



Sudan's Battle for Sovereignty:

Unmasking the Militia of RSF's Campaign of Terror and the Path to Peace

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A massacre committed by the RSF militia at AlJazira State.

Introduction:

The war launched by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia on April 15, 2023, marks one of the darkest chapters in Sudan's modern history. This is not a struggle rooted in democratic ideals or legitimate grievances but a calculated campaign of terror aimed at subjugating the Sudanese people and dismantling the nation's sovereignty. Through mass killings, sexual violence, systematic looting, and the destruction of critical infrastructure, the RSF militia has plunged Sudan into an unprecedented national crisis.

Despite widespread international condemnation, meaningful action remains elusive. The Sudanese government continues to call for urgent global solidarity to address the devastating consequences of this conflict, not only for Sudan but for the stability of the entire region.



Mohamed Hamdan Daglo- The commander of the Janjaweed (2008)

From Janjaweed to RSF: A legacy of Brutality

The RSF militia traces its origins to the notorious Janjaweed militias, which gained infamy during the Darfur conflict in the early 2000s. Their campaigns of ethnic cleansing and genocide led to international outrage and the indictment of Sudan's former president, Omar al-Bashir, and key Janjaweed leaders by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Institutionalised in 2013 as the Border Guard and later rebranded as the RSF in 2017, the militia became a tool of the ousted regime. Under the leadership of Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemeti, the RSF amassed significant military and economic power, leveraging its control over Sudan's gold mining industry and other key sectors. Over time, it evolved into a parallel power centre, undermining Sudan's sovereignty and obstructing its path to democracy.

A Fragile Condition and Road to War

The ousting of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 ignited hopes for democratic reform. Under the August 2019 Constitutional Declaration and the Juba Peace Agreement of 2020, a transitional government was established to prepare the country for democratic elections. In a bid to maintain stability, Hemeti despite his militia's notorious history was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Sovereign Council.

However, the transition was fraught with challenges. The Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) fractured into two factions, the Central Council and the Democratic Bloc weakening civilian leadership and creating a political vacuum that the RSF sought to exploit.

Efforts to unify the two FFC factions culminated in the November 2022 Framework Agreement, intended to accelerate Sudan's democratic transition. However, tensions escalated when the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and key political parties rejected the proposed ten-year timeline for integrating the RSF into the national army, arguing that such a delay would render Sudan's democratic aspirations unattainable. It is inconceivable for a democracy to function with both an army and an autonomous paramilitary force under an elected government.

Recognizing that its ambitions were being curtailed, the RSF resorted to open rebellion. This was not a spontaneous act of desperation but a calculated move to seize control of Sudan and impose its will by force.



The commander of RSF militia with UAE president, the sponsor of the RSF militia

The Role of Foreign Actors in Sudan's Crisis

Sudan's internal conflict has been exacerbated by external interference, particularly from regional powers seeking to manipulate its political landscape for their interests. Chief among these foreign actors is the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has provided the RSF with weapons and financial support.

A growing body of evidence confirms this involvement. The Sudanese government has repeatedly called out the UAE's complicity, a stance supported by the report issued by the UN Panel of Experts confirming that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is supplying weapons and logistics to the RSF Militia (S/2024/65/ 15 January 2024). On the same foot, many media reports by reputable media firms such as BBC, The Guardian, New York Times, Bloomberg, and Wall Street Journal confirmed the same narrative. Additionally, several U.S. lawmakers have urged President Biden to halt the UAE's support for the RSF and to designate the militia as a terrorist organization.

This foreign interference has not only prolonged the conflict but also transformed Sudan into a battleground for competing regional interests, exacerbating the suffering of the Sudanese people. It underscores the urgent need for the international community to hold external actors accountable and to pressure them into ceasing their support for the RSF.



RSF militia Destruction of Khartoum Oil Refinery

A Nation Under Siege: The RSF's Destruction

The RSF's campaign of terror has devastated Sudan's social and economic fabric. In regions like Al-Jazira, Khartoum and Darfur, the militia has looted vital agricultural equipment, destroyed irrigation systems, and terrorized rural communities, causing widespread displacement and food shortages, in addition to intentionally destroying the infrastructure and governmental institutions.

Despite these immense challenges, the Sudanese government has taken significant steps to mitigate the crisis. However, humanitarian access remains restricted due to the RSF's deliberate attacks on aid convoys and its occupation of major supply routes. Immediate and decisive international intervention is crucial to alleviating the suffering of millions of Sudanese civilians.

Challenging the ‘Power Struggle’ Misconception

Some external observers have wrongly framed Sudan’s war as a mere power struggle. This oversimplification distorts the reality of a militia’s violent attempt to overthrow a legitimate government.

The Sudanese government’s response to the RSF’s rebellion is not about securing power but about defending national sovereignty and protecting civilians from an armed group that has engaged in systematic atrocities. Framing the conflict as a military rivalry diminishes the gravity of the RSF’s crimes and distracts from the urgent need for justice and accountability.

Failed Mediation and Flawed Peace Efforts

The RSF’s repeated violations of ceasefire agreements have undermined international mediation efforts. Despite numerous attempts at negotiation, including the Jeddah Declaration of May 2023, the RSF has refused to abide by its commitments, instead using ceasefires to regroup and escalate violence.

The Sudanese government’s rejection of U.S.-led ceasefire talks in Geneva on August 14, 2024, reflects its well-founded concerns over flawed mediation efforts. The involvement of the UAE, an open backer of the RSF, has cast doubt on the impartiality of these negotiations and their ability to yield a lasting resolution.

Charting Sudan's Path to Peace

The Sudanese government remains steadfast in its commitment to peace and democratic transition. Its vision for national recovery includes:

- 1- Decisive Military Victory Against the RSF Militia: Sudan is determined to restore its sovereignty by ending the RSF's aggression against its people and institutions.
- 2- Establishing a Technocratic Civilian Government: A neutral, nonpartisan transitional authority is crucial for steering Sudan towards free and fair elections.
- 3- Ensuring Accountability for War Crimes: Justice for victims is a non-negotiable priority. The international community must support efforts to prosecute RSF leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- 4- Ending Foreign Interference: Sudan calls on the global community to exert pressure on the UAE to cease its destabilizing support.

These steps are vital to not only ending the conflict but also laying the foundation for long-term peace and stability.

The Urgent Call for International Solidarity

Sudan's struggle against the RSF militia is more than a domestic conflict; it is a battle for sovereignty, security, and the future of an entire nation. The government calls upon the international community to move beyond rhetorical condemnation and take concrete action, including:

- Designating the RSF as a terrorist organization to cut off its support networks.
- Imposing sanctions on the RSF and its backers, particularly those who continue to fuel the conflict.
- Supporting Sudan's democratic transition by assisting in reconstruction efforts and ensuring a peaceful political transition.

The road ahead is fraught with challenges, but Sudan's resilience remains unshaken. The unwavering spirit of the Sudanese people in the face of adversity is a testament to their determination to reclaim their country's sovereignty. With genuine international support, Sudan can emerge from this crisis and rebuild a future founded on peace, justice, and democracy.

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