

ACERWC's Statement on the Situation of Children in the Republic of the Sudan

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/the Committee), an Organ of the African Union with a mandate for monitoring the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Africa, expresses its grave concern over the ongoing conflict in the Republic of the Sudan. The Committee appeals to all parties to the conflict to respect principles of international humanitarian law. actors at the national and international scene to urgently avert the devastating impact of the conflict on children in the Sudan.

The Committee notes, with grave concern, that the conflict has significantly harmed the physical and mental well-being of children in the Sudan. According to UNICEF, children have been killed and many have been injured as a result of the hostilities. Moreover, reports suggest that the conflict is causing displacement and exposing children to potential grave violations, including recruitment and use by parties to conflict, as well as sexual violence.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child provides for the protection of the rights of children in situations of internal armed conflicts, tension and strife. The Republic of Sudan, as per the obligations under Article 22 of the African Children's Charter, has an obligation to protect children from the impacts of conflicts, including the obligation to take special protection measures.

The Committee firmly believes that the continuation of the conflict is putting the lives and well-being of children in the Sudan at extreme risk, subjecting them to all forms of violations, and depriving them of basic rights such as healthcare, education, and survival. The Committee calls for a political solution to this conflict and respect of the ceasefire agreements.

The Republic of the Sudan has a legal obligation to ensure the protection of children from all child rights violations. children's physical and mental well-being, provide special protection measures, refrain from violation of the grave violations including the recruitment of children into the armed forces, and ensuring access to humanitarian assistance. The Committee believes that it is essential to work towards achieving aspiration no. 9 of the 2040 Agenda, which seeks to ensure that every child is free from the impact of armed conflicts and other disasters or emergency situations.

In light of the above, and reiterating the provisions of the African Children Charter and the ACERWC's General Comment on Article 22 of the Charter concerning children in situations of conflict, the Committee urges:

- i. parties to conflict to seek political solutions to the conflict. The negotiations for peace should put at the centre the protection of children and their best interests.
- ii. the Government of the Sudan to assume the primary responsibility to uphold the rights of children and ensure humanitarian access to all children in need without any adverse distinction founded on ethnicity, religion, sex, or any other similar ground;
- iii. the Government of the Republic of the Sudan to fulfil its obligations under the Charter and other international instruments and take immediate action to protect the children of Sudan from the impact of the ongoing conflict;
- iv. the Government of the Sudan to ensure continuity of services to children, including health services and adequate food and nutrition; and
- v. For an establishment of a targeted national child protection in emergencies system with a view to protecting children from the impact of the ongoing conflict.

The Committee also urges the African Union, the United Nations, and humanitarian agencies to take note of the plight of children in Sudan and prioritise their needs in their efforts to resolve the challenges. The Committee further calls upon all actors on the national and international stage to take urgent measures to protect the rights and welfare of children in the Sudan.

The Committee stands ready to support the Republic of the Sudan in its efforts to protect the rights and welfare of children.

04 May 2023

Maseru- the Kingdom of Lesotho