

## The Situation in Sudan

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### Introduction

Since April 2023, Sudan has been engulfed in a civil war, probably the most violent and deadly of all contemporary conflicts. At least 150,000 people have been killed. Approximately 12 to 14 million have been displaced—the largest homeless population in the world—with over 3 million fleeing abroad, mostly to neighboring countries like Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. Once a vibrant city of 7 million residents, much of the Sudanese capital of Khartoum is a ‘burnt-out shell’.<sup>1</sup>



For the 50 million people of Sudan, the war has been a disaster. The country, previously gaining prosperity and development, found itself plunged into destruction, impoverishment, displacement of much of the population, and widespread helplessness.

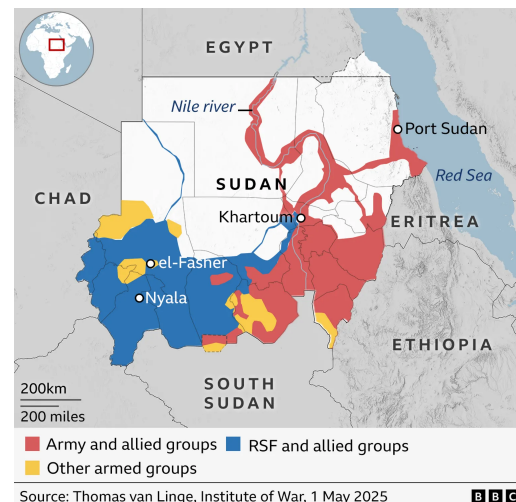


The war pits the *Sudanese Armed Forces* (SAF, the military of the internationally recognized government of Sudan), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, against the *Rapid Support Forces* (RSF), a paramilitary group led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti. Their differences are largely personal, with ethnic and regional aspects.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lucía Caballero, ‘Sudan: foreign interests are deepening a devastating war – only regional diplomacy can stop them’, *The Conversation*, 26 June 2025, <https://theconversation.com/sudan-foreign-interests-are-deepening-a-devastating-war-only-regional-diplomacy-can-stop-them-259824>

<sup>2</sup> Natasha Booty and Farouk Chothia, ‘Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening’, *BBC News*,

## Sudan divided, as of July 2025



SAF controlled territory in red, RSF territory in blue. White regions are sparsely settled, without permanent military presence.

Source: Natasha Booty, et. al., 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', *BBC News*, 4 July 2025

The United Nations has recognized the stakes in this situation in relation to Sudan's previous conflicts and periods of political instability. Responding to Sudan's current crisis, the Security Council and the International Criminal Court have agreed to focus not so much on resolving the war, as responding to secondary issues; humanitarian suffering, abuse of civilians, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such actions might reduce some of the worst suffering, but that do not resolve the conflict. Can the UN do more? That's the challenge before the Security Council at ODUMUNC 49.

The first year of the war favored the RSF, which conquered the national capital and largest city, Khartoum, forcing the SAF to shift its headquarters and government to Port Sudan, on the Red Sea coast. Recent fighting favors the SAF, but the RSF remain portent, and has powerful backers. The situation is unpredictable.<sup>3</sup>

The most influential foreign actors in the war are neighboring countries, especially Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, who support the Sudanese Armed Forces, versus the Ethiopia and especially the United Arab Emirates, which aggressively backs the Rapid Support Forces. The support of foreign actors has been crucial to sustaining the war, making it impossible for either side to gain a decisive advantage. China and Russia have tried to stay neutral in the war, supplying both sides, while the European Union and United States support the Sudanese Armed Forces. Both the SAF and RSF are committed to continue fighting for complete victory and control of the entire country.

The Sudan war is a difficult issue for the UN Security Council. It is compelled by the UN Charter to act on issues of peace and conflict. But the Security Council action requires the support or abstention of all five veto powers. On Sudan, China is hesitant to act too strongly. Russia is generally opposed to international intervention. Overcoming these differences is a difficult job. The Security Council at ODUMUNC must find formulas to help advocates of international action lower their expectations, and trade-offs or incentives that might entice the holdouts.

4 July 2025,  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjel2nn22z9o>  
<sup>3</sup> 'The Sudan Armed Forces attempt to consolidate gains', *International Institute for Strategic Studies*,

February 2025,  
<https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/2025/01/the-sudan-armed-forces-attempt-to-consolidate-gains/>

## Background

**First Sudanese Civil War:** At the foundation of the situation in Sudan is the lasting tension from the country's previous conflicts and frequent periods of political turmoil. Originally vast territory—Africa's largest, equal to the entire United States east of the Mississippi River—its great diversity harbored intense regional tensions. The First Sudanese Civil War was a 17-year long war fought between northern Sudan and southern Sudan from 1955 to 1972 and resulted in the deaths of over a million people. In 1956, a year after the war began, Sudan was officially granted independence after being a colony of the United Kingdom and Egypt since 1899.

