

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 20 Jan 2023

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Following an [opening ceremony](#) for the “final phase” of Sudan’s democratic transition on 8 January, a four-day workshop began in Khartoum on 9 January, focusing on the [future](#) of the Empowerment Removal Committee. [Participants](#) were a mix of signatories to the 5 December framework agreement and other civil society representatives. Among other reported [recommendations](#) from the [workshop](#) were: the creation of a new committee composed of ‘professionals’ and not political figures; the establishment of subcommittees at the state level; a new process for evaluating civil servants’ ongoing employment on the basis of their practices and performance (rather than solely on the basis of their NCP membership); and the creation of a special committee focused on the extractive industries. The second [conference](#) of the political process will focus on transitional justice, and the spokesman of the process [expects](#) that workshops on the Juba Peace Agreement and the east of Sudan will occur in the upcoming weeks.
 - Al-Burhan [said](#) during the 8 January launch of the “final phase” that the military would exit politics and come under civilian control, though not until after the close of any transitional period. On the other hand, al-Burhan reportedly also [once again warned](#) politicians against interference in the military, saying that “[w]e warn politicians against meddling in army’s affairs. They have to work to reform their parties.” Though al-Burhan has said that the framework agreement will “lead the country out of crisis,” protestors continue to be met with excessive force. For example, the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors [reported](#) that at least 44 people were injured during protests on 17 January alone, including one case of a skull fracture. See here for a good [analysis](#) of the resistance committees’ ongoing activism.
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ACCOUNTABILITY ACQUITTALS, CORRUPTION, DETENTIONS

Daughter of ERC member abducted and assaulted

The daughter of El Tayeb Yousef Osman, one of the members of the Empowerment Removal Committee, was kidnapped, gang-raped, and dropped in Manshiya Valley in [suspected retaliation](#) for her father's work on the committee. The day after the assault, the Khartoum State Police reportedly [arrested](#) the owner of the car that transported the girl to Manshiya Valley, and he confessed to the crime.

Widad Babiker convicted of “illegally amassing wealth”

The Anti-Corruption Criminal Court [convicted](#) Widad Babiker, Omar al-Bashir's second wife, of illegally amassing wealth. In addition to ordering Babiker [stripped](#) of her assets (including land and gold), the presiding judge imposed a fine of 100 million Sudanese pounds (roughly \$19,190). Babiker has two weeks to appeal the judgment. In particular, Babiker was found guilty of collecting the armed forces pension of her former (deceased) husband for more than 16 years, using the money to buy land.

Lawyers hopeful that Darfuri detainees will be released soon

Lawyers acting on behalf of the more than 160 detainees from Darfur held in prisons around Sudan said that they [expect](#) the prisoners will be released within the next few days. A spokesperson for the group said that the “authorities intended to release the detainees after intense pressure exerted on them by international forces and institutions,” and that lawyers had been preparing to file a complaint with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Many of the detainees remain on hunger strike. Separately, the Emergency Lawyers group [said](#) that a lawyer was assaulted and arrested in front of her Khartoum office this week, as security forces sought to prevent protestors from participating in demonstrations on 17 January.

Atbara court acquits intelligence agents accused of killing protestor

A court in Atbara [acquitted](#) four defendants from the Sudanese intelligence services for their role in the 20 December 2018 death of Mariam Ahmed Abdalla, who was shot and killed by Sudanese forces while inside her home. Mariam's family said that they would appeal the ruling, and that they were surprised that the court had not announced in previous sessions that it would issue a verdict imminently. Mariam was one of the [first three people](#) killed during the December revolution, along with Tariq Ahmed (who was shot in the chest and died an hour later in the hospital) and Isam Ali Hussein (who was shot in the head and also died in a hospital).

Witness provides testimony in ongoing MI killing case

During the [ongoing trial](#) against eight young men accused of killing a Military Intelligence sergeant, a witness testified that he did not see any of the accused at the crime scene. The defence team said that the witness filmed the victim on the ground and was present at the time of the crime. To expedite the proceedings, the court has decided to hold two trial sessions a week. See here for a [deep dive](#) into this case and the case against four young men accused of killing a police brigadier general.

