

FORUM:	Security Council
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Introduction

Despite being home to the largest internal displacement crisis in the world, having over 18 million people facing hunger, and facing a potential genocide, the conflict in Sudan is largely unknown to much of the developed world and has even gained the title of “a forgotten war” as a result. Media coverage and foreign support have been minimal, and many of the most influential members of the Western world do not prioritize or express interest in innovating solutions to resolve the convoluted and catastrophic events unfolding in this war-ravaged country.

Sudan’s government and humanitarian situation have been defined by the country’s history of military coups, authoritarian leadership, and ethnic division. The two most recent coups, which occurred in 2019 and 2021, were both highly pivotal in shaping the political climate of today. The 2019 coup was carried out by two prominent military leaders, Abdul Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagalo, who at the time were leading two military groups that were under the control of President Omar al-Bashir. Initially, Burhan and Dagalo represented the hope of a brighter future for the country, making glittering promises of a civilian-led government and better opportunities for the individual. Two years later, however, their story changed dramatically, and they once again overthrew the newly-inducted prime minister in a coup.



Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagalo (left) with Abdul Fattah al-Burhan

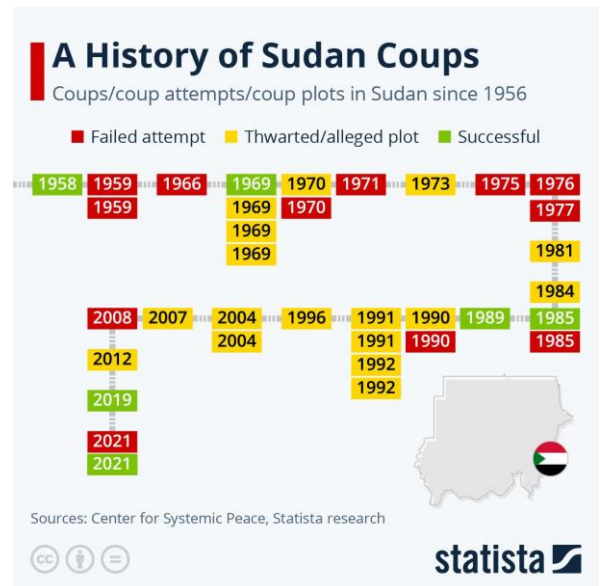
Since then, Sudan has descended into civil war and chaos. After the 2021 coup, the two leaders, instead of continuing their partnership and establishing a new form of government together, began to fight against one another in a bloody struggle for power. Today, the two military groups, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are locked in a deadly conflict and the Sudanese civilian population is caught in the crossfire. Consequently, a serious humanitarian crisis has

emerged in which the common people of Sudan struggle to meet their basic needs and the already underdeveloped Sudan continues to deteriorate.

Background

Sudan has a rich and fascinating history, but the events that are the most relevant to the current day situation took place in 1956, when Sudan declared independence from over half a century of joint British-Egyptian rule. The young country began with high hopes of self-rule, but its experiment with liberal democracy failed almost as quickly as it began. Although democracy was a widely popularized and highly held ideal, its nature as an imported Western form of government clashed with the deep-rooted cultural forces of the traditional Sudanese and after two years of experimentation, the country turned back to the familiarity of military rule and authoritarianism. The unstable and fragile nature of this transition stage was never fully resolved and since then, the political climate in Sudan has been volatile, with a political stability score of 5.2 out of 100 in 2022 and countless coup attempts, six of which have been successful.

In 1989, Omar al-Bashir and his Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCCNS) took advantage of the indecisive leadership and their many political failures to overthrow the government in a coup. Bashir disrupted the pattern of previous coup-susceptible leaders by strategically surrounding himself with protectors who would ensure that his time as a self-established president would remain uninterrupted by coups and other such plots. The first group he aligned himself with and supported heavily was the SAF. During his presidency, the SAF concentrated their efforts in the south of Sudan, where civil war was raging. Around the same time, a revolution began brewing in the western region called Darfur, which had been historically underrepresented and marginalized, likely due to its largely non-Arab population and Sudan's historically Arab-favoring government. Under Bashir's guidance, the government began partnering with Arab militias in the same region, who fought with the Darfur rebels and preserved Bashir's control of that region. These Arab militias would come to be known as the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF. During that time, an estimated 300,000 people were killed and thousands more were displaced or suffered other atrocities. In 2008, the International Criminal Court (ICC) accused Bashir of war crimes and genocide for the situation in Darfur, only to be quickly refuted