The war stemmed from grievances of Southern Sudan, which believed their civilians and politicians were facing ethnic and religious oppression for being non-Islamic and lacked proper representation in the Sudanese government located in the capital city of Khartoum. The southern Sudanese rebel army, the Anyanya, and separatist movement, the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) emerged as the faces of southern Sudan throughout the war. Although the war lasted for 17 years, both sides were inundated with a lack of internal unity within their own leadership.<sup>4</sup>

The war eventually ended in 1972 through the Addis Ababa Agreement which was a treaty between the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement and the Sudanese government that officially established the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region which granted southern Sudan with political autonomy and separate legislative and

executive bodies.<sup>5</sup> However, the agreement was only a temporary solution for Sudan's deeper problems and these tensions were reignited during the country's second civil war.

**Second Sudanese Civil War:** The Second Sudanese Civil War was a 22-year long war fought between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from 1983 to 2005. The cause of the war is credited to President Gaafir Nimeiry who violated the Addis Ababa Agreement between 1979-1983. Nimeiry attempted to violate the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region by taking control of oil fields located along the border that separated the northern and southern regions of the country.

In 1983, Nimeiry declared all of Sudan an Islamic country despite southern Sudan being a majority non-Islamic region. Nimeiry's actions are widely recognized as the preliminary events that started the second civil war. The Sudan People's Liberation Army, a rebel group, was established in 1983 to fight against the Sudanese government and restore the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region.<sup>6</sup>

On 6 April 1985, two years after the beginning of the war, a coup was led by General Abdel Rahman Swar al-Dahab and military officers who established a new government and transitional military council which consisted of dissolving Nimeiry's previous government, restoring the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region, and retracting Nimeiry's declaration of Sudan as an Islamic state.

<sup>4</sup> 'First Sudanese Civil War', *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Sudanese\\_Civil\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Sudanese_Civil_War)

<sup>5</sup> 'Addis Ababa Agreement (1972)', *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addis\\_Ababa\\_Agreement\\_\(1972\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addis_Ababa_Agreement_(1972))

<sup>6</sup> 'Second Sudanese Civil War', *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Sudanese\\_Civil\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Sudanese_Civil_War)

In April 1986, a year later, a civilian-led government was democratically elected, and the military council transferred power to Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi and President Ahmed al-Mirghani of the new government.<sup>7</sup> In 1989, however, yet another phase of political instability occurred amidst the peace negotiations between Mahdi and the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

**1989 Coup and Continuation of the Second Civil War:** On 30 June 1989, the Sudanese Armed Forces carried out a military coup against Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi and President Ahmed al-Mirghani. General Omar al-Bashir led the coup and became Sudan's de-facto president and prime minister, and ruled the country for 30 years until he was overthrown in 2019.<sup>8</sup>

The Second Sudanese Civil War intensified throughout Bashir's rule as the war transitioned into a fight between Bashir's consolidated, authoritarian regime and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. The coup and Bashir's newly formed government effectively eliminated any further peace negotiations that occurred between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the more democratic government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi. Throughout the war, Bashir's regime largely consisted of punishing dissent, oppressing non-Muslim civilians, and committing war crimes and human rights violations against villages in southern Sudan with an estimated 2 million deaths resulting from the conflict.<sup>9</sup>

From 2003 and 2004, negotiations and peace talks between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army finally saw significant progress. On 9

January 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed by both sides which ended the Second Sudanese Civil War. One of the provisions of the agreement granted southern Sudan autonomy for six years with the option of holding a referendum on whether the region should secede from Sudan and declare its independence. Ultimately, southern Sudan seceded and declared its independence on 9 July 2011 as the Republic of South Sudan.<sup>10</sup>

**2003 Darfur Conflict:** In 2003, towards the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War, a bloody conflict emerged in the Darfur region between the government of Sudan and Darfuri rebel groups consisting of the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit groups.<sup>11</sup> These rebel groups, collectively known as the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) accused the government of Sudan of oppressing non-Muslims in the Darfur region.

During this time, President Omar al-Bashir would frequently deploy the *Janjaweed*, a military-supported militia, commanded by Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, and General Mohamed Hamdan (known as Hemedti) to combat and suppress the rebel groups in the region. The Janjaweed became infamous for war crimes. As part of the United Nations resolution regarding the situation, the United Nations Security Council referred this conflict to the International Criminal Court in 2005 after the Janjaweed militia was consistently accused of committing acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit African communities and

<sup>7</sup> 'Second Sudanese Civil War', *Wikipedia*, *ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> '1989 Sudanese coup d'etat', *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989\\_Sudanese\\_coup\\_d'%27%C3%A9tat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989_Sudanese_coup_d'%27%C3%A9tat)

<sup>9</sup> 'Second Sudanese Civil War', *Wikipedia*, *op.cit*.

<sup>10</sup> 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement', *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive\\_Peace\\_Agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Peace_Agreement)

<sup>11</sup> James Copnall, 'Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate', *BBC News*, 29 April 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22336600>



villages.<sup>12</sup> Simultaneously, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan commanded the Sudanese Armed Forces in the Darfur region to provide additional assistance in suppressing the Darfuri rebel groups.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequently, the International Criminal Court, in cooperation with the United Nations, issued arrest warrants against five of the top Sudanese officials related to the conflict: Former Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Muhammad Harun, former Janjaweed militia leader Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, former Sudanese Minister of National Defence Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein, and former Commander-in-Chief of the Justice and Equality Movement Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain.

