

Topic 1: Discussing solutions to the Sudanese civil war

Overview:

What the UN calls, “The World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis”; the Sudanese Civil war is an ongoing and well documented conflict in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces(SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces(RSF). Since April 2023, what began as a small-scale standoff between the army and a paramilitary group has escalated into a large-scale, nationwide civil war.

The reasons for this war are rooted in a long history of oppression, revolutions, inequality, and the rivalry of two men who were once allies. After the fall of the long-standing dictator, Omar Al-Bashir in 2019, a power vacuum was created. The Sudanese Government had been overthrown and revolted against before, and it happened again in 2021, when General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the SAF, and Mohamed Hamdan “Hemedti” Dagalo, commander of the RSF, staged a coup together and were successful, however, as time went on, tensions grew between the SAF and the RSF primarily due to disagreements regarding the methods of the RSF’s integration into Sudan’s army, as well as disputes regarding money, resources, and foreign allies. Tensions continued to rise until April 15th, 2023, when the two forces fought in Khartoum, sparking the current civil war in Sudan.

History:

As previously mentioned, Sudan's government has a history of being revolted against. The first example of which occurred only 2 years after Sudan gained its independence. A coup was staged against the civilian-elected government in 1958, led by General Ibrahim Abboud, however, in 1962, a civil war broke out in the south of Sudan, led by the Anya-Nya movement -- Meaning snake venom in the Ma'di language, it is a South Sudanese separatist rebel group formed during the first civil war -- and in October of 1964, the appropriately named, "October Revolution" overthrows Abboud and establishes an Islamic-led government in Sudan.

In 1969, Sudan's government was revolted against once more, this time, in a coup led by Jaafar Numeiri. Numeiri's government stayed in power for a long time until 1983, when civil war broke out again in the south, involving government forces as well as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement(SPLM), led by John Garang. Following this, a new government was formed, however it didn't last long, as another military coup was staged in 1989, with the National Salvation Revolution electing General Omar al-Bashir 4 years later in 1993, who stayed in power under different titles through reelections until 2019.

The Humanitarian Crisis:

Prior to the war, Sudan was already experiencing severe humanitarian issues, caused by years of corruption in the government, lack of economic stability due to the recent revolution and power vacuum, and more. Overall, about 15.8 million people were left in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Since the beginning of the war, those numbers have only gone up. Due to the military disputes and nonstop danger, over the past 2 years, over 12 million people have been displaced and over 30 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Given that this is over half of the Sudanese population, it is now confirmed that Sudan is facing the fastest displacement crisis in the world as well as the largest humanitarian crisis ever.

Regarding the crimes of the RSP and SAF, civilians and infrastructure are consistently targeted by both groups, civilians face sexual violence, indiscriminate attacks, and child soldier recruitment. With the body count reaching the tens of millions(~30 million), human rights groups have gone as far as to call the crisis an “ethnic cleansing”.

Additionally, since April of 2023, nearly 4 million people(consisting of mainly women and children) have fled Sudan to neighboring countries; although countries like Chad and South Sudan accepted Sudanese refugees with open arms, they do not have the resources to aid the large amount of refugees crossing the borders, at least not without international help.

