

Sudan: New evidence of sexual violence and genocide submitted to the ICC

Geneva (LAW) – Today, Legal Action Worldwide (LAW), submitted a legal brief on behalf of 22 Sudanese women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to the Office of the Prosecutor of International Criminal Court (ICC). In close partnership with the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), LAW was able to raise the voices of victims and survivors of recent violence in Darfur who are calling on the international community to prosecute those responsible.

"We have been suffering for decades. They broke our families and killed our people. We are still afraid. If the ICC brings justice to the Masalit, it means that our voice is heard and that we might live in peace someday," one female survivor told our investigators.

LAW is the legal representative of 22 Darfuri women, who have survived sexual violence, and other war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide at the hands of the Rapid Support Forces ("RSF") since at least 2023. The Victims' accounts substantiate that the RSF committed murder, rape, sexual slavery, and other sexual violence, torture, deportation, and persecution on ethnic, gender, and political grounds in El Geneina since 2023. This submission identifies eight persons of interest who could share individual criminal responsibility for these crimes, including RSF commanders and their associates.

"The women of Darfur are not just witnesses to atrocity – they are survivors, truth-tellers, and leaders in the fight for justice. Every scar on the bodies and minds of Darfuri women is an indictment," said Antonia Mulvey, LAW's Executive Director. *"Their voices must echo in courtrooms until the men who burned their villages, raped their bodies, and slaughtered their families are stripped of impunity. Anything less than uncompromising accountability is complicity. The ICC must now request for arrest warrants to put an end to impunity."*

Working together, SIHA and LAW documented the deliberate, systematic and widespread character of these crimes through evidence from UN bodies, human rights organizations, and the Victims' accounts. Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), including satellite imagery, videos, social media posts, and geospatial analysis, also helped link these crimes to the RSF. Patterns of killing, sexual and gender-based violence, deportation, and the destruction of community structures demonstrate the RSF actions were not simply collateral damage of the war, but part of a campaign to eradicate certain ethnic groups from specific regions, including the Masalit, Fur, and Zaghawa communities.

"For half a century, the women and children and civilians in Darfur have been exposed to generational sexual violence, systemic forced eviction, and mass killing that has gone on nonstop. And despite the clarity and justice of the Darfur cause, the international justice system continues to fail Darfur and Sudan as if we are not even human," said Hala Al-Karib, Regional Director of SIHA.

This filing is also made on a historic day. The long-awaited ICC judgement of Ali Kushayb was rendered today finding the accused guilty of 27 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur between August 2003 and March 2004. This important decision is a right step towards accountability and Justice in Darfur. But much more needs to be done, to put an end to impunity and answer the survivors' call for justice.

About LAW

At Legal Action Worldwide, we work towards equality of all before the law and to deliver access to justice to those who need it most – victims and survivors of human rights violations and international crimes in crisis and conflicts. While these people have the greatest need for protection and assistance, they usually have the least access to legal resources. Often people may not know that legal assistance exists, and they rarely know what their options are for redress. The result of this has been widespread impunity for serious human rights violations.

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