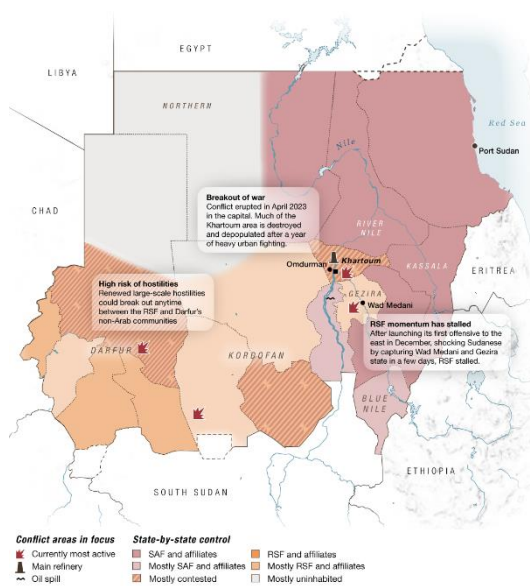


A look at coups in Sudan over the years

by the Sudanese government, who declared him to be innocent. Both the SAF and RSF carried out Bashir's bloody and brutal military decisions, all the while thriving off of the financial benefits and political influence he gave them. Meanwhile, the people of Sudan struggled to meet their daily needs amidst the flailing economic situation. The tipping point for the country came in 2018 when it was discovered that the majority of the country's budget was dedicated to the security sector. That year, Bashir also campaigned for a third term, a move that would violate the constitution, causing rifts in public opinion. In December of that year, protests against the food prices broke out. They were followed by protest after protest until eventually escalating into Sudan's largest revolution yet. The protests continued into April 2019 and ended only when the leaders of the RSF and SAF turned on their former benefactor and overthrew him in a coup.

In the aftermath, the leaders of the two groups, along with support from the international community, established a Transitional Military Council (TMC) that consisted of both military and civilian leaders. The talks and transition period lasted till late 2021, when another coup occurred in which the RSF and SAF overthrew the reform government, having been unable to compromise on a power-sharing agreement. Their disagreement led to the fighting between troops they had stationed all over the country. Estimates for the number of troops in the RSF and SAF are 100,000 and 200,000, respectively. The scope and range of both groups mean that the entire country suffers when mass fighting occurs between the two. The widespread violence creates a myriad of other issues and further exacerbates dozens of existing crises.

Problems Raised



Mapping the control of different military groups

Hindered Humanitarian Access

Sudan has the largest internally displaced persons crisis in the world, even larger than that of the war-torn Ukraine. According to United Nations (UN) reports, over 7 million people have been displaced in the country, while a million are refugees in bordering nations. These statistics represent two different issues: one national and one regional. The national problem in question is an overwhelmed public services sector, overcrowded internally displaced people (IDP) camps, and epidemic threats. National infrastructure has long been crumbling due to both RSF and SAF forces destroying and looting public facilities, which were already weak to begin

with. The regional problem is caused by the one million refugees in bordering nations, which include Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia—all countries that are suffering similar humanitarian crises. The significant refugee problem increases not only national instability but regional instability as well.

Another humanitarian issue that goes hand in hand with the refugee and IDP crisis is food insecurity. 75% of IDP households surveyed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) listed food access as their priority need. Additionally, the hunger crisis in Sudan is among the world’s most severe, with Sudan making it near the top of Action Against Hunger’s “World’s Hungriest Countries” list.

UN reports claim that over 20 million in Sudan are experiencing hunger, but despite the hundreds of damning reports, Sudan’s government fails to address or even acknowledge the issue, with the agricultural minister claiming that there is no famine or even an imminent famine in the country.



Suffering in Sudan’s IDP camps

Overall, the humanitarian access system in Sudan is severely crippled. Although weapons, troops, and mercenaries from other countries are able to filter through the border, the militias and army continue to hinder and disrupt humanitarian aid organizations from sending aid shipments into the country. Analysis provider ACAPS gave Sudan a score of 5 on their humanitarian access index, which is the worst score possible for that particular data set.

Proxy Wars

One complexity that makes the conflict in Sudan so distinct from other similar conflicts is the unique way it is intertwined with the international community. In other words, the nature of the Sudan conflict has many more global implications than we think. Credible reports and investigative journalism have discovered that several countries have been using the war-torn Sudan as a proxy battlefield. For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is one of the primary backers and arms providers for the RSF, while Egypt and Iran have been backing the SAF and providing it with weapons. Proxy wars hold a high risk of complicating the current situation further by involving the broader regional community and are slowly but surely escalating the conflict.

War Crimes and Genocide

The weapons utilized by the RSF and SAF are not limited to guns and planes. The two groups also use rape, intimidation, and arbitrary killings as weapons of war. Reports of women and girls being abducted and sexually abused are not uncommon, as are stories of homes and businesses being looted. Indeed, the violence has become so pervasive that many cannot find safety even in their own homes. Despite this, many are afraid to leave their homes, for fear of attacks on roads elsewhere. Hence, many Sudanese citizens are stuck with only two options: the bad one and the worse one.

