TMUN26

Research Report

Committee: United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

Topic: Protecting the rights of civilians in Sudan

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Position: Deputy Chair

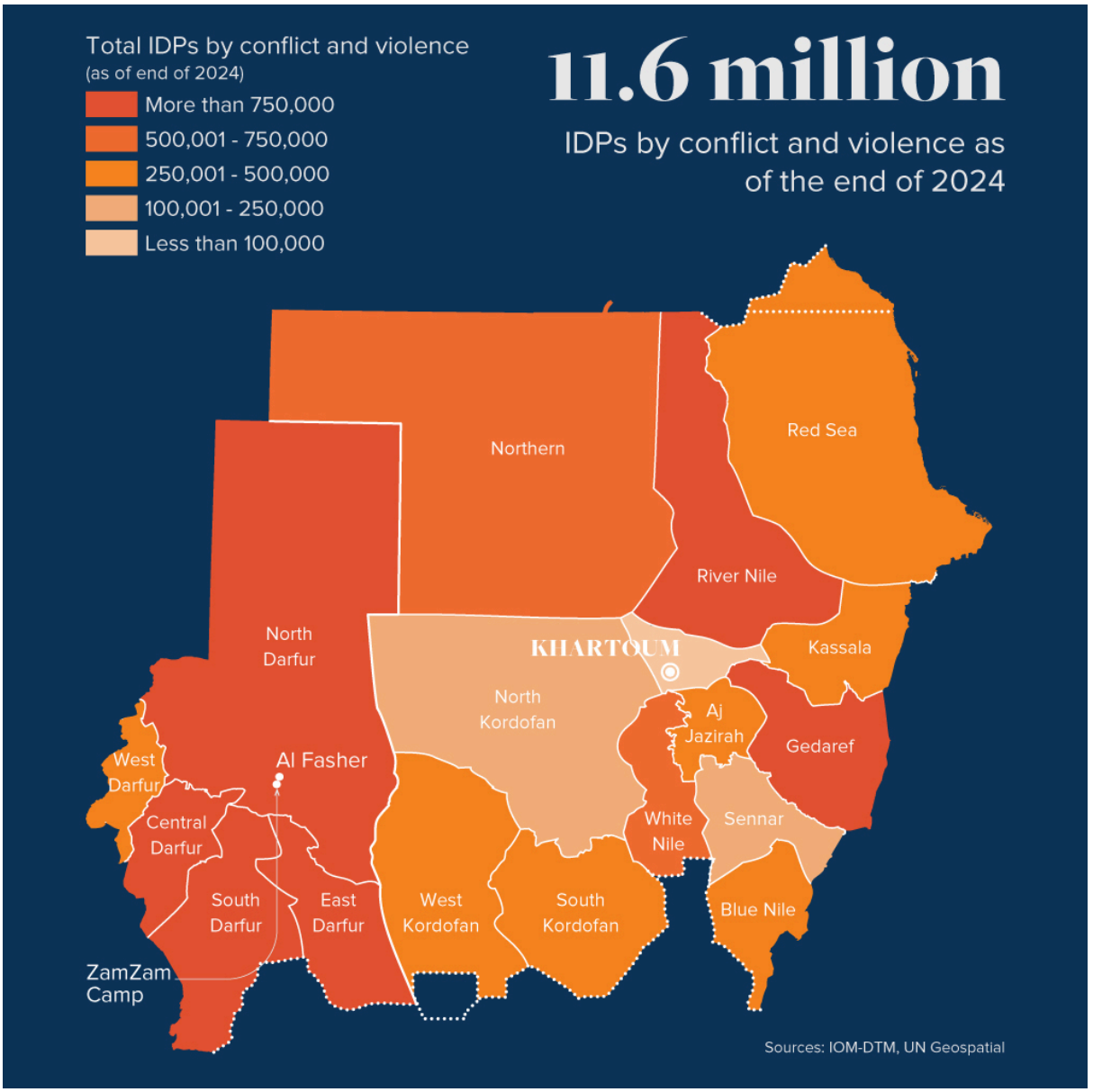
Introduction

Since April 15th 2023, Sudan has been undergoing devastating violent conflicts between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) which is a powerful organisation led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as “Hemedti”. What began as a struggle for political and military power quickly developed into a nationwide issue, primarily affecting the regions; Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan and Gezira. The Sudanese Civil War has created one of the world’s largest displacements and humanitarian crises of the 21st century. The scale of the humanitarian crisis is severe, with around 150,000 civilians reported dead, 770,000 children facing risk of death and around 4 million more suffering from malnutrition. Civilians have endured killings, sexual violence, unlawful detention, torture, food insecurity, destruction of homes, restrictions on assistance and violence. The UN has repeatedly documented violations of the international human rights laws and international humanitarian laws by parties in the conflict.

