

# The General Assembly

## Addressing the Sudanese Conflict

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## Introduction

The volatile security situation in the North-East African state of Sudan has become of particular concern to the International Community, and it is within the interests of the United Nations General Assembly to address resultant tension in the region. NGOs globally seek to address this crisis, which is currently directly affecting more than 50 million people between Sudan and South Sudan. This report seeks to inform delegates of the history, global political implications, and dire humanitarian consequences resulting from the Sudanese Conflict.

The current Sudanese conflicts stem from years of challenges Sudan has faced with colonisation and within their country. This conflict has led to a constant state of unreliable governance within Sudan and unrest in Sudanese minority groups as they have long fought for their freedom and peace. The independence of the Sudan government started when the Sudanese people fought for their freedom over their land, from the rule of the Anglo-Egyptian government. To this day, the Sudanese people are entering their third civil war, between two government groups, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Understanding why the conflicts started and what made them grow is always important when trying to resolve them. This report will provide a thorough, yet brief overview of the Sudanese conflict in hopes that the reader will gain a deeper understanding of the Sudanese conflict.

## Key Terms



### Coup-proofing

A political regime creates a structure which makes it hard for any small groups to seize power through a focus on internal security and stability of the state.

### Juba Peace Agreement

A peace agreement was signed by the prime minister of Sudan, Abdallah Hamdok, in 2020. The agreement incorporates eight protocols. The entire agreement aims to integrate militias into official government forces, gradually reshaping Sudan's security forces. Another two goals of the agreement are implementing transitional justice in Sudan, addressing past human rights violations, supporting the victims of the conflict, and funding the reparations.

## Key Parties

### SAF

Sudanese Armed Forces. A military organisation formed in 1925, acting as the main military power of the Sudanese government. As of today, this organisation is led by a former regional commander in Darfur, Abdel Al-Burhan. This organisation has been involved in all Sudanese conflicts discussed in this report and is one of the two fighting sides in the current conflict.

### RSF

The Rapid Support Service is a paramilitary organisation officially formed in 2013 by Arab militias, particularly the Janjaweed militias, in Sudan. The organisation is headed by a man named Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo or Hemedti. The RSF has been involved in Sudan's current conflict as one of the two conflicting sides.

### NISS

National Intelligence and Security Service: A Sudanese organisation that collects information and intelligence from the Sudanese people and neighbouring countries.

### The African Union

The African Union (AU) is a continental organisation comprising 55 countries across Africa, excluding Morocco, formed in 2001 to promote unity, cooperation, and development on the continent. It serves as a platform for addressing political, economic, and social challenges, while also advocating

for peace, security, and human rights. The African Union was involved in peacemaking negotiations in Sudan.

## TMC

The Transitional Military Council is a government body formed in 2019 with an intervention from the international community, particularly, the USA. This government body was formed by the leaders who took over Bashir's power. Of course, the two main members of the council were Dagalo and Burhan but the council also included some other high-ranking commanders and officers. The TMC was created to transition safely to a democratic civilian-led government

## General Overview

The history of what is today known as 'Sudan' starts in 1899, when it fell under the rule of an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. This was due to the Mahdist War, which was a fight over Egypt and the United Kingdom, Egypt and England solved this problem with the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium declared that Egypt and England shared rule over Sudan. Their rule, however, was not shared. Egypt controlled the North, whereas England mostly dominated the south. Under Egyptian rule, the North advanced and grew and the South grew weak under British colonial rule. This Anglo-Egyptian rule created a strong divide between the north and the south of Sudan. The south of Sudan was significantly more colonised by the British, whereas the north grew and advanced. The South was a heavily Christian culture and the North was dominated by Islamic ideals. This created a rift between the two, which created conflict between the two sides that later led to Sudanese independence. The Sudanese people were largely unsatisfied with English control in Sudan, and in 1956, a military coup in Egypt forced Britain to cease its colonial rule of Sudan. However, it was under the contract that Sudan would keep close ties with Egypt. With the new Government in Sudan, there were already divides in the nation's political landscape. The North and South had very contradictory ideas in the process of governing the nation. The South, which was primarily educated in British Christian schools, commonly lacked local historical knowledge the majority in the North had. There was also an extreme religious divide. The North was largely Muslim, and the South was predominantly African-Christian. The political parties that were created quickly became corrupt and based on alliances and religious ideas. The nation once again fell into an authoritarian rule. The two sides had their conflicts however, it wasn't until November of 1956 that the commander in chief of the Sudanese army, General Ibrahim Abbud, controlled a bloodless coup d'etat that dissolved all the political parties, temporarily taking down and controlling all the newspapers, and prohibiting assemblies. Although his efforts in the south were to unite the country

together by spreading the Arabic language and Islamic ideals, they backfired. He banned Christian missionary schools that widely controlled the South's education. This led to a widespread strike in October of 1962.

