

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) And Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

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Abstract:

Due to their shared desire to struggle for civilian leadership, the confrontation between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is solely internal. Since al-Bashir's administration was overthrown by Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Leader General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan. Extremist movements such as the Sudanese Armed Forces Coup Movement and the Rapid Support Forces are a constant feature of the ongoing power struggle. Extremist movements have been carried out by the Rapid Support Forces after al-Burhan displayed the 2019 Constitutional accord for political transition, and in 2023 in the capital city of Khartoum in an attempt to remove Abdel Fattah al-Burhan from office. This essay seeks to examine two topics: 1) The impact of the Sudanese Rapid Support Force movement; and 2) The rationale behind RSF.

More individuals than ever before are facing homelessness. Following several years of stability, the number of refugees is sharply rising due to the crises in Sudan. Conflict and natural disaster-related internal displacement is at an all-time high. Given this unsettling environment, humanitarian, development and displacement organisations adjust to strategies that strengthen vulnerable people' resilience stopping more displacement.

1.1 Introduction

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are at the center of a power struggle that began in April 2023, causing widespread violence, mass displacement, and a dire humanitarian crisis in the country. General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, led by the RSF, has emerged as a significant force in the Darfur conflict, transforming from the Janjaweed militias, known for their brutal tactics, including extrajudicial killings and widespread violence against civilians. The RSF is notorious for brutal tactics, including extrajudicial killings, looting, and violence against civilians, including attacks on hospitals, homes, and displacement of large populations during ongoing conflict. (Ardianti et al., 2024). The Sudanese paramilitary force known as RSF (Rapid Support Force) is headed by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti. He is now the Sudanese Sovereign Council's deputy head. An estimated 100,000 soldiers are part of the RSF, which is dispersed all across the world. In 2003, the Sudanese government employed the paramilitary Sudanese Rapid Support Forces to combat the uprising in Darfur. Both RSF's contributions to the nation and its violations of human rights are documented. One of RSF's accomplishments is that, in 2015, it fought alongside Saudi and UAE forces in the Yemen War. The RSF has maintained tight ties with the Gulf nations ever since. That being said, RSF. Mass protests by Sudanese citizens are taking place as the country's economy deteriorates. They call for President al-Bashir to be removed and for economic change. Soon after, a military-civilian administration was put in place, but General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan gained control of it in 2021, overthrowing it as well. It is documented that the RSF, along with the SAF, NISS (National Intelligence and Security Service), and many other police units, took part in the coup against President al-Bashir. The Sudanese people's desire for political reform—that is, a shift from authoritarian to popular power—is the sole driving force behind the drive to equalise President al-Bashir. At first, the global phenomenon of the Arab Spring served as the inspiration for this movement. A revolutionary movement known as the Arab Spring aims to topple authoritarian social. Since then, a council of generals led by two military leaders at the heart of the conflict—General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the president of the nation—have ruled the nation. General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, his deputy, is in charge of the paramilitary Rapid Relief Forces (RSF). The military council reached a deal to return Sudan to civilian control in 2023, but tensions escalated between the two generals over the terms of the transfer, resulting in an attack on April 15, 2023, between their respective armed units. The Rapid Support Force was first created and governed by the Sudanese government, according to the Washington Post. During the conflict in Darfur, western Sudan, the RSF militia—originally known as the Janjaweed—was sent to fight on behalf of the Sudanese government. Omar al-Bashir, the then-authoritarian leader, utilised them to assist the armed forces in quelling a civil revolt. Although the Sudanese military at the time lacked heavy weaponry and a powerful air force, it was nonetheless able to mobilise for battle more successfully than the parched rural districts of Darfur. According to (Verhoeven, 2023) Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was among the notable politicians detained by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), General Intelligence Service (GIS), and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) after they took up positions in crucial locations throughout Khartoum before daybreak on October 25, 2021. Abdulfatah El-Burhan, the chief of staff of the SAF, proclaimed a state of emergency and suspended transitional institutions run by civilians. Burhan denied that this was a coup meant to destroy the Juba Peace Agreements or stifle the fledgling democratic process. Rather, he contended in a broadcast speech, SAF took action to avert civil strife. A government of technocrats and ex-rebels dedicated to "our path towards the state of freedom and peace" was to replace the quarrelling party leaders, whom he claimed were instigating violence against SAF. In the weeks that followed, hundreds of thousands of Sudanese took to the streets to protest the

SAF's disproportionate political power and unilateral declarations. Multilateral development banks, the US, and the EU stopped supporting Khartoum.