Another heavily related and deeply concerning issue that stems from this one is the potential genocide in the Darfur region. Darfur has long been subject to marginalization and poor conditions in Sudan's history, but never to the extent that it has in the past year. Since the RSF is essentially an Arab mercenary group turned paramilitary group, hostile sentiment towards non-Arabs is prevalent among their troops, leading to the dehumanizing treatment and significant number of killings in the Darfur region, which is mainly populated by non-Arabs. In November 2023, over one hundred legal and political experts wrote an open letter expressing their concerns over an imminent genocide in the Darfur region. Since then, the region has continued to deteriorate and a full-scale genocide in the near future is more than possible.



Rapid Support Forces in Sudan

International Actions

Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024

In 2024, the UN along with many of its sub-bodies and over 70 organizations, including World Relief (WR), African Relief Committee (ARC), and International Rescue Committee (IRC), set up a joint humanitarian response plan that targeted different aid sectors in Sudan, such as food security, health, and education. Despite their valiant efforts, funding has only reached about 30% as of July 2024, and humanitarian aid has become increasingly difficult to administer in Sudan, what with the aid-blocking efforts of the RSF and the SAF.

Ceasefire Talks in August

It was announced on July 26, 2024, that the leader of the RSF had agreed to attend ceasefire talks in Switzerland along with the United States of America, the African Union (AU), Egypt, and the UAE. However, it is yet uncertain whether the SAF plans on also joining the talks, and the hopes for success at the meeting are dim, seeing as previous ceasefire talks have proved unsuccessful. Even when ceasefire talks have been agreed upon in the past, they have quickly been broken by both of the armed groups.



Previous Sudanese talks with the UN and AU

Key Players

African Union (AU)

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU has reiterated its support for Sudan consistently and fervently, condemning the armed and violent actors in the country and contributing large amounts of humanitarian aid to the country. In June 2019, the PSC drafted a resolution that clarified the AU's concern for the human rights situation in Sudan and reiterated their solidarity with the nation at large. Despite their verbal support for the country, however, the AU has failed to publicly declare a comprehensive plan to either help Sudan or address the conflict there. Like they have in past years, the AU has shown their willingness to remain passive and play second fiddle to the USA and UN.

United States of America (USA)

The USA is the largest provider of aid to Sudan, having provided over one billion in aid over the last year. The US has also expressed interest in mediating peace talks between the Sudanese parties involved and was previously a major player in constructing the transitional military council in 2019. Nevertheless, many Sudanese people view US involvement with suspicion and distaste, particularly because of their failures relating to the 2019 TMC. Many experts agree that if Sudan were to build a democracy in the future, it should not be US-based, but rather it should center on the unique needs of the Sudanese people.

Possible Solutions

Facilitating Effective Negotiations

Despite the failures of the international community in this area previously, there is still a chance that third-party-mediated peace talks have a chance at working. The key in considering facilitating negotiations by a third party lies in ensuring that every relevant party is present, that the Sudanese voice is preserved, and that any attempts at the creation of a new form of government are made in collaboration with Sudan. Although the RSF and SAF may seem like the bad guys in this situation, the UN should continue their commitment to democracy and approach conversations with the two groups with a level head and open mind.

Peacekeeping

Since the Sudan conflict is barely a year old, the UN has not sent a peacekeeping force there



UN Peacekeeping troops

before. The situation is a bit unique in that the conflict is a civil war between a military group and a paramilitary group as opposed to a war between nations or non-military groups, so the UN must remain aware of the complexities of the crisis and consider carefully where they ultimately put their support. As a third party, the UN should also focus more on humanitarian aid rather than manipulating the situation in the country a certain way. In other words, UN peacekeeping troops should

focus on protecting civilians from danger and improving the security conditions for individuals and households.

Glossary

Authoritarianism

Submission to authority and the strong central power at the expense of political plurality.

Coup

An attempt to unlawfully overthrow the government.

Genocide

The deliberate and mass killing of people within a specific demographic, including regional, national, or racial.

Liberal democracy

Alternatively called Western democracy, liberal democracy is a representative democracy with limited governmental power that emphasizes pluralism and toleration.

Proxy war

A war involving a certain country where that country does not become directly involved.

Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

A paramilitary group formerly known as the Janjaweed, it consists of skilled, largely Arab killers and fighters and is led by Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagalo.

Reform government

A reform government is a newly instituted government that hopes to bring change and improvement to the political system of the country at large.

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

The official army of Sudan with approximately 200,000 fighters is led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan

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