



Sudan's War: Is there a solution?

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African Security Sector Network (ASSN)

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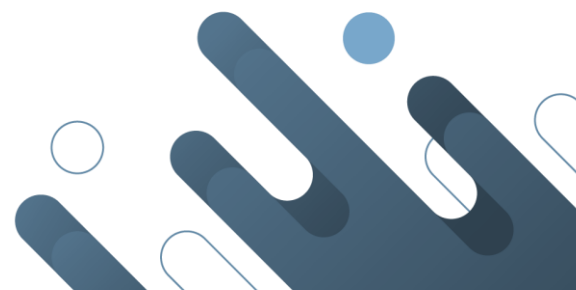
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Table des matières

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
MESSY WAR	5
1. A LONG HISTORY OF A POLITICIZED AND OPPRESSIVE ARMY	6
2. AVOIDING PROSECUTION.....	6
3. A FRAGMENTED CIVILIAN FORCE	7
4. PROLIFERATION OF PRO-RSF AND PRO-SAF MILITIAS	8
IGNORED WAR	11
OUTSIDE PLAYERS	14
A CHALLENGING PEACE	19
CONCLUSION	21
APPENDIX	22



Abbreviations and acronyms

AU	: The African Union
FFC	: The Forces for Freedom and Change
ICC	: The International Criminal Court
JEM	: The Justice and Equality Movement
PSC	: The Peace and Security Council
RSF	: The Rapid Support Forces
SAF	: The Sudan Armed Forces
SLM-MM	: The Sudan Liberation Movement
Tagadom	: The Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces
SPA	: The Sudanese Professionals Association
UAE	: The United Arab Emirates
UA	: The United Nations
UNITAMS	: The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan
US	: The United States

Introduction

The war between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary unit that grew out of the Janjaweed militias, has been described by the United Nations (UN) and the U.S. administration as genocidal and constituting crimes against humanity. Yet, it does not receive the coverage it deserves. Neither ideological nor simply a conflict between two generals¹, the causes of Sudan's war lack consensus. However, the real reasons may lie deeper in Sudan's long history of successive kleptocratic and authoritarian military regimes.

Sudan's war cannot end while both the SAF and the RSF expect to win the fight and are not inclined to make what they view as concessions. Each side believes that its advances on the ground give it leverage and enhance its position in future negotiations. To continue their fight, they rely on external support in the form of weapons, equipment, money, and advisors². Complex conflicts are harder to resolve; consequently, Sudan's war may last a long time due to its complexity, invisibility to the international community, and foreign interference.

The ambiguous roles of the U.S. administration and its allies in the Gulf and Africa, as well as the role of the UN, add to the complexity and contribute to the prolongation of the war. General Abdelfattah Al-Burhan administers the country and the war from the coastal city of Port Sudan. At the same time, Mohamed Hamadan Dagalo, known as "Hemedti," is absent from the battleground and has unknown whereabouts. Most civilian leaders have left the country and are more fragmented than ever. International diplomacy aimed at stopping the conflict is at a standstill. This gloomy situation gives every Sudanese a good reason to ask: Is there a solution?

Messy war

Sudan's war isn't a simple two-sided affair between SAF and RSF. It's a complicated regional, ethnic, and political internal power struggle intermingled with foreign interference. The geographic area of conflict is vast, allowing for the proliferation of all sorts of criminalities. Sudan stretches over 1,861,484 square kilometers. It has long porous borders with Egypt, Chad, Libya, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan, making it difficult to control. But beyond these broad factors lies other fundamental factors:

1. A long history of a politicized and oppressive army.
2. Avoiding prosecution.
3. A fragmented civilian force.
4. Proliferation of pro-RSF and pro-SAF militias.

¹ The term "war of two generals" is widely used. However, it is well known that Hemedti has never set foot in a military academy, and he earned his military ranks from the killings committed in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan.

² "Smoking gun' evidence points to UAE involvement in Sudan civil war", The Guardian, 25 July 2024.

1. A long history of a politicized and oppressive army

Since Sudan's independence in 1956, the military has dominated politics, with only ten years governed by elected civilian governments³. Colonel Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri, who seized power in 1969 with the help of socialist and communist Sudanese military officers⁴, was the first to indoctrinate army officers to defend his regime. This became more evident when General Omar Hassan al-Bashir seized power in 1989 with the help of the National Islamic Front led by Hassan al-Turabi. Al-Bashir transformed the SAF into an instrument of the Islamic regime. Moreover, military businesses gave the SAF the upper hand over the country's resources.

Because of Sudan's large area, both the military and civilian governments have used regional or tribal paramilitary militias to repress insurgencies throughout its history. However, al-Bashir was the first to institutionalize ethnically based militias. In 2013, he transformed the Janjaweed into the RSF and officially recognized it as a military force through the Rapid Support Forces Act of 2017. Wars waged by the SAF and associated militias in western and southeastern Sudan created a collective sense of injustice among the inhabitants of these regions. This has led to deep rifts in Sudanese society based on regional and ethnic grounds. The elites of central Sudan are accused of grabbing power and wealth while neglecting the peripheries, a situation that has boosted the proliferation of armed groups and militias that believe in conquering power with arms.

Although they have different backgrounds, al-Burhan and Hemedti are part of Sudan's armed forces' violent history. Both fight to perpetuate military, political, and economic dominance. However, the SAF and RSF aren't comparable in any way: the SAF, despite its oppressive history, is a national army representing an institution and the country's sovereignty, whereas the RSF is a tribal and mercenary militia controlled by the Dagalo family.

2. Avoiding prosecution

Sudan has an awful record of impunity. Previously wanted persons by the International Criminal Court (ICC) (Table 1 appendix) have never been held accountable for their crimes in Darfur. The Sudanese transitional authority jailed them in 2019, but it failed to hand them over to the ICC. Now, they have vanished, and no one knows their whereabouts. Today, al-Burhan and Hemedti seek a role in any future deal to protect themselves from prosecution. They seek a way out of accountability, as their past cronies have done: war could be that option.

Al-Burhan and Hemedti share a common concern: they fear prosecution for their past and ongoing crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes. Losing power means losing immunity. Therefore, they will continue fighting no matter the consequences unless a favorable deal is worked out for them. Hemedti and the RSF militia have a history filled with genocide and crimes against humanity, dating back to 2003. The SAF is no less encumbered. After the fall of al-Bashir, both al-Burhan and Hemedti

³ Sudan holds the record for having the highest number of coups d'état in Africa. The [Frequency of Coup Events from 1945 to 2023, by Country](#).

⁴ A group called itself the "Free Officers", they defined their cause as Arab nationalism and revolutionary socialism patterned after the ideology of President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt.

portrayed themselves as the men who stood beside the people in their aspirations for democracy. In the euphoria of the revolution, they were allowed to get away with their past war crimes. Worse, after the massacre of peaceful protesters at the sit-in outside the military headquarters in Khartoum on June 3, 2019, the civilian forces signed the power-sharing declaration with the perpetrators without taking a firm stand for accountability and justice. After that, Hemedti made every effort to present himself as the voice of reconciliation but never succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the people.

