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**International Centre for Trade Union Rights**

*Centro Internacional para los Derechos Sindicales*  
*Centre International pour les Droits Syndicaux*

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ICTUR was founded to  
defend and extend trade union rights and  
to raise awareness of these rights and their violations  
around the world

**By e-mail:**

[info@presidency.gov.sd](mailto:info@presidency.gov.sd)

**Attn:**

**Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir**  
**President of the Republic of Sudan**  
Presidential Palace  
Khartoum  
Sudan

**CC:**

Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the  
rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

**JANUARY 2019**

Dear President

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR) is writing to raise concerns about the violent repression of protests, including the use of live ammunition against crowds by police and security officers, and at the arrest and detention of political leaders and activists. Our concerns are set out below.

Violence repression of demonstrations

ICTUR understands that from mid-December more than 380 demonstrations have been held across Sudan involving thousands of people protesting against the high cost of living. Involved in and supporting these demonstrations are organisations and activists known to ICTUR as genuine and effective advocates for workers and trade union rights, and campaigners for human rights, as well as the trade union organisation, the Sudanese Professionals Association. We are advised that more than 40 people have been killed and that many more have been injured by police violently repressing these protests, including reports of the widespread use of live ammunition against protestors.

ICTUR joins leading voices in the international human rights community in expressing its profound concern at the repression of these protests, and by the use of force, and in particular by the use of live ammunition, against crowds of protesters. We note that Sudan has ratified both of the United Nation's key human rights treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and we urge the

authorities to heed these obligations, and to be guided by the international human rights consensus in their response to these demonstrations. ICTUR emphasises that the demonstrations are legitimately expressing real and serious socio-economic and civil and political rights matters of direct concern to the people of Sudan.

With respect to the rights of those protesting, we recall that Article 21 of the ICCPR affirms the right of peaceful assembly, while Article 22 of the ICCPR establishes extensive protections for the principles of freedom of association. These rights provide a clear foundation for the expression of opinion on matters and civil and political and socio-economic interests, and for the public demonstration of these concerns. We recall that they are subject only to such restrictions as: i) are prescribed by law and ii) are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The violent repression of such demonstrations by police firing live ammunition into crowds cannot be regarded as meeting these standards.

ICTUR calls on the Government to immediately comply with the international human rights obligations under the ICCPR and the ICESCR, and to take immediate action to ensure that its policing of demonstrations complies, at a minimum, with the standards required under the 1990 United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. These principles permit the use of firearms only in defence against imminent threat of death or serious injury and only when less extreme methods are insufficient, which criteria we believe are not met in the situations reported in this letter.

#### Arrest of political leaders and activists

We are further informed that more than 1000 people have been arrested, including political activists and leaders, among them Fathi El Fadl of the Political Bureau of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP). Also in detention are members of the SCP's Central Committee, including Siddig Yousif, Masoud Alhassan, Hanadi Fadl, Kamal Karar, Sied Ahmed Alkhteb, Tariq Abdalmagied.

Among those arrested, ICTUR observes that Fathi El Fadl has a strong international reputation for his work not only in the political sphere, but as a lifelong defender of trade union rights and advocate for the rights of workers around the world. Fathi El Fadl is a member of our organisation has participated in the international activities of ICTUR for more than 30 years, including as its founding Executive Secretary, he is known and respected by the many senior lawyers and trade union leaders from around the world who comprise the ICTUR Executive Committee. ICTUR expresses its grave concern at these arrests, and our concern for the rights, freedoms, and welfare of those arrested.

Concerning the arrests of political leaders, we recall that in addition to those elements of freedom of assembly and of association referred to above, Article 19 of the ICCPR further emphasises the right to hold opinions without interference, to freedom of expression and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, while Article 9 protects the right to liberty

and security of person, and Article 10 affirms that for any period of detention all persons shall be treated with humanity and respect.

We further call for the swift release from detention of all arrested political leaders and activists, and we urge the government to take all measures necessary to ensure the fundamental freedoms of Sudanese citizens to enjoy their rights to assembly, association, and expression.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Blackburn', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Blackburn, Director