

# Sudan's War: The Narrow Path to Peace

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The chaos in Sudan keeps getting worse and threatens the entire region, but it does not receive the coverage it deserves. Eclipsed by the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, the war between the national army, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary unit that grew out of the Janjaweed militias has become increasingly brutal and uncontrollable. The war started in the capital city of Khartoum and has spread to fourteen of Sudan's eighteen states, covering an area nearly three times the size of France. A fierce media war accompanies the fighting on the ground. Many people question the causes of this war. The answer may lie in the history of kleptocratic military rule and the recently shattered revolution. Following the fall of Omar Hassan al-Bashir's regime in 2019, Abdelfattah Al-Burhan, Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council and Commander-in-Chief of the SAF, and Mohamed Hamadan Dagalo, known as "Hemedti," chief of the RSF militia, allied to seize power, undermining the transition to democracy. Now turned enemies, they provide different narratives to justify their war. Al-Burhan claims to be fighting a "dignity war," while Hemedti says he fights to restore democracy—the same values they have wrecked.

Both the SAF and the RSF rely on external support for weapons, money, and advisors, which further inflames the conflict. Consequently, Sudan's war may last a long time due to its complexity, invisibility to the international community, and foreign interference.

## 1. A complex war

Sudan's war isn't a simple two-sided affair between the SAF and RSF. It's a complicated regional, ethnic, and political internal power struggle intertwined with international ramifications. Additionally, the vast geographical extent of the conflict enables the proliferation of all sorts of criminal activities. Sudan covers a large area of 1,861,484 square kilometers. It shares long and porous borders with Egypt, Chad, Libya, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan. Moreover, the ambiguous roles of the U.S. administration and its allies in the Gulf and Africa, along with the inaction of the UN, further complicate the war.

Since Sudan's independence in 1956, the military has dominated politics, with only ten years governed by civilian elected governments<sup>1</sup>. The army's indoctrination began under Colonel Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri<sup>2</sup>, who seized power in 1969 and continued under General Omar Hassan al-Bashir<sup>3</sup>, who took power in 1989. This became more evident when al-Bashir turned the SAF into an instrument of his Islamic regime. Moreover, military businesses gave the SAF the upper hand over the country's resources, mostly utilized for the regime's benefit. Throughout Sudan's history, both military and civilian governments have employed regional or tribal paramilitary militias to fight in southern and western Sudan. However, al-Bashir was the first to institutionalize ethnically based militias when he transformed the Janjaweed in 2013, officially recognizing it as a military force through the Rapid Support Forces Act of 2017. The RSF was attached to the presidency, as required by Hemedti to evade any control by the SAF. This move has sown problematic seeds for the RSF's integration into the SAF, which is a key element of their hostilities today.

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<sup>1</sup> Sudan holds the record for having the highest number of coups d'état in Africa. The [Frequency of Coup Events from 1945 to 2023, by Country](#).

<sup>2</sup> Nimeiri seized power with the help of socialists and communists, a group that called itself the "Free Officers". They defined their cause as Arab nationalism and revolutionary socialism patterned after the ideology of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Bashir seized power with the help of the National Islamic Front of Hassan al-Turabi.

Sudan has an awful record of impunity. Previously wanted persons by the ICC (including former President al-Bashir) have never been held accountable for their crimes in Darfur. The Sudanese transitional authority jailed them in 2019, but it failed to hand them over to the ICC. Both Al-Burhan and Hemedti fear prosecution for their past and ongoing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Losing power means losing immunity, unless a comfortable deal is worked out for them.

Hemedti and the RSF have a history filled with crimes that date back to 2003. The SAF is no less encumbered. In the euphoria of the December 2018 revolution, al-Burhan and Hemedti were allowed to escape justice for their past war crimes. Worse, after the massacre of peaceful protesters at the sit-in outside military headquarters in Khartoum on 3 June 2019, the civilian forces went on to sign the power-sharing declaration with the perpetrators without a firm commitment to accountability. Since the war began in April 2023, the RSF has resumed its exceptionally brutal conduct. Civilians were massacred, and Sudan's main cities (Khartoum, el-Genena, el-Fasher, Nyala, Wad Medani, Sinja, in particular) have been besieged, bombed, and heavily looted. On the other hand, the SAF made fatal airstrikes in Khartoum and Darfur. Today, al-Burhan and Hemedti seek a role in any future deal to protect themselves from prosecution and accountability: war could be that option.

