



Policy Brief Paper

Renewal and Extension of the Fact-Finding Mission's Mandate – Sudan

August 2025



1. Executive Summary:

Since the outbreak of armed conflict in April 2023, Sudan has witnessed a severe deterioration in both security and humanitarian conditions. The ongoing hostilities between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces have resulted in widespread and grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. These include war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by both parties to the conflict. The humanitarian crisis has escalated catastrophically, displacing millions of people, exacerbating food insecurity, and facilitating the spread of epidemics and diseases.

In response to these grave challenges, the United Nations Human Rights Council established the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan in October 2023. The mission's core mandate is to conduct comprehensive investigations into the facts, circumstances, and root causes of all alleged human rights violations, and to identify those responsible to ensure accountability.

Given the ongoing nature of the conflict and the intensifying scale of atrocities, extending the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission beyond October 2025 is not merely a desirable option, it is an urgent and unavoidable necessity. Such an extension aims to ensure the continuity of independent monitoring, accurate documentation of violations, and sustained pursuit of justice for victims.

This policy brief provides an in-depth analysis of the critical role played by the Fact-Finding Mission in this context. It also highlights the serious implications of failing to renew its mandate and presents strategic recommendations for its extension and the expansion of its powers in line with the complexity of the current crisis.

2. Introduction:

The armed conflict in Sudan erupted on April 15, 2023, in the capital city of Khartoum, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The conflict quickly spread to other regions and states, drawing in various armed groups and resulting in widespread violations and atrocities. The war has created a complex and dire humanitarian situation, marked by acute shortages of food and essential supplies, a deepening political deadlock, and the inability of political and civil actors to broker a sustainable ceasefire despite repeated efforts. The conflict has also intensified political and social fragmentation across the country.

In response to the escalating human rights and humanitarian crisis, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/RES/54/2 on October 11, 2023, establishing the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan. The mission comprises three members: Mr. Mohamed Chande Othman (Chairperson, Tanzania), Ms. Joy Ezeilo (Member, Nigeria), Ms. Mona Rishmawi (Member, Jordan/Switzerland). The mission is mandated to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of human rights and breaches of international





humanitarian law, including those committed against refugees, and to establish the facts, circumstances, and root causes of these violations in the context of the ongoing armed conflict. Initially established for a one-year term starting in October 2023, the mission's mandate was renewed on October 9, 2024, for an additional year. A critical session of the Human Rights Council is scheduled for September 2025, during which a resolution will be put to vote to either extend or terminate the mission's mandate. The original resolution was adopted with a narrow margin: 19 votes in favor, 16 against, and 12 abstentions.

Now entering its third year, the conflict in Sudan continues to deteriorate, with alarming consequences for civilians. Extensive documentation reveals grave violations, including: (Indiscriminate killings, Systematic sexual violence, The deliberate use of starvation as a weapon of war, The targeted destruction of essential infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools

Amid this chaos, the Fact-Finding Mission has emerged as a vital independent mechanism. It plays a critical role in: (Monitoring and documenting violations, systematically collecting and preserving evidence Pursuing justice and accountability for victims) The mission's work is foundational to any future efforts aimed at addressing Sudan's deepening human rights crisis. Terminating its mandate at this pivotal moment would not only undermine these essential efforts but would also represent a serious and irreversible setback for human rights in the region. It risks emboldening perpetrators and perpetuating a dangerous cycle of impunity.

3. Background:

The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan was formally established by the United Nations Human Rights Council through Resolution [A/HRC/RES/54/2](#) in October 2023. Under this resolution, the mission was mandated to conduct comprehensive investigations into all alleged human rights violations and abuses, as well as breaches of international humanitarian law committed in Sudan since April 15, 2023. The scope of the investigation explicitly includes actions taken by all parties to the conflict, including the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces, and affiliated militias and armed groups.

During its first year of operation, the Fact-Finding Mission carried out its mandate with diligence and professionalism, issuing three substantive reports that meticulously documented alarming and consistent patterns of violations. These reports revealed a range of egregious acts, including but not limited to:

- **Indiscriminate Targeting of Civilians:** The mission documented multiple instances in which civilians were directly attacked through aerial bombardments, artillery shelling, and ground assaults often in densely populated areas constructing clear violations of international humanitarian law.
- **Widespread Sexual and Gender-Based Violence:** Particularly disturbing were findings of the systematic and widespread use of sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery, as a weapon of war. These acts, primarily targeting women and girls, often amount to crimes against humanity.