Since the Civil War began on April 15, 2023, the RSF has resumed its ruthless conduct. Khartoum, el-Geneina, el-Fasher, Nyala, Wad Medani, Sinja, and other cities have turned into battlefields; they have been besieged, bombed, struck by rockets, and heavily looted, causing massive killings, population displacement, and damage to infrastructure as well as public and private utilities. Hospitals are mainly targeted and destroyed. The latest massacres of civilians by the RSF in Gezira state are adding to their widespread campaign of ethnic cleansing in Darfur, targeting non-Arab groups such as the Masalit, Fur, and Zaghawa. The RSF atrocities caused at least 15,000 deaths in el-Geneina alone⁵, about 4,000 in el-Fasher, and hundreds in Gazira State. On the other side, the SAF made fatal air strikes in Khartoum and Darfur. In 2023, there were more than 100 deaths in Khartoum and about 50 in Nyala⁶; meanwhile, in May 2024, there were about 57 deaths⁷. Considered responsible for the indiscriminate aerial bombing of densely populated residential areas since the beginning of the conflict, the European Union imposed sanctions in June 2024 on Mirghani Idriss Suleiman, the Director General of the Defense Industry System (DIS), and El Tahir Mohamed El Awad El Amin, the Commander of the Sudanese Air Force⁸. In the EU council's decision, three members of the RSF were also sanctioned. Although the atrocities and genocidal killings committed by the RSF far exceed the fatalities caused by SAF's airstrikes, the U.S. and EU sanctions are systematically applied in a balanced manner between the two warring parties.

3. A fragmented civilian force

During the thirty years of the al-Bashir regime, the political parties experienced serious rifts, including divisions within the Islamic Front itself. However, according to Dr. Al-Wathiq Kamir, the divisions among political forces after the December Revolution of 2018 are unprecedented in Sudan's political history⁹. Today, civilian forces are plagued by internal divisions within each political formation and a lack of consensus. On top of that, numerous scattered civil coalitions have formed based on support for or against the war, as well as on those siding with the SAF or the RSF. Moreover, the co-option of civilian forces by regional and international powers further weakens them.

The Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), formed on January 1, 2019, have revived hopes for a united and influential political force to lead the transitional period after al-Bashir's deposition. It was a broad

⁵ “Full Text: UN Panel of Experts Report on Sudan”, Sudan war monitor, 23 January 2024.

⁶ “Sudan's armed forces fails to protect civilians during air raids”, Aljazeera, 13 September 2023.

⁷ “The Sudanese army intensifies its air strikes.. (57) civilians were killed within a week”, Ayin Network, 14 May 2024.

⁸ “Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1784” Official Journal of the European Union, 24 June 2024.

⁹ Dr. Alwathiq Kamir is a Sudanese academic and activist. “Unity of the Unionist: unfinished business”, Sudan Tribune, 24 September 2022.

coalition led by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) and included political parties, civil society organizations, and rebel armed groups. However, the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) quickly succumbed to internal divisions that significantly weakened the civilian stance in the face of an emboldened military.

With the onset of the war, the Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Tagadom) was established and led by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Although it seeks to rally as many civilians as possible, Tagadom already shows signs of division due to its alleged support for the RSF¹⁰ and its refusal to acknowledge the role of the The United Arab Emirates (UAE) in arming the RSF. Moreover, Abdalla Hamdok's image has been tarnished in the eyes of many Sudanese, first when he signed a deal with the putschists in November 2021 and now for praising the UAE¹¹ despite its confirmed role in supporting the RSF. So far, Tagadom has not succeeded in garnering all the political parties; on the contrary, some parties have become even more divided because of it. For example, the Umma party, the largest political organization in the country, which has experienced seven significant splits in the past, now faces further divisions over whether to stand beside the SAF or join Tagadom.

4. Proliferation of pro-RSF and pro-SAF militias

Before the eruption of war, Sudan was already rife with militias and arms. Mercenaries and Arab militias from Chad and the Sahel joined the RSF and settled in Sudan before the war. Back in 2015, Hemedti recruited fighters from Chad, Niger, Mali, northern Nigeria, and southern Libya for the war in Yemen. Most of these mercenary fighters reportedly continued to work with the RSF and remained in Sudan after the April 2019 revolution. Another source of mercenaries comes from the artisanal gold mining controlled by the Dagalo family in Darfur, which has brought in many immigrants and has become a hotbed for recruiting mercenaries. The presence of these mercenaries is mainly conveyed through numerous video clips circulating on social media platforms. Additionally, the Sudanese army announced in April 2024 the arrest of mercenaries from Chad and South Sudan within the RSF in the city of Omdurman. The former head of the The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) mission in Sudan, Volker Perthes, stated, *“Fortune seekers or mercenaries from the Sahel states like Mali, Chad, and Niger are coming to support the RSF in Sudan. Their number is not insignificant”*¹².

The proliferation of militias is further exacerbated by the repeated divisions within the militias and armed rebel movements, as well as the return of Sudanese mercenary militias that fought in Libya.

The RSF's militias and warlords

RSF has been joined by several militias from Darfur, Gazira, White Nile, and Blue Nile states, as well as many militias and warlords who have returned from Libya. Additionally, some defecting factions of

¹⁰ Al-Hadi Idris Yahya, Vice President of Tagadom, is also the Head of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, a Darfuri rebel movement that claims to be neutral but is actually supporting the RSF in the el-Fasher battle.

¹¹ In an interview with the UAE state-controlled National News, Hamdok describes the UAE as a force for good in Sudan. [“Hamdok warns more people could die from 'starvation than bullets' in Sudan”](#), The National News, 26 June 2024.

¹² [“UN warns of deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sudan”](#), DW, 5 May 2023.

the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Finance Minister Jibril Ibrahim, and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-MM), headed by the Governor of the Darfur region, Minni Arki Minawi, have joined the RSF. Curiously, non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur, particularly the Tama and Fallata, are also fighting alongside the RSF.

Table 1. Main militias fighting beside the RSF

Name	Commander	Origin
Third Tamazju Front	Ahmed Mohamed Goja	It's reported that the militia was created by Hemedti in west Darfur and imposed it at the Juba Peace negotiation. The movement is a signatory to Juba Agreement. Goja was reported to work on behalf of the al-Bashir former regime for Chadian opposition group.
Braves of Kordofan	Jalha Rahamtalla Mahdi	The militia was declared an armed movement in 2020 demanding social justice. Jalha belongs to the Massirya (an arab tribe of Kordofan). He was fighting in Libya. He was filmed thanking a Libyan commander Hassan Matouq al-Zadma for his collaboration. In another video the RSF announced his return from Libya ¹³ . He joined the RSF in September 2023 although he claims to be the Rapid Intervention and not the RSF. He claims to have 32 thousand fighters.
Sudan Shield Forces	Abu Aqla Mohamed Ahmed Keikel	The force was formed in December 2022. Keikel is a retired army officer who is considered one of the Islamists. He participated in the war against the armed movements in the Blue Nile state during the former regime of al-Bashir. It reported that he was the link for supplying weapons to the allies of the al-Bashir regime in neighboring countries. At the beginning of the war, the militia stood beside the SAF, but it changed positions and joined the RSF in August 2023 ¹⁴ . He rejoined the SAF in October 2024.
Sudan Revolutionary Forces Movement	Ali Rizkallah, "al-Safna"	Al-Safna joined the Sudan Liberation Movement for Justice led by Ali Karbino in 2005, then defected in 2013 and joined SAF as part of the security arrangements of the Doha agreement. He joined the Revolutionary Awakening Council led by Sheikh Musa Hilal and was arrested by the RSF in 2017. He was released in 2021. He joined the RSF after the outbreak of war.