The roots of the current crisis goes beyond the outbreak of the war in 2023. Sudan has already experienced decades of political instability, authoritarian rule, economic difficulties and armed conflict. After the removal of Omar al-Bashir in 2019, Sudan entered a transitional period which was intended to be led towards a civilian government. However, the disagreements between military and civilian parties eventually contributed to the October 2021 military coup. SAF, RSF which had previously cooperated with one another in the political transition. Both competed for political influence and control over the country’s security forces. A major disagreement formed over the transitional phase to civilian rule, particularly with how and when the RSF would be integrated into regular armed forces. These disputes would eventually culminate in the outbreak in April of 2023.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) plays an important role in addressing the consequences of the conflict. Delegates should investigate any alleged violations, documented abuses and encourage states to uphold human rights laws and coordinate with one another. The main question for this topic is not just how

to end the Sudanese Civil War, but how the international community can work together to protect civilians while ongoing issues continue.



Internally displaced persons (IDPs) across Sudan by conflict and violence at the end of 2024. Source: IOM-DTM and UN Geospatial. (2024)

Definition of Key Terms

1. **Civilian:** Person who is not a member of an armed force or organised armed group which participates in hostilities. Civilians must not be deliberately

targeted under international humanitarian law. Losing this protection only for such time as they directly participating in hostilities.

2. **International Humanitarian Law (IHL):** The body of the law regulating conduct during an armed conflict. It is built on the principles of distinction , proportionality in attack, and also the legal standards conducted by SAF and RSF.
3. **Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** A person who is forced to flee their homes due to some sort of conflict. But still remains within their country's borders. Sudan, for example, has approximately 6.49 million IDP as of 2026.
4. **Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV):** Acts of violence committed due to a person's gender, including rape, sexual assault and forced marrige. Women and girls are usually the target of this conflict, notably in Darfur.
5. **Accountability:** The process of investigating, prosecuting individuals who are responsible for human rights violations, through national courts, the International Criminal Court (ICC) or UNHRC with mandated mechanisms.
6. **Independent International Fact FInding Mission for Sudan:** UNHRC mandated body holding responsibility for investigation and documenting factors. Working with alleged human rights violations and abuses committed during the conflict, including SGBV attacks.
7. **Janjaweed:** An Arab aligned militia which operated in Darfur since the 2000s, they are accused of widespread attacks against civilians during the Darfur conflict which began in 2003. The RSF later developed from Janjaweed's structure and became its own independent formal paramilitary forces under Sudanese states.
8. **Partisan:** A term generally referring to a bias for a particular party or cause. In this report's context it is used to describe how the RSF, having come from Janjaweed militia structures, became a formally recognised armed force which aligned with Sudanese states.
9. **Masalit people:** An ethnic group based in Western Darfur regions, particularly surrounding the El Geneia area. During the conflict, the Masalit people have been significantly affected and targeted in attacks, carried out along ethnic

lines. Most notably during RSF's capture of El Geneina in June of 2023, where thousands of Masaliit civilians were killed.

Background Information

Historical and political context

This present crisis cannot be told without Sudan's long history of battles with political instabilities and armed conflicts. Omar al-Bashir rose to power through a military coup in 1989, remaining president for almost 30 years. His governance faced armed opposition and criticisms internationally, especially over violence in Darfur. In 2003, conflict in Darfur escalated between the government and armed rebel groups. Government-aligned Janjaweed militias were accused of attacks against common civilians. RSF later developed from the Janjaweed structure and became formally partisan in Sudan.