- **Ethnic Cleansing and Targeted Violence:** The mission gathered compelling evidence of ethnically motivated attacks, especially against non-Arab communities in Darfur. These acts bear the hallmarks of ethnic cleansing, including systematic killings, forced displacement, and the destruction of property aimed at altering the demographic composition of specific areas.
- **Obstruction of Humanitarian Aid:** All parties to the conflict were found to have deliberately obstructed the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance. Tactics included blocking aid convoys, looting supplies, and attacking humanitarian workers. This has significantly worsened the humanitarian crisis, particularly in [El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State](#), which has been under siege by the RSF since April 2024.
- **Attacks on Protected Persons and Sites:** The mission documented deliberate targeting of human rights defenders, journalists, and medical personnel, as well as attacks on civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and places of worship clear violations of international law.

These findings underscore the urgent need for continued independent scrutiny and accountability, reinforcing the imperative to extend the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission.

4. Analysis:

The conflict in Sudan has escalated dramatically, evolving into one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world. What began as fighting concentrated in the capital, Khartoum, and a few other states has now spread to 14 out of Sudan's 18 states, plunging vast areas of the country into a spiral of violence and insecurity.

The human cost of this conflict is staggering. Over 12 million people have been internally displaced, making it the largest displacement crisis globally, in addition to 3.5 million refugees who have fled to neighboring countries placing immense pressure on regional resources.

The humanitarian situation is dire, with widespread reports of massacres, particularly in Darfur, and prolonged sieges in key cities such as El Fasher. The deliberate targeting of civilians, coupled with the systematic destruction of critical infrastructure, has crippled essential services. Moreover, humanitarian aid is being weaponized, access is severely restricted, and supplies are frequently looted or obstructed exacerbating food insecurity and pushing many regions toward famine-like conditions.

Hospitals and schools protected under international law have become primary targets, further dismantling the social fabric and undermining the nation's prospects for future development. The United Nations has issued warnings about the worsening humanitarian crisis, highlighting a significant funding gap in the 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan, which aims to assist approximately 21 million vulnerable people.

Impact of non-renewal of the FFM's Mandate on Justice and Accountability:

Failing to renew the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission would have severe and far-reaching consequences for the pursuit of justice and accountability in Sudan.





First, it would result in the immediate cessation of independent investigations into ongoing atrocities, effectively obscuring the international community's visibility into the full extent of violations. This would lead to a catastrophic erosion of global confidence in Sudan's commitment to human rights.

Second, and most critically, it would significantly escalate the already entrenched culture of impunity. Without an active and independent body to document crimes and identify perpetrators, those responsible for grave human rights violations would face little to no prospect of accountability. This would embolden warring parties to continue their destructive actions without fear of consequences, thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence and suffering.

Finally, terminating the mandate would severely undermine future accountability efforts. The Fact-Finding Mission plays a pivotal role in collecting and preserving evidence—an essential foundation for potential future prosecutions before the International Criminal Court or other independent judicial mechanisms. The loss of this evidence and the disruption of ongoing documentation efforts would make it exceedingly difficult to build strong cases against perpetrators. This would deny victims their right to justice and obstruct long-term peace and reconciliation efforts in Sudan, including the broader pursuit of transitional justice.

5. Policy Options:

Option 1: Renew and Strengthen the Mission's Mandate (Strongly Recommended) This option represents the most robust and ethically sound approach to addressing the ongoing crisis in Sudan. Renewing the FFM's mandate will ensure the continuity of independent investigations into human rights violations and abuses, which is crucial for maintaining international oversight and pressure on warring partiesⁱ. The preservation of evidence, meticulously collected by the FFM, is vital for future accountability processes, both nationally and internationally. This sustained effort directly supports the pursuit of justice for victims, offering a glimmer of hope in a conflict characterized by widespread impunityⁱⁱ. Furthermore, the continued presence of the FFM and its documentation efforts significantly contribute to the protection of civilians by deterring further violations and highlighting areas of concern for humanitarian intervention.

To maximize effectiveness, the renewed mandate should include potential expansions: **Enhanced Operational Capacity:** This involves providing the FFM with increased financial resources, additional expert staff (including forensic experts, legal advisors, and gender-based violence specialists), and enhanced logistical support to operate more effectively across Sudan's vast and challenging terrainⁱⁱⁱ.

Ensuring Greater Field Presence: A stronger presence on the ground would enable the FFM to conduct more direct investigations, gather firsthand testimonies, and monitor the situation in real-time, particularly in hard-to-reach areas where grave violations are reported^{iv}.

Collaboration with International Judicial Mechanisms: Explicit authorization and facilitation of stronger cooperation between the FFM and international judicial bodies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), would streamline evidence sharing and directly contribute to potential prosecutions, thereby reinforcing the principle of complementarity.