On 5 April 2022, the International Criminal Court opened the first trial against former Janjaweed militia leader Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman who was accused of committing 31 counts of war crimes between August 2003 and April 2004 in Darfur. The trial concluded in December 2024 and the court is expected to give a decision towards the end of 2025.

The remainder of the arrest warrants are currently outstanding, and the International Criminal Court accused three of the men, Bashir, Harun, and Hussein, of orchestrating a genocide against the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit groups. However, they were previously detained in the Kober Prison in Khartoum after being overthrown in the 2019 military coup where Bashir subsequently faced corruption charges for his role in the 1989 coup, but they escaped

once Sudan's current civil war began.<sup>14</sup> All three of the men have yet to face prosecution for the genocide against the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit groups.

In 2013, the Rapid Support Forces was established by the SAF from the remnants of the Janjaweed militia and has remained under the command of Hemedti while Burhan has maintained authority of the Sudanese Armed Forces.<sup>15</sup> During this time, the conflict began the transition into a stalemate. Marking a decade since it began, the Sudan Liberation Movement, the Justice and Equality Movement, and other rebel groups remained at war with the government of Sudan. President Omar al-Bashir deployed Hemedti's new paramilitary which continued to carry out the Janjaweed militia's suppressive attacks against the rebel groups in Darfur alongside Burhan's Sudanese Armed Forces.

## Rival leaders



RSF General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (left, better known as Hemedti) and SAF General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (right) lead powerful Sudanese forces, each with strong foreign backing. *Source:* Copnall, 'Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate', *op.cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', *op.cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Copnall, 'Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate', *op.cit.*

<sup>14</sup> 'Sudan's Bashir on trial over 1989 coup that brought him to power', *Aljazeera*, 21 July 2020,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/21/sudans-bashir-on-trial-over-1989-coup-that-brought-him-to-power>

<sup>15</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', *op.cit.*

**2019 Coup:** In April 2019, after constant civil unrest throughout the country, which stemmed from Sudanese civilians demonstrating their support for a democracy, government reforms, and an end to the Darfur conflict, President Omar al-Bashir was overthrown in a military coup that was jointly led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti). Burhan and Hemedti saw an opportunity amidst the civil unrest and Bashir's unpopularity.

The coup effectively ended al-Bashir's three-decade rule (after coming to power in the 1989 coup) and raised hopes for the establishment of a democracy. Sudanese civilians protested to support a democratic government, but Burhan and Hemedti negotiated to establish a short-lived, civilian-military form of government, ostensibly a transition to democracy.<sup>16</sup> During this transition period, Burhan was effectively Sudan's president while Hemedti was his deputy.<sup>17</sup>

**2021 Coup:** The civilian-led government was installed for less than two years before being overthrown by a coup in October 2021. General Burhan and General Hemedti collaborated again on the coup which returned the country to its previous militaristic-style of government without civilian involvement.<sup>18</sup> Although Burhan remained Sudan's president and Hemedti remained his deputy, the two generals began exhibiting disagreements regarding the direction of the government and who would be the country's primary leader with both of them unwilling to forfeit their power, political influence, and wealth.<sup>19</sup>

The two men who were once allies, with a well-documented history of cooperation, now lead the warring sides in Sudan's civil war for control of the country.

## Current Situation



Flames and smoke in Khartoum as the forces controlled by the two generals clash.  
*Source:* Copnall, 'Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate', op.cit.

On 15 April 2023, the conflict between the generals reached heightened tensions as shooting between their forces officially began. Over two years later, the ongoing civil war can be described as a constant battle between two, equally powerful forces that are capturing specific territories and regions from one another. The Rapid Support Forces have held a near permanent control of the majority of Darfur, Kordofan, and most recently captured territory along the region of Sudan that borders Libya and Egypt in June 2025. The Sudanese Armed Forces have maintained control of Northern Sudan and Eastern Sudan.<sup>20</sup>

According to the Human Rights Council, the conflict in Sudan remains at a high risk as the civil war rages on and more claims of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and

<sup>16</sup> Copnall, 'Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate', op.cit.

<sup>17</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> Copnall, 'Darfur conflict: Sudan's bloody stalemate', op.cit.

<sup>19</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', op.cit.

<sup>20</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', ibid.

crimes against humanity are reported. Reminiscent of the ethnic cleansing allegations raised against the Janjaweed militia during the 2003 Darfur conflict, the Human Rights Council has accused the Rapid Support Forces of continuing the Janjaweed militia's ethnic cleansing attacks against the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit groups in the Darfur and Kordofan regions.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants against Sudan's top officials in relation to the country's current conflict and allegations of war crimes, ethnic cleansing, gender-based crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity in the Darfur region. Similar to the Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court in its briefing to the Security Council has highlighted the consistencies between the crimes committed in the 2003 Darfur conflict and the region's current conflict.

## RSF victorious



RSF celebrate in Gouz Abudloaa after capturing civilians trying to escape into Libya. Source: 'Exposing the RSF's secret financial network', *Global Witness*, 9 December 2019, <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/conflict-resources/exposing-rsfs-secret-financial-network/>

**Territory Battles, Alliances, and Drone Strikes.** As the war continues, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and General

Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) have also been at war over Sudan's resources, such as the country's gold mines, and interference of leaders from nearby countries. It is reported that Hemedti and his Rapid Support Forces have control over Sudan's gold mines and smuggle it to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). According to General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the Sudanese Armed Forces, this is sufficient evidence to accuse the United Arab Emirates of intervening and aiding the Rapid Support Forces with drones. However, the United Arab Emirates has denied any involvement.

