



"Save Women of Sudan"

ECHRD

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"Save Women of Sudan"

Egyptian Coalition for Human Rights and Development

It is an initiative launched by Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue Foundation, and consists of 500 development associations and organizations in 9 Governorates, in order to promote Human Rights conditions in Egypt, strengthen partnerships, and exchange experience.

The NGOs and institutions participating in the initiative were distributed in 9 governorates: Cairo, Gharbia, Beheira, Alexandria, Beni Suef, Sohag, Luxor, Qena and Aswan.

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❖ **Introduction:**

On 15 April, fighting broke out in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The fighting quickly spread to other cities and towns across the country, including Darfur in Sudan's western region and to eastern Sudan.

However, the fighting has plunged Sudan **into one of the worst humanitarian conditions in modern history, which has killed 9,000 people, displaced more than 5.6 million from their homes and 25 million in need of humanitarian aid, according to UN reports. More than 70% of healthcare facilities in conflict zones are out of service, and fighting keeps 19 million children out of school, drastically reducing their education and the country's future.**

Civilian casualties and injuries have also increased, particularly in Khartoum and Darfur, and escalating violence in densely populated areas has led to large numbers of civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure.

Relief work is hampered in reaching those in need due to insecurity and restrictions, with the killing or detention of humanitarian workers, and the theft and looting of food items by the RSF.

Humanitarian workers are also underfunded, with only 33% of the \$2.6 billion requested to help those in need in Sudan received. In addition to the cholera outbreak, where more than a thousand cases are suspected in Gedarif, Khartoum, and Kordofan.

The escalation of the conflict has led to systematic ethnic-based violence against civilians and increased tribal tensions. Moreover, Conflict in South Darfur, its Central, and West has killed dozens of people and displaced thousands.

The political situation deteriorated significantly due to the continued fighting. The violence has been concentrated in the cities of Khartoum, Omdurman, and Bahri.

The RSF controlled most of the capital and Darfur except for parts of El Fasher and Nyala, while the armed forces continued to control the northern and eastern parts of the country and most areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

More serious is the special situation of women and girls in Sudan, who suffer from kidnapping and rape by the Rapid Support Forces that face accusations of using women's bodies as "battlefields", as sexual violence - especially rape - is used as a method of war. So, the conditions of women

and girls in Sudan have deteriorated and their suffering increased due to the war.

The war crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces, especially against Sudanese women, reveal that we are facing forces that do not know any humanitarian principles in dealing with civilians, especially women.

According to the spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Liz Throssell, on 3 November 2023, at least 105 people have been subjected to sexual violence since the outbreak of hostilities on 15 April 2023.

As of 2 November, the UN Human Rights Office in Sudan had received credible reports of more than 50 incidents of sexual violence linked to hostilities, affecting at least 105 victims, including 86 women, 1 man, and 18 children. These included 23 rape incidents, 26 gang rape, and three attempted rape incidents.

At least 70% of the 37 confirmed incidents of sexual violence recorded were attributed to men in RSF uniforms, eight incidents to RSF armed men, and two to men in unknown uniforms. Men whose identities have not yet been determined perpetrated the remaining cases.

Through this report, we will review some points related to the Rapid Support Forces and its role in increasing the suffering of Sudanese Women, which are represented in:

1. Overview of the Rapid Support Forces.
2. History of disputes between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Army.
3. Protection of women during armed conflict.
4. Violations and Crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces against women.

❖ **First: Overview of Rapid Support Forces "RSF"**

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as “Hemedti”, who has been the deputy chairman of the country's ruling Transitional Sovereignty Council since the outbreak of the 2019 Sudanese revolution. Moreover, these forces were established by the Rapid Support Forces Law approved by the National Assembly at its 43rd session of the fourth session on January 18, 2017.

