



APQ



Topic: Addressing the Impact of Political Stability on the Local Residents of Sudan with Natural Disasters and the Political Volatility Threatening Peacekeeping Efforts

Committee: Advisory Panel

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Introduction to the Committee

The Advisory Panel is a committee consisting of experts in various fields, e.g. law, political science, geography, economics etc., who come from many nations. It is summoned by the Security Council to give, as its name suggests, its advisory opinion on the issues for which it has been summoned. The clauses submitted are debated in the ad-hoc format and assembled into a Joint Communiqué that is then referred to the Security Council as advice for its consideration. Usually, the Advisory Panel (AP) is gathered for discussions on a particular region. For this conference, that region is North Africa.

In the Advisory Panel on the Question of North Africa, we will be debating two agenda items, one of which considers the situation in Sudan and is the title of this report: “Addressing the impact of political stability on the residents of Sudan with natural disasters and the political volatility threatening peacekeeping efforts”

Introduction to the Agenda Item

The agenda item for this study guide is “Addressing the impact of political stability on the residents of Sudan with natural disasters and the political volatility threatening peacekeeping efforts”. The item looks at the Sudan issue from two perspectives. First, the impact of political stability (or lack thereof) on the residents of Sudan, and second how the political instability alongside recent natural disasters hinders peacekeeping efforts.

The Sudanese political crisis has resulted in a bitter civil war between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces, who are the army of the Sudanese government, and the Transitional Sovereignty Council. The warring led to 9 million internally displaced people as of February 2024, with 18 million facing food insecurity and 25 million needing humanitarian assistance and protection (United Nations Human Rights Council).

On the other hand, Sudan is among the countries most affected by climate change. In recent years, during Sudan's rainy season (June-September) heavy and persistent rains have led to severe flooding, causing billions of dollars of damage, and bringing about the destruction of thousands of homes while displacing tens of thousands. The natural disasters come while the country is already in one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, which hampers the already weak economy and exacerbates the humanitarian crisis by leading to homelessness and the destruction of livestock and agricultural products.

Key Terms

Rapid Support Forces (RSF): The Rapid Support Forces are a paramilitary organization currently in conflict with the Sudanese Armed Forces over ruling Sudan. Led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), the RSF consists of Janjaweed militiamen used by the Sudanese government during the War in Darfur during which their actions fell under crimes against humanity (Human Rights Watch).

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF): The SAF are the military forces of Sudan. Before the civil war, the RSF was part of the SAF. It is led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan Abdelrahman al-Burhan (al-Burhan), who is also the de facto ruler of Sudan since the 2019 coup d'état.

Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC): The TSC succeeded the Transitional Military Council, which was founded in 2019 following the coup. Due to pressure from the international community, the African Union, and Ethiopia in particular, Al Burhan was forced to share his power with civilian forces and abolished the Military Council in favor of the Transitional Sovereignty Council with democratization promises. The TSC was founded under the August 2019 Draft Constitutional Declaration and under this constitution was the collective head of Sudan. However, after the 2021 coup, Al Burhan consolidated his power and abolished the TSC, thereafter changing its composition and ridding it of its civilian leaders.

Internally displaced people (IDPs): "People become internally displaced when they are forced to leave their homes due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, natural hazards, or other crises within the borders of their country" (OCHA)

General Overview

The Political Volatility of Sudan

Sudan has rarely been a stable nation since it declared independence from the United Kingdom in 1956. Since its founding, it has engaged in 3 civil wars, and many more internal uprisings, and had South Sudan secede from it in 2011.