Option 2: Non-Renewal (Catastrophic Implications) While this option may appear to offer a reduced financial burden in the short term, its long-term consequences would be catastrophic for human rights in Sudan. The immediate loss of an independent mechanism for monitoring and documenting violations would create an accountability vacuum, allowing perpetrators to act with greater impunity. This would inevitably lead to the collapse of accountability efforts, as crucial evidence would not be systematically collected and preserved. The message sent to both victims and perpetrators would be devastating: that the international community is abandoning its commitment to justice, thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence and suffering.

Option 3: Transferring the Mandate to an Alternative Mechanism (Local or Regional - High Risks) This option, while seemingly promoting local ownership, carries significant risks in the current Sudanese context. The primary concern lies in the potential for weakened independence, as local or regional mechanisms may be susceptible to political interference or pressure from parties involved in the conflict. This could compromise the integrity and effectiveness of investigations. Furthermore, there is a high risk of politicization, where the pursuit of justice could be marginalized due to political agendas or power dynamics. Most importantly, many local or regional bodies currently lack the necessary technical and legal capacities, including forensic expertise, investigative resources, and international legal knowledge, to effectively conduct investigations on the scale and complexity required to address grave violations in Sudan. While local ownership is a long-term goal, it must be built on a foundation of robust and independent institutions, which are currently absent in Sudan.

6. Strategic Recommendations:

To effectively address the ongoing human rights crisis in Sudan and ensure future accountability, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Renew the Mandate of the International Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan Until at Least October 2028:** A long-term extension of the mission's mandate is essential to ensure continuity in documentation, monitoring, and accountability efforts. A one-year renewal is insufficient given the protracted nature of the conflict and the scale of atrocities committed. Extending the mandate through 2028 would enable the mission to conduct in-depth investigations, build trust with victims and witnesses, and strengthen evidence-gathering efforts to support justice processes.
2. **Expand the Mission's Mandate to Include Judicial Accountability Recommendations and the Establishment of a Criminal Database:** The mission's role should go beyond documentation. It must be explicitly mandated to provide concrete recommendations for judicial accountability, including identifying individuals and entities responsible for serious violations of international law. Additionally, the creation of a centralized criminal database managed by the mission is recommended. This database should contain detailed information on perpetrators, victims, patterns of violations, and supporting evidence. It would serve as a





foundational tool for future prosecutions at both national and international levels and support transitional justice efforts.

3. **Strengthen Cooperation with the International Criminal Court and Regional/National Judicial Mechanisms:** The mission should establish effective coordination protocols with the International Criminal Court (ICC), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Fact-Finding Mission, and relevant national and regional courts. This would ensure the secure and efficient exchange of information and evidence, thereby reinforcing ongoing accountability efforts.

4. **Increase Financial and Human Resources:** Implementing an expanded mandate requires additional resources. Member states and international donors are urged to provide flexible and adequate funding to enable the mission to recruit experts in key areas such as international law, forensic science, gender-based crimes, and criminal data analysis.

5. **Develop Witness and Victim Protection Mechanisms:** Given the significant risks faced by victims and witnesses, it is crucial to establish effective protection programs that ensure their safety and confidentiality. Such mechanisms would encourage testimony without fear of retaliation or threats.

6. **Enhance Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations:** The mission should strengthen collaboration with local and international civil society organizations, which play a vital role in documenting violations and accessing affected communities. This cooperation would contribute to building a reliable and comprehensive information base to support investigations and accountability.

7. **Expand the Jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to Cover All Regions of Sudan:** As the ICC's current jurisdiction is limited to Darfur and given the commission of crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possibly genocide in other regions of Sudan, it is imperative to advocate through diplomatic and legal channels for the expansion of the Court's jurisdiction to encompass the entire Sudanese territory. This would ensure comprehensive justice and prevent impunity.

7. Proposed Implementation Steps:

To ensure the successful renewal and strengthening of the FFM's mandate and the broader pursuit of justice in Sudan, the following implementation steps are crucial:

- **Mobilize Human Rights Council Member States and submit a joint draft resolution for mandate extension:** Diplomatic efforts must be intensified to secure broad support among Human Rights Council member states. This involves proactive engagement, bilateral discussions, and forming a core group of states committed to human rights in Sudan. A joint draft resolution, clearly outlining the proposed extension and expanded powers for the FFM, should be prepared and submitted well in advance of the October 2025 deadline to allow for sufficient negotiations and adoption.





