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A WAR ON CIVILIANS: ADDRESSING THE HUMAN TOLL OF THE CONFLICT IN SUDAN

**Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
and International Development**

Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Chair

Subcommittee on International Human Rights

Fayçal El-Khoury, Chair

MAY 2026

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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**Hon. Ahmed Hussen
Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

has the honour to present its

EIGHTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), and the motion adopted by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development on Thursday, April 30, 2026, and the motion adopted by the Subcommittee on International Human Rights on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, the committee has studied the human rights situation in Sudan and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada call on all parties to the conflict in Sudan to end the use of sexual and gender-based violence, and to respect international humanitarian law, including by ceasing attacks against civilians and humanitarian and medical personnel.

6

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada appoint a Special Envoy for Sudan to coordinate Canada's response across government and to engage with other countries in the region.

6



A WAR ON CIVILIANS: ADDRESSING THE HUMAN TOLL OF THE CONFLICT IN SUDAN

INTRODUCTION

Since April 2023, the conflict in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has escalated into a severe humanitarian crisis. On 28 October 2025, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Subcommittee) began an urgent study on Sudan, hearing from Sudanese citizens, non-governmental organizations, academics and a former Sudanese government minister.¹

THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The targeting of civilians and indiscriminate fighting between the RSF and the SAF has caused significant suffering and loss of life for the people of Sudan. Attacks against doctors and medical infrastructure have been widespread, while humanitarian organizations operate under severe constraints.² Famine and malnutrition have reached catastrophic levels, with food security and famine affecting 60% of the population amid blocked aid and halted agricultural production.³ Starvation has been used as a weapon of war: during the RSF's 18-month siege of El Fasher, food, water, and medicine were cut off.⁴

Witnesses shared horrific stories about how sexual and gender-based violence is deliberately employed to inflict emotional harm on women, destroy communities and

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- 1 Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (SDIR), *Minutes of Proceedings*, 28 October 2025.
 - 2 SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1600, 1730 (Michael Lawson, Humanitarian Representative to Canada, Doctors without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)).
 - 3 SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1610 (Khalid Medani, Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of the African Studies Program, McGill University, As an Individual); SDIR, *Evidence*, 24 November 2025, 1640 (Sadia Araa, Registered Pharmacy Technician, As an Individual); SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1615 (Jon Unruh, Professor and Director, Department of Geography, McGill University East Africa Field Studies Semester, As an Individual).
 - 4 SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1640 (France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director, Amnistie internationale Canada francophone); SDIR, *Brief*, MSF.



displace people from their homes.⁵ France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director, Amnistie internationale Canada francophone, and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR) noted that belligerents on both sides have subjected women and girls, some as young as 12 years old, to sexual violence.⁶

These abuses have contributed to what witnesses characterized as the largest internal displacement crisis in the world, with an estimated 12 to 15 million people displaced.⁷

Ranya Elfil, Member of the Board of Directors, Sudanese Canadian Community Association (SCCA), indicated that Canada's immigration pathways for those affected by the war in Sudan are insufficient.⁸ The SCCA noted that a limited family reunification program for Sudanese Canadians, combined with processing delays, has left at-risk individuals stranded in unsafe conditions, including children with Canadian citizenship.⁹

According to witnesses, much of the conduct described above constitutes violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law,¹⁰ including war crimes.¹¹ Some further noted the possibility of crimes against humanity,¹² ethnic cleansing,¹³ or

5 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 24 November 2025, 1640 (Sadia Araa, Registered Pharmacy Technician, As an Individual); SDIR, [Evidence](#), 3 November 2025, 1625 (Casey Babb, Director of the Promised Land Program and Strategic Advisor to Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism, Macdonald-Laurier Institute); SDIR, [Evidence](#), 24 November 2025, 1645 (Yonah Diamond, Senior Legal Counsel, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (RWCHR)); SDIR, [Brief](#), Jon Unruh; SDIR, [Brief](#), MSF.

6 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 3 November 2025, 1555 (France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director, Amnistie internationale Canada francophone); SDIR, [Brief](#), RWCHR.

7 Ibid.; SDIR, [Evidence](#), 24 November 2025, 1620 (Ranya Elfil, Member of the Board of Directors, Sudanese Canadian Community Association (SCCA)); SDIR, [Evidence](#), 3 November 2025, 1610 (Khalid Medani, Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of the African Studies Program, McGill University, As an Individual); SDIR, [Brief](#), SCCA.

8 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 24 November 2025, 1600, 1715 (Ranya Elfil, Member of the Board of Directors, SCCA).

9 SDIR, [Brief](#), SCCA.

10 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 3 November 2025, 1555 (France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director, Amnistie internationale Canada francophone); SDIR, [Brief](#), MSF; SDIR, [Brief](#), Canadian Red Cross.

11 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 3 November 2025, 1555 (France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director, Amnistie internationale Canada francophone); SDIR, [Brief](#), Jon Unruh; SDIR, [Brief](#), RWCHR.

12 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 3 November 2025, 1555 (France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director, Amnistie internationale Canada francophone); SDIR, [Evidence](#), 24 November 2025, 1705 (Yonah Diamond, Senior Legal Counsel, RWCHR); SDIR, [Brief](#), RWCHR.

