

justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

REDRESS

Hello,

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

Friday 1 Sep 2023

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Al-Burhan recently [left](#) Sudan for the first time since 15 April 2023, embarking on a regional tour to engage with various States regarding the current conflict. In a [speech](#) given to SAF soldiers in Port Sudan, al-Burhan: (i) explained that he had left the SAF's HQ in a coordinated military operation during which two navy members were [killed](#) in clashes; and (ii) [rejected](#) the prospect of reaching any peace agreement with the RSF, affirming his belief that the SAF would defeat the RSF. Despite this latter comment (which may have been intended as a morale booster for the SAF fighters), al-Burhan is expected to discuss regional proposals intended to broker a permanent ceasefire. He first travelled to [Egypt](#) to discuss with al-Sisi, where he (dubiously) claimed that the SAF does not wish to govern Sudan and is committed to a democratic transition. The two also [discussed](#) Egypt's offer to mediate negotiations between the SAF and the RSF – which al-Burhan apparently welcomed. Having now returned to Sudan, there is [speculation](#) that al-Burhan may appoint a new transitional government prior to travelling to [Saudi Arabia](#). He is also expected to travel to [South Sudan](#) and later, [Qatar](#). For his part (perhaps aiming to steal a march on al-Burhan's regional advocacy plans), Hemedti published a '[vision](#)' for a comprehensive settlement to end the war and progress to a democratically elected government. The proposal, which is largely generic and entirely at odds with the RSF's prior actions, has been [widely criticised](#) as a political ploy.
 - Fierce battles have continued between the SAF and the RSF, particularly around Khartoum, as well as Darfur and South Kordofan (on which, see below). Regular clashes have taken place in [Al-Shajara](#), with the RSF battling to take control over the military complex. The fighting reportedly led to a "[mass exodus](#)", with missiles "[indiscriminately and continuously](#)" hitting homes. An unknown number of people have been killed in a situation that activists have called a "[humanitarian catastrophe](#)". RSF political advisor Youssef Ezzat had previously [alluded](#) to the prospect of the RSF also targeting states that have declared support for the SAF and mobilised their youth to join its ranks, though this doesn't yet appear to have materialised. Meanwhile, the SAF recently [resumed attacks](#) on RSF positions in several cities across Khartoum.
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ACCOUNTABILITY TORTURE, AFRICAN COMMISSION, TARGETED ARRESTS

Tupac released from detention, signs of torture

Mohamed Adam ('Tupac') was recently [released](#) from detention (pictured [here](#)) following his (re)[arrest](#) on 13 August 2023. This latest arrest was reportedly tied to his 'escape' from al-Huda Prison, where he and as many as 7,000 others were [released](#) by prison police following an attack on the building. As a reminder, following his release from al-Huda Prison, Tupac was [arrested again](#) by the Central Reserve Police without explanation. He was soon released, before being arrested once more. This time, according to Tupac's lawyers, he was detained without a legal basis for a seemingly unlawful period, and displayed visible signs of torture, including being seen "[shackled and bleeding](#)". His release follows the retraction of written evidence supposedly "implicating" Tupac. It should be noted that following his initial release from al-Huda Prison, Tupac [spoke](#) of his willingness to turn himself in once it was safe to do so, and that he would demonstrate his innocence. Meanwhile, ICC indictee Ahmed Harun, who left Kober Prison in [similar circumstances](#) and also gave a commitment to return once safe to do so, was not re-arrested, with the Public Prosecution in Kassala [striking off](#) his arrest warrant (as noted in our previous roundup).

Sudan responsible for NISS gang rape

In another recent Sudan decision (see [here](#) from our previous roundup), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights ('African Commission') has [found](#) Sudan responsible for failing to investigate and prosecute the arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture (including gang rape) of Safia Ishaq Mohammed Issa by NISS agents back in February 2011. REDRESS and the [African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies](#) originally filed a complaint with the African Commission on behalf of Safia on 26 March 2013. In its decision, the African Commission recognised (for the first time) that sexual violence automatically implies gendered discrimination, and ordered Sudan to implement several reparation measures, including to: (i) pay compensation to Safia; (ii) investigate and prosecute the perpetrators; and (iii) undertake a series of institutional and practical reforms to address sexual and gender-based violence and ensure redress to victims.

Targeted arrests in Blue Nile State

Targeted arrests continue to be reported in Sudan against activists, human rights defenders, and others. In Blue Nile alone: (i) ten women human rights defenders and a journalist were [arrested](#) at an event held to commemorate the [International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances](#); (ii) Military Intelligence [arrested](#) two resistance committee leaders, who were severely beaten and detained before being released; and (iii) a Military Intelligence raid led to the [detention](#) of 23 people attending an event at the Communist Party's office in Ed Damazin.

