



SITUATION OF FEMALE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SUDAN

June 2016 — February 2018



The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation working to monitor and promote respect for human rights and legal reform in Sudan.

ACJPS has a vision of a Sudan where all people can live and prosper free from fear and want in a state committed to justice, equality and peace.

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Acronyms

NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
POL	Public Order Law
PPA	Press and Publications Act
SCC	Sudan Criminal Code
SPLM-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North

INTRODUCTION

Women have been pioneers throughout Sudanese social and political history. Tireless campaigns by female activists have helped women achieve their deserved recognition and go on to defend the human rights of others. At the turn of the twentieth century, Babikir Badri campaigned for women's right to education and triumphed, laying the foundation for all subsequent activities by women in Sudanese public life. In 1946 and 1947, the Sudanese Women's League and the Educated Girls Association were founded with the mission of using this education to improve women's economic and social status; together, these two organisations evolved in 1952 into the influential and still-active Sudanese Women's Union.

Despite persistent gender discrimination, women have managed to play an active role in Sudanese public life as politicians, civil servants and trade unionists, among other roles. In 1953, the same year as women's suffrage was achieved, Thurayya Al Dirdeeri was selected to sit on the committee drafting the Sudanese constitution as the nation prepared for the end of colonial rule. Women had won the right to stand in general elections by 1964, and the following year Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim of the Sudanese Women's Union became both the first African *and* the first Arab woman to be elected as a member of parliament. A few years later, in 1969, women successfully lobbied for an amendment to the Family Law of Sudan—the only amendment to date—whereby police could no longer enforce the “house obedience” of a wife to her husband. Nafeesa Ahmad Al Ameen became the first woman to hold a ministerial portfolio in 1971, and twenty years later Agnes Lokono was elected the first female state governor. The Sudanese police force had its first female lieutenant general, pharmacologist Suad Al Karib, in 2002 (although it was another eleven years before Nur Al Huda became the next to follow in her footsteps). In 2011, Hala Abdul Halim of the New Democratic Forces Movement broke ground as the first woman to lead a political party, and it happened that in the same year Hanan Khalid became the first female manager of a Sudanese football club: Al Mourada.

Mismanagement of the state and resources since independence in 1956 has had an especially negative impact on women. The Sudanese government has tackled political crises with military conflict, in which women have become collateral damage—an effect amplified by the absence or unsustainability of development in certain regions. After forty years of encouraging progress, women's rights were crippled in 1983 with the enforcement of the so-called September Laws (implementing sharia as the law of the land), which in turn gave rise to the highly restrictive Family Law of 1991 and Public Order Law of 1994. The situation worsened when the government refused to modify these laws in accordance with the Interim National Constitution of 2005 or to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention Against Torture. Each

of these political decisions has contributed to increased violence against women nationwide and to the hindrance of their economic, social and political development. Female defenders of human rights continue to suffer greatly in this oppressive and rigid atmosphere, which hampers their movement and activities.

The ideologues in power today tend to abuse these already oppressive laws in order to restrict women's participation in public life. Women face unmerited legal action and trials, arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention, prohibitions against travel and work, physical abuse, sexual harassment or assault and threats of violence or even death. The absence of mechanisms by which women can defend themselves or file official complaints against the security personnel who carry out these violations makes women in public life extremely vulnerable.

It has become increasingly challenging for such women to establish a safe and stable environment in which to carry out their work. Media censorship prevents reporting on these crimes and makes it hard for victims to find solidarity and support in rural areas. Restrictions have been put in place making it difficult for organisations that support women to recruit voluntary support, which denies them access to training in addition to legal, psychological and medical assistance. Collectively, these measures and the violations themselves put immense pressure on the resources of female human rights defenders. The cases highlighted in this report reflect how the patriarchal security forces, under the guise of religion and doctrine, continue to commit crimes with impunity against women seeking to defend human rights.

