

# Situating Non-military Players in the Sudan Conflict

Assessing Their Role in the Post-conflict  
Reconstruction of Sudan

Report | May 29, 2024

## 01

## Symposium Convenors

**About the HORN Institute:** The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies is a non-profit, applied research and policy think-do tank based in Nairobi, Kenya. The Institute works closely with local communities, governmental and non-governmental organisations and partners on various projects and activities focusing on six thematic areas: defence and security; terrorism and violent extremism; climate change, migration, and development, diplomacy and foreign relations; governance and statecraft; and transnational crimes and strategic threats with a primary focus on 13 countries that include; Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2021, the Institute was ranked 18th globally behind leading Think Tanks such as Brookings, Chatham House, and Hoover Institutions, among others. Indeed, the HORN Institute has become the go-to think tank for opinion and analysis on its key thematic areas by local as well as leading international media houses.

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# 02

## Contents

01 Symposium Convenors	2
03 Acronyms and Abbreviations	4
04 Acknowledgement	5
05 Executive Summary	6
06 Background	9
Objectives	9
Projected Outcomes	10
07 Format	11
<b>Session One</b>	<b>11</b>
Opening Remarks	
<b>Session Two</b>	<b>14</b>
Comments and Q & A	
<b>Session Three</b>	<b>17</b>
Comments Q & A	
<b>Session Four</b>	<b>21</b>
Comments and Q & A	
<b>Session Five</b>	<b>25</b>
Comments and Q & A	
<b>Session Six</b>	<b>28</b>
08 Closing Remarks	29



# 03

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DB</b>	Democratic Bloc
<b>FFC</b>	Forces for Freedom and Change
<b>FNM</b>	Forces of National Movement
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced person
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>KAS</b>	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
<b>MSF</b>	Médecins Sans Frontiers
<b>RCC</b>	Radical Change Coalition
<b>RSF</b>	Rapid Support Forces
<b>SAF</b>	Sudan Armed Forces
<b>SPF</b>	Sudan Popular Front
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>US</b>	United States



## Acknowledgement

The HORN Institute and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) would like to appreciate in a special way, the keynote speaker, Joseph Boinet, Deputy National Security Adviser, Republic of Kenya, for gracing the occasion.

The symposium conveners sincerely appreciate all the participants and presenters for their invaluable insights and contributions. Collectively, your efforts will significantly deepen the understanding of the conflict in Sudan, and enrich alternative peaceful conflict resolution approaches for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Sudan and the Horn of Africa region at large.

Most sincere gratitude to all the individuals and organisations that made the symposium a success especially Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa for the strategic support for the event, as well as the Symposium Organizing Committee from the HORN Institute composed of Dr. Hassan Khannenje (Director); Asia Mustafa (Strategic Communications Officer); Raudhat Saddam Sayeeda (Researcher); Evans Ombisa (Publisher and Graphic Designer); and Sharif Nasir (Accountant) for their role in the success of the symposium.

HORN Institute would like to extend its appreciation to Angella Kasekende (Project Manager, KAS Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa); Edgar Mwine (Project officer, KAS Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa); Janice Sanya (Symposium Coordinator); Edmond Pamba (Symposium Rapporteur) and all the service providers for contributing to the overall success of the symposium.



## 05

## Executive Summary

The armed conflict in Sudan between two military factions, Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has been going on for over one year. Approximately 13,900 people have been killed and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 6.5 million Sudanese have been displaced internally and 1.7 million across neighbouring countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad and South Sudan. Various efforts and

SITUATING NON-MILITARY PLAYERS IN THE SUDAN CONFLICT:  
ASSESSING THEIR ROLE IN THE POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION



“ **While the civilian front is fragmented in Sudan, various civilian groupings have emerged to front civilian interests, issues, agenda, positions and principles for a negotiated settlement to the current conflict** ”

actors have attempted mediation to end the conflict in separate processes in vain. However, the conflict receives the least global attention and the peace processes have mostly focused on the military parties in the conflict at the exclusion of civilians despite the second goal of transitioning Sudan into a civilian-led democratic state.

While the civilian front is fragmented in Sudan, various civilian groupings have emerged to front civilian interests,

issues, agenda, positions and principles for a negotiated settlement to the current conflict. Tagadom which is the successor to the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), Sudan Popular Front (SPF), the Democratic Bloc (DB), Forces of National Movement (FNM), and the Radical Change Coalition (RCC) among others may differ ideologically but generally support Jeddah Talks Forum led by the United States (US) and Saudi Arabia, with support from African Union (AU) and Intergovernmental



Authority on Development (IGAD). The civilian groupings further support the end to the conflict, transition to democratic governance and intra-Sudan dialogue. The centrality of civilians in Sudan's peace processes and the future of the country, remains of paramount importance to durability of peace and security in Sudan. It is worth noting however, that fragility in Sudan is partly historical, owing to the instrumentalization of the military in politics and mismanagement of the country's socio-cultural, ethnic and religious diversity through extremist and exclusionary dispensations.

As such, to ensure durable peace in Sudan:

- Inclusivity should be observed at the level of mediation and the peace be through intra-Sudan process.
- The peace processes of Sudan should be civilian-driven and people-centered as opposed to the exclusive focus on ceasefire and military factions.
- Access to humanitarian assistance should be urgently be granted by the fighting parties.
- The international community should develop a unified approach to the peace process in Sudan; there is need to unify peace processes under AU-IGAD-led forum.
- The peace process should prioritize security sector review or reform.
- Economic development should be securitized by ensuring equity in resource distribution and inclusive economic development and growth.



