



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Council conclusions on Sudan

At its meeting on 20 October 2014, the Council adopted the Council conclusions set out in the annex to this note.

Council conclusions on Sudan

1. The European Union remains deeply concerned at the ongoing conflicts in Sudan, notably in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and the accompanying violations of humanitarian and human rights law, as well as a serious humanitarian emergency all of which continue to cause enormous human suffering and internal displacements and pose a risk to regional stability. There can be no military solution to conflicts in Sudan. The EU therefore supports the African Union Peace and Security Council's repeated call for a holistic approach to Sudan's multiple challenges and the need to tackle comprehensively the political, economic and social causes of persisting conflict.
2. The initiated National Dialogue process is currently the best opportunity to make progress towards this goal and to pave the way towards internal peace, reconciliation and democratic governance. The EU welcomes recent signs of a political momentum, in particular the Agreements on the National Dialogue and Constitutional Process signed in Addis Ababa on 4 September 2014. It calls on all groups to renounce violence as a means for political change and to seize this opportunity for a political solution to Sudan's challenges through dialogue and negotiation without delay.

3. The EU considers that for the National Dialogue to succeed and to achieve legitimate results, it should be
- inclusive: Space should be given for a meaningful participation of the opposition parties and armed movements as well as civil society, including women's, groups. The dialogue should include stakeholders from all of Sudan's regions and reflect the full ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of Sudan;
 - comprehensive: To address Sudan's internal conflicts, issues such as socio-economic marginalisation, unequal distribution of resources, political exclusion and lack of access to public services need to be tackled. The dialogue should provide mechanisms for the way forward for peace and development in all regions in conflict. It should provide for a platform on which to discuss issues of national importance, including identity and social equality, agree new and inclusive governance arrangements, a definitive constitution and a roadmap for the holding of national elections;
 - held in a conducive environment: The freedoms of expression, of media, of association and assembly must be guaranteed. Political prisoners must be released, and practices of arbitrary detention - like those across the anniversary of the September 2013 protests - stopped;
 - accompanied by confidence-building measures: These should include, first and foremost an immediate, sustained and verifiable cessation of hostilities and free and unhindered humanitarian access to all civilians in the conflict areas. This is of relevance both to the Government of Sudan and to the armed movements;
 - transparent about the process, the objectives, the timeframe and the way forward, so that the Sudanese people at large can own the process and accept its outcomes.
4. The EU stands ready to support a National Dialogue process as set out above and encourages all stakeholders inside and outside Sudan to join efforts towards such a process.

5. The EU reiterates its full support to the work of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and commends its chairman President Mbeki on his recent efforts to promote a genuine National Dialogue process on a broad basis. The EU calls on all international stakeholders to rally behind the AUHIP to reinforce its role and strengthen its voice. The EU supports current efforts to create a comprehensive platform for the facilitation of the National Dialogue that will integrate the different peace and dialogue processes for Sudan's regional conflicts.
6. Sudan stands at an important crossroad. A genuine National Dialogue would help enhance confidence between Sudan and international partners such as the EU. It would also create a peaceful environment in which tangible and sustained progress in addressing Sudan's main political and economic challenges, needed to secure debt relief under the HIPC process, could be achieved. The EU therefore calls on the Government of Sudan, the opposition and the armed movements to rise to the occasion and demonstrate the leadership necessary to put Sudan on a path to peace, prosperity and justice. In this respect, the EU recalls the importance of fighting impunity.
7. In the face of the worsening humanitarian situation the EU is very concerned by access restrictions still imposed for international humanitarian agencies and organisations. It reiterates its call on the Government of Sudan, as well as on armed movements to guarantee safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas by humanitarian agencies, in particular in conflict-affected areas in line with international humanitarian principles. Civilians, humanitarian staff and assets must be protected.
8. The EU reiterates its commitment to support Sudan and the Sudanese people in their transition to an internally reformed democracy, living in peace with itself and with its neighbours.