Before gaining official status, the RSF was made up of tribal military militias, as it was Janjaweed militias that fought in the conflict in Darfur in the first decade of the millennium and it was used by the then-ruling regime of Omar al-Bashir to help the army put down a rebellion. The conflict displaced more than 2 million people and killed 300,000 between 2003 and 2008. International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors have charged government officials and Janjaweed militia leaders with genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

The forces grew over time and were used as border guards in particular to clamp down on irregular migration. In parallel, Hemedti's business interests expanded with Bashir's help, as his family acquired significant activities in gold mining, livestock breeding, and infrastructure.

Bashir legitimized these militias by issuing a presidential decree in 2013 establishing these forces as a force affiliated with the Sudanese government under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) to eliminate the insurgency in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile state, before transferring their subordination to the armed forces under the 2017 law.

Throughout its history, the RSF has committed many recorded violations, starting with its war in Darfur and humanitarian violations there, until the dispersal of the General Command sit-in in 2019, where it was accused of participating in the dispersal of the sit-in and brutally killing about 100 civilians, which the commanders of the forces have consistently denied.

There is no official count of the RSF, but some estimates put it at 100,000 and have military bases spread across the country.

The RSC sought to increase its resources, build an independent economic empire, and benefit from its control of the gold mining sites in Amer Mountain in Darfur before later ceding it to the Ministry of Finance.

❖ **Second: History of disputes between the RSF and the Sudanese army:**

The disputes between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Army date back several years, with talk of merging those forces under the umbrella of the army. RSF rejected this suggestion, so Hemedti announced in 2021 that talk of integration into the army could dismantle the country, and then the dispute escalated with Burhan's decision to dissolve the Transitional Sovereignty Council, while Hemedti said that Burhan's decisions failed and that Sudan had become worse.

In December 2022, Burhan and Hemedti signed the framework agreement with several parties from the Forces of Freedom and Change, as it was a framework agreement that aimed to develop a final agreement to form a civilian government, withdraw the army from the government, and expedite the integration of the Rapid Support Forces into the army, within two years. According to the timetable agreed upon in the framework agreement, a prime minister was supposed to be announced.

❖ **Third: Protection of women in armed conflict:**

International Humanitarian Law prohibits parties to an armed conflict from deliberately harming civilians. Moreover, Article 3, common to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and customary International Humanitarian Law, prohibits rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence committed in the context of armed conflict can constitute a form of torture and a war crime and, if part of a widespread or systematic attack by a government or armed group, can constitute crimes against humanity.

Women should have "special protection" from sexual violence because such sexual violence, which includes rape, forced prostitution, and any other form of inappropriate abuse, constitutes war crimes. International humanitarian law also prohibits threatening women with sexual violence. Women prisoners must be held separately from men to avoid sexual assault.

International Humanitarian Law also requires pregnant women and mothers of young children, in particular breastfeeding mothers, to be treated with special care. This includes, for example, food, clothing, medical care, evacuation, and transportation.

International Humanitarian Law gives families the right to know the fate of their missing relatives and forces parties to armed conflicts to take all feasible measures to reveal the fate of missing persons.

International Humanitarian Law has also granted women in conflicts general protection, as they are civilians, taking into account the fact that women in particular may be vulnerable to specific types of violence. This need for special protection focuses on the needs of women as mothers, and on the need to protect them from sexual violence in particular.

At other times, including during internal tensions, women's rights are protected under international law through numerous treaties ranging from

human rights conventions, which seek to ensure equal rights for women by prohibiting all forms of discrimination, including those based on sex, and by establishing mechanisms to monitor and condemn such acts. The Convention aimed in particular at defending women's rights was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, which was signed by 189 countries as of June 2015.

Women in conflicts are entitled to the guarantees that must be accorded to all protected persons – that means respect for and their personality, honor, family rights, and religious convictions, as well as the right to humane treatment at all times and the right to be protected from all acts of violence or otherwise. In addition to these rights, Humanitarian Law recognizes that "women shall be particularly protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, forced prostitution and any indecent assault" (Geneva Convention 4, art. 27; Protocol 1, art. 76.1).

