

justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

REDRESS

Hello,

Welcome to this fortnightly roundup of news on justice and conflict in Sudan. Hyperlinks are underlined.

Friday 6 Aug 2021

BIG STORIES FIRST

- The Council of Ministers announced its [unanimous decision](#) to pass a bill joining the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Prime Minister Hamdok [tweeted](#) that “justice and accountability are a solid foundation of the new, rule of law-based Sudan we’re striving to build.” This historic decision must now be approved in a joint meeting with the Sovereign Council. In the interim, Sudan remains obligated to cooperate with the ICC under Security Council Resolution 1593, including by transferring the three suspects currently in Sudanese custody to The Hague.
 - The Ministry of Justice has published the official accession bills for the Convention against Torture and Convention on Enforced Disappearances (available [here](#)). Though bills published in the Gazette have the force of law, Sudan must still deposit instruments of ratification with the UN in order to become a State Party to either treaty.
-

ACCOUNTABILITY COUP, HUMAN RIGHTS, CONVICTIONS

RSF members sentenced for El-Obeid killings

Of the nine RSF members tried for their role in the killing of [six protestors](#) in July 2019, 6 have been [sentenced to death](#), while another two were acquitted and one referred to a juvenile court because he was under 18. The judge said he found the actions of the six found guilty “unnecessary” and “not on par with” the alleged verbal provocations by protestors. Sudanese media noted that the [referral of one defendant](#) to a juvenile court “reveals that the RSF use children, which contravenes the laws of children’s rights.”

First sessions in the Mahjoub al-Taj Mahjoub case begin

Medical student Mahjoub al-Taj Mahjoub was [killed](#) after allegedly being subjected to torture in a NISS detention centre in January 2019. 11 NISS agents have been [charged](#) under Articles 21 (criminal complicity), 130 (premeditated murder), and 186 (crimes against humanity) of the 1991 Criminal Code. In the first week of the trial, the police detective responsible for investigating the relevant torture report [refused to comply](#) with a court order to appear (reasons unknown).

Confusion continues over 1989 coup case

Closely following the resignation of the first presiding judge in the ongoing case against al-Bashir and

associates for their role in the 1989 coup, the second judge has now [submitted](#) his [resignation](#) (yet to be accepted). The proceedings continue to be plagued by various procedural disputes.

Public Prosecutor issues guidelines for witness protection

The Public Prosecutor has [issued](#) Circular No. 1 (2021) outlining measures to be taken to protect witnesses, victims and others involved in serious criminal cases. These include the use of pseudonyms and other anonymising details, inclusion of psychiatrists in certain interviews, and providing security measures at places of residence or work as necessary. This news follows a meeting between the Public Prosecutor and members of the resistance committees, in which the Prosecutor was reportedly presented a [memorandum](#) on the need for witness protections.

Public Prosecution explains delay in morgue exhumation

In a recent statement, the Public Prosecution said that a committee has been formed to determine why bodies have piled up in [Khartoum-area morgues](#). The committee has reportedly recommended an increase in the number of public prosecutors working in the morgues, and classified the bodies (eg, “newborns,” “traffic victims,” “natural deaths” and “criminal suspicions”).

Sudanese activist sentenced in Saudi Arabia

A Saudi court [sentenced](#) Sudanese military personality and journalist Ahmed Ali Abdelkader to four years in prison for “insulting the state’s institutions and symbols” and “negatively speaking about the kingdom’s policies,” including criticising Saudi Arabia’s involvement in Sudan.

GOVERNMENT REGIONAL GOVERNANCE, SPLM-N, USAID

Regional governance system for Darfur has been approved

Per the Juba Peace Agreement, the Council of Ministers has [approved](#) the draft law establishing a regional governance system in Darfur, defining the roles of a regional government and of newly-appointed governor Minni Minnawi. Minnawi emphasised that the regional government will focus on implementing the JPA, returning IDPs and refugees, and regional development.

SLM-AW and SPLM-N El Hilu discuss conditions for peace

Abdel Wahid, leader of the holdout SLM-AW group, and Abdelaziz El-Hilu (leader of the SPLM-N El-Hilu) [met](#) for closed-door talks regarding ongoing [peace negotiations](#). In a joint statement, the leaders “agreed that the unity of the Sudanese state must be based on: secularism, democracy, liberalism, equal and decentralised citizenship,” among other items, and emphasised the need for comprehensive [security sector reform](#). The men also highlighted the need for land return and compensation, a central issue in Darfur. The talks coincided with active discussion in the media about controversial comments made concerning “reconciliation with Islamists” (see [here](#), for example).

Gold production numbers up as smuggling is down

Government sources have said that Sudan’s [official gold output](#) has nearly doubled in the first half of 2021 as smuggling was reined in. The head of planning and research at the state-owned Sudanese Mineral Resources Co. said that Sudan saw gold revenues of \$86 million in this period. (This week, three Sudanese nationals were also [arrested](#) in Delhi, India trying to smuggle gold into the country.)

US commits funding to support 2024 elections

USAID Administrator Samantha Power arrived in Sudan in late July, visiting [refugee camps](#) in eastern Sudan, the [University of Khartoum](#), and [Darfur](#), among other places. During the course of the visit, Power

announced that USAID will [contribute](#) an additional \$4.3 million to support an independent election commission and other processes, in advance of planned elections in 2024.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION ETHIOPIA, DARFUR, FLOODING

Grim evidence of atrocities committed in Ethiopia arrives in Sudan

Dozens of bodies from Ethiopia have [washed up on a riverbank](#) in eastern Sudan in the past week, many bearing [visible evidence](#) of bullet wounds and other injuries. Many of the bodies had tattoos in the Tigrinya language or other identifying Tigrayan features. At least 3,000 more Ethiopian refugees [fled to Sudan](#) in late July.

Widespread flooding reported across Sudan

UNOCHA has documented [flooding](#) in 6 of 18 states in Sudan, including al-Gedaref, White Nile, South Darfur, Kassala, River Nile and Aj Jazirah. OCHA continues to predict that over 540,000 people could be affected by flooding, disease outbreak or conflict over the course of the year.

Ongoing sporadic conflict throughout Darfur

In North Darfur, armed militias have [attacked farmers](#), resulting in the death of at least one individual, other injuries, and the [displacement](#) of hundreds of people. Armed members of the SLFA forcibly [released](#) several prisoners from a police station in North Darfur (subsequently returned), while several people were killed and raped in [West Darfur](#).

Still no GERD agreement . . .

Sudan continues to [warn](#) that Ethiopia's unilateral filling of the GERD without a binding agreement could "threaten the wellbeing of half of Sudan's population." Sudan's foreign minister has welcome [Algeria's offer](#) to mediate a resolution to the dispute. This comes as Sudan [closed](#) a border crossing with Ethiopia amid reports that a Sudanese military captain was [kidnapped](#) and tortured by Ethiopian militias.

**weekend
read**

A profile on Sudan's 'hidden' [COVID problem](#); [religious freedom](#) and [educational reform](#) in Sudan; and UNITAMS' [virtual reality](#) mini-doc on its work.

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

If this was forwarded to you, please email emma@redress.org to sign up.
