



## **The Sudanese Human Rights Monitor Demands Immediate Ending of Violence against Peaceful Protesters and Calls for Independent Investigation in Killings in Niyala, Medani and Khartoum**

Khartoum. 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM) follows with great concern the gross human rights violations that accompany the ongoing peaceful protests since 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2013, especially in Medani and Khartoum. People were protesting in different locations in Medani, Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman against the government decision to cut subsidy of oil products, and consequently increase prices of fuel and food items. Police and security have dealt with these protests violently leading to killings in several cases. Authorities have also waged campaigns against protesters, activists and political opponents and arrested tens of them without specific charges. We also followed with concern using excessive force by authorities against protesters in Niyala, South Darfur last week in the aftermath of the assassination of a local businessman.

Medani, Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman witnessed peaceful protests over the last four days against the cut of subsidy. Security apparatus responded with tear gas, sticks and close chasing of protesters by police and security vehicles as shown in many video footages circulated by eyes witnesses. Confirmed reports indicate more than 50 cases of killings, in the most conservative estimations, in Medani, Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman in addition to tens of injuries. Also reports, including the statement by the Gezira Governor Al Zubeir Bashir Taha confirm arrest of tens of protesters in Medani. The opposition alliance confirmed arrest of 17 of its leaders and cadres from their homes. Last week, Niyala witnessed protests that have been confronted by authorities with different forms of violence including shooting that led to the killing of at least two protesters and injury of tens. At the same time, authorities continue restricting freedoms of expression as three dailies were confiscated on 19<sup>th</sup> September. These were Al Ayam, Al Jareeda and Al Intibaha. On 24<sup>th</sup> Aljareeda was again confiscated and columnists Zuhair Al Sarraj was banned from writing for seven days. In response to clear instructions by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) on coverage of protest, Al Ayam daily decided on 26<sup>th</sup> September to voluntarily stop publishing as 'censorship made it impossible to publish a newspaper with the minimum professional ethics' according to its editor, Mr. Mahjoub M. Salih.

The use of excessive force by authorities created a favorite environment for assaults and destructions of public and private properties. Several eye witnesses who talked to SHRM were doubtful about the identity of vandals. They were emphasizing that protests started peacefully.

SHRM calls upon officials to practice self-constraint, draw lessons from the developments in the region and work to avoid pushing the country, which is already plagued with conflicts, into further violence. SHRM reaffirms that even under the current circumstances; protection of lives and properties of citizens is the responsibility of the state.

The human rights abuses that took place in Sudan over the last four days represent clear violation to Sudan Interim Constitution that protects the right to life, right to freedom of expression and right to peaceful assembly and protest. They also violate Sudan international obligations. Sudan is a state party to a number of international conventions; most relevant to the current developments is the International Covenant for Political and Civil Rights. On the other hand, the Bill of Rights in the Interim Constitution considers all rights and freedoms included in international human rights instruments ratified by Sudan a part and parcel of the Sudan constitution.

**The Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM) demands the authorities to issue clear instructions to its different organs to abide by law and immediately stop using violence against peaceful protesters. Further, SHRM demands initiating an independent investigation into killings in Niyala, Medani, and Khartoum and release of all detainees or taking them to court in a due legal process.**