

justice + conflict

UPDATES FROM SUDAN

REDRESS

Hello – and a belated Eid Mubarak to those celebrating,
Welcome to this fortnightly roundup of news on justice and conflict in Sudan.
Hyperlinks are underlined.
Friday 12 Apr 2024

BIG STORIES FIRST

- This coming Monday will mark [one year](#) since the start of the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan. The situation remains dire – and worsening daily. In rare positive news, the UN World Food Programme delivered food and nutrition assistance to parts of [Darfur](#) and [Khartoum](#) – the first such deliveries in months due to recurring armed clashes and obstruction/[appropriation](#) by [both sides](#). According to recent data, [17.7 million people](#) faced acute hunger during the recent harvest season. The situation is [expected to worsen](#) in the lean season, with a risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) in parts of West Darfur, Khartoum, and areas in Greater Darfur with high concentrations of protracted and often re-displaced persons. Against this backdrop, the [International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and its Neighbours](#) is set to take place on Monday in Paris – bringing together [States](#) and key humanitarian and [civil society](#) actors to examine how to improve and scale up the humanitarian response. Key items on the agenda will likely include: (i) increased funding commitments as the Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 is [only \\$155.3m \(5.8%\) funded](#) (at the outset, the US has announced it is “[significantly increasing](#)” its funding commitment by more than [\\$100 million](#)); (ii) [depoliticising](#) aid access and securing increased access to communities most in need, whether they are in areas controlled by the SAF or the RSF; and (iii) coordinating with the grassroots groups that have developed robust mutual aid networks and strategies amidst the fighting, including the [emergency response rooms/resistance committees](#). Sudan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has [denounced](#) the event (the de facto authorities and warring parties have not been invited to participate – and were apparently not consulted).
- It remains [highly unlikely](#) that the Jeddah talks will resume on 18 April (as the [US previously pushed for](#)), though “[\[informal\] negotiations are happening every day.](#)” Following the [appointment](#) of Tom Perriello as its Special Envoy for Sudan, the US is increasingly articulating aspects of its strategy on Sudan, with Perriello [expected to enjoy greater autonomy](#) than his predecessor, John Godfrey. Perriello has met with [UAE and Egypt officials](#) ahead of their

(seemingly now confirmed) participation in future Jeddah talks. Early indications are that he may (encouragingly) also focus more on engagement with grassroots and pro-democracy activists than the FFC/Taqaddum. The US also continues to engage with [countries fuelling the conflict](#), including [Iran](#) (presumably also the [UAE](#)) and is [expected to issue new sanctions designations](#) targeting SAF and RSF officials who fail to comply with the [Jeddah Declaration](#) (which is itself primarily a codification of IHL principles that already bound the warring parties). It is unclear when the Jeddah talks may resume, though Perriello has [hinted](#) that Saudi Arabia is yet to commit to a date and both warring parties have [confirmed](#) that they are yet to receive an invite. Alongside the challenge of integrating additional parties in the process and the appointment of Perriello seemingly reflecting a material change in US negotiation strategy, the resumption of talks has likely also been complicated following recent drone attacks on a [Ramadan iftar](#) in River Nile and the [GIS HQ](#) in Gedaref (see below in Accountability).

ACCOUNTABILITY DRONES, TUPAC, CLASHES

Use of long-range drones in River Nile and Gedaref attacks

At least five people were [reportedly killed](#) following a drone strike that hit a Ramadan iftar held by the (SAF-affiliated) El Baraa bin Malik Brigade in Atbara, River Nile State – a city that had not previously been contested by the warring parties. Days later, [three people were injured](#) following a series of drone strikes targeting the [General Intelligence Service HQ](#) in Gedaref. Both River Nile and Gedaref States host thousands of civilians forcibly displaced from other parts of Sudan due to the armed conflict. While the group responsible for these attacks is [unclear](#), the selection of targets indicates possible RSF responsibility. A [security source claims](#) that the drones responsible for the Gedaref attack were Chinese-made Sunflower-200 drones (see here on [links to the UAE](#) – and therefore possibly the RSF), though this has been questioned by [some analysts](#). In any event, the attacks are likely to further entrench divisions between the warring parties as well as [fuel increased crackdowns \(see below\) and civilian mobilisation campaigns](#). The use of long-range kamikaze drones is also likely to result in further civilian casualties.

Tupac receives life sentence

The Sudanese de facto authorities have launched a new round of legal actions targeting perceived opposition actors. The East Gedaref Criminal Court has [convicted](#) Mohamed Adam ('Tupac') of waging war against the State under Article 51(a) of the [Criminal Act 1991](#) (a broad offence that includes 'abetting' or 'supporting' those who fight against the State; punishable by death, life imprisonment, or other custodial sentence). Tupac was sentenced to life imprisonment. The case raises serious fair trial concerns, particularly as it is unclear what evidence was presented against Tupac (very likely no credible evidence) and he has previously been [subjected to torture](#), including to [extract a forced confession](#) (in relation to separate targeted proceedings that he and three other young men killed a brigadier general, despite no credible evidence of this). Meanwhile, the Public Prosecution has issued [arrest warrants](#) against a range of political actors and journalists, including former PM Hamdok. The warrants are based on complaints filed by the SAF-established 'National Committee for War Crimes and Violations by the

RSF, and reportedly charge the individuals with offenses under Article 51(a) (as above) as well as Article 50 (undermining the constitutional system) and encouraging or supporting the commission of crimes against humanity ([Article 186](#)), genocide (187), and war crimes (188, etc.). As above, these are all potential capital offences. The charges against Taqaddum representatives are likely tied to the [Addis Ababa Declaration](#) and the de facto authorities' accusation that Taqaddum 'supports' the RSF. On the recent [campaign of targeted arrests](#) (a Bashir-era tactic), see also [here](#) and [here](#) on arrests in Gedaref, [here](#) in Sennar, and [here](#) in White Nile and Northern States.