## Background

It is now coming to a year since the armed conflict between two military factions in Sudan, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) broke out. Approximately 13,900 people have been killed and according to UNHCR, 6.5 million Sudanese have been displaced internally and 1.7 million across neighbouring countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad and South Sudan. This is on top of 2 million more Sudanese that were previously displaced by, among other factors, droughts and hunger. Active hostilities are hampering humanitarian access and assistance leaving 24.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and 14.7 million in need of targeted assistance. As the conflict stretches to a year, all indications point to a protracted armed conflict with no viable peace settlement in sight.

Various actors have attempted mediation to end the conflict through different peace processes including: (i) Jeddah Talk brokered by the United States (US), Saudi Arabia and by extension Egypt and United Arab Emirates (UAE), (ii) Inter-governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Quartet (iii) the African Union (AU) Expanded Mediation Mechanism, (iv) the Troika, and (v) neighbouring countries (Egypt, UAE, and Saudi Arabia). However, all peace processes are faltering with ceasefire agreements having collapsed 17 times and no meaningful progress in peace talks. Principally, the peace processes inherently suffer: (i) the lack of adequate leverage on conflict actors, (ii) a fragmented approach characterized by a multiplicity of actors, interests, and processes, (iii) weak legitimacy and credibility, and (iv) the exclusive, narrow, and top-down approaches focussed on the military elites.

Whereas the military objectives of the conflict cannot be ignored, the resolution of this conflict requires a political solution. Similarly, restructuring Sudan into a functional democratic state will require civilian-led peace negotiations and transitional justice efforts. In this light, the HORN Institute, in partnership with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa, proposed a regional symposium to envision non-military solutions to the conflict and a sustainable path for lasting peace and stability in Sudan.

### Objectives

The symposium sort to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive mapping and analysis of the non-military actors in Sudan vis a vis their roles, challenges, opportunities, and needs in peace building.
2. Evaluate the approaches to humanitarian interventions for the displaced persons of Sudan with a view of facilitating early return and active participation in the reconstruction of the Sudan state.





3. Facilitate strategic dialogue and collaboration among the non-military actors and other stakeholders to enhance their coordination and effectiveness in peace building in Sudan.

#### Projected Outcomes

1. A framework outlining the potential roles and contribution of civilians in resolving the conflict in Sudan.
2. A roadmap for engaging with the international community to support for civilian-led initiatives for state reconstruction in Sudan.
3. Policy recommendations for internal actors in Sudan and international stakeholders to navigate the complexities of the current political situation in Sudan.

“ Active hostilities are hampering humanitarian access and assistance leaving 24.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and 14.7 million in need of targeted assistance. As the conflict stretches to a year, all indications point to a protracted armed conflict with no viable peace settlement in sight

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## 07

## Format

## Session One

Moderator: **Hassan Kanneje, Ph.D.**, Director HORN Institute

**Opening Remarks** by **Mustafa Y. Ali, Ph.D.**, Co-Founder and Chairman, HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies.



He welcomed all the participants to Nairobi and to the symposium. He acknowledged with profound gratitude, the HORN Institute staff and their KAS counterparts for meticulous organization of the symposium. Dr Ali described the symposium as a sequel of the 2023 HORN-KAS symposium on the Sudan conflict. He further described the symposium as special in terms of its focus on the non-military path towards the resolution of the conflict in Sudan through inclusive dialogue.

The non-military path is formidable in providing lasting stability in Sudan. He faulted previous exclusive processes centered around the primary and military actors in the conflict. Dr Ali invited the insights of experts in symposium for the benefit of the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) among other actors leading peace processes in Sudan. He concluded by highlighting that the non-military path acknowledges the need for balancing between national security and human security dimensions of the conflict in Sudan. Dr Ali further highlighted the overriding essence of shared security as he called for concerted domestic, regional and international efforts to end the conflict.

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**Opening Remarks** by **Nils Wörmer**, Regional Director, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)  
– Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa.



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Sudan is of significant interest to international security due to the geographical position it sits at and the interlinkage of security of security issues from Sudan, the Horn of Africa, Europe, the Gulf and the Middle East  
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Nils Wörmer welcomed all the participants to the symposium and appreciated the participants' commitment to the quest for peace and stability in Sudan. While participating in yet another forum to brainstorm on pathways for Sudan's peace is a great pleasure, Nils expressed strong personal frustration and sorrow given the lack of meaningful progress in Sudan. He argued that the longer the war takes, the more regionalized it becomes, the more actors it attracts, the more interference it receives, the more actors factionalize and the more peace becomes elusive.

Sudan is of significant interest to international security due to the geographical position it sits at and the interlinkage of security of security issues from Sudan, the Horn of Africa, Europe, the Gulf and the Middle East. The symposium revives hope for the non-military approach to end the conflict in Sudan, after the non-violence movement in Sudan festered after the ouster of President Omar Bashir (1989 – 2019). The non-military approach may as well lead to sustainable pathways to durable peace.

**Remarks by Key Guest.** The key guest, who serves in the capacity of deputy security advisor, opened his remarks by thanking the HORN Institute and KAS for the invitation to the symposium. He welcomed all the participants to Nairobi and appreciated their sacrifices for the symposium. The Government of Kenya and the Office of the National Security Adviser associates itself strongly with the symposium and its theme, as well as the spirit to bring peace and stability to Sudan.

Sudan presents a unique set of international security challenges to the region, continent and the globe, and thus demands re-doubling of efforts to help Sudan find peace. The key guest acknowledged the frustrations with the peace processes of Sudan. The conflict parties, regional states and international actors should prioritize the plight of the Sudanese people. The conflict in Sudan has lost attention to conflicts in other parts of the world.

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Kenya as a member of IGAD and the Horn of Africa, remains fully engaged at unilateral level, and in concert with other actors and multilateral mechanisms, for peace and stability in Sudan. Kenya supports all efforts towards peace and urgent humanitarian assistance in Sudan.



