

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 Mar 2024

BIG STORIES FIRST

- The armed conflict still shows no sign of abating as [both sides](#) have reaffirmed their intentions to defeat the other and mediation efforts have failed to yield results. Al-Burhan [travelled to Tripoli, Libya](#) on an official visit, meeting with Mohamed al-Menfi (President) and Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh (Prime Minister) to discuss “joint cooperation” and the situation in Sudan. While the outcomes of the meetings are unclear, the main prevailing suggestions are that Dbeibeh [proposed to broker a peace and ceasefire initiative](#) and that al-Burhan may have requested [military assistance](#) from Libya (as with [Iran](#)). Days later, Dbeibeh [also met with Hemedti](#). [Some sources suggest](#) that the SAF would be receptive to negotiations brokered by Libya provided they receive guarantees that the RSF will comply with its obligations under the [Jeddah Declaration](#) (particularly that [RSF forces withdraw from civilian homes](#)). Meanwhile, negotiations in Jeddah are [expected](#) to resume this month – possibly building on an [agreement reached in Manama, Bahrain](#) between Shamseddin al-Kabbashi and Abdelrahim Dagalo that reportedly provides for, amongst other things, a unified national army comprising the SAF, RSF, and [certain armed movements](#), compensation for damage caused during the conflict (details unclear), and a comprehensive national dialogue between political actors (except remnants of the al-Bashir regime). While the Manama talks were unannounced at the time, [outgoing](#) US ambassador to Sudan, John Godfrey recently [confirmed](#) that they did take place, as [previously reported](#). Finally, following a meeting with Uganda’s Museveni, Malik Agar claimed a “[new plan](#)” for peace in Sudan would be announced imminently, though it is not clear whether this plan is endorsed by the de facto authorities nor how it relates to the Jeddah/Manama process.
- While nearly [one in two people](#) in Sudan will need humanitarian assistance in 2024, new barriers are further impacting the ability of aid organisations to access those most in need. The de facto authorities recently revoked [permission for cross-border aid deliveries](#) from Chad to Darfur – a critical lifeline for 1 million people, including [200,000 children](#) expected to

suffer from life-threatening malnutrition this year. Most healthcare facilities in Darfur are non-functional. Medical sources in Al-Fashir, North Darfur have warned that the health sector in the city is “[on the verge of collapse](#)” due to a lack of supplies and the withdrawal of the Darfur Joint Forces (which, prior to a recent escalation of clashes in North Darfur, had been securing aid convoys from Port Sudan). The de facto authorities’ policy to [obstruct aid to communities in areas controlled by the RSF](#) has been [widely criticised](#). Although the RSF – not the SAF – controls most areas around the Darfur-Chad border (and uses this as its [key resupply channel](#)), aid agencies that do not comply with the de facto authorities’ orders in Darfur may be blocked from operating from (SAF-controlled) Port Sudan. Meanwhile, [attacks by Houthi forces against ships in the Red Sea](#) continue to hold up aid shipments to Sudan. For instance, the International Rescue Committee’s logistics partner will now [bypass the Red Sea route and deliver supplies via the UAE](#) – raising transportation costs by more than 40 percent and more than doubling shipping time from ~two weeks to more than a month.

ACCOUNTABILITY WAR CRIMES, CIVILIANS ATTACKED, AIR STRIKES

UN report finds evidence of war crimes

The [latest report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) on the situation in Sudan (15 April – 15 December 2023) details: (i) indiscriminate attacks by the SAF and the RSF in densely populated areas; (ii) attacks on specially protected objects; (iii) the RSF’s use of human shields; (iv) unlawful killings and sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by the warring parties; and (v) ongoing practices of enforced disappearance and child recruitment. The High Commissioner notes that “[some of these violations would amount to war crimes](#)”. Once again, the Sudanese de facto authorities [rejected any reports equating the SAF with the RSF](#). Today, the [enhanced interactive dialogue on the report](#) took place at the UN Human Rights Council. Amongst other things, CSOs described the impact of the SAF’s ban on cross-border aid deliveries (see above in ‘Big Stories First’) and emphasised the need to properly resource and support the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan.

RSF attack civilians in Jezira and South Kordofan

RSF fighters have continued targeting civilians in Jezira and South Kordofan. In Jezira, the RSF has [attacked at least 53 villages](#) amidst the [communications blackout](#) – arresting, [forcibly recruiting](#), or killing civilians, and looting homes, markets, public facilities and aid warehouses. At least [46 civilians have been killed](#) and 90 people injured. [Reports indicate](#) that the SAF may attempt to retake Wad Madani in the near future. The RSF also launched a new round of attacks against civilians in South Kordofan, deploying similar tactics to those it has used in Darfur since April 2023 – including mass extrajudicial killings and [burning at least five villages to the ground](#). At least [60 people](#) have been killed and [16 women](#) have been abducted. More than [40,000 people](#) have been displaced following the RSF’s attacks around Habila. Elsewhere, Emergency Lawyers [condemned a SAF airstrike](#) on Hamrat al-Sheikh, North Kordofan – the tenth such bombing in eight months.

SAF offensive in Khartoum, civilians killed

After [breaking the RSF’s siege](#) on the Engineers Corps in Omdurman, the SAF has

launched a [renewed offensive](#) on [several fronts](#) across [RSF positions](#) in Khartoum. Again, civilians have been disproportionately impacted by the fighting. [Seven civilians were killed](#) by artillery shelling in an RSF-controlled neighbourhood south of Khartoum and [four civilians were killed](#) (and more than 30 people injured) following a drone attack on a market in Bahri. Meanwhile, local emergency response rooms have [suspended communal kitchens](#) across Khartoum State due to the ongoing communications blackout and scarcity of supplies – exacerbating the [ongoing hunger crisis](#).

