

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

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Ida Nicolaisen
Denmark

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Canada

Ovid Tzeng
Taiwan

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rebecca Everly

SECRETARIAT

500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001, USA
tel: (202) 334-3043
fax: (202) 334-2225
email: hnetwork@nas.edu
internationalhnetwork.org

FOUNDING MEMBERS
François Jacob* – *France*
Max Perutz* – *United Kingdom*
Pieter van Dijk – *Netherlands*
Torsten Wiesel* – *USA*
(*Nobel Laureate)

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The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (H.R. Network) is an alliance of more than 90 national academies and scholarly societies that defends the fundamental rights of fellow academics and health professionals worldwide and supports academic and medical institutions under threat. As members of the H.R. Network's Executive Committee, we are profoundly concerned about widespread and ongoing human rights abuses by the Sudanese government, which include targeted attacks against our professional colleagues.

Mass popular protests concerning the political and economic situation in Sudan, which began in December 2018, have been met with disproportionate, and frequently deadly, force by government authorities. Amnesty International has documented dozens of deaths and more than 180 injuries since the beginning of the protests, and more than 2,500 individuals have reportedly been arrested and detained.

The government's human rights crackdown has included attacks on medical facilities and personnel, involving—among other atrocities—the firing of teargas in hospitals and the beating of medics by security forces. Dozens of the individuals who have been arrested and detained are health care professionals, as punishment for their care of injured protestors.

These abuses have been accompanied by raids on institutions of research and higher education and the arrest of numerous students and scholars seen as supporting the protests. We are alarmed by reports of the detention of Dr. Muntaser Ibrahim, vice president of the Sudanese National Academy of Sciences and professor in the University of Khartoum's Department of Microbiology and Institute of Endemic Diseases.

It is our understanding that, on February 21, 2019, Dr. Ibrahim and several opposition members were detained shortly before they planned to present Sudan's President with an initiative (supported by more than 500 faculty members at the University of Khartoum) containing proposed pathways for a peaceful solution to the country's crisis. Reportedly, while the individuals taken into custody with Professor Ibrahim were later released, he remains in incommunicado detention at the Security Forces' Political Detention Center in Bahri, Khartoum.

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

The governmental actions listed above are inconsistent with Sudan's binding obligations under international human rights standards, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

As a matter of urgency, we call upon Sudanese authorities to respect the right of peaceful protest and to put an end to the abuse of our colleagues and other individuals exercising internationally protected rights in Sudan. In this connection, we ask that Dr. Ibrahim and others detained for the exercise of such rights be released from detention immediately and unconditionally.

We further ask the Sudanese government to respect the right of health professionals to provide needed care to the sick and injured on a non-discriminatory basis. International human rights law requires that officials refrain from impeding, criminalizing, or punishing the provision of such care. Finally, we call on the government to perform an independent, transparent investigation into human rights abuses and to hold accountable those found to be responsible.

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Martin Chalfie*, United States of America
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