Methodology

This report addresses the violations committed against female human rights defenders in Sudan in light of the government's international, regional and national human rights obligations. In addition, it catalogues several cases involving such violations that have been brought before the judiciary in Sudan, noting how their number increased in the period from June 2016 until February 2018. The cases recorded in this report come both from primary sources such as interviews and secondary sources including online & printed Sudanese newspapers.

International obligations: International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights

- **Article 6** Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.
- **Article 7** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- **Article 9** Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.
- **Article 17** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.

Regional obligations: African Charter for Humans & Peoples' Rights

- **Article 4** Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.
- **Article 6** Every individual shall have the right to liberty and the security of his person. No one may be deprived of his freedom except for reasons and conditions previously laid down by law. In particular, no one may be arbitrarily arrested or detained.
- **Article 9** (1) Every individual shall have the right receive information. (2) Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.

National obligations: Interim National Constitution of 2005

- **Article 33** No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.
- **Article 34** (1) An accused is presumed to be innocent until his/her guilt is proved according to the law. (2) Every person who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his/her arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charge against him/her.
- **Article 37** The Privacy of all persons shall be inviolable; no person shall be subjected to interference with his/her private life, family, home or correspondence, save in accordance with the law.
- **Article 40** The right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed; every person shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form or join political parties, associations and trade or professional unions or the protection of his/her interests.

1. TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

1.1 By the government

The NISS routinely practices physical and psychological torture and other forms of ill treatment against political opponents and civil activists, including female human rights defenders. Detainees are often assaulted upon arrest, en route to or immediately upon arrival at a detention centre (NISS personnel call this a “reception party”) or during subsequent interrogation. Victims are often forced to face the wall to make identification of perpetrators more difficult.

Types of physical torture:

- Assault with thick plastic water hosepipes.
- Assault by direct punching or slapping.
- Sexual assault and harassment including rape and groping.¹
- Enforced sleep deprivation through prolonged interrogation, interrogation at night, or day and night incarceration in a brightly lit or extremely cold cell.
- Starvation.

Types of psychological torture:

- Verbal intimidation during interrogation including verbal abuse, obscene language and threat regarding future treatment.
- Threatening detainees with rape and/or telling them stories of other female rights defenders whom they have raped.
- Forcing detainees to do “housework” in detention centres and prisons, such as washing plates and cleaning cells, to undermine their empowerment.
- Threatening families of detainees.
- Preventing religious practice such as praying and fasting.
- Mock executions.

Types of ill treatment:

- Daily summons of free women to NISS centres and offices, where they are kept all day without being addressed or interrogated in order to curtail their activities. Failure to report to NISS offices is punished by arrest and detention.
- Contacting families of detainees to spread fear and panic.
- Deprivation of medical treatment and supplies to detainees, including sanitary pads and medications brought by family members.

- Denial of medical care and rehabilitation to survivors of sexual violence, including access to Form 8: a Ministry of Justice document that entitles a rape survivor to medical treatment and due legal process against their attacker. This is tantamount to denying their right to a judge.
- Warning victims not to discuss their experiences under threat of further incarceration or violence. (Those who have spoken to us about the violations they suffered are those who managed to leave the country.)

1.2 By the police

The establishment of the Public Order Courts and POL in 1994 ushered in a period of increased torture and ill treatment of women, especially defenders, by the police force.

Types of physical torture:

- Assault with whips, hosepipes, or other objects.²
- Assault by direct punching or slapping.
- Sexual assault and harassment including rape and groping.³

Types of psychological torture:

- Death threats.⁴
- Arbitrary arrest.
- Filing false criminal charges on grounds such as breaching public peace, dressing indecently, acting immorally, obstructing the duties of a public servant.
- Threatening families of detainees.

Types of ill treatment:

- Verbal abuse, including calling detainees prostitutes or degenerates.
- Contacting families of detainees to spread fear and panic.
- Threatening prosecution if no confession to the charges is made or the right to humane treatment (Article 83, Criminal Procedures Act of 1991) is invoked.
- Delaying investigations and bail procedures to prolong detention.
- Denying detainees legal representation and family visits under the pretext of ongoing investigations.
- Denial of due process under law.