Rape, enforced prostitution, and any other form of indecency are prohibited under International Humanitarian Law during international and internal conflicts. (Geneva Convention 4, Article 27, Protocol 1, Article 76.1, Protocol 2, Article 4.2e).

Under the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the commitment of Governments to prosecute and punish perpetrators of rape and any form of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations was strengthened and classified as war crimes.

In the Statute of the International Criminal Court, promulgated on 17 July 1998, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy (as defined in Article 7.2 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court), forced sterilization, or any form of sexual violence, are included in its definition of both crimes against humanity and war crimes that have jurisdiction over them, during international and non-international armed conflicts. (Articles 7.1g, 8.2b.22; 8.2e, 6 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court).

The rights granted to women in international and non-international armed conflicts have acquired the status of customary law. Moreover, Rule No. 134 of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) study of customary International Humanitarian Law states that "the protection, health, and assistance needs of women affected by armed conflict should be protected".

According to the common article 3.1 of the Geneva Conventions, at all times, whether in conflict or otherwise, women - and all protected persons - must be protected from attacks on life and physical integrity, especially murder, maiming, cruel treatment, torture, outrages upon personal dignity, and degrading treatment.

❖ **Fourth: Violations and Crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces:**

The violations committed by the Rapid Support Forces have multiplied, and they are certainly not limited to occupying civilian homes, hospitals, and civilian facilities, turning residential neighborhoods into military barracks, and raping women, in addition to the accusations that pursue them of looting private cars and bank branches.

The RSF's criminal activities of looting homes and stealing civilian cars, especially convertible and four-wheel drive, at gunpoint have increased.

The ceasefire period also brought a scourge on the citizens, as the Rapid Support Forces devoted themselves to criminal operations, increasing the rate of theft carried out by elements to 3 times.

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have committed the most horrific crimes in several neighborhoods in Khartoum, where they use murder and rape as a refuge in order to intimidate citizens and force them from their homes.

Moreover, these forces storm houses under the pretext of snipers, but it was later revealed that they intend to settle in them, and their members steal cars, gold collectibles, money, and shops, leaving them open and vulnerable to further looting.

The RSF's occupation of homes and hospitals and the ongoing looting cannot be treated as individual transgressions, but rather as systematic errors and deliberate abuse.

Sudanese citizens have paid with their lives for the reckless actions of unaccountable militias.

In the same context, Mass sexual assaults and abductions are reported in peripheral neighborhoods in the capital, Khartoum, as well as women and girls at risk of sexual assault while searching for food and services, by troops dressed as RSF.

Violations of conflict-related sexual violence and endangering civilian lives are war crimes and crimes against humanity, potentially ending any future for the legitimacy of the RSF and the ambition of its commander.

Under no pretext can these violations be considered as individual actions either of forces claiming to be fighting for the transition to democracy, systematically to impose a new reality and demographic change, or by mercenaries and merchants of war.

a. Rape cases

- **Videos filmed by a resident of Khartoum documented the moment a gunman raped a girl in the middle of the street.**

The person who filmed the video surreptitiously from the balcony of his house considered that this confirms to everyone who denies the matter, that there are indeed cases of rape, according to CNN, which reported the video as part of a lengthy investigation into violations against civilians.

The video also showed a man dressed in a "Rapid Support Forces uniform", standing at a street corner near the site of the "rapist" as if to protect him, according to the photographer of the horrific scene.

- **Gunmen raped a 24-year-old woman in her home, in front of her mother.**
- **Four men took turns assaulting a 19-year-old girl over three days after kidnapping her.**
- **28-year-old women's rights activist was kidnapped in front of her home and raped while she was detained for hours in an abandoned house.**
- **One survivor from North Darfur:** "They raped three of my sisters, beat them and broke my sister's hand, and took them for several days, and I later learned that they were in El-Fasher hospital with between 10-15 other girls".

She added: "They were raided with armed cars, motorcycles, and camels by the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias".

She said: "They looted our belongings, including cattle and belongings, and we went towards Mount (Martal) and there they also pursued us".

