To All States Delegates
Thirty First Session of the Conference of the States Parties
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
The Hague (The Netherlands)

Geneva, 21 November 2026

Allegations about the use of chemical weapons in Sudan

The undersigned organizations issue this statement on the occasion of the Thirty First Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP-31) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to be held from 23 to 27 November 2026, with the urgent request that particular attention be given to the accusations about the use of chemical weapons during the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan.

We are deeply concerned that a growing body of material and circumstantial evidence as well as victims' accounts and eyewitnesses testimonies, in addition to documents leaked by the Sudanese military about the manufacturing and use of chlorine munitions, all point in one direction that: chemical weapons may have been in use in Sudan within the context of the armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023. The brutality of this armed conflict comes to the fore in the reported scorched-earth warfare tactics that have been systematically used by the warring parties and which led to the killings and maiming for life of hundreds of thousands of people and the displacement of about 16 million Sudanese civilians inside the country and abroad.

We draw attention to the declaration of the US Government of 24 April 2025 in which they stated that it has evidence that SAF used chemical weapons in some parts of Sudan in 2024 and consequently it imposed sanctions on Sudan.[1] We also draw attention that in June and July 2025, the Governments of Chad, Benin and Mauritania, supported by Guinea-Bissau, wrote to the Chairperson of the Executive Council of State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), in accordance with provision 4 of Article IX of the CWC, requesting clarifications from Sudan regarding the accusations about the use of chemical weapons in its territory.[2] The request had been sent by the OPCW's Secretariat to Sudan and all state parties to CWC on 23 June 2025,[3] yet so far this request has not received any sufficiently substantiated response regarding such serious allegations.

We are aware that the existence of credible accusations about the use of chemical weapons is not a conviction or proof of guilt, but it is a strong ground for competent international investigations and access to the country to examine the available forensic evidence, verify victims accounts and eyewitnesses' testimonies and to establish the facts. This step is crucial because the consequences of the use of such prohibited weapons extend well beyond Sudan, which is a State Party to the CWC and is expected to fully meet its obligations in this respect.

We kindly remind state delegates to CSP-31 that the CWC is unequivocal in prohibiting any treatment or use of chemical weapons under any circumstances and consequently the slightest doubts about such use must be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any delay in this respect carries serious consequences. Physical evidence may deteriorate or be altered or lost, relevant records and documents may disappear, and victims and witnesses may face enforced disappearances or become increasingly difficult to reach. On the other hand, a prolonged absence of effective action also risks emboldening those responsible for any such violations and leaving civilians exposed to further attacks. Timely action is, therefore, essential both to establish the facts and to help prevent the recurrence of such crimes.

Under the circumstances, we are gravely concerned about the inability of the OPCW to constructively engage with Sudan and to persuade it to fully and unconditionally cooperate. Failing to do so, violates the CWC in letter and spirit and questions the credibility, ability and willingness of the international community to uphold its binding commitments under CWC and intervene in Sudan before crucial evidence is lost, destroyed or compromised.

Meanwhile, as a member of OPCW's Executive Council,[4] Sudan is entrusted with promoting compliance with and overseeing effective implementation of CWC, therefore, it must show exemplary conduct by fully and constructively collaborating with all state members of CWC and the Executive Council. It should particularly declare any chemical weapons production facilities and the whereabouts of chemical munitions. To clear its records, Sudan should allow the OPCW's Technical Secretariat to deploy specialized technical teams on its territory and ensure that any investigations are conducted in a thorough, transparent, independent and timely manner with a view to verifying, and where applicable, allow the destruction of such munitions in conformity with its obligations under CWC.

We strongly believe that the failure of Sudan to fully comply with its obligations under the CWC and its inability or unwillingness to unconditionally cooperate with the OPCW in this regard should lead to its immediate removal from membership of the OPCW's Executive Council and before the end of its tenure in May 2027. Considering the gravity of these accusations, the CSP-31 is called upon to bring the situation in Sudan to the attention of the UN Security Council as a matter of extreme urgency.

Finally, we respectfully call upon all delegates to CSP-31 and the office of the OPCW Director General to exercise leadership and take all the necessary steps to enable a prompt, credible and independent investigation. By doing so, the OPCW preserves its credibility and purpose and sends a clear signal that the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons applies everywhere and that the suffering of the Sudanese civilians will not be overlooked.

Signed:

1. African Organization for Rights and Development, Kampala
2. Centre for African Legal Studies/*Centre d'Études Juridiques Africaines (CEJA),* Geneva
3. Centre for Study of Truth & Knowledge, London
4. Civil Society Initiative, Nairobi
5. Darfur Victims Support Organization, Kampala
6. *Espace Afrique International,* Geneva
7. Global Forum for the Defence of the Less Privileged, Yaoundé, Cameroun
8. Independent Commission for Human Rights in North Africa, Laayoune, Morocco
9. Institute for Law and Development, Accra, Ghana
10. Nabag Organization for Rights & Development, Kampala
11. Platform Women and Sustainable Peace, The Hague
12. Sekkat Tasamuh to Repair Social Fabric, Nairobi
13. Researchers Without Borders, Kampala
14. *Réseau des Organisations de Défense des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC),* Douala, Cameroun
15. Sudan Democratic Transition Network, The Hague
16. Sudan Knowledge Centre, Switzerland
17. West African Human Rights Defenders Network, Lomé, Togo
18. The Darfur Women Organization in The Netherlands, The Hague
19. Voices of the Victims Newspaper, Kampala

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[1] Imposing Measures on Sudan for its Use of Chemical Weapons, US Department of State, Press Statement, Tammy Bruce, Department Spokesperson, dated 22 May 2025, https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesman/2025/05/imposing-measures-on-sudan-for-its-use-of-chemical-weapons

[2] Note Verbale No. 0050/ATBEL/SD/2025 dated 11 JUNE 2025 from the Embassy of the Republic of Chad to the Benelux Countries and the European Union addressed to the Chairperson of the OPCW's Executive Council, https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025/06/ec109nat03%28e%29.pdf

[3] OPCW Executive Council, Opening Statement by the Director General, to the 109th session of the Executive Council, EC-109/DG.25 dated 8 July 2025, https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025/07/ec109dg25%28e%29.pdf

[4] Executive Council: The governing body of the OPCW, 41 Member States responsible for promoting the effective implementation of and compliance with the Convention, https://www.opcw.org/about-us/executive-council