1.3 By prosecution representatives

One instance of violations by a prosecutor against a female human rights defender has been reported in Khartoum, although it cannot be listed as a routine practice. Even so, the incident points to coordination between the police, the prosecution and the NISS in the crackdown on female human rights defenders.

The events were as follows:

- A policeman and a prosecutor harassed a women's rights activist, Winnie Omar, on the street outside her office on Sunday 10 December 2017.
- She was charged under Article 152 (Inappropriate Dress) of the POL while wearing a skirt, blouse and scarf. She had worn the same clothes that morning in attendance at the trial of 24 women who had also been arrested under Article 152 for wearing trousers at a private party.
- NISS personnel interrogated Winnie on police premises. Her phone and laptop were taken and searched, although this is unlawful under Article 152.
- She was threatened and manipulated. One interrogator reportedly said to her: "You see, Winnie? This world is very small – did you think we could not find you?"⁵
- 12 days later, a judge ruled that the evidence against Winnie was insufficient and she was released. Police and the NISS have continued to hound her.

2. OTHER VIOLATIONS

2.1 Arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention by NISS

The NISS have subjected female human rights defenders in Sudan to arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention over long periods. At the time of preparing this report, ACJPS knows of 30 women who have been subjected to such detention for periods ranging from one day to three months on NISS premises, in prisons and in private apartments.⁶

Accompanying violations included:

- Torture and ill treatment.
- Solitary confinement.
- Failure to inform family members about their detention.
- Denial of family visits and legal representation. In some cases, families were allowed to visit after a period of detention. However, certain families known for their views against the regime were not permitted to visit at all.⁷
- Security personnel oversaw family visits, and detainees were only permitted a cursory greeting. They were forbidden from discussing their health or detention conditions.
- Before their release, some detainees were referred to the State Security Prosecution, where they were faced with criminal charges.

ACJPS documented the female human rights defenders who were subjected to arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention over the period covered in this report.

Their names are:

- Reem Abbas, a journalist, was arrested from North Khartoum Criminal Court on 12 November 2016 and released later the same day.⁸
- Tasneem Taha Al Zaki, a lawyer, was arrested from her office in Elfasher on 26 December 2016 and released on bail on 12 March 2017. The charges against her were later dropped after the president chose to grant amnesty to her and a number of other human rights defenders on 10 August 2017.⁹
- Noura Obaid, an accountant, was arrested in Khartoum on 7 January 2017 and released on bail on 12 March 2017. The charges against her were also dropped following the presidential amnesty on 10 August 2017.

- Amal Habani, a journalist, was detained on 16 January 2018 and released on 18 February 2018.¹⁰
- Nahid Jabralla, director of the Seema Centre for Training and Protection of Women and Child's Rights, was detained on 16 January 2018 and released on 18 February 2018.
- Samia Mohamed Salih Argawi, a lawyer, was detained in Khartoum on 16 January 2018 and released on 18 February 2018.
- Rashan Oshi, a journalist, was detained in Khartoum on 16 January 2018 and released on 18 February 2018.
- Ruaa Jafar Bakheet, a university student, was detained in Khartoum on 16 January 2018 and released on 20 January 2018.
- Rashida Shams El Deen, a university student, was detained in Omdurman on 10 January 2018 and released on 11 January 2018.
- Najlaa Nurain, a pharmacologist, was detained in Omdurman on 10 January 2018 and released on 11 January 2018.
- Hibat Alla Dafa'a Alla Al Badawi, a journalist, was detained in Al Ahliya Square on 17 January 2018 and released later that day.
- Hanan Hassan Khaleefa, a lawyer, was detained in Khartoum North on 31 January 2018 and released on 18 February 2018.
- Najla Mohamed Ali, a lawyer, was detained in Khartoum on 9 February 2018 and released on 18 February 2018.

On 16 January 2018 at about 3:30pm, four female human rights defenders were arrested during the anti-austerity protests in Khartoum North. They were held for a number of hours at the Khartoum North Police Station and released at 10:00pm that night. The four were charged under Articles 69 (Disturbance of Public Peace) and 77 (Public Nuisance) of the SCC.