# Session Two

## History and Evolution of the Conflict: SAF-RSF War: Examining the Tapestry of Conflict in Sudan

### Introduction

The discussion essentially focused on the history of conflict in Sudan and the background to the current conflict.

### History of Conflict in Sudan

Sudan descended into conflict a year to its independence in 1955, when the southern region rebelled against northern administration. The civil war culminated in 1972 with the creation of southern Sudan as a distinct self-governing territory of Sudan. The second civil war erupted in 1983 led by southern Sudan against the Islamist and Pan-Arabist northern administration and culminated in 2005, followed by the secession of southern Sudan (modern day South Sudan) in 2011. In 2003, another armed conflict broke out in Darfur between the central government and the regional Darfuri rebel groups. As such, it was noted that the history of conflict in Sudan is a struggle between the centre and the periphery. The RSF then Janjaweed, was deployed as a counter-insurgency militia to quell the Darfuri rebellion.

### The Current Conflict in Sudan

Having successfully quelled the rebellion in Darfur, Janjaweed was mainstreamed into national security architecture by President Omar Bashir in 2013 and renamed RSF. The force was subsequently deployed to counter-insurgency operations. Through the RSF Act of 2017 officially established the para-military organization as the Fifth Command, directly under the command of the President, Omar Bashir.

The ouster of President Omar Bashir (1989 – 2019), by the civilian protest movement, the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), left a vacuum of command over RSF. As such, power struggle ensued between RSF and SAF leading to the October 2021 coup against the civilian component. The coup stoked tensions between SAF and RSF as personal relationship between the SAF Chief General Fattah Al Burhan and RSF leader General Mohamed 'Hemedti' Dagallo deteriorated and dissolved to the current armed conflict.



## Refugee Crisis and Cross-Border Displacement in Sudan: Assessing the Plight of Sudanese Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

### Introduction

The discussion provided an assessment of the impact of the conflict in Sudan on civilian populations, and the efforts by MSF in alleviating the humanitarian strife thereof.

### The Humanitarian Situation in Sudan

Generally, it was observed that more than 4 million people have been displaced internally with over 1 million others fleeing into neighbouring countries as refugees. The health systems have collapsed with between 70 – 80 percent of health facilities no longer functioning. Infectious diseases such as Cholera, Dengue and Measles

rising in regions such as Khartoum and Gadaref. About 2,000 people are suffering from Cholera. Armed violence is active in Khartoum, Darfur and South Kordofan; the violence is indiscriminate in civilian areas.

Access and provision of health services are extremely difficult as Sudan faces critical health supplies shortage and disruption and suspension of medical services. The country is further experiencing destruction of health facilities and displacement or insecurity for medical personnel due to ongoing hostilities and poor levels of security. Maternal healthcare is particularly affected with



pregnant women and new-born infants facing malnutrition and poor healthcare.

Levels of civilian protection are critically low as cases of harassment, sexual violence, ethnic violence and gender-based violence. Lawlessness is acutely high with looting, vandalization of telecommunication, education, banking, food and water infrastructure, hence disrupting the basic services. Hospitals including Al Nao, Al Saudi Maternity in Omdurman, Al Geneina Hospital in West Darfur, and Babiker Nahar Pediatric Hospital in El Fasher have experienced looting, shelling and other forms of disruptive violence.

Sudan is facing an imminent famine as national cereal production levels continue plummeting by 46 percent in 2023 and 40 percent compared to the last five years. In fact, 15 percent of children aged between 6 months and two years are suffering from severe to acute malnutrition; more than 30,000 children are suffering from acute

malnutrition. About 40 percent of pregnant women and lactating mothers are malnourished.

### MSF Humanitarian Support

MSF is among the leading humanitarian response agencies in Sudan, with operational footprint in 9 states across the country, 1200 national staff and 90 international staff. MSF is supporting 20 Ministry of Health hospitals as well as private healthcare clinics, with MSF-run hospitals leading in medical assistance to IDPs, refugees and conflict-trapped populations. Over 500,000 medical consultations, 8,400 deliveries and 1,600 caesarean section surgeries have been carried out.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, a call for all parties to the conflict to guarantee protection to civilians and respect human rights was made. The call for all parties to guarantee unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and for the international community to urgently scale up humanitarian assistance to the people of Sudan was reiterated.



## Military Situation (Role of External Players): A Critical Review Regional Mediation Efforts and Peace Initiatives Thus Far

### Introduction

The discussion primarily analysed the military situation as well as the role of external players in the conflict in Sudan, with a secondary focus on the regional mediation efforts and peace initiatives.

### The Making of State Fragility

It was instructively argued that the conflict in Sudan is not an ideological conflict but rather a factional conflict between two military formations over power and resources. He further argued that the institutional colonial legacy of the military in Sudan as partly influencing the military conflict in Sudan. The military in Sudan was colonially designed for control not defence and the successive governments in Sudan have instrumentalized the military to control power, resources and population, hence a larger role in the economy and politics of Sudan.

Given the series of military coups before Omar Bashir's own coup in 1989, President Bashir established RSF for counter-insurgency and coup-proofing SAF. However, RSF over the years acquired more capabilities thus threatening

the position of SAF and inviting factional competition between the two military formations.

As such, the current armed conflict is basically a fight to the finish which threatens to divide the country into two: the Eastern region under SAF and Islamist militias, and the Western region under RSF. There are three possible scenarios for the conflict in Sudan: two governments formed in the two regions; a low-intensity protracted civil war; and victory for either of the parties. However, no party is able to establish viable independent states and governments hence each seeks to rule over the whole of Sudan.

### Conclusion

It was observed that the important question is about how to design a viable peace mediation effort in Sudan. accordingly, several factors were stressed:

- The issues and differences among warring parties. These emerged as the most critical area of focus. At the core, it was argued that there is need to

appreciate the role of multi-culturalism in Sudan as a source of conflict for example and find a workable form of federalism as did Ethiopia. The center-periphery struggles need to be looked at and see the most stable formula of economic, social and political inclusion for the peripheries and address the dominance by the riverine groupings.