Khartoum security committee increases drug abuse patrols

The Security Coordination Committee of Khartoum has decided to [increase](#) patrols combatting drug abuse, stating that “community security points” would be set up across neighborhoods to “monitor negative phenomena and secure the neighborhoods.” Activists fear that increased patrols could be a pretext for a clampdown on resistance committees and other pro-democracy groups.

GOVERNMENT CAR, PEACE AGREEMENTS, RSF

Additional Sudanese forces deployed to CAR border

The RSF, SAF, and other Sudanese security forces have been [deployed](#) along the border with the Central African Republic, reportedly in relation to a possible coup attempt. Speaking after a visit to Darfur, Hemedti [said](#) that internal security agents and former military officers in Sudan had been arming forces linked to CAR rebel groups hoping to overthrow the regime in Bangui. Hemedti told reporters that this “is the second time such a thing has happened [and that] a year and half ago forces amassed on the border ready to attack, but this time, it was on a bigger scale with the support of bigger players.” CAR opposition forces denied Hemedti’s claims and said instead that Hemedti’s RSF was working with Wagner mercenaries to destabilise the government.

Peace agreements signed in Blue Nile and South Darfur states

Blue Nile community leaders [signed](#) a framework agreement to end ongoing violence in the state. The deal [involves](#) the creation of a peace council comprised of native administration and civil society. In South Darfur, another [agreement](#) to end hostilities was signed between leaders of the Daju and Rizeigat tribes in Beleil, but unarmed civilians in the area [continue](#) to experience violent attacks. Late last week, for example, a woman’s leader told reporters that militiamen assaulted three women in South Darfur, even as the governor of the state and members of the state security committee were holding a meeting in the same area. Gunmen have also reportedly [gathered](#) in West Darfur, prompting the West Darfur Security Committee to meet. Additionally, a video circulated on social media showing large numbers of motorcycle-riding militia members in North Darfur; Abdul Wahid al-Nur [described](#) the footage as “foreshadowing further attacks on innocent civilians as the region is plagued by widespread insecurity caused by the RSF and Janjaweed militias.”

RSF special security force established in Darfur

The RSF and two JPA signatory groups, SLM-Minni Minnawi and the Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance (El Tahir Hajar), announced the creation of a [special protection force](#) in Darfur. A spokesperson said that the force “consists of 80 military vehicles (10 troops per vehicle)” and that other JPA signatory groups should contribute troops later. Under the terms of the JPA, the joint security force is intended to be 12,000 people strong, with 6,000 troops from the SAF and 6,000 drawn from the former rebel groups.

Hemedti conducts visits to neighboring countries

The RSF announced on [social media](#) that Hemedti had conducted an official visit to Kenya, marking a “breakthrough in bilateral relations.” Hemedti met with Kenyan president William Ruto and visited the Sudanese embassy in Nairobi. Some sources reported that Hemedti also [conducted](#) an unannounced visit to Morocco; this visit has not been widely corroborated.

Hemedti also recently [met](#) with the [Turkish](#) head of intelligence in Khartoum. Al-Burhan also [traveled](#) to Juba for talks with president Salva Kiir. Relatedly, see [here](#) for an analysis of Egypt's role in Sudanese politics.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION FIRES

Fires destroy homes across Sudan

On 9 January, a fire [destroyed](#) more than 15 homes and multiple crops in South Darfur, followed several days later by another fire in the state which destroyed at least four houses and large quantities of crops. Meanwhile, in Khartoum, a [fire](#) tore through the Takamul [camp](#), which is home to roughly 1,000 South Sudanese refugees. At least one person was killed, with another two missing and 11 seriously injured.

**weekend
read**

Expert [analysis](#) of the framework deal and its [prospects](#); [laundering](#) Hemedti's reputation; 20 years of [genocide](#) in Darfur; eastern Sudan as a [microcosm](#) of crisis; [mapping](#) disinformation and [tax reform](#) in Sudan; [resistance and repression](#) in the gold mines; and a piece of new [short fiction](#).

Thanks for reading and see you in two weeks.

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