Omar al-Bashir was overthrown by mass protests in 2019 and transitional arrangements involving military and civilians were established, creating a sense of hope for a democratic transition. However, relations between civilian political groups and militariats remained extremely fragile and in October 2021, both the SAF and RSF participated in military coups which would disrupt the terse transition towards democracy. The United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IDAG) subsequently supported the attempts to restore the political transitional progress which culminated in a framework agreement in December 2022, however major disagreements remain to be unresolved.

Outbreak of the conflict

In 2023, both SAF and RSF possessed substantial military capabilities and heavy political influence, causing the conflict to escalate and rivalries to grow. A major disagreement concerned the proposed integration of RSF into regular armed forces. Both parties disagreed over the timetable and conditions of said integration, while the

wider political transition remained full of uncertainty. Tensions would grow increasingly as both forces mobilise around Khartoum and other strategic locations.

On April 15th 2023, fighting broke out between SAF and RSF in Khartoum and Merowe before spreading rapidly, soon spreading way beyond the capital. Into Darfur, Kordofan as well as the Blue Nile state. Displaced civilians face shortages of clean water, food and medicine, while damaged roads have prevented access to healthcare and humanitarian assistance. Many have also been separated from their families, livelihoods and lost their homes. Facing increased risks of injury, diseases and violence. The United Nations News reported that roughly 14 millions innocent lives were either displaced or trapped within Sudan.

Expansion into Darfur

Darfur has been one of the most severely affected regions. The conflict in Darfur has also worsened existing ethnic and political tensions, increasing the risk of mass atrocities. The RSF and allied armed groups captured many major cities in Darfur solely in 2023, including El Geneia, Nyala and Zalingei. The United Nations documented attacks against civilians in West Darfur, including killings that were ethnically motivated. Thousands of people were killed in attacks surrounding the El Geneia region, particularly members of the Masalit community.

This situation later became serious around the capital of northern Darfur; El Fasher. El Fasher became an important center for the displaced civilians from other parts of Darfur. In 2024, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 2736, which detailed the demand for RSF's halt with its siege of El Fasher and calling on all pirates to protect civilians and allow humanitarian assistance to those who are in need.

Human rights violations

The conflict has produced many counts of human rights concerns. The United Nations Rights Office has documented sexual violence, killings, indiscriminate attacks, forced displacements, arbitrary detention and recruitment of children. The RSF has been accused of large-scaled attacks on civilians, including ethnically motivated killing, gender-based sexual violence and forced displacements, particularly in Darfur.

While the SAF has been also accused of serious acts of violations, including artillery attacks, air strikes, as well as attacks which have damaged civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and homes.

Explosive weapons both air-delideered and ground launched, have been used in densely populated areas. In Khartoum, airstrikes and artillery attacks damaged civilian infrastructures and residential areas. The destruction of hospitals and medical buildings have affected beyond individuals casualties, preventing other civilians from receiving treatment or help. The loss of electricity, medical services and clean water has increased the vulnerability of civilians.

Displacement and Refugees

One of the most visible consequences of war is mass displacement. It is estimated that approximately 14 million people have been forced to flee their homes since the beginning of the Sudanese conflict. Those include roughly 7 million IDPs within the borders of Sudan and several millions more who have crossed beyond international borders.

