

# **Declaration of Principles of Civil Actors for Ending the War and Restoring Democracy in Sudan**

## **Sudanese Civil Actors Speak with One Voice**

**Endorsed by Representatives of 75 Civic Organizations on 13/07/2023**

**(Including: resistance committees, trade unions, initiatives to end the war and restore democratic transition, diaspora groups, civil society organizations, and women and youth groups).**

### **Preamble**

This document is the outcome of the analysis of more than 15 national initiatives, including four focused on the situation of women. All aimed at addressing the war that broke out on April 15 and its horrific repercussions of killing, destruction, displacement, in addition to threatening Sudan's territorial integrity, sovereignty and social fabric. The first version of this document was presented at a preparatory meeting that gathered the authors of other initiatives (84 participants, including 35 women) on July 14, 2023, as a starting point for dialogue. After the meeting, the draft was amended and developed into a declaration of principles. Since those actors come from diverse intellectual and philosophical backgrounds, it is natural that there will be variations in defining the problems and how to address them. It is crucial to understand that this document is a declaration of principles, not a blueprint to achieve the ultimate national goals. It is rather a reasonable consensual springboard to deal with the major issues based on the highest national principles. However, there is certainly an urgent need to initiate a deep and constructive dialogue on the issues of federalism, the nature of the state, equal citizenship, and the formula of fair regional distribution of resources. The proper place to discuss such issues is the Constitutional Conference, which will not be realized without a broad consensus. The goal of this document is indeed to achieve consensual legitimacy that would enable us to lay the foundations for new processes at a time when all forms of legitimacy in Sudan have been eroded.

### **We, the undersigned,**

Civil forces who believe in civil democratic change and the principles and goals of December Revolution, women and men, groups and individuals from various professional, factional, and social backgrounds;

Resistance Committees in urban neighborhoods and villages, women and youth organizations, civil society organizations, and trade unions across Sudan, whose members responded voluntarily to medical emergencies and humanitarian needs including shelter and basic services since the eruption of the war;

Bodies established before or after the eruption of the current armed conflict by intellectual leaders and initiators, in anticipation of the crisis and to unify civilian voices to restore Sudan's path towards a civilian-led democratic transition;

National political parties that have worked constantly to promote democracy, as an approach and culture, to promote it as a system of government in the country, which promote peaceful transfer of power;

Independent associations and individuals who share the understandings set forth in this document, and strive to enforce its recommendations and demands; and Sudanese communities and professional associations in the diaspora.

**Today, July 13, 2023, we confirm the following:**

**First: The shared understanding of the ongoing crisis in Sudan**

We agree that the immediate cause of the ongoing war is the coup led by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the armed forces allied with them against the civilian democratic transformation. This is due to the competition over power to achieve narrow interests of the groups that benefited from the previous regime. The October 25 coup interrupted the path to a democratic civilian state and created conditions that allowed this competition to dominate. Further, the structural causes of this war are the buildup of misapprehensions in the exercise of power, including during the short experience of transition that was marred by many shortcomings, the imbalances of the power and wealth distribution and mismanagement of diversity. This resulted in widespread discrimination and exclusion based on intersectionality and overlapping of gender, ethnicity, and geographical identities. Solving these problems requires comprehensive approaches that address the root causes of the chronic conflicts that have led to fighting and instability. Attempts to achieve full, democratic, civilian authority that do not exclude the two warring parties will only lead to perpetuation of the crisis and renewal of conflicts.

**Second: General principles**

1. Utmost priority is placed on ending the war, the bloodshed, and the brutal massacres by protecting all civilians, in all parts of the country, including in the capital Khartoum and Darfur and taking strict measures to ensure their safety according to the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), particularly Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949). Pressure on, and cooperation with, the regional and international community, including the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) must be initiated to achieve this goal and to develop effective mechanisms to monitor ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.
2. This war represents the peak of failure of the modern state in Sudan, which lacks constitutional frameworks based on justice, equality, and human rights. Waging war in residential areas and among civilians is a crime under IHL and international human rights law. Therefore, the slogan "No to war, yes to peace and justice" does not mean passive neutrality, it rather means delegitimizing the war. It also means confronting biased narratives offered by both sides. In effect, negating such narratives is a success for civil forces and a step towards building a civilian, democratic state.
3. The endpoint of efforts to end the war and initiating peace must include the establishment of a fully democratic, independent, and civilian state, committed to rule of law. The army and all regular forces must fully withdraw from the authority, political participation, and business while ensuring a just distribution of resources and allocating them to the welfare of citizens without discrimination between men and women.
4. Solutions to the crisis must be based on territorial integrity, sovereignty, and justice throughout Sudan. This can be achieved by adopting approaches that ensure access of all

citizens to fair resource sharing, the right to work, and to enjoy social services, including maternal and child health care, without any discrimination and irrespective of their region of origin.