Omar Al-Bashir was the head of Sudan from 1989 until 2019. During his time he dealt with many insurgencies, and one of the more significant ones was the War in Darfur. The conflict was brought about due to ethnic and racial tensions in the Darfur region and was characterized by large-scale state-sponsored violence, which left approximately 300 thousand dead and 2.7 million displaced.^[1] Throughout this war, Al-Bashir used local Janjaweed tribes as military forces to crush the rebellions by non-Arabs. The Janjaweed organized into the Rapid Support Forces and were placed under the command of Hemedti. After crushing the insurgency the RSF grew in power and started to be integrated into the SAF. In 2019, in light of growing civil unrest and dislike towards Al-Bashir's regime, general al-Burhan staged a coup d'état, backed by Hemedti. After the coup, the Transitional Military Council was founded and the nation came to be ruled by the military junta. However, in a few months, constant civil unrest as well as growing international pressure from the African Union, and exhortation from Ethiopia forced the military to compromise and bring civilians into government. With that, the August 2019 Constitutional Declaration was made and the Transitional Sovereignty Council was born, Sudan committed to a return to democracy in 39 months and the chairmanship of the TSC would be yielded to a civilian leader in 21 months in November 2021. During this time, crackdown on protests was particularly brutal and the RSF engaged in the killing of civilian protestors (Human Rights Watch). However, as the 21 months came to expire in October 2021, pro-military protestors assembled in Khartoum, demanding that al Burhan stage a coup and assume total control. When hundreds of thousands across the nation assembled in return in support of the civilian government, and civilian leaders called for al-Burhan's resignation in light of his brutal treatment of protestors, al-Burhan staged another coup for the stated reason of "armed forces [having] no option apart from arresting politicians who were carrying out incitement against the military." Al-Burhan dissolved the TSC and then reopened it with new members. It was these new members that disturbed the amicable relationship between Hemedti and al-Burhan. Hemedti thought that the new officials were from Khartoum's ruling elite, with whom Hemedti, a Janjaweed Arab, had racial tensions. After the two's relationship began to sour, the RSF began recruiting around the country,

^[1][apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com)

preparing for an insurgency. The insurgency came on 15 April 2023, with RSF forces assaulting SAF-held posts, buildings, and facilities. Soon the nation descended into a brutal civil war. Especially fighting in the nation's capital, Khartoum raged violently and al-Burhan was placed under



A picture of al-Burhan and Hemedti, in that respective order^[2]

siege by RSF forces. It should be noted that the ICC, Human Rights Watch, and other international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have recognized that the RSF has been committing war crimes in the regions it occupies or attacks in the form of rape, looting, mass murder, etc. Currently, the fighting rages on and the humanitarian situation in Sudan shows no sign of becoming better. Even though in recent years the SAF's position has deteriorated, both parties are not interested in making peace and the many attempts at ceasefires, even the ones that have been signed, have failed to stop the fighting. Most recently, due to the RSF's superior position, peace talks were set to be conducted in December. However, the talks were postponed and later al-Burhan declared that no compromise would be made and that fighting would continue against Hemedti, who he accused of committing war crimes.

The Humanitarian Crisis

Sudan, a nation that struggled with disease outbreaks, ongoing conflicts, economic and political instability, and climate emergencies (UNHCR), declined severely in terms of its humanitarian and

economic situation due to the civil war. The number of internally displaced persons has grown to an enormous 6.5 million (UNHCR). 25 million need humanitarian assistance and protection while 18 million are facing acute food insecurity.

The fighting started at a time when Sudan was already requiring the most humanitarian aid it had in a decade. For example, before the war, 3 million women were thought to be at risk of gender-based violence. The conflict has rendered around 75% of the healthcare facilities of the nation out of service (UNFPA) making the country even more vulnerable to diseases, a two-thirds of the population lacks access to healthcare. Furthermore, the conflict has prevented 12 million kids from education, with the total number being up to 19 million.