- External factors. It was observed that since the onset of the war, foreign powers have been involved

on both sides, with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) supporting RSF and Egypt supporting SAF.

- The most unifying mediation process. It was noted that there is need to include consequential actors with the capabilities of unifying mediators around common objectives, approaches and vision for Sudan. Accordingly, the mediation process under the chairmanship of AU, such as UN, IGAD, the League of the Arab States was suggested as one of the most unifying approaches.

### Comments and Q & A

**Question:** *What evidence is there, that Islamists in the East support SAF? Is it not just the propaganda of FFC and pretext for its support for RSF?*

In response to the question above, Islamization of Sudan was described as what created the fragility of the state; the Islamist political and military elite established control over instruments and institutions of the state including the military for decades. It was argued that the Islamists use this machinery for control and not public service, as you can see in the character of the military and security services of Sudan. One of the top Islamist leaders recently asked that investigations be carried out on how the army participated in ousting President Bashir and how Bashir-era Islamist political elite can come back to power. The remnants of the Islamist Front in Sudan have regrouped as the party of the army and yes, they control the army.

**Question:** *Why is the conflict not prominent in the global media and garnering global attention?*

In response to the question above, it was noted that the crisis in Sudan is competing for resources and attention with similar crises in Ukraine and Israel, which for geopolitical reasons have prominence globally. Second, it was observed that the lack of vibrant local media in Sudan as well as significant media presence in the country, blacks out the events in Sudan.

**Question:** *Are Sudanese citizens able to push peace efforts and why have European Union AU and IGAD failed? Is it because of their bureaucracy?*

As a response to this question, it was argued that the Sudanese are the most important stakeholders and must be at the centre of peace efforts for lasting peace and stability in the country. The regional peace and security mechanisms are largely symbolic institutions with the least political effectiveness especially in this conflict, given the powerful role of external actors in both the conflict and the peace processes. The regional mechanisms have also failed because of the lack of inclusive processes.



**The ouster of President Omar Bashir (1989 – 2019), by the civilian protest movement, the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), left a vacuum of command over RSF**



# Session Three

## Mapping non-military actors, their agenda, strategies and interventions of non-military actors for lasting peace in Sudan

### Introduction

The discussion centred on mapping non-military actors, their agenda, strategies and interventions of non-military actors for lasting peace in Sudan, mainly identified the non-military actors in the conflict and peace in Sudan as well as their issues, interests and positioning in Sudan's political crisis.

### Mapping of Non-Military Actors in Sudan

The opening argument was made that the current conflict has left no room for civilian activism, which has weakened further given the lack of a unified civilian front. The current conflict may further be seen to emerge from three other factors: ideology (Islamism versus secularism), the October 2022 coup which escalated tensions between RSF and SAF, and the Political Framework Agreement which sowed discord in the civilian front. However, most Sudanese people support the ongoing Jeddah Talks Forum and an end to the war. There is no united civilian front in Sudan. Nonetheless, civilian factions agree in principle for immediate ceasefire, an inclusive peace process and democratic transition of power to a civilian-led government. The most notable civilian actors in Sudan are:

#### i. *Tagadom*

The initial civilian protest movement FFC, has factionalized into Al-Maglis Al-Markazi (FFC-CC) and Al-Tawfug Al-Watani. The Al-Maglis Al-Markazi faction proceeded to establish Tagadom which is now FFC's successor, is carrying on with political engagements with stakeholders such as IGAD, UN, RSF, Ethiopia, South Sudan, France and Egypt, to push for ceasefire, an inclusive peace process and an end to the conflict. Tagadom met RSF leader Dagalo signed declaration with him in Addis Ababa in January 2024 to end the war, exerted effort to meet SAF leader in Sudan have not been successful. Tagadom supports the Jeddah Talks and the non-inclusion of the Bashir-era political party (National

Congress Party - NCP) and the Islamic Movement in any peace processes.

#### ii. *Sudan Popular Front*

Sudan Popular Front (SPF) emerged after the war in the Eastern region (pro-SAF), the inaugural meeting was held in Cairo Egypt and Port Sudan. SPF is chaired by Mohamed. Al-Amin Tirk and seeks to unify the efforts of as many political parties, civil society organizations, religious Sufi sects, intellectuals and others, to rebuild the country.

#### iii. *The Democratic Bloc*

This is a faction of FFC; the Democratic Bloc is in fact a coalition comprising Sudan liberation army of Mini, Justice and Equity of Jibril, and a faction of the Unionist party, they supported October 2021 coup, and are opposed to the Political Framework Agreement. The Democratic Bloc also calls for unification of regional and international initiatives, while highlighting the significance of comprehensive Sudanese dialogue with regional and international facilitation. The group submitted their proposed solution to the African Union High -level Mechanism for Sudan emphasizing the sovereignty of the state institutions and the territorial integrity, more or less close to the position of SAF.

#### iv. *Radical Change Coalition (RCC)*

This is as well a breakaway of FFC comprising 10 bodies pioneered by the communist party and the Baath Party, established in 2022, essentially to counter October coup before the war. The coalition declared its prime goal to safeguard the 2019 revolution objectives.

#### v. *Forces of National Movement (FNM)*

This is a coalition of 13 political parties established in December 2021 two months after October coup. The coalition includes Sudan Justice of Farah Agar, Umma National Party, Democratic Unionist Party and others.



“ In civilian factions agree in principle for immediate ceasefire, an inclusive peace process and democratic transition of power to a civilian-led government ”

Tigani Sessi the leader of FNM believe that the current crisis should be resolved through internal dialogue among the Sudanese with the assistance of neutral foreign mediators. FNM emphasizes the necessity of

broad-based national consensus among the Sudanese in pursuit of a solution of the current crisis.