¹³ [Jalha arriving from Libya](#).

¹⁴ "A prominent Islamic leader defects and joins the Rapid Support Forces", Sudan war monitor, 8 August 2023

Militia in Central Darfur state	Ali Yacoub Jibril	<p>Ali Yacoub was related to Hemedti, he reported to move from Chad to Darfur in the eighties. He worked at the beginning of his life as a cattle herder, then joined an armed militia in Central Darfur. He joined the RSF and became commander of the Central Darfur sector¹⁵. It was reported that he fought in Libya.</p> <p>He was sanctioned by The US Treasury Department on 15 May 2024 for his brutal attacks in Darfur North¹⁶. He led the operation to control El Fasher since April 2024.</p> <p>He was killed in el-Fasher on 14 June 2024.</p>
Descendants of the Blue Sultanate	al-Obaid Mohamed Suleiman Abu Shotal	<p>Abu Shotal is a mek (king) of the Hamaj or Funj tribe in the Blue Nile region.</p> <p>He was a soldier in the Sudan People’s Liberation Army under the leadership of Malik Agar. He became a colonel before breaking up with the SPLM to become a leader of al-Bashir’s Islamist party, the National Congress Party, in Blue Nile State. He allied with the RSF following the signature of the Juba Peace agreement, contesting the choice of Malik Agar to represent the Blue Nile state at the sovereign council.</p>
Ghadhiboon (angry) Without Borders		<p>It is a defection from the resistance committees. The resistance committees have been co-opted by both the SAF and the RSF. Ghadiboon has been divided into three groups: one joined the SAF, another joined the RSF, and a third remained neutral and unsupportive of war in general.</p>

Source: compiled by the author

SAF allies

SAF has allied with former Darfur rebel movements. Since November 2023, JEM and SLM-MM have fought alongside SAF, particularly in el-Fasher. SAF has also formed military groups (katibas) and self-defense volunteer units. Some of these katibas existed at the time of the former Islamist regime but were disbanded after the fall of al-Bashir. Additionally, some of the resistance committees that were essential in the deposition of al-Bashir joined the army’s mobilization camps. However, these camps are portrayed as elements of the former regime because some of them are led by former Islamist figures such as Naji Mustafa and Naji Abdalla. The army tries to show that the people’s resistance groups and brigades are not politicized and are armed according to a strictly controlled process. To avoid the exploitation of these camps by any political group, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Shams al-Din Kabbashi, instructed the supervisors of the camps “*not to allow any political organization to control those camps*”¹⁷.

¹⁵ “[A big blow... Who is Ali Yacoub Jibril?](#)”, al-Hurra, 14 June 2024.

¹⁶ [Treasury Sanctions Sudanese Rapid Support Forces Commanders Expanding War](#).

¹⁷ “[Did the Sudanese army turn against Al-Baraa bin Malik?](#)”, al-Hurra, 17 April 2024.

Table 2. Main SAF's allied groups

Name	Commander	Origin
Al-Baraa bin Malik	Al-Misbah Abu Zaid	It is the most well-known militia affiliated with the SAF. Due to its close link to the former regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, it sparks widespread controversy.
Al-Bunyan Al-Marsous		It is one of the largest battalions in the former Popular Defense Forces and includes members of the former National Security and Intelligence Service. It fights alongside the army forces in Khartoum.
Ghadhiboon (angry) Without Borders		It is a defection from the resistance committees. Its members are trained in various army units, particularly the Armoured Corps, Corps of Engineers, and the Air Force camp.
Al-Matmoura		A katiba formed in Gedaref State, eastern Sudan.

Source: compiled by the author

Ignored war

The reaction to Sudan's war has been negligible in terms of international political responses, media coverage, and humanitarian aid donations. The U.S. and the UN have been slow to appoint a dedicated Special Envoy to Sudan. The Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra, was appointed only at the end of November 2023, while the U.S. envoy, Tom Perriello, was appointed in February 2024. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) could convene a meeting on Sudan at the heads of state and government level only a month after the war began¹⁸. Despite the brutality of war, the high risk of regional implosion, and the proliferation of militias and jihadists, why this neglect? Both internal and external factors may provide an explanation.

Internally, civilians' inability to unite and speak with one voice has weakened their position and visibility, exacerbating the confusion surrounding the causes of the conflict. Is it a war between a general and a warlord? Is it an intra-military conflict? Is it a war waged by elements of the former Muslim Brotherhood regime? Or is it a conflict caused by external meddlers? Another internal factor is the lack of adequate communication. Sudanese and international media have a limited presence on the ground. While some media outlets left Sudan for security reasons, others were asked to leave. In April 2024, the Sudanese authorities suspended three Arab satellite channels due to their lack of transparency and unprofessional reporting practices¹⁹. With the outbreak of the war, more than forty newspapers, radio stations, and television channels ceased operating²⁰, which allowed social media to

¹⁸ The meeting was convened on 27 May 2023.

¹⁹ "Sudan suspends Arab Satellite Channels for lack of transparency and expired licenses", Sudan Tribune, 2 April 2024.

²⁰ "Hate speech and racism in Sudanese media", Aljazeera media institute, 2 March 2024.

become a significant source of news and information, opening the door to disinformation, labeling, and defamation.

Externally, the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have drawn significant global attention. The few resources deployed, the number of high-level political statements, and media reporting reveal how marginal the war in Sudan is. Data provided by the Economist shows that in 2024, news coverage of Sudan averaged 600 monthly stories compared to 100,000 stories for the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine²¹. Another data provided by Foreign Policy magazine says, *“President Joe Biden tweeted about Israel or Gaza at least 107 times in the six months since the 7 October 2023. Since the war in Sudan, he has tweeted about Sudan four times—three of which were about the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum right after fighting broke out”*²².

Moreover, there is global fatigue regarding African conflicts, a trend recently observed during the two-year conflict in the Tigray region (2020-2022), which claimed thousands of lives yet has largely been ignored. Sudan’s war is no exception. Sudan endured the longest civil war in Africa. No wonder the current war has triggered fatigue not only among the international community but also among Sudan’s diaspora, which has been a powerful force for mobilizing support to topple al-Bashir’s regime in 2019. Today, the diaspora struggles to unite efforts and lobby public opinion in their host countries to help victims and end the war.

Nevertheless, ignoring the war in Sudan comes with high costs, including an intensified humanitarian crisis and the potential for regional destabilization.

