

# ASSESSMENT OF SUDAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT (1980-2018)





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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
GUSW	General Union of Sudan's Women
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Committee
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
INC's	Interim National Constitution
NIF	National Islamic Front
NWDA	National Women's Democratic Alliance
SCP	Sudanese Communist Party
SIHA	Southern Initiative for the Horn of Africa
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSU	Sudanese Socialist Union
SuWep	Sudanese Women's Empowerment for Peace
SWU	Sudanese Women's Union
USW	Union of Sudan's Women
VHWA	Voluntary Humanitarian Work Act

# METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This study is one of the country studies contributing to the continental study of the women's movement in Africa initiated by the UN Women. The continental study aims to assess the current situation of women's movements in Africa, including constituency, programs and strategies, policy and legal environment, funding situation, main achievements, current

challenges, and recommendations for the future. This country study focuses on the women's movement in Sudan, its main trends, issues, strategies, and achievements. It also examines its main challenges and potential opportunities to strengthen and sustain the women's movement.

## Methodology

The study primarily relied on a literature review from published and unpublished secondary data sources, including Masters and PhD theses and many Sudanese or otherwise websites. In addition, two interviews were conducted with visiting Sudanese activists in Cairo during the study. Both activists were involved in the movement at different historical points and are still connected through exile.

One of the Challenges/limitations of this study is the limited available resources on Sudanese women's activism in Exile, which constituted an important section of Sudanese women's activism in the late nineties.

### Structure:

This paper is presented in six sections. The section addresses the conceptualization of the women's movement. Section 2 examines the legal environment in which the Sudanese women's movement operates. Section 3 traces

the movement's history from its pre-colonial roots to the current regime of President Al Bashir, with a short introduction to the political scene as it evolved historically. Section 4 focuses on the movement's achievements and contributions to gender equality, while Section 5 discusses its challenges. Section 6 is dedicated to conclusions and recommendations.

The main focus of the Study is on the period 1985-2018. However, this paper dives into earlier phases of the women's movement in a "country that became two"<sup>1</sup> after a long civil war, considered the longest civil war in contemporary African history.

The Study concentrates mainly on the state of Sudan in its current geopolitical context after the accession of the state of South Sudan. Occasional referrals to the women's movement in Southern Sudan will be made as needed.

# SECTION ONE: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Conceptualization of the women's Movement in Sudan entails interrogation of inherent questions about a multitude of issues about the concrete geopolitical and socio-economic dynamics within the country and its impact on women's experiences of the different kinds of oppressive gender power relations created by the intersectionality of those dynamics with the diverse religious, cultural and ethnic affiliations.

For many years, writings on the Sudanese women's movement usually meant the Sudanese Women's Union (Hale, S. 2011) and its rivals Union of Sudan's Women (USW) during the Numairi rule, or the General Union of Sudanese Women (GUSW), under the current Islamic regime since the 1990s. This improperly shed the focus on the movement in Northern Urban Middle-class women's activism, missing the opportunities arising from the engagement of wider constituencies of women (workers particularly in the informal sectors, farmers, students, professionals, etc.) from different social classes in different regions of Sudan.

Compared to the wealth of writings on the SWU, more research must be conducted on the other CSOs, particularly in the past two decades. Badri provides a wide conceptualization to understand feminism considering "any actions to promote women's quality of life and provide individuals or small groups with the agency to cross the boundaries that limit women's spaces, to make the binaries fluid" as the feminist movement. (Badri, 2005 -7). Her definition combines generating knowledge and Action (individual or collective) to critically analyze and address gender power relations and causes of women's subordination to achieve gender equality. Accordingly, feminists in academic, civil society, Institutional state-affiliated, or international agencies are included in the definition. Even "The women forming the first women's associations in 1947 and 1949 could all be considered the mothers of modern

feminism in contemporary Sudan (Badri, 2005, p. 9).

The debate on "feminism" can be traced back to the older generations. Many early Sudanese Women's Union leaders, e.g., Fatima Ibrahim<sup>2</sup>, were sceptical about feminism despite their early involvement with the international women's movement. (Hale, 2011 289-292) On the other hand, new generations of activists define their activism as feminist activism.

However, feminists can't evade the inevitable conflicts created by antagonistic agendas within the different constituencies of the feminist movement, particularly when some of these constituencies are affiliated with political trends that "have power and domination over the political, {economic} and social scene that influences women's positioning." (Badri, *ibid*)

Women's activism within a theological state is constrained by additional pressures of conceptualizing gender roles and relationships in public and private spheres. Such conceptualization, particularly regarding women's rights in the family, is not restricted to Islamist political parties but prevails among the secular parties and some social movements like trade unions and within some women's organizations.

A critical theoretical distinction can be made between women's movements, which premise their vision on minimization of the difference between the sexes, and those which argue for the enhancement of women's place in society through an appreciation of the difference between sexes (Molyneux 1998-273). Practically, this is translated to a call for gender equality or gender Equity, with the first implying a universal legally binding measure, while the second is subjective, discretionary, and arbitrary. (Dairiam, Shanthi 2017)<sup>3</sup> This definition is important in Sudan, where Islamist women closely linked with the state (both within the state institutions and in NGOs)

adopting the “equity” discourse, played and are still playing a significant role in shaping the discourse on women’s rights.

No one can speak of the Women’s movement in Sudan as a homogenous group; it is an assortment of different groups using different approaches that are sometimes complementary and sometimes antagonistic. (Ahmed, 2014 - 36). Accordingly, no one can speak of a unified Sudanese women’s movement, particularly in the past two decades. There is some dispersion in the activism and mobilization of Sudanese women, not only among different stakeholders with their ideologies and sectarian and religious history, between secularism and religion but even within each category, there are those who work within Sudan and those who work in exile. (Hale, 2011) This is not necessarily negative,

as long as these diverse movements reflect the diverse needs of Sudanese women and as long as these movements can find ways of working together on specific issues across their diverse contexts, which they did in the past two decades, as will be discussed in the following sections of this paper.

In addition, the Sudanese women’s movement has also been influenced by the International women’s movement since its inception. Despite the complex national context, the Sudanese women’s movement absorbed transnational influences. It adapted to the national context resulting in specific forms of alliance-building at the national and international levels. (Tripp, 2006). This was clear in how women of Sudan have used and adapted the UN documents and their international ties to support their rights. (Ahmed, 2014)



## SECTION TWO: OPERATING LEGAL ENVIRONMENT:

In January 2005, the state of emergency was lifted following the signing of the CPA with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). However, it remains in force in certain areas affected by the armed conflict, such as Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan.