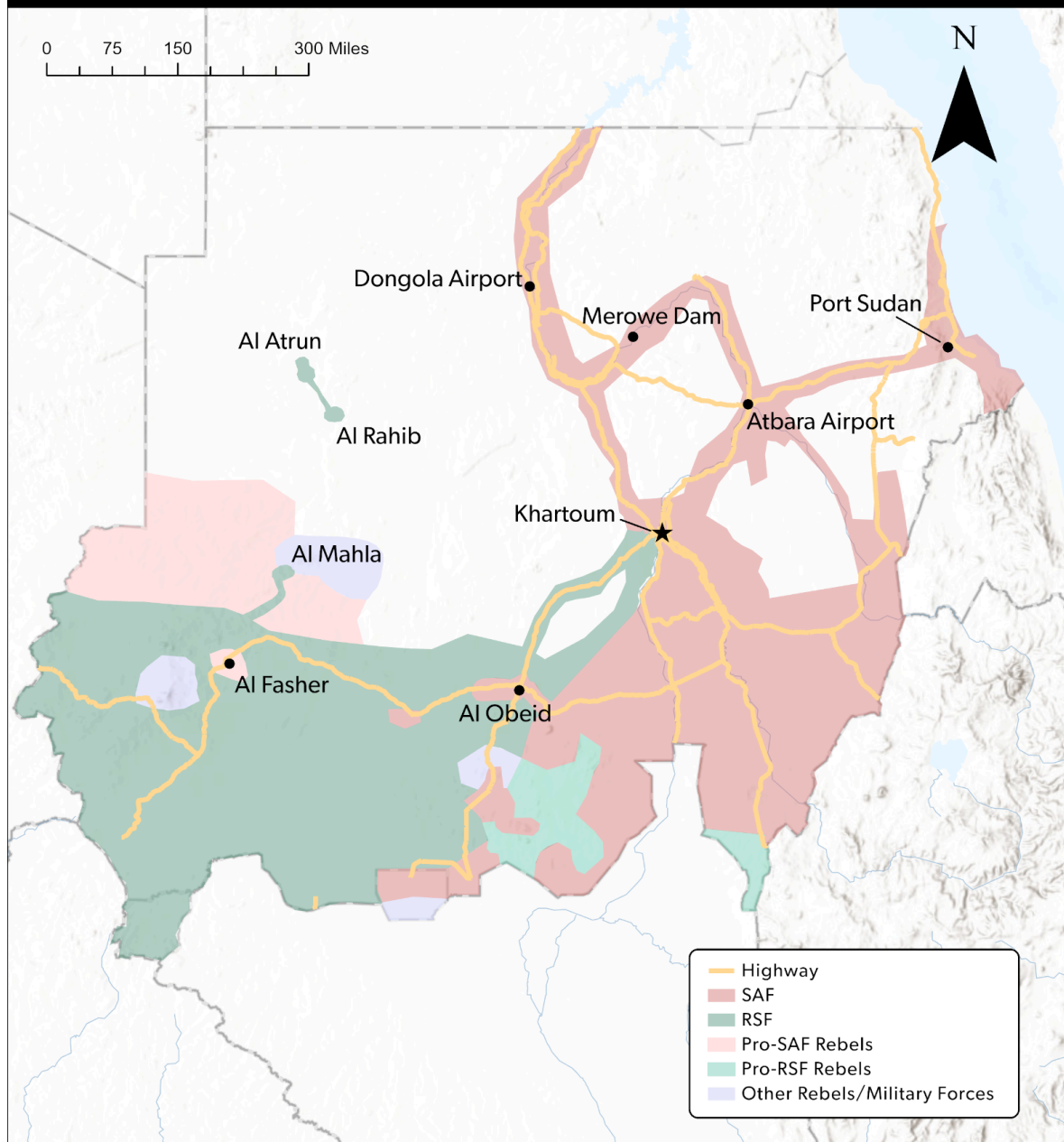
Furthermore, from June 2024 to September 2024, Sudan has experienced heavy rain and flooding which has drastically impacted those in need of humanitarian aid, affecting ~600,000 people and displacing over 170,000 as a result of destruction and damage to homes and infrastructure. Additionally, this has contributed to another outbreak of cholera. Areas such as North Darfur and the Red Sea have experienced the worst of the crisis, since they now experience a greater risk of famine and starvation in addition to the existing effects of the crisis that other areas also experience.

International Stances and Involvement:

Country	Involvement
United States	The United States does view the situation as a massive humanitarian crisis and has outwardly criticized both the RSF and the SAF, imposing sanctions on both of them, claiming the RSF is committing “genocide”.
United Kingdom	The UK is actively involved in sending humanitarian aid to Sudan, and has co-hosted an international press conference to address the issue with the African Union and the European Union(EU) in April 2025. Additionally, the UK currently acts as a “Penholder” for Sudan in the UNSC.
France	France has publicly called for the SAF and the RSF to stop fighting immediately and unconditionally for the safety of the citizens however their actions have not gone further than that.
China	China has largely remained silent on the issue and have prioritized a pragmatic stance, publicly supporting economic and infrastructural development without humanitarian conditions to the SAF. Additionally, throughout history, China has been a major supplier of arms to Sudan.
Russia	Russia has made its stances publicly clear from the beginning and even through changes. Initially, Russia had supported the RSF for gold mining concessions-related reasons, in recent years, their support has seemingly shifted to backing the SAF for strategic reasons including securing a foothold on the Red Sea. Overall, their reasons for supporting either one of the military groups is to simply expand Russia’s influence in Africa.
South Sudan and Chad	Both nations have taken in Sudanese refugees who cross the border and flee seeking safety and security, however, unless they gain international support and assistance, they will no longer have the resources to give Sudanese refugees the aid they need.

Map as of April 10th 2025:

Control of Terrain in Sudan's Civil War



Map created by Kathryn Tyson © Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute. Sources: Thomas Van Linge; April 9, 2025

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS

Relevant Sources:

Articles:

1. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/power-struggle-sudan>
2. <https://news.un.org/en/focus/sudan-conflict>
3. <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-sudan-what-happening-and-how-help>
4. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sudan/Sudan-under-Bashir>

Videos:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b12lgo_G7Hw
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDfhxMwoyWo>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqIMES53rsY>