Due to the invisibility of Sudan’s war, humanitarian donations have become meager. The UN humanitarian appeal for Sudan is struggling to raise the targeted funds. Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, admits that the UN has failed to protect and aid: *“It’s very, very difficult to get attention to Sudan, which, in my view, is a place of as great a suffering as anywhere in the world”*²³. However, seven months after the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan, held in Paris on 15 April 2024, where thirty-three countries committed to 2.2 billion dollars in aid²⁴, the Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 has received only half of the required aid so far²⁵.

Out of sight, the belligerents freely expand the bloodshed, committing horrific crimes. Thousands of civilians are killed, millions are uprooted, infrastructure is ruined, and the humanitarian and security situations continue to deteriorate. The Sudanese economy is in ruins, making the country poorer. The industry has been wiped out in conflict areas, and the agricultural sector has been heavily impacted. Mining and farming exports have plunged significantly. All of this has caused the GDP to fall by 12 percent in 2023. The Sudanese pound depreciated by 246 percent, continuing to fall against the U.S.

²¹ “Sudan: the war the world forgot”, The Economist, 24 May 2024.

²² “Why Is the World Ignoring a Looming Genocide in Sudan?”, Foreign Policy, 28 May 2024.

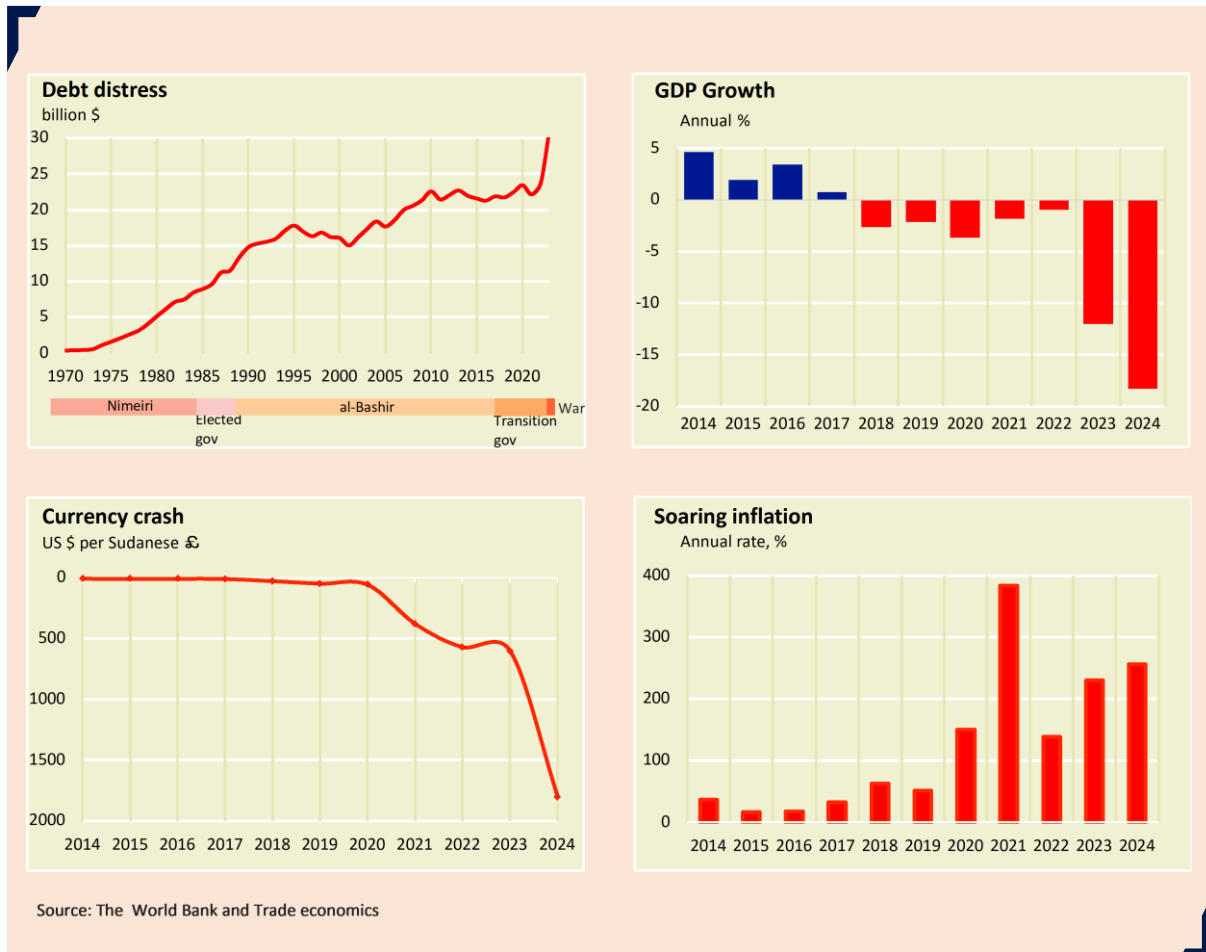
²³ “UN relief chief tells media “Very, very difficult to get attention to Sudan”, OCHA, 7 February 2024.

²⁴ International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and its Neighbours in Paris, [Financial announcement](#).

²⁵ [Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024](#) required 2.7 billion US\$ for humanitarian aid, but only 441.4 million US\$ were received as of 31 May 2024.

dollar²⁶ while the currency’s black market thrives²⁷. Incomes have declined or vanished, plunging over two million people into poverty, and food insecurity is on the rise.

Graph 1. Sudan’s shrinking economy



Sudan’s war also poses regional security risks and threats of implosion. In its 2750 (2024) resolution, the UN Security Council stated, “*Determining that the situation in Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region*”. In a region awash in arms and militias, this sends a clear message about the gravity of the situation. However, the UN Security Council issued four resolutions in 2024 regarding the situation in Sudan²⁸, but none have been respected. Worse, weapons and ammunition flow into Darfur in flagrant violation of the Darfur arms embargo resolution, which was renewed in September 2024. Despite the overwhelming evidence of arms inflow, the UN Council has applied no sanctions against the belligerents or their arms suppliers.

²⁶ At the beginning of the war, the dollar's price was about 560 Sudanese pounds to reach 1940 on 29 June 2024.

²⁷ A full floating policy of the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound against the US dollar was adopted in march 2022.

²⁸ Resolution 2750, adopted by the Security Council at its 9721st meeting on 11 September 2024. Resolutions 2736, adopted by the Security Council at its 9655th meeting on 13 June 2024. Resolution 2725, adopted by the Security Council at its 9569th meeting on 8 March 2024. Resolution 2724, adopted by the Security Council at its 9568th meeting on 8 March 2024.

The lack of high-profile, coordinated peace initiatives hinders the achievement of at least a cessation of hostilities. Sudan borders seven fragile countries, and the conflict threatens to spill over their borders, fueling regional rivalries and burdening their vulnerable economies with a large flow of refugees. Sudan already has long-standing disputes with Ethiopia over the Al Fashqa triangle, which is fertile farmland; with Egypt over the Halaib triangle, a mineral resource-rich area; with South Sudan over the oil-rich Abyei area; and with Chad over the mutual support of opposition groups. On the Red Sea side, Sudan's war may risk depressing the volume of trade passing through the Suez Canal and raising international tensions over this vital waterway, which is already disrupted by the conflict in Yemen.

