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Sudan: Detention and judicial harassment of human rights defender Yasir Mirghani

On 11 April 2023, the Sudanese police arrested and detained human rights defender **Yasir Mirghani** on corruption charges. The charges are allegedly in relation to EU funds received by the Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS) in 2012, which Yasir Mirghani is currently the head of. The state refused to release the human rights defender unless he pays a bail of EUR 264,875, a sum corresponding to the full amount of funds received by SCNP from the EU. The human rights defender remains in detention. In late 2022, the authorities annulled the registration of the SCPS over the same allegations.

[Yasir Mirghani](#) is a Sudanese human rights defender, pharmacist and head of the Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS), founded in 1998, which fights corruption and protection of the community from companies' abuse. Yasir Mirghani is also a member of the Confederation of Civil Society which is a collation of more than 50 human rights organisations in the country.

On 11 April 2023, the human rights defender Yasir Mirghani was arrested by the Sudanese police in relation to corruption charges and had his mobile phone confiscated. The Anti-Corruption Prosecution authority in Khartoum filed the charges under Article 177, the crime of criminal breach of trust, of the Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991. The prosecution is accusing the human rights defender of embezzling EU funds received by the SCPS back in 2012. The judge has set bail of EUR 264,875, a sum corresponding to the full amount of funds received by SCNP from the EU, which the human rights defender has been unable to post.

On 8 December 2022, Yasir Mirghani was arrested and questioned in relation to the same charges. He maintained that the organisation has all the required documents that verify all aspects of the upright disbursement of funds. He was released on bail on the same day.

On 8 December 2022, a statement on the matter was published by the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), the governmental body that manages humanitarian work carried out in Sudan. It announced the lodging of a criminal complaint against the management of SCPS.

On 23 October 2022, the HAC cancelled the registration of SCPS and ordered the confiscation of its assets. The organisation maintains that the allegations against it are false and that they are in retaliation to its human rights work which included publishing several reports evidencing corruption in governmental institutions. It also maintains that this is retaliation for the case it initiated against telecommunication companies in connection to the internet shut down after the military coup in October 2021.

Human rights defender Yasir Mirghani was subjected to many forms of harassment by authorities in the past years which included detaining him several times, which appears to have been in relation to his human rights work on documenting and publishing corruption challenging impunity of those in official positions.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the detention of human rights defender Yasir Mirghani. It is also concerned about the decision to terminate the human rights organisation SCPS by restricting its registration. Front Line Defenders believes that the human rights defender and the

human rights organisation are solely being targeted with punitive measures as a result of their peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Sudan to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against Yasir Mirghani as it believes that they are solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Immediately reverse the decision to shut down the human rights organisation the Sudanese Consumers Protection Society (SCPS) and remove all other restrictions placed on the organisation and its members;
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.