



## Mass killing of street Children in Sudan

Last week Sudan was appalled by the horrific mass death of over 70 of street children between the ages of 13-25 in the Sudanese capital Khartoum. The head of Khartoum state's police department, Major General Mohammed Ahmed Ali, claimed on June 23 that all the deaths were caused by the consumption of methanol and other toxic substances. Most of the bodies were found in Omdurman and Khartoum. The police stated a second statement that they put their hands on the gangs that was supplying these toxic substances and has arrested six suspects. Sudanese experts on drugs expressed their surprise on how the suspects were able to obtain such lethal substance which is limited in distribution to certain specialized and professional categories.

Although no accurate statistics had been made for the street children in Sudan, it was through some studies and surveys estimates that the number of street children (A.K.A. Shamasa) in Khartoum state, amounted to 50.000 children. Armed conflict, drought, famine have led to a mass displacement of the Sudanese population. Government policies have impoverished the majority of the Sudanese people, ruptured the social fabric of the communities, leaving many children either separated from their families or orphaned. Because of the harsh life and the government abandoned them, many children resort to glue sniffing and drugs as coping mechanism to extinguish hunger. The huge gap between the rich and poor in Sudan has devastating effects particularly on children. Since the 1990s the government of Sudan has engaged in campaign of cleaning up city streets from street children through arbitrary arrest, detention and beating by the police. The security authority accuses street children of fueling the sporadic demonstration alongside other elements. The state authority see street children as nothing more than pests need an exterminator, this attitude towards them facilitates crime against these children and allow it to go overlooked and unpunished.

**Sudan Human Rights Network (SHRN)** believes that the poisonous substance was deliberately given to those children by ill intentioned people that led to the mysterious mass death.

**SHRN** call for the appointment of independent investigations committee to conduct a credible and impartial investigation to this heinous crime and to prosecute perpetrators regardless of their positions or affiliation. The ability of perpetrators to commit such crime without being held accountable has helped fuel abuse, along with the general mistrust in the Sudanese legal system.