- **A Survivor of abduction by the RSF in Tawila town in North Darfur:** "We tried to get away from the gunman, but he insisted on taking us. He wore military uniforms similar to that of the RSF, and he was armed and carried approximately 7 ammunition magazines. He started threatening us and trying to catch me as I tried to escape, but he chased me on his horse, and when he grabbed me I tried to resist; I offered him my

donkey and the cart, and everything on it to leave me alone; but he told me that he wanted me too, not just my belongs".

- **A 26-year-old girl said she was gang-raped on 7 November** by two members of the Ashaws Division of the Rapid Support after the fall of the army command in Ardamata, north of El-Geneina, the capital of West Darfur.

She added that officers chased her in the street even inside her house, where "the rape took place", and then they asked me if I had money, and I said no.

She continued that they epileptic me and two of them violently raped me, which led to a rupture of my sensitive organ resulting in bloodshed and severe knee pain due to the force of the epilepsy.

She pointed out that two days after the incident, she received some pain relievers and medicines from a Médecins sans frontières (MSF) hospital in El-Geneina, before fleeing to Chad and cutting off the news of her husband and two of her brothers who were working in the collapsed army camp. She concluded: "I don't know if they're alive or dead".

- **A 38-year-old middle school teacher told** the story of her rape in early June in front of her older brother by Janjaweed (Rapid Support) members.

After reviewing a testimony by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) that she had been subjected to sexual violence, she said: "One grabbed my legs; the other my hand, the third stripped me naked and assaulted me"

She added that those who grabbed her hands and legs were wearing quick support clothes, while the third was in a regular "jalabiya".

She also reported that her husband's trace disappeared permanently in early November after the fall of the army camp in the north of El-Geneina, although he is a civilian, while her brother is still detained by the Rapid Support, and her mother insists on staying in El-Geneina pending his release.

- **One student at the University of Bahri, 22 years old, said** she was caught between two bitter choices: killing her mother in front of her or accepting the empowerment of criminals on her own.

She continued: "They didn't give me much time to change my mind about this option, as they forced me at gunpoint and took me to an empty house near where we were gathering with families, and there the assault took place and that was in November".

- **In a statement to Al-Masry Al-Youm, 21-year-old Maryam pointed out:** «We have become accustomed and surrendered to the fact that rape is only a matter of time, and we are looking for ways to prevent pregnancy, after the occurrence of the crime against us instead of crying».

She stressed: «rape happens to them collectively from the Rapid Support Militia, soldiers take turns on the body of the victim because they find in it the strength and proof of their virility».

She added: «There is no official body interested in the events that the people of Sudan are exposed to. Moreover, women in Sudan are in a bad psychological state and are waiting for their turn at any time to be raped in light of the absence of security in the region.

She pointed out that there are a large number of women victims of lawlessness in Sudan, and refused to disclose what they are exposed to for fear of scandal.

She appealed to civil society to intervene to save what women are exposed to in Sudan, which was also confirmed by many women who refused to give their names.

- **One of the girls pointed out,** "We are looking for birth control pills in all the streets of Sudan, abortion pills and there are no pharmacies. There are thousands of families every day who travel long distances on foot to escape the hell of war, which is now chasing the people of Sudan in all its streets».
- **One of the girls left** Khartoum to escape the fighting, and at a checkpoint, armed men stopped her bus, dropped her off with three other women, and raped them at gunpoint.
- **In May, one of the girls** was accompanied by her younger sister and two women, one of whom was carrying a child, on a minibus carrying passengers fleeing fighting at a support forces checkpoint.

A person likely to be the "commander" of the checkpoint asked her to lie on the ground. She refused, screamed, and spat in his face, only to receive a blow with a rifle she threw to the ground.

The twenty-year-old added with great emotion, "Two surrounded me. One of them caught me and the other raped me. Then, they swapped roles, and the act was repeated.

After begging, the gunmen allowed the women, all of whom had been raped, to return to the bus and leave with the other passengers.

