

## Sudan's Civil War escalates to a wider geographical area

October 21, 2023

*Please see Editorial Comments on page 5.*

*On 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia is scheduled a meeting for permanent cessation of hostilities in Sudan. [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) wishes the meeting all success.*

*Please read pages 2-3 for a Report on the Status of Civil War.*

*Pages 4 describes the difficulties of citizens face in Khartoum and elsewhere in Sudan.*

*[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) brings to you Geo-Political influence on the Civil War in Sudan and International Efforts for Peace on pages 6 to 9+.*

*A Backgrounder on RSF and SAF is given on pages 10-11.*

**On October 26, 2023** is scheduled a meeting of **Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)** and **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** at Jeddah to discuss the possibility of a truce, announced **Lt Gen Shams al-Din al-Kabashi**, the deputy commander-in-chief of the Sudanese army on Saturday, October 21, 2023, in his speech before the army officers at the **Wadi Saydna military base**.

The army had suspended its participation in the Saudi-U.S. led mediation effort to protest against RSF's failure to withdraw from essential service facilities and residential areas in the conflict-affected areas. On May 11, 2023, the Sudanese army and the RSF had signed a **Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan** and to facilitate reaching **humanitarian assistance to the people**. Thereafter SAF and RSF were expected to have **talks for a permanent cessation of hostilities**, with the participation of Sudanese civilians and regional and international partners.

The major point of contention is the **demand by SAF** that the **RSF forces should withdraw to cantonment sites outside the Khartoum state**.

But the RSF says **the capital and other conflict-affected states should be fully demilitarized** and requests the withdrawal of the army on equal bases.

**October 21, 2023:** Critical facilities and government institutions in Khartoum have been set ablaze during intense fighting between between **General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** (leading the SAF) and **General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo** (heading the paramilitary RSF).

Yale University's **Humanitarian Research Lab** (HRL) has confirmed damage, including smoke emanations visible in satellite imagery, to many high-rise buildings including the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company Tower and the Ministry of Justice building, after the recent escalation, which began from Sept 16, 2023.



**Oct 19, 2023:** Attacks on medical facilities have jeopardized health care in Khartoum and not only for those injured by fighting, but also for all those with routine medical needs. On Thursday, Doctors Without Borders (known as M.S.F. for Médecins Sans Frontières) withdrew a surgical team from a hospital in Sudan after military authorities blocked all delivery of supplies to the facility. The team had been providing lifesaving trauma surgeries and cesarean sections from one of the last functioning hospitals in the capital, Khartoum.

This civil war, between **General Burhan** and **General Dagalo** had started on April 15, 2023. The issue was differences over how the RSF would integrate into the SAF. Today the civil war has escalated into a full-blown conflict and has spread geographically. In the southern **Kordofan region**, in the city of **El-Obeid**, 350 km south of Khartoum, battles on 16-17 Sept between the regular army and the paramilitaries had been “the most violent since the war began”.



**Sudan:** Population: 45 Mn, Area: 3<sup>rd</sup> largest country in Africa (Algeria (2,381,741 km<sup>2</sup>); Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,344,858 km<sup>2</sup>); Sudan (1,861,484 km<sup>2</sup>))  
**Bordering countries** of Sudan: after the Red Sea, anticlockwise 7 countries: Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea

A Report of Reuter reported that RSF claimed on July 18, 2023, that it had taken control of an army base in **Kas** in South Darfur State, seizing vehicles and weapons and **capturing 30 soldiers** as part of the wider conflict. This displaced 5000 families. RSF denies targeting of Africans by Arab militias and said that some of the internal refugees were due to inter-tribal conflict.

Damage from aerial bombardment and explosive ordinance has damaged and destroyed water pipes and water treatment plants in residential areas across Khartoum State. In Khartoum State, the damage to water treatment plants and constant power outages continues to affect the operations of the water stations in **Bahri and El Shajara**.

