

Sudan Coup Prompted by Failures in Washington's Foreign Policy

Demands on the interim government created an unsustainable transitional process

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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A military coup was carried out in the Republic of Sudan on October 25 as the contradictions within the Sovereignty Council (SC) burst asunder.

This coalition of political and military interests was formed in the aftermath of tumultuous political events between December 2018 and June 2019.

The Chair of the SC, Maj. Gen. Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan engineered the removal and detentions of the interim Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok along with several other leading cabinet ministers within the transitional regime. Events leading up to the military coup can be traced back to the announced arrest of 40 people including military officers and civilians on September 21 ostensibly for plotting a seizure of state power.

A very limited and sketchy amount of information was published about the personalities and motivations of those arrested in September in what was described by Prime Minister Hamdok as a preemptive act. Differences among the political and military leadership of the SC had become well known over the last several months. The attempted coup in September was blamed on the supporters of former President Omar Hassan al-Bashir who remains in detention in Sudan pending the outcome of criminal charges levelled against him. Also, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Netherlands has warrants out for the arrest of al-Bashir yet he has not been extradited by the administrations which have governed since April 2019.

An agreement between the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) which led the demonstrations against the former administration of ousted President Omar Hassan al-Bashir beginning in December 2018, and the Transitional Military Council headed by al-Burhan and the commander of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (aka, Hemeti), created the political atmosphere for the formation of an interim administration. Hamdok, an economist who has held several administrative and diplomatic

posts, was selected to be the political face of the SC.

During the early morning hours of October 25, reports emerged from Khartoum that a military coup was underway. Hamdok had been moved to an undisclosed location while the media remained silent on the rapidly unfolding events.

Later Gen. al-Burhan made a videotaped statement to the people of Sudan and the international community acknowledging the removal of Hamdok and other officials of the interim government. He claimed that the actions of the military were designed to carry out the ideals and objectives of the “December 2018 Revolution.”

Such an assertion is counter-intuitive since it was the military under the direction of the generals that seized power from President al-Bashir in April 2019. These actions were taken by the military in order to stave off a genuine popular revolution in Sudan.

Soon enough the military revealed its brutal and undemocratic character by carrying out a massacre of protesters on June 3, 2019. The attack on demonstrators occupying areas around the Ministry of Defense in the capital of Khartoum resulted in more than 100 deaths. Hundreds of others were wounded and injured while assaults on women and youth continued for several hours.

The October agreement which jump-started the SC set a timetable of 39 months for the transfer of power to a civilian government after multi-party elections. This deal resulted in placing Gen. al-Burhan as chairperson for the first 21 months. Later the civilian members of the SC were slated to take over the leadership of this alliance. The events since October 25 have

aborted this accord, known as the Draft Constitutional Declaration, while at the same time placing the negotiations for the end to rebel insurgencies in Darfur, Blue Nile, North and South Kordofan in jeopardy. A Juba Agreement was signed in South Sudan in October 2020 between the transitional administration and various rebel groups aimed at bringing the armed elements into a political process.

After it became clear that a coup had occurred on October 25, the Associated Press reported that:

“As plumes of smoke rose, protesters could be heard chanting, ‘The people are stronger, stronger!’ and ‘Retreat is not an option!’ Social media video showed crowds crossing bridges over the Nile to the center of the capital. The U.S. Embassy warned that troops were blocking parts of the city and urged the military ‘to immediately cease violence.’ Pro-democracy activist Dura Gambo said paramilitary forces chased protesters through some Khartoum neighborhoods. Records from a Khartoum hospital obtained by The Associated Press showed some people admitted with gunshot wounds.” See [this](#).

One day after the coup it was reported that at least seven people had been killed and 140 injured in demonstrations across the country. Mass demonstrations began almost spontaneously after the announcement of a coup. Internationally, the African Union, the United Nations as well as the U.S. has issued statements opposing the military takeover.

Another Failure in U.S. Africa Policy

For decades now the political affairs of the Republic of Sudan have been a preoccupation of the U.S. State Department, Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Prior to the partition of the country in 2011, Sudan was the largest geographic nation-state in Africa. The country of 50 million was becoming an emerging oil-producing state maintaining ties with both the West and the developing countries.

During the 2000s, Sudan had good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China through trade agreements and other forms of bilateral and multilateral relationships. However, international pressure from the U.S. under the administrations of Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, sought to balkanize and destabilize the country. The U.S. engineered the creation of the Republic of South Sudan along with Britain, the former colonial power, and the State of Israel. Today, both North and South Sudan are in economic and political turmoil. The governments in Khartoum and Juba in the South are beholden to the whims and caprices of imperialism and its allies.

Since the overthrow of al-Bashir, the monarchies of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have pledged monetary assistance. The U.S. then pressured Hamdok into accords that are at extreme variance with the priorities and needs of the Sudanese people.

Hamdok and al-Burhan knelt to U.S. pressure and revoked without any legitimate authority, the Israel Boycott Act of 1958 which prohibits recognition and trade with Tel Aviv. In addition, the interim government accepted a proposal from the administration of President Donald Trump to pay hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars to survivors of victims of terrorist acts carried out in 1998 in Kenya and Tanzania and in 2000 in the Port of Aden off the coast of Yemen. There was no concrete evidence presented to the international community which could link the government of al-Bashir, which was toppled, to these bombings. Yet the people of Sudan will be forced to pay restitution for crimes ostensibly committed during a previous deposed administration.

This reckless disregard of the political and economic sovereignty of Sudan could only serve to weaken its national institutions and foment social chaos among the working class, youth, women's organizations and professional associations. The coup has been condemned by numerous opposition groupings including the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) which has called for mass resistance against the putsch.

Biden Administration Maintains Same Imperialist Policy

The current administration of President Joe Biden has paid limited attention to foreign policy. His orientation has been quite similar to that of his predecessors Obama and Trump. Biden has continued and enhanced the hostility towards China, Iran, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Cuba, Venezuela, among other states. The potential for an international conflict over the strategic control of geo-political regions could very well erupt in the coming months. The failure of the Biden administration to intervene constructively in the Horn of Africa is fostering greater discord and instability.

With the seizure of power by the Sudanese military, this scenario lays focus on the need for a political revolution in the country along with several others. Despite the promises of monumental economic and security assistance from Washington and Tel Aviv, the Sudanese people continue to be mired in a cycle of declining wages, rising prices and political uncertainty.

It will be up to the workers, youth, women, professional associations and genuine political parties to build a coalition of popular forces that can secure victory over the military apparatus and construct a domestic and foreign policy independent of Washington and Wall Street. The intervention of the military in governmental affairs is once again becoming widespread on the African continent. In Chad, Mali and Guinea, similar developments have taken place. The African Union must address this crisis in order to prevent a further deterioration of the security situation on the continent.

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Abayomi Azikiwe is the editor of Pan-African News Wire. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Featured image: In this frame taken from video, the head of the military, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, announced in a televised address, that he was dissolving the country's ruling Sovereign Council, as well as the government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, in Khartoum, Sudan, Monday, Oct. 25, 2021. Burhan said the military will run the country until elections in 2023. His announcement came hours after his forces arrested the acting prime minister and other senior government officials. (Sudan TV via AP)

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