The Environmental Situation

Sudan is ranked, in many global indexes, to be within the ten most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change. Not only is it among the most vulnerable, but it also stands as one of those countries that are least capable of taking the necessary measures to reduce the impacts of the climate crisis. Currently in Sudan, the rate of increase in yearly average temperatures is nearly double that of the global average, and with 60-80% of the nation's population dependent on climate-sensitive agriculture this trend represents a dangerous challenge. Although environmental factors are already affecting Sudanese in a grave way, with the conflict raging on and the climate steadily worsening, they have the potential to have much greater consequences. Unfortunately, due to the spillover of the armed conflict, environmental degradation has been proceeding at an alarming rate and critical action towards reducing the impacts of climate change cannot be taken.

One of the most important environmental challenges in Sudan is the century-old flooding problem. Recent years have seen monsoon rains in Sudan get longer and heavier, increasing the amount and severity of the flooding. This has led to devastating floods in the last three years, with the floods affecting thousands of already disadvantaged families. The floods have left hundreds of thousands displaced, hundreds killed and injured and thousands of homes destroyed, 80,000 in 2020 alone.

Peacekeeping in Sudan

The future and present situation of peacekeeping in Sudan looks to be bleak, as the military junta increasingly views foreign nations with mistrust. In July 2023, it was declared that "The Sudanese government rejects the deployment of foreign forces in Sudan and will consider them enemy forces." This

belief can be seen in other actions of the Sudanese government, such as refusing to comply with previous ceasefire agreements.

Although Sudan currently views foreign nations with suspicion, during the so-called “Sudanese Transition to Democracy” between 2019 and 2021, things were not like this. In 2020, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2524 establishing the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). This special political mission had many aims which were stated on UNITAMS’s website: “Supporting political stability, the constitution-making, electoral and census processes, institutional reforms and the promotion and protection of human rights, the conclusion of an inclusive peace process, the implementation of the peace agreement, the strengthening of the protective environment, in particular in conflict/post-conflict areas, the achievement of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation between communities, international resource mobilization and national socio-economic reforms, the establishment of a national architecture for development planning and aid effectiveness, and the conclusion of an inclusive peace process.”

Such international actors were generally thought to be very important in ensuring a safe and smooth transition to democracy in the aftermath of the 2019 coup. However, even as things seemed to be looking up, with the 2021 coup, peacekeeping in Sudan changed dramatically. First, the military, now unchecked by civilian leaders, began to view foreign nations with distrust and diplomatic relationships began to sour. Afterward, peacekeeping missions, such as UNITAMS, were dismissed, and proposed ceasefires and other proposed peacekeeping initiatives were denied or not implemented by Sudan. This represents a great challenge for the international community as it seems that the nation currently experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis of the year (rescue.org) cannot be helped.

Timeline of Key Events

2013	The Rapid Support Forces are established to help the Sudanese government crush the rebels in Darfur
11 April 2019	Amidst growing civil unrest and turmoil, the leader of the Sudanese Armed Forces, al-Bashir, conducts a coup d’etat, supported by the RSF.
17 August 2019	With persisting protests and international pressure,

	<p>the Transitional Military Council is dissolved and the Transitional Sovereignty Council is established to jointly rule the nation. The TSC includes civilian representatives and will be chaired by a military leader for the upcoming 21 months and the chair position will be given to a civilian leader after the 21 months is over.</p>
3 June 2020	<p>UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) is established with Security Council resolution 2524 (2020), with the aim of assisting in the nation’s transition to democracy, upholding the rule of law, engaging in peacebuilding and more.</p>
25 October 2021	<p>With just a few weeks to go until the end of the 21 months, al-Bashir stages a coup and assumes complete control of the nation, disbanding the TSC and reopening it with after filling it with loyal military officers.</p>
15 April 2023	<p>The long division, distrust, and ethnic tensions between the RSF and SAF erupt into a civil war.</p>
29 February 2024	<p>The United Nations Security Council votes to dissolve UNITAMS with resolution 2715. This resolution was adopted upon a letter from Sudan, claiming that the mission was fulfilled in a “disappointing” manner.</p>