Birch et al., (2024) A minimalist "do no harm" approach to one that actively participates with peace and conflict dynamics when circumstances permit is at the extreme of the spectrum of conflict sensitivity. Understanding how a social protection intervention interacts with the setting in which it is implemented and using that understanding to inform its design, targeting, and delivery methods to avoid damage, guarantee that populations impacted by conflicts may access the program as planned, and (when appropriate and feasible) advance social justice and peace. As we consider various ways, we make reference to the conflict sensitivity continuum and emphasise some of the conflict sensitivity issues brought about by the extremely challenging situation that has emerged in Sudan.

Fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the capital city of Khartoum on April 15, 2023. As the fighting progressed, more than 20,000 people had been killed by January 2024 (ACLED 2024), which is probably an underestimate, and more than 7 million people had been forcibly displaced, either inside the nation's boundaries (6 million) or outside of them (1.4 million) (OCHA 2024b). Conflict has been a part of many Sudanese people's lives for decades, especially in areas far from Khartoum, as evidenced by the fact that 3.8 million people had already been displaced from their homes before April 2023, primarily from areas of South Kordofan, Darfur, and Blue Nile (OCHA 2023).

The current crisis has far-reaching and serious effects. International humanitarian law is being disregarded, as evidenced by the extent of civilian casualties and injuries as well as the weaponization of sexual assault and rape (Amnesty International, 2023). It is especially alarming how quickly and brutally the conflict in Darfur has escalated (Sudan Conflict Observatory 2023; ACLED 2024). In terms of the economy, the war has caused disruptions to the banking and marketing systems, decreased liquidity, and increased inflation (ACAPS 2023).

1.2 Method

According to Tucho(2022) Because of the complexity of the factors influencing access to sustainable mobility and policy interventions, this study employs a realist review approach Based on an emerging realistic approach to evaluation, a realist review approach is appropriate for comprehending complex social interventions. A more thorough and useful understanding of intricate social interventions is offered by realist review, which improves program planning and execution. It considered pertinent research on the circumstances, alternatives, and difficulties of transport access in order to provide Sudan specifically and Africans in general with sustainable and need-based transportation.

English-language published literature was employed in this investigation. There were no limitations based on the type of setting, and studies were reviewed regardless of the year of publication. Included were the majority of previously released reports as well as some grey literature. Additionally, taken into consideration were case studies, analytical cross-sectional research, systematic reviews, policy review papers, and other pertinent studies that were readily available.

1.3 Civil Wars and Conflicts

Research on the origins and effects of the three civil conflicts that erupted in Sudan (1955–1972, 1983–2005, 2023). The crisis in Darfur and its effects on the area and the world. An examination of how the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) contributed to South Sudan's decision to secede. Military rule and authoritarianism. analysis of the history of authoritarian rulers and military takeovers in Sudan, including Omar al-Bashir and Gaafar Nimeiry. The part that paramilitary and military organisations play in preserving authority. The role of economics in political dynamics energy and natural resources' political economy, particularly prior to and during South Sudan's independence. the economic crisis and how it contributes to political instability.

2.1. Origins of the crisis

The nature of Sudan's governance, in particular the extent of impunity for past human rights violations (REDRESS 2023) and the concentration of power and resources among a network of political, military, and private sector actors to the exclusion of others (Jaspars and Oette 2023; Hoffmann and Lanfranchi 2023; Cartier, Kahan, and Zukin 2022). The use of militias is one strategy employed by this elite to preserve its power; in the outlying areas of Sudan and, more recently, in Khartoum, these groups were given considerable autonomy by succeeding administrations. This increased institutional rivalry between various security apparatus components and undermined the army's monopoly on violence (Verhoeven 2023).

2.1.1 Political and humanitarian response to the crisis

Regarding the political response, none of the numerous disorganised attempts to put a stop to the war have gained enough support to be effective. The likelihood of international agreement on Sudan is further weakened by the fact that both of Sudan's main belligerents have connections to governments and players in the larger Sahel and Middle East regions (Burke 2023; Kapila 2023). Sanctions imposed by the Western administration have had little impact (Baldo 2023). The three-point political program of freedom, peace, and justice, civilian rule (with the military going back to its barracks and the RSF being abolished), and holding those responsible for atrocities accountable are the tenets of Sudan's grassroots democratic civilian actors.