### Conclusion

The above-mentioned groups are more or less the most important civilian political actors in the Sudanese arena. However, given that the security situation in the country is not conducive to political activism, most actors operate from outside the country, mostly in Egypt and other neighboring countries. Civilian actors' agenda and strategies differ but converge on three points: ending of the war, support for Jeddah Talks forum and the call for Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue.



## Sudan's Peace Landscape Through the Eyes of Non-Military Actors; Collaborative Approaches to Legal advocacy and Networking in Sudanese Conflict Resolution Efforts

### Introduction

The discussion narrowed down on the strategies civil society organizations are employing to collaborate, network and promote advocacy around the conflict, its effects on civilian population, atrocities committed during the conflict and pathways for peace in Sudan.

### Justice before Peace

There was consensus that the second civil war in Sudan (1983 – 2006) had been imagined to be the last, but the country has experienced other conflicts including the conflict in Darfur and the current civil war. It was argued that what seems to be the major problem in Sudan is the poor exercise of power and prior peace agreements which lacked strong emphasis on the question of justice.

Among other such civil society actors in Sudan, the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies thus argued for justice before peace, not peace before justice. Civil society actors continue to advocate for accountability on both sides of the conflict. Such actors also monitor and document human rights violations, as well as cases of murder, torture, sexual violence and new forms of sexual slavery, slavery and gender-based violence.

However, the challenge of ensuring accountability remains high given the collapse of the justice system in Sudan during the current war. In attempt to fill this void, actors such as RSF were noted to be attempting to establish their own courts in the areas they control but this is not a satisfying development. However, the actors in the conflict cannot independently investigate and address violations they are party to.

### Conclusion

A call for the extension and expansion of the International Criminal Court (ICC) mandate in Darfur, to cover other regions which have experienced hostilities was made. The aim is to help provide the needed independence in investigation as well as competence in addressing some of the worst forms of human rights violations. Finally, a call for justice for the Sudanese people and support all mechanisms and processes for peace in Sudan was also made.



## Voices of Resilience: Women's Movements and their Impact on Conflict Transformation in Sudan

### Introduction

The discussion covered the resilience strategies for women-led movements and initiatives especially at the local levels in Sudan.

### Resilience Strategies for Women in Sudan

It was observed women-led civil society actors in Sudan, support women-targeted initiatives and women-led organizations as the main strategy of shoring up women's resilience in the wake of violence and instability in Sudan. Further, support for women in displacement through healthcare provision and psychotherapy and provision of emergency response in cases of sexual and gender-based

violence are critical interventions to support women in Sudan. Women-led movements are also steering consultations to address local humanitarian needs and find local solutions. Women in South and North Kordofan are leading efforts counter hate speech and preach peaceful co-existence. Women have submitted a draft memorandum focusing on priorities and needs to the local authorities. Women are also forming coalitions at the local levels across ethnic and religious lines, to campaign for an end to the war and to stop the recruitment of the youth into the fighting groups.



## The Role of Civil Society Organization (CSOs) in Voicing Out the Rights of Civilians and Promoting Unity

### Introduction

The discussion focused on analysing the CSO strategies in defense of human rights under the current environment of armed violence in Sudan, and challenges thereof.

### The CSO Agenda in Sudan

It was argued that civil society organizations have been the strongest element of civilian representation in the past decade in Sudan. CSOs are open compared to other civic spaces such as the political parties. Sudan's history of dictatorship has meant a history of human rights violations, which inevitably and naturally gave birth to activism. International support for activism in Sudan has also been a strong pillar for CSOs in the country. The revolution period during the fall of President Omar Bashir in 2019, the CSO movement was at its strongest but quickly weakened after the revolution, especially during the transition period.

The civil society movement in Sudan is pursuing the legal path to justice and accountability, by monitoring and documenting violations of human rights during the conflict. The other core issues the CSO sector is focused

on, are efforts towards immediate ceasefire, robust peace talks, anti-corruption, pushing for a new and permanent constitution for Sudan, and supporting the urgency for democratic elections as a path to the transition to civilian-led government. Resilience committees, which were the building blocks of the civilian protest movement against President Omar Bashir's rule, have modified themselves to become emergency response entities at the local levels.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it was emphasized that the international community should support Sudanese citizens through emergency assistance. About 25 million Sudanese are in need of emergency support. However, the CSO movement is faced with a myriad of challenges such as the internet black-out, the collapsed banking system, the lack of internal cohesion in the country, polarization across the country's ethnic and religious groups, and poor communication channels. The CSOs in Sudan need support to be able to document atrocities, as well as better networking to be able to reach out to development partners.

## Comments Q & A

### Comments

First, it was noted that Tagadom is not a political party but a grouping of political parties and entities. The Paris Conference was well inclusive, given its accommodation of civilians and CSOs as well as a broader scope of issues to include people-centred issues.

Second, it was observed that there is need for the international community to localize their humanitarian support through community-based response groups and organizations. The humanitarian situation is worsening in Sudan in the wake of deepening poverty and loss of livelihoods; for example, it cost a family USD 16 to access food in the pre-war period, the cost has hiked to USD 146 per week. The humanitarian aid is just not available given that the UN humanitarian response plan is under-funded. The challenges CSOs are facing are the requirements for registration and banking, among others.

Third, it was argued that CSOs should position themselves in ways that donors find demonstrable accountability and impact in them. The requirements for CSO registration and banking records are there for accountability and transparency purposes. Without such requirements, how do you ensure accountability for the resources

**Question:** *What will the political configuration in Sudan look like in the next 2 -3 years? Are SAF and RSF going divide the country int two?*

In response to this question, participants expressed hope that the conflict in Sudan does not last that long. It was also noted that RSF may not be satisfied with the western part of the country. Optimism was expressed against the possibility of Sudan breaking apart the South Sudan way [secession] because conflict parties will be dividing the divided.

