

justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

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Hello,

Welcome to this fortnightly roundup of news on justice and conflict in Sudan (a day early this time, in advance of a long weekend). Hyperlinks are underlined.

Thursday 1 Apr 2021

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Khartoum's Police Chief was dismissed after making controversial statements calling for the reinstatement of Sudan's now-abolished Public Order Law regime, which targeted women for a range of "morality offences." The [Ministry of Interior](#) and [Public Prosecution](#) separately issued statements denouncing the Police Chief's remarks, which followed public outcry over a social media [campaign](#) to "whip women in the streets," as well as the [murder](#) of a teenage girl by her father. See [here](#) for a short video summary, and [here](#) for a CSO statement about gender-based violence.
- Sudan's [transitional government](#) and the SPLM-N, led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu, have signed a "Declaration of Principles" [agreement](#) committing the government to the establishment of a secular state with freedom of religion, as well as the unification of armed groups in Sudan. The SPLM-N is one of two major armed movements that has yet to sign a peace agreement with the transitional government. Several days before the signing of the agreement, Lt. Gen. al-Burhan [affirmed](#) that the Sudanese Armed Forces are "ready to integrate rebel movements."

ACCOUNTABILITY TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, SANCTIONS, REVOLUTION

Prosecution of human rights defender an echo of the past

Human rights defender Khadeeja Aldewaihi has been [charged](#) with publishing "false news" under the 2018 Cybercrimes Act after posting Facebook updates about the health situation in Sudan. In Nov. and Dec. 2020, Aldewaihi was interrogated about these posts as well as her political affiliation and engagement with the Sudanese communist party. Under the amended Cybercrimes Act, individuals found guilty of publishing false news online can be handed prison sentences of up to four years.

RSF member charged with murder for killing of Saber al-Tijani Abdel Rahman

Rabih Abdo has been [charged](#) with the premeditated murder of Saber al-Tijani Abdel Rahman in Khartoum on 5 June 2019, two days after the violent dispersal of the Khartoum sit-in. Abdo has reportedly confessed to killing Abdel Rahman.

1989 coup case moving, slowly

Former president al-Bashir and 27 other defendants have appeared in court again, as the trial for their role in the 1989 coup resumes after COVID-related delays. The court on 23 March [rejected](#) the defence committee's requests to permit the accused's relatives in court, as well as the defence's request to replace the investigative committee overseeing the proceedings.

UN denies request to remove sanctions on Musa Hilal, others

After issuing a [pardon](#) for former *Janjaweed* leader Musa Hilal, Sudan's transitional government, via Sudan's ambassador to the UN, requested that Hilal and two others be struck from the UN sanctions list. The UN [denied](#) the request, to "support the attainment of sustainable peace." The UN has imposed sanctions on Hilal since 2007 because of his participation in crimes in Darfur.

First trial of December revolution killers

Sudan's attorney general [announced](#) new charges for four members of Sudan's intelligence services accused of killing protestors in [Atbara](#) in December 2018. [Charges](#) included murder (Article 130 of the Sudanese Criminal Law) and crimes against humanity (Article 186). Separately, "Abu Jaqa," who has been [accused](#) of acting as a hired assassin under the al-Bashir regime, has reportedly been [charged](#) with the same crimes. These are thought to be the [first cases](#) brought under Article 186 of the Criminal Code since its amendment to include international crimes, including crimes against humanity, in 2009.

Perpetrators of Krinding camp attacks to be charged with crimes

The Public Prosecution has [referred](#) 33 cases to a Sudanese court in relation to the [Dec. 2019 attacks](#) on Krinding camp in West Darfur, in which 72 people were killed and 109 others wounded. Some of the perpetrators allegedly wore Rapid Support Forces uniforms while carrying out the attack, and members of the Sudanese Police Forces were also reportedly involved. Charges include murder, theft, and criminal destruction.

Sudanese women's rights activist sentenced and fined

Waad Bahjat, an activist who was detained and subjected to ill-treatment by the police after reporting on an incident of harassment by SAF and police officers, has been given a [suspended sentence](#) of six months in prison, and fined 10,000 Sudanese pounds. Human rights organisations had previously [called](#) on the government to "urgently drop all charges and effectively investigate the allegations of ill-treatment" against Bahjat.

Campaign for ratification of the Rome Statute launched

The Organisation of the December Revolution Martyrs' Families and the SPA have launched a [campaign](#) calling on the transitional government to ratify the Rome Statute and to transfer al-Bashir and other suspects in Sudanese custody to the ICC. The campaign's organisers have also asked Prime Minister Hamdok and the transitional government to request technical support for the 3 June investigative committee from the United States and other sources.

NEIGHBORS ETHIOPIA, EGYPT, DAM, MEDIATION

Second filling of dam constitutes "direct threat" to 20 million Sudanese

The head of Sudan's technical team [predicted](#) that Ethiopia's planned second filling of the GERD could constitute a direct threat to the lives of 20 million Sudanese people living along the Nile River, and appealed to Ethiopia to respect international law. Egypt, on the other hand, [warned](#) of "unimaginable

instability” should the GERD be filled without an international agreement. Sudan has since [accepted](#) the UAE’s offer to mediate the dam dispute as well as the ongoing conflict over al-Fashqa.

US creates special envoy position for the Horn of Africa

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has approved the creation of a [special envoy](#) position for the Horn of Africa. The special envoy will focus on conflict in Ethiopia’s Tigray region as well as tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan, including as related to the controversial GERD project.

GOVERNMENT COMPENSATION, TREATIES, ARMED GROUPS

Armed groups – reportedly – to leave Khartoum

Large numbers of armed forces (from a variety of groups) in Khartoum have [sparked fears](#) in recent weeks of a looming showdown between them. In response, on 30 March, the Technical Committee of the Security and Defence Council held a meeting with the Office of the First Vice President of the Sovereign Council. Among other outcomes, the Committee [determined](#) that all armed groups are to be removed from Khartoum.

Sudan deposits instruments of ratification for key ILO treaties

Sudan’s permanent representative in Geneva has [presented](#) Sudan’s instruments of [ratification](#) for the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention No. 87; the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards No. 144); and the Forced Labour Convention No. 29.

US receives \$335 million from Sudan

Secretary of State Antony Blinken [announced](#) on 31 March that the US received \$335 million for compensation to victims of the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as the 2000 attack on the USS Cole.

Sudan clears arrears to the World Bank

Following a US bridge loan, Sudan has cleared its [arrears](#) to the World Bank, giving Sudan access to \$2 billion in [financing](#) for the first time in nearly 30 years. Sudan may be eligible for additional funding under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) [initiative](#) as early as mid-2021. In the meantime, Sudan is immediately eligible for grants of \$420 million towards the Thamarat Programme (family support programme) and an additional \$215 million for budget support.

**weekend
read**

Sudan’s football team [advances](#) to the Africa Cup of Nations finals for the first time since 2012; The Sentry examines broader [economic reforms needed](#) in addition to the managed float of the Sudanese pound.

Thanks for reading and see you in two weeks.

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