### Regional Instruments

Sudan has ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. However, it has not ratified the Protocol establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, thus escaping accountability and possibilities for individuals or other member states of the African Union to bring proceedings against

### The Constitution:

Within the negotiations of the CAP 2005 came the Interim National Constitution (INC) 2005, acknowledging in its first article a) cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, b) political plurality, and c) respect for human rights. The latter was further elaborated in Article 27, which states, "All rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants, and instruments ratified by the Republic of Sudan shall be an integral part of this Bill". It is worth mentioning that Sudan remains one of the few countries that did not ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

As the INC was an outcome of the wider dynamics of settling the war with South Sudan,

### The Laws

Many of the current laws in Sudan are inconsistent with many provisions of the INC. The Voluntary Humanitarian Work (organization) Act (VHWA)<sup>6</sup> defines the objectives of humanitarian work narrowly, and some observers see the Act as intended for humanitarian relief and charitable work rather than the wider scope

*Since the beginning of the armed conflicts in 1983, Sudan has virtually been subjected to a permanent or de facto emergency. Under these circumstances, it makes sense to regard emergency powers as Sudan's de facto constitution<sup>4</sup>.*

Sudan. Also, Sudan did not ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Likewise, Sudan has not signed or ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights, which entered into force in 2008.

issues of gender equality were part and parcel of the surrounding debates. Thus INC emphasized gender equality in the article (15-2 & 32-2), non-discrimination article (31), and Affirmative Action in the article (31-2). In addition, Article 7 states equal citizenship rights.<sup>5</sup> This allowed the Sudanese women's movement to organize and demand legal reform.

Article 40 states that the right to peaceful assembly shall be guaranteed; every person shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form or join political parties, associations, and trade or professional unions for the protection of their interests." Also, Article 7(1) states that "citizenship shall be the basis for equal rights and duties for all Sudanese".

of civil society pursuits, such as the rule of law, democratic transition, justice, and fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Act provides the government authority with excessive discretionary and regulatory powers over the work of CSOs. In the past decade, dozens of NGOs, including women's, particularly those



working on violence against women, were shut down or expelled outside the country.<sup>7</sup> According to the Act:

- Charitable organization means such organization as may be established by citizens, groups, or individuals having the financial ability to establish and sustain charitable activities
- Civil society organization means a civil society organization, which practices voluntary and humanitarian work, not for profit purposes, and which is registered by provisions of this Act;
- Foreign voluntary organization means a non-governmental or semi-governmental organization having international or regional capacity, which is registered under the provisions of this Act or licensed to work in Sudan by country agreement
- A national voluntary organization means a Sudanese non-governmental voluntary organization registered per the provisions of this Act and doesn't include any
  - a). company, registered per the provisions of the Companies Act, 1925
  - b). Political party;
- Network means national and foreign non-governmental voluntary organizations networks working inside Sudan;
- the project means the humanitarian aids services, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resettlement, and rehousing programmes, which any of the voluntary organizations apply and is implemented by the organization, individually or jointly with the ministry, competent institution, or any other organization, the community, or group of persons ;
- voluntary and humanitarian work" means any non-profit voluntary humanitarian

activity carried out by any national, or foreign voluntary, or charitable organization registered in Sudan, targeting rendering humanitarian aids, relief, public services, human rights services, protection of the environment or enhancement of economic and social standers of the beneficiaries, and renders voluntary humanitarian work in the said fields.

Civil society also faces several extra-legal pressures. First, they are required to re-register annually. The official procedures take long periods during which they can't work. Second, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) continuously scrutinized them. In 2014, for example, HAC began scrutinizing several women's organizations, including Salma Women's Resource Centre, whose Director was served with a decree signed and stamped by the Sudanese Ministry of Justice that ordered the cancellation of Salmah's registration license and Salma's immediate liquidation. This has led to concerns that the HAC will continue to shut down organizations it perceives to be working against its interests, even those that provide needed services to women.<sup>8</sup>

In 2016, a new draft law regulating civil society was circulated. Although the draft appears to be broadly similar to the Sudanese Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act, 2006, which is currently in force, the new legislation would, in its current state, place additional burdens on civil society. More significantly, the proposed reform of laws on public freedoms, including those governing CSOs, the media, and public assembly, has been postponed until the next session of Parliament. This means the current restrictive laws and measures on CSOs will continue in force. (Ibid)

# SECTION THREE: HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SUDAN

## Introduction:

Before the secession of the South in 2011, Sudan was the largest African country in the Arab region, with an area that represented more than 8 per cent of the African continent and almost 2 per cent of the world's total land area.<sup>9</sup> Its historical ties with both regions are reflected in the diversity of ethnic, religious, and cultural affiliations of its population. Unfortunately, ethnic conflicts were a main feature in the recent history of Sudan. Many elements contributed to the ethnic conflicts. Colonial policies before independence significantly ignited ethnic conflicts by implementing different policies for the North and the South. The failure of different Sudanese governments to build a strong democratic nation-state that considers Sudan's cultural diversity and unequal distribution of wealth aggravated the ethnic conflicts.<sup>10</sup> (Ibrahim, BT. 2017)

The most famous was the civil war between North and South, which some consider the longest civil war in Africa (1955 – 2005)<sup>11</sup>. It began in 1955 on the eve of independence (1956) when the Southerners were excluded from the pre-independence negotiations. (Hashem, 2018). Other ethnic conflicts continued during the recent history of Sudan. A temporary settlement was achieved in 1972 but was overturned after the imposing Sharia law in 1983. In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended the half-decade war between the South and North and was eventually concluded by the separation of South Sudan in 2011. Still, other civil conflicts

(Western et al. Nile) had not been settled down yet. This long history of civil conflicts/wars in different regions of Sudan impacted all its populations, particularly women.

Politically, the military institution has remained in power since Sudan's independence in 1956 (Hale, 1997). Independent organizing for political and social movements, including women's activism, has been prohibited except for very short periods of democracy, during which independent organizing was available to different social and political groups. The first democratic post-independence government lasted nearly two years, 1956 – 1958. The second democratic government followed the 1964 revolution and lasted for nearly five years: 1964-1969. It lasted till the 1989 military coup, which supported the Muslim Brothers to come to power, declaring the National Islamic Front (NIF) government which remained until today. (Badrey, 2005)

During the democratic eras, the political scene was hegemonized by two main political parties, Umma (the nation) and Democratic People Union DPU, representing the two main historical Islamic sects and affluent groups, *Mahdyeha* and *Khahmyeha*. (Badrey 2005). Both were as political as religious, and both movements excluded women from their religious-political structures (Hale, 2011 157). However, the Muslim Brothers' ruling since 1989 represents a more strict Islamic implementation of Sharia laws. (Badrey 2005)

