

Another Political Framework Signed in Sudan

Agreement has been met with protests and rejection by the Resistance Committees along with some Islamic groupings

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On December 5 yet another transitional political framework was signed in the Republic of Sudan by the military regime and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), the broad-based democracy organization inside the country.

The agreement is designed to break the existing stalemate which has been in existence since the military coup which removed former President Omar Hassan al-Bashir in April 2019.

This new accord was met with much skepticism and angry protests from various political tendencies throughout Sudan. The Resistance Committees which have organized street demonstrations over the last four years have categorically rejected the new agreement saying it does not bring about the removal of the military as the dominant political and economic force inside the country.

The Sudanese Communist Party has condemned the new agreement while continuing to call for mass mobilizations to end military rule. "No negotiation, no partnership, no legitimacy" with the military institution has been the rallying cry of the Resistance Committees and the Communist Party.

In addition, several Islamic parties have opposed the deal as well. These parties want a greater role for religious leaders within the overall structures of governance.

Violence and mass arrests have occurred since the outbreak of protests over high food and fuel prices during December 2018. Massive demonstrations and strikes prompted the military to seize power in the hopes that the unrest would subside.

However, the democracy movement which includes many youth and workers continued to demand national elections and the departure of the military after April 2019. A sit-in outside the Ministry of Defense in the capital of Khartoum continued until it was broken up in June of the same year resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people at the hands of the Sudanese

security forces encompassing the military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Negotiations led by the African Union (AU) provided the initial political framework creating a Transitional Sovereign Council which included both the military and the pro-democracy leaders tasked with preparing the country for multi-party elections. Nonetheless, since the June 2019 transitional agreement peace and social stability has not been achieved.

The initial transitional framework which ushered in the Sovereign Council was supposed to last for 39 months. In that time period the military would first serve as the Chair of the Sovereign Council, later relinquishing control to a civilian.

Before the civilian leadership could take hold of the Sovereign Council, the military dissolved the body and arrested the interim Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on October 25, 2021. The latest coup did not bring a halt to the mass demonstrations and rebellions against the military leadership of General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan and Commander of the RSF Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemeti).

Although Hamdok was briefly reinstated as interim prime minister several weeks later, he would soon depart again realizing that the military was not committed to relinquishing power to a democratically elected civilian government in Sudan. The Central Committee of Sudan Doctors, one of the important professional groupings in the democracy movement, has reported that 120 people have died at the hands of the security forces since the October 2021 coup.

[In an article published by Al Jazeera](#) on December 6 it notes that:

“Critics fear the deal extends a lifeline to the army and the powerful paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), both of which spearheaded the putsch. Sudan’s resistance committees, which are neighborhood groups leading the street pro-democracy movement, say the deal effectively restores a partnership between political and security elites and thereby betrays the aspirations of the 120 people killed in anti-coup protests. ‘We believe that if there is no justice then the killing and raping will continue,’ said Ahmed Ismat, a spokesperson for the Khartoum south resistance committees. ‘We are just repeating the same cycle.’”

In essence the December 5 agreement does not provide definite timelines for the transition to democratic rule. Nor does the framework address the demands among the democracy movement that the military be held accountable for the brutality and deaths of people over the last four years.

The Role of the United States in Imposing the Framework

State Department envoys to Sudan and the Horn of Africa have been visiting the country over the last year desperately seeking to negotiate a solution to the political impasse. Washington does not want a revolutionary democratic government to emerge in Sudan which could challenge U.S. foreign policy in the region.

Under the previous administration of President Donald Trump, former interim Prime Minister Hamdok was pressured into making several concessions which would ensure that Khartoum remained within the western sphere of influence. During 2020, the Trump administration pressured Hamdok to recognize the State of Israel in violation of the 1958 law which

mandated a boycott of Tel Aviv by Sudan.

Later the interim administration of Hamdok agreed to pay hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars to the families of people killed in terrorist attacks. These attacks did not occur in Sudan but in other African states and in the Gulf of Aden.

These concessions by Hamdok and the military leadership were designed to make Sudan eligible for renegotiating financial obligations to the banks and foreign governments along with the procurement of additional loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Sudan would be removed from the “state sponsors of terrorism” list which has been utilized as a foreign policy weapon of Washington.

This same pattern of interference and the imposition of policies which betray the interests of the majority of the Sudanese people has not been altered under President Joe Biden. The latest framework agreement was adopted largely at the aegis of the State Department.



Sudan women march against US-imposed framework (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

Secretary of State Antony Blinken in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the latest agreement issued threats to anyone the U.S. believes is undermining the accord. Sanctions, which is a hallmark of U.S. foreign policy, will be leveled against anyone opposing the transitional agreement.

The Middle East Eye news website [emphasized](#) in regard to the role of the State Department:

“This was a pact to rescue Sudan’s democratic transition after the 2021 military coup, Washington argued. It didn’t matter that the deal had little popular support, and had been outright rejected by many key players. ‘We have experience of agreements signed under international pressure ... none of them led to a happy ending’, said Mohamed Badawi, Sudanese political analyst. ‘Just as we used our prior visa restrictions policy against those who undermined the former civilian-led transitional government, we will not hesitate to use our expanded policy against spoilers in Sudan’s democratic transition process,’ the US secretary of state said in a statement.”

Some Armed Rebel Groups Also Reject Framework Deal

Several rebel groups which have been fighting the Sudanese central government for years are opposed to the latest agreement. These groups include the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Gibril Ibrahim, who is now serving as finance minister under the military regime.

Also opposing the agreement are Mini Arko Minawi, leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), and Mohamed Tirik a sectional leader from the Eastern region of the country around the strategic Port of Sudan.

Interestingly enough, these armed opposition groups were supportive of the October 25 coup and have taken cabinet positions in the administration established by the military over the last year. Since December 5 these organizations have publicly criticized the framework agreement.

At a December 13 public meeting held in Khartoum, the three leaders explained their respective positions. The Middle East Eye quoted the leaders of the armed groups who said:

“Our problem with what happened in the so-called political framework is the clear hijack of the fate of the country by specific forces and individuals. So we are against this methodology, which excludes us from participation in the management of the country,’ Minawi said. ‘We believe that this way is not correct, and it will neither lead to stability nor any progress of the democratic transition. We are one of the main actors in this country ... we are Sudanese like others This mentality has to be stopped or otherwise Sudan will never see stability,’ Ibrahim warned. Tirik, meanwhile, has closed the road linking Eastern Sudan with Khartoum, cutting the capital from Port Sudan.”

It remains to be seen whether the December 5 framework can bring stability to the oil-rich state which is a gateway to North, East and Central Africa. With the dominant role of the U.S. in the negotiations for the current agreement, there will not be a genuine democratic solution that brings together all of the legitimate forces concerned with uniting the country independent of imperialism and its allies in the region.

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