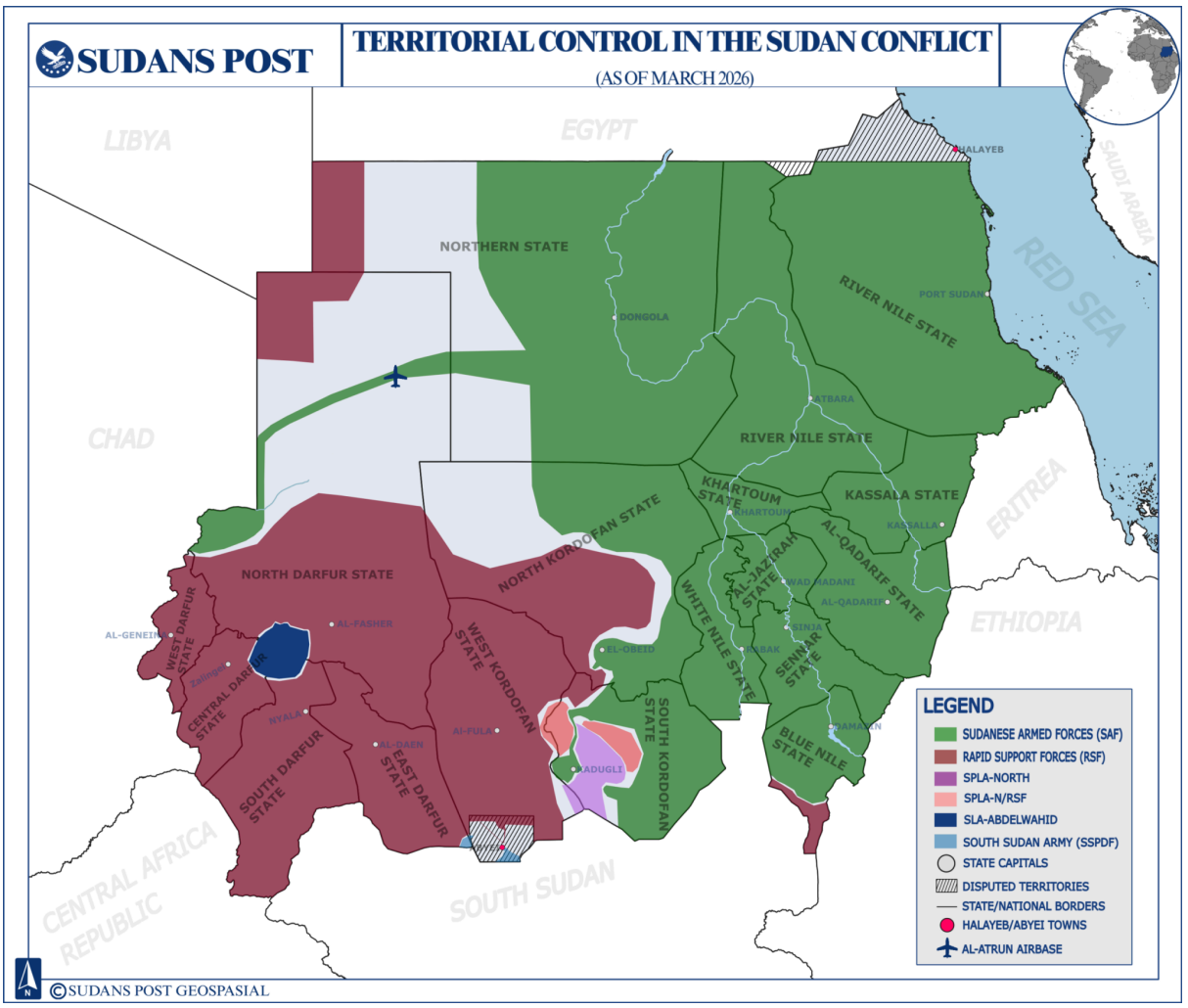
Sudan's neighbouring countries therefore would be directly affected by the conflict. Countries such as Chad, Egypt, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Libya and the Central African Republic have all been affected by this conflict, having received refugees and others fleeing from Sudan. Chad in particular has receded more than a million Sudanese refugees, its primary reason being the geographical closeness of both countries. This places significant pressure on water, food supplies, healthcare and housing in eastern Chad regions. Since the conflict, more than 940,000 Sudanese refugees have faced difficulties accessing services, registering for assistance or securing legal status. Children who are born during said conflict may also face difficulties obtaining birth registrations and nationality documents.

Displacement also creates additional humanitarian rights risks. People who leave their homes may lose access to education, healthcare, employment and documents. Women and children may face the risks of trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation. Internally displaced people may be unable to return to their homes due to them being destroyed or the areas being unsafe to enter.

Statelessness and legal issues are also concerns for the displaced civilians. The loss of identity documents and difficulties registering births will prevent individuals, mainly children, from proving their nationality. This can restrict their access to education, healthcare, employment and other services. While increasing their vulnerability to discrimination, exploitation and trafficking. Refugees also face difficulties surrounding the obtaining of legal residency, accessing asylum procedures or reuniting with their family. Therefore, protecting the displaced population requires improving access to legal documentation, birth registration and legal assistance to ensure their fundamental rights are upheld.