## Early Beginnings:

As in many African countries, the organized Sudanese women's movement was borne within the national struggle for independence from colonial rule after the Second World War and the rise of liberation and non-alliance

movements in Africa and many "third-world" countries. The early beginnings of Sudanese women's organizing began in the 1940s with the formation of various women's organizations. Some of those organizations worked

on specific issues, like the “Young Women’s Cultural League” 1946, concentrating on fighting illiteracy as the main obstacle to women’s liberation<sup>1</sup>. Some were driven by unionist agendas, demanding specific rights, like female members of “The Ministry of Health Workers Syndicate (1949) and the Female Teachers Syndicate (1951) demanding equal pay for female teachers. The nurses were the

## Nationwide organization:

The Sudanese Women’s Union (1952), considered by most scholars as the real birth of the Sudanese women’s movement, brought together many women’s activists around a secular elaborated program and gradually expanded its membership to include thousands of Sudanese women<sup>12</sup>. (Hale, Badri, Babiker, Ahmed). Although it has close links with the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), the SWU included women from different ideologies in its earlier stages. The SWU had branches in nearly all geographical areas of Sudan. However, it was mainly urban-based, and its activities had been focused in Khartoum.

Later on, with changing political context, polarization along political affiliation started to divide the union into three categories, Islamists, leftists, and others who decided to support

## 1970s: State feminism:

After the military coup 1969, General Numari declared Pan Arabism promising a secular agenda, particularly about women’s rights. He also settled the civil war with the Sudanese Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM) through the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, which granted South Sudan self-rule and allowed women from the South to enroll in universal education in the North.

However, he soon prohibited all political parties and all other social movements’ organizations SWU, students, and workers’ unions replacing them with the –single state party, Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU), and its state feminist institution, the Union of Women of Sudan (UWS) coopting a section of the SWU

first section of women to organize a demonstration alongside their male colleagues for their rights, marking the first mixing of women and men in the workplace in Sudan’s contemporary history. Other organizations had limited membership and social and charitable agenda yet paved the way for women to enter the public sphere. (Babiker, 2002 – 258- 260).

Numeri’s military regime. Some members left to establish their organizations or join state-affiliated organizations. The first split, 1965, was by the Islamist women who established the “Muslim Sisters”, and the second split, 1971, when the regime established the Union of Women of Sudan (UWS) to build its state feminist arm. (Ahmed. 2014)

The Sudanese Women’s Union (SWU) focused on women’s rights in the public sphere, mainly suffrage rights and rights to education and work. It achieved considerable rights within the aforementioned democratic eras. However, strategies for organizing women around gender relations in the private sphere were almost absent from the SWU’s program adopted in its 6<sup>th</sup> General Conference in 1968 (Al Qaddal, 2016 pp. 39-68).

membership. Through the UWS, the regime coopted, enhanced, and implemented the SWU’s agenda broadening women’s participation in the public sphere. With the banning of the SWU, its activities were greatly diminished except for its magazine, “The Woman Voice,” registered as private ownership.

In fact, in the early years of Numeri’s rule, women achieved many gains in the public sphere. In addition to full suffrage rights<sup>13</sup> for women, the regime took measures that opened the public space, in the wider meaning, for women providing opportunities in all the political, executive, legislative, and judiciary institutions. (Babiker, 2002 284) Women also had increasing opportunities in the universities

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1 Established the first women’s popular school to provide literacy classes to Sudanese women and child nursery for working women

with fellowships and training. Women's Bureaus in different ministries, the First female Minister, and the first women judges even in the Shariaa courts. The deteriorating economic situation in the 1970s led to increasing migration of men to the gulf and consequently opened the door for women to get more middle management posts. (Hashem 2018)<sup>14</sup>

## 1985-1989: A Missed Opportunity:

A civil coalition of workers, professionals, and students was able to overthrow the Numairi regime through the 1985 uprising peacefully. (Hale 1997 - 162), marking the third democratic era. The state-affiliated Women's Union was dissolved. It was expected that the Sudanese women's union, after 16 years of underground restricted activism, to work hard to cope with the changes, convene its general congress (the last central committee was elected in 1970), make essential changes to the charter, and program, and to change its organization structure<sup>15</sup> to accommodate thousands of women in different work settings; factory workers, rural women, civil servants, teachers,

However, the regime soon shifted to an autocratic religious one and, consequently, its discourse on women's rights. Sharia laws in 1983 were imposed all over the country, which led to escalating discontent among wide sections of the civil society and stirred the civil war with the South again.

doctors, but all expectations failed (Babiker 2002 – 297) and the years of “democracy” ended leaving the SWU to wait for another twenty years to convene its general congress in 2009, missing a chance to develop by the new generations aspirations.

On the other hand, the newly elected governments did abolish Sharia law, and “Islamist women were able to build their constituency among young women in schools and universities, so when they came in 1989 they were ready, by 1990 they formed the General Sudanese Women's Union”. (Hashem 2018).

## The 1990s: Between State Feminism and Transnational Feminism

Numeri's rule was an important period for the Islamist women, particularly “Muslim Sisters,” to build their constituencies at the state and community levels; in the near void of other organized forms of women's activism, particularly the SWU who was forced to clandestine activism in the first half of the eighties and failed to respond to the mounting challenges in the second half.

The National Islamic Front (NIF) took over in 1989, and all political parties and other forms of independent organizing were prohibited. The Union of Sudanese Women (USW) was dissolved. However, the project of restructuring gender relations through law machinery<sup>16</sup> was resumed and enhanced by the new government and its women's arm, the General Union of Sudan's Women (GUSW).

Despite the restrictive political atmosphere, the nineties opened new ways of women's activism through two main doors, the UN conferences

and exile women's activism. Linking with transnational feminism through the UN conferences, particularly the Beijing 4<sup>th</sup> world conference on Women, provided an avenue for the interaction, understanding, collaboration, and coordination between Sudanese women from different regions, religions, and ethnicities, which culminated in building a joint minimum agenda for the whole Sudanese women's movement. Sudanese women from both North and South started coming together. The First meeting that began in the peace tent in Beijing during the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Women eventually led to the formation of the Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP), an umbrella body bringing together women from the two regions, and also from different ethnic, socio-economic and political backgrounds (El Sawi, 2011)<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneously, Sudanese women outside Sudan in Eritria and liberated lands, Egypt and Kenya established the Feminist Alliance

in 1998 to support the struggle of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)<sup>18</sup>. Though this experience was not as successful as the SuWEP one, it was an important lesson for the women's movement as it exposed the phony rhetoric of many political parties on women's rights. (Abdel Aziz, 2012 – 10)<sup>19</sup>

Within Sudan, new independent women CSOs emerged working for for-profit companies.