**Question:** *What role have the religious groups and leaders played in conflict resolution so far?*

In response to the question above, it was argued that the religious groups which are mostly Muslim, have gone rogue; they support one faction of the military parties fighting in Sudan. They support SAF.

**Question:** *Is there a plan to make Sudan a signatory of Africa Human Rights Charter (AHRC)?*

Responding to this question, it was observed that plans to make Sudan a signatory to international human rights statutes including AHRC is work in progress. In fact, CSOs in Sudan have drafted and submitted the memorandum to commissioners calling for Sudan to accede to AHRC.



Women-led movements are also steering consultations to address local humanitarian needs and find local solutions



# Session Four

## Deconstructing the Efficacy and Constraints of African Union (AU) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Peace Initiatives in Sudan

### Introduction

The discussion focussed on highlighting the basis and role of the AU and IGAD in the conflict in Sudan.

### The Bashir Legacy

President Omar Bashir (1989 – 2019) established deep seated patron-client structures through which he out-sourced ethnic militias and bought loyalty from ethnic groups. President Bashir led the country in tumultuous moments of international labelling of Sudan as state sponsor of terrorism, international; sanctions against Sudan, and the collapse of Sudan's economy. In the post-Bashir era, the counter-revolution has ended up producing a civil war and more civilians are becoming militarized.

### Conclusion

AU and IGAD should focus on addressing three situations:

- The political situation; political peace processes have wasted time. Emerging powers have meddled in Sudan and made the conflict intractable.
- The security situation is characterized by high volatility, with possible expansion of RSF, SAF and other armed groups.
- Humanitarian situation which is dire since the collapse of the security system in Sudan; there is need for neighbouring countries, AU, IGAD and UN to strongly support ceasefire and a peaceful end to the conflict.



## Examining the Challenges and Opportunities of the Jeddah and Expanded Mediation Frameworks

### Introduction

The discussion was centred around the dynamics of the peace processes in Sudan and the factors for their success or failure, with a special emphasis at the positioning of the civilians in the peace process.

### The Mediation Processes

Fundamentally, it was argued that mediation can only be successfully conducted on the basis of principles of impartiality, neutrality, and credibility. Further, the mediating party must have leverage on the conflict parties and demonstrable political acumen. To lead a coherent mediation process in Sudan is a huge responsibility given the complex regional and international geopolitical environment coupled with a multiplicity of actors attempting to influence peace processes as well as the conflict.

The Manama Meeting was noted to be one of the most inclusive forums, which brought together all levels of stakeholders including the civilians; this is the best approach. The Jeddah forum however, is focused exclusively on ceasefire hence excluding civilians and failing to broaden the scope of issues. Ceasefire talks should immediately lead to the next steps of addressing the political and humanitarian situations in the country.

The central question is how can civilians play this role [of being leading players in mediation efforts]? There is a big struggle to build a common civilian front without much success. The Paris meeting which involved civilian groups offered a glimmer of hope for the civilians in Sudan to play a meaningful and leading role in the peace processes.



“**Bashir led the country in tumultuous moments of international labelling of Sudan as state sponsor of terrorism, international sanctions against Sudan, and the collapse of Sudan’s economy**”

## Conclusion

In conclusion, a call for a multi-track approach in Sudan. We need to first reconcile mediators and neutralize spoilers,

then we need to reconcile the roles and interests of the actors and stakeholders. The AU expanded mechanism can reconcile agendas and interests but needs support from the belligerents. The argument that an effective mediation must prioritize justice and accountability, the future of RSF, and civilian leadership of the peace process was advanced. Lastly, the argument that the mediation process has to also define what kind of democracy the post-conflict Sudan will be and address radical political ideology which has made the country fragile since independence was lodged.



## Examining the Limitations and Prospects of the United Nations in Sudan’s Conflict Resolution Efforts

### Introduction

The discussion focused on analysing the challenges and opportunities for UN peace efforts in Sudan.

### The UN Common Approach

In the ongoing conflict in Sudan, it was observed that 14,000 people have been killed. Sudan is now, in the words of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, “a nightmare of sexual violence for women and girls, a nightmare of destruction of infrastructure, and a nightmare of hunger for millions of people”. Currently, about 18 million people face hunger in Sudan, a situation likely to worsen with the protraction of the conflict. The international community, led by the UN should enhance efforts to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe in Sudan and support robust efforts to end the conflict.

For the period ahead, the UN is pursuing a common approach aimed at saving lives, sustaining communities, preventing violence and mitigating the most severe impact of the fighting between SAF and RSF on vulnerable population. UN will utilize the area-based approach at state and community levels; the approach is centered around geographical priorities, capabilities and needs as well as conflict dynamics.

There are three critical priority areas for the UN. The first is basic services, community stabilization and resilience where the UN is drawing attention to gaps in food and

nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as energy, education and livelihoods. The second is the protection of civilians, human rights and the rule of law and the third is conflict prevention, social cohesion and peacebuilding.

### Prospects for UN Peacebuilding in Sudan

Mediation; it was noted that UN will provide diplomatic support to facilitate peaceful negotiations. In Sudan’s case, UNITAMS was mandated for that but despite goodwill it did not manage to achieve peace and stability in the country. The UN Special Envoy, Mr Ramtan Lamamra is now playing the leading role in facilitating peace talks. Peacekeeping Coordination; it was noted that UN which coordinates peacekeeping in conflict zones by monitoring ceasefire agreements and providing protection to civilians among other roles, will endeavour to promote civilian protection in Sudan.

Supporting peace agreements; the UN strongly supports the implementation of peace agreements to ensure their success.

