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**Sudan: Arbitrary detention of woman human rights defender Hala Khalid Abugroun**

On 17 August 2020, woman human rights defender **Hala Khalid Abugroun** was detained for several hours at Khartoum Central Police Station after attempting to report human rights abuses carried out by NISS officers against protestors during a peaceful protest in the capital. She was interrogated for several hours and reported being subject to severe physical abuse, which may amount to torture, by police and security officers.

[Hala Khalid Abugroun](#) is a woman human rights defender and lawyer. She is a member of the 'No to Women's Oppression' initiative, as well as a member of the Collation of Democratic lawyers, an organisation of lawyers across Sudan who support democratic transformation and provide legal aid to victims of human rights violations.

On 17 August 2020, National Intelligence Service (NISS) officers harassed and threatened Hala Khalid Abugroun and her colleagues while they were documenting arbitrary arrests and incidents of violence against protestors carried out by officers of the NISS. The protestors were reportedly lashed by the NISS officers during a peaceful demonstration in Khartoum, marking the anniversary of the signing the Constitutional Declaration. The defender and her two colleagues immediately went to the police station in Khartoum to file a report against the NISS officers involved in the abuses against them and the protestors. Whilst in the police station, Hala Khalid Abugroun was detained for over five hours by three NISS officers and a number of police officers but her colleagues were allowed to leave. During this time, she reported being subject to severe physical abuse causing injuries to her right eye and knee which resulted in the defender being hospitalised. Police officers also tried to forcibly seize her mobile phone and searched her handbag. Hala Khalid Abugroun was not given the reasons behind her detention during this time. She was eventually released and no charges were brought against her.

Since being arbitrarily detained and subject to physical abuse on 17 August 2020, Hala Khalid Abugroun has attempted to open a file against the officers involved. There has been no progress in this process, and the defender has subsequently received verbal threats from unknown persons indirectly, warning her to cease her attempts to take legal action against the officers involved.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned regarding the arbitrary detention and reports of physical abuse, that may amount to torture, against woman human rights defender and lawyer Hala Khalid Abugroun. It is also concerned by the threats the defender has received concerning her efforts to seek redress. Front Line Defenders believes she was targeted as a result of her peaceful and legitimate human rights work in Sudan.

**Front Line Defenders urge the Sudanese authorities to:**

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the detention and reports of severe physical abuse, which may amount to torture, of Hala Khalid Abugroun, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;

2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Hala Khalid Abugroun
3. Ratify the International Convention against torture (CAT);
4. 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.

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