Their names are:

- Afree Saad, journalist
- Imtithan Al Radi, journalist
- Wahaj Al Tayib, journalist
- Samah Mohamed, journalist

On 29 December 2016, a number of female rights defenders were arrested by the NISS in Omdurman during a peaceful protest organised by the No to Women's Oppression Initiative.¹¹ They were later referred to Omdurman police and detained in Omdurman until later that day after being charged under Articles 69 (Disturbance of Public Peace) and 77 (Public Nuisance) of the SCC.

Those who were arrested include:

- Ihsan Fagiri, physician
- Ihsan Abdalla, social worker
- Amna Ibraheem Nugud, physician
- Ruaa Hasan Al Hadi, student
- Mihaira Majdi Saleem, university graduate

2.2 Allegations of apostasy

Shamail Al Noor, a journalist and outspoken defender of women's rights, was accused of apostasy by a clergyman named Mohamed Ali Al Jizooli after she wrote an article for *Al Tayyar* advocating for safe sex practices such as the use of condoms. Al Jizooli, the self-proclaimed coordinator of the "One Nation" group that is loyal to ISIS in Sudan, began accusing her of apostasy in his Friday sermons in early February 2017. The editor-in-chief of *Al Saiha* newspaper, Al Taiyeb Mustafa, published articles agreeing with Al Jizooli after Shamail published her article "Virtue Obsession".

2.3 Allegations of cybercrime

Amal Habani, a journalist and human rights defender, was interrogated by the Cybercrime Prosecution Office on 19 June 2017 regarding a post she published on her Facebook page. The post discussed the alleged ownership of Smart Schools by Abu Bakr Hamad, the justice minister whose appointment was halted due to his fake Masters and PhD certificates. In her Facebook post, Amal warned parents against enrolling their children in a school whose owner is involved in such a case. She apologised when she learned that co-owner of the said schools is the brother of Mr. Hamad, and deleted it after just one hour.¹² Amal was released later that day pending trial after being charged with Article 17 (Defamation) of the Cybercrimes Act of 2007. A date for the trial has not yet been set.

2.4 Breaches of privacy

NISS personnel tend to confiscate phones and laptops to search their content. Any content found that relates to their activism is laid out before detainees as a threat. Confiscated phones are left open to monitor incoming calls and messages, and the callers or senders as well as their relatives are investigated. Those who appear in personal photographs found on the phone or laptop are also investigated. In addition, NISS authorities routinely demand that detainees give up their social media login details and then use these to spread defamatory information about the women themselves. Women who refuse to reveal these passwords face beatings and/or threats of assault. This is a clear case of the NISS authorities breaching the privacy of those detained.¹³

2.5 Forced disclosure of sources

Maha Al Tilib, a journalist and human rights defender, was interrogated in Khartoum by NISS for four hours on 3 April 2017. She had recently published an article regarding the coordination between the Sudanese and Libyan authorities to return four Sudanese children to Sudan whose parents had been killed fighting for ISIS in Libya. NISS insisted Maha disclose her sources for this story and ordered her not to publish any further news stories without their consent.

2.6 Travel bans

Several female human rights defenders were banned from traveling to the Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva in 2015 and 2016. According to a reliable source, the women were prevented from boarding the aircraft by two NISS officials after they had already received their boarding passes. This is a tactic the NISS has used before: a journalist, Rasha Awad, reported that she was on her way to Cairo in March 2013 when the Khartoum Airport Authorities told her that the NISS has issued an order prohibiting her from leaving the country.

3. CASE STUDIES

Female human rights defenders commonly face spurious criminal charges brought by agencies affiliated with the government. The SCC, the PPA or the POL are routinely used against these women to inhibit their work. Outlined below are some of the cases in which women were made to stand trial in order to undermine their activism.

