

justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

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Hello,

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

Friday 1 Oct 2021

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Absolutely no big stories in the past two weeks . . . other than a failed coup attempt, and escalating rhetoric between the civilian and military components of the transitional government. On the morning of 21 September, Sudanese authorities [announced](#) that they had [thwarted](#) a coup attempt by “factions [inside](#) and outside the armed forces.” Prime Minister Hamdok [said](#) on Twitter that the “coup attempt was preceded by extensive preparations represented by the lawlessness in cities, exploitation of the situation in the [east](#) of the country . . . and continuous incitement against the civilian government.” Among other things, Hamdok was referring to [protests](#) in Port Sudan over the Eastern Sudan Track of the Juba Peace Agreement (and economic marginalisation more generally). The High Council of Beja Nazirs led the closure of several Red Sea ports and the [oil terminal](#) (now reopened).
- In the days after the [coup attempt](#), [relations](#) between the civilian and military components of the transitional government publicly [deteriorated](#). In separate comments, [al-Burhan](#) and Hemedti blamed civilian politicians for the coup; Hemedti, for example, [said](#) that the military is “met with humiliation and insults day and night, so how can there not be coups?” Hamdok said he was “astonished” by these comments, and Khalid Omer Yousif, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, [said](#) the civilian component was “ready for confrontation” if necessary. [Representatives](#) from [foreign governments](#), the [UN Security Council](#), and the head of [UNITAMS](#) have attempted to [mediate](#) between the two sides of the transitional government, and expressed [support](#) for Sudan’s democratic transition.
- On 26 September, the Empowerment Removal Committee [announced](#) that the security forces tasked with protecting recovered assets had been [ordered](#) to withdraw from their posts immediately, and called on activists to [gather](#) at the Committee’s [Khartoum office](#) to secure the premises. Police reportedly returned after Prime Minister Hamdok’s intervention. Sources also [said](#) that the military component of the Sovereign Council had suspended all meetings with its civilian counterpart, and pulled security details assigned to civilian members.
- On 30 September, an estimated [20,000 people](#) gathered in Khartoum in support of a civilian-led democratic transition. Despite some reports of attempted [sabotage](#) of train lines, many protestors traveled by [train](#) from Atbara and Madani, in an echo of the 2019 protests which led

to al-Bashir's removal from office. Civilian officials welcomed the protestors, while security forces fired [tear gas](#) on crowds later in the day.

GOVERNMENT ISIS, UNITED NATIONS, ELECTIONS

Sudan stands resolutely against HRC resolution

In the third week of the UN Human Rights Council's 48th session, it appeared that Sudan would indeed leave the HRC's agenda, after Sudan's permanent mission in Geneva (on the basis of instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) refused to discuss a Sudan-specific resolution. The Council has had a resolution on Sudan [every year](#) since its creation in 2006; without a resolution, all formal reporting and plenary debates on Sudan will end. Despite [public calls](#) from Sudanese civil society organisations and [international NGOs](#) for a continued resolution, foreign governments have not been willing to present a resolution without Sudan's consent. See also PM Hamdok's [statement](#) during the UN General Assembly's 76th session.

ISIS militants kill intelligence officers in Khartoum

Five intelligence officers were killed in a [shootout](#) with suspected ISIS militants, after a raid gone awry in the Gabra neighbourhood of Khartoum. 15 individuals were subsequently [arrested](#) in total. Some analysts have [speculated](#) that the raid was intended to demonstrate the need for a strong military role in Sudan's [democratic transition](#).

Sudan takes control of Hamas assets

Sudanese authorities have [taken over](#) at least a dozen companies that officials say were linked to Hamas, and have seized assets ranging from real estate to a Khartoum hotel and more than a million acres of farmland. Former president Omar al-Bashir was publicly supportive of Hamas. Egyptian sources have reported that a high-level figure within Hamas' political bureau has [reached out](#) to Egypt's General Intelligence Service, in hopes of holding talks with Khartoum about the seized assets.

Ministry of Justice holds consultations on Electoral Commission draft law

Consultations have [begun](#) on the Electoral Commission draft bill, ahead of the planned 2024 elections. Find the draft [here](#) (Arabic version only). The consultations were [attended](#) by civil society organisations and representatives from the media.

