Hello,
Welcome to this fortnightly roundup of news on justice and conflict in Sudan.
Friday 5 Mar 2021

BIG STORIES FIRST
- Sudan’s transitional government approved the ratification of the Convention against Torture and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. This historic milestone comes after years of advocacy from Sudanese and international activists. The government must now submit instruments of ratification for both treaties.

- The ICC announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sudan. The MOU covers only the Prosecution’s case against Ali Kushayb. Next up for the ICC is the confirmation of charges hearing in this case, currently set for 24 May.

- Sudan’s transitional government devalued its currency on 21 February and announced a new regime to “unify” official and black-market exchange rates. This decision was made as part of an effort to satisfy demands of foreign donors, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Other economic hurdles remain, including cracking down on gold smuggling.

ACCOUNTABILITY TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, DARFUR, RSF
Draft transitional justice commission bill open for public comment
After months of private wrangling, the draft transitional justice commission bill has been publicly released (available for download here, along with the draft Peace and Anti-Corruption Commissions laws). Consultations for the draft law on the National Human Rights Commission are also underway.

Accountability for crimes committed in Darfur?
Sudan’s attorney general, Tajelsir el Hibir, reaffirmed the transitional government’s commitment to prosecuting those accused of committing serious international crimes in Darfur. Aisha Musa el Saeed, a member of the Sovereign Council, said that laws allowing for the trial of these individuals had been approved by both the Sovereign Council and Council of Ministers.
Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continue unlawful detentions
Human Rights Watch has released a new investigation detailing continued practices of detention, torture and other forms of ill-treatment by the RSF, despite the recent directive by Sudan’s attorney general limiting detention and arrest authorities to the police and Public Prosecution.

New activity from the Empowerment Removal Committee
The Empowerment Removal Committee announced on 11 February that it had gathered sufficient information about the activities of former officials under the al-Bashir regime to begin criminal proceedings.

1989 coup trial postponed, again
The ongoing proceedings against those accused of plotting and implementing the 1989 coup which brought Omar al-Bashir into power have been postponed until 9 March after at least one defendant, Nafeh ali Nafeh, contracted COVID-19. It remains critical that the Sudanese government ensures the health of all those in its custody.

No answer to “shadow brigades” questioning
Ahmed Haroun, former National Congress Party chairman (and one of five men wanted by the ICC), and Ali Osman Taha, former First Vice President of Sudan, refused to give statements to the Public Prosecution Office regarding the paramilitaries known as the “shadow brigades.”

No end in sight to dam and border disputes with Ethiopia
In late February, Sudan accused Ethiopia of an “unforgivable insult” after Ethiopia’s foreign ministry said that any conflict could “only serve the interests of a third party at the expense of the Sudanese people.” This week, Sudanese forces drew closer to the Ethiopian militias stationed inside Sudan’s border, and Sudan and Egypt signed a joint military cooperation agreement—none of which makes GERD negotiations any easier.

Significant humanitarian aid needed in Sudan
The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has released its latest humanitarian needs overview.” OCHA estimates that 13.4 people—29% of Sudan’s population—will need humanitarian assistance in 2021, in an increase of 44 percent since 2020.

Sudan launches Family Support Program
“Thamarat,” the Family Support Program, was officially launched on 24 February. The program is designed to deliver cash transfers to support vulnerable Sudanese families who may be adversely...
impacted by ongoing economic reforms. Phase I of the program will cover more than 11 million people. Donors have stepped up to provide significant funding, including the EU, which has pledged €305 million towards the program.

**800,000 vaccines doses arrive in Sudan**
A shipment of COVID-19 vaccines made it to Sudan on 3 March. Sudan is the first country in the Middle East and North Africa region to receive vaccines through the World Health Organization’s COVAX Initiative. Vaccine distribution is set to begin next week.

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**weekend read**

International Peace Institute discusses the path ahead for UNITAMS; and the International Crisis Group sets out key steps for implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement.

*Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.*

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