There are significant capacity and access issues facing the humanitarian response. The UN's Humanitarian Response Plan for Sudan

had less than 40% of its funding by the end of 2023 (Financial Tracking Service, 2024). Although Chad started providing cross-border aid to Darfur in August 2023, the majority of the international response is still based on Port Sudan, which is located on the coast.

Impact of conflict on informal social safety nets and their responses

The extent and severity of the violence in various areas of Sudan affect the impact of war on informal social safety nets. Due to the destruction of community assets, the uprooting of communities and their structures from their settlement areas, and the disruption of relationships and customary institutions on a local or regional level, conflicts frequently result in long-term disruption to these mechanisms (Fitzpatrick et al. 2022). The effect on services like banking and telecommunications that are necessary for the provision of social safety exacerbates this even further. In order to help individuals impacted by war, grassroots groups are able to gather resources from government agencies, outside partners, and community fundraisers. Internally displaced individuals (IDPs) who have been displaced from their homes since the state's conflict began two decades ago have been provided food, shelter, work opportunities, and land in rural villages in Darfur.

2.1.2 Complementarity between informal social safety nets and formal social protection

Their inexperience with the formal aid system is a prevalent characteristic of more recent locally driven efforts. As previously mentioned, formal bodies have received the majority of attention when it comes to localisation worldwide (Kim et al., 2022). However, in Sudan, national and international actors are becoming more aware of the importance of informal social safety nets in responding to local shocks and are also interested in helping to deliver social protection through them. This may have been influenced by the prominence of grassroots organisations in the present crisis. Nonetheless, there are differences in the ways that official and informal social protection mechanisms interact. It heavily relies on the mechanism's goal as well as the comprehension and drive of external actors. Many unofficial safety nets are run entirely by members of the community and do not require outside assistance.

The Zakat Chamber is Sudan's official government agency in charge of social protection. In compliance with the rules of Islamic Sharia, it oversees the funds collected via almsgiving, or zakat. Our research indicates that although the Zakat Chamber does contribute to unofficial social safety nets, this help is frequently quite modest and given on an as-needed basis.

We have ties to humanitarian organisations, such as international NGOs and UN organisations, as an emergency reaction room. We use our volunteers to coordinate with them. They have met with us many times, and we have discussed our opinions about the current problem with them. Teams of volunteers have collaborated closely with us to provide assistance services and do needs assessments in a few of them. Together with us, they have met many of the IDPs' essential requirements, including as food, sanitation, and medical supplies. Our volunteers have even received training from some NGOs on humanitarian values, voluntary work laws, and how to deal with refugees and internally displaced people. We anticipate that they will increase our ability to be sensitive to conflicts.

2.2 The First Sudanese Civil War broke out in 1955.

Tensions between the mostly Christian and animist south, which yearned for more autonomy and inclusiveness, and the predominantly Muslim and Arabized north were major causes of the war. The Addis Ababa Agreement, which gave southern Sudan a great deal of autonomy, put an official end to the fighting in 1972. But the fundamental problems of marginalisation and inequality remained unresolved, which finally resulted.

2.2.1 The Second Sudanese Civil War broke out in 1983 and lasted until 2005.

The Sudanese government's attempt to enforce Sharia law, or Islamic law, over the whole nation—including the largely Christian and animist south—rekindled this conflict. The epidemic was also influenced by problems with economic marginalisation, resource management (particularly oil), and unfulfilled Addis Ababa Agreement commitments. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which was signed in January 2005 and gave southern Sudan six years of autonomy until South Sudan gained its independence in 2011, put an end to the fighting.

According to Abdalla, (2013) Sudan and South Sudan, the two governments that made up the former Sudan until June 6, 2011, share one of Africa's longest political boundaries, spanning 1,200 km from Ethiopia to the Central African Republic. The 750-kilometer Bahr Alarab River, a branch of the White Nile in what was formerly the Sudan, serves as a natural border between the recently split republics. In addition to millions of cattle, the region surrounding the border is home to nearly all of the large, prolific petroleum wells. Additionally, throughout the year, the border region benefits from the presence of green pasture and surface water (the river).

3.1 Third Sudanese Civil War Broke out in 2023

Two groups of the Sudanese military—the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), under General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), under General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan—began this fight. Power conflicts after the overthrow of long-time tyrant Omar al-Bashir in 2019 and the fall of a precarious civilian-military transitional administration in 2021 are the cause of the bloodshed. Disagreements regarding the RSF's integration into the national army and the timing for the restoration to civilian authority are important problems. Widespread destruction, displacement, and a worsening humanitarian disaster have resulted from this conflict. This river system which used to be an administrative boundary between these settlements

before Sudan's independence in 1956 has turned into an international border after 6 June 2011. The peaceful coexistence of these nearby pastoralist groups has been significantly impacted by the political developments that have occurred since the split.

