

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 23 June 2023

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Heavy clashes have [resumed](#) between the SAF and the RSF in Khartoum and Omdurman after the expiry of recent short-term ceasefires which – until partway through the second ceasefire – had seen a [significant decrease](#) in fighting (though the violence continued uninterrupted in other parts of the country, especially Darfur and North/South Kordofan). During the recent fighting, large fires broke out at the [General Intelligence Service HQ](#) and north of [Yarmouk ammunition factory](#). Meanwhile, international actors are scrambling to encourage the two warring parties back to the negotiating table, with the US-KSA talks in Jeddah now [adjourned](#) (apparently “because the format is not succeeding in the way that we [the US, and presumably KSA] want”). In a recent session, the IGAD adopted a roadmap for mediating the conflict in Sudan which envisaged, amongst other things, face-to-face talks between the two Generals. So far, the roadmap has been [rejected](#) by al-Burhan, who apparently [objects](#) to: (i) the appointment of Kenya’s William Ruto as head of the new IGAD Quartet on the situation (he claims Kenya harbors sympathies for the RSF); (ii) the mediation schedule; and (iii) the [classification](#) of the conflict as a fight between the two Generals. Despite this opposition, the Quartet – comprised of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan – recently [convened](#) for the first time, affirming their commitment to the roadmap, and the launch of “an all-inclusive political process aimed at achieving peace and a peaceful transition to democracy and civilian rule” (which is apparently to be hosted by Kenya in mid-July or the first week of August 2023). For his part, Hemedti has [reportedly](#) expressed positive sentiment towards the IGAD proposal, though it currently seems unlikely that the two will actually meet in person any time soon.
- Alarming atrocities continue in Darfur, with another barrage of horrific violence committed by the RSF and allied militias, including in [El-Geneina](#) (West Darfur), [Zalingei](#) (Central Darfur), [Kutum](#), [Tawila](#), and [Al Salam IDP camp](#) (North Darfur). Scorched earth tactics are consistently being employed by perpetrators – for instance, [widespread destruction and razing of civilian structures](#), mass killings (including of [fleeing civilians](#)), and sexual violence. Though some of the violence appears to be indiscriminate, two key patterns are consistent across the vast majority of accounts – the targeting of: (i) [specific ethnic groups](#), including the Masalit and other darker-skinned non-Arabs; and (ii) lawyers, doctors, activists, and prominent community figures (particularly those

known for reporting human rights violations and supporting IDPs). The situation in El Geneina has been described as “genocide” by various actors, including the [Darfur Bar Association](#) (DBA) and [SIHA Network](#); as well as “ethnic cleansing” by both [domestic](#) and [international](#) actors. Having accused the RSF/allied militias of deliberately targeting civilians during an interview with Al-Hadath, the wali (governor) of West Darfur was, just hours later, abducted and [killed](#); almost certainly by the RSF (e.g., videos of his capture [seemingly](#) featured RSF officers, though the RSF [denies](#) its involvement). Since then, his brother and father have [reportedly](#) also been killed. Amongst the stark array of other extrajudicial killings reported in Darfur in recent days, Prince Tariq Abdul Rahman Bahr al-Din (the brother of Dar Masalit Sultan Saad Abdul Rahman Bahr al-Din) and 16 others were [killed](#) in El-Geneina, [Al Sadiq Muhammad Ahmed](#), commissioner of the Humanitarian Aid Commission, has also been killed.

ACCOUNTABILITY TARGETING, CRSV, ICC

Further targeting of lawyers, doctors, journalists, and activists

[Lawyers](#), [doctors](#), [journalists](#), and [activists](#) continue to be targeted amidst the conflict. In Khartoum, SAF soldiers have [reportedly](#) been targeting young Misseriya tribesmen (the RSF often recruits Misseriya tribesmen and the leader of the Misseriya [recently announced](#) support for the RSF). Two Al Jazeera journalists were also shot by snipers, in an incident that the [Sudanese Journalists Syndicate](#) attributes to the RSF. In El Geneina (where such targeting has increased at an aggressive rate), four lawyers were recently [killed](#) – seemingly by the RSF. The DBA claims the lawyers were deliberately targeted for their involvement in reporting past incidents in El Geneina and has [called](#) on its members to leave El Geneina due to DBA members being increasingly targeted and killed.

Numerous CRSV cases reported around Khartoum

Numerous cases of sexual violence have been reported, including 11 women who were raped in [El Shajara](#), south-west Khartoum, 16 further rapes reported to [Radio Dabanga](#), and at least 18 incidents of sexual violence reported to the [OHCHR](#) involving at least 53 women and girls. In one case reported to the Combating Violence against Women Unit, a woman in Kafouri, Khartoum North was [reportedly](#) gang raped by 17 RSF officers. According to the [Unit](#), the cases it has documented likely represent “only two percent of the actual numbers of cases of sexual violence in Khartoum”.

