



THE ARAB NGO NETWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT
SOLIDARITY STATEMENT WITH HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SUDAN

Beirut, September 30st, 2013: It has been around a week since the outset of the peaceful demonstrations of Sudanese citizens against austerity measures and lifting of fuel subsidies that have induced doubled prices of gasoline and fuel. However, such demonstrations continue to face violent repression measures by the Sudanese Government, resulting in serious violations of human rights. The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) expresses its full solidarity with Sudanese civil society and human rights activists in Sudan. Along with the aforementioned, ANND calls for attention from the international community and the Arab League of States to the deteriorating situation of human rights in Sudan, particularly the right to life, right to peaceful assembly and freedom of opinion and expression.

The peoples' demonstrations in Sudan, which were initiated as early as of January 2011, together with peoples' uprisings in the Arab region, are result of the culmination of years of undemocratic practices, oppression, unjust social and economic policies as well as systemic corruption associated with human rights violations. The Sudanese government's continuous dereliction to public demands calling for equity, social justice and respect of human rights; together with more repressive measures, have resulted in larger demonstrations in 2013 whereby the opposition has called to the ouster the President Omar al-Bashir.

It is noted that Sudan's economy has been performing poorly for the last two years, ever since the ceding of South Sudan and its acquisition of 75% of the oil reserves. Fuel subsidies, that have served in halting the passage of hiking global fuel prices to domestic prices, have been reduced by the Sudanese government in July 2012, thus prompting several weeks of protests and a security crackdown. Today, authorities in Sudan are embarking on the same road of austerity measures, where most lately, the regime has decided to lift fuel subsidies to raise revenue, as designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a step that strikes at the heart of the purchasing power of low income households. This decision has sparked the peoples' protests seeking economic and social justice.

As of September 29th, 2013:

- The death toll in Khartoum stands at 116. Whereas this figure is just for those casualties with a death certificate, there is a number of cases in which dead bodies were taken by their families without going to hospital. Moreover, over 600 people are injured.
- Over 1000 people have been detained, including 16 journalists.
- There is a clear media blackout; 5 newspapers have been forced to shut down and 3 others ceased publishing in response to the new restrictions.
- The offices of media channels, namely *Al Arabiya* and *Sky news* that were covering the news were closed. Moreover, BBC has been blocked for some time, not to mention that the transmission of France 24 has been interrupted.

- Internet was totally shut for two days. At current stage it is operative but in very low capacity.

However, the most serious development is the brutality of the armed militias of Gangaweed from Darfur and Mali and NCP militia from the north established by the Government, dressing the official uniform of the national security forces and who are permitted to shoot randomly on citizens.

In this context, we call the international community as well as the Arab League of States to exert the necessary pressure on the Sudanese Government in order to:

- **Signal an immediate halt to using arbitrary and unlawful force against protesters by the Sudanese security forces, which is forbidden by international law pursuant to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.**
- **Fully respect its human rights obligations particularly with regard to the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of opinion**
- **Release all detained activists**
- **Establish an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the killings**
- **Engage in an inclusive dialogue with all opposition groups and other relevant stakeholders in Sudan, including civil society organizations, with the goal of arriving at a common economic, social and political vision to agree on a democratic and inclusive transition towards democratic and productive Sudan.**

***The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) is a regional network, working in 12 Arab countries with seven national networks (with an extended membership of 200 CSOs from different backgrounds) and 23 NGO members. ANND headquarters is located in Beirut, Lebanon since 2001. For more information please visit our website (www.annd.org) or contact Ziad Abdel Samad (Abdel.samad@annd.org).**