3.1 Amal Habani

On 10 November 2016, during the trial of the Tracks Training Centre employees, an NISS agent named Aiman Farouq refused the journalist Amal Habani entry to the court. He arrested and slapped her, before filing criminal charges against her in which he claimed she had assaulted him first. Amal was released on bail that same day and stood trial in Khartoum South criminal court eight months later on 10 July 2017.¹⁴ She was convicted of contravening Article 103 and 116 of the SCC (Threat to Public Servant and Insult to Public Servant Exercising Judicial Proceedings) and forced to choose between paying a 10,000 SDG (\$550) fine or accepting four months' imprisonment. Amal could not afford the fine so was taken to Omdurman Women's Prison, but an initiative was soon launched by her colleagues and other civil activists to fundraise and pay it for her, so she was released.

Amal had previously been tried at Khartoum North criminal court in July 2012 on grounds of contravening Article 159 (Defamation) of the SCC. The sitting judge, Muddathir Al Rasheed, sentenced her to pay a 12,000 SDG (\$665) fine or face one month of imprisonment.¹⁵ The case had been brought shortly after Amal published an article in *Ajras Al Huriyya* defending the activist Safia Isahag, who had been raped by NISS agents and gone public with her allegation on YouTube. Amal opted for the prison sentence, but activists fundraised to pay her fine and she was released after two days.

3.2 Madeeha Abdalla

Journalist and women's activist Madeeha Abdalla, former editor-in-chief for *Al Midan* newspaper, has faced a number of court cases over the past five years. The majority of these cases pertain to news stories she has published on socioeconomic issues, as well as those relating to freedom of expression and the media. The continuous prosecution against Madeeha has put enormous strain on her family both financially and psychologically.

In April 2014, Madeeha published an article in *Al Midan* regarding the risk of famine in the Nuba Mountains. In the article, she referred to a statement issued by the SPLM-N blaming the crisis on the humanitarian blockade in the region. The authorities, who view the SPLM-N

as a hostile rebel movement, considered Madeeha's article to have crossed their "red line". She was banned from writing for one year and her newspaper was suspended for 24 hours.

In 2015, Madeeha was charged under Articles 21 (Joint Acts of Criminal Conspiracy), 50 (Undermining the Constitutional System), 63 (Calling for Opposition to Public Authority by use of Violence or Criminal Force) and 66 (Dissemination of False News) of the SCC, and Articles 24 (Liability of Editor-in-Chief) and 26 (Conditions of Newspaper Licenses) of the PPA. The charges are believed to have related to articles Madeeha published in *Al Midan* that included comments by Abdelaziz Al Hilu, a leader of the SPLM-N, regarding the economic situation facing the Lagawa people of West Kordofan and the burning of palm trees by the government to clear land in Northern Sudan. On 7 March 2017, the Press and Publications Court convicted Madeeha under Articles 66 (Dissemination of False News) and 159 (Defamation) of the SCC, and sentenced her to a fine of 10,000 SDG (approx \$550).

On 31 March 2016, the NISS interrogated Madeeha about an article published in *Al Midan* on 13 March 2016 about corruption in land distribution in the Al Halfaya district of Khartoum North and later released her.

3.3 Nada Ramadan

On 11 November 2015, Nada Ramadan published an article in *Al Jareeda* revealing that "a known Asian country" had dumped 60 containers of hazardous chemical materials in Sudan while building a major dam in the north, posing a serious risk to human health and the environment. NISS accused her of reporting fake news and disturbing the public peace, on which grounds they compelled her to attend court hearings about twice a week from 2015-2017. This burden on Nada's time significantly impeded her ability to work effectively.

3.4 Inaam Adam

Inaam Adam, a journalist with *Al Gareeda* newspaper, faced similar charges to Nada Ramadan. She published an article in 2015 about four directors at the National Authority for Nuclear Regulation and Radiation Safety who had resigned following a report regarding containers of radioactive materials from Belarus which had been returned to Sudan. The Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology, Tahani Abdalla Atiyya, brought a case against Inaam citing Articles 66 (Publication of False News) and 159 (Defamation) of the SCC and in addition to Articles 26 (Liability of Chief Editor) and 35 (Penalties) of the PPA. Her trial began on 28 September 2015 at the Court of Press and Publications, and the charges were finally dropped in January 2018.

