflict areas. The activities of rebel movements and the response of government forces, particularly the Rapid Support Force, led to many human

⁴ See National Security Act (2010), art. 50, para. 1 (c), (f), (g) and (h).

rights violations in those States, including killings, sexual and gender-based violence, rampaging of villages as well as destruction of property.⁵ UNAMID reported large-scale attacks by the Rapid Support Force on armed groups and villages in South and North Darfur States in February and March. There were continued reports of aerial bombings by the Sudanese Air Force in the conflict areas and of their consequential adverse impact on the civilian population in those areas. There were reports of civilians killed from such aerial bombings in Draib Al Reih and Um Gunya in South Darfur in February, in Uzbun village East of El-Daein in Blue Nile State on 15 March and in Thabit in North Darfur on 28 April. A hospital run by Médecins Sans Frontières in the village of Farandalla in South Kordofan was bombed by the Air Force on 16 June. Such indiscriminate aerial strikes, which are a clear violation of the basic principles of international human rights and humanitarian law, must stop.

62. The trajectory of the armed conflicts has been at three interconnected levels: tribal violence over land and natural resources, attacks by armed movements against government positions and vice versa, and aerial bombardments of areas under rebel control by the Sudanese Air Force. All that led to the destruction of life and property and seriously undermined the security of civilians during the reporting period, particularly in different parts of Darfur and South Kordofan. The upsurge in conflict in the Darfur region generated an estimated 250,000 new civilian IDPs between February and April 2014, which was higher than the total number of IDPs for 2011 and 2012. The total number of IDPs in Darfur was estimated at over 2 million in April 2014.⁶

63. In Darfur, there were reported rebel attacks on UNAMID peacekeeping forces and carjacking of UNAMID vehicles during the reporting period, as well as robberies and attacks on humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Programme.

64. The Independent Expert emphasized the need for proportionality and respect for humanitarian and human rights principles in the Government's engagements with rebel forces. He also had discussions with the Chairman of the Darfur Regional Authority on efforts to encourage the non-signatory armed movements to join the peace process. The Independent Expert commends the Authority's efforts and the instrumental role of the Head of UNAMID in mediating with non-signatory armed movements to broker a solution that will bring lasting peace to Darfur. He also met with the tribal leaders in South Kordofan who emphasized that the use of traditional peace settlement mechanisms and adequate consultation with tribal leaders was an important factor for success in the peace initiatives. The Independent Expert's efforts to meet with representatives of some of the armed movements during the reporting period were unsuccessful.

65. It is imperative to intensify efforts towards ending the armed conflicts in the Sudan, which are a major cause of human rights violations. The Government's effort to set up social peace workshops across the five States in Darfur aimed at culminating in a Social Peace Conference in November is commendable in that regard.

J. Violence against women and children

66. Although the Unit for Combating Violence against Women and Children as well as the Family and Child Protection Unit of the Sudanese police force are doing very good work, the problem of violence against women and children remains of grave concern,

⁵ See Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2014/279 of 15 April 2014), paras. 7–11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 14.

especially in the conflict areas. During the reporting period, there were incidents of sexual and gender-based violence including rape, mainly targeting IDPs in conflict-affected areas. Among cases reported was the shooting and killing of five women including a minor following a failed attempted rape, while the victims were fleeing the attacks on Hajer and surrounding villages in South Darfur in February 2014. In addition, on 9 April a United Nations peacekeeper was gang-raped in El-Fasher, North Darfur. Four suspects were arrested and charged to court.

67. There is increased reluctance on the part of victims to formally report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, for fear of social stigma or reprisals and also due to the absence of government security forces in some localities where those crimes are prevalent. There are no government police forces in Kalma IDP camp (South Darfur), Abusurug (West Darfur), and Korma, Saraf Omra and Tawilla (North Darfur), which fosters a culture of impunity for such crimes in those areas. UNAMID has made commendable efforts to provide training and capacity-building to civil society groups and IDPs on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and referral pathways, as well as to collaborate with relevant government departments on addressing information-sharing gaps on the problem.

68. The Independent Expert urges the Government to establish effective security and police presence in the areas where sexual and gender-based violence is prevalent. He also urges the international community to help with technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen community policing and enhance the protection of women and children in the conflict areas.

K. Humanitarian access and Government's suspension of the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross

69. While the Humanitarian Affairs Commission claims its coordination of humanitarian aid has improved significantly, the question of timeliness and unhindered access continues to be raised by different humanitarian agencies. It is reported that humanitarian access to Jebel Marra areas (North Darfur) remains problematic, and that Adillah and Abu Karina localities (East Darfur) have not been reached since August 2013. The Commission needs to look into these access problems and allow humanitarian protection activities in these areas.