5. Solutions must take place within the framework of fully maintaining the country's independence and sovereignty, without subservience to any regional axis or other state.
6. There shall be a single, professional, national army, with a new leadership, committed to its task of protecting the constitution within the framework of democratic civil rule. Elements with political loyalties should be excluded from the military service, while dismissed officers and soldiers should be reinstated, and qualified elements from the RSF and armed movements should be recruited according to rigorous professional and objective standards consistent with international standards for security and military reform, including the special considerations related to the role of women in peace and security.
7. Any transitional justice strategy, including truth and reconciliation programs, must involve victims and survivors, while enforcing the principle of accountability and investigation into all violations and crimes committed in the ongoing and previous wars. War crimes, gross human rights violations, and crimes against humanity, including genocide, sexual and gender-based violence, and forced displacement must be addressed. The assistance of competent international bodies must be sought to establish the necessary fact-finding committees and bring those responsible for the crimes to fair trial, both locally and internationally.
8. Victims and survivors who have lost loved ones or have been subjected to sexual violence, displacement or destruction of their homes, factories, shops, or property must receive reparations.
9. Preserving the lives, safety and security of Sudanese citizens must be of utmost priority. Warring parties must abide by the May 11 Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan with concrete mechanisms in place to monitor adherence to this Declaration and all relevant elements of the IHL. Monitoring should be carried out by Sudanese and international observers. The AU, IGAD, LAS, and the UN (with its various organs) should support these efforts and receive reports. If the warring parties do not respond to the demands to stop the war once and for all, there will be no choice but to resort to international humanitarian intervention to protect civilians in accordance with international conventions and norms.
10. An Executive Transitional Authority should be established in the country, based on broad national consensus, and governed by the principles of the rule of law, accountability and effective participation of both sexes, in accordance with a just and equitable law. The principle of accountability for all crimes committed during the period of religious extremism and its aftermath must be emphasized, based on the goals of December Revolution.

### **Third: General Goals**

1. Urgent relief must be provided to those affected by the war, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and those stranded at the border crossings and along the borders with the neighboring countries. Safe havens must be established to shelter the displaced using all possible means. Particular attention must be given to women and girls, who constitute the largest number of IDPs. Sudanese civil organizations must play their role in this field in cooperation with the international and regional actors and overcome all obstacles that prevent

the implementation of this intervention, considering linking aid to future reconstruction and development schemes.

2. Civilians, both men and women, must participate as a genuine party in the negotiations to end the war and achieve peace. They must hold consultations around the political process that aims at realizing civilian, democratic transition, in the framework of an inclusive political process that brings together all civil groups, including grassroots organizations, resistance committees, women's organizations, local NGOs, businessmen, and technocratic institutions.
3. Civilians must develop plans and programs for short, medium, and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction after war, and strive to secure the necessary resources to implement them. This should be done by fully integrating gender perspective into building, development, and reconstruction plans.
4. Civilians, being men or women, must develop a common and agreed vision to restore the social fabric to realize a healthy Sudan after the end of the war, and rebuild the state's legislative, executive, and judicial institutions on new foundations that observe justice in the distribution of power and wealth.
5. Civilians, in all sectors and irrespective of gender or other characteristics, must redesign the economic structure to invent a relevant economic model that meets the needs of all citizens, both men and women. This model should contribute to freeing the country from conflict, underdevelopment and exploitation, and drive it towards growth, progress and prosperity. This requires managing resources based on sound foundations; combating corruption and over-exploitation of our natural and mineral resources; and developing an integrated human development and capacity building plans through the education system, technical and vocational training.

#### **Fourth: practical steps**

Implementation of the goals herein requires establishing a coordinating body among the various initiatives and bodies composed of male and female representatives of all civil forces who shall agree on joint action mechanisms to carry out the following tasks:

1. Developing an integrated concept for joint action based on the principles of participation, transparency, inclusiveness, and national ownership as well as defining the agenda of civilians' participation in the ceasefire negotiations, peace and political process.
2. Coordinating communication with regional and international bodies, including the AU, IGAD, LAS, UN, EU and all states supporting Sudan, in various political, diplomatic, legal, human rights, security, economy, media, academic and research fields with a view to end the war and achieve civil democratic transition. Fair and effective participation of women must be ensured in accordance with the Security Council resolutions 1325 and related resolutions.
3. The representation of civilians in ceasefire and peace negotiations, and any future negotiations must be coordinated to achieve civil democratic transition, including the inclusion of women and mainstreaming gender perspective in the outcome.
4. If the war continues for a long time, formation of an executive transitional authority comprised of no less than 30% of women and youth must be sought to assume the responsibility of running the country and conveying the voice of the Sudanese to the world. Aspects of this proposal and how to implement it must be scrutinized to reach consensus.