

Press Release: As the African Union celebrates 10 years, new research warns of the “disappearance of Sudan” International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) 21 May 2013 A report launched today in Addis Ababa urges Sudan and the African Union (AU) to take a new approach to resolving Sudan’s multiple conflicts and ending the ongoing suffering of its people.

The report by the Kampala-based International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), *The disappearance of Sudan? Life in Khartoum for citizens without rights*, examines the experiences of Sudan’s conflict affected communities from the perspective of those displaced from the margins to Sudan’s capital Khartoum.

It identifies that at the root of Sudan’s wars and dislocation of its diverse peoples is a crisis of citizenship that must be resolved if the country is to survive.

Launching the paper today prior to the opening of the 21st AU Summit, Dismas Nkunda of IRRI said, “Without the protection of the state – or even the legitimacy to be recognised as being in need of protection – the citizenship of millions of Sudanese is shrinking. So, too, is the reality and legitimacy of the Sudanese state”.

Nkunda pointed out that since the independence of South Sudan and the eruption of new rounds of conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and in Darfur, “talk of secession is gaining greater traction in places where it was never previously on the table.”

In urging the African Union to take a fresh approach to its engagement in Sudan, the report points to the fact that the deliberate exclusion of millions of Sudan’s citizens through violence, war and discrimination, threatens both the existence of its peoples and the existence of Sudan itself. Africa must respond.

The 10th anniversary of the African Union presents a critical opportunity to demonstrate to the people of Sudan that Africa’s commitment to the principle of “non-indifference” is still alive. (...)

Summary of the report

The disappearance of Sudan? Life in Khartoum for citizens without rights examines the experience of people living in Khartoum State who identify themselves as being from one of the conflict-affected areas of Sudan. Based on interviews with 117 individuals, the research concentrates primarily on those from the newly independent state of South Sudan, the (now) five Darfur states, and Southern Kordofan state. For decades, marginalisation and neglect of these areas by the government of Sudan has led to conflicts which, in turn, have further exacerbated their economic, political and cultural marginalisation. (...)

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