Food insecurity and Humanitarian conditions

The Sudanese civil war has severely damaged Sudan's agricultural production, markets, infrastructure and transportation networks. According to the FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation, Sudan's total cereal production in 2025 estimated at 5.2 million tonnes has a 22% decrease compared to 2024 and 19% across the five year average. The Integrated Food Phase Classification (IPC) further reported that approximately 19.5 million people, roughly 41% of the population faced acute food insecurity between February and May 2026. This includes around 5 million experiencing emergency levels of hunger and 135,000 facing catastrophic food insecurity. Furthermore, 14 areas across North Darfur, South Darfur and South Kordofan were identified as being at risk of famine. Such shortages have exactly overbated by disrupted supply chains, high agricultural input costs, restricted humanitarian access and the displacement of farming communities. When civilians can't access sufficient food, clean water or medical care. Humanitarian organisations such as the United Nations World Food Programme, the World Health Organisation, UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross require safe and consistent access to affected populations, while parties involved with the conflict mustn't obstruct the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance.



Territorial control in Sudan as of March 2026. Source: Sudan's Post Geospatial. (March 2026)

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Core Conflict Actors:

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

The SAF; Sudanese Armed Forces, represent the registered military forces of the Republic of Sudan. As of August 2026, they are led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and headquartered in Port Sudan, while currently have control over most parts of northern and eastern Sudan, including but not limited to major political and military centres such as Khartoum and Port Sudan. SAF presents itself as Sudan's

official national military and the principal armed force of the internationally recognised Sudanese government. The SAF support the preservation of Sudan's territorial integrity and have rejected arrangements that grant the RSF an equal political or military role, seeking complete disarmament and disbandment of the RSF. It frequently accuses the RSF of war crimes and active genocidal violence against the people of Sudan and more specifically, Darfur. However, it is important to note that neutral third party investigations such as those conducted by the United Nations have documented alleged violations; indiscriminate attacks in civilian populated areas and attacks against civilian infrastructure against the SAF.

Regarding international aid and UN interference, the SAF supports humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by the conflict but maintains that such aid should respect Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It opposes external interference that could undermine Sudan's national institutions or provide political or military advantages to the RSF. However, the SAF's position must be considered alongside concerns about restrictions on humanitarian access and allegations of violations against civilians. This raises questions about how the international community can provide assistance and protect human rights while respecting Sudan's sovereignty.

Rapid Support Force (RSF)

The RSF presents itself as opposing military rules and supporting a civilian-led democratic government that represents Sudan's ethnic diversity. It advocates political reforms and accountability, although its establishment of a parallel administration has raised concerns about Sudan's political division. Regarding international aid, the RSF has expressed support for humanitarian assistance but has faced accusations of obstructing aid deliveries and humanitarian workers in areas under its control.

The RSF has been accused of widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, particularly in Darfur. These include ethnically targeted killings of the Masalit community in El Geneina in 2023, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture, forced displacement, looting and the recruitment of children. Following its capture of El Fasher in October 2025, the UN reported mass killings,

sexual violence and other serious abuses, finding resonable grounds to believe that certain acts constituted war crimes and may have amounted to crimes against humantiy.

Regional Actors:

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

UAE is a significant external actor in Sudan's conflict due to repeated allegations of providing military and logistical support to the RSF which the UAE denies. A 2024 UN Panel allegations of provisioning military and logistical support to RSf which UAE denies. A 2024 UN Panel of Experts report documented allegations that weapons and ammunition were transported from the UAE through Airports in Chad and then moved by road into Darfur. Further investigations have raised concerns about military equipment, financing networks and foreign fighters supporting the RSF. Such assistance risks prolonging the conflict and worsening civilian suffering. However, the UAE also provides humanitarian assistance, including a 20 million grant to the WFP in February 2026 for emergency food aid. Along with funding for refugee protection, healthcare and shelter through UN agencies. Politically, the UAE maintains that it supports regional stability, humanitarian relief and a negotiated settlement while rejecting allegations of military involvement.