During the thirty years of al-Bashir regime, the political parties experienced serious rifts, including divisions within the Islamic Front itself. However, the divisions that struck the political forces after the December Revolution of 2018 are unprecedented in Sudan's political history<sup>4</sup>. Civilian forces are divided along political, ethnic, regional, and ideological lines. Since the outbreak of war, additional dividing elements have emerged: either supporting or opposing the war and siding with the SAF or the RSF. The Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Tagadom) is a newly formed coalition that already shows signs of division, particularly regarding its rapprochement with the RSF<sup>5</sup>. Tagadom has not succeeded in uniting all the parties; on the contrary, some of them are even further divided today.

Before the eruption of war, Sudan was already rife with militias and arms. Now, the situation is worsened by the repeated divisions within the militias and rebel movements, the return of Sudanese mercenary militias, and the proliferation of criminals who have been set free from prisons. The RSF has been joined by militias from Darfur, Gazira, and Blue Nile states, as well as by warlords returning from Libya. On the other hand, the SAF has formed military groups and organized popular resistance camps to encourage self-defense against the RSF. Some are led by former Islamist figures, these camps are portrayed as a continuation of the former regime.

## 2. An invisible war

The response to Sudan's war has been negligible in terms of political, media, and humanitarian donations. The U.S. and the UN have been slow to appoint dedicated special envoys to Sudan. The Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra, was appointed only at the end of November 2023, while the U.S. envoy, Tom Perriello, was appointed in February 2024. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) could convene a meeting on Sudan at the heads of state and government level only a month after the war began<sup>6</sup>. Despite the brutality of war, the high risk of regional implosion, and the proliferation of militias and jihadists, both internal and external factors could explain such neglect.

Internally, civilians' inability to unite and speak with one voice has weakened their position and visibility, exacerbating the confusion surrounding the causes of the conflict. Is it a war between a general and a warlord? Is it an intra-military conflict? Is it a war waged by elements of the former Muslim Brotherhood regime? Or is it a conflict caused by external meddlers? Another internal factor is the lack

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<sup>4</sup> According to Dr. Alwathiq Kamir, a Sudanese academic and activist. "[Unity of the Unionist: unfinished business](#)", Sudan Tribune, 24 September 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Hadi Idris Yahya, Vice President of Tagaddom, is also the Head of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, a Darfuri rebel movement that claims to be neutral but is accused of supporting the RSF in the el-Fasher battle.

<sup>6</sup> The meeting was convened on 27 May 2023.

of adequate communication. Sudanese and international media have a limited presence on the ground. While some media outlets left Sudan for security reasons, others were asked to leave. In April 2024, the Sudanese authorities suspended three Arab satellite channels for lacking transparency and unprofessional reporting practices<sup>7</sup>. Due to the war, more than forty Sudanese newspapers, radio stations, and television channels ceased operations<sup>8</sup>, allowing social media to become a significant source of news and information.

One of the main external factors is that the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have drawn significant global attention. The few resources deployed, the number of high-level political statements, and media reporting reveal how marginal the Sudan war is. Data from The Economist shows that in 2024, news coverage of Sudan averaged 600 monthly stories compared to 100,000 stories for the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine<sup>9</sup>. Another data provided by Foreign Policy magazine states, “*Since the war in Sudan began over a year ago, President Joe Biden has tweeted about Sudan four times—three of which were about the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum right after fighting broke out*”<sup>10</sup>. Besides, there is global fatigue regarding African conflicts, and Sudan’s war is no exception. Sudan endured the longest civil war in Africa and both the most successful and the failed coups d’état. The current war has triggered fatigue not only among the international community but also within Sudan’s diaspora, which was a powerful force in mobilizing international support to topple al-Bashir’s regime in 2019.

Out of sight, the belligerents freely expanded the bloodshed, committing horrific crimes. Thousands of civilians have been killed, and millions have been uprooted. Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread yet underreported. Infrastructure is ruined. The scale of economic loss further worsens humanitarian conditions. The industrial and agricultural sectors in conflict areas have been wiped out. Mining and farming, the country’s main exports, have plunged significantly. The Sudanese pound has depreciated by 246 percent and continues to fall against the US dollar<sup>11</sup> while the currency’s black market thrives<sup>12</sup>. Incomes have declined or vanished, plunging over two million people into poverty, along with rising food insecurity. Another aspect of the invisibility of Sudan’s war is that humanitarian donations have become meager. The UN humanitarian appeal for Sudan is struggling to raise the targeted funds. Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, admits that the UN has failed to protect and aid: “*It’s very, very difficult to get attention to Sudan*”<sup>13</sup>. Six months after the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan in Paris on 15 April 2024, where thirty-three countries committed to 2.2 billion dollars in aid<sup>14</sup>, the Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 has received 50% of the required aid so far<sup>15</sup>.

