

NORWAY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2024



Forum: General Assembly First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)

Issue: The Continuous Intensity of the Sudanese Civil War and Its Effect on Regional Security

Chairs: Leo Aaslund Cristofoli and Lars Torstein Kvamme

Introduction to the Committee

The First Committee (GA1), established in 1946, handles issues related to disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

Introduction to the Issue

Sudan has been heavily impacted by civil wars over the last 60 years. Sudan gained autonomy from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in 1956. Internal conflicts between peoples of different religions caused a divide between the wealthy Northern Muslim/Arabic region, and the less wealthy Southern Christian/animist region, making Sudan very vulnerable to wars and authoritarian regimes. In 1989, Omar al-Bashir, a Sudanese Armed Forces officer gained power in Sudan through a military coup, making him the dictator of the state. His regime was brutal towards non-Muslims who were persecuted, also seen in the Darfur war which is considered a genocide. During this period Bashir hired private militias and morality police to enforce his Theocratic regime. In 2011, the Southern region accomplished autonomy creating the Republic of South Sudan.

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) was one of the major militias used to persecute South Sudanese rebels in the Darfur wars, and the largest group to continue operations after Bashir's loss of power. Although the group was hired by Bashir, it was part of the 2019 coup together with the SAF, establishing a transnational regime under the name Transnational Sovereignty Council. The government was in a constant state of change, attempting to establish civilian leadership. The two paramilitary groups struggled to agree on a plan of action and how to organize the military.

War broke out in Khartoum on the 15th of April 2023. The war has amassed more than 15,000 deaths and displaced 10 million people, making it the largest displacement crisis in the world within just over a year. Saudi Arabia and the United States attempted to broker peace

negotiations in May, however, these were unsuccessful when the SAF abandoned the talks with Burhan, the leader of the SAF, officially refusing international efforts to establish peace.

The conflict is proving to threaten states in North Africa, the Sahel region, and the Horn of Africa. Many opposition groups in these regions have ties to the aggressive paramilitary groups in Sudan, threatening to spread extremist activities beyond the borders of Sudan. Displaced Sudanese further threaten to destabilize security frameworks and governance by undermining border security and occupying territories in states that can't afford to help them. Additionally, the blockage of aid from international actors has left the neighboring states of the region to handle the situations without adequate resources to do so.

Timeline of Events

- **April 11, 2019:** Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir is overthrown after months of protests against his 30-year rule. The coalition between the SAF and RSF, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) assumes control.
- **August 17, 2019:** A power-sharing agreement is signed between the TMC and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), establishing a transitional government led by the Sovereignty Council, with General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, also leader of the SAF as chairman.
- **October 3, 2020:** The Juba Peace Agreement is signed between the Sudanese government and several rebel groups, aiming to resolve conflicts in Darfur and other regions.
- **October 25, 2021:** General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan leads a military coup, dissolving the Sovereignty Council and the transitional government. Civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok is placed under house arrest, sparking mass protests.
- **November 21, 2021:** Hamdok is reinstated under a deal with the military but resigns in January 2022 after failing to garner civilian support.
- **Throughout 2022:** Power struggles intensify between the SAF, and the paramilitary RSF, over control of key resources, governance, and military integration.
- **April 15, 2023:** Fighting erupts between the SAF and RSF in Khartoum and across Sudan, marking the start of the civil war. Key disputes include control of military assets and integration of the RSF into the regular army.
- **April–May 2023:** Heavy clashes devastate Khartoum and Darfur. Millions are displaced, and humanitarian conditions worsen.
- **May 21, 2023:** A ceasefire brokered by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah briefly reduces fighting but collapses within days.
- **July 2023:** Reports emerge of widespread atrocities in Darfur, with the RSF accused of targeting civilians and ethnic minorities.

- **September 2023:** The conflict intensifies, with urban centers and key infrastructure becoming battlegrounds. Both sides face accusations of war crimes.
- **January 2024:** The death toll surpasses 15,000 (a conservative estimate), with West Darfur's El Geneina suffering particularly severe massacres. Over 8.5 million people are displaced.
- **February 2024:** International mediation efforts continue to falter, with the SAF and RSF rejecting major compromises. Humanitarian aid remains severely restricted due to ongoing violence.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Civil War:** Armed conflict between organized groups within a state.
- **Regional Security:** The stability and safety of nations within a specific geographic region.
- **Proxy Warfare:** Involvement of external powers in domestic conflicts.
- **Paramilitary:** Well-organized non-governmental militaries.
- **Humanitarian Crisis:** Severe human suffering caused by conflict.
- **Sahel:** The region of Africa spanning from Chad to Senegal across the Southern Sahara.
- **Horn of Africa:** The region of Africa placed in the east "horn" of Africa.