The Arab Republic of Egypt

The Arab Republic of Egypt wishes to support the territorial integrity, state institutions and central government of Sudan while preventing this conflict from destabilising Egypt or threatening its Nile river interests. Historically, Cairo has maintained close relations with the SAF and strongly opposes the fragmentation of Sudan or the creation of competing parallel governments. Egypt has also played a diplomatic role in attempts to resolve the conflict and is part of the US-Saudi-Egypt-UAE "Quad" seeking a humanitarian truce. However, Egypt's close relationship with SAF creates concerns about its ability to act as a neutral mediator.

Republic of South Sudan

The Republic of South Sudan is highly vulnerable to Sudan's conflict due to its geographical location, refugee movements and economic dependence on Sudan's oil export infrastructure. This disrupted oil transportation through Sudanese pipelines. Threatening Southan's source of government income. South Sudan has also received thousands of people fleeting the conflict, including both Sudanese refugees and returning South Sudanese citizens. Placing additional pressure on food supplies, healthcare and shelter. In response, Juba has worked with UN agencies, including UNHCR and WFP, in order to support the displaced population through emergency food distributions, shelters and essential services, although funding shortages remain a major challenge. South Sudan has supported its neighbouring states the AU and IGAD, advocating for ceasefires, humanitarian access and negotiations between SAF and RSF. Its priority is to restore the stability in Sudan, protect the displaced and secure the continued operation of oil export.

International and Regional Bodies

African Union (AU)

The African Union wishes for an immediate humanitarian truce leading to a permanent ceasefire and an inclusive, Sudanese led political process. The Union rejects the idea that this issue has a military solution and supports the restoration of civilian led constitutional governance. The AU emphasises on sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity preserved while also demanding humanitarian access, civilian protection as well as accountability for serious issues. However, its effectiveness is constrained by limited resources, political infighting and difficulties accessing the conflict zone within Sudan.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development is an East African regional organisation that primarily attempts to facilitate negotiations and de-escalation between the warring parties of Sudan. IGAD supports diplomatic efforts that are aimed at achieving a ceasefire and political statement, however severe disagreements among

member states and competing regional interests have limited its effectiveness. Therefore, IGAD also wants the conflict resolved without further destabilising the Horn of Africa with the preferred outcome being a return to civilian led governance.

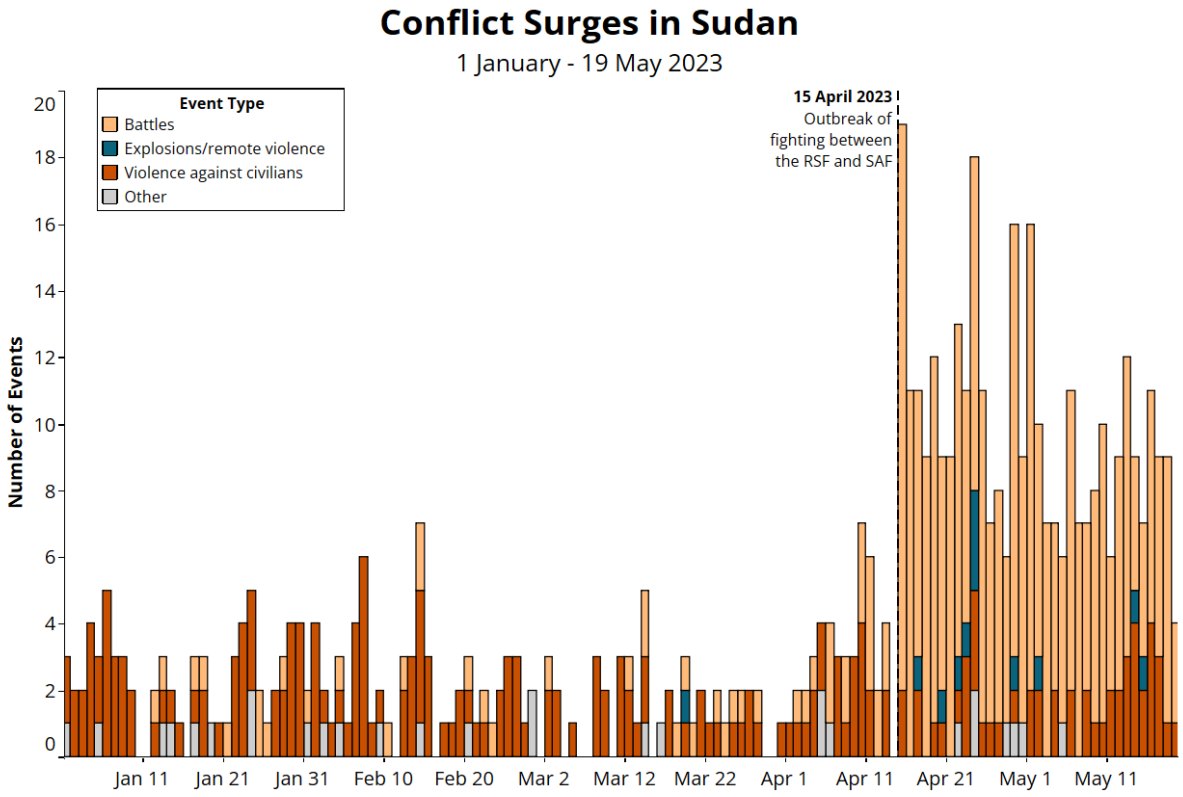
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