The urban war in Sudan has decimated already fragile infrastructure and has plunged millions into acute hunger. The people are surviving thanks to the trade networks that bring food from Egypt to the markets and **the extraordinary efforts of Sudanese groups providing solidarity and support to their fellow citizens**.

STATUS in Khartoum: Over **half the estimated population** of Khartoum **has fled**, and the civilian population that remains in Khartoum is probably unable to leave due to travel risks, the cost of leaving, or physical limitations including disability and age. Exiting Khartoum is prohibitively expensive; civilians are often robbed or forced to pay bribes to pass through security checkpoints.

In the areas of the city where there is less fighting, housing costs and rent have increased exorbitantly. The price of food is prohibitively expensive. Households need cash to purchase essential supplies.

The network of **volunteer emergency rooms are a testament to the spirit of the Sudanese people**. Nobility of their souls, their readiness to risk their own lives to help their compatriots, in times like this, makes it possible for the old and those with handicaps to survive.

Till a few months back, the **brave NGOs of citizens continued to demonstrate, in the face of bullets, for forcing the government to promise to restore civil administration through elections and a good constitution**. It is only during September-October 2023 that such demonstrations have become less intensive, in the absence of any help from international agencies like **UNO** or **African Union**. Another reason is that survival is becoming very difficult for ordinary families in urban areas, like those of Khartoum and its twin cities, without availability of even basic facilities like potable water.

**China and the Wagner Army of Russia** seem to support military regimes.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) **salutes the efforts of the civil society**, which continued for many years and which forced the SAF and militias to repeatedly promise to restore democracy.

The Global South, particularly the civil society in countries like **Brazil** and **Nigeria** must build NGOs, which are respected by the society. India has had the good fortune of having leaders like **Mahatma Gandhi, Jai Prakash Narayan, Anna Hazare**, who could appeal directly to the conscious of the people. But even in India, as the society is becoming more polarized, there is a need for ensuring that such leaders, who are respected by the whole of the society, continue to be available in different regions of the society. The media must play its role in giving sufficient space in local as well as in national programs to leaders, in various facets of public life, so that such a leadership emerges, when needed.

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) commends the effort of the citizens of Sudan to help through bootstrapping. The organized groups in Khartoum through their sustained demonstrations forced General Bashir to give up power. The coalition of General Burhan and General Dagalo, with a civilian Prime Minister was possible only because the organized groups continued to show their strength in spite of hundreds being killed by the military.

