

2024

# VičMUN

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL STUDY GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

In April last year Sudan, a North-African country, saw the start to a gruesome civil war between the army and a powerful paramilitary group in a vicious struggle for power. After a military coup in 2021 Sudan's government was run by Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the head of the armed forces and in effect the country's president and his deputy and leader of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as "Hemedti". The war broke out due to a disagreement on the move towards civil rule and the inclusion of the RSF into the national army. Shooting between the two forces, the army and the RSF, began on April the 15th after the redeployment of several RSF units in a move that the army deemed threatening. This fighting is the latest episode in bouts of tension that followed the 2019 ousting of long-serving President Omar al-Bashir, who came to power in a coup in 1989. There were huge street protests calling for an end to his near-three decade rule and the army mounted a coup to get rid of him. But civilians continued to campaign for the introduction of democracy. A joint military-civilian government was then established but that was overthrown in another coup in October 2021, when Gen Burhan took over. And since then the rivalry between Gen Burhan and Gen Dagalo has intensified. A framework deal to put power back in the hands of civilians was agreed in December 2022 but talks to finalise the details failed. When it began, the conflict appeared to be around the control of key installations. However, much of it is now happening in urban areas and civilians have become unwitting victims. The RSF captured much of the capital, Khartoum, and Darfur. The military controls most of the north and the east, including the key Red Sea port of Port Sudan. In a major blow to the army, the RSF seized the strategic city of Wad Madani in December, along with much of the surrounding Gezira state. Hundreds and thousands of civilians were forced to flee the city, which had become a hub for humanitarian services and a refuge for those who had escaped conflict in other parts of the country. In February, the army recaptured the centre of Omdurman, one of three cities along the River Nile that form Sudan's wider capital, Khartoum. It regained control of the state broadcaster there - a symbolic breakthrough for the army.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-59035053>

# HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

As with any conflict the civil war has caused many human rights issues and violations in Sudan, the most concerning of which are the following:

## Indiscriminate attacks

Many civilians were caught in the crossfire as members of the SAF and RSF, often using explosive weapons with wide area effects, launched frequent attacks in and from densely populated civilian neighbourhoods. People were consequently killed inside their homes, or while desperately searching for food and other necessities. Others were killed and injured while fleeing from the violence, and in places where they had sought safety. In most cases, it was difficult to establish which side fired the munitions that killed and injured civilians.

On 15 April, the day clashes erupted, Ala' Fawzi al-Mardi, a doctor, was killed and her mother, Zeinab Ahmad Othman, injured by a stray bullet, in their home in Hay al-Manara in Omdurman.

On 24 April, Suhair Abdallah al-Bashir, a lawyer, and her two brothers-in-law, Mohammed and Omar al-Rayeh, were killed by explosive ordnance. The munitions struck near their vehicle as they were leaving their home in the centre of Khartoum, near the foreign affairs ministry.

On 18 May, Khadija Mustafa Osman Said, her sons, Haydar Hamed Guma Khater and Hameid Hamed Guma Khater, and their neighbour, Mustafa Ali Hamdan, were killed when munitions hit their house in the Imtidad neighbourhood, near the centre of Nyala, South Darfur.

On 21 May, at least seven people were killed and 12 injured in one strike on the Ministry of Agriculture, in the northern part of the al-Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina in West Darfur, where many residents had taken refuge after leaving their homes.

On 14 June, dozens of civilians were killed and injured, including Gamra Mustafa, who was hit by two bullets while inside her home in the al-Madaris neighbourhood of El Geneina. On the same day, in the nearby neighbourhood of Hay al-Riadh, seven-year-old Adnan Is'haq was killed inside his home by a stray bullet which struck him in the chest.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/>

## Unlawful attacks and killings

Civilians were killed and injured in targeted attacks in many parts of the country including Khartoum, but particularly in West Darfur.

On 13 May, RSF members broke into the Mar Girgis (St Georges) Coptic Church complex in the Bahri area of Khartoum. They shot and injured five members of the clergy and stole money and a gold cross.

On 19 May, Peter Kiano, a 60-year-old maths and engineering teacher from South Sudan, who had lived and worked in Khartoum for many years, was shot dead by RSF soldiers outside a restaurant, in the southern outskirts of Khartoum.

Tensions increased in Darfur, and towns, cities and villages in West Darfur including El Geneina, Misterei and Tandelti were attacked by heavily armed Arab militias, supported by RSF fighters. Many ethnic Masalit people, mostly men and older boys, were deliberately killed and injured in ethnically motivated attacks.

On 25 April, Ibrahim Adam Mohamed and his brother Mohamed, were shot and injured by Arab militia members while sitting outside their home in the Bouhaira neighbourhood of El Geneina.

On 14 May, Adam Zakaria Is'haq, a medical doctor and human rights defender who worked with the Darfur Network for Human Rights, was killed together with 13 other people at the Medical Rescue Centre, a health clinic in the Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina.

On 17 May, farmers Abderrahman Ibrahim Ahmed and Ali Is'haq Ali Bashir were deliberately shot and killed by Arab militia fighters in Tandelti, north-west of El Geneina, close to the Chadian border. Five other civilians, including Mariam Mohamed Ahmad and her cousin Hassan Ibrahim were killed in the same incident.