OHCHR supports civilian protection primarily through monitoring of human rights, investigation and international advocacy rather than directly providing resources or establishing refugee camps. Deploying or working with human rights officers to document violations, interviews survivors and witnesses, preserves evidence and publishes reports which may support future prosecutions. It also cooperates with the UN Independent International Fact Finding Mission for Sudan to investigate war crimes and human right abuse cases. Through public statements and engagement with the government, the OHCHR pressures both SAF and RSF to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, including protecting civilians and allowing humanitarian access. Although it doesn't organise military interventions it establishes refugee camps or directly distributes the emergency supplies. Working alongside agencies such as UNHCR, OCHA and UNICEF, coordinating refugee protection, humanitarian assistance, food, shelter and medical services. Its preferred approach is to strengthen civilian protection through independent monitoring, accountability and international cooperation rather than military force.

Timeline

Date	Description of Event
April, 2019	Omar al-Bashir steps down following the mass protests, beginning a transition involving civilians and military parties.
October, 2021	Both SAF and RSF participate in a military coup which disrupts Sudan’s transition.

December, 2022	Sudan's Political Framework Agreement is signed as part of attempts to restore the political transition.
15, April, 2023	War commenced in Khartoum between SAF and RSF, quickly escalating and spreading into other regions.
11, May, 2023	SAF and RSF sign the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment in order to protect civilians of Sudan.
June, 2023	RSF captures El Geneina in Western Darfur following severe violence and attack allegations.
October-November 2023	RSF continues the capturing of major cities and military positions within Darfur.
11, October, 2023	UNHRC adopts Resolution 54/2 in order to create an independent Fact-Finding mission for Sudan.
13 June 2024	The Security Council adopts Resolution 2736, demanding an end to the RSF control of El Fasher and protection for civilians and humanitarian access.



Conflict events in Sudan before and after the outbreak of fighting on 15 April 2023. (May 2023)

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

There have been repeated attempts to reduce violence and protect civilians internationally, but implementation has been a major challenge. During the early stages of the conflict, the UN, AU and IGAD repeatedly called for ceasefires and humanitarian pauses. For example, in May 2023, the SAF and RSF agreed and signed the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to protect the civilians in Sudan which included commitments to respect humanitarian law and facilitations. However, the fighting continued, showing how truly difficult it is to translate political commitments into compliances.

- Responding to the human rights and humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing armed conflict in the Sudan, 11 October 2023 (A/HRC/RES/54/2)

    - This resolution addressed the human rights consequences of the conflict and supported stronger international reporting and investigations.
- Resolution 2736 (2024), adopted by the Security Council at its 9655th meeting, on 13 June 2024 (**S/RES/2736 (2024)**)
    - Demanded that the RSF end its siege of El Fasher and also called for civilian protection, humanitarian access.
- Responding to the human rights and humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing armed conflict in the Sudan : resolution / adopted by the Human Rights Council on 9 October 2024 (**A/HRC/RES/57/2)**
    - Adopted 23-12 with few abstentions and continues monitoring of international human rights.
- Resolution 2725 (2024), adopted by the Security Council at its 9569th meeting, on 8 March 2024 The Security Council **(S/RES/2725)**
    - Resolution 2736 renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts which supported the Sudan sanctions.