Clashes and attacks in Gezira, Sennar, South Kordofan, Khartoum

As expected, the SAF launched a [multi-pronged offensive](#) to reclaim control of Gezira after their retreat in December 2023. The SAF took control of some villages without RSF resistance but has since clashed with the RSF east of Madani as well as in [western Sennar](#). Meanwhile, a new armed group – the [Gezira Call](#) – has reportedly also started a ground operation against the RSF in Madani. Despite these developments, the RSF has continued launching attacks against civilians in these areas – e.g., [killing at least 28 civilians](#) and injuring more than 240 people in a “massacre” in Um Adam (Gezira) and [killing at least six civilians](#) in Goz Aburof village (Sennar). The RSF has also launched further attacks in South Kordofan ([killing over 100 people](#) having seemingly targeted villages under the control of the SPLM-N al-Hilu) and Khartoum ([RSF shelling in east Jireif](#) killed seven people from the same family).

Darfur NGO reports on torture and sexual violence by warring parties

The Darfur Network for Human Rights ('DNHR') has published a [new report](#), “When the War Ends, I Will Go Back Home”, drawing on research conducted by DNHR between January and March 2024. The report describes testimonies of torture and sexual violence perpetrated by the RSF and the SAF – mainly in Darfur, but also several cases in Sennar, Gezira, and Khartoum States. Amongst other things, the report calls for the need to allocate additional resources and funding to the International Independent Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan as well as resources to facilitate the ICC's investigations in Darfur.

GOVERNMENT EU, SANCTIONS, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Upcoming EU FAC meeting on Sudan

On 22 April 2024, the [EU Foreign Affairs Council will exchange](#) views on the latest developments in Sudan after an informal exchange of views with the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra. In the build-up to the meeting, an [EU statement](#) has called for the need to “stop the manmade disaster in Sudan”, referencing “[RSF and allied militia-perpetrated] genocidal atrocities” in Darfur, as well as external sponsors that are “fuel[ing] the fighting” – mentioning the role of the UAE, Iran, and Russia. The statement also notes that the warring parties' holding up of aid may amount to war crimes and that failure by Hemedti and al-Burhan to come to the negotiating table “would have consequences”. Additional EU targeted sanctions are likely to follow at some stage. Ahead of the meeting, a coalition of CSOs wrote a [joint letter](#) calling on the EU to “take urgent, strategic and concrete steps” in response to the “dramatic human rights and humanitarian crisis” in Sudan.

Authorities suspend Al Arabiya, Al Hadath, Sky News Arabia operations

The Ministry of Culture and Information has [announced the suspension](#) of operations for Saudi-State owned broadcasters Al Arabiya and Al Hadath, as well as UAE-owned Sky News Arabia, citing non-compliance with licence renewal procedures. Seemingly, none of the broadcasters received official notification from the authorities. The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate denounced the (again Bashir-era) move as a blatant violation of freedom of expression and press freedom, noting the potential chilling effect of the decision which could also foster the spread of misinformation and hate speech.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AIRSTRIKES, ZAGHAWA, MUSA HILAL

Increase in violent clashes in Darfur

Clashes have continued between the SAF and the RSF in Darfur, with SAF airstrikes targeting key strategic locations for the RSF in North Darfur ([Mellit](#), [Zurug](#), and [Al-Fashir](#)) as well as [Nyala](#) (South Darfur). Meanwhile, the RSF has attacked Zaghawa villages west of Al-Fashir, [killing at least 15 people](#). These attacks are likely connected to the SLM-MM's [recent mobilisation](#) alongside the SAF in Khartoum and Gezira States (see also [here](#) on their joint force with JEM-Ibrahim) and raise fears of large-scale violence between the Zaghawa and the RSF/allied Arab militia as well as a [major RSF attack to capture Al-Fashir](#). Elsewhere in Darfur: (i) Tahir Hajer (GSLF) [announced the formation of a new joint force](#) despite [threats](#) by Mustafa Tambour (SLM-Tambour) to fight the GSLF and SLM-TC (led by al-Hadi Idris) if they did so; (ii) [Musa Hilal](#) narrowly escaped an [assassination attempt](#) after a gunman opened fire on Hilal in Umm Sant (North Darfur); and (iii) the Habbaniya and Salamat tribes have signed a [reconciliation document](#) following months of armed clashes (which were [apparently caused](#) after Salamat fighters accused the Habbaniya of being aligned with the SAF).

weekend read

In conversation with [Moneim Adam](#); counter-revolution against the [corporeal and the imaginative](#); a [year of war](#) (high-level recap [here](#)); land, livestock and Darfur's '[culture wars](#)'; [looming catastrophe](#) of famine; [curbing](#) outside intervention (and [greater engagement needed](#) with US' Arab allies); [potential](#) of civil and democratic forces (and need for [real Sudanese dialogue](#)); [future](#) of the SAF; [stolen homelands](#); [Blue Nile analysis](#); [internet lifeline](#); Port Sudan's [fragile political landscape](#); and Sudan crisis toll on [neighbouring countries](#).

Thanks for reading, and see you in two weeks.

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