Clashes continue across Darfur

The situation in Darfur remains fragile after another round of clashes between the RSF and SAF. In Al-Fashir, North Darfur, [clashes briefly resumed](#) between the two forces leading to widespread displacement. Another round of gunfire was [reported yesterday](#), [injuring several people in Abu Shouk camp](#). [SLM-TC](#) leader, al-Hadi Idris, has [called on SAF and RSF forces to leave Al-Fashir](#) and hand control to the JPA signatories. See also [here](#) on the SAF's targeting of the RSF in Zurug, North Darfur – reportedly its main supply point from Chad and Libya – killing “dozens of people in air strikes”. Elsewhere in Darfur, the [SAF](#) bombed several locations in [El-Daein](#), East Darfur, [killing nine people](#), and at least [14 people have been killed](#) near Tortahan, East Darfur, after five gunmen opened fire on a merchant convoy.

GOVERNMENT SMUGGLING, SPECIAL ENVOY, UNSC

Concerns over smuggling across Egypt border

Al-Burhan recently visited Cairo for [talks with Egypt's al-Sisi](#), discussing solutions to end the conflict in Sudan and ways to support displaced Sudanese people who have fled the violence since April 2023. The meeting follows [increasing media reports](#) of people smuggling routes at the border with Egypt. While the al-Bashir-era [Egypt-Sudan Four Freedoms Agreement](#) guarantees the freedom of movement, residence, work and property ownership between the people of Egypt and Sudan, this remains an “[unfulfilled promise](#)”. The situation has worsened significantly since the armed conflict began, with Egypt [imposing numerous new visa restrictions](#) on those attempting to enter from Sudan. Given the time, cost, and difficulty of obtaining a visa in Wadi Halfa or Port Sudan, Sudanese people are increasingly placing their lives in the hands of people smugglers. The journey is itself expensive and extremely perilous – usually, people are secured by rope to the back of a pick-up truck and driven at speed to Aswan. Smugglers often warn that they will not stop if somebody falls out (e.g., [this case](#) of an individual whose mother was killed after the truck crashed and was abandoned along with the rest of their family). Those who arrive in Aswan are regularly extorted further by the smugglers (some threaten to report the individuals to the Egyptian authorities where they [risk deportation](#)). Once in Egypt, they need to travel to Cairo or Alexandria to book an appointment with UNHCR which can be scheduled for as many as four to ten months later.

US appoint Perriello as Special Envoy

As expected: (i) the US has [appointed Tom Perriello as US Special Envoy for Sudan](#) – to coordinate US policy on Sudan and advance efforts to end the conflict and secure unhindered humanitarian access; and (ii) [John Godfrey has concluded his tenure as US Ambassador to Sudan](#) (Former Ambassador Daniel Rubinstein will serve as Chargé

d’Affaires, ad interim). The appointment was welcomed by Malik Agar, who noted his hope “[that the special envoy shall be sensitive and considerate of the failed endeavours, that were far from achieving results](#)”. The move has been [criticised by some US Republican officials](#) on the basis that it: (i) is a “temporary appointment”; (ii) a special envoy was only appointed after an extensive delay (which they attribute to internal disagreements about “resources, reporting lines, and how this position will be used”; and (iii) Perriello will seemingly not report directly to President Biden – as US officials had previously called for. Following Perriello’s appointment, the US Secretary of State held [phone calls](#) with the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, stressing the need to end the conflict in Sudan (the details of precisely what was discussed are not known). Meanwhile, earlier this week, the US observed that the situation in Sudan “demands greater attention from the [UN] Security Council” and [called on the Council](#) to “act urgently to alleviate human suffering, hold perpetrators to account, and bring the conflict in Sudan to an end”. The US Ambassador to the UN did not specify what action the US recommends that the Council take, though many have called for the proper enforcement (and possible extension) of the UN arms embargo (which has been [routinely violated](#) since the armed conflict began). Relatedly, UNITAMS [completed its withdrawal](#) from Sudan yesterday. A small team will remain in Port Sudan to oversee its liquidation, beginning today. The UN Secretary-General emphasised that the UN “is not leaving Sudan” and remains “strongly committed” to providing humanitarian assistance/supporting the Sudanese people.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION MALNUTRITION, DISEASE, FUNDING SHORTFALL

Major funding shortfall despite growing Sudan crisis

At least [25 million people](#) in Sudan are struggling with soaring rates of hunger and malnutrition, with an estimated [five million](#) experiencing emergency levels of hunger according to the UN World Food Programme. As described above in ‘Accountability’, the situation has been exacerbated in part due to ongoing communications outages. Meanwhile, cases of cholera and dengue fever are increasing while [70-80% of hospitals in conflict zones are non-functional](#). Although the humanitarian situation in Sudan worsens by the day, based on [recent data](#), only \$96.7 million (3.6%) of the UN’s Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 has been funded (last year, [only 43.1%](#) was funded by year end).

weekend read

[Dirty money](#) destroying Sudan; need to sanction [RSF’s auxiliary networks](#); [black markets](#) of conflict; [deep scars](#) in El-Geneina; RSF recruiting [children](#) (and orphaned and disabled children [forced to flee](#)); refugees in [South Sudan](#) and [Chad](#); challenges and opportunities for [local mediation](#); and Sudan’s collapse as [\(failing\) test](#) for international community.

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

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