Possible Solutions

Strengthening independent human rights monitoring

The UNHRC could work to strengthen independent monitoring and documentation of humanitarian right violations across Sudan. This may involve encouraging collecting information from sources such as survivors of conflict, medical workers, humanitarian organisations and local networks. While witnesses and sources could be protected from retribution. Regular public reporting on documented patterns of abuse could help maintain international attention on said crisis and build evidence that may support future accountability efforts.

Creating stronger civilian protection systems

Delegates could consider the methods of supporting civilians protection in vulnerable areas, especially locations which have experienced displacement of targeted attacks.

Some ideas may include early warning systems, improved coordination between bilateral local organisations or international agencies. Any mechanism proposed should be considered and utilised carefully in order to ensure that it remains the protective nature it was originally intended and not another actor causing the conflict

Improving humanitarian access

Encouraging parties to allow more consistent humanitarian access throughout Sudan so that organisations can deliver any necessities (such as water, medicine and food). UNHCR's 2026 response priorities have already identified the improved access to areas affected by conflict. This could be a useful starting point to any further discussion.

Education and healthcare

Hospitals, clinics, schools and other infrastructure as such need to be better protected during the conflict, delegates may wish to discuss how these areas could be further improved. The extent of these attacks and how the attacks are carried out could also be investigated and documented to prevent further negative implications. Another possible solution could be how essential services may be supported or restored such as through mobile clinics or remote education, depending on conditions of surrounding areas.

Preventing and responding to sexual violence

UNHRC could consider how to support the survivors of sexual and gender based violence. Given the excessive impact on women and girls throughout the entirety of the conflict. Delegates may need to explore ideas such as psychological or medical support, legal assistance or safe shelters. While also considering how humanitarian programmes more generally could be designed to reduce risks of exploitations or discrimination.

Protecting youth

Children affected by the conflict may need extra attention and measures of preventing recruitment by armed group forces, supporting family reunification or maintaining access to education. Consideration of how psychological support could be offered to children who have experienced violence in their lives, though the specific approach is open to be debated.

Supporting refugee and IDP

Having neighbouring states hosting large populations such as Chad, Egypt and South Sudan may also be a solution. Within Sudan, there may be room to discuss how IDPs could maintain access to their documents, healthcare and protection services. What conditions should exist before any return would be considered appropriate.

Strengthening accountability

Encouraging states to keep evidence and cooperate with accountability mechanisms both national, international or UN-mandated. This would raise bigger questions such as how documentation efforts could be structured so information gathered during the conflict can remain encrypted and credible, useful for any future investigations. Even if war continues on.

Protecting human rights activists and journalists

Journalists, lawyers, humanitarian workers and human rights activists all play a critical role in documenting such abuses, appropriate protection should definitely be considered for these parties. This could include addressing arbitrary detention or retaliation against such individuals or the development of safer channels.

Increasing funding

Given that UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and its partners have already repeatedly noted the funding shortfalls affecting the abilities of assisting in refugees and internally displaced persons. This should be addressed through a combination of approaches and may involve new funding mechanisms, even larger

amounts of contributions from member states or more effective use of pre-existing resources.

Supporting inclusive political process

Even though HRC's mandate centers on human rights, civilian protection connects tightly to the broader political situation amidst Sudan. This includes considering what an inclusive political process may look like. Whole should be involved, and how any settlement could avoid granting immunity for such serious human rights abuse cases. While recognising that these are ultimately questions for Sudan to determine.

Improving regional cooperation

IGAD, The African Union, neighbouring states and UN agencies should coordinate closely with Sudanese organisations in the consequences of the conflict. Including but not limited to refugee movements and economic disruption. YThe burden of the Sudanese Civil War crisis should not be falling disproportionately on states solely such as Chad and South Sudan.

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Useful Links

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2. https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/04/1167281
   Important for understanding HRC's mandate and establishment of Fact Finding Mission.
3. https://www.unicef.org/sudan/reports/unicef-sudan-humanitarian-situation-report-april-2026
   Address children's rights, education, nutrition and healthcare issues.
4. https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2026/04/

Useful evidence for addressing SGBV and survivor support.

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