70. Due to non-access to areas under the control of armed movements since 2011, it is estimated that 160,000 children under the age of 5 have not received necessary routine immunization in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, leaving them at risk of contracting polio and other vaccine preventable diseases. The Independent Expert joins the call made by the United Nations Children's Fund to the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements to allow vaccination access to the conflict areas to save children from preventable diseases.

71. Since 1 February 2014 the Government has suspended the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Sudan for "technical and administrative reasons". Being a neutral humanitarian agency with unique experience in assisting victims in situations of conflicts and natural disasters, ICRC is indispensable in providing humanitarian assistance particularly to civilians in rebel-controlled areas of conflict. The Independent Expert discussed the suspension of ICRC activities with the Director of the Humanitarian Affairs Commission and was assured that the issue was being looked into with ICRC to find a quick resolution to it. The suspension of ICRC activities in the Sudan has resulted in humanitarian deficits in the face of the effect of the escalation of the conflict on civilians, as highlighted in paragraphs 61 to 70 above. The Independent

Expert urges the Government to lift the suspension on ICRC activities so that it can resume its humanitarian services in the country without further delay.

L. Economic and social rights

72. The Ministry of Welfare and Social Security of the Sudan is doing very good work in pursuance of its mandate to reduce poverty and provide welfare for the people, especially through its Zakat Chambers and other initiatives for the economic empowerment of women, the disabled and the very poor. Nevertheless, poverty continues to be an issue of concern, especially for IDPs in conflict-affected areas. There are noticeable inequalities in terms of access to education, sanitation, clean water and a wide gap in income opportunities between people living in rural settings and those in urban settings. People in rural settings continually complained about their limited access to basic needs and services as well as their limited ability to provide for themselves and their families.

73. Based on academic research linking deprivation of economic, social and cultural rights to escalation of conflict,⁷ it is important that the problem be addressed. With regard to Darfur, there is a need for the effective and timely implementation of the development projects under the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which are currently hampered by the financial constraints and limited technical capacity of the Darfur Regional Authority. Effective implementation of the grass-roots development projects under the Doha Document would go a long way to alleviate poverty and improve the situation of economic, social and cultural rights in the Darfur region.

VII. Technical assistance and capacity-building

74. During the reporting period, UNAMID and UNDP provided different forms of technical assistance and capacity-building to government institutions such as the police, the justice sector, the legislature, the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, as well as civil society organizations in different parts of the Sudan. In view of the subsisting human rights challenges, there is a need for continued technical assistance and capacity-building for the different institutions and civil society organizations in the country.

75. It is necessary to continue strengthening and working with relevant institutions such as: the Advisory Council for Human Rights; the National Commission for Human Rights; the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly; the Unit for Combating Violence against Women and Children; the National Council for Child Welfare; the Family and Child Protection Unit of the Police Force; the Women's Centre for Human Rights in the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security; the Committee on Human Rights Education in the Ministry of Education; the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes in Darfur; the judiciary — including the Constitutional Court; the police; the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission; the Commission for Refugees, as well as the different local civil society organizations, for the long-term improvement of the situation of human rights in the Sudan.

76. In view of the important role of peace in the realization of practical improvements to the human rights situation in the Sudan, particularly in the conflict areas, the Independent Expert commends the decision of the European Union in July 2014 to enhance its support for projects concerning peacebuilding in the Sudan, and its allocation of 13.5 million euros

⁷ See, for example, Oskar N.T. Thoms and James Ron, "Do human rights violations cause internal conflict?", *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 29 (2007), pp. 674–705.

over the next three years to support local peace processes in the conflict areas of the Sudan. The European Union has also budgeted one million euros to be spent in 2014 under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights project to support, inter alia, capacity-building for local civil society organizations in promoting human rights and democratic reform in the Sudan.

77. The Independent Expert encourages other donor States, international institutions and agencies to assist the Government of the Sudan as well as national and local civil society organizations, with the technical assistance and capacity-building needed to address the subsisting human rights challenges in the country.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

78. **Within the reporting period, the Government of the Sudan has sustained its efforts in respect of policies aimed at improving the situation of human rights in the country, but the effective and practical implementation of those policies on the ground still remains protracted. This report has evidently identified that major human rights challenges still persist, and the Government of the Sudan must take practical steps to redress them.**

79. **Despite the subsisting human rights challenges in the Sudan, the situation is not totally bleak as the Government's human rights policy orientation has relatively improved over the past two years. The mandate of the Independent Expert is therefore making an impact and the international community should continue engaging with and supporting the Sudan towards realizing the practical improvement of its human rights situation.**

80. **On the basis of the appraisal and candid assessment of the subsisting human rights challenges in the Sudan during this reporting period, the Independent Expert makes the following recommendations.**

