

UN Secretary General calls for 'Immediate' Ceasefire in Sudan

April 17, 2023

Monday, April 17, 2023: Khartoum: António Guterres, UN Secretary-General appealed for peace as the army started firing rockets into the capital, home to 6 million people. The paramilitary Rapid Support Force claimed that it had taken control of Khartoum international airport, Merowe airport, al-Obeid airport and the presidential palace in the capital.



Sunday night, 16th April 2023: Smoke from a Khartoum neighbourhood

The clashes are part of a power struggle between the armed forces, led by **General Abdel-Fattah Burhan** (Left) and the Rapid Support Forces, led by **General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo**, better known as Hemedti (Right in the picture below)



“Hospitals and health institutions in Khartoum and cities of Sudan have been bombarded by artillery and firearms,” said the **Sudan Doctors’ Syndicate**, a pro-democracy group monitoring casualties, adding that multiple medical facilities were evacuated and even stormed by the armed forces.

The civilian death toll rose to 97, the **Central Committee of Sudan Doctors** said early Monday, with nearly 350 people injured.

Medical staff, patients and children were in a “state of confusion and fear,” it said, adding hospitals in the capital and surrounding areas were suffering a power outage with generators running out of fuel, putting patients’ lives in “severe danger.”

World Health Organisation (WHO), in a statement released on Sunday called for protecting health workers and patients and urging parties to respect the neutrality of healthcare.

In a statement on Sunday, **Cindy McCain, Chief of the UN World Food Program (WFP)**, said that WFP’s operations in the country are temporarily on hold, as threats to its teams make it impossible for them to operate safely and effectively. “I am appalled and heartbroken by the tragic deaths of three WFP employees on Saturday 15 April in violence in Kabkabiya, North Darfur while carrying out their life-saving duties on the front lines of the global hunger crisis,” said Chief of UN WFP.

www.DiGiNews360.com demands an immediate ceasefire and full implementation of the agreement signed by the civilian groups, military and RSF, under a committee nominated by UN General Secretary.

www.DiGiNews360.com also requests Canadian Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, India’s Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Nigeria’s President-Elect **Bola Tinubu** to jointly come forward and work with UN General Secretary to help the civilian groups achieve peace at the earliest.

By -- **Dr K N Mistry**

A BRIEF BACKGROUND: From the middle of the 19th century, Sudan was occupied by Egypt and was governed as an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. Sudan was granted independence on 1st January 1956 and a parliamentary democratic system was established. However soon the democracy was interrupted by military coups.

The seat of the government was in the north. The North is Islamic, with less than 5% Christians. The South is animist and Christian.

Since the army was largely Muslim, rebellions started in the southern areas. The most well-organized group in the South was Sudan People’s Liberation Army. On 9th July 2011, South Sudan seceded and became an independent country with about Sudan was left with about 74.5% of the area of Sudan of 1956. It has a

population of about 48 million. South Sudan, on the other hand has an area of about 25.5% of the area of Sudan of 1956. It has a population of about 11.5 million.

While Sudan has suffered multiple coups, South Sudan has also suffered from civil wars. Following a peace agreement in South Sudan, elections are scheduled in late 2024.

Between 1989 and 2019, Sudan experienced a 30-year-long military dictatorship led by Omar al-Bashir. Protests broke out in 2018 against Bashir leading to a coup on 11th April 2019 and Bashir's imprisonment. In 2020, Sudan became a secular country. After the military's 2021 coup, a deal was finalized between the military leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, over the planned integration of Daglo's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) into the regular army.

Reference: <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20221205-sudan-s-military-civilian-factions-sign-framework-deal-aimed-at-ending-crisis>

(RSF was set up by the then President Omar al-Bashir in 2013 for bringing Darfur region under control and for eliminating minority armed groups.)

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES: After the coup, the military had agreed to permit Russia have a military base at the Sudan port, against which Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, USA had warned Sudan in 2022.

RSF has good relations with Saudi Arabia, whom it has helped in the Yemen war.

Haggling between Daglo and Burhan has twice forced postponement of the signing of an agreement with civilian factions setting out a roadmap for restoring the democratic transition.

Since Saturday, a full-scale war seems to have erupted since the army showed photographs of two RSF locations attacked by the air force.

The military's civilian interlocutors and ex-prime minister **Abdalla Hamdok** appealed for a ceasefire, a plea echoed by US ambassador **John Godfrey**.

Reference: <https://www.emirates247.com/world/un-secretary-general-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-in-sudan-as-death-toll-mounts-2023-04-17-1.708360>