In its 2750 (2024) resolution, the UN Security Council stated that “*the situation in Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region*”. However, the UN Security Council issued four resolutions in 2024 regarding the situation in Sudan<sup>16</sup>, but none have been respected. Worse, weapons and ammunition flow into Darfur in flagrant violation of the Darfur arms embargo resolution, which was renewed in September 2024. Despite the overwhelming evidence of arms inflow, the UN Council has applied no sanctions against the belligerents or their arms suppliers. The lack of high-profile, coordinated peace initiatives hinders the achievement of at least a cessation of hostilities. Sudan borders seven fragile countries, and the conflict threatens to spill over their borders, fueling regional

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<sup>7</sup> “[Sudan suspends Arab Satellite Channels for lack of transparency and expired licenses](#)”, Sudan Tribune, 2 April 2024.

<sup>8</sup> “[Hate speech and racism in Sudanese media](#)”, Aljazeera media institute, 2 March 2024.

<sup>9</sup> “[Sudan: the war the world forgot](#)”, The Economist, 24 May 2024.

<sup>10</sup> “[Why Is the World Ignoring a Looming Genocide in Sudan?](#)”, Foreign Policy, 28 May 2024.

<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of the war, [the dollar's price was about 560 Sudanese pounds to reach 1940](#) on 29 June 2024.

<sup>12</sup> A full floating policy of the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound against the US dollar was adopted in march 2022.

<sup>13</sup> “[UN relief chief tells media “very, very difficult to get attention to Sudan”](#)”, OCHA, 7 February 2024.

<sup>14</sup> International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and its Neighbours in Paris, [Financial announcement](#).

<sup>15</sup> [Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024](#) required 2.7 billion US\$ for humanitarian aid, but only 441.4 million US\$ were received as of 31 May 2024.

<sup>16</sup> [Resolution 2750](#), adopted by the Security Council at its 9721st meeting on 11 September 2024. [Resolutions 2736](#), adopted by the Security Council at its 9655th meeting on 13 June 2024. [Resolution 2725](#), adopted by the Security Council at its 9569th meeting on 8 March 2024. [Resolution 2724](#), adopted by the Security Council at its 9568th meeting on 8 March 2024.

rivalries and burdening these vulnerable economies with a large flow of refugees. Sudan already has long-standing disputes with Ethiopia over the Al Fashqa triangle, which is fertile farmland, with Egypt over the Halaib triangle, a mineral resource-rich area, and with South Sudan over the oil-rich Abyei area. On the Red Sea side, Sudan's war may risk depressing the volume of trade passing through the Suez Canal and raising international tensions over this vital waterway.

### 3. A war fueled by foreign meddlers.

Sudan's war is drawing in multiple foreign meddlers, divided between those who claim to be neutral (the U.S. and Saudi Arabia), the SAF supporters (Iran, Turkey, Qatar, Algeria and Egypt), and the RSF backers (mainly the UAE). China is silent, adopting a discreet position. Foreign involvement in Sudan could be motivated by the strategic importance of the Red Sea, economic interests, and power influence. Each country, however, has its own interests and approaches.

The U.S. has sanctioned Sudan's Muslim Brotherhood regime for many years. However, Sudan is not important enough for the U.S. to merit significant efforts, if not for Sudan's rapprochement with Russia and Iran. The U.S. fears the establishment of a Russian or Iranian naval logistics facility on the Red Sea and the presence of the Wagner Group in the country. However, the U.S. counts on the UAE as a Mideast ally for managing the crisis in the region, in addition to its important trade partnership, particularly in the defense industry. This could explain why the U.S. is silent about the UAE's role in Sudan's crisis and why President Biden loosely discussed Sudan while meeting Mohamed Bin Zayed on 23 September 2024<sup>17</sup>. The U.S. has initiated peace negotiations with the Saudis between the SAF and RSF in Jeddah and Geneva, but neither initiative has stopped hostilities.

