



Sudanese Civil War 2023 - present

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Introduction:

Sudanese Civil War 15 April 2023 - present is a war between two factions of the country's military government - SLM and RSF, which followed the power vacuum created after the 2021 coup d'état led by Abdel Fatah al-Burham (currently de-facto recognized leader of Sudan, leader of SLM) against the Sudanese government established after 2019 coup d'état. It is complicated to trace why the war broke out, some sources name the reason to be the economic decline following the 2021 coup, some name personal tensions between al-Burham and Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo Musa (military head of RSF, *nome de guerre* Hemendti), who has personal interests in gold extraction, particularly in Darfur, but in reality there have been a multitude of reasons, some of which we will look at later.



The war is characterized by the heavy utilization of unconventional war practices, many of which fall into the category of war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as intentional bombardment of civilian infrastructure, such as roads, hospitals, power plants, water supplies, refugee camps, food and medical equipment warehouses, blocking supply lines of humanitarian organization, forced displacement, hunger and heavy violence against the civilian population (up to a genocide in Darfur). There is also heavy international intervention, particularly from the side of the UAE, which supports illegal gold trade by RSF and provides them with military equipment around sanctions, and Saudi Arabia and Egypt - which have interests in supporting the SLM. The presence of the PMC Wagner (Rebranded Africa Corps) was also reported, although Russia has systematically denied their presence until the death of Prigozhyn.

Currently Sudan is in the largest displacement crisis (13.6 million people displaced). Some areas have declared Phase 5 famine (North Darfur) with an estimated 150'000 deaths caused by malnutrition (with over 500'000 children facing death risks as of now). Humanitarian aid is being systematically targeted by both factions (primarily by RSF).

When the conflict started, the United Nations disbanded the UNITAMS mission, so now the only peacekeeping mission is UNISFA in the Abyei contested area between Sudan and South Sudan with mandate until November 15, 2026. It does little to nothing to provide humanitarian aid to RSF controlled areas. There is also an independent FFM panel of experts, which was scheduled to report to OHCHR by the 23rd of February 2026. WFP tries to open aid corridors from Chad to Darfur, although little success is made. The conflict signifies total failure of international diplomacy and UNSC in particular. Given these circumstances and the scale the conflict reached, it is a duty of UNSC to discuss what is going on in Darfur and what can be done.





Factions

RSF (½) Ivan

New Sudan(¼) Tobias

During the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983 -2005) the SPLA/M was one of the key factions. After the Peace Agreement (2005) and the independence of South Sudan (2011) it became the official military and ruling party of South Sudan. Some parts of the organisation stayed in Sudan and became the SPLM-N (N for North).

The SPLM-N is smaller than SAF and RSF. During the current Civil War it has been fighting against the SAF. The SAF has been focused on fighting the RSF, which allowed the SPLM-N to win territory which they call New Sudan. The SPLM-N is one of the few rebel groups which claims to fight for a “Western-style Democracy” and wants for Sudan to become a secular state. New Sudan has a Constitution, a court of voluntary judges and schools which teach English.

Together with RSF it is part of the rival Government of Peace and Unity founded in 2025 and currently holds the position of the Vice-President of the Presidential Council.

Historical context

Background (1.5) Ivan, AvB

Sudan is home to one of the oldest civilisations on earth. This remarkably long and rich history created a cultural and ethnic diversity that has been used more than once as a tool of conquest through division by outside powers. The after effects shape the political landscape of the region to this day.

Much of Sudan's ancient history was shaped by the contrast between then Nubia and Egypt, with changing dynamics of domination and submission. In the first half of the first millennium this resulted in a wave of Christianisation emerging from koptic Egypt, which captured the whole region. From the 7th century onwards, Islam and Arabisation spread from now Arab-conquered Egypt as well as the coastal regions. This created the pattern still seen today: A north inhabited by ethnically more Arabic Muslims, and a smaller, ethnically Black South with strong Christian and tribalistic faiths.

Since independence was achieved from British-dominated Egypt in 1956, the modern nation state has been riddled with coups and quarrels over Islamic hegemony, communism and control over resources, which lead to dictatorships, civil wars and finally the secession of South Sudan in 2011. In the 21st century, both Sudan and South Sudan are considered failed states, with already weak institutions destroyed after continued power struggles and civil wars in both countries.





