



For immediate release – 27 May 2009

Sudan: ARTICLE 19 Submits Written Statement to 11th Session of UN Human Rights Council

ARTICLE 19, supported by the Khartoum Center for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KCHRED), has submitted a written statement expressing serious concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in Sudan to the 11th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, taking place from 2 to 19 June 2009.

In their written statement, ARTICLE 19 and KCHRED draw the UN Human Rights Council's particular attention to the increasing violation of the rights of freedom of expression and access to information, as well as liberty and freedom of association, in Sudan.

The organisations express particular concern about three issues. *First*, despite some positive changes, the draft Press Act retains many of the problematic provisions of the 2004 Press Act. *Second*, existing legislation, in particular the 1999 National Security Forces Act, has been used to suppress the exercise of a broad range of human rights in the country, including the right to freedom of expression, in relation to issues of international justice and domestic legal reform. *Third*, over the past year, there has been a broader campaign to restrict the right to freedom of expression in Sudan with increasing incidents of harassment, intimidation and arrests of journalists.

In response to these human rights challenges, ARTICLE 19 and KCHRED recommend that the UN Human Rights Council renews the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan. In addition, the organisations urge the Government of National Unity to: protect the rights to freedom of expression and access to information in the run-up to the national elections in 2010; revise the draft press law and the 1999 National Security Act in accordance with international human rights standards; and immediately halt media censorship and violations of human rights, especially when they are connected with debates on domestic legal reform, developments on the human rights situation in Darfur and the proceedings of the International Criminal Court.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- See ARTICLE 19's written statement here: [.....]
- For more information: please contact Sejal Parmar, Senior Legal Officer at sejal@article19.org or at +44 20 7278 9292.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.