

# justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

REDRESS

Hello,

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

Friday 21 July 2023

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## BIG STORIES FIRST

- Several new mediation initiatives have emerged to end the current conflict, though there is no clear frontrunner. As expected, al-Burhan declined to participate in a recent meeting of the IGAD Quartet, ostensibly [because](#) the Quartet failed to replace Kenya's Ruto as chair (the two have since [spoken](#) on a phone call, the outcomes of which are unclear). The meeting – which had broad attendance, including representatives from the RSF, US, UK, EU, Egypt, KSA, and the UAE – [concluded](#) with the announcement that the IGAD and AU will immediately commence on a “civilian engagement process”, as well as the Quartet requesting a regional summit to consider the possible deployment of the East Africa Standby Force (‘EASF’) to protect civilians and secure humanitarian access. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs [rejected](#) the IGAD’s proposals, threatening to reconsider Sudan’s IGAD membership and claiming the EASF (which Sudan is also a member of) would be considered aggressors in Sudan. Meanwhile, Egypt (which has so far [struggled to gain a foothold](#) in the mediation process) launched its own mediation effort – a [summit](#) of neighbouring States in Cairo, which also secured strong attendance, including from Ethiopia – coinciding with [renewed GERD negotiations](#). There is also speculation that the US/KSA-led Jeddah talks have [resumed confidentially](#), with an [RSF advisor](#) reportedly claiming a comprehensive ceasefire and the start of political negotiations would likely be reached before the end of July. While it is doubtful that the sheer array of active facilitators is particularly helpful, recent activities from elsewhere (including [Chad](#) – on which see below, as well as [Russia](#), [Turkey](#), and [Qatar](#)) suggest that, if anything, the pool of negotiating platforms could conceivably increase in the coming weeks.
- While both the [SAF](#) and the [RSF](#) continue to claim their apparent willingness to end the conflict, the violence has again escalated around [Khartoum](#), as well as spreading to new areas (including [West Kordofan](#)). Dozens of civilians have been [killed](#) following a series of [airstrikes](#) in Omdurman and Bahri. The SAF is continuing to [establish](#) new regional military training camps following al-Burhan’s [recent call](#) for young people to mobilise in support of the SAF. There are [growing concerns](#) that both forces are recruiting along tribal and ethnic lines. Meanwhile, both sides are increasingly employing drones as part of their attacks. In one incident, at least 14 people were [killed](#) in a drone strike on a gathering of civilians south of Khartoum, reportedly conducted by the RSF. Efforts

remain ongoing to quantify the devastation caused since the conflict began. Over [3 million people](#) have been displaced. While conservative figures suggest that some [1,200](#) people have been killed, the true figure is likely far higher. The Professional Pharmacists Association [reports](#) that 11,000 people have been killed in El Geneina alone (though this figure has not been verified). An estimated [50%](#) of the population are in urgent need of humanitarian aid and protection (a third of which are in [Darfur](#)). Sudanese economists [recently estimated](#) that \$9 billion of economic loss has been caused, with a further \$40 billion in property and goods looted.

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## ACCOUNTABILITY ICC, SANCTIONS, DETENTION

### ICC extends investigation, announces new platform for evidence

[Briefing](#) the UN Security Council ('UNSC'), the ICC Prosecutor has announced that his Office (the 'OTP') has launched: (i) a new investigation into alleged international crimes committed in Darfur since 15 April 2023; and (ii) a [public appeal](#) for evidence on crimes in relation to this new investigation or the OTP's long-standing Darfur investigation into events since 1 July 2002. An open question remains regarding the legal limits of the ICC's Sudan jurisdiction (derived from a [prior UNSC referral](#) on the "situation in Darfur" since 1 July 2002). While a literal reading may suggest that the ICC's jurisdiction is geographically confined to Darfur, the Prosecutor could argue that atrocities committed elsewhere in Sudan (particularly in Khartoum) are in scope, due to being "[sufficiently linked to the situation of crisis which was ongoing at the time of the \[UNSC\] referral](#)".

### Al-Bashir unharmed after hospital attack, Harun travelling

Al-Bashir is reportedly [unharmed](#) following an [attack](#) (apparently by the RSF) on Alia Military Hospital in Omdurman, where he was receiving treatment. At the time of the attack, al-Bashir, Bakri Hassan Saleh (former PM and Bashir-deputy), and other detainees were [reportedly](#) attending noon prayers. There is speculation that al-Bashir has since been moved to an unknown secure location. Meanwhile, fellow ICC indictee Ahmed Harun is [travelling freely](#) across parts of Sudan, apparently [promoting](#) the continuation of the current conflict together with other Bashir-affiliated leaders. Harun [fled](#) Kober Prison during the early stages of the conflict following a series of armed attacks on the prison. At the time, he claimed – in an unverified [audio message](#) – that he would turn himself in when the situation returned to normal.

### New UK targeted sanctions

The UK has sanctioned: (i) [six entities](#) – three associated with each of the RSF and the SAF (including [replicating](#) the four recent US entity sanctions); and (ii) [three entities and two individuals](#) linked to the Wagner Group's activities in Sudan (mostly replicating existing US and EU sanctions), in each case for fuelling the current conflict. Currently, none of the UK, US, or EU have imposed individual sanctions on members of either the RSF or the SAF, despite the widescale atrocities being reported in Darfur and Khartoum. The designations made to date appear to suggest that these actors wish to preserve opportunities for dialogue with al-Burhan and Hemedti, while avoiding being perceived as favouring a particular side.