### Limitations

UN efforts face certain limitations. First is political consideration or balancing diverse national interests and views, which may hinder multilateral action. Second, there is a likelihood of resistance from conflicting parties, against



the involvement of the UN. Thirdly, the UN is challenged by the complexity of the conflict itself; the conflict is multi-faceted, multi-layered and rapidly changing. Lastly, resource constraints may impact the ability for the UN to ensure the conflict is resolved comprehensively.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it was observed that plans for the next phase are contingent upon the unfolding conflict dynamics; the UN will carry out scenario planning. If a peace agreement or ceasefire is reached, plans may be re-adjusted for

durability of solutions. Post-disaster damage/need assessment is also a critical part of determining conflict impact magnitude and priorities. The UN will also need to support the local governance systems and mobilize efforts to ensure critical infrastructure is restored. Lastly, there is need to initiate efforts and programs to prevent conflict triggers through community peacebuilding structures, and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) for example. Efforts to reduce tension among communities will be critical at this phase and may focus on among other issues, combating hate speech.



## European Engagement in the Resolution of the Sudan Conflict

### Introduction

The discussion focused on European perspectives on the conflict and the European Union's (EU) role in the peace processes in Sudan thus far.

### Sudan Mediation Dynamics

First, it was observed that the Paris meeting organized by Germany, European Union (EU) and France was a critical opportunity for an inclusive and non-military path towards peace in Sudan. This is because the meeting, unlike many others and after, had a broader scope of issues and diverse range of stakeholders. The meeting had a political component, a civilian seminar for civilians, and a humanitarian forum which culminated in a humanitarian pledge to Sudan. Secondly, it was noted that regional and international conflict management system on Sudan is crowded, hence the EU does not want to open another track.

EU supports ongoing efforts such as the Jeddah Talks as well as the AU-IGAD Expanded Mediation. A lot is already happening, what is needed is coherence, a comprehensive agenda and a civilian-led dimension in

Sudan's peace process. The challenge here is how to re-insert the civilian-led component.

However, it was noted that EU has learnt over time that it under-estimated the spoiler effect of the military establishment in Sudan. EU similarly over-estimated the possibility for a quick transition to civilian-led democratic government.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it was argued that civilian voices need to dominate the peace process and the political transition. The question concerning all stakeholders is how the Generals can put weapons aside and let the civilians lead the peace process and the transition to democratic governance. The role of the civilian movement should be enhanced.

As such, it was further argued that there is need to increase pressure on the belligerents to provide access to humanitarian aid; if they lay claim to legitimacy they must live up to its responsibility.



... it was noted that EU has learnt over time that it under-estimated the spoiler effect of the military establishment in Sudan. EU similarly over-estimated the possibility for a quick transition to civilian-led democratic government



## Comments and Q & A

**Question:** *Has the UN and the international community failed in exercising R2P in Sudan?*

In response to the above question, it was noted that even if UN would exercise R2P, such an intervention would just be a bandage not a solution.

**Question:** *Why is there no unified force or position at the UN over Sudan?*

As a response to this question, it was argued that while the Sudanese people cannot rely on the UN Security Council to drive the process towards peace in Sudan, it does not mean the international community cannot push for UN to take a firm common approach towards the conflict in Sudan. UN Security Council should live up to its role and responsibilities.

**Question:** *Which actor can credibly play the role of the mediator?*

The response to this question stressed that no one actor can effectively achieve at mediation in Sudan in the wake of the lack of a common position within the regional and international communities; all countries have interests. As such any peace processes can fail if interests are not checked.

# Session Five

## Assessing Negotiation Positions of Non-Military Actors in Sudan Peace

**Processes:** Strategies, Challenges and Successes of Non-Military Actors in Sudan's Negotiation Arena

### Introduction

The discussion centred on assessing negotiation positions of non-military actors in Sudan peace processes as well as strategies, challenges and successes of non-military actors in Sudan's negotiation arena.

### The Conflict

First, it was noted that the current conflict in Sudan emanates from two major developments in the post-Bashir era: the Juba Peace Agreement and the 2021 military coup.

The Juba Peace Agreement which amended the Constitutional Declaration, introduced 25% allocation of power in the transitional government to armed movements. As such, the transitional government accommodated partisan cabinet members.

Secondly, the 2021 military coup against the transitional civilian – military power-sharing government under the civilian leadership left only the military factions in a struggle for power. As the struggle intensified, the fall-out became militaristic hence the civil war.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it was observed that the non-military stakeholders or actors in Sudan share major negotiating positions. For example, the flawed political processes of selection or election of leaders has been rejected by non-military actors in favour of free and fair democratic elections. Further, major non-military actors also want the military to return to the barracks and for RSF to disband. However, the civilian – military relations need healing and reconciliation



## Non-military Opposition's Strategic Engagement in Shaping Sudan's Future Governance and State Reconstruction

### Introduction

The discussion highlighted the non-military political opposition's approach and principles of engagement in the peace processes and in the re-imagining of the state of Sudan.

### Sudan's Historical Fragility

Generally, it was argued that the nature of Sudan has made the conflict relatively intractable. Further, Sudan has a vast geography and is located in close proximity to unstable neighbouring countries which complicates the situation. The non-military movement in Sudan is composed of intellectuals, political parties, and activists. Sudan has had a history of conflict, especially civil wars which have

undermined the country's economic development. This is because development budget is skewed towards conflict, where the state allocates more resources to war. Sudan has also experienced ideologically driven conflict, when Islamist parties take power and pursue pan-Islamism over Sudan hence clashing with secularist or non-Muslim groupings as did Southern Sudan which later seceded into modern day South Sudan.