The new millennium, particularly after the comprehensive peace agreement CPA 2005, settling the long civil war between South and North Sudan, and the new interim constitution marks an important shift for the Sudanese women's movement characterized by:

- Mushrooming of independent women's CSOs (developmental, service-providers womanist and feminist), not only in the capital but, most importantly, throughout most of the Sudanese states and provinces, engaging women at the local level and broadening the base of the Sudanese women's movement
- The growing realization of women groups of the patriarchal nature of political parties and the need to go beyond the different partisan agendas
- The gender equality agenda is being increasingly adopted by a wide range of women's CSOs and Coalitions, including inter-party coalitions.

Gender equality, work rights and economic empowerment, and fighting violence were high on the agenda of those CSOs<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, Sudanese women from both North and South started coming together. This eventually led to the formation of the Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP), an umbrella body bringing together women from the two regions and different ethnic, socio-economic, and political backgrounds. (El Sawi, 2011)

However, after the indictment of President Al Bashir by the ICC in 2009 and the separation of South Sudan in 2011, the government in North Sudan began a crackdown on CSOs, particularly those women and human rights working on sexual violence. However, despite such a restrictive environment, the women's movement gained hard-won achievements, to be discussed in the following section.



# SECTION FOUR: MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

## Legal Reform:

### 1. Women's Quota:

The discussions on the quota system date back to the nineties. Women who participated in the Beijing Conference in 1995 returned, calling for 30 per cent representation to comply with Beijing recommendations. The demand was replicated also by the women in exile. The Sudanese Women's Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP) includes a 30 per cent quota of women representation at all levels in the Maastricht declaration (2000), which emphasized the need for (Badri, 2005). In 2003 Ahfad University for Women had a lecture by an international expert on quotas. In 2004 Gender Center prepared a conceptual framework for quota and presented it in regional and national fora.

Even though CPA was not gender-sensitive, women activists used it to push the boundaries for women's political rights. They managed to engage a wide spectrum of women's groups, political parties, and academics in the discourse on adopting quotas.

As part of one of its protocols, the CPA included a new constitution (INC) to be developed, a new Electoral law, and fair elections. The Sudanese women and various actors used that historical moment to demand a 30 per cent quota in the INC. Although they didn't manage to include their demand in the C, there was a positive development as Article 32 of the INC to the need for affirmative action to promote women's rights.

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*Article rights of men and women to enjoy all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including rights of men and women to enjoy all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits. (2) The State shall promote woman's rights through affirmative Action. (3) The State shall combat harmful customs and traditions undermining women's dignity and status. (4) The State shall provide maternity and child care and medical care for pregnant women.*

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The fact that the Southern Sudan regional constitution stipulated a 25 per cent quota for women provided the women's movement with another opportunity to further their demands. They began a national campaign to include the demand for quota in the electoral law as the elections will be nationwide. The momentum for quota had changed from one of the demands to the movement's main issue (Badri et al., 2013), bringing women activists, academics, and even women to state institutions.

In 2006, the Peace Center University of Khartoum 2006, with the support of UNDP, prepared a draft election law. In response to a draft law, different groups organized many

workshops. They culminated in a meeting with the Peace Center and establishing an "advocacy group" that included representation from the Umma party, National Congress party, and North and South Sudan activists. 2007 heralded an intensive process of meetings, awareness raising among CSOs and political parties, and workshops with relevant stakeholders (media, academic institutions, state institutions, etc).

Finally, in 2008, the Election Law<sup>21</sup> included an article stipulating a 25 per cent quota for women. However, the process continued till the end of the election in April 2010.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the local governance law was

amended to include a gender quota of 25 per cent. (Badry, 2013)

The campaign leads to building:

1. The national consensus among very diverse constituencies on the importance of the quota as a measure to improve the representation of women
2. Comprehensive discourse encompassing feminists, Islamic and international perspectives employed different arguments to defend the demand for quota and ultimately mitigated resistance from most conservative decision-makers.
3. With more networking among women in civil society and political parties
4. culture of solidarity was maintained by many groups, as indicated in the participation in the consultations for the new post-referendum constitution
5. Trust and bridging the differences among the diverse Islamist and secular activists/groups. Although the Islamist women soon went out of alliances and supported their party's decision, many maintained their linkages and cooperation with other political parties and CSOs during constitution building and engendering constitution initiatives.

## 2. Khartoum Governor's Decree 84/2000

The Decree<sup>23</sup>, issued on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, banned women from working in gas stations, restaurants, hotels, and other public services. Police and security forces were instructed to enforce the Decree immediately.

In collaboration with other CSOs, women's groups reacted swiftly, forming a solidarity network that used many strategies to build their case to annul the Decree. Their strategies managed not only to build women's support across their geographical, religious, ethnic, and political affiliation differences but also to build regional and international support (Ahmed, 2014)<sup>24</sup>.

The swift reaction of the movement was crucial for the campaign's success. Within the week following the Decree, a statement signed by 34 CSOs was issued (September 7th), a press conference and a media campaign (September 8th), a memorandum (September 11th) to the President and members of the Ministerial Cabinet and started a constitutional motion against the Decree because it violates the Sudanese constitution of 1998 and the international treaties and conventions signed by the Sudanese government.<sup>25</sup>

At the national level, the "National Women's Democratic Alliance" (NWDA) established and coordinated a comprehensive action plan, using various methods to mobilize against the

Decree. These strategies are built on the capacities of the various constituencies to support women affected by the Decree, develop an awareness-raising campaign on the ramifications of the Decree on women's rights and lives, and create a huge support network. Many CSOs and Women's groups joined the NWDA from other Sudan regions. NWDA members met with a wide range of groups, lawyers, academics, women groups from the South, and some official institutions, e. g. judges from the Ministry of Justice and the state-affiliated General Union of Women of Sudan (GUWS).

Three motions were put to the constitutional court on behalf of the affected women, two by NGOs and the third by GUWS, who said, "*Being part of the Islamic government does not forbid us from keenly following up on women's issues and opening our eyes wide for any attacks on women's rights.*" (Ahmed 2014 – 161)

Finally, the Decree was withdrawn, and the governor changed. This was one of the first joint activities (Badri, 2008. 60); such wide groups worked together to oppose what they perceived as a wide group working group worked together to oppose what they perceived as a direct threat to their hard-won basic rights. It also marked the shift of the Sudanese women's movement to adopt more aggressive tactics.



### 3. Reforming Article 149 of the Penal Code

Violence against women, particularly sexual violence, became much politicized after the ICC investigation into sexual violence in Darfur. The opening of space for civil society institutions through the provisions of the interim constitution 2005, the international presence, and the influx of aid offered women's groups an opportunity to build their capacity and networks independent of political parties and the state (Hale 215). Sudan has never seen so many NGOs working within the field of gender and women's rights as after the 2005 peace agreement. (Tønnessen 2017) <sup>26</sup> those new groups focused on more radical and politically sensitive issues like violence against women, particularly sexual violence.

