

justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

REDRESS

Hello,

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

Hyperlinks are underlined.

Friday 24 Nov 2023

BIG STORIES FIRST

- Following the RSF's latest spree of violence in Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minnawi and Gibril Ibrahim's Justice and Equality Movement [announced jointly](#) that they would fight alongside the SAF against the RSF. Until now, the forces had declared their neutrality – likely to hedge their position while monitoring how the conflict developed, noting that sustained clashes between the RSF and SAF would weaken both (to the advantage of the JPA signatories). The groups' neutrality had become [increasingly untenable](#) in recent weeks as: (i) most of Darfur is now controlled by the RSF (the RSF [took control of El-Dein](#) days later); (ii) an RSF attack on the last remaining Darfur capital, Al-Fashir, is [increasingly likely](#) (a red line for both, as well as other Darfur armed groups); (iii) the RSF has attacked their joint force on [numerous occasions](#) in recent months; and (iv) the groups faced pressure to take strong action following the RSF's latest attacks on civilians (e.g., Minnawi recently referred to RSF atrocities in West Darfur as [genocide](#) [*sensitive content*]). Minnawi and Ibrahim were soon joined by forces led by [ICC indictee](#) Abdallah Banda and ([reportedly](#)) [Tahir Hajer](#). While these developments may slow the RSF's progress in Darfur, the involvement of additional armed groups will [bring more civilians into the crossfire](#) – especially the Zaghawa and Fur (prominent ethnic groups from which SLM-MM/JEM recruit). For instance, a [Chadian Zaghawa leader](#) recently spoke from Al-Fashir where he called on the Zaghawa community to take up arms and fight the RSF. This also complicates the Chad dimension to the conflict. There is a notable Zaghawa population in eastern Chad, including Déby – whose Sudan strategy will no doubt now be further scrutinised (since April, Chad has both facilitated the RSF's resupplies as well as sheltered SAF fighters retreating from Darfur). See [here](#) and [here](#) on the RSF's recent actions to secure border areas between Sudan and Chad.
- There are [growing fears](#) that the conflict in Sudan will divide the country in a manner akin to Libya following: (i) the RSF's consolidation of control over most of Darfur (with SAF fighters previously stationed in Darfur [complaining of being abandoned](#) by leadership); (ii) RSF resupplies into (and movement

to/from) Khartoum being significantly hindered by the [destruction of Shambat Bridge](#), which could conceivably entrench the RSF's local positions or prompt an eventual – possibly negotiated - retreat; (iii) continued militarisation along ethnic lines by numerous parties to the conflict; and (iv) the [increasing incidence of tribal disputes](#) (exacerbated by ongoing conflict conditions). Discussing with al-Burhan in the margins of the Saudi-Africa summit, Mohammed bin Salman [emphasised](#) that the division of Sudan would be a red line for Saudi Arabia. Also reflecting on a possible State division (or the RSF defeating the SAF), the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa remarked that the RSF “[are destroyers, not administrators. It's hard to imagine them running a State.](#)” Meanwhile, amidst claims from some [individuals affiliated with the RSF](#) that they may attack the SAF in Port Sudan, al-Burhan travelled to meet with leaders of [Kenya](#) and [Ethiopia](#), two IGAD members (as well as with the [AU Commission Chair](#)). Having [previously accused](#) Kenya's Ruto of bias towards the RSF, al-Burhan and Ruto formally recognised the “slow progress” in Jeddah and [agreed](#) to convene an urgent IGAD summit to: (i) find ways to “accelerate” the Jeddah process towards cessation of hostilities; and (ii) agree a framework for an “all-inclusive” Sudanese dialogue. Hemedti also claims to have recently spoken with Ruto and apparently “[stressed the importance of IGAD's role](#)”. Both leaders have been accused of forum shopping to prolong the conflict. In this respect, it is unclear whether al-Burhan's renewed IGAD engagement is a substantive step towards a possible long-term ceasefire or a delaying tactic. Ruto also met with the [Executive Secretary of IGAD](#) (IGAD's ‘[co-facilitator](#)’ of the Jeddah talks) and [Abdalla Hamdok](#) (likely in the context of his leadership within the Civil Front to Stop the War and Restore Democracy).

ACCOUNTABILITY KILLINGS, SANCTIONS, INVESTIGATIONS

Further civilian casualties, tribal groups mobilise

Clashes between the RSF and SAF have continued across parts of Sudan, particularly around [Jebel Aulia](#), the SAF's [General Command in Khartoum](#), [Omdurman](#), and [El-Obeid](#). Dozens of civilian casualties have been reported, including [12 people killed in Karari neighbourhood](#) (Omdurman) and seven people killed in [al-Hamra](#) (North Kordofan). After initially failing to capture Jebel Aulia Dam and the local SAF garrison, the RSF launched a series of violent attacks in Jebel Aulia and nearby neighbourhoods – [reportedly killing \(and in some cases beheading\) civilians](#). In response, the Jumo'iya tribe announced that it would [take up arms](#) against the RSF to protect civilians. Days later, the RSF took control of both [Jebel Aulia Dam](#) and the [SAF base](#).

Disagreement delaying EU sanctions, further US sanctions likely

According to [Africa Intelligence](#), the deployment of EU targeted sanctions is being held up by a lack of consensus amongst Member States. Despite establishing a [new Sudan sanctions framework](#) on 9 October 2023, the EU has – in [contrast to the US/UK](#) – not yet sanctioned any individuals or entities for their involvement in the current armed conflict. Meanwhile, further US sanctions are expected – possibly before the end of the year. Some sources suggest that the US may target influential RSF officials based outside Sudan (e.g., [Algoney Hamdan Dagalo](#), [Youssef Ezzat](#)) as

well as further 'pro-war' Islamists associated with the SAF. Having [sanctioned](#) prominent Islamist Ali Karti in late September, there is (unconfirmed) speculation that Karti recently fled Sudan to Eritrea. The RSF [reportedly demanded](#) the arrest of Karti (considered an instigator and aggravator of the current conflict) during the recent Jeddah talks.