Omar Al-Bashir:

The background well predates current SLM faction, tracing as far as 1989 coup d'état, after which which Omar al-Bashir (former president) came into power and built a heavy suppressive government aparate, which allowed him to safeguard power for 30 years, until he was overthrown in 2019. During his reign is characterized with antagonising Sudan to the international community,



as he was systematically harboring terrorists and supporting Hussein, loss in Second South Sudan war, start of the conflict in Darfur (the Land Cruiser War), formation of Janjaweed led by Hemedti (current RSF). al-Bashir was systematically antagonising Black Sudanese, leading to the belief in Janjaweed that it is because of Black Sudanese they are losing the war against South Sudan, so it has started the original genocide, leading to the death of 300000 Black Sudanese.

In 2013, Janjaweed were reformed into RSF, placing them directly under the president. Al-Bashir called Hemedti, the leader of RSF, his personal protector. Afraid of the coup, he has been systematically weakening the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), which was met with outrage from SAF generals. Hemedti soon realized that the regime is doomed to fall, as a result of the prolonged economic decline and internal rivalry. In late 2018 the protests against al-Bashir ignited in Atbara, following the coup in April 2019 in Khartoum. Hemedti united with Awad Ibn Auf (Vice-President) and al-Burhan (back then Army's Inspector General of SAF) against al-Bashir. As a result, the Transitional Military Government was placed in charge with al-Buhran in charge. Then the Sovereignty Council was formed as a half-military, half-civilian government (Abdalla Hamdok).

2021 coup:

The Sovereignty Council was able to achieve many positive things for Sudan. Particularly, the country was removed from the Terrorist Supporters list and has received sizable international grants from many international players, including USA and the World Bank. They were even in negotiations to have their 50 billion debt forgiven, the country saw the stable economic growth and influx



of international investments (primarily in gold extraction). However, the military leaders did not want to hand over their personal control over state owned enterprises and fear of being persecuted





for the 2019 Khartoum Massacre led to the tensions between civilian and military halves of the government.

In 2020 there was an assassination attempt on Hamdok, presumably by the military, in September 2021 pro-Bashir loyalists attempted a coup against the government, which failed due to weak military and civilian support. However, it has shown to the military half of the government that the regime is weak and Burhan united again with Hemedti, now to seize power for themselves. On October 21st 2021 hundreds of thousands of Sudanese marched in demand to give power to the civilian half of the government. At Dawn the October 25st the RSF forces arrested the Prime Minister and several other cabinet members. Internet and phone lines were cut off, al-Burhan appeared on TV to declare a state of emergency. On October 26th, al Burhan was placed under house arrest, and on October 27th, African Union suspended Sudan's membership. In November al-Burhan appointed the new council, which excluded the civilian coalition. On November 21st, the military agreed to reinstate the technocratic Civilian cabinet as their puppet.

Course of war (1.5)

As mentioned before, there were 2 military branches in the Sudanese Army. SAF led by al-Burham and RSF led by Hemedti. Following the coup they had to share power between each other. SAF demanded RSF to be integrated into SAF within 2 years, however Hemedti demanded a 10 year integration period and wanted to report to the Civilian presidency, when fully reinstated. The prime minister resigned in January 2022, frozen international aid of 2 billion USD quickly soared the inflation beyond 400%. On that background, the resistance has continued with "Resistance Committees" organizing protests and demonstrations against the government. General al-Burhan announced that the military will withdraw from politics. However, this was a strategic move that SAF seems more favorable for the Sudanese civilians, which in practice never happened. Under heavy international pressure by the UAE, UK, USA and Saudi Arabia, on the 5th December 2022 the military signed the agreement which mandated full transition to the Civilian government.

Current situation

Political climate (1)

War Crimes (1)





Humanitarian Crisis (1) Alexandra

Under the clash between the RSF and the SAF the civilian population is suffering severely. Famines, lack of safe drinking water, disease outbreaks, a shortage of medical supplies, communications disruption, mass displacement and violence on the civilian population including sexual violence upon women and children are being exacerbated by lack of funding and disrupted supply routes.