- **Enhance cooperation between the Mission, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Special Rapporteurs:** Synergies between the FFM and other UN human rights mechanisms must be maximized. This includes regular information sharing, joint analysis of findings, and coordinated advocacy efforts with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and relevant Special Rapporteurs. This collaboration will ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the human rights situation and strengthen calls for accountability [19].
- **Launch a strong diplomatic and advocacy campaign led by Sudanese and international civil society:** Civil society organizations, both within Sudan and internationally, are vital partners in this endeavor. A coordinated campaign, leveraging their networks and expertise, should be launched to raise awareness about the critical role of the FFM, highlight ongoing atrocities, and pressure member states to support the mandate extension. This campaign should utilize various platforms, including social media, public statements, and direct lobbying of diplomatic missions.
- **Coordinate efforts with the International Criminal Court to expand jurisdiction:** Given the ICC's existing jurisdiction over Darfur, close coordination with the ICC Prosecutor's Office is essential. This involves sharing evidence collected by the FFM that falls within the ICC's jurisdiction and exploring avenues to expand the ICC's jurisdiction to cover all international crimes committed throughout Sudan since April 2023. This could include new referrals from the Security Council or requests from Sudanese authorities, once a legitimate and stable government is in place.

8. Conclusion:

The extension of the Fact-Finding Mission's mandate in Sudan transcends mere political expediency; it is a profound legal, ethical, and humanitarian imperative that the international community must uphold. The ongoing conflict continues to inflict unspeakable suffering on the Sudanese people, characterized by widespread human rights violations and a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation. In this context, the Fact-Finding Mission stands as a crucial bulwark against impunity, serving as a key independent mechanism for documenting atrocities, preserving evidence, and laying the groundwork for future accountability.

Terminating its mandate amidst these dire and escalating circumstances, with grave violations continuing unchecked, would constitute a profound betrayal of the countless victims who have endured immense suffering. It would send a dangerous signal to perpetrators, effectively granting them licenses to continue their heinous acts without fear of consequences, thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence and injustice. Such a decision would also represent a serious retreat from the international community's stated commitment to protecting human rights and upholding international law. Therefore, renewing and strengthening the FFM's mandate is not merely a policy option; it is an urgent moral necessity to ensure the rule of justice, protection, and accountability in Sudan.

9. References:





1. UN Human Rights Council renews mandate of Fact-Finding Mission... - Jurist. (October 11, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/10/11/un-human-rights-council-renews-mandate-of-fact-finding-mission-in-sudan/>
2. Sudan: Extend the Fact-Finding Mission's Mandate - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. (May 17, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/sudan-extend-the-fact-finding-missions-mandate/>
3. <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/report-independent-international-fact-finding-mission-sudan-advance-unedited-version-ahrc5723>
4. Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan - OHCHR. (July 5, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ffm-sudan/index>
5. Crisis in Sudan: What's Happening and How to Help | International Rescue Committee. (May 27, 2025). Retrieved from <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-sudan-what-happening-and-how-help>
6. Destruction and violence in Sudan - Amnesty International. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/projects/sudan-conflict/>
7. UN warns of worsening humanitarian crisis in Sudan with... - UN News. (July 7, 2025). Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165340>
8. Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan - OHCHR. (July 5, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ffm-sudan/index>
9. Sudan faces unprecedented hunger and displacement with... - UN News. (April 10, 2025). Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162096>
10. Findings of investigations conducted by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission... - ReliefWeb. (October 29, 2024). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/findings-investigations-conducted-independent-international-fact-finding-mission-sudan-ahrc57crp6>
11. Sudan: Give UN Fact-Finding Mission a chance - Amnesty International. (March 4, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/03/sudan-give-un-fact-finding-mission-a-chance/>
12. Sudan: Extend the Fact-Finding Mission's Mandate - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. (May 17, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/sudan-extend-the-fact-finding-missions-mandate/>
13. Sudan faces worsening humanitarian catastrophe as famine and conflict escalate... - OHCHR. (April 14, 2025). Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/sudan-faces-worsening-humanitarian-catastrophe-famine-and-conflict-escalate>
14. Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan... - ReliefWeb. (September 6, 2024). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/report->





independent-international-fact-finding-mission-sudan-advance-unedited-version-ahrc5723

15. Sudan Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help | World Vision. (April 10, 2025). Retrieved from <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/sudan-crisis-faqs>
16. Sudan in 'world's largest humanitarian crisis' after two years of civil war - The Guardian. (April 15, 2025). Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/15/sudan-in-worlds-largest-humanitarian-crisis-after-two-years-of-civil-war>
17. Strong support for ongoing Sudan probe at UN Human Rights Council - Human Rights Watch. (October 11, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/11/strong-support-ongoing-sudan-probe-un-rights-council>
18. Why the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) for Sudan must be extended... - Amnesty International. (August 27, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/8460/2024/en/>
19. Q&A: Why should the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) for Sudan be extended... - Human Rights Watch. (August 28, 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/28/qa-why-should-mandate-fact-finding-mission-ffm-sudan-be-extended>