Outside players

The Sudan conflict has attracted a tangled host of outside foreign players. It raises the question of why they care and what they aim to gain. Foreign involvement in Sudan could be motivated by the strategic importance of the Red Sea, economic interests, or power dynamics. Each country, however, has its own interests and approaches. Some claim to be neutral (the U.S. and Saudi Arabia); others are SAF supporters (Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and Algeria) or RSF backers (mainly the UAE). China remains silent, adopting a discreet stance. Since the independence of South Sudan in 2011, where oil reserves lie, China's stake in Sudan has decreased significantly. Sudan was among the first African countries to join the "Belt and Road" initiative in Africa and was once seen as playing a pivotal role, overlooking the Red Sea and serving as an entry point to other parts of Africa.

The U.S.

Sudan is not important enough for the U.S. to merit attention—if not for Sudan's rapprochement with Russia and Iran. As mentioned above, Tom Perriello, the U.S. special envoy to Sudan, was appointed ten months after the eruption of war. Worse, he visited several countries except Sudan. Since the beginning of the war, the U.S. has imposed nine sanctions on persons or entities considered to undermine peace and security²⁹. However, the U.S. increasingly relies on its Middle Eastern allies (Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia) to manage the crisis in the region. Questions have been raised about whether the next Republican administration will pay direct attention to Sudan or continue to delegate regional issues, such as the Sudan file, to its allies. However, the size of U.S. economic interests in the Gulf countries is incomparable to its meager interests in Sudan; this may explain U.S. silence regarding the UAE's role in arming the RSF and why President Biden casually discussed Sudan during a meeting with Mohamed bin Zayed on September 23, 2024³⁰. In the past, the U.S. has sanctioned Sudan's Muslim Brotherhood regime for many years, and it may now fear its return to power. However, members of the two main Islamist parties, the National Congress Party and the People's Congress Party, are divided and co-opted by the two warring factions. A significant concern for the U.S. is the possible establishment of a Russian or Iranian naval logistics facility on the Red Sea, along with the presence of the Wagner Group in the country. The U.S. has initiated peace negotiations with the Saudis in Jeddah and Geneva, but neither initiative has halted the hostilities.

²⁹ "[Sudan Sanctions](#)", U.S. Department of State.

³⁰ The two countries signed the strategic and defense partnership. "[U.S.-UAE Joint Leaders' Statement Dynamic Strategic Partners](#)". The White House, 23 September 2024.

Russia

Russia's presence in the Red Sea could shake the balance of power in the region. However, Russia's involvement in Sudan is ambiguous and two-faced. Isolated by the ICC warrant, former President al-Bashir initiated a closer relationship with Russia and the Wagner Group. In 2017, he invited Vladimir Putin to build a naval base at Port Sudan³¹ to protect the country from U.S. aggression³². Al-Bashir reopened the country to Russian weapons imports and granted the Wagner Group gold mining concessions. Reportedly, up to 85% of Sudan's gold is thought to be sold off the books to the UAE and Russia³³. After the fall of al-Bashir's regime, the Wagner Group became increasingly involved alongside the RSF, providing military assistance, political advisors, and social media campaigns. The war has deepened their collaboration, as the Wagner Group continues to supply arms to the RSF in return for gold. On the other hand, the Kremlin has approached Sudan's government in Port Sudan by recognizing the Sovereignty Council of Sudan as the representative of the Sudanese people. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov visited Port Sudan on April 29, 2024, and provided military and economic assistance³⁴. In May 2014, General Yasser al-Atta, second-in-command of the SAF, stated in a TV interview that Russia requested a fueling station on the Red Sea in exchange for cooperation programs in security and military fields, as well as in agriculture and mining. Although no agreement for such a naval station has been signed, subsequent visits to Port Sudan were made first by members of Russia's Central Bank and then by Viktor Chimodanov, the chairman of the Russian-Sudanese Business Council. The talks included a proposal to use local currencies to settle bilateral trade and fund joint investments in the mining sector, particularly in gold³⁵. It is worth noting that, although Sudan is among the important African arms buyers from Russia, the economic exchange between the two countries is minimal. Russia has also voted in favor of the U.S. proposal to the UN Security Council to sanction two RSF commanders³⁶. However, this move is still marred by ambiguity as Russia is the only country that abstained from voting on the UN Security Council resolution calling for the RSF to end its siege on El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State³⁷. During Bogdanov's visit, the Russians reportedly revisited the issue of constructing a naval base in Sudan. A naval base on the Red Sea coast would provide Russia with crucial geopolitical positioning in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. Also, the Russian delegation inquired about the SAF's collaboration with Ukrainian special forces³⁸. Ukrainian special forces reportedly operate in Sudan alongside the SAF to combat Wagner mercenaries aligned with the RSF³⁹. Other aspects of Russia's rapprochement could include arms sales and aligning Russian policy with Iran's, which supports the SAF.

³¹ The agreement between Russia and Sudan on establishing a logistics centre for the Russian Navy in Sudan was signed in Khartoum on July 23, 2019, and in Moscow on December 1, 2020.

³² Al-Bashir during his meeting with Putin in Sochi, November 2017 reported saying "We are thankful to Russia for its position on the international arena, including Russia's position in the protection of Sudan. We need protection from the aggressive acts of the United States".

³³ Russia is plundering gold in Sudan to boost Putin's war effort in Ukraine", CNN, 29 July 2022.

³⁴ Russia offers 'uncapped' military aid to Sudan", Sudan Tribune, 30 April 2024.

³⁵ Sudan, Russia discuss development of mining cooperation", Sudan Tribune, 17 September 2024.

³⁶ Security Council 1591 Sanctions Committee Adds Two Entries to Its Sanctions List", UN press, 8 November 2024.

³⁷ Resolution 2736, adopted by the Security Council at its 9655th meeting on 13 June 2024. The resolution, put forward by the United Kingdom, received 14 votes in favor, none against, with Russia abstaining.

³⁸ Ukraine's special services 'likely' behind strikes on Wagner-backed forces in Sudan", CNN, 20 September 2023.

³⁹ Ukrainian Special Forces Interrogate Wagner Mercenaries in Sudan", Kyiv Post, 5 February 2024.

Saudi Arabia

The Saudis claim to be neutral in Sudan's conflict and present themselves as credible peace mediators. However, their collaboration with the RSF in Yemen continues. The Saudis seek stability and security in the region, particularly in the Red Sea, due to its oil exports and the Vision 2030 projects, including the futuristic NEOM megacity project⁴⁰. Of course, the reestablished relations between Sudan and Iran raise concerns for Riyadh. Moreover, in Sudan, the Saudis and Emiratis compete for influence, agricultural land, and seaports along the Red Sea coast. The Saudis view the UAE's interests in the Red Sea as a direct encroachment on their backyard. To succeed, ending the war in Sudan would enhance the Saudis' image and influence in the Arab and Muslim arenas, giving them a stronger position that contrasts with the UAE, which is perceived as supporting the aggressor.

Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and Algeria expressed their support for Sudan's government. While Iran and Turkey provided al-Burhan with vital military assistance, Qatar and Algeria voiced their diplomatic support.

Egypt

Governed by a strong military regime, Egypt has always favored the SAF. Moreover, many Sudanese military officers who graduated from the Egyptian Military Academy maintain close relationships with their Egyptian colleagues. Cairo did not condemn al-Burhan's October 2021 coup; instead, it was openly supportive, believing that military rule would keep the Muslim Brotherhood at bay and help stabilize the country. However, since the eruption of the war, Egypt has adopted a low profile and tried to maintain a neutral position, although statements from the Egyptian authorities indicate their support for the SAF. Egyptians have systematically referred to the RSF as a rebellious militia, which should not be equated with the SAF, a legitimate state institution. Egypt has taken timid initiatives to resolve the conflict, even though it has a military cooperation agreement with Sudan⁴¹ and has received the highest number of refugees. Moreover, Egyptians are highly concerned about the security of the Red Sea and the River Nile, particularly regarding the Renaissance Dam crisis. However, Egypt's stance against the RSF became clearer after Hemedti accused the Egyptian Air Force of striking its troops in Sennar State⁴². The reasons for Egypt's timid role may lie in its acute economic crisis and its dependency on Gulf countries for financial assistance. Despite U.S. financial support, Egypt's economy struggles with a total external debt of \$160 billion⁴³ due to the economic consequences of insecurity in the Red Sea, the conflict in Gaza, and extensive infrastructure spending.

Iran

Iran is an essential player in the Sudanese conflict. In the 1990s, former President al-Bashir fostered close ties with Iran, a relationship driven by their mutual isolation from the international community. However, the Sudanese government suspended diplomatic relations with Iran in 2016 and tilted

⁴⁰ NEOM is a futuristic megacity on the Red Sea coast in northwest Saudi Arabia. The Public Investment Fund funds it for 500 billion dollars. It was launched in 2017 as part of Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 plan to diversify the kingdom's economy away from oil and pivot toward tech and innovation. [Neom webpage](#).

⁴¹ "Egypt, Sudan sign joint military cooperation" Sudan Tribune, 2 March 2021.

⁴² "RSF leader accuses Egypt of direct military intervention in Sudan's war", Sudan Tribune, 9 October 2024.

⁴³ Data from the Central Bank of Egypt indicate that the Gulf countries' share in Egypt's external debt amounts to \$46.2 billion.

toward Saudi Arabia and the UAE. After an eight-year rift⁴⁴, Sudan and Iran restored diplomatic and military ties in October 2023, and ambassadors were exchanged⁴⁵. Iran has backed the SAF and started to deliver arms (including Mohajer-6 drones) to the SAF in December 2023. Reportedly, an Iranian cargo plane owned by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has made several trips to Port Sudan⁴⁶. Iran is seeking allies that share its political orientation in addition to breaking free from diplomatic isolation and trade sanctions. Moreover, it aims to establish a presence on the Red Sea coast to challenge its rivalries (the Gulf countries and Israel). It is reported that Iran has asked Sudan to build a naval base, but its demand has been rejected⁴⁷.

Turkey

Supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey hosts many influential figures from the former Sudanese regime who fled Sudan after the fall of al-Bashir, including Al-Abbas and Abdullah Hassan Al-Bashir, brothers of former President al-Bashir, Ali Karti, current secretary general of the Sudanese Islamic Movement, and Mohamed Atta al-Mawla former chief of intelligence. Also, since the eruption of the war, relatives of al-Burhan and Hemedti have found refuge there. In 2017, Sudan and Turkey signed a ninety-nine-year lease to restore Suakin Island and develop a naval dock⁴⁸ using Qatari funds⁴⁹. Although the deal was formally intended to restore the old Ottoman buildings, Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and even Eritrea viewed it as an encroaching move by Turkey in the Red Sea region⁵⁰. Since the eruption of war, it's reported that Turkey has provided the SAF with Bayraktar TB2 drones via Egypt in September 2023⁵¹, and Amnesty International stated that *"shipment-level trade data indicates that hundreds of thousands of blank guns have been exported by Turkish companies to Sudan in recent years, along with millions of blank cartridges"*⁵². Istanbul has also organized a forum to support the recovery of Sudan's agricultural sector in December 2023⁵³. In supporting the SAF, Turkey may wish to advance the Suakin deal further to pursue its naval port on the Red Sea coast and ensure the return of its Islamist allies.

Qatar

Qatar tacitly voiced its diplomatic support for the SAF while requesting that the international community refrain from interfering in Sudan's internal affairs. Qatar is considered a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and a close ally of the former al-Bashir regime. During the Gulf crisis (2017-2021), Sudan was among the few Arab countries that resisted Emirati and Saudi pressure to cut ties with

⁴⁴ Sudan broke ties with Iran in 2016, supposedly in solidarity with Saudi Arabia, but in reality, al-Bashir was seeking financial help from the Saudis.

⁴⁵ Iranian ambassador Hassan Shah Hosseini was received in Port Sudan and Sudan ambassador Abdelaziz Hassan Saleh in Tehran.

⁴⁶ ["Iranian cargo flights arrive in Sudan"](#), Sudan war monitor, 30 January 2024.

⁴⁷ ["Iran Tried to Persuade Sudan to Allow Naval Base on Its Red Sea Coast"](#), WSJ, 3 March 2024.

⁴⁸ Renovation project of 650 million dollars aims to turn the island into a tourism and cultural place. The project was launched in January 2018 by Turkey's state-run aid agency, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA).

⁴⁹ <http://www.madote.com/2017/12/turkish-base-in-sudan-problem-for-arab.html>

⁵⁰ During Erdogan's visit to Sudan, Turkish, Sudanese and Qatari Army chiefs met in Khartoum on December 27, 2017.

⁵¹ ["The Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones were delivered to Sudan's military"](#), WSJ, 14 October 2023

⁵² ["Sudan: Constant flow of arms fuelling relentless civilian suffering in conflict"](#), Amnesty International, 25 July 2024.

⁵³ ["Sudanese Minister: We would like to benefit from the qualitative leap of the Turkish economy"](#), Anadolu Ajansı, 4 December 2023.

Qatar. A stand that strengthened the ties between the two countries. However, after al-Bashir's removal, the transitional government halted Qatar's Red Sea port project with Turkey. Fearing isolation from Sudan, where it has various investments—including those in the mining and agricultural sectors—Qatar has kept its distance. Qatar allegedly deposited one billion dollars in the Sudanese central bank to stabilize its economy, and it agreed to establish a gold refinery in Doha to accommodate Sudan's gold exports⁵⁴. A victory for the SAF may allow Qatar to regain an essential ally while pursuing mining and agricultural projects. In contrast, a victory for the RSF would compromise its relationship with Sudan.