Renewed calls for commission of inquiry

Today, 117 civil society organisations, including REDRESS, [reiterated](#) a call for the UN Human Rights Council ('HRC') to establish an independent mechanism on Sudan, such as a commission of inquiry. During a special session held on 11 May 2023, the HRC adopted a resolution which, amongst other things, enhanced the mandate of the UN Expert on Sudan but fell short of establishing a dedicated investigative mechanism. The next HRC session begins on 11 September 2023, with the High Commissioner for Human Rights scheduled to present an oral update on Sudan the following day.

GOVERNMENT JEM, SPLM-N AL-HILU, RSF

JEM splinter group formed

Fractures continue to emerge within Justice and Equality Movement ('JEM'), with [recently ousted](#) Suleiman Sandal now leading a [splinter group](#) and purporting to have ousted Gibril Ibrahim. Previously, Ibrahim fired Sandal and three other officials following their [unauthorised participation](#) in covert discussions with the RSF's Abdel-Rahim Dagalo in N'Djamena, Chad. In recent days, the group of ousted officials had led a charge demanding the election of a new JEM President to replace Ibrahim (ostensibly on the basis of [term limits](#), while also criticising Ibrahim for failing to take a neutral anti-war stance). For his part, Ibrahim still claims to serve as JEM President and recently [called](#) for the formation of a transitional caretaker government in Sudan.

Further SPLM-N al-Hilu clashes in South Kordofan

Clashes between the SAF and SPLM-N al-Hilu have continued in South Kordofan. While there was a temporary cautious calm following prior battles, the SAF recently launched a [counter-attack](#) on the SPLM-N's positions around Kadugli. A number of casualties have since been reported today following an [SPLM-N attack](#) on SAF positions east of Dalami. Amidst the recent clashes, the UN Interim Security Force in Abyei reported an attack that [reportedly targeted](#) its helicopter in Kadugli.

RSF diplomatic passports revoked

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has [revoked](#) the diplomatic passports of various RSF leaders and several senior officials from the prior transitional government, including Abdallah Hamdok and Khalid Omer Youssef. This decision follows a series of recent actions brought by the Sudanese authorities against the RSF, including the [formation of a committee](#) to investigate RSF crimes (which will [seemingly](#) target RSF leadership), the [issuance of arrest warrants](#) against Hemedti and his brothers, and [plans](#) to submit a dossier of evidence on RSF crimes to the ICC. It remains to be seen how these actions will affect negotiation dynamics between the two forces.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION CONFLICT, HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Continued violence in Nyala, Zalingei, Al-Fashir

The situation in Darfur remains dire, with major clashes reported in [Nyala](#) (South Darfur), as well as [Zalingei](#) (Central Darfur) and [Al-Fashir](#) (North Darfur). Amidst widespread communications blackouts in Nyala, widespread civilian casualties have been reported following clashes between the SAF and the RSF. More than 40 people were [reportedly](#) killed in one day alone. The commander of the SAF's 16th Infantry Division was amongst those [killed](#) during the clashes. The joint Darfur forces have now [deployed](#) in Nyala to establish stability. Elsewhere in South Darfur, clashes that broke out at the beginning of August between members of the Salamat and Beni Halba tribes in Kubum have [continued](#), despite various community efforts to stop the fighting.

Humanitarian crisis deepens

At least [24.7 million people](#) in Sudan need humanitarian aid and protection according to an OCHA Director, in the latest stark illustration of Sudan's growing humanitarian crisis. As of writing, only [26.4%](#) of the necessary funding for the revised Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan has been raised. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the UN has [described](#) that the consequences of the conflict – marked by hunger, disease, and displacement – threaten to “consume the entire country” and warned that a

further protracted conflict “will almost certainly lead to a lost generation of children”. [Almost 5 million people](#) have been displaced since the start of the conflict. According to observers, a “[dire situation is unfolding](#)” across displacement camps in Eastern Sudan, with similar reports emerging elsewhere, including from the Arkoum camp in Chad.

weekend read

Sudan’s warring generals make their [appeal](#); a genocide unfolds – [again](#); murky arms trade [thrives](#) in Sudan’s East; Sudanese [feminist sisterhood](#); [joint letter](#) on atrocity prevention; the [last days](#) of Yevgeny Prigozhin (and [what next](#) for Wagner); and Sudan’s treasures in the [line of fire](#).

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

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