Major Parties Involved

Egypt

Egypt is considered to be among the friendliest countries for Sudan. The two nations’ militaries engaged in joint training exercises and practices often before the outbreak of the civil war, to the point

that after the civil war started, RSF forces captured a few hundred Egyptian forces on Sudanese soil when fighting SAF forces. Although the RSF repatriated the soldiers successfully, it seems that Egypt is allied with the SAF's cause.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The United Arab Emirates is a covert backer of the RSF. This has led to the diplomatic relationship between Sudan and the UAE deteriorating over the years as the nations kicked out each others' diplomats and suspended diplomatic missions. Sudan claims that the UAE smuggles weapons to the RSF through Chad and other bordering nations of Sudan, and such claims have since been confirmed to some extent.

The Russian Federation

Russia is another one of the RSF's few allies. The primary connections between Russia and the RSF existed through the Wagner Group, a Russian military company. The sides engaged in training exercises and the RSF became a close ally of Russia.

The United States

The US's stance on the issue is complex. Although they do not support the RSF, they do not necessarily support the SAF either, as the US views them also as usurpers of the previous civilian regime. This has been made clear in their statements for the ceasefire meetings the US attended.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The Ceasefire of 22 May 2023

Although this ceasefire aimed to cease hostilities for 7 days. It failed when, after the documents were signed, the sides continued to fight within just hours. Although the ceasefire itself is not that important, its catastrophic failure is and it goes to show how difficult peace efforts in Sudan have been.

United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)’s Involvement in Sudan

The environmental situation in Sudan is critical and getting worse. To curb its effects, UNEP has been involved in various projects such as, “*Supporting Sustainable Peace in Blue Nile Region through Gender-Responsive Natural Resource Governance, Inclusive Conflict Resolution Mechanisms and Climate-Resilient Livelihoods.*” The efforts of the projects vary, for the aforementioned one it is to enhance climate-independent livelihood options for women to help with peace efforts. Other efforts have been made to gather information about the Sudanese environmental situation to help policymakers make better-informed decisions about environmental issues.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Peacekeeping Attempt

The war in Sudan has seen many failed peacekeeping, negotiating, and mediation efforts. One of them is IGAD’s failed attempt to mediate peace by encouraging both sides to accept and work together with to-be-deployed regional peacekeepers. This offer was flatly rejected by Sudan, which now views such efforts with disdain and has insulted Kenya for coming up with this offer.

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

- S/Res/2724 - calling for an immediate cease to hostilities between the warring parties during Ramadan.
- S/Res/2524 (2020) - establishing UNITAMS

Possible Solutions

The situation in Sudan is very difficult to navigate as the environmental, humanitarian, and political situations are very delicate and multifaceted issues on their own. That being said, taking note of the failure of previous events, some new considerations should be made.

One possible factor to ameliorate the humanitarian situation is to engage in infrastructure building or repair efforts. Ensuring the security of such efforts is a different and arduous task on its own, however, it has been seen that Sudan is receptive to such development initiatives from its allies, notably Russia. Such efforts could be practiced in regions of the country where conflict is not active.

Furthering the involvement of Sudan in the international community is critical for ensuring that future peacekeeping efforts can even be implemented. If Sudan continues to be distrustful of foreigners, which precludes much of the international community’s involvement, its residents will continue to suffer.

Reinforcing the arms embargo on Sudan and stopping the flow of material that is used to keep the fighting going is also very important, as these hostilities have brought about or exacerbated many of the humanitarian and environmental issues this report has focused on.

Environmental efforts should be increased. Since Sudan's willingness to have foreign personnel operating on its soil is dubious, these efforts can be done in cooperation with Sudanese personnel, through providing equipment, expertise, and monetary support.

Further Reading

The humanitarian report on: [Sudan Humanitarian Update \(23 November 2023\)](#)

Video on the Sudan conflict: [Sudan Crisis Explained](#).

One of the latest reports on the Sudan Conflict:

[‘Up to 100’ killed in RSF attack on Sudan village: Activists | Conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

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