13 SDIR, [Evidence](#), 24 November 2025, 1645 (Mutasim Ali, Legal Advisor, RWCHR); SDIR, [Brief](#), Jon Unruh.

genocide.¹⁴ They emphasized that a culture of impunity has driven the conflict and stressed the need to collect evidence and hold perpetrators accountable.¹⁵

THE QUAD ALLIANCE

On 12 September 2025, the Quad Alliance, comprising the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, issued a *Joint Statement on Restoring Peace and Security in Sudan*, identifying principles for ending the conflict. These principles included that there is no viable military solution, that Sudan’s future governance must be decided by the Sudanese people, and that external military support for the warring parties must end.¹⁶

Some witnesses expressed optimism about the Quad initiative, arguing that a negotiated solution is the only way to end the conflict.¹⁷ Khalid Medani, Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of the African Studies Program, McGill University, noted the exclusion of Sudanese civil society from the negotiations, and suggested that Canada could emphasize the need for the inclusion of Sudanese voices in future negotiations.¹⁸

TOWARD A CIVILIAN-LED FUTURE FOR SUDAN

Witnesses agreed that the resolution of Sudan’s war must be predicated on a civilian democracy, impressing upon the Subcommittee that Sudanese civil society is “robust.”¹⁹ Calling the conflict a “war between two illegitimate parts aborting the transition of

14 SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1625 (Casey Babb, Director of the Promised Land Program and Strategic Advisor to Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism, Macdonald-Laurier Institute); SDIR, *Evidence*, 24 November 2025, 1540 (Hon. Irwin Cotler, Founder and International Chair of the RWCHR, As an Individual); SDIR, *Brief*, RWCHR.

15 SDIR, *Evidence*, 24 November 2025, 1650 (Mutasim Ali, Legal Advisor, RWCHR); SDIR, *Brief*, Jon Unruh.

16 United States Department of State, *Joint Statement on Restoring Peace and Security in Sudan*, 12 September 2025.

17 SDIR, *Evidence*, 24 November 2025, 1540 (Khalid Omer, Former Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Civilian Transitional Government of Sudan, As an Individual); SDIR, *Brief*, RWCHR.

18 SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1630, 1730 (Khalid Medani, Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of the African Studies Program, McGill University, As an Individual).

19 Ibid.; SDIR, *Evidence*, 3 November 2025, 1710 (Jon Unruh, Professor and Director, Department of Geography, McGill University East Africa Field Studies Semester, As an Individual).



Sudan,” Khalid Omer, Former Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Civilian Transitional Government of Sudan, stressed that neither party should decide the future of Sudan.²⁰

The Subcommittee agrees that the future of Sudan must be decided by its people. Action must be taken that empowers Sudanese civil society; includes the voices of Sudanese women in peace processes; pursues justice and accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations; and supports the transition to a civilian democracy. The Subcommittee extends its utmost gratitude to the witnesses for their contributions to this study and for shedding light on the situation in Sudan. It expresses its hope for a future where the people of Sudan can live without fear.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada call on all parties to the conflict in Sudan to end the use of sexual and gender-based violence, and to respect international humanitarian law, including by ceasing attacks against civilians and humanitarian and medical personnel.

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada appoint a Special Envoy for Sudan to coordinate Canada’s response across government and to engage with other countries in the region.

20 SDIR, *Evidence*, 24 November 2025, 1540, 1655 (Khalid Omer, Former Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Civilian Transitional Government of Sudan, As an Individual).

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Khalid Medani, Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of the African Studies Program, McGill University</p> <p>Jon Unruh, Professor and Director, Department of Geography, McGill University East Africa Field Studies Semester</p>	2025/11/03	3
<p>Amnistie internationale Canada francophone</p> <p>France-Isabelle Langlois, Executive Director</p>	2025/11/03	3
<p>Doctors Without Borders</p> <p>Michael Lawson, Humanitarian Representative to Canada</p>	2025/11-03	3
<p>Macdonald-Laurier Institute</p> <p>Casey Babb, Director of the Promised Land Program and Strategic Advisor to Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism</p>	2025/11/03	3
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Sadia Araa, Registered Pharmacy Technician</p> <p>Khalid Omer, Former Minister, Cabinet Affairs in the Civilian Transitional Government of Sudan</p> <p>Amjad Taha, Strategist</p>	2025/11/24	5
<p>Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights</p> <p>Mutasim Ali, Legal Advisor</p> <p>Hon. Irwin Cotler, Founder and International Chair</p> <p>Yonah Diamond, Senior Legal Counsel</p>	2025/11/24	5
<p>Sudanese Canadian Community Association</p> <p>Ranya Elfil, Member of the Board of Directors</p>	2025/11/24	5

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Ahmed, Iman

Canadian Red Cross

Doctors Without Borders

Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights

Sudanese Canadian Community Association

Unruh, Jon

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development ([Meeting No. 33](#)) is tabled and a copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights ([Meetings Nos. 3, 5, 8, 9, 13 and 16](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.
Chair