3.5 Arwa Al Rabea

On 23 May 2016, the NISS detained Arwa Al Rabea, the executive director of Tracks for Human Development. In the midst of a crackdown on civil society organisations, the authorities stormed her office and arrested her along with six others. She was detained for one week before being released on bail on 30 May 2016. The Central Khartoum criminal court dropped the charges against Arwa on 19 January 2017.

3.6 Winnie Omar

On 10 December 2017, journalist Winnie Omar was harassed outside her office and detained on the grounds of Article 152 (Indecent Dress) of the SCC. She was brought to trial in the Khartoum Public Order Court, where the plaintiff (a public order police officer) reported that he and a prosecutor had caught Winnie wearing indecent clothes (a skirt and a blouse) and walking enticingly. The judge rejected the plaintiff's allegations, describing his behaviour as "stalking," as it was also revealed he had contacted the defendant through social media. It was ruled that the skirt displayed in front of the court was typical of the clothes worn by Sudanese women, and not indecent at all. The charges against Winnie were dropped on 21 December 2017.

3.7 Mias Saif Al Deen

On 21 February 2018 at 5.30pm, several police officers—some in plain clothes—stormed the apartment of women's rights defender Mias Saif Al Deen. Mias and her guests were all arrested, including Winnie Omar and two other human rights defenders: Siraj Omar and Muhannad Omar. They were all taken to Al Mugran police station, outside of the jurisdiction of Haj Al Zuhour where Mias lived. Their laptops were seized and they were taken to NISS offices, where they were interrogated. All four of them were charged under Articles 78 (Drinking Alcohol and Nuisance), 154 (Practicing Prostitution) and 155 (Running a Place for Prostitution) of the SCC, in addition to Article 20 (Possession of Drugs) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Act of 1994. They were arrested without evidence and the prosecutor delayed their bail application by staying out of his office and keeping his cell phone switched off. Reportedly, he also avoided meeting the lawyers of the detainees. He said that it was "not possible to approve bail for that particular case."¹⁶ The procedures of the Public Order system mean that these defenders were subjected to summary trials, an abridgement of a fair trial. In addition, the police officer had conducted a search of Mias's apartment without producing a search warrant.

ACJPS monitored coordination between the Public Order police officers and some journalists loyal to the ruling regime. It transpired that there was a connection between one of the journalists in attendance at the police station and the prosecutor (plaintiff) in the first case reported against Winnie Omar.

3.8 No To Women's Oppression Initiative

Ihsan Fagiri, a physician and the leader of the No To Women's Oppression Initiative, told the ACJPS that "targeting rights defenders with arbitrary detention or frequent summons to the NISS is intended to curb our movement and daily activities, whether we are defending human rights or performing any other social, economic, or cultural activities. Detention and summons are a means of putting pressure on women who are defending their rights and the rights of others." She added: "Detention makes us aware of what is going on within the authorities and the way they act. However, the experience makes those who are aspiring for change closer to each other."

Ihsan sees the No To Women's Oppression Initiative as a key player in standing up against the POL, which target women socially, politically and economically. The Initiative organises demonstrations and protests against the POL, in addition to providing support to women who are victims of these laws and submitting memoranda to the authorities demanding that they be repealed.

ACJPS urges the Government of Sudan to:

- Respect and protect the rights to free association, assembly and expression in regards to the work of human rights defenders and the media, and improve on the working environment of human rights defenders in accordance with the Declarations on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.
- Ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Extensively and impartially investigate the violations committed against female human rights defenders and publish the conclusions of the investigation in the public domain, in addition to holding perpetrators accountable and repatriating the victims morally and financially.
- Stop criminalising the civil society activities of female human rights defenders.

ACJPS further recommends that the National Commission for Human Rights ensures the protection of female human rights defenders and an improvement in the working environment.