Then, another rebellion occurred in September of 1963 led by the Anya Nya, a southern Sudanese guerrilla Organisation. The Anya Nya believed that violent resistance was the only way to fight back against the government of General Abbud. However, in return for the rebellion, the generals controlling the south increased the repression. This was the beginning of the First Civil War in Sudan (1955-72) This civil war was between the freedom of the south of Sudan and the north. The economy in the North was booming, being close to the Nile and without the heavy colonisation of Anglo-Egyptian rule. The civil war had no impact other than negatives, especially in the South. There was no government control and a lack of people fighting. The ending of the first civil war after seventeen years was with the Addis Ababa Agreement. This created the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region (SSAR).

### **I . Omar Al Bashir's rise to power and atrocities in Darfur**

In the past 70 years, Sudan has been subject to rapid changes in government. This persisted until Omar Al Bashir came to power in 1989. Bashir decided to focus heavily on the state's security and sovereignty. Sudanese Armed Forces, or the SAF, has been Sudan's strongest and most influential party since its formation in 1925. Knowing this, Bashir made certain to maintain a strong bond with the SAF, bolstering and relying on them to control the war in South Sudan. Soon, another war started to take shape in the West of the country in the Darfur region. The Darfuri citizens had been neglected for decades, with little representation in the Sudanese government whilst suffering from a serious economic crisis. In 2003, while large portions of the army were concentrated in the South, rebel groups attacked some troops in the West of Sudan. Instead of relying on the SAF and moving a proportion of the troops from the South, Bashir decided to rely on local Arab militias, the largest of these was called the Janjaweed. Janjaweed and SAF troops together focused on eradicating the threat on Bashir's behalf. Both groups were accused of killings, rape and forced displacement of Darfuris. Between 80 and 400 thousand Darfuris were killed during the conflict. Seeing the benefit of turning to militias, Bashir aimed to bring Janjaweed leaders into the government. The person he trusted the most was a man named Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, one of the leaders of the Janjaweed.

## I I . The Crisis

In 2011, South Sudan gained its independence, leaving Bashir vulnerable since the majority of oil resources were located in the South of the country. Soon after the separation, Sudan's economy rapidly began to enter recession. To strengthen his position, Bashir granted the Janjaweed the official status of a paramilitary force, and the organisation was renamed into RSF or the Rapid Support Forces in 2013 and put under the control of another organisation supporting Bashir: the NISS. In 2017, Dagalo was placed directly under Bashir's command, making it clear that RSF's main purpose was to protect Bashir's political position. In exchange for loyalty, Dagalo was given financial autonomy and control over some of Darfur's gold mines. Not only that but Dagalo was also allowed to engage in illegal weapon and mineral trade to countries like Chad and Libya and to send mercenaries to countries with ongoing conflicts, such as Syria and Yemen. A compromise with SAF was reached by allowing them to control weapon production and telecommunications. By 2018, the economic crisis had grown bigger, and many civil protests had broken out in a struggle for freedom. By that point, a mindblowing 60-70% of Sudan's budget was allocated to the security sector, including Bashir's protectors such as the RSF and the SAF. Many protests continued to break out and eventually became concentrated in the capital city of Khartoum. Bashir refused to leave office, backed by the RSF and the SAF. Protesters were met with a violent response from the authorities, with hundreds of people falling victim to the violence of the political struggle.