On the other hand, the government established its organizations, units, and initiatives on violence against women. Under the auspice of the UN mission in Sudan, the government hosted workshops on combating violence against women, and participants called for reform of Sudan's laws on rape. A National Plan for Combating Violence against Women and Children was developed 2010. One of its main objectives was to "review policies and legislations about women and children [and] enact strict legislations for combating violence against women and children".

In 2009, a national Coalition, the '149 Alliance' was formed. In 2010, the alliance launched a national campaign to reform Sudan's rape laws, which included dialogues between women's groups, legislators, and government figures, as well as awareness raising at the grassroots level<sup>27</sup>. The campaign got media coverage and

called attention to how Article 149 produced impunity for sexual violence crimes in the name of Sharia.

The Sharia-based Criminal Act (1991) did not differentiate between rape (intercourse without consent) and the crime of *Zina*<sup>28</sup> (intercourse outside the formal marriage). According to Article 149 of the Penal Code ("Offences against Honor, Reputation and Public Morality"), rape was considered *zina* without consent. This constituted a huge obstacle for victims of rape to report it, not to mention to call for justice. After years of legal mobilization by the women's movement, the government enacted a rape reform in 2015. The reform provided a new definition of rape, delinking it from *Zina*.

In February 2015, Sudan National Assembly reformed Article 149. The new definition rape is a) delinked from *zina* altogether, b) not restricted to penal penetration but also foreign objects or other parts of the body, and c) includes psychological intimidation in addition to physical violence

There are critical views about this reform; while rape and *Zina* are differentiated, it is still unclear what constitutes evidence for rape (Salah 2015). Since the Evidence Act of 1994 only provides judges with what constitutes evidence for *Zina*, not rape, the reform would be incomplete without reforming the Evidence Act. However, the reform was coupled with a clamp down on women activists; the Salma resource center, which played a leading role in this reform, was closed down in 2014.

## Women's Participation in the Peace Process

The Beijing Platform of Action (1995) and the UN resolutions during the 2000s, particularly the Security Council resolution 1325, created a space for the Sudanese women's movement to engage with the peace process in their country, torn apart by decades of civil war and conflicts. It was in the Beijing NGOs forum that women from both the North and South of Sudan met together and had direct talks under the "Peace Tent" (Ahmed. 2014 166)

The Sudanese Women's Empowerment for Peace" (SuWep) was officially launched in Khartoum and Nairobi in 1998 when the Committees were formed from the different parties to the conflict and other women's interest groups. SuWep represented the first peace initiative formed by Sudanese women and included nine women's groups from North and South Sudan. The main objective agreed upon by the committees included conscious-

ness-raising among Sudanese women on their roles and responsibilities in the peace process at all levels of society and, in particular, within the conflicting parties. It was also decided that these committees would take on the responsibility of raising awareness of the leadership of the conflicting parties on the aspirations and potential roles of Sudanese women in the peace process.<sup>29</sup>

Although members of SuWep were not included in the official peace talks in 2002, their relentless efforts throughout the years since its establishment were vital for building the Sudanese women's movement across all divides. They were able to agree on common demands that went beyond the immediate

peace talks to gender equality for Sudanese women as reflected in the different declarations they issued (please refer to appendices 1-3)

These achievements of SuWep should be assessed within the general political context, where the political parties in the National Democratic Alliance were patronizing and excluding their women affiliates and opposing their efforts to work together. (Abel Aziz 2013). The international pressure to include women in peace processes also played a considerable part. Still, the success of this initiative and its continuation depend primarily on Sudanese women and their willingness and interest to realize peace.

## SECTION FIVE: CURRENT CHALLENGES

The history of the Sudanese women's movement is a history of continuous intersectional challenges and a history of relentless struggle with these challenges. Despite all odds, Sudanese could manipulate their economic,

political, and social barriers to advance their activism. However, the movement must still cope with the many challenges of a counter-productive environment and movement building.

### External Challenges

#### Shrinking democratic spaces:

As explained in previous sections, the legal environment governing the activities of civil society is very restrictive. Since the ICC indictment of President Al Bashir in 2009, the government has been targeting NGOs, specifically those working on sexual violence in general and those working in Darfur in particular (Tønnessen, Liv. 2017)<sup>30</sup>. Pressure on civil society increased in September 2013 and has continued since then. This includes closing CSOs, revoking licenses, raiding offices, and confiscating activists' passports.

The current political and economic situation also plays an important role in aggravating such a restrictive environment. On the eve of the parliamentary elections 2015, the government cracked down on CSOs, human rights defenders, students, the media and

members of the political opposition. It refused to allow CSOs to observe the elections. Similar actions were imposed following protests against austerity measures under the January 2018 budget.

The proposed reform of laws on public freedoms, including those governing CSOs, the media, and public assembly, has been postponed until the next session of Parliament. This means the current restrictive laws and measures on CSOs will continue in force.

Finally, a proposed new law, the Humanitarian and Voluntary Works Act, 2018, raises concerns among civil society actors regarding registration requirements, the Registrar General's discretionary power, and CSO funding provisions.

#### Legal Discrimination:

Having not ratified the CEDAW convention or the Maputo Protocol, Sudan still has a large arsenal of laws embodying stark gender inequality. Apart from the personal status law that entrenches discrimination against women in the family and consolidates prevailing culture on the subordination of women, many other laws discriminate against women in the public sphere. At the forefront comes the public order laws and the penal code.

Although the women's movement was able

to advocate against legal reform on specific articles of the penal code, like the campaign on article 149 or the political representation quota, advocacy for reforming the personal status law has always been low on the list of demands for legal reform even among the most secular groups. One can imagine the hardships implicated with that endeavour in a theological state. However, legal reform is crucial for dismantling the prevailing culture of gender inequality in both the private and public spheres.

#### Funding

Funding played an important role, in the period leading to the CPA, in building women's CSOs

capacities and bringing women activists across ethnic, religious, political, and geographical

divides. Foreign Governmental Funding, particularly from the Netherlands, played a crucial role in capacity building, networking, and coordination among Sudanese women's organizations, particularly for providing women's perspective on the peace process. International agencies also funded coalitions and individual women's organizations, including within the academia, in their advocacy on specific issues, e.g., the campaign

to reform Article 149

However, the current political and legal environment is uncondusive. In the last decade, we have witnessed the expulsion of many international agencies, particularly those supporting women's CSOs working on sexual violence. In addition, the current associations' law creates an unconstructive environment.