General Overview

Humanitarian Impact:

- The conflict has displaced nearly 10 million people and left over 25 million in need of humanitarian assistance, including 18 million facing acute hunger and 3.6 million malnourished children.
- Refugees fleeing to neighboring countries such as Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan have overwhelmed local resources, creating secondary humanitarian crises.
- Civilians, particularly women and children, endure immense suffering, including violence, exploitation, and inadequate access to food, water, and healthcare.

Regional Spillover:

- The influx of refugees into neighboring countries has strained social and economic resources, potentially destabilizing already fragile states like Chad and South Sudan.
- Militant groups exploit the chaos, moving freely across ungoverned areas in the Sahel and spreading violence and instability across borders.
- Neighboring nations like Libya, facing their internal conflicts, risk further destabilization due to their links with factions involved in the Sudanese war.

Involvement of External Actors:

- The conflict has drawn the attention of global and regional powers, including the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and African Union, whose fragmented peace efforts have inadvertently prolonged the violence.
- Proxy influences and arms suppliers have exacerbated the conflict, with warring factions using external support to sustain their campaigns while ignoring peace initiatives.
- Strategic geopolitical interests, such as Sudan's location and resources, complicate international responses, as global actors prioritize competing agendas.

Economic Ramifications:

- Trade and stability in the Horn of Africa have been severely impacted, with cross-border trade routes disrupted and regional economies destabilized.
- Refugee inflows and humanitarian crises place significant economic pressure on neighboring nations, diverting resources from development to crisis management.
- The prolonged instability has destroyed local economies in Sudan, with famine, infrastructure damage, and the collapse of governance structures adding to the devastation.

Major Parties Involved

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is concerned for the stability of its regions close to the Ethiopia-Sudanese border. The fighting, which has taken place close to this border, threatens to re-awaken ethnic turbulence between the Amhara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia. As this was the major cause of the Ethiopian civil war between 2020 and 2022, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed fears the implications these tensions could have. Ethiopia is also the home to the African Union (AU) which is responsible for mediating relations between the African countries.

Chad

Chad is facing great numbers of refugees settling in the Ouaddaï region of the country which has seen its population double since the beginning of the Sudanese Civil War. The region was already struggling with high poverty rates, clashes between religious groups are becoming common, and people are fighting for resources. This has greatly destabilized the region and is threatening the stability of Chad as a whole. Thus, Chad is very interested in quick peace in Sudan.

Egypt

Egypt has taken a neutral stance in the conflict to position itself in a mediating position in the conflict. Egypt has maintained strong relations with both factions and is therefore able to

communicate with both sides, becoming a middleman between the two factions, and also between the factions and other international actors. Egypt is reliant on its water supply from the Nile, and instability in Sudan could have major implications for the water reserve in Egypt.

USA

The US is working to negotiate a ceasefire between the two factions, working with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to mediate negotiations. A conference was held in Switzerland where the US stayed persistent on agreeing a ceasefire to enable humanitarian aid to help the thousands that have been affected by the war.

Russia

Russia initially sided with the RSF, however its position has changed during the conflict for strategic reasons. Russia had a deal with Sudan in 2019 which allowed them to establish a base in Port Sudan that would give access to landlocked Africa through the Red Sea. However, without a governing body in Sudan, this deal has not been ratified, making Russia very interested in a SAF victory. Russia is therefore supplying the SAF with weapons which many states believe will prolong the war.

UAE

The UAE has historic ties to the RSF as it is a faction that is key to gold trade between the two countries. Evidence has emerged of the UAE supplying the RSF with weapons which has been a great upset in the political sphere as this goes against most efforts to broker peace between the two factions.

Possible Solutions

1. Negotiate a ceasefire between the factions.
2. Establish a democratic government that includes representatives from both factions.
3. Disarm both factions, ensuring the building of trust that allows for positive peace.
4. Strengthen regional relations to increase the security of the Sudanese government

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