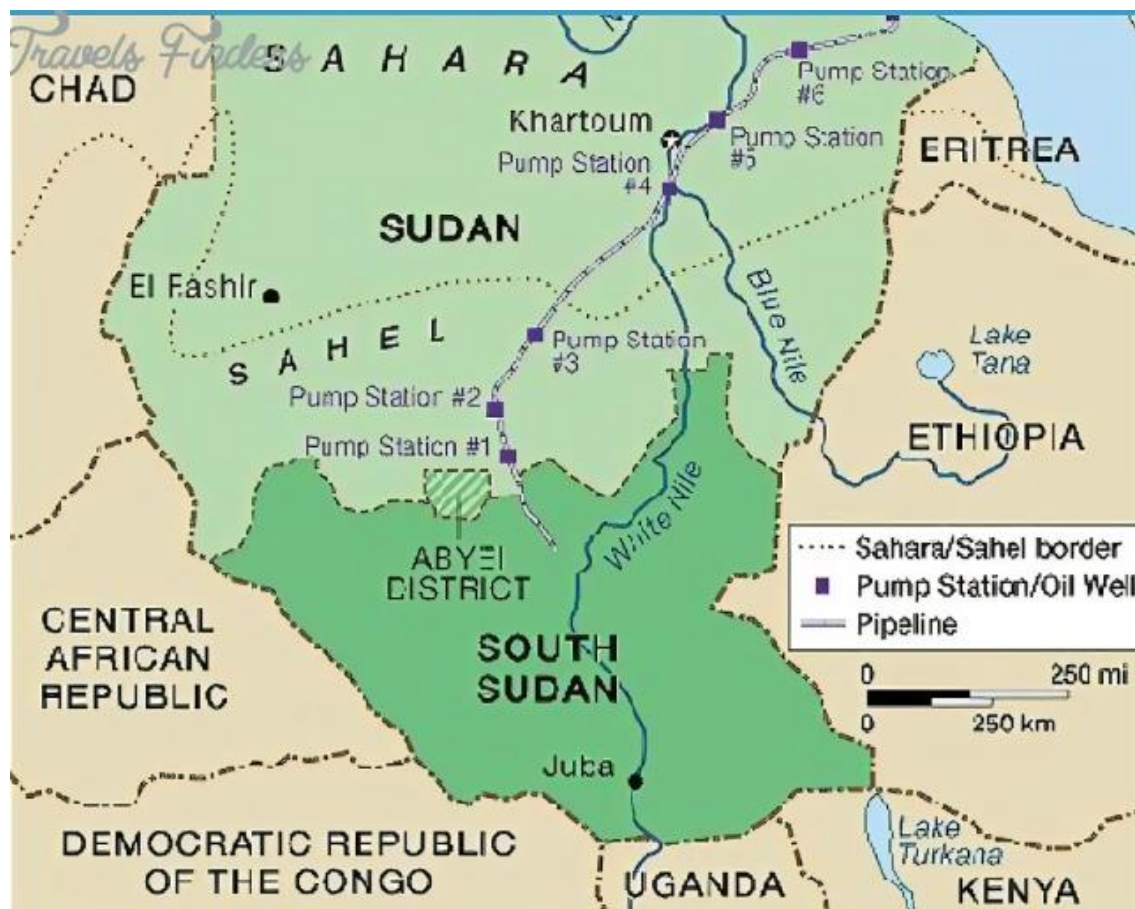
[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) feels that citizens in the Global South should learn **from the organizational strength and individual bravery** displayed by the citizens of Sudan.

**References:**1.Report by **Alex Rondos** of **US Institute of Peace**, Washington DC at <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/10/after-six-months-civil-war-whats-state-play-sudan>; <https://www.usip.org/> dated October 19, 2023

2. Sudan Conflict Observatory: is a collaborative effort between Yale's **Humanitarian Research Lab** (HRL) and the geographic information systems companies **Esri** and **PlanetScape Ai**. The HRL team produces scientific evidence that validates the gross violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. <https://hub.conflictobservatory.org/portal/apps/sites/#/sudan>

## GEO-POLITICAL ISSUES:

- Any sustained interruption of regular flow of Nile waters in Sudan will be a direct threat to Egypt's economy and security.
- The communities of Darfur straddle the Chadian frontier -- their future becomes Chad's fate.
- Saudi Arabia is investing much of its economic future toward the Red Sea Coast. Any threat to the security of the Red Sea is a threat to that investment.
- United Arab Emirates has worked closely with RSF and companies linked to it. RSF has also worked in Yemen, as long as UAE was involved in Yemen.
- Juba's South Sudanese oil is exported through Sudan and Juba has been threatened by an interruption in the flow if it is seen to support any of the two side.

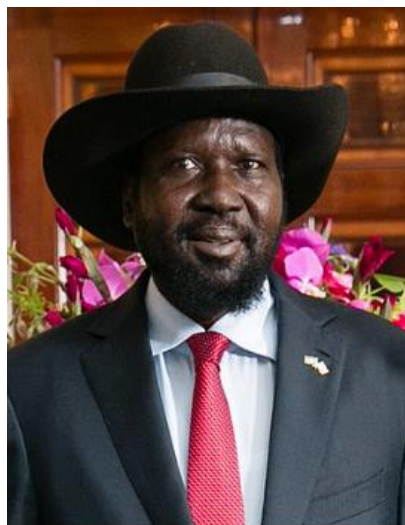


Competing Arabian countries have also contributed to worsening the civil war in Sudan. Thus, Egypt patronizes SAF while UAE and Qatar back RSF.