A. Recommendations to the Government of the Sudan

81. **The Government of the Sudan should take concrete action to address the subsisting human rights challenges identified in this report to achieve visible improvement of human rights on the ground. To that end the Government should:**

(a) **Implement the remaining recommendations in the previous report of the Independent Expert without further delay;**

(b) **Institute an independent judicial public enquiry into the killings and other human rights violations that occurred during the September 2013 demonstrations;**

(c) **Ensure that the death of Ali Abakar Musa Idris, killed by gunshot at the University of Khartoum on 10 March 2014, is fully investigated and its findings made public;**

(d) **Release the leader of the Sudanese Congress Party, Ibrahim al-Sheikh, and all other political and youth activist detainees or charge them to court if there are any established charges against them;**

(e) **Ensure that its security agents desist from arbitrary arrests and detentions, press censorship, clamping down on civil society organizations, and fully respect the right to liberty and freedom of individuals;**

- (f) Repeal or amend the National Security Act of 2010 to bring it into conformity with its constitutional and international human rights obligations;
- (g) Review article 126 of the Sudanese Criminal Act (1991) in line with its constitutional and international human rights obligations on freedom of religion and belief;
- (h) Accept regional observers from the African Union and League of Arab States to support the national dialogue process;
- (i) Recognize representatives of armed movements, civil society organizations, academia, women and youth groups as formal participants in the proposed national dialogue to ensure maximum inclusiveness of all necessary stakeholders;
- (j) Stop indiscriminate aerial strikes and respect the principle of proportionality in its armed response to attacks by armed movements;
- (k) In cooperation with relevant United Nations demining agencies, address the problem of unexploded ordnances in the conflict areas;
- (l) Provide police forces in areas where sexual and gender-based violence is prevalent to ensure security in those areas;
- (m) Lift the suspension on activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross so that it can resume its humanitarian services in the Sudan;
- (n) Allow vaccination access to the conflict areas to save children from preventable diseases, and facilitate humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance;
- (o) Improve the conditions of prisons outside Khartoum, including the male section of the Zalingei prison;
- (p) Respond formally to communications received under the special procedures system in a timely manner;
- (q) Ensure the enjoyment of economic and social rights, particularly in the rural areas;
- (r) Facilitate the establishment of branch offices of the National Commission for Human Rights in states outside Khartoum;
- (s) Cooperate with the international community to find a permanent peaceful solution to armed conflicts in the country, especially in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, and ensure the full implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur throughout the five States of Darfur.

B. Recommendations to the international community

82. The Independent Expert encourages the international community to continue providing necessary technical assistance to the Government of the Sudan, and national and local civil society organizations in the Sudan towards the effective improvement of the practical situation of human rights in the country. To that end the international community should, inter alia:

- (a) Allocate sufficient funding to UNDP to enable it to continue supporting the national plan of the Government of the Sudan to implement the remaining recommendations of the universal periodic review;

- (b) Provide UNAMID with adequate human and financial resources to continue promoting and protecting human rights and supporting the peace process in Darfur;
- (c) Encourage both the Government of the Sudan and the rebel movements to lay down their arms and engage in peaceful negotiations;
- (d) Support the social peace initiatives of the Government of the Sudan aimed at ending the tribal conflicts in the different parts of the Sudan;
- (e) Assist the Government of the Sudan in addressing the problem of unexploded ordnances in the conflict areas;
- (f) Provide technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen community policing and enhance the protection of women and children in the conflict areas;
- (g) Support the Government of the Sudan in the realization of economic and social rights and the effective implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur;
- (h) Support the proposal of the Sudanese Bar Association to organize workshops to discuss the scope of article 126 of the Sudanese Criminal Act (1991) in order to address its apparent conflict with the Constitution of the Sudan and its international human rights obligations.

C Recommendations to civil society organizations in the Sudan

83. Civil society organizations in the Sudan, should:

- (a) Continue their good work to promote human rights awareness in the Sudan and their constructive engagements with the Government;
- (b) Continue to improve their human rights advocacy skills in order to enhance their capabilities to promote and protect human rights in accordance with the rule of law;
- (c) Submit proposals for technical assistance and capacity-building to UNAMID, UNDP and other international partners such as the European Union to help improve their human rights advocacy capabilities and rule of law knowledge.

D. Recommendations to the armed movements in the Sudan

84. Armed movements in the Sudan, should:

- (a) Cooperate fully with the international community to find a permanent peaceful solution to armed conflicts in the country;
- (b) Respect international human rights and humanitarian law in their rules of engagement and avoid targeted or indiscriminate attacks that harm the lives and properties of civilians and personnel of the United Nations and international relief agencies;
- (c) Support the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and cooperate with the Government of the Sudan and the international community to make its implementation successful;

(d) Allow vaccination access to the conflict areas to save children from preventable diseases, and facilitate humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance.