- **In late April, gunmen arrested 12 women in the Darfur region,** ordering these women to help them loot a warehouse. Inside the warehouse, the doors were locked behind them, and they were raped.

One activist in Darfur said: "They were all raped together at the same time". She and her colleagues documented the youngest case of a fourteen-year-old girl.

She stressed: "Women were taken to a Rapid Support Forces hotel where they spent two or three days and were raped there."

- **In the east of the capital, a 30-year-old survivor said** members of the Support Forces had raped her and three other women from her neighbors in the building. She added that she was "violently raped" while alone with her three children.
- **Lawyer and human rights activist was raped near Mansoura, Darfur,** while fleeing with two women and four children to a safe place.

She said, "We were running to escape the RSF chasing us, and suddenly we couldn't find a way to cross, so we entered one of the houses whose people had been abandoned. After a while, they broke into the house and asked, "Where the men are, and where the weapons are?", We said there were no men or weapons, and then they told us to hand over what we had, and we said nothing with us. Meanwhile, someone looked at me carefully and said, 'You're the girl who works in court,' I said yes, and he told me to approach him, I refused and hesitated and he fired a shot in the air, and said if you don't come, I'll kill you" She was frightened because the weapon was pointed at her, and she went towards him, and he ordered her out of the room. At gunpoint, he then demanded that she go to another room and take out a "sack" (a bag of pills) inside. She tried to inquire, but he ordered her to remain silent and obey and preceded her to the room, I saw her from afar and did not see any "Shawwal/Sack", so she realized that there was scheming and tried to escape, but he followed her and put the weapon on her back.

She continued that this woman was raped three times in a row, after which the soldier left, leaving her unable to move. She stayed the same for a while, and then she prejudiced herself and went to a nearby house made of straw and hid under a bed for a whole day. At night, she resisted her pain and left those with her towards her family home.

- **A Sudanese human rights and political activist narrates that** as a human rights activist, the Rapid Support Forces targeted me. During the events of El-Geneina, they attacked my house, I managed to escape, but they killed my younger brother and shot my father who miraculously survived death, and then burned the house"

She added, "I ran to my aunt's house because my house was known to the Janjaweed, but unfortunately they realized where I was. They attacked the house, arrested me, and led me to one of the neighboring houses from which they had displaced. Then they raped me and left me in a position that I can't describe". After the aggressors left, I was rescued.

- **Members of the Rapid Support Forces raped a 22-year-old girl from the city of El Geneina, Hay al-Tadamon, in July.**

She said, "That day, there was an attack on the area, my mother and siblings and I stayed at home and we were very scared. Three men entered the house,

two in RSF uniforms and the third in civilian clothes, but all carrying weapons. They asked where the men and the weapons were. We replied that there were no weapons or men in the house after we hid my brothers under the bed for fear of being killed. My mother, aunt, and I were in the middle of the house when someone ordered me to come, but I refused. So he pointed his weapon at my mother and threatened to kill her"

Yathrib feared for her mother, complied, and went towards him, when he beat her and then raped her in front of her mother. Her mother begged him to kill her and leave her, but he didn't pay attention to her.

She pointed out, "He left me in a very difficult state, bleeding heavily from a wound sustained during the rape. My mother took me to Al-Burhan Specialized Hospital for Obstetrics and Gynecology where I was rescued, and then we ran to Adri camp, and I got sick and when I went to the doctor, he told me I was pregnant. It was the worst I heard; I completely collapsed and felt like I was living the worst nightmare, I almost died without the psychological support I found from MSF in the camp"

- **A 24-year-old girl, who lives in the city of al-Thawra in Omdurman,** **said** she went out of the house to go to her aunt's house nearby. When she reached the opposite street, three members of the Rapid Support Forces, which controlled the area, stopped her. At gunpoint, they asked her where she was going. She told them that she was on her way to her aunt's house. "So they told her, you belong to Army Intelligence, but I denied that. They asked her to accompany them in their car"

She stressed, "I tried to scream and run away but they were strong, threatened me with weapons, and forced me into a house, and there was someone else wearing only underwear. I tried to run away but one of them beat me so hard that I fell to the ground and threatened to kill me if I moved or screamed again".