## Internal Challenges

### Divisions within the movement

The main divisions which permeated the history of the movement, particularly within the period of the study, relate to

a) The urban /rural division: "We have remained for nearly half a century addressing women's issues from the viewpoint of urban women, while 80 per cent of women live in the country and face completely different problems throughout their daily lives". (*Khalda Zahir*<sup>31</sup> 2006)<sup>32</sup>

b) Generational gap between the generations entails conceptual issues and differences regarding feminism. Older generations tended to have a sceptical attitude towards Western feminism. They focused on women's rights in the public sphere, while new generations of activists describe their activism as feminist. Although the Sudanese Women's Union had a wide membership, it could not reach out to younger generations and integrate their

aspirations into its agenda because of the restrictive political environment and organizational structure. On the other hand, the General Union of Sudan's Women, with its close association with the ruling party, can no longer engage the new generations of the secular feminist movement despite the involvement of the GUSW in some of the recent legal reform efforts.

d) division along partisan affiliation of the women activists within the different political parties, which hold patriarchal attitudes towards gender equality and tend to marginalize women within its ranks, and women's issues in its programs and policies.

However, the past decade has witnessed successful experiences that brought wide constituencies of women to work together across many of those divides.

### Personal status law

Throughout the Sudanese women's movement's history, reforming the personal status law had been low on the movement's agenda, including the most secular sections like the SWU, and even during the limited democratic eras. Reforming the personal status

law is difficult, particularly under the current Islamic regime. Still, it is central to changing the prevailing patriarchal power relations within the family and wider political context, including the political opposition.

# SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conclusions

As in all countries, the Sudanese women's movement has been impacted by and responded to the broader national political, economic, and social contexts. In addition, the Sudanese women's movement has also been influenced by the International women's movement since its inception.

In the earlier phases of the Sudanese women's movement, women's activism was confined to one dominant group: secular women under the Sudanese Women's Union (SWU) in the 1950s - 1960s; state feminism of women bureaucrats, Union of Sudan Women (USW) in the 1970s -1980s<sup>33</sup>, and finally Islamist women in the late 1980s into the 1990s, the General Union of Sudan's Women (GUSW) (Ahmed, 2014). Regardless of their different ideologies, the movement's main focus in the early periods

was women's rights in the public sphere, namely political representation, education, and work. Even for the secular SWU, patriarchal gender relationships and women's rights within the family were not high on its agenda.

The late 1990s through the millennium marked a new wave of Sudanese women's activism with a shift from ideological and political partisanship politics to feminist politics, thus impacting the movement's issues, structures, programs, and mobilization strategies. Through militant activism in the past two decades, Sudanese women could work collaboratively across all geographical, political, religious, and cultural divides, despite a very restrictive and unproductive political environment.

## Recommendations

1. The Sudan women's movement has a unique and rich experience that deserves a **more in-depth study**. Its uniqueness comes from two main points; first, it works within an Islamic regime under Sharia laws. Second, at least in part of its history, it had the only secular women's union in North Africa, with thousands of women in its membership.
2. Within Sudan's current restrictive legal environment, UN Women, with its Africa Strategy for 2018-2021, can provide **invaluable opportunities and avenues** for empowering the Sudanese women's movement that has more chances to be accepted by the state of Sudan.
  - a). The Sudanese government's interest in clearing its human rights record provides a significant opportunity to enhance the accountability of the state of Sudan through ratifying both the CEDAW convention and the Maputo Protocol.
  - b). SDGs provide another opportunity by linking goals other than Goal 5 to the equally binding UN treaties, particularly the CEDAW convention. Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) and International Women's Action Watch – Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP) efforts towards harmonizing the human rights and sustainable development framework could be a useful entry point.
3. Working towards a minimum agreed-upon agenda within the Sudanese women's movement, building on successful past experiences, and benefit from the different inputs brought by the different constituencies, particularly younger generations of feminists

# APPENDICES:

The following documents were enlisted in Ahmed Mawahib, 2014.<sup>34</sup>

## The Hague Peace Appeal-Sudanese Women's Appeal for Peace. May 13th, 1999

We, the women representing all sides of the conflict in Sudan, have come together to participate in The Hague Appeal for Peace conference,

- Aware that the war in Sudan is one of the longest-running wars in the world and is often forgotten by the international community;
- Conscious that the war has caused untold suffering to the Sudanese people, particularly to women, children, and other vulnerable groups;
- Considering the magnitude of death, destruction, and displacement;
- Noting the deadlock in the peace process;

We are here despite all our social, political, and religious differences because we want to end this war.

- We call on our leaders to declare and our people to abide by an immediate, comprehensive ceasefire, cease all hostilities, and respect the human rights of all Sudanese. This is to be followed by an immediate, sustained peace dialogue.
- For the benefit of all Sudanese, we encourage our leaders to allow humanitarian assistance and unhindered access to needy people in need.

Sudan is a potentially rich country with many natural resources currently not utilized for national development. Still, instead of a war that has claimed over 3.2 million lives – many more than Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, and Kosovo. We believe that in this war, there can be no winner.

- We urge our political leaders to facilitate the participation of the civilian population in the peace process to determine their fate through democratic processes based on their rights and interests.
- We appeal to the international community and all peace-loving people to:
  - Strengthen existing mechanisms (IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) in the Sudanese peace negotiations, support internal peace agreements, and other peace efforts;
  - Assure women's participation in the peace negotiations to voice their concerns and enable them to reach a sustainable peace with justice;
  - Create a conducive environment for warring parties to have a constructive dialogue;
  - Clear landmines, cease arms sales to warring groups in the Sudan;
  - Compel the warring parties to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

If we, the women of Sudan, having witnessed so much suffering, can work together for peace, it is incumbent on our leaders to commit themselves to ending this war.

Signed by

The Participants in the Initiative to Facilitate the Participation of Sudanese Women in the Peace

Process

*Source: Salmamah Women's Resource Center (2006)*

## The Draft Women's Minimum Agenda for Peace (January 2000)

### Preamble

The Sudanese Women's Agenda for Peace reflects the vision and aspirations of Sudanese women in the peace process. The Nine women's groups [s] from the Northern and Southern sectors represented by 25 women met in Nairobi between 26th - 29th January 2000. It reached a consensus on a unified woman's agenda for peace. The groups promoted engendering the peace process initiative, facilitated by the Netherlands Government, [including]:

- Ensure the participation of women in all peace initiatives by at least 30 per cent.
- Women's concerns should be mainstreamed in all peace negotiations/initiatives and agenda.
- Women should choose their female representatives in the peace initiative.
- All the parties to the conflict must restrain from shelling and bombarding civilian targets.
- The abduction of women and children must stop, and the violence against women in the war zones by all warring parties [must] come to an end.
- The parties to the conflict must stop recruiting children under 18 into the war.
- Cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity must be respected.
- The implementation of CEDAW.
- Freedom of movement for all Sudanese must be guaranteed, and the restriction on women's mobility going out of Sudan must be lifted.
- Principles of inclusiveness (participation of women) must be adopted.