While exact numbers are hard to get, as of February the UN is tracking five ongoing famines in Sudan, and another 5 are expected to break out by May 2026. Estimates put the total over 21 million people facing acute or worse food insecurity. Meanwhile access to clean drinking water is being hampered by active sieges of cities and strikes on civilian infrastructure. This water shortage has fueled the already precarious health crisis as Dengue, Malaria, Measles and Cholera outbreaks all over Sudan. Dengue and Cholera especially are having devastating effects with the former spreading through extensive mosquito breeding sites and the latter causing acute watery diarrhoea further straining the already dehydrated patients. The medical infrastructure is in near total disarray with 40% of healthcare facilities non-operational. Meanwhile medical supplies are being bogged down through disrupted supply chains and repeated attacks on health care facilities, workers and others. Sudan's telecommunications remains severely disrupted with both widespread damage to infrastructure, power outages and deliberate shutdowns by militant forces with many parts of the population having irregular or no access to information.

The ongoing conflict has forced many individuals to flee their homes. 3 million refugees and almost 9 million internally displaced making it difficult for humanitarian aid to reach those in need. Many of the displaced, whether they stay in Sudan or flee abroad, face reduced access to food and essential services. Furthermore, disease outbreaks are rampant in refugee camps. The surrounding nations absorbing the refugees are themselves among the poorest in the world and have limited, often already overstretched services.

Since the beginning of the conflict an estimated 18,800 civilians have been reportedly killed. Artillery, airstrikes and drone attacks pose a constant threat to both the native population and the aid workers, some of them also being the target of intimidation and violence. A UN fact finding mission has documented a large range of severe human rights violations by both the SAF and RSF. Most severely impacted are women and girls with reports of rape, forced marriage and abductions. Young boys as well are treated with great mistrust, often being accused of being spies.

Unfortunately, despite the severity of the situation, a lack of funds has severely limited the UN's ability to offer aid to the Sudanese population. So far less than the minimum of assistance needed is being provided by UNHCR and partners.





International players

RSF supporters (½) Tobias

Chad publicly denies supporting the RSF, but the RSF owns facilities in Chad including an airfield and a hospital. There are reports the United Arab Emirates supply the RSF with weapons through Chad. The RSF recruits young people from Chad.

Ethiopia supports the RSF at least diplomatically, mainly to oppose Egypt. They have hosted a peace initiative for Sudan from the UAE. Recently there have been reports of an RSF military training camp financed by the UAE.

There have been found ammunition crates from **Kenya** in an RSF depot. The Sudanese government accused Kenya of delivering weapons which Kenya denied.

The **United Arab Emirates** is the most important supporter of the RSF. They supply weapons, which they deny, and provide diplomatic support. In return, they receive access to resources such as gold in Sudan. Many Western governments have been criticized for supplying weapons to the UAE that often reappear in Sudan.

SAF supporters (½) Tobias

Egypt is one of the supporters of the SAF. The president of Egypt has a close relationship with the leader of the Sudanese government. It has supplied weapons and intelligence support. On the diplomatic side it started an initiative to resolve the conflicts between RSF and SAF but it was in the favor of SAF and had no success.

Eritrea is supporting the SAF with military help on the eastern border. It fears that the RSF might attack Eritrea and wants to prevent that.

Iran has resumed diplomatic relations with Sudan which puts them on the side of SAF. There has been a report that Iran has delivered drones to both sides of the conflict. The interpretation is that Iran tries to counter the influence of the UAE and secure access to the Red Sea.

The **Russian** Wagner Group seems to have supported the RSF with weapons and training. Both sides in the war seem to have supported Russia exporting gold to finance the war in the Ukraine. In 2024 the Wagner Group left Sudan. Later Russia started supplying the SAF with weapons which allowed them to recapture parts of the capital.

Saudi Arabia is supporting the SAF with weapons and money to counterbalance UAE influence, which supports the RAF.

Turkey is supporting the SAF by selling weapons to it, but there are also reports of connections to the RAF. Turkey's intention seems to be to increase its influence in the region.