¹ Rape and sexual assault of detainees is known to occur in Sudan, but it is rare that survivors make their allegations public for reasons of personal safety and stigmatisation. The only high profile case to date was that of Safia Isahag, who was gang raped by NISS agents while in detention in 2011. After her release she tried to obtain Form 8 (a Ministry of Justice document that entitles a rape survivor to medical treatment and due legal process against their attacker) and her request was initially denied. She posted a video on YouTube describing her ordeal.

² Journalist Nada Ramadan was also arrested on 16 January 2018 while protesting price hikes. The police subjected her to excessive violence, including beating her all over with a hosepipe.

³ One former detainee, who wishes to remain anonymous, told the ACJPS that she had been inappropriately touched by one of the NISS personnel while he searched her. When she objected, he told her that he was searching her for anything she might be hiding on her body.

⁴ Journalist Hawwa Rahama of *Al Jazeera* newspaper was assaulted by police on 10 August 2016 in the Al Takamul neighbourhood of Khartoum's Al Shajara district while she was covering the demolition of this area by the local authorities. Hawwa was severely beaten by police and threatened with death by one police officer, who told her he was under strict orders "including killing". Her brutal interrogation prevented her from carrying out her work and prompted her to flee Sudan.

⁵ From an interview with Winnie by *Al Tagheer* on 28 February 2018.

⁶ Tasneem Taha Al Zaki and Nour Obaid were transported from NISS headquarters in Khartoum North and detained in a flat in the Al Mamoura neighbourhood of Khartoum.

⁷ Defender and lawyer Samia Mohamed Salih Argawi was allowed a family visit two weeks after her detention began. However Shawgi Abdul Azim, the husband of defender and journalist Amal Habani, himself a journalist who was arrested on 17 January 2018 and detained for 5 days, was not allowed to visit his wife, although other family members were.

⁸ Reem Abbas, Amal Habani and Mohamed Irwa were detained by NISS agents from Khartoum North Criminal Court after the Tracks Training Centre employees' trial and taken to a detention centre in central Khartoum (Khartoum III). They stood accused of using cameras in the courtroom—a charge which lay within the authority of the court, not the NISS—which they all denied. Their smartphones were searched and Amal was slapped by a NISS agent, and the three were released two hours later. Their detention highlights the restrictions imposed on court reporting, and thus on freedom of expression.

⁹ President Al Bashir has been known to occasionally grant amnesty to human rights activists for political reasons.

¹⁰ In January 2018, a number of activists were arrested during the anti-austerity protests. See ACJPS, '79 activists detained incommunicado amidst heavy crackdown on popular protests in Sudan', 22 January 2018. Available online at: www.acjps.org/79-activists-detained-incommunicado-amidst-heavy-crackdown-on-popular-protests-in-sudan/.

¹¹ The No to Women's Oppression Initiative was launched in 2009 during the trial of the journalist Lubna Husein, who was put on trial for wearing trousers. The Initiative protests oppression against women by the authorities, organises peaceful protests and provides support to women who stand trial before the Public Order Courts.

¹² See 'Cybercrime Prosecutor's Office Interrogates the Journalist Amal Habani', *Al Rakouba*, 19 June 2017. Available online (in Arabic) at www.alrakoba.net/news-action-show-id-278632.htm.

¹³ One woman who wishes to remain anonymous told ACJPS that her mobile phone was confiscated following her arrest on 16 January 2018 and that she was forced to unlock it. Three NISS personnel searched its content and commented on her saved photos and messages, before asking her to turn over the passwords for all of her email and social media accounts. When she refused, she was beaten and threatened with rape.

¹⁴ See ACJPS, 'Crackdown on media freedoms, May – July 2017', 14 August 2017. Available online at: www.acjps.org/crackdown-on-media-freedoms-may-july-2017.

¹⁵ See 'Amal Habani Sentenced in Safiya Ishaq Case', *Hurriyat*, 27 July 2012. Available online at www.sudaress.com/sudantoday/2401.

¹⁶ 'More Trumped-up Charges Against Winnie Omar and her Colleagues', *Al Rakouba*, 25 February 2018. Available online (in Arabic) at www.alrakoba.net/news-action-show-id-299294.htm.



Monitoring respect for human rights and law reform in Sudan

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