She added, "The three took turns on me more than once, then took me to the car before throwing me by the side of the road as the sun went down", emphasizing "I felt oppressed, scared, and wanted to die from what happened to me, but I held on and went home and didn't tell anyone". Then I contacted my friends to tell them what happened but I could not. One of my friends who works as a doctor wrote to me and told me that she would not be able to reach me because of the security situation and there is no hospital where I can be treated, but she advised me to follow medical advice in order to avoid pregnancy".

- **According to one of the girls,** a force of three members of the Rapid Support Forces stormed their house at about five o'clock in the afternoon, saying, "They were armed and I was alone, my brother went out to check

on the neighbors and look for something to eat. When I saw them, I screamed and tried to escape, but one of them closed the door, pointed their weapons at me, and told me to shut up".

She continued, "One of them forcibly took me to a room and told me to lie on the bed, and when I refused he hit me hard and then attacked me. He raped me strongly, and before I woke up from the shock, his two companions came and did the same thing. I feel oppressed and terrified and I cannot do anything".

She emphasized, "They withdrew from the house after looting gold and valuables. Currently, I receive medical care through a specialized feminist group, but I still feel oppressed and wish I wasn't in this world".

- **One of the survivors lives in the Kafouri area of Bahri and the RSF was celebrating its capture of Bahri not long after the start of the war.**

She said that after her family decided to leave the area, which is now under full RSF control, they were in a small car with family members. "We crossed several RSF checkpoints, but at one of these points, one of the soldiers looked inside the car and asked me to get out, and when my family objected, he fired several shots in the air, so I got out of the car".

She added, "My family objected to this path and he fired a bullet that hit my younger brother in the foot, and then the car moved without me". "The soldier took me to a house near the checkpoint despite my pleas for him and the checkpoint officers. He violently raped me for a short time, and while talking on the phone with a companion we heard gunshots and he took me back to the checkpoint, stopped one of the passing cars, and asked them to drive me to my destination"

- **A young woman in her twenties** recounts the day when about 6 members of the Rapid Support Forces stormed her house in Khartoum North, north of the Sudanese capital, under the pretext of searching for weapons, and when they found nothing, they decided not to leave without achievement. Two officers, some of whom were in civilian clothes, pulled her strongly into one of the rooms, and she lost consciousness out of fear, not knowing how long she had been away. But she woke up and found herself covered in blood. During her trip outside Sudan, she met other girls who faced the same tragedy in different parts of Khartoum, where a fierce war between the army and the RSF began in mid-April.

She says how the RSF returned to her home, threatened her with death if she talked about being assaulted, and hinted that they would return to her soon, so she left with the help of some activists who brought her to an African country to receive psychological and medical assistance.

- **Several women's and human rights organizations document** cases of sexual violence, particularly in Khartoum, Darfur, and Jazeera states, which have been most affected by months of fighting. However, everyone faced the dilemma of definitive figures on the number of cases, due to the silence of the victims and their fear of stigma, and poor communication networks prevented follow-up with survivors.

Hala El-Karib, regional director of the Horn of Africa Women's Network (Saiha), said there is very little information available on crimes of sexual violence compared to what has been committed on the ground.

She explains that the majority of victims are silent for months, perhaps years, before recounting the facts, while others are forced to go into details if they become pregnant.

She adds, "There have been 180 documented cases, but there are others that we have not been able to follow up because of movement and war, and some victims have retreated from speaking, and they cannot be forced to do so".

b. Kidnappings

- **A 15-year-old girl from Tawila recounts what she endured after returning home to the town after the fighting subsided.**

After she took some things and the moment she left the house, she found two men and a woman riding camels, they asked for her name and the name of her father, and then they blindfolded her, tied her with a rope and put her on the box of the karoo cart. They walked towards the mountain, when it fell dark they stopped there, to ask the girl to go the bathroom, and after they allowed her to do so, she managed to escape. She reached an area where she found a neighbor of theirs from another area who told her to walk in the direction of the (Zamzam) area where her family was displaced.