The UAE

Despite the brutal history of the RSF and Hemedti, the UAE stands firmly behind them. The U.S. special envoy to Sudan said, *"Let's be clear: the RSF and its leadership are rooted in the Janjaweed militias who committed genocide and widespread crimes against humanity. They have conducted this war with unspeakable brutality, including through ethnic cleansing of the Masalit, sexual violence as a weapon of war, and torching whole villages. Any external actor providing support to the RSF cannot claim ignorance of its past or ongoing atrocities"*⁵⁵.

The UAE is the main supporter of the RSF, providing substantial military support not only since the beginning of the war but also for the past four years. Moreover, the UAE has drawn neighboring countries of Sudan into the conflict to side with the RSF. The UAE's supply of weapons and mercenaries transits through complicit countries: Chad, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and the Central African Republic, all of which have received substantial development and military aid from the UAE in return. Despite the UAE's denial, the U.N. and other documented reports confirm the UAE's arms supply to the RSF⁵⁶. The UAE claims to combat the Muslim Brotherhood, but many Islamists from the former regime remain within the RSF leadership and its commanders. Real reasons may lie behind the UAE's global ambition to expand its influence over numerous seaports, including the Red Sea, and play a vital role in global trade. Furthermore, the UAE has specific interests in the RSF, which have two dimensions: inside Sudan, to secure large agricultural projects that address the UAE's food insecurity and ensure gold procurement, and to control ports on the Red Sea⁵⁷. Outside Sudan, it aims to keep RSF fighters in Yemen and Libya while ensuring a supply of mercenaries for possible future regional missions. In March 2024, Sudan presented a complaint to the UN Security Council, charging Abu Dhabi with fueling the war in Sudan⁵⁸. RSF

⁵⁴ "Sudan and Qatar agree to establish a gold refinery in Doha", Aljazeera, 2 May 2024

⁵⁵ [Statement of Special Envoy for Sudan Tom Perriello](#) U.S. Department of State Senate Foreign Relations Committee "Conflict and Humanitarian Emergency in Sudan: An Urgent Call to Action" 1 May 2024.

⁵⁶ [Full Text: UN Panel of Experts Report on Sudan](#)", Sudan War Monitor, 23 January 2024.

⁵⁷ Selma el Obeid "Gulf States: A Paradoxical Economic Lifeline for Sudan", IFRI Studies, 9 September 2024.

⁵⁸ [Sudan demands UN condemnation of UAE support for RSF](#)", Sudan Tribune, 29 March 2024.

A challenging peace

Various peace initiatives were launched, and meetings were held in Jeddah, Addis Ababa, Paris, Geneva, Nairobi, Cairo, and Djibouti. In addition, workshops and seminars were organized by the European and U.S. governments in France, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and Kenya. Still, there has been no peace—or at least, a humanitarian pause. Multiple factors paralyze peace initiatives, but what lies behind them is a lack of consensus on the causes of the war. For the RSF and Tagadom, the Islamists (who infiltrated the SAF) fired the first shot. For the SAF and its supporters, it’s a failed coup d’état by the RSF. The rhetoric of who started the war is important because it shapes public opinion, co-opts external supporters, and influences mediators. Another key factor hindering peace talks is the insistence of both parties on a military solution. The failure of the Geneva talks held in August 2024 raises doubts about both parties' seriousness in



Sudanese out-of-school refugee children in Adré, Chad

reaching a political settlement. In October 2024, the Sudanese army's deputy commander-in-chief, Lieutenant General Ibrahim Jaber, stated that peace talks may continue, but the army will not cease fighting⁵⁹. Another reason is that foreign meddlers do not bear the destructive costs of the war, making them less inclined to pursue peace. On the contrary, they continue pouring large quantities of weapons into the country, which reduces the chances of achieving a peaceful solution.

Moreover, initiatives are likely to fail because there is a proliferation of civilian platforms. As Tagadom is viewed as a supporter of the RSF, a parallel entity, “the Sudanese National Forces Coordination,” led by Malik Aqar, the Deputy Chairman of the Sovereignty Council, was formed to support the SAF. Likewise, the multiplication of mediators and the competition among them have weakened their influence as efforts are dispersed among too many uncoordinated and competing initiatives. For example, three meetings were organized consecutively in July 2024. The first was the Cairo Conference

⁵⁹ “[Sudan army vows to fight on despite peace efforts](#)”, BBC, 3 October 2024.



of Sudanese political forces (6-7 July)⁶⁰. The second was the Addis Ababa meeting (10-15 July), organized by the African Union. The third was the Geneva meeting, organized by the UN (11-19 July)⁶¹.

Multiple resolutions have been agreed upon, but they have not been implemented. The UN Security Council issued four resolutions in 2024 regarding the situation in Sudan⁶², but none have been respected. Peace talk platforms and the UN Security Council make decisions, sign agreements, and launch recommendations without taking any practical steps to implement them.

⁶⁰ The FFC-Democratic Block is a split faction of the Forces of Freedom and Change. It was formed on 3 November 2022 by a coalition of former rebel groups and some political parties. The FFC-DB supported the 25 October 2021 military coup.

⁶¹ “Statement of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra, after the conclusion of the Geneva Proximity Talks”, UN, 19 July 2024.

⁶² Resolution 2750, adopted by the Security Council at its 9721st meeting on 11 September 2024. Resolutions 2736, adopted by the Security Council at its 9655th meeting on 13 June 2024. Resolution 2725, adopted by the Security Council at its 9569th meeting on 8 March 2024. Resolution 2724, adopted by the Security Council at its 9568th meeting on 8 March 2024.

Conclusion

Sudan's situation is gloomy by all measures, and the prospects for peace remain bleak: a chaotic political situation, a ruined economy, and a highly divided society, partly due to hateful messages on social media. The war has become increasingly genocidal, as an inhabitant of Gazira State expressed: "We are tired of digging graves." How can Sudan be pulled out of the abyss? Undoubtedly, Sudan needs a political agreement, and it needs to be done quickly. In the last eighteen months, the war has ruined the few institutions that existed and depleted the foreign reserves. A group of Sudanese experts estimates the total loss of capital stock to be around \$200 billion to date.

The peace process in Sudan requires three elements: civil forces need to reconcile, as the proliferation of actors creates confusion and dispersion. Then, they should be given a role in the peace talks to ensure that the settlement is not solely military. The second element is to stop the flow of weapons into the country, and arms suppliers should be held accountable. International laws and arms embargoes are widely ignored. Military, financial, logistical, and diplomatic support from many countries for the Sudanese fighting parties is well recognized. Yet, the international community remains silent, unable to hold them accountable⁶³. The third element is to opt for an inclusive peace settlement rather than limiting the discussion to three areas: humanitarian access, the protection of civilians, and the cessation of hostilities. However, these peace dynamics can work only if Sudan's government, the RSF, Tagadom, and the other civil forces demonstrate shared responsibility, political courage, and a genuine willingness to achieve peace.

Despite Sudan's gloomy situation, one reason to be optimistic that the country's crisis will be averted is the resilience of many ordinary Sudanese people. While more than two million Sudanese have given up on their country and found refuge in neighboring countries, over 45 million still live inside Sudan, facing the daily hardships of war with strength and dignity.

