Hello,
Welcome to this fortnightly roundup of news on justice and conflict in Sudan. Hyperlinks are underlined.
Friday 9 July 2021

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Today, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II confirmed the Prosecutor’s charges against Ali Kushayb, who will now face trial for 31 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity (committed between August 2003 – April 2004). The full decision is available here. The Council of Ministers has announced that the other wanted individuals currently in Sudanese custody would be transferred to the ICC—it remains to be seen whether the military component of the government will agree.

- Sudan has officially completed the necessary steps to begin receiving debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This means that Sudan’s external public debt will be irrevocably reduced by more than $50 billion (representing over 90 percent of Sudan’s total external debt) if it reaches the HIPC Completion Point in about 3 years. Sudan will now be eligible for $2.5 billion in new IMF funding.

ACCOUNTABILITY NISS, SALAH GOSH, TERROR

NISS agent sentenced to hang for student’s Dec 2018 death
The Special Court convened to prosecute perpetrators of crimes related to the Sudanese revolution has convicted former NISS agent Ashraf el-Tayyib (“Abjiga”) of premeditated murder and crimes against humanity. This is the first conviction of its kind by the Court; watch the sentencing here. The victim’s family has requested retribution in this case.

Sentencing of second Dec 2018 killer scheduled for 12 July
Walid Ahmed Yahya, a member of the security forces, will be sentenced on 12 July for the killing of twelve-year-old Shawqi al-Sadiq Ishaq, who was shot on 21 December 2018. Ishaq is thought to be one of the youngest victims of the Sudanese revolution.

Salah Gosh allegedly implicated in foiled terror plot
24 individuals were reportedly arrested and charged by the Public Prosecution for their involvement in a terror plot aimed at toppling the transitional government. Former NISS director Salah Gosh has been accused of masterminding the planned attacks. Around the same time, it was rumoured that Salah Gosh had been seen in Khartoum; these reports have not been confirmed. Separately, some protestors in the
lead-up to 30 June also called for the overthrow of the transitional government, and many (perhaps up to 200) former NCP members were reportedly arrested.

Journalist arrested, detained while reporting on protests
An Al Jazeera reporter was, in the words of the network, “kidnapped” in Khartoum while covering anti-government protests. Ali Abou Shaleh was taken by Sudanese security forces to an “undisclosed location,” and released late at night on the same day. In another challenge to press freedom, the website of newspaper El Sudani was blocked, along with 30 other websites. After an outcry by human rights defenders and journalists, access to the paper’s website was restored, and the editors of the paper have threatened legal action against the head of the Information Crimes and Digital Investigations Prosecution.

Mass graves confirmed in Central Darfur
The wali (governor) of Central Darfur State has confirmed the discovery of three mass graves containing at least 76 bodies (with one of the graves awaiting exhumation). Back in Khartoum, the bodies found decomposing in a morgue refrigerator have still not been identified.

Citizen reportedly detained and tortured by Military Intelligence
HUDO, a Sudanese human rights organisation, said that Muaaz Hassan Daoud was arrested by a group of SAF Military Intelligence forces. He was reportedly imprisoned in an underground cell, had his head shaved, and was beaten for 4 days before his release. In its statement, HUDO said Daoud was arrested after criticising the Military Intelligence for confiscating food commodities from civilians (on the grounds that they were transferring the goods to SPLA-N territory).

GOVERNMENT ETHIOPIA, LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, POWER CUTS
Still no resolution in sight to dam and border disputes with Ethiopia
The UN Security Council met on the GERD issue, but does not seem likely to take independent action after backing the African Union’s mediation efforts. Watch the UNSC session here (Sudanese Foreign Minister Mariam al-Sadiq speaks at 2:02). Ethiopia has notified Sudan of its intention to begin a second filling of the dam. See here and here for interesting reporting on the dispute. Unrelatedly, Ethiopia has said it is “building up its defenses” on its border with Sudan, and Sudan and Egypt have signed another military cooperation agreement.

Legislative Council (possibly) convening in August
The transitional government has announced that the long-delayed Transitional Legislative Council will be created by 17 August. The planned establishment of the Council was also announced in January of this year. Women are meant to occupy 40% of seats in the new body; see this gender assessment of women’s participation in Sudanese political parties. Also, the appointment of a new attorney general has been delayed after it was decided that the pool of candidates needs widening.

Frequent power cuts, deteriorating living conditions lead to protests
Power blackouts in Khartoum (and across Sudan) are compounding already difficult living conditions for many residents. An unnamed official has said that the government cannot afford to import enough fuel or pay for necessary maintenance of power stations. The government has said it will cut government spending while increasing social spending, including through the expansion of the Thamarat (Family Support) programme and the doubling of the budget for a programme meant to provide cheap food commodities. According to the FAO, high fuel prices are also likely to affect the 2021 cropping season.
UNAMID completes its drawdown activities

On 30 June, as mandated by UN Security Council resolution 2559 (2020), UNAMID completed its final drawdown activities. UNAMID has handed 14 sites to the transitional government, which are to be used for the provision of health care, education, and other social services. The transitional government is now responsible for security and peacekeeping in the region. In recent weeks, clashes in Darfur have continued, with at least 20 killed in the first week of July. (And farmers have also been killed in South Kordofan.)

The role of Sudanese artists in the revolution; the experience of Sudanese asylum seekers in the UK; an examination of Sudan’s prison complexes and privatization.

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.
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