The gunman and three of his young colleagues were held for several days in a large Rapid Support Forces camp in North Darfur. They threatened and whipped her so violently that she was seriously injured. One of them said, "I killed men, I brought money, booty, and cars from Khartoum; I just need a woman". She would marry him, taking her to live with his family in Chad, and he would kill any member of her family who tried to save her.

She pointed out, "They told me they were leaving to meet with the leadership of their camp, and he ordered me to take a shower, change my clothes, and stay there. He threatened to kill me if I tried to escape, and gave me a bag full of money, all in 1,000 Sudanese pounds. He had gold, firearms, five cars, two motorcycles, furniture, household items, and food supplies".

She added, "I was only able to escape when they left for their meeting, but escaping was not easy, as I was in bad shape, all four of them beat me mercilessly, and I was bleeding profusely".

She continued, "My clothes were torn, noting that they saw her trying to escape, so she ran to the nearby mountain, hiding under rocks and behind trees; I spent two days hiding in the mountain, without food or water, barefoot. I was bleeding".

She said, "On the second day I could not get up and was thirsty, but I came down from the mountain on the third day. I could see the RSF sleeping in their camp, as they looted a Tawela town, took cars from there, brought them to that camp, and burned them. There were a lot of RSF. So, I walked on tiptoe, and they didn't see me this time; I was confused, and I couldn't even pinpoint directions. I just crept out of the area, and I ran, blood dripping from my clothes. I kept running away from this place"

She stressed, "When she arrived in a remote agricultural area, she was able to get immediate help from farmers who gave her water, treated her wounds, dressed her, and accompanied her on her journey to reunite with her family".

She emphasized, "My clothes were full of thorns, dry, attached to my body, and they had to pour water over me to take them off," recalling her struggle, adding it was a very dangerous place from which no one could escape. Now she is in severe shock, and cannot even go out on the street on her own.

- **A 17-year-old girl says,** "I was with my sisters outside the house in the Tadamon neighborhood on 24 April. I entered the house to take things, and there I found elements of quick support to steal the house".

She added, "They chose me between killing and rape, so I preferred to die, one of them stabbed me with a knife on my breast, another kicked me on the side and I fell pretending to die, they beat me with rifle butts, and I heard someone say she is dead. They stole everything and fled, and then I prejudiced myself until I reached the nearest stick, leaned on it and walked".

- **A woman left her home in the western suburb of Greater Khartoum, Omdurman, to visit her mother in the city of Bahri on a 30-minute journey, but has since not returned home to her husband and three children.**
- **The family of a 17-year-old girl posted her photo on Facebook to ask for help in finding her, after she went missing in the Ombada neighborhood west of Omdurman on May 18 and has not yet returned to her family.**
- **A girl was found and returned to her family safely, by Special Forces in a house in Halfaya (north of Khartoum) along with a group of girls and elderly women, after she went missing in the first week of the war.**

- **On 24 November, the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, witnessed a horrific kidnapping incident carried out by the Rapid Support Forces where they kidnapped two minor girls in front of their mother in the Al-Safa neighborhood of Al-Kalakla.**

The victims are members of a family of a mother and five daughters, who have lived in Khartoum since the beginning of the war. The mother lost contact with her husband two years ago after he left home to work in gold mining in another state. The two girls who were abducted are 15 and 13 years old. According to eyewitnesses, the Rapid Support Forces stormed the house in the Safa neighborhood at night and forcibly abducted the two girls, after threatening all the residents of the house with weapons. Many Attempts by family and friends to find the girls have so far been unsuccessful.