In the current conflict, Sudan's fragility is further traced to the multiplicity of actors in conflict, both military and political. The Juba Peace Agreement added further strain to the fragile state by accommodating militant groups



“ ... when Islamist parties take power and pursue pan-Islamism over Sudan hence clashing with secularist or non-Muslim groupings as did Southern Sudan which later seceded into modern day South Sudan ”

in government and throwing the civilian cabinet into dysfunction. The dysfunction was later exploited by SAF and RSF to stage the coup of October 2021.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it was strongly argued that the peace processes in Sudan should embrace a comprehensive and inclusive approaches. There is need to attain a unified army through DDR and other security sector reforms. Sudan further needs a constitutional review to achieve a permanent constitution which fundamentally addresses instability. Lastly, the observation was made that Sudan's peace and stability needs the hand of the international community, supporting the peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.



## Lessons from Across the World: Drawing Insights and Inspiration from Governance Case Studies in Diverse Contexts Worldwide

### Introduction

The discussion explored conflict resolution case studies as a guide for Sudan to pursue for post-conflict stability.

### Lessons from Sudan and Across the World

Fundamentally, it was argued that the solutions for Sudan will be by the Sudanese people. The state of Sudan is only fragile because it has failed to provide material welfare for its people. Sudan suffers poverty and from enemies and spoilers who ruin its peace and stability.

Further, it was observed that Sudan currently needs humanitarian aid, to alleviate the mass suffering of the Sudanese people as a result of the ongoing conflict. For the non-military path, there is a risk of commercialization of the civil society space. As such, meaningful development partnerships are the most critical intervention to guarantee humanitarian assistance reaches the populations in need and accountability on the part of the civil society organizations. The global community needs to reconsider sanctions on Sudan, to allow the country, society and economy to rebuild and livelihoods to recover.

Internally, Sudan suffers trust deficit which requires genuine dialogue and reconciliation for long-term peace and stability. Accordingly, it was argued that Somalia provides one of the best case studies of DDR where indigenous strategies were employed to pacify armed groups after 30 years of conflict and state collapse. Rwanda thus provides a good case study for justice and reconciliation;

the formal justice system in Rwanda was tampered with to allow informal conciliatory forums to drive reconciliation as opposed to retribution, after the 1994 genocide.

In the post-conflict phase, there is need for structured interventions through structured programs targeting education, health, food, and water, among other basic services and social development sectors. There is also need for consensus between international, regional and local efforts for peace and humanitarian assistance.

Given the duality of national security architecture as seen in the existence of both SAF and RSF, and given the urgency of security sector reforms, it was argued that Egypt presents a good case for the integration of the military in the economy and development. The military of Sudan can similarly be deployed to play a critical role in Sudan industrialization and provision of economic opportunities to the people of Sudan.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the argument that economic development be securitized in Sudan was advanced because economic development promotes peace, security, justice and stability. In so doing, there will be need to ensure resources are shared equally. This is the most viable way to manage Sudan's heterogenous society; South Africa and the United States of America (USA) are rainbow societies and homes to diversity. The constitution of Sudan just like the constitutions of South Africa and the USA.

## Comments and Q & A

### Comment

It was observed that the symposium gave little attention to important regions such as Darfur, Blue Nile, the Kordofans and the Nuba Mountains. The symposium should have also captured this element of inclusivity, which is beyond the emphasis on SAF and RSF.

### Question: *How do you realistically dismantle RSF?*

In response to this question, it was argued that RSF can be dismantled on the basis of the rule of law and through security sector reform programs. One such way is to integrate RSF into SAF.

# Session Six

## The Way Forward for Sudan

The plenary, based on the previous discussions and reflections on the conflict and peace processes in Sudan, offered the following ways forward:

- Inclusivity at the level of mediation, in recognition that peace take place through an intra-Sudan process.
- The peace processes of Sudan should be civilian-driven and people-centered as opposed to the exclusive focus ceasefire and military factions.
- Access to humanitarian assistance should urgently be provided by the fighting parties and the international community to lobby respective actors and mobilize resources for humanitarian response in Sudan.
- Sudan's mineral resources such as Gold can be certified for sanctions in the international markets to help defund the militant groups in the country.
- The international community should develop a unified approach to the peace process in Sudan.
- The media coverage of Sudan should be enhanced to mobilize global consciousness around the gravity of the conflict in Sudan.
- Leveraging on experiences in other similar conflict set-ups such as Rwanda.
- Security sector review or reform.
- Development should be securitized.
- There is need for a third track of diplomacy [civilian-centred], to strengthen the peace process in Sudan.
- The Sudan diaspora should be mainstreamed in the peace process.
- The military-civilian relations should be mended and a new army built through security sector reforms.
- The transition to democratic governance be strengthened to ensure accountability in Sudan's politics.

“ The solutions for Sudan will be by the Sudanese people. The state of Sudan is only fragile because it has failed to provide material welfare for its people ”

## Closing Remarks



**Angella Kasekende, Project Manager at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa**, in her closing remarks appreciated all the participants' contribution to the symposium and stressed the importance of the international community as well as regional stakeholders, to treat the situation in Sudan with the urgency it deserves. She further underscored the importance of peace and stability in Sudan, given its regional implications on security of the region as a whole. She urged the plenary to carry on the debate and discussion on the conflict in Sudan beyond the symposium across platforms at their disposal. She concluded by thanking partners KAS and HORN Institute for the organizing the symposium.



**Hassan Khannenje, Ph.D., Director, HORN Institute**, in his closing remarks, thanked HORN Institute and KAS for organizing the symposium and proceeded to underscore the importance of Sudan as country and its place in the history of civilization in Africa. He highlighted the pivotal geopolitical position Sudan occupies in the Horn of Africa, between Northern and Eastern Africa, and across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. He expressed profound hope that a robust peace process in Sudan can emerge and that stakeholders can unify behind common agenda. He concluded by expressing his desire that civilians in Sudan can ultimately enhance their agency, not just in the peace process but also the transition to democracy, justice and post conflict reconstruction.













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