Investigations of atrocities in Darfur

Amongst those once more signalling the alarm in Darfur: (i) the [UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide](#) has condemned recent attacks against civilians in West Darfur which "if confirmed, may constitute acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes"; (ii) the [UN is](#) "verifying credible reports [...] of large-scale violence directed towards members of the Masalit community in Darfur, particularly in El Geneina"; and (iii) the [EU High Representative](#) described the RSF's attacks in Ardamata as "seemingly part of a wider ethnic cleansing campaign", emphasising the EU's work with the ICC (the Office of the Prosecutor's staff [recently travelled to Chad](#) to speak with survivors from Darfur) and other partners to monitor and document human rights violations in order to ensure accountability. Meanwhile, the RSF's Abdelrahim Dagalo has [affirmed the RSF's supposed willingness](#) to cooperate with investigations into crimes committed in Darfur.

GOVERNMENT SOVEREIGN COUNCIL, UNITAMS, RESHUFFLE

Al-Burhan removes Hajer from Sovereign Council

Al-Burhan has issued a decree [purportedly removing](#) Tahir Hajer from the Sovereign Council. This follows the [recent removal](#) of fellow JPA appointee, al-Hadi Idris. Malik Agar – deputy chair of the Council – is the only JPA appointee remaining in the Council, which now consists of five members (al-Burhan, Agar, Shamseddin al-Kabbashi, Yasser al-Atta, and Ibrahim Jaber). Back in mid-September, a letter was [leaked to Sudan Tribune](#) showing that al-Burhan had reallocated administrative oversight responsibilities within the Council, assigning no roles to either Hajer or Idris. Days before his removal, Hajer penned a [letter](#) with Idris and Hafez Ibrahim Abdel Nabi – in response to SLM-MM and JEM's announcement (see above in Big Stories First) – that their respective forces would remain neutral, though days later, Hajer's deputy, Abdallah Yahya, [claimed that their neutrality had indeed ended](#). Like Idris, Hajer considers his removal was unlawful and unconstitutional. He has [called for an urgent meeting](#) of the nine Council members removed by al-Burhan to address the current situation.

Sudanese authorities request UNITAMS termination

The Sudanese de facto authorities have [informed](#) the UN Security Council of their request to terminate the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission ('UNITAMS'), citing a lack of progress and the need for a new form of cooperation with the Council. Shortly before this, the UN Secretary-General [announced](#) the launch of a strategic review of UNITAMS, which has been without an official leader since [Volker Perthes' resignation](#) in September. The review will be [led by Ian Martin](#), former UN Special Representative in Libya. Council members are [currently negotiating](#) a UK-authored draft resolution renewing UNITAMS' mandate – which expires on 3 December, having been [expanded back in June](#) for six months (as opposed to the usual 12). The UK (penholder on Sudan at the Council) [reportedly favours](#) a three or six-month

‘technical’ extension. This would allow the Council to reconvene with the benefit of the findings and recommendations of the strategic review, which will be shared with Council members in [January 2024](#). While the review may ultimately be the death knell for UNITAMS in its current form (it has widely been criticised since the October 2021 coup as not being fit for purpose), it is unclear what alternatives are viable given the current political climate in the Council. Meanwhile, the UN Secretary-General [announced the appointment](#) of Ramtane Lamamra of Algeria as his Personal Envoy for Sudan, and the Council has [renewed the mandate](#) of the Interim Security Force for Abyei until 15 November 2024.

Further reshuffle of de facto administration

Al-Burhan has taken further steps to reshuffle the de facto Sudanese administration, [dismissing](#) four ministers (Interior, Justice, Industry, and Religious Affairs) as well as six governors (Al-Jazira, Kassala, Northern, and West Kordofan States, as well as the RSF-controlled South and Central Darfur). This latest move follows al-Burhan’s [dismissal](#) of five ministers earlier this month and – at least in the case of Al-Jazira and Northern State governors – is likely connected to delays mobilising additional SAF fighters.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION CONFERENCE, FUNDING, ACCESS

Humanitarian conference concludes, urgent action needed

The three-day Sudan Humanitarian Crisis Conference has concluded in Cairo, with a total of [420 people](#) participating across Sudanese civil society, emergency response rooms, international aid groups, and UN agencies. Participants [explored strategies](#) for increasing access, coordination, localisation, and decentralisation. The resulting findings and recommendations will soon be [published](#) in a detailed report. The Conference concludes as some [25 million people in Sudan require assistance and protection](#), around [6.5 million people have been forcibly displaced](#), and [funding constraints](#) already hinder the delivery of relief (e.g., [food aid to displaced in Chad, needs outstrip assistance for displaced in Egypt](#)). Meanwhile, despite the RSF making [renewed humanitarian commitments in Jeddah](#), MSF has [announced](#) it may be forced to halt surgeries at the Turkish hospital in southern Khartoum as RSF members will not allow surgical supplies to be transported to hospitals in areas under its control.

**weekend
read**

[‘They called me a slave’](#); [‘unimaginable horror’](#) (and one of the [deadliest attacks yet](#)) in Darfur; dehumanisation of women [‘part of our reality’](#); civil society [sounds alarm](#); humanitarian crisis reaches [breaking point](#); the men [defending their homes](#); converging wars and [Russia naval port](#); and will Africa [remain on the sidelines](#) of Jeddah talks?

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

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