- **The Rapid Support Militia kidnapped Salma Ibrahim, wife of Al-Tom Hassab El-Naby Al-Tom, from the city of El-Daein in East Darfur state.**

Sources said that an armed group on board an Atos vehicle kidnapped Salma before heading east of the city while she was pregnant in her last month.

c. Women's slave markets

While the security situation is exacerbated by the continuation of the war, data circulated by Sudanese media about the existence of markets in North Darfur state, to sell girls and women who were kidnapped and brought from war-affected areas, including Khartoum state.

Allegations sparked widespread controversy on social media, especially as they coincided with the publication on social media by human rights groups and pressure groups of photos of girls said to have been forcibly disappeared during the 3-month war between the army and the Rapid Support Forces.

Testimonies were received on social media from activists about slavery markets in Sudan, especially in Darfur, where women are sold and kidnapped by the Rapid Support militia, while the director of the Violence against Women and Children Unit confirmed the existence of these markets.

Local activists and human rights organizations also spoke about girls abducted from Khartoum and areas in Darfur, sold in slave markets, and extorted their relatives for ransom payments in El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. As, the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias kidnap women and establish slave markets and places of detention in Darfur to sell or release them for ransom. They pointed out that «The presence of slavery markets is confirmed through eyewitnesses, and there are girls who were released with ransom». In addition,

some families are reticent to address the issue, as well as there is an imminent danger that haunts those who speak on the subject, so activists were unable to reach the real numbers and names of specific areas».

The news indicates that women abducted from Khartoum and Nyala are detained in closed hotels and inside broken government buildings in Nyala, as well as in areas on the road linking the cities of El-Fasher and Nyala in the Darfur region.

The Darfur Bar Association had previously revealed the abduction of women from Arab militias, on the condition that they be released in exchange for ransom. She said she had received information about allegations of slavery markets in El-Fasher, but could not prove it.

Moreover, some human rights activists in Darfur pointed out that RSF and the Janjaweed kidnapped some girls and took them in unknown directions. One of the girls was sold for (700) thousand pounds, and the second for one million Sudanese pounds, and the buyer left them in the Ardamta area, near El-Geneina. There they were met by an acquaintance who paid the amounts and took the two girls and released them and they are now in an area in the locality of Serba in West Darfur state.

According to the activists, the detained women and the markets are located in West and North Darfur and places in the direction of Jebel Si and the Da'wa area.

In another witness, one of the activists reported that slavery markets are located in Al-Furqan and the sale and ransom prices range to two million pounds, indicating that there is no civilian authority in Kass after the fall of the army garrison at the hands of the RSF.

❖ **Conclusion:**

Sudan is currently witnessing killing, mass destruction, and the displacement of citizens from their lands. In addition, what women and girls are subjected to rape and abduction confirms that these crimes are committed by RSF that can be said to be mercenaries who commit the most horrific crimes that are war crimes for which they must be held accountable

Sudan is witnessing a significant deterioration in the human rights and protection of civilians, which has catastrophically affected the humanitarian situation. Humanitarian activities have been halted by widespread insecurity, exacerbated by the widespread looting of humanitarian assets. This requires

the exercise of restraint and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

❖ **Recommendations:**

- Investigate and prosecute those responsible for sexual violence and those responsible for kidnappings;
- Call on the warring parties to de-escalate and abide by an immediate and sustainable ceasefire to end the war and avoid the loss of innocent civilian lives of the Sudanese people and the destruction of property, besides providing special protection for women.
- The need to preserve the institutions of the Sudanese State, prevent their collapse, and help them as much as possible to continue to perform their tasks normally and overcome the difficulties they face
- Strengthening the urgent humanitarian response to the situation in Sudan and intensifying Arab, regional, and international efforts to prevent the deterioration of deteriorating food security in the Sudan
- Make all efforts that would resolve the crisis in order to spare the blood of the Sudanese and save the future of Sudan
- All parties respect their responsibilities under international humanitarian law – including allowing civilians safe passage on the move in search of safety.
- The need to establish safe humanitarian corridors that facilitate the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to affected civilians, ensuring that essential aid reaches those in need