

**DUBLIN**

Front Line Defenders – Head Office
First Floor, Avoca Court
Temple Road, Blackrock
Co. Dublin, A94 R7W3, Ireland

info@frontlinedefenders.org
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +353 1 212 3750
fax +353 1 212 1001

BRUSSELS

Front Line Defenders – EU Office
Square Marie-Louise 72
1000 Brussels
Belgium

euoffice@frontlinedefenders.org
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +32 2 230 9383
fax +32 2 230 0028

7 May 2025

Sudan: Human rights defender Montaser Abdullah may face the death penalty

On 21 April 2025, the first court session for lawyer and human rights defender **Montaser Abdullah** took place. The human rights defender has been detained since being taken into custody on 7 September 2024.

[Montaser Abdullah](#) is a Sudanese lawyer and human rights defender who has offered legal assistance to survivors of gender-based violence. He was arrested in September 2024 after representing members of the Tagadom Coordination Committee against accusations by the National Committee for Investigating Crimes and Violation of National Laws and International Humanitarian Law.

On 21 April 2025, the first court session against Montaser Abdullah took place. The military authorities have opened cases against him under articles 53 and 85 of the Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991, articles 9, 17, 24, 26, and 27 of the Cybercrimes Act, and articles 5 and 6 of the Anti-Terrorism law. He currently faces a minimum of 20 years in prison, with the death penalty as the maximum sentence.

On 3 October 2024, Montaser Abdullah was brought before the Criminal Court in Port Sudan and was charged under article 53 of the 1991 Sudanese Criminal Code for alleged espionage. The human rights defender denied the charges and refused to confess, despite alleged coercion by the authorities.

Montaser Abdullah was taken into custody on 7 September 2024, following a brief detention on 5 September. During his detention, authorities allegedly forced him into waiving his legal immunity granted to him in his capacity as a practising lawyer. This detention occurred after months of reported surveillance, beginning when Montaser Abdullah became the legal representative for 17 members of the Tagadom Coordination Committee, including its chair, former Prime Minister Dr. Abdalla Hamdok. They are facing accusations brought by the National Committee for Investigating Crimes and Violations of National Laws and International Humanitarian Law.

Montaser Abdullah has reportedly been held in deplorable conditions: confined with others in a small cell, denied access to basic facilities, subjected to repeated beatings, and forced to remain unclothed.

Since the outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023, lawyers have been among those most targeted by both warring parties, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Armed Forces (SAF), including cases of arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary killings. Front Line Defenders has previously condemned the murder of human rights defenders [Mohammed Ahmed Kudia](#), [Khamis Arabab](#), [Tareg Hassan Yagoub Elmalik](#) and [El Sadeg Mohammed Ahmed Haroun](#). The organisation believes they were killed as a result of having witnessed the outbreak of a violent clash between the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group and Sudanese military forces while they were carrying out their human rights work in West Darfur.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the arbitrary detention and extreme sentencing faced by human rights defender Montaser Abdullah. The organisation believes that the human rights defender has been targeted with punitive measures solely as a result of his legitimate and non-violent human rights work.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Sudan to:

1. Immediately release Montaser Abdullah and terminate all cases opened against him;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Montaser Abdullah, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Sudan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders Board of Directors

Kieran Mulvey, Roja Fazaeli, Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe), Mary Jane N. Real (Philippines), Verónica Vidal (Uruguay), Jim Conway, Maria Mulcahy, Eamon Gilmore, Dermot Hayes

Front Line Defenders International Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Maryam Elahi, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani, Mary Lawlor

Front Line, The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders trading as Front Line Defenders, is registered in Ireland as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Registered Office: First Floor Avoca Court, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 R7W3, Ireland

Company No. 593190; Registered Charity No. 20204494; CHY 22404