Ethnically motivated violence in Darfur , a region in western Sudan, has killed as many as 300,000 people since 2003, according to an estimate from the United Nations, with Arab militia groups destroying and terrorizing villages inhabited mainly by ethnic African communities.

More than a third of Sudan's population, are facing severe food insecurity, according to the **World Food Program** (WFP). WFP suffers not only from inadequate donations, it is also facing the challenge of insecurity. WFP workers can go to only those areas, where the Law & Order situation is under control. *(Reference: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/sudan>)*

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS for PEACE in SUDAN: Besides the Saudi Arabia-US effort, which is going on at present, an earlier Agreement had been reached between President Burhan and 40 civil society organizations through the good offices of **Salva Kiir Mayardit**, the **President of South Sudan**. Mayardit knows the leaders of SAF and RSF well, since, he was the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, as well as First Vice President of Sudan, from 2005 to 2011, before an **independent South Sudan** was carved out of Sudan on July 9, 2011.



**Salva Kiir Mayardit** , the **President of South Sudan** (from 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011)  
**South Sudan**: Population: 12 Mn (80<sup>th</sup>), Area: 644, 329 Km<sup>2</sup> (41<sup>st</sup>), GDP:\$6.3 Bn,  
GDP/capita: \$417 (194<sup>th</sup>); Capital: **Juba**, on White Nile, Population: 0.53 Mn

So, South Sudan took an initiative in 2022 to bring the warring parties together.

**December 5, 2022:** Sudan’s military and a number of militias signed an agreement with **President General Burhani** to revive the transition towards civilian rule. The deal was signed in Khartoum and included a reference to a new constitution. The Agreement was brokered by Saudi Arabia, UAE, UNO and USA.

THE AGREEMENT: The deal aimed to establish a new, two-year transitional civilian authority that will be led by a prime minister who will be selected by the “forces of the revolution” who endorsed the deal.

It also limited the military’s role in politics and governance. It promises to create “one national professional army” and noted that **the military would be part of a security and defense council led by the prime minister.**



*Military President of Sudan: **General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** (from 2019)*

The second part of the agreement, without providing a timeline, attempted to engage the wider public in addressing even thornier issues related to transitional justice, reforming the security and military organs, along with reviewing the components of a major peace agreement signed in 2020 that called for an alliance of rebel factions in the restive western region of Darfur to induce them to lay down their weapons.



OPPOSITION to the DEAL: Several resistance committees called on their members to march in the streets on Monday, December 5, 2022 against the signing of the agreement.

**Ms. Kholood Khair**, founding director of **Confluence Advisory**, a policy think tank in Khartoum, was skeptical about execution of the Agreement.



She said that the military had scuttled a similar power-sharing agreement with civilians and seized power in the early hours of Oct. 25, 2021. The military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, had arrested Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, blocked the internet and imposed a state of emergency just hours after assuring American officials that it would not imperil the democratic transition. But after a month under house arrest, Mr. Hamdok was reinstated after he signed an agreement with the military to calm tensions in the country. Protesters in the streets rejected that agreement or any compromise with the military, forcing Mr. Hamdok to resign in early January. “Our country is going through a dangerous turning point that may threaten its entire survival if it is not remedied soon,” Mr. Hamdok warned at the time.

Before the Agreement could be executed, a civil war between SAF and RSF began on April 15, 2023.

Many suspect that President Burhan is either a member of or influenced by **the Kizan, a clan of Islamist Bashir supporters with Muslim Brotherhood roots.** This is shown by the appointment of **Osman Hussein**, as the **Acting Prime Minister**,

on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022. Osman was the General Secretary of the PM's Office from 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 to 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Though he had been **appointed by President Omar al-Bashir**, he continued during the Presidency of **Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf** and **Abdel Fattah al-Burhan**. He was a member of NCP till the party was banned on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019. After President Bashir was overthrown, the Sovereign Council had decided that NCP members would not be appointed to any position in the Government for ten years.