ACCOUNTABILITY JOURNALISTS, SENTENCING, DETENTIONS

Court of Appeals upholds death sentence

The Court of Appeals has [upheld the death sentence](#) for a senior officer with the Rapid Support Forces. Yousif Mohi al-Din al-Faki was sentenced for killing a protestor, Hanafi Abdel Shakour, during the dispersal of protestors outside of the military headquarters in Khartoum on 3 June 2019. Al-Faki was accused of ramming Shakour with his car. The trial court judgment was the second of its kind in Sudan against members of the security forces.

Human rights defender faces defamation charges

Aisha al-Majidi was [arrested](#) on 15 September 2021 after the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Empowerment Removal Committee filed two separate cases against her under Article 159 of the Criminal Code 1991 (defamation), concerning two Facebook posts in which al-Majidi criticised both bodies. Al-Majidi wrote that the "RSF must be dissolved because they are not useful and there is no need for them in the first place [...]."

Newspapers temporarily suspended for protest announcements

The Press and Publications Council [suspended](#) two newspapers, Al-Intibaha and Al-Sayha, for three days after the papers published announcements about planned protests in eastern Sudan. The Press Council said in a [statement](#) that the announcements were a violation of the 2019 Constitutional Declaration, which prohibits the media from inciting religious, ethnic, racial or cultural hatred, or calling for violence or war (article 56(4)).

Several journalists arrested, detained

Journalists across Sudan have been arrested in the past two weeks, including journalist [Muzammil Sidiq](#) in Wad Medani; the Sudanese Journalists Network criticised the irregularity of Sidiq's arrest, noting that only the Press and Publications Prosecutor, and not the police, has the authority to bring charges against journalists in relation to their work. Separately, Attaf Abdelwahab, a journalist and the director of Al-Naba Centre for Press Services, was arrested and [detained incommunicado](#) for several days. Abdelwahab has been charged with "undermining the constitutional system" and "waging war against the state," crimes which carry the death penalty or life imprisonment. After his arrest, the Public Prosecution issued a [clarification](#), stating that Abdelwahab was properly [arrested](#) on the basis of an Empowerment Removal Committee complaint.

Women detained, beaten by Community Police

Two women were [beaten](#) and detained for "indecent dressing" by members of the Khartoum Community Police, formerly known as the Public Order Police. A lawyer passing by, Al-Fateh Hussein, was also beaten after attempting to intervene on behalf of the women. In [statements](#) to the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, the three individuals attested to being beaten with sticks, water hoses, and to being whipped and kicked. Despite the repeal of the Public Order laws, the 1991 Criminal Code still retains "public morality" offences; for this reason, the National Human Rights Commission called in a [statement](#) for reforms to the Criminal Code 1991.

NEIGHBOURS ETHIOPIA, SOUTH SUDAN, LIBYA

Sudan, South Sudan border scheduled for reopening today

The border between Sudan and South Sudan is set to [reopen today](#), 1 October, after being closed for 11 years. A South Sudanese official [said](#) that 7 border crossing points are to be opened for regular trade and travel.

Sudan seizes weapons smuggled from Libya

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) [announced](#) that its forces "deployed on the border strip between Sudan, Egypt and Libya managed to seize a shipment of weapons, ammunition, and explosives coming from the State of Libya." Four people, including two Libyans, have reportedly been arrested.

Army "repelled" Ethiopian troops

In his capacity as head of the Sudanese Armed Forces, al-Burhan [announced](#) that the army had repelled an incursion of Ethiopian troops in the district of Umm Barakit (in the disputed al-Fashaga border region). On the heels of the failed coup attempt, al-Burhan said this showed how the army was protecting the country (he did not mention that the thwarted coup was orchestrated from within the army). Ethiopia [denied](#) to Al-Jazeera that its troops had taken any action on the border.

weekend read

[Arabic](#) in Africa; a [podcast](#) on Sudanese foods; women's perspectives on peace in [East Sudan](#); and a Sudanese airline's resumption of [flights](#).

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

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