Libyan support also has been important. Additionally, the Sudanese Armed Forces has also alleged Libyan General Khalifa Haftar, commander of the Libyan National Army, of supplying the Rapid Support Forces with weapons and soldiers. In June 2025, these allegations of an alliance between Libya and the Rapid Support Forces were reignited after the Rapid Support Forces captured territory that borders Libya.<sup>21</sup>

Simultaneously, Egypt is accused of aiding the Sudanese Armed Forces who control most of the northern and eastern regions of Sudan that border Egypt. The Nile River is a significant resource in this alliance since the Sudanese Armed Forces have maintained complete control over Sudan's part of the river in the northernmost region of the country. In March 2025, the Sudanese Armed Forces took control of the central parts of Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan where the Republican Palace and other government buildings are located, from the Rapid Support Forces who maintained control of the city since the start of the war.<sup>22</sup>

Subsequently, the Rapid Support Forces

<sup>21</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> Booty, Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', *ibid*.

retaliated by launching drone strikes on Port Sudan, the Sudanese Armed Forces' headquarters near the Red Sea.<sup>23</sup> The battle of Khartoum is among the most important battles for both warring parties and will be a major advantage for whichever side has complete control of it. The Republican Palace, also known as the Presidential Palace, is the official residence of the president of Sudan. However, the ongoing civil war has left the building and city in complete ruin and devastation.

## RSF besieges El Fasher



The RSF attacks to drive out civilian residents, in their on-going two-year siege of El Fasher.

Source: 'Halting the catastrophic battle for Sudan's El Fasher', *International Crisis Group*, 24 June 2024,

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/sudan/b198-halting-catastrophic-battle-sudans-el-fasher>

Delivering another blow to the Rapid Support Forces, the Sudanese Armed Forces recaptured Gezira state from the RSF.<sup>24</sup> Before the Rapid Support Forces captured the city of Wad Madani in the Gezira state

in December 2023, the area was considered a refuge for Sudanese civilians who were escaping the war in other regions of the country. According to the United Nations, 250,000 civilians in the Gezira state were forced to flee in late 2023 after the Rapid Support Forces' advances in the area, and it is unlikely the Gezira state will return to being a safe haven.<sup>25</sup>

**El-Fasher:** The most recent developments in the war have located both of the warring parties in an intense battle in El-Fasher, the last city in the Darfur region that the Sudanese Armed Forces have maintained control over. The Rapid Support Forces have launched full-scale attacks on El-Fasher with the hopes of seizing the city and officially controlling all of the Darfur region.<sup>26</sup>

## North Darfur: Scene of some of the worst violence



They have been accused of burning and looting villages as well as assaulting, detaining, and killing civilians in El-Fasher, including murdering over 100 civilians in one of their attacks between 10-13 April 2025. On 1 June 2025, the Sudanese Armed Forces allegedly attacked a market, killed

<sup>23</sup> Alex de Waal, 'Sudan in danger of self-destructing as conflict and famine reign', *BBC News*, 16 June 2025,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg717385nj7o>

<sup>24</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', op.cit.

<sup>25</sup> Zeinab Mohammed Salih, 'Sudan conflict: Hundreds of thousands flee Wad Madani safe-haven -

UN', *BBC News*, 19 December 2023,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-67754921>

<sup>26</sup> Anne Soy, 'I lost a baby and then rescued a child dodging air strikes in Sudan's civil war', *BBC News*, 1 July 2025,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvgee0q590qo>



15 civilians, and injured dozens in Al Koma, an area located 80 kilometers from El-Fasher. A day later, on 2 June 2025, an attack was carried out against a humanitarian aid convoy consisting of 15 trucks from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

This attack resulted in five deaths, dozens injured, and destroyed trucks, but it is currently unclear which side is responsible. Both parties have blocked food, aid, and humanitarian supplies into the area which has caused an overwhelming impact on hospitals, severe famine, and displacement among the civilians in the area.<sup>27</sup> The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has urged an investigation into both attacks and reiterated the importance of both parties following international humanitarian law by protecting civilians, infrastructure, and ensuring the transportation of humanitarian aid and supplies.

## SAF victorious



Sudan Armed Forces soldiers celebrate their conquest of an oil refinery in North Bahri, Sudan, 25 January 2025. *Source:* 'Sudan's military touts field advances, breaks RSF siege of crucial city', *Associated Press*, 23 February 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/sudan-military-touts-field-advances-breaks-rsf-siege-of-crucial-city/7985349.html>

<sup>27</sup> Booty, 'Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening', op.cit.