Russia's involvement in Sudan is ambiguous and duplicitous. Former President al-Bashir initiated a closer relationship with Russia and the Wagner Group when he invited Vladimir Putin to build a naval base at Port Sudan<sup>18</sup> to protect the country from U.S. aggression<sup>19</sup>. Al-Bashir reopened the country to Russian weapons imports and granted the Wagner Group gold mining concessions. Reportedly, up to 85% of Sudan's gold is thought to be sold off the books to the UAE and Russia<sup>20</sup>. After the fall of al-Bashir's regime, the Wagner Group became increasingly involved alongside the RSF, providing military assistance, political advisors, and social media campaigns. The war has deepened this collaboration as the Wagner Group continues to supply arms to the RSF in return for gold. On the other hand, the Kremlin has approached Sudan's government in Port Sudan by recognizing the Sovereignty Council of Sudan as the representative of the Sudanese people. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov visited Port Sudan on 29 April 2024 and provided military and economic assistance<sup>21</sup>. However, this move is still marred by ambiguity as Russia is the only country that abstained from voting on the UN Security Council resolution calling for the RSF to end its siege on El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State<sup>22</sup>. Additionally, Russia is blocking the U.S. proposal to the UN Security Council to sanction two RSF commanders<sup>23</sup>. During Bogdanov's visit, the Russians reportedly revisited the issue of constructing a naval base in Sudan. A naval base on the Red Sea coast would provide Russia with crucial geopolitical positioning in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. Also, the Russian delegation inquired about the SAF's collaboration with Ukrainian special forces<sup>24</sup>. Ukrainian special forces reportedly operate in Sudan alongside the SAF to combat Wagner mercenaries

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<sup>17</sup> The two countries signed the strategic and defense partnership. "[U.S.-UAE Joint Leaders' Statement Dynamic Strategic Partners](#)". The White House, 23 September 2024.

<sup>18</sup> [The agreement between Russia and Sudan](#) on establishing a logistics centre for the Russian Navy in Sudan was signed in Khartoum on July 23, 2019, and in Moscow on December 1, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> [Al-Bashir during his meeting with Putin in Sochi, November 2017 reported saying](#) "We are thankful to Russia for its position on the international arena, including Russia's position in the protection of Sudan. We need protection from the aggressive acts of the United States".

<sup>20</sup> "[Russia is plundering gold in Sudan to boost Putin's war effort in Ukraine](#)", CNN, 29 July 2022.

<sup>21</sup> "[Russia offers 'uncapped' military aid to Sudan](#)", Sudan Tribune, 30 April 2024.

<sup>22</sup> [Resolution 2736](#), adopted by the Security Council at its 9655th meeting on 13 June 2024. The resolution, put forward by the United Kingdom, received 14 votes in favor, none against, with Russia abstaining.

<sup>23</sup> On 27 August 2024, the U.S. formally proposed that an international travel ban and asset freeze be imposed on RSF head of operations Osman Mohamed Hamid Mohamed and RSF West Darfur Commander Abdel Rahman Juma Barkalla.

<sup>24</sup> "[Ukraine's special services 'likely' behind strikes on Wagner-backed forces in Sudan](#)", CNN, 20 September 2023.

aligned with the RSF<sup>25</sup>. Other aspects of Russia's rapprochement could include arms sales and aligning Russian policy with Iran's, which supports the SAF.

