

# Struggle for Power and Control in Sudan May Lead to Civil War

By [Steven Sahiounie](#)

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*Sudan's capital Khartoum has turned into a [war zone with a split in the military forces](#). The Sudanese army is battling the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) which is a paramilitary force, and the 10 million residents are taking cover to avoid the artillery exchanges, and air force operations against the RSF. Hospitals are reporting 80 injured, and three civilian deaths.*

Al Sharek TV, based in the UAE, reporting from Sudan, claimed that an Egyptian soldier was killed in Murwey military airbase in Khartoum today, with raging battles continuing from yesterday.

A large contingent from the army swooped into the RSF camps and took control on Saturday after the RSF had attacked army bases previously, according to **Brigadier-General Nabil Abdallah**, who characterized the army as performing their duty to safeguard the country.

The RSF claimed to have taken control of the capital airport, two other regional airports, and the presidential palace, while Sudan's General Intelligence Service refuted the RSF claims as untrue.

**General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan**, head of the ruling Sovereign Council, was reportedly safe. Sudan has struggled to return to civilian rule following a military takeover when the army and the RSF ousted the former president in 2019. A transition period, with elections to follow was planned, but never initiated.

**General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo**, also known as Hemedti, the commander of the RSF, called Burhan a 'criminal' and accused the army of carrying out a coup. Hemedti has been deputy leader of the ruling Sovereign Council headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan since 2019, and his RSF are 100,000 strong.

The tension between the [army and the RSF](#) began on Thursday when the army accused the

RSF of movements which were independent of the army and were illegal. Under the still unsigned transition agreement, the RSF is to be integrated into the ranks of the army. The process of the merger and under which authority it should be conducted has opened the door to conflict.

The RSF grew out of the government of the autocratic **President Omar al-Bashir**, who was removed from office in 2019. During Bashir's time in power, Hemedti carried out a brutal crackdown in Sudan's Darfur region during the decades of conflict there. The struggle for power and control between the army and the RSF today dates back to the previous administration.

The RSF have been accused of war crimes in the Dafur conflict, and in June 2019 they raided a Khartoum pro-democracy camp and nearly 130 people died.

## **Foreign intervention**

Like so many countries in the Middle East, Sudan has been split by sections of the society who follow the Muslim Brotherhood, and their political ideology of Radical Islam, and those who are against extremism. Qatar, Turkey and the US have been allied with the Muslim Brotherhood, and especially the US has used them as foot soldiers in Syria. However, Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Russia have rejected the Muslim Brotherhood.

## **US and Israel**

Yesterday, the U.S. Ambassador to Sudan, **John Godfrey**, said the escalation of tensions to direct fighting was "extremely dangerous" and called urgently on the senior leadership to stop the clashes. Godfrey said he and embassy staff were sheltering in place.

In January 2021, Sudan agreed to [normalize relations with Israel](#) in order to have Sudan removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. On February 2, 2023 Israeli **Foreign Minister Eli Cohen** met with Burhan in Khartoum, and the two countries were planning to sign a peace treaty in Washington, DC. before the end of 2023, but first depending on the Sudan democratic elections result.

Burhan accepted the US demands that Sudan stop its support of the Palestinian cause of freedom, and to cut off its relations with Iran.

However, Sudan was not the beneficiary of improvements in its infrastructure, and Sudan remains a broken, failed state with a population on the brink of starvation.

The current confrontation between the army and the RSF could acerbate the economic breakdown, and tribal violence across the vast country.

## **The Syrian opposition**

Syrian opposition leader **Fahad Almasri**, founder of the National Salvation Front in Syria (NSF), has publically called for normalization between Syria and Israel. Almasri says Syrians have wasted their time on the Palestinian cause, and should look after their own interests instead.

During the armed conflict in Syria, injured Jibhat al-Nusra terrorists were taken to Israeli hospitals for treatment. Jibhat al-Nusra is designated as a terrorist group by the US and the

UN.

Members of the extinct Free Syrian Army sang songs and carried banners in Homs praising Israel and asking for their help in their participation in the attack on Syria.

The conflict in Syria began in 2011 and was a US-NATO attack on Syria for regime change. The US policy goal to change the government in Syria was formulated in Tel Aviv with the policy paper "A Clean Break" written in 1996.

The situation today in Sudan should be a wake-up call to the Syrian opposition calling for normalization with Israel. Looking at the case of Sudan, we can see that following the US and Israel down the path of normalization has not benefitted Sudan, or its people.

The US and Israel make promises, but fail to follow through with actions.

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**Steven Sahiounie** is a two-time award-winning journalist. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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