Source: Salmmah Women's Resource Center (2006)



## Maastricht Declaration of the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative-April 13, 2000

### 1. Preamble

Our Sudanese women's initiative for engendering the peace process in Sudan was conceived in late 1997. It was officially launched in Khartoum and Nairobi in 1998 when the Committees were formed from the different parties to the conflict and other women's interest groups. The main objective agreed upon by the consciousness-raising committees among Sudanese women is their roles and responsibilities in the peace process at all levels of society and, in particular, within the conflicting parties. It was also decided that these committees would take on the responsibility of raising awareness of the leadership of the conflicting parties on the aspirations and potential roles of Sudanese women in the peace process.

Workshops, training sessions, and meetings were organized to prepare us for this important role. Workshops, training sessions, and meetings were organized to prepare us for this important role. These include The Hague Appeal for Peace, May 1999; Cairo, 1999; Nairobi,

March and November 1999; Nairobi, January 2000; South Africa, 2000. We are very pleased that the IGAD Sudan Peace Process by the end of 1999 officially supported and continues to support our initiative. IGAD has substantially contributed to the Initiative by convening this International Conference in Maastricht, the Netherlands, from 11 to April 13th, 2000.

Our gathering here in Maastricht has been to advocate for our increased participation in the Sudanese peace process. To this extent, we have called on IGAD members, women leaders from IGAD countries, global women leaders, representatives of the international donor community, the European Union, IPF members, the OAU, the Arab League, and the United Nations to support our efforts for peace in Sudan actively.

Based on extensive dialogue emanating from the Sudanese women's Minimum Agenda for Peace, we have mutually agreed on the following:

### 2. Acknowledging

**2.1** That Sudanese women are overburdened by the devastating effects of war, which has caused enormous suffering and loss of lives, homes, and possessions since 1955, except from 1972 to 1983 when there was relative peace;

**2.2** That the costly war is destructive to humanity, community life, to basic social needs such as health, education, and human security, thus destroying the prospect for future generations;

**2.3** Our ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity;

**2.4** That the war is against the ethical principles of all religions in Sudan;

**2.5** The international call for active women's participation in peacemaking, as clearly stated in Beijing at the fourth World Women's Conference, followed by the EU meeting organized by the Government of Finland and

the Security Council statement of March 8th, 2000, as well as numerous attempts by international donors;

**2.6** The long strife and efforts of Sudanese women to attain peace and the vital role of women in traditional conflict resolution;

**2.7** The need for a broader and increased representation of Sudanese women at the peace

negotiation table and other peace initiatives to mainstream women's concerns in negotiations;

**2.8** Women will continue to work at all levels in the peace process, specifically bringing together community women of conflicting parties across the country and convincing leaders and communities of the urgency for peace.

### **3. Appreciating**

1. The Initiative to facilitate the participation of Sudanese women in the peace process;
2. The acceptance of the Declaration of Principles by all parties;
3. going ongoing mediation efforts of the IGAD Sudan peace process in support of a peaceful The solution to the conflict;
4. All national peacemaking efforts;
5. The efforts of the conflicting parties in search of a solution to the conflict;
6. The international support offered by the IPF;
7. The willingness of the parties who promote women's participation in the peace process;
8. The willingness to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by all parties;
9. The establishment of a gender desk at the level of IGAD in Djibouti.

### **4. We, the Sudanese women, decide to undertake the following actions immediately**

1. Develop a broad culture of peace at all levels;
2. Empower women to contribute to a just and sustainable peaceful resolution to the conflict;
3. Further, develop the Sudanese Women's Minimum Agenda for Peace about the Declaration of Principles; develop a plan for its implementation and communicate its contents to all parties;
4. Educate women in mediation and negotiation to enable effective participation of women in non-violent conflict resolution;
5. Establish links and networks with relevant international organizations and the media to support and advocate for just and sustainable peace;
6. Establish regular meetings with IGAD leaders and Secretariat for the Sudan peace process to ensure a women's perspective on human security, conflict resolution, and development in Sudan.

### **5. We, Sudanese women, call upon the leadership of the conflicting parties**

1. To end the war by utilizing peaceful negotiation to stop the further suffering of the civilian population, particularly women and children;
2. To actively support our peacemaking efforts;
3. To permit women to work unhindered and safely at the community level to establish a culture of peace;
4. To establish regular meetings with us to integrate women's perspectives in peacemaking and good governance;
5. To provide and protect access to basic services, such as health and basic education, throughout the country in, particular in war-affected areas;
6. To incorporate peace education into the school curriculum and Sudanese mass media;
7. To forbid and stop the admission and recruitment of children below the age of eighteen as child soldiers;
8. To keep war away from the civilian population, to stop using landmines and other small arms, and to protect the environment and wildlife;
9. To value and respect diversity (culture, ethnicity, religion, and language) as an empowering resource for Sudanese society.

### **6. We, Sudanese women, call upon the IGAD leaders and representatives of the IGAD**

#### **Secretariat for the Sudan peace process**

1. To establish regular meetings with women to include women's aspirations and concerns in the peacemaking process;
2. To actively search for creative ways to speed up the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan;
3. To allow for a special envoy for Sudanese women in IGAD.

### **7. We, Sudanese women, call upon leading women in IGAD countries**

1. To share information and engage in advocacy with their respective governments in support of the Sudanese women's peace initiative;
2. To promote empowerment and training of Sudanese women on human security, peacemaking, development, and leadership.

### **8. We, Sudanese women, call upon members of the OAU, IPF, the EU, Arab League, and UN agencies**

1. To further consolidate and support the non-violent conflict resolution efforts in Sudan, such as the IGAD peace process;
2. To facilitate training, exchange of experiences, and the development of strategic plans and programs in support of peacemaking;
3. To provide active moral and material support to Sudanese women's efforts in peacemaking;
4. To accelerate the efforts to promote non-violent conflict resolution by the specialized UN agencies, such as UNIFEM, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNICEF;
5. To coordinate their efforts in the search for peace in Sudan and provide an audience for women's perspectives in the peace process in Sudan.

### **9. We, Sudanese women, call upon the bilateral donors**

1. To raise the awareness of their citizens about the negative impact of the war in Sudan, the urgency for non-violent conflict resolution;
2. To provide financial and technical assistance to the peace efforts of Sudanese women;
3. To facilitate training in mediation, negotiation, and preventive diplomacy for all parties, including women;
4. To support inter-religious and intercultural dialogue among women at a community level to support non-violent conflict resolution.