Calls for new ICC investigation into current situation in Sudan

Minni Minnawi has [added](#) to calls for the UN Security Council to extend the ICC’s mandate to allow it to investigate the atrocities currently being perpetrated in Darfur. As Sudan is not a State Party to the Rome Statute, the ICC’s jurisdiction in Sudan is principally derived from a prior [UN Security Council referral](#) regarding “the situation in Darfur since 1 July 2002”. The Prosecutor of the ICC is scheduled to brief the Security Council on Sudan next month. There, it is hoped that he will shed some light on what the ICC needs to effectively address the current situation, including whether he considers that ongoing events have a sufficient nexus to the prior referral to allow the ICC to investigate without a new referral. Meanwhile, Alicia Kearns MP (Chair of the UK’s Foreign Affairs Committee) has [called](#) on the UK (as penholder on Sudan at the Security Council) to lead efforts to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate alleged ongoing international crimes in Sudan.

GOVERNMENT AID, IDPs, RSF ULTIMATUM

Continuing challenges to delivering humanitarian aid

While \$1.5 billion in aid was recently [pledged](#) by international actors, [significant obstacles](#) remain to ensure that aid can actually be delivered. Most humanitarian NGOs are still being [denied](#) new Sudan visas with no proper justification. Those able to operate do so in challenging circumstances – e.g., [gunfire](#) recently prevented the transfer of wounded soldiers to hospitals by the ICRC in Khartoum; and, in order to reach people in need of aid, MSF were [forced](#) by the RSF to participate in a [video](#) stating that the RSF acted in accordance with IHL and that MSF were able to work without RSF interference. More recently, 30 trucks of aid were [reportedly](#) confiscated in Port Sudan by Red Sea State authorities. See this [MSF press release](#) on some of the challenges facing those seeking to deliver aid.

Almost 2.5 million displaced since conflict began

Almost [2.5 million people](#) have been displaced within and outside Sudan since the onset of the conflict, including nearly 2 million IDPs. Crossing to neighbouring countries remains extremely unpredictable, with regularly changing requirements/restrictions being imposed by the likes of [Egypt](#). Efforts are [reportedly](#) underway to establish a new passport factory in Port Sudan, with many currently stranded due to not having a valid passport. Relatedly, see this [account](#) of the current situation in Renk, South Sudan, where nearly 60,000 have passed through from Sudan since the conflict erupted.

RSF oil ultimatum to South Sudan

South Sudan's oil production hangs in the balance after the RSF [reportedly](#) issued a three-week ultimatum to shut down oil pipelines in RSF-controlled areas unless South Sudan shares oil revenues or halts payment of transit fees to the Sudanese authorities. While South Sudan officials have refrained from commenting on the specifics of the RSF's demands (which the RSF's recently [globetrotting](#) political advisor, Youssef Ezzat, [denies](#) were made), they have [called](#) on al-Burhan and Hemedti to ensure the continuous flow of oil. See this [article](#) on some of the complexities involved in this situation.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION DARFUR, NORTH/SOUTH KORDOFAN, SPLM-N (al-Hilu)

Dire situation in Darfur

The violence in Darfur continues to escalate rapidly and shows no signs of coming to a halt. As described above, the situation in El Geneina remains dire. Some figures indicate that more than [1,100 people](#) have been killed in El Geneina, though others suggest the true figure may be more than [5,000](#). Very little communication is emerging from [Zalingei](#), though [recent reports](#) suggest that heavy attacks continue to be perpetrated by the RSF and allied militias. Mustafa Tambour of the SLM-T previously [called](#) for military support in the area. The RSF continues to fight the SAF in [Nyala](#) and has now entered into renewed clashes in [Al-Fashir](#). The situation in Al-Fashir (which is now "[relatively calm](#)" as of writing) could have devastating consequences for both the local community as well as the many Darfuris who have been displaced into Al-Fashir since the conflict began. Reportedly, these latest Al-Fashir clashes started after the SAF [rejected demands](#) from the RSF to continue paying its officers' salaries.

Armed clashes in North and South Kordofan

Renewed clashes have also taken place in North and South Kordofan. In North Kordofan, the SAF conducted an [airstrike](#) on RSF positions in El-Obied, displacing some 64 families; and 10 people were [killed](#) following clashes between civilians and RSF officers in El Rahad. There has

since been a [cautious calm](#) in these areas, seemingly due to mediation efforts between civil leaders and the RSF. In South Kordofan, the SAF has been in [sustained conflict](#) with the SPLM-N (al-Hilu) around Kadugli since the it attacked SAF positions in the area. The SAF claimed it recently [repelled](#) an assault by the SPLM-N (al-Hilu) on the city but that it had also sustained some casualties. Residents have since [reported](#) fighting between the SAF and the RSF in the capital.

weekend read

[Spiralling violence](#) in West Darfur (and [updates](#) across Darfur); [Sudan Conflict Monitor](#) (and [Sudan Conflict Observatory](#)); UNHCR's latest [Protection Brief](#); ICC trial – [history repeating itself](#) (and [don't forget](#) the indicted war criminals); assessing the risk of [regionalisation](#); a [race against time](#) to halt Sudan's collapse (and what the [US](#) can do to help); [more humane approach](#) needed at Egypt-Sudan border; and [race to protect Sudan's pyramids and tombs](#) (and [attack](#) on Sudan's heritage).

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

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