## I I I . Peacekeeping Attempts

Nevertheless, the protests did not stop, leading the RSF and the SAF to realise that Bashir's position was too weak to be useful to them anymore. In April 2019, the two organisations combined their forces and removed Bashir from power. A few days later, a former regional commander in Darfur named Abdel Al-Burhan took power in the South of Sudan together with Dagalo. However, the situation did not get better since both Dagalo and Burhan were quickly accused of the horrors that took place in Darfur. The protesters rebelled once again, this time causing a crackdown on Dagalo's forces. At least a hundred civilians were killed during peaceful protests, and more massacres began to emerge across the country. This violence signalled the following countries to step in and attempt to put Sudan on a democratic path: the USA with its Arab allies, the United Kingdom and the African Union. Sudan's government and protesters were pressured to accept a power-sharing agreement. This agreement involved the formation of a transitional government, which would have representatives from both the government (military) and the protesters. The military would have control of the country for 21 months and the protesters for 18. Such an arrangement was created to ensure a gradual shift to civilian rule, with the military gaining longer control to ensure a safe

transition. The issue lay in the appointment of Burhan as chair and Dagalo as vice chair of the council.

### I V . The Latest Situation

The established council functioned for some time and even installed a new prime minister Abdallah Hamdok. Following the overthrow of Bashir and the unrelenting protests, Hamdok and Burhan signed the Juba Peace Agreement between the authorities and the five major rebel groups. Nevertheless, Hamdok was forced to resign in January 2022 after multiple military interventions from the two leaders and a staged coup in October of 2021. This made Burhan a de facto leader of Sudan, with Dagalo as number two. While Burhan was forming political connections with some countries in Asia and the Middle East, Dagalo was connecting with powerful individuals from the same countries using his riches from the Gold mines and other illicit activities. The protests persisted in Sudan, and the USA, UAE, Saudi Arabia and the UK pressured Burhan, Dagalo and the protesters into another agreement. This agreement was signed in December 2022, promising a new civilian-led transitional government by April 2023. However, a key part of the agreement involved the RSF becoming part of the SAF, Burhan's army. And while Burhan wanted this process to take no longer than 2 years, Dagalo demanded 10. This disagreement caused a big rift between the two men and lay at the roots of the ongoing fighting in Sudan. Sudan's hopeful revolution, which was aiming to place Sudan on track to a democratic future, has been interrupted by two conflicting men, and the interventions from the International communities had little effect, leaving the protesting civilians betrayed and only hoping for a brighter future.

## Timeline

- 1989 Omar Al Bashir comes to power through a successful coup.
- 2003 Conflicts in Western Sudan led to the Darfur Genocide - atrocities committed by the SAF and the Janjaweed militias, which involved killings, rape and forceful displacement of hundreds of thousands of protesters in Darfur.
- 2011 South Sudan gains its independence from Sudan, and an economic crisis hits the country.
- 2013 Janjaweed and Dagalo are given the official status of a paramilitary organisation and renamed into the RSF by Bashir. The RSF is put under the control of the NISS.
- 2017 Dagalo and the RSF are placed directly under Bashir's control.
- 2018 The biggest revolution in Sudan's history breaks out with the economic crisis tearing Sudan apart. Countless protests occur all over the country and eventually become concentrated around the capital city Khartoum.
- 2019 Bashir's power is seized, and Sudan's government is taken over by two men: Burhan and Dagalo.
- 2019 The agreement to form a government, which would transition Sudan to democracy, was signed by the Sudanese government with an intervention from the UN and the AU.
- 2022 Another agreement was signed, in which the Sudanese authorities promised a civilian-led transitional government by 2023.
- 2023 Clashes between the SAF led by Burhan and the RSF led by Dagalo continue to emerge across Sudan, having a big impact on the lives of Sudan's civil population.



## Possible Solutions

Regardless of multiple attempts at peacemaking from the international community, which were discussed above, there has not been any success in improving the situation in Sudan for the long term. An obvious goal, which Sudan should be heading to is a democratic government. However, that goal is not achievable without cooperation from the authorities, which seem to not be interested in a democratic resolution. If the government were to be changed, setting Sudan on a path of economic growth and stabilisation would, at the very least, reduce the number of protests since it would increase the quality of life. The international community should interact with, secure and support the process to minimise the risk of more civil unrest or political conflicts emerging.

Another possible solution to move the nation to a state of stability would be increased peacebuilding efforts in the area. However, this is also a very difficult job, with many peacebuilders being killed due to the conflict. However, it is also a very effective method to settle disputes in some areas of Sudan and should be considered as an option when addressing the Sudanese Conflict

In conclusion, the problem that Sudan is facing is rather clear, but even if the international community manages to build successful cooperation with Sudanese authorities, it is apparent that the Sudanese conflict will take years to be comprehensively addressed, and the process can be accelerated with the participation from the international community's side.

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