## Role of the United Nations

The United Nations has maintained a focus on the Darfur region since the start of the 2003 conflict and has feared the continuation of Darfur's humanitarian crisis throughout the current civil war. The United Nations overall role consists of mediating the conflict, seeking peace through comprehensive solutions, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and relief, and implementing long-term strategies for reconstruction. The Security Council receives consistent briefings on the situation in Sudan from other agencies of the United Nations. These briefings include recent developments regarding the state of the conflict, information related to the humanitarian crisis, and the United Nations progress on resolving the situation and whether different approaches are needed.<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, the Security Council has mainly struggled with promoting accountability, justice, and prosecuting the perpetrators of the crimes that have been committed in Darfur since 2003. According to the Council, the ineffectiveness of the agency's ability to seek accountability and its failure to promote justice during the 2003 conflict has significantly contributed to the continuation of those same crimes in the current conflict. While the United Nations has maintained close cooperation with the International Criminal Court in issuing arrest warrants throughout both conflicts, most of the warrants remain outstanding. The Security Council faces the unfortunate reality of prolonging Sudan's humanitarian crisis if it maintains an ineffective response.

Regarding the International Criminal Court, the Security Council has recently sought to strengthen the Court's cooperation between

<sup>28</sup> United Nations, 'In Focus: Sudan Conflict', *UN News*, <https://news.un.org/en/focus/sudan-conflict>



Sudanese authorities and organizations that are involved in the situation. This intends to prioritize more resources towards the outstanding arrest warrants and the International Criminal Court's ongoing investigations.

Additionally, the Security Council believes cooperation between Sudanese authorities and the International Criminal Court would facilitate the safety and security of the Court's ability to collect necessary evidence for the investigations. For most of the war, the devastation in El-Fasher has created a dangerous environment in Sudan which has presented challenges for the International Criminal Court in advancing its investigations. Specifically, the Court has struggled with resource constraints, limited access to key information sources, and difficulty in establishing contact with witnesses or survivors in Darfur.

The Security Council also faces divisions regarding the Court's actions related to the conflict in Darfur. Members of the Security Council who strongly support the Court's work in Darfur related to pursuing arrest warrants and investigations include: Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. These members have endorsed the actions taken by the International Criminal Court and the plan to improve cooperation between the Court and Sudanese authorities.

However, the members who oppose the Court's efforts include: Algeria, China, Pakistan, Russia, Somalia, and the United States. Russian President Vladimir Putin has especially vocalized his opposition to the International Criminal Court's efforts in Darfur by accusing the court of political bias.

Putin's criticism of the Court comes after it issued arrest warrants for him on 17 March

2023 for allegedly committing war crimes and crimes against children in Ukraine. Algeria, China, Pakistan, and Somalia have expressed support for Sudan's existing judicial institutions and legal frameworks to lead the investigations as opposed to the International Criminal Court. Nonetheless, the Security Council cannot properly fulfill its obligations to promote justice and accountability amidst divisions within the Council and the International Criminal Court's numerous incapacibilities.

## Recent UN Security Council Resolutions

Recent Security Council resolutions show the limits of what the international community has been able to achieve. Unable to find agreement among the five permanent powers, the veto powers, the Security Council has only been able to agree on secondary issues, such *fact-finding* missions to establish what is going on, *humanitarian assistance* to civilians caught in the fighting, and *trade sanctions* to discourage the war effort. The most prominent sanctions are the arms embargo and selective trade sanctions, but these resolutions have been ignored by important states backing one side or the other.

### United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2725 (8 March 2024):

This resolution extended the work of the Panel of Experts in Darfur until 12 March 2025. The panel was established in resolution 1591 in 2005 during the previous conflict in 2003. The panel's work consists of assessing the United Nations progress towards mediating the conflict between all parties, promoting stability in the region, and investigations regarding the violations of international humanitarian law.

In this resolution, the Security Council also expressed concern related to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, including the

reports of gender-based crimes and attacks against civilians. The Council determined that the situation in Sudan threatens international peace and reiterated the importance of the warring parties abiding by international humanitarian law and human rights.<sup>29</sup>

## **United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2736 (13 June 2024):**

This resolution, authored by the United Kingdom, was significant in relation to the developments of the conflict in El-Fasher. The Security Council demanded a halt to the Rapid Support Forces' advances in El-Fasher and a de-escalation between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces. The resolution was adopted by 14 votes in favor with Russia abstaining.

The Security Council reiterated its support for upholding international humanitarian law, and it urged all parties involved in the conflict to facilitate the passage and distribution of humanitarian aid and relief in the area. The Council urged for regional cooperation from organizations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States to promote peace. The resolution included the possibility of securing an immediate ceasefire in El-Fasher to de-escalate and prevent further civilian deaths. The Council also reaffirmed its support of Sudanese authorities increasing their cooperation with the United Nations.<sup>30</sup>

## **United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2750 (11 September 2024):** This resolution involves the

extension of sanctions against Sudan, which includes travel bans, arms embargo, and asset freezes, until 12 September 2025. These extensions are significant because the arms embargo restricts the trafficking of weapons into the region, and the travel bans and asset freezes punish the perpetrators of the conflict. This unanimous resolution exemplifies commitments towards de-escalation, addressing the humanitarian crisis, and ensuring the protection of civilians.<sup>31</sup>

## **Major Country and Bloc Positions**

**African Union (AU):** The African Union and its 55 member states have labored to resolve the Sudan civil war, working to create opportunities for peaceful settlement, avoiding pressure to pick sides. But the AU also needs to help prevent the Sudan civil war from spilling over Sudan's borders, endangering the security of neighboring states, all AU members.

