

# Political Deadlock Continues in Efforts to Open Peace Talks in Sudan

SAF still accuses the United Arab Emirates of supporting the RSF

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*A United Nations Security Council resolution was passed on June 13 calling for an end to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) siege upon the North Darfur capital city of El Fasher.*

In a 14-0 vote with the Russian Federation abstaining, the highest decision-making structure of the international body demanded the end to the fighting in one of the most restive areas inside the country.

The resolution was sponsored by United Kingdom (UK) **Ambassador Barbara Woodward** who pointed to the worsening humanitarian crisis in the area. Civilians are being prevented from moving freely in and out of El Fasher while essential infrastructure such as hospitals are being shelled by the RSF.

Several days later on June 18, there was a heated exchange between the Sudanese Ambassador to the UN, **Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith** and his counterpart from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), **Mohamed Abushahab**. The Sudanese envoy once again accused the UAE of providing weapons to the RSF in violation of the arms embargo on Darfur located in the western region of the vast oil-rich state.

In response Abushahab accused the Sudanese government of refusing to participate in negotiations with the RSF. Sudanese **General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** rejected an invitation to appear or send an envoy to proposed peace talks in late May in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (See [this](#))

## **Worsening Humanitarian Crisis**

War erupted on April 15, 2023 between the leading state-sponsored military units, the

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) under **General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), headed by **General Mohamed Hamdan Degalo (Hemedti)**. Since the fighting began, reports indicate that approximately 14,000 people have been killed with tens of thousands of others being injured.

In addition to the growing casualties in the war, millions of others have been forced to leave their homes to relocate both inside and outside of the Republic of Sudan. Most of the refugees have fled to Chad and the Republic of South Sudan. The UN says that 25 million people in Sudan are in desperate need of assistance including access to food, water and medical care which has been disrupted over the last 14 months. (See [this](#))



Sudan refugees in neighboring Chad (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

18 million people are suffering from food deficits with 9 of those million being children. Another subset of those living without adequate food supplies includes 5 million on the brink of starvation.

The UN-affiliated World Food Program (WFP) has stated that it will urgently escalate its assistance to meet the growing need. Small-scale farmers are being selected for cash grants, the distribution of seeds and other agricultural inputs due to the fact that many working in the food production sector have been displaced.

WFP Regional Director for East Africa **Michael Dunford** [said of the food crisis in Sudan](#):

“The situation in Sudan is not so much forgotten as neglected. It is already the largest displacement crisis in the world, and it has the potential to become the world’s largest hunger crisis. As global leaders focus elsewhere, it is not receiving the necessary attention and support to avert a nightmare scenario for the people of Sudan. The world cannot claim it doesn’t know how bad the situation is in Sudan or that urgent action is needed.”

The UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan, **Clementine Nkweta Salami**, has made a public plea for the silencing of the guns in the North Darfur capital of El Fasher. Salami was prompted to make this call after a pharmacist, Amna Ahmed Bakhit, working in

the Saudi Hospital in El Fasher, was killed as a result of shelling by the RSF.

[The Sudan Tribune](#) noted in a recent report that:

“In an emotional statement issued on Sunday, the UN official wrote, ‘Another day of violence in Sudan brings another human tragedy in Darfur’s Al Fasher. This time, the person who won’t be going home to their family was a pharmacist. Died when an explosive artillery hit the corner of the hospital where she worked’, she added.’ Nkweta-Salami said the pharmacist was ‘killed on the job, prescribing and administering medicine to women, men, and children in a place that should have been safe’.”

Over the last 14 months, the war in Sudan has raged on despite the repeated regional efforts to reach a negotiated settlement. **Former Interim Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok** has reemerged as the leader of a coalition of political groupings known as the Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Tagadum).

Tagadum is attempting to initiate an internal dialogue within Sudan which could reach consensus on a long-term solution to the present situation. This coalition is oriented towards the African Union (AU) which is hosting an emergency meeting on Sudan scheduled for July 10-14 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Hamdok has requested discussions with the AU Commission based in Addis Ababa to review the list of invitees, agenda items and parameters of the dialogue for the emergency summit. The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) has encouraged broad participation in the gathering including the former ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

[Reports suggest](#) that Tagadum has rejected the involvement of the NCP. The High-Level Panel on Sudan (HLP-Sudan) sent a delegation into the country in March to begin dialogue with the Sovereign Council headed by General al-Burhan as well as leaders of various mass organizations and political parties.

The SAF leadership under General al-Burhan has expressed its hostility towards Hamdok and the Tagadum grouping. Tagadum has been accused of acting as a front for the RSF since General Hemedti agreed to join the proposed internal negotiating process.

Apparently the SAF wants a complete military victory over the RSF. With this reality in mind, the AU Commission and PAS alongside HLP-Sudan and the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are continuing in their plans to convene the emergency summit at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa.

## **Domestic and International Dimensions of the Sudanese Conflict**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE have invested much in the governance process in Sudan since they provided billions of dollars to shore up the Transitional Military Council (TMC) which emerged after the overthrow of former **President Omar Hassan al-Bashir** in April 2019. A popular upsurge in political activity from a variety of organizations beginning in December 2018 created the atmosphere for the removal of al-Burhan.

Nonetheless, the coup against al-Burhan and the NCP was not sufficient for the democratic movement inside the country. The emergence of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) in 2019 brought together a broad spectrum of organizations including the Sudanese Professional Association (SPA), Resistance Committees, No to Oppression Against Women

Initiative, Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), among others. These developments led to a negotiated settlement aimed at implementing a three-year process towards democratic transition.

Although this dialogue took place with the involvement of the SAF and RSF, there was never a complete understanding reached over the prospective role of the military within a democratic state. As the transitional process became stalled and suffered setbacks with the continued state repression carried out by the military units and security forces, the demands of the popular democratic groupings were violently pushed into the background within the national political situation.

The quagmire deepened with the outbreak of the war involving the SAF and RSF in April 2023. At present there is ongoing widespread destruction in the state of Khartoum and in the Darfur region.



Sudan smoke fills the sky (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

In addition to the roles of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the United States has been attempting to control the political situation in Sudan for several decades. As a former British colony, the U.S., as in other geo-political regions, has become the leading imperialist power seeking to remake these areas in their own neo-colonized image.

Washington and Wall Street were clearly opposed to the possibility of a genuine revolutionary democratic transformation in Sudan. The role of the former administration of **President Donald Trump** and the current White House under **President Joe Biden** has been aimed at maintaining western influence in Sudan.

Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the Sudanese people themselves to forge ahead with a program for transformation. Obviously, the military elites within the SAF and RSF have forfeited their capacity to assist in the establishment of a civilian government based upon the interests of the majority of workers, farmers and youth in Sudan.

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