#### ---BACKGROUND on SAF and RSF----

**Rapid Support Force (RSF)**: President Bashir used the Janjaweed militia to control some of the tribes, which were difficult to control by his army. After the militia had grown bigger, Sudan's parliament passed the **Rapid Support Forces Act (2017)**, putting the militia under the office of the president.

**Lt. Gen. Mohammed "Hemedti" Dagalo**: Hemedti rose from the ranks back when RSF was the Janjaweed militia to eventually take over its leadership as its status changed from an irregular militia to RSF.

Under Hemedti, the RSF grew into a large and well-trained **urban fighting force**, and its control over Sudan's western borders has allowed Hemedti to create direct ties with a number of regional and international players. President Bashir is said to have given to Hemedti control over the Darfur region's gold mines (some 40% of Sudan's gold exports) to bring billions of dollars to the personal coffers of Bashir. Hemedti also controlled African migration and human trafficking through Libya.

It is said that SAF's Islamic leaders hate Hemedti's ethnic and tribal background (the historically marginalized **Darfurian Arab tribes**).

Since the start of this conflict, Hemedti has tried **to frame his actions as an attempt to salvage the democratic transition**, accusing Burhan of being an anti-democratic radical Islamist who is using foreign forces to kill Sudanese civilians.

More than two decades back, the Janjaweed militia was accused of genocide of African tribes in Darfur. The media and the intelligentsia in Sudan have always painted Hemedti as a perpetrator of genocide of African tribes in Darfur.

#### **Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Gen. Abdelfattah Al Burhan:**

On April 11, 2019, when President Omar al-Bashir was overthrown due to public agitation against him, **Ahmed Awad Ibn Ouf**, Chief of the SAF took over as the President. However, he resigned from his position as the head of **Sudan's**

**Transitional Military Council** on April 12, 2019, just one day after he was sworn in as the interim leader of the country. The reason for his resignation was due to widespread protests and opposition from the Sudanese people, who rejected him as a leader due to his close ties with al-Bashir's regime.

**Lt. Gen. Abdelfattah Al Burhan** was working as the Military Attache in the Sudanese embassy in China. He was called back to Khartoum and appointed as the Army's inspector general. Khartoum was tense due to continuous agitation against Bashir. Soon al-Burhan was appointed as the Defense Minister of Sudan. When **Ahmed Awad Ibn Ouf** resigned during the uprising, al-Burhan became Chief of the Army and President. Thus within 3 months, al-Burhan moved from being a Military Attache to become the President.

As President, he presided over Sudan's military deployment to Yemen, where his and Hemedti's militia cooperated.

As the highest-ranking figure in the SAF, Burhan is believed to be either a member of or influenced by **the Kizan, a clan of Islamist Bashir supporters with Muslim Brotherhood roots.**

Those Muslim Brotherhood ties have always made Egypt and the UAE view him with suspicion, but given Burhan's institutional legitimacy as head of the military, they have cooperated with him and supported him on multiple occasions.

**The SAF is twice the size of the RSF and has an air force and heavy weaponry, but it is not as well trained or suited for urban warfare as the RSF.**

Burhan has attempted to consolidate his position by maintaining formal relationships with old regional allies like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Chad as well as forming a new one with Israel to ensure his place in the future of Sudan. His unclear loyalties and mercurial positioning kept him from securing the backing of Abu Dhabi in 2022, and his ordered release of some Islamist prisoners has also not endeared him to UAE.

Since the conflict started, he has called the RSF a dangerous militia and refused all calls for dialogue, which some Sudanese voices say was due to pressure from **the Kizan, which wishes to eradicate the RSF and bring the deposed regime back to power.**