After the Rapid Support Forces announced their plan to establish a parallel government in 2025, the African Union declared that it would not recognize any unofficial governments in Sudan.<sup>32</sup> The African Union also condemned both warring parties and their attacks. Furthermore, the United Nations has urged the African Union to coordinate with other organizations in the region, such as the Arab League, and play a

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Security Council, 'S/RES/2725 (2024)', *United Nations*, 8 March 2024, [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2725\(2024\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2725(2024))

<sup>30</sup> United Nations, 'Adopting Resolution 2736 (2024) with 14 Votes in Favour, Russian Federation Abstaining, Security Council Demands Rapid Support Forces Halt Siege of El Fasher, Sudan', *United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 13 June 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15728.doc.htm>

<sup>31</sup> United Nations, 'Security Council Extends Sanctions Regime against Sudan, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2750 (2024)', *United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 11 September 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15817.doc.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Al Jazeera, 'African Union warns of Sudan partition risk', *Al Jazeera*, 12 March 2025, [African Union warns of Sudan partition risk | African Union News | Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/12/african-union-warns-of-sudan-partition-risk)

leading role in brokering peace.<sup>33</sup> Sudan has been a member of the African Union since 1963 and a member of the Arab League since 1956.

The member states of the African Union are not prepared to intervene in the war militarily, although they might eventually contribute peacekeeping troops, if that becomes possible. The African countries understand they must live with the Sudan that emerges from the war, regardless of who rules. For this reason, the African Union and its member states refuse to act aggressively against one side or the others, preferring to offer to support peace negotiations. The African Union also coordinates humanitarian assistance to the millions of international refugees that fled Sudan and live in camps and cities of neighboring African states.

**Arab League (AL):** Since Sudan is a member in the Arab League, the organization and its 22 member states have tried to support mediating the conflict. Alongside the African Union, the Arab League expressed their opposition towards the Rapid Support Forces' plan to establish a parallel government which would challenge the legitimacy of Sudan's government.<sup>34</sup> But like the African Union, the Arab League is very hesitant to criticize its members, including Sudan. Many Arab League member states favor one side or the other, further limiting what the organization and its member can do. Like the member states of the African Union, Arab League member states stress humanitarian

assistance, support for negotiations, and might be willing to offer peacekeeping staff.

**China:** Always hesitant to intervene in the affairs of a sovereign state, which it considers beyond the legitimate authority of the UN, China support UN action, but tries to limit its ambition. In debating Resolution 2750, the Chinese ambassador addressed the Security Council and explained how the country supports extending the sanctions against Sudan, especially the arms embargo, to prevent the further circulation of weapons and mediate the conflict. The ambassador also stressed China's commitment to urging the warring parties to uphold international humanitarian law.<sup>35</sup>

China's position is extremely influential, considering the country's strong economic and trade relations with Sudan and the rest of neighboring Africa, as well as China's role as one of Sudan's main trade partners, a major buyer of Sudanese oil, raw materials and agricultural products.<sup>36</sup> China supports humanitarian assistance and, unlike Russia, strongly supports arms embargoes. It also welcomes peacekeeping intervention by regional organizations, especially the African Union, which it might finance.

**European Union (EU):** For the 27 member states of the EU, universal principles of international humanitarian law matter above all. The EU has led establishment of sanctions against Sudanese leaders, including the rival generals. It also expects the warring sides to yield in peace negotiations to a democratically elected

<sup>33</sup> United Nations, 'Adopting Resolution 2736 (2024) with 14 Votes in Favour, Russian Federation Abstaining, Security Council Demands Rapid Support Forces Halt Siege of El Fasher, Sudan', *United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 13 June 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15728.doc.htm>

<sup>34</sup> Sudan Tribune, AU, Arab League, Saudis condemn RSF-led government in Sudan', *Sudan Tribune*, 29

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<sup>35</sup> United Nations, 'Security Council Extends Sanctions Regime against Sudan, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2750 (2024)', *United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, 11 September 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15817.doc.htm>

<sup>36</sup> 'China-Sudan relations', *Wikipedia*, [China-Sudan relations - Wikipedia](#)

government. The EU member states believe the Security Council and UN humanitarian agencies must play a prominent role, and only they can lead settlement of the war. The EU and its member states are the most important source of funding for humanitarian assistance to Sudanese displaced and refugees. It also leads demands to prosecute war crimes by the warring sides.

The Council of the European Union has imposed and extended its own sanctions against Sudan, including asset freezes and travel bans. Between 22 January 2024 and 24 June 2024, the Council imposed its first sets of sanctions against several entities with connections to the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces. On 8 October 2024, the Council decided to extend these sanctions until 10 October 2025.<sup>37</sup> The European Union has maintained its support for the adherence of international humanitarian law and an end to the conflict.

**Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):** The UN's largest voting bloc is a major force in the Security Council, where its member states have several rotating seats. They lack a veto, but have substantial numbers. For the NAM, the basic issue always is strengthening their national sovereignty, which is weak. They look upon UN action in any conflict as a possible precedent for action against themselves someday. This makes them cautious, and naturally sympathetic toward the position of China.