3.2 Fair Resource Management

Equity in distribution: Make ensuring that all people and regions, particularly those who are marginalised or afflicted by conflict, receive an equitable share of the resources' earnings and benefits. Prioritise undeveloped areas in resource-sharing frameworks to address past inequities.

Transparency: Publicise information on contracts, earnings, and resource exploitation to eliminate corruption and poor management. Engage the general public and impartial organisations in resource governance oversight.

Community Involvement: Include local communities in choices about the distribution of income and the exploitation of resources. Acknowledge and uphold land rights, particularly for rural or indigenous communities.

Sustainability: Make sure resource exploitation doesn't damage the ecosystem or leave behind resources for next generations. To diversify the economy, make investments in sustainable practices and renewable energy.

Conflict Prevention: Use discussion and the law to settle disagreements over regions with abundant resources. Invest in shared infrastructure and development to use resources as a tool for peacebuilding.

Investing in Public Services: Make use of resource profits to upgrade infrastructure, healthcare, and education nationwide. Create a resource fund to support sustained national growth.

3.3 Improved Public Services

a. Healthcare: The money made from resources like gold and oil may be used to construct and furnish hospitals, educate medical personnel, and guarantee that all areas, particularly underprivileged ones, have access to reasonably priced healthcare.

b. Education: Funding for schools, training for teachers, and access to high-quality education may all contribute to closing the literacy gap, giving young people opportunity, and lowering inequality.

c. Infrastructure: Constructing networks of roads, water, and power may enhance living conditions, encourage commercial activity, and link isolated areas to the rest of the nation.

International Influence

4.1 UAE Providing arms and troops for RSF in Sudan War

Despite the Gulf state's protestations, the discovery of Emirati passports among debris points to the presence of clandestine boots on the ground. The passports are said to have been discovered in the Omdurman wreckage, which is located across the Nile from Khartoum. Image: Getty Images/The Washington Post. According to stolen documents, passports found on Sudanese battlefields indicate that the United Arab Emirates is secretly participating in the horrific civil conflict there.

Images of Emirati passports purportedly discovered in Sudan and connected to members of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the infamous paramilitary organization of the African country, are included in a 41-page document that was sent to the UN Security Council and viewed by the Guardian.

In the past, the UAE has refuted any claims that it has provided weapons to the RSF, which is encircling the city of El Fasher as part of a larger ethnic cleansing effort in Darfur. The notion that the Emirates has sent troops to aid in the conflict in Sudan, however, would be an escalation and add to the geopolitical complexity of the RSF and Sudanese military's 19-month-long civil war.

4.2 Rivalries in Geopolitics

Middle Eastern Powers: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates are all heavily involved. Egypt backs the SAF because it believes that maintaining peace in Sudan is essential to safeguarding the Nile River, a valuable resource.

Because of their tight relationship with RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), the UAE has long supported the RSF, especially in areas like regional security and the gold trade.

Due to their rivalry with Egypt and the United Arab Emirates for influence in the area, Turkey and Qatar have occasionally backed civilian organisations or Islamist movements.

Russia and the Wagner Group: Russia has been implicated in backing the RSF, mainly through its private military firm Wagner. According to reports, the organisation is working to gain access to Sudan's gold reserves, which are vital to Russia's economy in the face of Western sanctions.

Western Powers: The US, UK, and EU have prioritised advancing democracy and peace, frequently through humanitarian assistance and sanctions. However, in contrast to regional actors' greater active participation, their impact has diminished.

5.1 Financial Interests

Natural Resources: Foreign powers are drawn to Sudan because of its abundance of gold, oil, and other resources. There are outside supporters of the RSF and SAF who want to take use of these resources. **Trade and Infrastructure:** Due to its Red Sea position, Sudan is essential for international trade routes, including plans for the construction of ports and other infrastructure.

5.2 The Refugee and Humanitarian Crisis

Millions have been displaced by the conflict, which has had repercussions in nearby nations including Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Chad. International help: Because of blockades and insecurity, humanitarian organisations supported by nations like the US and EU are finding it difficult to provide help. However, help frequently turns into an instrument of influence, with nations using it to curry favour with certain groups.

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