On 28 May, dozens of civilians were killed in Misterei, a town south-west of El Geneina, when clashes broke out between RSF and allied militias, and Masalit armed groups. RSF fighters killed five brothers inside their home.

On 14 June, the governor of West Darfur, Khamis Abakar, also the leader of the Sudanese Alliance armed group, was killed in El Geneina. He had been taken into custody by RSF fighters earlier that day.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/>

## Sexual and gender-based violence

Scores of women and girls, some as young as 12, were subjected to conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, by members of the warring sides, mainly RSF and allied militias. Most of the survivors were Sudanese, and some were nationals of other countries. They were abducted and subjected to sexual violence in their homes or when they went out to look for food or other necessities. In one case, RSF members abducted a group of 24 women and girls and took them to a hotel in Nyala where they were held in conditions amounting to sexual slavery for several days during which they were raped by several RSF members.

In another case, on 22 June, three plain-clothes armed Arab men assaulted a 25-year-old woman and forced her into the civil records building in the al-Jamarik neighbourhood of El Geneina, where they gang-raped her.

Many survivors had no access to necessary medical and psycho-social support because of the limited protection, rehabilitation and livelihood services available to them. Many health facilities had been damaged and looted in the conflict, and medical personnel had fled. Time-sensitive post-rape care was limited or non-existent; survivors were unable or too afraid to report assaults and seek medical care. In addition, communication networks were weak or cut off in some areas and movement was severely restricted by the conflict.<sup>4</sup>

## Right to truth, justice and reparation

In July, the ICC Prosecutor said his office had started investigating recent attacks in Darfur. Three people, including former president Omar al-Bashir, who faced ICC charges were still to be handed over to the ICC for trial.

On 11 October, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that established an independent international fact-finding mission for Sudan. The mechanism was mandated to investigate and establish the facts, circumstances and root causes of all alleged human rights violations and abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law, including those committed against refugees, and related crimes in the context of the ongoing armed conflict.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/>

## Internally displaced people's rights

The conflict was devastating for civilians and the situation continued to deteriorate. Over 5.8 million people were internally displaced since April, making Sudan the scene of the largest displacement crisis in the world. Over 4.5 million of these were displaced between 15 April and 19 October alone, according to the UN. Among those displaced were refugees from other countries, especially Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan, who had sought refuge in Sudan. The humanitarian crisis faced by internally displaced people was exacerbated by acute shortages of food, water, medicines and fuel. The price of essential goods increased dramatically due to disrupted trade routes and limited access, making them unaffordable to the population.<sup>6</sup>

## Refugees' and migrants' rights

Since 15 April, about 1.4 million had fled to neighbouring Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan, where they lived in dire conditions. The situation was exacerbated for some asylum seekers when they were denied entry to some countries, putting them at risk of return to the dangers they had tried to escape. The Egyptian authorities required all Sudanese nationals to obtain an entry visa issued by the Egyptian consular office in the Sudanese cities of Wadi Halfa or Port Sudan.<sup>2</sup> On 29 May, Egypt also introduced the additional requirement of security clearance for boys and men aged between 16 and 50 before they could enter Egypt (see Egypt entry).<sup>7</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The UN and other major humanitarian groups have issued several dire warnings about the situation in Sudan, accusing the international community of "forgetting" the African country. For instance, International Crisis Group has called diplomatic efforts to end the war "lacklustre", while Amnesty International labelled the world's response "woefully inadequate". Some international bodies have allocated funding to Sudan since the war started. In April, French President Emmanuel Macron announced a €2bn (\$2.1bn; £1.7bn) aid pledge from the international community. Foreign countries have also attempted to organise negotiations between the army and RSF. There have been several rounds of peace talks in

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/sudan/report-sudan/>

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain - but all have failed. The African Union and UN have a shared priority - to establish a ceasefire and bring the army and the RSF together.

## SOURCES AND ADITIONAL RESEARCH

Below are provided the links used as sources for this study guide, and additional sources that I believe will be helpful to you as you do your own research for the debate, I suggest looking through them. You can also find all previous resolutions made by the UN on this topic in the UN digital library.

[World Report 2024: Sudan | Human Rights Watch](#)

[Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission outlines extensive human rights violations, international crimes, urges protection of civilians | OHCHR](#)

[Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan | OHCHR](#)

[Sudan: Horrific violations and abuses as fighting spreads - report | OHCHR](#)

[Sudan: Human rights situation | OHCHR](#)

[Humanitarian Calamity, Human Rights Crisis Looming Large in Sudan as Fighting Intensifies, Security Council Warned | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases](#)

[Sudan war: Rights probe demands wider arms embargo to end 'rampant' abuse | UN News](#)

[Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission outlines extensive human rights violations, international crimes, urges protection of civilians \[EN/AR\]](#)

[Human rights in Sudan Amnesty International](#)

[Sudan crisis explained: What's behind the latest fighting and how it fits nation's troubled past](#)

[Sudan war: A simple guide to what is happening](#)

[Sudan conflict: Hospital attacks potential war crimes, BBC told](#)

[Sudan conflict: Ethnic cleansing committed in Darfur, UK says](#)

[Sudan conflict: Possible genocide committed in Darfur, HRW says](#)

[Sudan: One year since conflict began, response from international community remains woefully inadequate](#)

[Sudan rejects UN call for peace force to protect civilians](#)

[UN arms embargo violated in Sudan, investigation finds](#)