### Mass detention in Khartoum

According to a [recent report](#), unnamed Sudanese human rights organisations have evidence that the RSF has detained more than 5,000 people in Khartoum, ~3,500 of whom are civilians. The organisations reportedly have evidence of cases of death by torture, as well as "degrading,

inhumane conditions of detention devoid of human dignity and the most basic necessities of life". These accounts are consistent with prior reporting, which has implicated the RSF (as well as the SAF and [military intelligence](#)) in the widespread targeted detention of civilians. Six SAF members and 20 civilians were [recently released](#) by the RSF.

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#### GOVERNMENT JPA, JEM, SPLM-N al-Hilu

##### JPA groups meet for discussions in Chad

JPA signatory groups (including SLM-MM's Minni Minnawi and JEM's Gibril Ibrahim) travelled to N'Djamena for [discussions](#) with Chad's Idriss Deby on ways to stop the fighting in Darfur. The parties [discussed](#) the strengthening and possible expansion of the joint Darfur forces' deployment beyond Al-Fashir, as well as utilising Chad's airports as alternative entry points for the delivery of humanitarian aid (international aid has so far flowed through Port Sudan). Relatedly, the *wali* (governor) of North Darfur has [announced](#) an apparent agreement with UN humanitarian aid officials for the delivery of aid from Chad into Darfur. As of writing, another group of Sudanese activists, politicians, and Darfuri rebel leaders will [reportedly](#) now meet in Togo in the coming days as part of a separate initiative, apparently to discuss an action plan to prevent Darfur from descending into "full-blown civil war".

##### Fractures in JEM after apparent RSF meeting

[Gibril Ibrahim](#) has denied secretly meeting with RSF second commander Abdel-Rahim Dagalo (Hemedti's brother) while in N'Djamena. Dagalo [reportedly](#) left Khartoum recently, leading to widespread speculation regarding the purpose(s) of his travel. Seemingly acknowledging that a meeting took place with Dagalo and several JEM figures (but apparently not Ibrahim himself), a senior JEM official [has claimed](#) that Ibrahim "plans to impose severe penalties on the [JEM] leaders who clandestinely met Daglo". The official emphasised that the supposed meeting was unauthorised and had angered JEM's leadership. [Idriss Deby](#) has also denied meeting with Dagalo.

##### SPLM-N al-Hilu attacks resume

South Sudan's Kiir is [in talks](#) with the SPLM-N's leaders following renewed attacks by SPLM-N al-Hilu in [South Kordofan](#) and [Blue Nile](#). While Kiir [previously reported](#) that he had successfully persuaded al-Hilu to cease attacks on the SAF, attacks soon resumed and continue as at the time of writing. Meanwhile, the SAF continues to clash with the RSF in South Kordofan, with RSF troops [ambushing](#) SAF forces around Delling (SPLM-N al-Hilu has [reportedly](#) taken control of the oil pumping station just south of the area). SAF and RSF clashes have now apparently [erupted](#) in Al-Fula, the capital of West Kordofan – which has not previously experienced conflict between the two sides. Violent clashes also continue around [el-Obeid](#).

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#### HUMANITARIAN SITUATION KASS, MINNAWI, MASS GRAVES

##### RSF capture Kass, security situation worsens in parts of Darfur

The security situation in Darfur has worsened further, with the RSF now having [taken control](#) of Kass in South Darfur following [heavy fighting](#) with the SAF (which killed more than 30 people). The RSF [continues](#) to attack and take control of Darfuri towns and SAF garrisons with perceived strategic value. Elsewhere, six people have been killed following inter-communal clashes in [Zalingei](#), Central Darfur. In a recent [speech](#), Minni Minnawi has reportedly again called on Darfuri civilians to take up arms to defend themselves, saying that the "current situation necessitates that".

### Information on possible international crimes in Darfur

Organisations continue to gather information on possible international crimes committed by the RSF and allied militias in Darfur. The bodies of at least 89 people were [found](#) buried in a mass grave just outside of El-Geneina in West Darfur. In a recent report, [Human Rights Watch](#) revealed how the RSF and allied Arab militias executed at least 28 ethnic Massalit and killed and injured dozens of civilians during an attack on Misterei, West Darfur. The report described that at least 59 people had been buried in mass graves. Meanwhile, the [Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab](#) has found that at least 26 communities across Darfur have been systematically attacked or razed by the RSF and aligned forces since the beginning of the conflict (see [here](#) for a helpful timeline of major open source events across Darfur).

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## weekend read

Inside [Adré](#); [‘All that we had is gone’](#); al-Burhan’s appearance video [raises questions](#); [Ali Karti](#) ready to pounce; Haftar [rerouting supplies](#) to the RSF; life as a [hostage](#) of the RSF; Sudan’s [‘Dagalo’ markets](#); [KSA-UAE dynamics](#) and Sudan; Sudan’s [cultural heritage](#) in peril; and why is the ICC so [silent](#) on Sudan (written prior to the Prosecutor’s recent UNSC briefing).

*Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.*

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