The NAM supports humanitarian action, and sometimes sanctions and fact finding, but generally opposes foreign intervention unless it comes at the behest of the

country's government. It is suspicious of war crimes prosecution and the International Criminal Court, worried it could be used against their own leaders. But it also needs to help prevent the Sudan civil war from spilling over Sudan's borders, endangering the security of neighboring states, all NAM members.

**Russia:** Above all, Russia seeks its own national advantage through resolution of the war. Russia takes no clear position on which side should win. And it refuses to support resolutions that would make it difficult to support the victorious side, whichever that might be. Russia supports humanitarian assistance and some sanctions, but seems to be waiting for a clearer resolution of the fighting before making its preferences clear.

Along with Russian President Vladimir Putin criticizing the International Criminal Court's role in Sudan, Russia has maintained a confusing stance related to the war in Sudan. The Russian Federation was the only veto against the Security Council resolution 2736. Although the resolution was still adopted on 13 June 2024, the other members of the Security Council believed it was an opportunity for the Council to unify behind its primary goal of ending the conflict.

Russia's veto is significant because the resolution sought an immediate ceasefire. However, after Russia's deputy United Nations envoy vetoed the resolution, Russia's deputy ambassador to the United Nations addressed the council and explained that Moscow supported a ceasefire in Sudan.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, Russian mercenary group, Wagner, has been accused of

<sup>37</sup> Council of the European Union, 'Sudan: EU sanctions regime prolonged for a further year', *Council of the European Union*, 8 October 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/10/08/sudan-eu-sanctions-regime-prolonged-for-a-further-year/>

<sup>38</sup> Aljazeera, 'Russia vetoes Sudan ceasefire resolution at UN Security Council', *Aljazeera*, 18 Nov 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/18/russia-vetoes-sudan-ceasefire-resolution-at-un-security-council>

interfering in the conflict by arming the Rapid Support Forces with weapons, including missiles and drones.<sup>39</sup> Overall, due to a combination of these contrasting actions and statements, it is difficult to determine Russia's clear position on the situation.

**United Kingdom (UK):** Above all, the United Kingdom seeks a peaceful end of the conflict and transition to democratic rule. The UK works closely with the European Union to reduce human suffering and enforce sanctions against the warring sides. Although it has strong ties to Sudan, dating from its years of colonial rule, it is not willing to contribute in major way to a peacekeeping force, preferring to devote its army to meeting challenges on NATO's eastern borders.

In addition to authoring resolution 2736, the United Kingdom has played a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid since the war began. On 17 November 2024, the United Kingdom announced an increase in aid, approximately USD 150 million, and how it would support the United Nations in Sudan along with other international organizations.<sup>40</sup> While addressing the United Nations Security Council 2024, the United Kingdom stressed the urgency of ensuring humanitarian aid reaches Sudanese civilians and encouraged domestic and

international cooperation to create more centers for aid distribution.<sup>41</sup>

**United States (US):** Under President Biden, the American approach to Sudan was largely humanitarian and based on international law. Under President Trump, it is less focused on penalizing the warring armies, and more interest in investment opportunities with the eventual winner, keeping its distance diplomatically for now.<sup>42</sup>

The United States had a significant role in providing humanitarian aid and coordinating peace talks between both sides of the war and regional organizations. In 2024 under President Biden, the United States ambassador to the United Nations announced more than USD 200 million in humanitarian aid related to the crisis in Sudan.<sup>43</sup> Recently, the United States has imposed sanctions on Sudan following the conclusion of a 2024 investigation regarding the Sudanese Armed Forces' usage of chemical weapons, specifically the involvement of chlorine gas. Included in these sanctions are limits on US exports. The government of Sudan and the Sudanese Armed Forces have denied the accusations and stated that they are false.<sup>44</sup> Currently, the United States seeks to emphasize serious diplomatic relations to end the conflict.

<sup>39</sup> Nima Elbagir, et. al., 'Exclusive: Evidence emerges of Russia's Wagner arming militia leader battling Sudan's army', *CNN*, 21 April 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/20/africa/wagner-sudan-russia-libya-intl/index.html>

<sup>40</sup> United Kingdom, 'UK doubles aid for Sudan and neighbouring countries facing the worst humanitarian crisis of the decade', *Press Release*, 17 November 2024, [UK doubles aid for Sudan and neighbouring countries facing the worst humanitarian crisis of the decade - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-doubles-aid-for-sudan-and-neighbouring-countries-facing-the-worst-humanitarian-crisis-of-the-decade)

<sup>41</sup> United Kingdom, 'The warring parties must end Sudan's suffering in 2025: UK statement at the UN Security Council', *Speech*, 19 December 2024, [The warring parties must end Sudan's suffering in 2025: UK statement at the UN Security Council - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-warring-parties-must-end-sudan-s-suffering-in-2025-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council)

<sup>42</sup> 'Trump vows new US push for peace in Sudan', *Sudan Tribune*, 9 June 2025, <https://sudantribune.com/article302705/>

