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## ORAL STATEMENT

**81st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights  
17 October – 6 November 2024,  
Banjul, The Gambia**

**Agenda Item 5(v): Activity Report of the Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants in Africa**

Honourable Special Rapporteur,

Since armed conflict erupted in Sudan in April 2023, millions of people have fled the country, including 500,000 to neighbouring Egypt. Instead of facilitating their safe and dignified passage as required by international and regional refugee law, the Egyptian authorities have imposed stringent entry restrictions and arbitrarily arrested and unlawfully deported Sudanese refugees for entering or staying in Egypt irregularly.

For decades, Egypt was home to millions of Sudanese people studying, working, investing or receiving healthcare in the country, with Sudanese women, girls, boys under 16 and men over 49 exempt from entry requirements. In late May 2023, the Egyptian government introduced new rules requiring all Sudanese nationals to obtain visas, forcing people fleeing conflict to cross the border irregularly. In the months that followed, particularly from September 2023, the Egyptian authorities have cracked down on Sudanese refugees solely for entering the country through irregular border crossings or for not possessing valid residence permits, including through conducting racially-motivated identity checks targeting Black individuals, spreading fear within the refugee community leaving many afraid to leave their homes.

Evidence gathered by Amnesty International indicates that Egypt's Border Guard Forces operating under the ministry of defence as well as police operating under the ministry of interior have carried out mass arbitrary arrests of Sudanese people, and held women, men and children as young as two in cruel and inhuman conditions pending their forced return to Sudan. Detainees were kept in overcrowded facilities where they were denied adequate access to toilets and sanitation facilities, were given substandard and insufficient food, and denied adequate healthcare.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which carries out the registration of asylum seekers and refugee status determination in Egypt, 3,000 people were deported to Sudan from Egypt in September 2023 alone. With the conflict in Sudan continuing, tens of thousands of undocumented Sudanese refugees, including those who are awaiting for registration appointments with UNHCR in Egypt remain at risk of arbitrary arrest, detention in appalling conditions and forced return to Sudan.

We call on the Special Rapporteur to urge the Egyptian authorities to:

- immediately halt mass arbitrary arrests of Sudanese refugees solely on migration grounds or for entering the country irregularly and ensure that all those fleeing the conflict in Sudan are provided with prompt, safe and dignified entry into Egypt, and unrestricted access to fair and effective asylum procedures;



- immediately release all those arbitrarily detained in police stations, Central Security Forces' camps and makeshift detention facilities controlled by the Border Guard Forces;
- halt the deportations of Sudanese nationals to Sudan, which risks violating the principle of non-refoulement; and refrain from forcibly returning anyone without individually assessing their protection needs and the human rights risks they may face upon their return.

Thank you.