Iran is also an important player in the Sudanese conflict. In the 1990s, former President al-Bashir nurtured close ties with Iran, a relationship driven by their mutual isolation from the international arena. However, the Sudanese government suspended diplomatic relations with Iran in 2016 and tilted toward Saudi Arabia and the UAE. After an eight-year rift<sup>26</sup>, Sudan and Iran restored diplomatic and military ties in October 2023, and ambassadors were exchanged<sup>27</sup>. Iran has backed the SAF and started to deliver arms (including Mohajer-6 drones) to the SAF in December 2023. Reportedly, an Iranian cargo plane owned by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has made several trips to Port Sudan<sup>28</sup>. Iran is seeking allies that share its political orientation, in addition to breaking free from diplomatic isolation and trade sanctions. Moreover, it aims to establish a presence on the Red Sea coast to challenge its rivalries.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar compete for influence and aspire to play a broader role beyond the Middle Eastern region. Although Qatar is a common rival for the Saudis and Emirates, they also have their own rivalries. Before the outbreak of the war, through their financial largesse toward Sudan's transitional government, Saudi Arabia and the UAE succeeded in keeping Qatar, Turkey, and Iran away from Sudan while attempting to diminish the influence of political Islam in the country. However, with the onset of the war, their interests have significantly diverged. The UAE is the main backer of the RSF, providing substantial military support not only since the beginning of the war but also for the last four years. Moreover, the UAE has drawn Sudan's neighboring countries into the conflict to side with the RSF. The UAE's supply of weapons and mercenaries transits through complicit countries: Chad, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and the Central African Republic, all of which have received substantial development and military aid from the UAE in return. Despite the UAE's denial, U.N. and other documented reports confirm the UAE's arms supply to the RSF<sup>29</sup>. The UAE aims to combat the Muslim Brotherhood, pursue its ambition of controlling numerous seaports, and play a vital role in global trade by becoming involved in Sudan's war. Besides Sudan's strategic position on the Red Sea coast, the UAE has specific interests in the RSF, which has two dimensions: inside Sudan, to secure large agricultural projects that address the UAE's food insecurity and ensure gold procurement, in addition to controlling ports on the Red Sea. Outside Sudan, it aims to keep RSF fighters in Yemen and Libya while ensuring a supply of mercenaries for possible future regional missions.

The Saudis claim to be neutral in Sudan's conflict and present themselves as credible peace mediators. However, their collaboration with the RSF in Yemen continues. Of course, the reestablished relations between Sudan and Iran raise concerns for Riyadh and add to its Gulf rivals. But the Saudis firstly seek stability and security in the region, particularly in the Red Sea, due to its oil exports and the Vision 2030 projects, including the futuristic NEOM megacity project<sup>30</sup>. In Sudan, the Saudis and Emirates compete for influence, agricultural land, and seaports along the Red Sea coast. The Saudis view the UAE's interests in the Red Sea as a direct encroachment on their backyard. Succeeding in ending the fighting in Sudan would boost the Saudis' image and influence in the Arab and Muslim arenas, giving them a stronger position, that contrasts with the UAE, viewed as supporting the aggressor.

Qatar tacitly voiced its diplomatic support for the SAF while requesting that the international community refrain from interfering in Sudan's internal affairs. Qatar is considered a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and a close ally of the former al-Bashir regime. During the Gulf crisis (2017-

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<sup>25</sup> "[Ukrainian Special Forces Interrogate Wagner Mercenaries in Sudan](#)", Kyiv Post, 5 February 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Sudan broke ties with Iran in 2016, supposedly in solidarity with Saudi Arabia, but in reality, al-Bashir was seeking financial help from the Saudis.

<sup>27</sup> Iranian ambassador Hassan Shah Hosseini was received in Port Sudan and Sudan ambassador Abdelaziz Hassan Saleh in Tehran.

<sup>28</sup> "[Iranian cargo flights arrive in Sudan](#)", Sudan war monitor, 30 January 2024.

<sup>29</sup> "[Full Text: UN Panel of Experts Report on Sudan](#)", Sudan War Monitor, 23 January 2024.

<sup>30</sup> NEOM is a futuristic megacity on the Red Sea coast in northwest Saudi Arabia. The Public Investment Fund funds it for 500 billion dollars. It was launched in 2017 as part of Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 plan to diversify the kingdom's economy away from oil and pivot toward tech and innovation. [Neom webpage](#).

2021), Sudan was among the few Arab countries that resisted Emirati and Saudi pressure to cut ties with Qatar. A victory for the SAF may allow Qatar to regain an essential ally while pursuing mining and agricultural projects, while a victory for the RSF would compromise its relationship with Sudan.

Egypt is traditionally a supporter of the SAF because a military regime governs Egypt. Besides, there is a close relationship with many Sudanese military officers who graduated from the Egyptian Military Academy. Not only did Cairo not condemn al-Burhan's October 2021 coup, but it was openly supportive, believing that military rule would keep the Muslim Brotherhood at bay and help stabilize the country. However, since the eruption of war, Egypt has adopted a low profile despite Hemedti's accusation that the Egyptian Air Force struck its troops in Sennar State<sup>31</sup>. Egypt has taken timid initiatives to resolve the conflict, even though Egypt holds a military cooperation agreement with Sudan<sup>32</sup> and has received the highest number of refugees. Moreover, Egyptians are highly concerned about the security of the Red Sea and the River Nile, particularly regarding the Renaissance Dam crisis. Reasons may lie behind Egypt's acute economic crisis and its dependency on Gulf countries for funding<sup>33</sup>.

Supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey hosts many influential figures from the former Sudanese regime who fled Sudan after the fall of al-Bashir. In 2017, Sudan and Turkey signed a ninety-nine-year lease to restore Suakin Island and develop a naval dock<sup>34</sup> using Qatari funds<sup>35</sup>. Although the deal was formally intended to restore the old Ottoman buildings, Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and even Eritrea viewed it as an encroaching move by Turkey in the Red Sea region<sup>36</sup>. Since the eruption of war, it's reported that Turkey has provided the SAF with Bayraktar TB2 drones via Egypt in September 2023<sup>37</sup>, and Amnesty International stated that "*shipment-level trade data indicates that hundreds of thousands of blank guns have been exported by Turkish companies to Sudan in recent years, along with millions of blank cartridges*"<sup>38</sup>. In supporting the SAF, Turkey may wish to advance the Suakin deal further to pursue its naval port on the Red Sea coast and ensure the return of its Islamist allies.

## Conclusion

Several peace initiatives were launched, and meetings were held in Jeddah, Addis Ababa, Paris, Geneva, Nairobi, Cairo, and Djibouti. In addition, workshops and seminars were organized by European and U.S. governments in France, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and Kenya. Yet, these peace initiatives gained little traction. Multiple factors paralyze peace initiatives, but what lies behind them is a lack of consensus on the causes of the war. For the RSF and Tagadom, the Muslim brothers (considered to have infiltrated the SAF) fired the first bullet. For the SAF and its supporters, it's a failed coup d'état by the RSF. The rhetoric about who started the war is critical because it shapes public opinion, co-opts external supporters, and influences the mediators.

Another key factor hindering peace talks is both parties' insistence on a military solution. The failure of the Geneva talks held in August 2024 raises doubts about the seriousness of both parties in reaching a political settlement. In October 2024, the Sudanese army's deputy commander-in-chief, Lieutenant General Ibrahim Jaber, stated that peace talks may continue, but the army will not cease fighting<sup>39</sup>. Another reason is that foreign meddlers do not bear the destructive costs of the war, making them less

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<sup>31</sup> "[RSF leader accuses Egypt of direct military intervention in Sudan's war](#)", Sudan Tribune, 9 October 2024.

<sup>32</sup> "[Egypt, Sudan sign joint military cooperation](#)" Sudan Tribune, 2 March 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Data from the Central Bank of Egypt indicate that the Gulf countries' share in Egypt's external debt amounts to \$46.2 billion.

<sup>34</sup> Renovation project of 650 million dollars aims to turn the island into a tourism and cultural place. The project was launched in January 2018 by Turkey's state-run aid agency, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA).

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.madote.com/2017/12/turkish-base-in-sudan-problem-for-arab.html>

<sup>36</sup> During Erdogan's visit to Sudan, Turkish, Sudanese and Qatari Army chiefs met in Khartoum on December 27, 2017.

<sup>37</sup> "[The Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones were delivered to Sudan's military](#)", WSJ, 14 October 2023

<sup>38</sup> "[Sudan: Constant flow of arms fuelling relentless civilian suffering in conflict](#)", Amnesty International, 25 July 2024.

<sup>39</sup> "[Sudan army vows to fight on despite peace efforts](#)", BBC, 3 October 2024.

inclined to pursue peace. On the contrary, they keep pouring large quantities of weapons into the country, which reduces the chances of achieving a peaceful solution. A third reason is the numerous and competing mediation platforms. Peace talk platforms and the UN Security Council make decisions, sign agreements and launch recommendations without any practical steps to implement them.

However, the peace process in Sudan requires three elements: civil forces need to reconcile, as the proliferation of actors is causing confusion. Then, they should be given a role in peace talks to ensure that the settlement is not solely military. The second is to stop the flow of weapons into the country; arms suppliers should be held accountable. The third is to opt for an inclusive peace settlement rather than limiting the discussion to the three areas of humanitarian access, protection of civilians, and cessation of hostilities.

In such a bleak situation, one reason for optimism is the resilience of the Sudanese people. While 2.1 million Sudanese have found refuge in neighboring countries, more than 45 million are still living inside Sudan, facing the hardships of war with strength and dignity every day.