<sup>43</sup> Jade Lozada, 'US announces \$203 million in new aid to war-torn Sudan amid major humanitarian crisis', *AP News*, 18 July 2024, [US announces \\$203 million in new aid to war-torn Sudan amid major humanitarian crisis | AP News](https://apnews.com/article/us-announces-203-million-in-new-aid-to-war-torn-sudan-amid-major-humanitarian-crisis-1234567890)

<sup>44</sup> Simon Lewis, et. al., 'US to impose sanctions on Sudan after finding government used chemical weapons', *Reuters*, 23 May 2025, [US to impose sanctions on Sudan after finding government used chemical weapons | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-to-impose-sanctions-sudan-after-finding-government-used-chemical-weapons-2025-05-23/)



## Some Possible Proposals for Action

Current wars pose special challenges for the Security Council. In Gaza, Myanmar and Sudan, it is limited in its ability to respond. The strong national interests of the rival Permanent Members limits the ability of the Security Council to act. As a result, it tends to focus on what the Permanent Five can agree on, typically humanitarian action, sometimes sanctions. But it is generally unable to agree on aggressive action like military intervention, support for one side or the other, or a peacekeeping process.

Although the United Nations has a leading role in efforts related to de-escalating the conflict, coordinating humanitarian relief, and cooperating with the International Criminal Court, the war still persists. This suggests the need for alternative solutions and strategies, but it is important to recognize that the United Nations and other international organizations are facing immense difficulties in resolving the latest of several Sudanese conflicts. From 1955 to present-day, the country has existed in a recurring cycle of political and social turmoil, devastation, humanitarian crises, and political instability. As a result, the United Nations efforts in Sudan have faced constant setbacks after each conflict.

So far, the United Nations has collaborated with the International Criminal Court on the ongoing investigations and outstanding arrest warrants, coordinated humanitarian aid, extended the organization's previous efforts related to the 2003 Darfur conflict, orchestrated a weeklong ceasefire, and extended the sanctions on Sudan. Some alternative approaches include:

**Continue fact finding:** When agreement is difficult, often the best the Security Council members can agree on is to continue studying the issue. Fact finding is important

for effective humanitarian assistance—where are the refugees and displaced?—and for eventual prosecution of war criminals—where are the worst outrages?

But even a fact finding resolution can be hard to pass. There will be sharp disagreement on the powers of the fact finders. Are they authorized to investigate in dangerous, contested regions, near the fighting? Or must they work from the safety of their desks, far away? Can they interview affecting people or not? And who are the fact finders? Choosing the staff is controversial, whether they are independent experts or chosen by their governments for assured loyalty and predictability. Fact-finding is not a neutral activity; it can affect the war's course and outcome. So member states want to make sure it serves their own interests.

**Demand peace negotiations:** Security Council initiatives have done little to mediate between General Burhan and General Hemedti, bring them to a negotiating table. Both men control equally powerful forces with enough resources, so not much could truly incentivize them to stop fighting. This is why the United Nations should be more aggressive in terms of the peace talks and negotiations. Ending the humanitarian crisis is the top priority and, realistically, it partially involves the cooperation between both of the warring parties.

Effective demands for negotiations would require the support of all five Permanent Members, as well as most or all of regional states supporting the warring sides. Without their support, sanctions will be ineffective and Security council demands easily ignore. This means any resolution must have strong incentives for those countries to cooperate. But convincing China and Russia especially, as well some of the rotating member states, will be difficult. They prefer to wait and see

how the conflict develops, and probably will support the winning side.

Demanding negotiations is dangerous for the Security Council. If the demands fail, if they are ignored by the warring sides and their supporters, the harm to the UN's reputation and authority will be immense.

### **Establish a peacekeeping force in**

**readiness:** Instead of demanding peace where there isn't any, the Security Council can prepare for when it finally does arrive. Having an international peacekeeping force ready would help ensure the survival of an eventual peace agreement.

There is much to do in preparation. Given Sudan's massive territory and deep rivalries, a peacekeeping force would have to be large, well supplied and well-equipped. Several tens of thousands of personnel would be required. It would be very expensive, beyond the reach of neighboring states or the African Union alone. It would require pledges of personnel from traditional peacekeeping troop donors such as Bangladesh, the European Union, Fiji, India and Nepal, and large-scale financing. But the wealthiest countries committed to Sudan are not neutral; they favor one side, and might not be ideal peacekeeping financers.

### **Address divisions within the Security**

**Council:** One of the challenges that the United Nations is facing exists within the organization. Members of the Security Council are divided on the International Criminal Court's crucial work in Sudan. Some members support the Court's work while others do not. The Council's inability to unify behind the Court poses the risk of further inefficiency and prolonging the war and crisis because it prevents the Court from having the adequate political backing and resources of major countries, such as the United States and China, who are positioned against the Court. The Security Council should address these divisions and find common ground immediately because the Court's role is integral amidst the serious reports of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sudan.

**Discuss long-term strategies:** Since Sudan has faced recurring conflicts, the United Nations, as well as the Arab League and African Union, should shift towards creating a long-term, comprehensive plan for ensuring peace and stability in the country. In certain situations, short-term strategies are necessary and efficient, but given Sudan's history, the United Nations and regional organizations should shift towards placing an emphasis on ensuring stability for the future of Sudan as well as the present to finally end the country's cycle of conflict.

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