⁶³ Mohamed Suliman, "[To end the genocide in Sudan, we must divest from the UAE](#)", Analyst News, 16 July 2024.

Appendix

Sudan's short-lived elected governments, prolonged military rules, and wars.

War	1955	The first North-South civil war started in 1955 and ended with the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972.
	1956	1 January 1956: Sudan's independence from the UK. Ismail al-Azhari led the first national government.
6-year military regime	1958	17 November 1958: The first coup d'état was led by Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Abboud.
	1964	October 1964: The first people's uprising.
Democracy	1965	May 1965: Elected government led by Mohammed Ahmed Mahgoub.
	1969	25 May 1969: Second coup d'état, led by Colonel Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri.
16-year military regime	1983	The second North-South civil war started. It ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in 2005.
	1985	6 April 1985: The second people's uprising. General Mohamed Hasan Siwar al-Dhahab took power.
Democracy	1986	April 1986: The elected government was formed and led by Sadiq al-Mahdi.
	1989	30 June 1989: Third coup d'état, led by Lt. General Omar Hassan al-Bashir.
30-year military regime	2003	The Darfur conflict started in 2003. In October 2020, the Juba Peace Agreement was signed. SPLM-North of Abdelaziz al-Hilo and SLM-Abdelwahid al-Nour did not sign it.
	2005	9 January 2005: The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).
	2011	South Sudan separated from Sudan.
	2018	18 December 2018: The third people's uprising began.
Transitional gov.	2019	12 April 2019 Coup d'état led by Lt. General Abdelfattah al-Burhan to support the people's uprising. 21 August 2019: A transitional government was formed and led by Abdalla Hamdok.
2-year Military regime	2021	25 October 2021: Coup d'état, led by Lt. General Abdelfattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti).
War	2023	15 April 2023: War erupted between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.

- ★ Sudan was ruled by three military regimes: General Ibrahim Abboud (1958-1964), Field Marshal Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri (1969-1984), and Field Marshal Omar Hassan al-Bashir (1989-2019). Popular uprisings overthrew all three presidents.
- ★ After thirty years of kleptocratic rule, al-Bashir was toppled in April 2019, and a military council headed by Abdelfattah al-Burhan was established.
- ★ A power-sharing deal was reached between civilians represented by the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) and the military council.
- ★ The Constitutional Declaration signed in August 2019 dissolved the Military Council, replaced it with the Sovereign Council, and formed a civilian government led by Dr. Abdalla Hamdok.
- ★ Al-Burhan and Hemedti staged a coup d'état in October 2021 that halted the democratic transition.
- ★ The Framework Agreement, signed in December 2022 by the SAF and the RSF, revealed Hemedti's reluctance to integrate his forces with the SAF, which escalated the country into war.

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 3. Wanted

Name and place	Year arrest warrant issued by the ICC	Charged for
Hassan Omar al-Bashir Former president Currently unknown whereabouts	4 March 2009	5 crimes against humanity, 2 war crimes and 3 genocides between 2003 and 2008
Ahmed Mohamed Haroun Former minister of interior Currently unknown whereabouts	27 April 2007	20 crimes against humanity, 22 war crimes.
Abdulrahim Mohamed Hussein Former Minister of Defence Currently unknown whereabouts	1 March 2012	7 crimes against humanity and 6 war crimes between 2003 and 2004
Ali Muhammad Abdel Rahman (Ali Kushayb) One of the Janjaweed leaders	currently on trial after surrendering to the court in June 2020 in the Central African Republic	31 war crimes and crimes against humanity between 2003 and 2004
Bahr Idris Abu Garda Leader of the United Resistance Front	Charges dropped in 2010 and the case was closed until new evidence received	3 war crimes during an attack he launched in 2007.

Source: compiled by the author

Table 4. Initiatives and meetings on Sudan's war

Initiative/meeting	Date	Outcomes
United States and Saudi Arabia initiative	Talks were held in Jeddah. First round: 5-10 May Second round: 14 May Third round 25 October 2023	An agreement was signed on 11 May 2023. Mediators failed to implement the agreement. Negotiations suspended.
The African Union and the African Development Authority (IGAD)	Addis Ababa, 27 May 2023 The AU Roadmap ⁶⁴ Addis Ababa, 17 January 2024 The High-Level Panel on	AU road map was adopted by the PSC at the Heads of State and Government level and aims to establish mechanisms to coordinate support to Sudan, secure an immediate cessation of hostilities, strengthen the humanitarian response, ensure the

⁶⁴ “Communique of the 1156th meeting of the PSC”, The African Union, 29 May 2023.

	<p>Sudan led by Mohamed Ibn Chambas ⁶⁵</p> <p>Addis Ababa, 10-15 July 2024 Sudan political dialogue process</p>	<p>protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Nothing is been achieved.</p> <p>Egypt and Chad are not members of IGAD, that excludes two important neighbors of Sudan from the mediation.</p>
Egypt's forum of neighboring states	<p>Cairo, 13 July 2023</p> <p>N'Djamena, 6-7 August 2023, the first ministerial meeting</p> <p>New York, 20 September 2023, Second meeting</p>	<p>The leaders of Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, Eritrea, the Central African Republic, and Libya attended the meeting. A ministerial mechanism was put in place. Nothing is been achieved.</p>
Egypt Talks	<p>Cairo, 6-7 July 2024</p>	<p>Talks between civilian forces in an attempt to unite their views under the slogan "Together to stop the war". Pro SAF bloc refused to sign the final statement because of the lack of explicit condemnation of human rights violations committed by the RSF.</p>
Geneva Talks Closed sessions under the auspice of the UN.	<p>Geneva, 11-19 July 2024</p>	<p>"Proximity format" talks between SAF and the RSF to facilitate humanitarian aid and protect civilians. Vague commitments by one party were announced.</p>
Manama negotiations Talks were held in complete secrecy before the US State Department revealed it in February 2024.	<p>Manama, November 2023 to January 2024,</p>	<p>Talks between SAF and the RSF took place in the Bahraini capital, Manama, initiated by Egypt and the UAE and attended by U.S.</p> <p>A draft agreement titled "foundations and principles of a comprehensive political solution" and comprised of 21 items was signed between Shamseldin al-Kabashi representative of SAF and Abdelrahim Dagalo representative of the RSF.</p>

⁶⁵ ["The Chairperson of the African Union Commission Appoints High-Level Panel"](#), The African Union, 17 January 2024.

Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Walid bin Abdul Karim Al-Khuraiji	Port Sudan, 8 July 2024	Regional dynamics to revive Jeddah talks and the AU mediation.
Abi Ahmed tries to provide solutions on the ground.	Port Sudan, 9 July 2024	
Djibouti meeting between regional and international mediators	Djibouti 24-26 July 2024	The meetings aim at coordinating the peace initiatives.
Switzerland projected meeting between SAF and RSF under the auspice of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia	Switzerland, 14 August 2024	The talks aim to reach a nationwide cessation of violence, enabling humanitarian access to all those in need, and develop a robust monitoring and verification mechanism to ensure implementation of any agreement.

Source: Compiled by the author