Previous actions by the UNSC

Termination of UNITAMS (½)

Important resolutions (½) Levente

Due to the persistence of political instability in Sudan, which poses a constant security threat to the region, not to mention the terrible humanitarian situation, the UNSC has passed numerous resolutions about the situation in Sudan. Focusing on just the past 20 years, this included two UN missions. The first, the African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), was established in Security Council resolution 1769 (31 July 2007) and continued its operations until 31 December 2020. The core of its mandate was the protection of civilians, but it was also tasked with monitoring the situation and contributing to security, insofar as it was necessary to facilitate humanitarian assistance. The second mission, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), was established in Security Council resolution 2524 (3 June 2020) for an initial period of 12 months. Its objective was to support the Sudanese democratic transition, “progress towards democratic governance, in the protection and promotion of human rights and sustainable peace, as well as to support peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements, peacebuilding, civilian protection and rule of law, and the mobilization of economic and development assistance and coordination of humanitarian assistance.” UNITAMS’ mandate was extended in resolutions 2579 (2021), 2636 (2022), 2685 (2023), before being terminated in resolution 2715 (2023), with its operations set to wind down by March 2024. The same year (2024), the UNSC adopted 3 resolutions on the situation in Sudan. Resolution 2724 (8 March) called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Sudan during Ramadan, and warned the parties to seek a sustainable resolution to the conflict through dialogue. Resolution 2736 (13 June) demanded that the RSF halt the siege of El Fasher and called for an immediate halt to the fighting and de-escalation in and around El Fasher. Resolution 2750 (11 September) renewed sanctions on Sudan, including targeted sanctions (asset freezes, travel bans) and an arms embargo until 12 September 2025. The sanctions on Sudan were established in resolution 1591 (29 March 2005), which also set up a Panel of Experts (PoE) to assist the Sanctions Committee. The most recent UNSC resolution on the conflict is 2772 (17 February 2025), which extended the mandate of the PoE until 12 March 2026.

Panel of Experts (¼)





Potential blocks and positions

USA (¼) Levente

The US, encouraged by Saudi Arabia, is pushing for a ceasefire, engaging with both the SAF and the RSF. As of late 2025, it has been considering imposing wider sanctions on both of the warring factions, as well as those who circumvent the sanctions regime established in UNSC resolution 1591 (especially the arms embargo), such as the UAE. The US also has its own sanctions against Sudan, passed in 2024, after it suspected the use of chemical weapons by the RAF. In recent weeks, the country has greenlit 200 million dollars to the Sudan Humanitarian Fund. In January 2025, the US declared the actions of the RSF in Sudan a genocide.

UK (¼) Levente

The UK plays an active role in the de-escalation of the conflict and humanitarian efforts. The latter remains a top priority, with the country spending over 200 million British pounds on humanitarian aid, becoming Sudan's fourth largest donor. In December, it sanctioned some RSF commanders suspected of atrocities, including mass killings, sexual violence, and deliberate attacks on civilians in El-Fasher. This month (February), new sanctions were announced on 6 individuals, including senior commanders from both the RSF and the SAF. The UK Foreign Secretary fears that the RSF's advance on the city of El Obeid may lead to a repeat of El Fasher. In November, UK leadership at the UNHRC secured an international agreement to an urgent UN inquiry into crimes in El Fasher following its capture by the RSF. This month, it holds the presidency of the UNSC, using it to push for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. The country's diplomatic work extends to regional players in the African Union, and to negotiations with 'Quad' countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt) to push for a truce.

China (¼) Levente

China has a strong non-interference policy. It does call for the conflict parties to reach a peaceful solution, but opposes the economic sanctions championed by Western countries, such as the US. The Chinese position is primarily motivated by economic and political gains. China is one of Sudan's largest trading partners. The country accepts the CCP's One China principle, and it was one of the countries backing the Hong Kong national security law at the UN in 2020. Sudan, along with many countries in the Horn of Africa, is part of China's Belt and Road initiative. Port Sudan is a key hub for the program. The CCP supports humanitarian assistance but prioritizes regional stability to protect its economic interests. Chinese companies are eager to fill the gaps left by Western sanctions and embargoes without asking questions about human rights.

France (¼) Levente

France is pushing for a political, diplomatic solution to end the war. It supports sanctions together with its allies, the UK, the EU, and the US. They reminded the parties that they must respect international humanitarian law, which includes an obligation to allow and facilitate the rapid, safe, and unimpeded access of food, medicine, and other essential supplies to civilians in need. The country condemns the strikes on the trucks and warehouses of the World Food Programme, as well





as on health facilities. France condemned the RSF offensive in El Fasher and the atrocities committed over its course. They call on both parties to engage in direct negotiations urgently and in good faith in order to achieve a ceasefire.

Russia (1/4) Ivan

NP10 (3/4)