### **10. We, Sudanese women, call upon the Global Women Leadership**

1. To use their access to top-level decision-making institutions to bring attention to the Sudanese women's peace initiatives;
2. To demand the active involvement of the global community in a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan;
3. To put the conflict in Sudan on the agenda by visiting our areas and by meeting with us as well as the leaders of the conflicting parties;
4. To utilize their access to the media for statements in support of women's peace initiatives.

### **11. We, Sudanese women, will continue to work to seek agreement on the issue of arms**

(Civil Society Working Committee, The National Democratic Alliance, National Working Committee, The Non-Partisan Working Committee, Nuba Women Working Committee

Southern Women Working Committee, SPDF Working Committee, SPLM-United Working Committee)

**Note:**

We regret that our sisters from SPLM could not join us at this meeting, and their contribution to the preparation has been significant. The ideas in this document reflect the thinking of all the committees, including the SPLM. Their name may not appear in this document. However, we are convinced that together we shall use the document as a platform for an even greater inclusive process toward finding a just and peaceful solution to the conflict that has ravaged our great and beautiful country.

*Source: Salmamah Women's Resource Center (2006)*

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# ENDNOTES

1. From the title of a book by one activist, Ehsan Abdel Aziz.
2. Fatima Ibrahim (1933-2017), was the first woman parliamentarian in Sudan and the first Arab woman elected as the President of the [Women's International Democratic Federation](#) in 1991 Fatima was. She was the chairwoman of the Sudanese Women's Union 1965 - 2007.
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11. The war with the South was stopped temporarily after the Addis Ababa agreement 1972. However, it was reactivated after adoption of Shariaa law 1983, and continued until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Naivasha Agreement), and finally settled by separation of the south 2011
12. Some sources estimate its membership with 15000 at some point
13. Sudanese women got limited voting right (only for university graduates) in 1965, but it became a full-fledged right in 1972
14. Interview with Fahima Hashim, September 2018, Cairo. Hashim is a well-known Sudanese activist, director of Salmah Women Studies and Resource Center. The center was closed by the government in 2014.
15. Women in different work places established branches of the SWU, but since its membership is based on local residence, those work branches were not legitimate, and most importantly were not represented in the different levels of elections leading to the membership of the general congress who have the right to change the SWU constitution and election of the executive committee.
16. These included:  
Criminal Act 1991, article 152 ““Whoever commits, in a public place, an act, or conducts himself in an indecent manner, or a manner contrary to public morality, or wears an indecent, or immoral dress, which causes annoyance to public feelings, shall be punished, with whipping, not exceeding 40 lashes, or with fine, or with both. The act shall be deemed contrary to public morality, if it is so considered in the religion of the doer, or the custom of the country where the act occurs.”,

Public Order Act 1996, Article 9 (segregation of women and women in 20 public transport), articles 13-18 (hairstyling and tailoring dresses for women), article 20 (separation of men and women queuing), punishments varies between imprisonment, fines or whipping

17. El-Sawi, Zaynab. 2011. Women Building Peace: The Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP) in Sudan. Published by Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). Toronto
18. the NDA incorporated the southern political movements and in particular the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) as well as the traditional northern political parties. The NDA was disbanded after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005
19. "Women's gains in the sixties and seventies ... witnessed regressions under different regimes, particularly the Salvation regime .... the situation wasn't any better at the level of opposition particularly within the NDA. Politics of segregation and exclusion were intentionally practiced. In conclusion the NDA began masculine and ended masculine. Women's participation, was just a decorative phony clause, without getting serious and real implementation. Abel Aziz, 2012. Women in the range of the Gun. 10
20. Mutaawenat, Salma, the gender center were some of those CSOs
21. Compared to the previous law this is considered as success as it ensured the increase in number of women in parliament with a percentage that exceeded their number in any previous parliament. (Badri, 2013)
22. some of the activities undertaken: Workshop on women role in election organized in 2007 by the Women Union; Consultative meeting on women and Election: Quota, organized by Gender Center, 2007; Forum of Gender Center and Women in Political Parties Forum organized 2007; Forum on 'women rights in elections' by Women Initiative in 2008; Demonstration against separate women list in front of National Legislative Council in Omdurman in 2008 organized by Salama; Training for women candidates from 11 political party conducted by Sudanese Organizations for Research and Development, 2010.
23. foreword to the Decree stated that,
24. *"This is in consideration of the state which sought to honor and keeps safe the dignity of women and situates women in the right place which they deserve as per the civilized project of the nation and in line with our traditions and the values of our religion"*  
For more detailed information please refer to Ahmed, Mawahib. 2014
25. Copies were distributed to the representatives of the UN in Khartoum, the representative of the Arab League, the African Union, the Sudanese Human Rights Organization, the International Labor Organization.
26. Tønnessen, Liv. 2017. Enemies of the State: Curbing Women Activists Advocating Rape Reform in Sudan. Journal of International Women's Studies. Volume 18 | Issue 2. Jan-2017 - 147
27. WLUML 2015. Sudan's Revised Penal Code: A Mixed Picture for Women. [http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/Sudans\\_Revised\\_Penal\\_Code\\_Mixed\\_Picture\\_WLUML\\_2015\\_0.pdf](http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/Sudans_Revised_Penal_Code_Mixed_Picture_WLUML_2015_0.pdf)
28. The punishment of the crime of zina is stoning to death for married offenders and 100 lashes for non-married offenders.
29. Maastricht Declaration of the Sudanese Women's Peace Initiative-April 13, 2000. Salma Resource Center. In Ahmed Mawahib, 2014
30. The immediate response to the ICC indictment was to expel 13 international and shut down 3 Sudanese NGOs, in particular targeting NGOs working on sexual violence. The Sudanese NGOs were Amal Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence; the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights Development and Environment; the Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO). Tønnessen, Liv. 2017 Ibid



31. Khalda Zahir, was the first chairwoman of the Sudanese Women's Union in the 1950s,
32. Interview with Adnan Zahir, quoted in Amel Aldehaib's posts, Revisiting Sudanese Feminist Movements  
<http://womensuffrage.org/?p=21295>. 18 Mar 2013 | No Comments | posted by Aldehaib, Amel | in Africa, Contemporary, Middle East, Post Classifications, Regions
33. Many of them split from the SWU in the 1970 and joined the UWS
34. Ahmed, Mawahib. 2014. The women's movement in Sudan from nationalism to Transnationalism: prospects for a solidarity Movement. A PhD. Dissertation, Graduate program in gender, feminist and women's Studies. York University. Toronto, Ontario





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East and Southern Africa Regional Office  
UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;  
Block M, Ground Floor  
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

[africa.unwomen.org](http://africa.unwomen.org)  
Email: [esaro.publications@unwomen.org](mailto:esaro.publications@unwomen.org)

 [unwomenafrica](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenafrica)

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