

Open Statement: A Crisis of Sexual Violence and Famine in Sudan - Protect Women & Girls now

Date: 26th September 2025

We, the Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, express our deep solidarity with the women of Sudan who, since the outbreak of war in April 2023, have faced one of the world's worst humanitarian and human rights catastrophes. Women's bodies have been turned into battlefields, with rape and sexual slavery systematically deployed as weapons of war to terrorise communities and break their resilience.

Sudan is today witnessing the world's largest internal displacement crisis, with more than 12 million people displaced, the majority women and children. More than 26 million people, over half the population, are on the brink of famine, a figure equivalent to the entire population of Australia.

In Darfur and beyond, women and girls have been subjected to widespread conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, sexual slavery, and gang rape, crimes that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity (UN Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan, 2025; Human Rights Watch, 2024). Sudan's Unit of Combating Violence Against Women documented more than 1,100 incidents of sexual violence between April 2023 and December 2024, many attributed to the RSF. A UN panel of experts further estimated that up to 15,000 civilians were killed in West Darfur in 2023 in a documented campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Masalit community.

Health providers and clinics offering reproductive and emergency care have been attacked or obstructed, leaving survivors without life-saving services. An entire generation of girls is being deprived of education and healthcare, with UNICEF projecting nearly half a million acutely malnourished children in North Darfur alone by the end of 2025. Women human rights defenders and frontline workers are being targeted, silenced, and persecuted.

The impact of this tragedy extends to Australia. Thousands of Sudanese Australian families have relatives trapped under siege in El Fasher and Darfur or have lost loved ones to mass killings and atrocities. Their grief and resilience are part of Australia's multicultural fabric.

Our Urgent Demands

As a Coalition, we commit to:

- Advocate to DFAT and the Australian Parliament for increased humanitarian funding, particularly to women-led organisations in Sudan and the region
- Work alongside the Sudanese diaspora in advocating for expanded visas and community sponsorship pathways for at-risk women and families
- Amplifying the voices of Sudanese women leaders and survivors in all our advocacy, communications, and coalition initiatives.

We call on the Australian Government and the United Nations to:

- Immediately open safe humanitarian corridors to deliver food, medicine, and aid to El Fasher and all camps across Darfur
- Provide international protection for women and girls in Sudan, including the deployment of independent monitors to document and prevent further abuses
- Ensure comprehensive survivor support, including healthcare, psychosocial services, legal assistance, and expanded funding for gender-based violence programs
- Conduct prompt and transparent investigations into crimes of rape, abduction, and sexual slavery, and refer perpetrators to the International Criminal Court (ICC)
- Expand resettlement and protection programs for at-risk Sudanese women and families, including community sponsorship pathways through the Sudanese diaspora in Australia and beyond

- Guarantee meaningful inclusion of Sudanese women in all political processes, peace negotiations, and reconstruction efforts, ensuring that their voices and rights are not marginalised
- Deliver a stronger Australian response, including increased humanitarian funding for Sudan, active diplomatic engagement at the UN Security Council, and targeted sanctions against militia leaders and financiers complicit in atrocities.

Humanitarian Appeal

The suffering of women in Sudan today is not just about numbers in reports or headlines in the news; it is the daily destruction of lives under siege, hunger, and violence. Humanity cannot be measured by words and statements alone, but by action and responsibility. The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security calls on the Australian Government and the United Nations to demonstrate leadership and take urgent and effective action to respond to the conflict, save the lives of women and children in Sudan, and support their leadership in shaping the response.

Women, Peace & Security.

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