

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1000
Land:	Sudan
Kilde:	Freedom House
Titel:	Freedom in the World 2026 – Sudan
Udgivet:	19. marts 2026
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	8. april 2026

Freedom in the World 2026 - Sudan

Overview

After military commanders and a prodemocracy protest movement ousted the repressive regime of longtime President Omar al-Bashir and his National Congress Party (NCP) in 2019, Sudan was ruled by a transitional government in which military and civilian leaders agreed to share power until national elections could be held. The process was thrown into turmoil in late 2021 when the military leadership dissolved the transitional government in a coup and cracked down on the ensuing prodemocracy protests. In April 2023, hostilities broke out between the regular Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group originally formed by al-Bashir, and the fighting quickly spread across the country. The ongoing conflict has been characterized by extreme levels of violence, including reported atrocities against non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur, and has led more generally to the mass killing and displacement of civilians.

Key Developments in 2025

- The conflict between the SAF, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti, continued throughout the year, killing more than 17,000 people between January and early December. More than seven million people were internally displaced and more than four million others had taken refuge abroad as of December.
- The SAF secured control over Khartoum and surrounding areas during the first half of the year, consolidating its position in central and eastern Sudan. However, the RSF worked to strengthen its own territory, anchored in the Darfur region of western Sudan. In October, the RSF captured El-Fasher, the state capital of North Darfur, after a long siege, and more than 6,000 residents were allegedly killed within three days. Witnesses reported summary executions, torture, sexual violence, and other abuses against civilians, and satellite images showed mass graves in the affected areas.
- Later in the year, the RSF pushed into North and West Kordofan States, threatening SAF control over the cities of El-Obeid and Babanusa.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

In October 2021, General al-Burhan staged a coup, declared a state of emergency, and dissolved the Transitional Sovereign Council (TSC) and transitional government that had been in place since the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir's regime in 2019. The SAF detained several civilian government leaders, including Prime Minister Abdulla Hamdok. That November, al-Burhan reconstituted the Sovereign Council with himself as chair; Hamdok was subsequently reinstated as prime minister after signing an agreement with al-Burhan that provided for the release of political detainees, a new

technocratic government, and the restructuring of the Empowerment Removal Committee (ERC). However, it also retained the Sovereign Council's "oversight" role and excluded the civilian political coalition Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) from participation in the Sovereign Council. These provisions allowed the military and al-Burhan to maintain significant control over the transitional government.

In January 2022, Prime Minister Hamdok resigned following weeks of protests by the FFC, the Umma Party, and Sudanese people across the country who demanded a fully civilian government. In December 2022, the military signed a framework agreement to enable cooperation with civilian groups on forming a new transitional government. In early 2023, however, the signing of a transition deal was postponed twice due to disagreements between the SAF and the RSF over security reforms. In April, disputes between al-Burhan and RSF leader Hemedti over the integration of the RSF into the SAF sparked armed clashes in Khartoum as the two commanders vied for control. The fighting escalated into the broader civil conflict that continued throughout 2025.

In May 2025, al-Burhan appointed legal expert Kamil Idris to serve as Sudan's first prime minister since Hamdok's resignation. The RSF established an alternative government in July, with a presidential council chaired by Hemedti and civilian politician Mohamed Hassan al-Taishi serving as prime minister.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

The former parliament was dissolved as part of the 2019 revolution. That year's interim constitution called for a 300-seat Transitional Legislative Council (TLC), which was to hold office until elections could be organized. However, protracted disputes over the formation of a civilian-led government delayed the TLC's creation, as did the outbreak of civil war in 2023. The legislative council had yet to be established at the end of 2025.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

0 / 4

In September 2021, the Ministry of Justice presented and held public consultations on a draft electoral commission law. However, the draft law was not enacted, and an electoral commission was not created prior to the October 2021 coup. The civil war that broke out in 2023 put a halt to legislative processes, and it appeared unlikely that an electoral commission would be created while hostilities continued.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

0 / 4

The 2019 interim constitution guaranteed the right to form political parties, subject to legal regulation. Security forces arrested leaders and members of political parties, civilian resistance committees, and the FFC following the 2021 coup, including the heads of the Sudanese Congress Party and the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, as well as a leader in the Umma Party. The detained

politicians were held incommunicado and allegedly tortured before being gradually released, with the last leaving prison in 2022.

Since the April 2023 onset of civil war, civilian political parties have effectively been unable to operate in Sudan. Although some have called for the formation of broad antiwar coalitions, such projects have been stymied by military interference, significant fragmentation among the parties, and an overall lack of coordination that has undermined their influence.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

0 /
4

Sudan has not held elections since the end of al-Bashir's 30-year rule in 2019; changes in leadership have been the result of political negotiations or military intervention. Plans to conduct balloting have been disrupted repeatedly in recent years, by obstacles including the 2021 coup and the outbreak of civil conflict in April 2023. As of 2025, it appeared unlikely that any elections, with or without opposition participation, would be held so long as the war continued.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

0 /
4

The country has a long history of military interventions in political affairs. The October 2021 coup was led by the SAF and supported by the RSF and leaders of armed rebel movements that had signed the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement (JPA). It followed a coup attempt that September, when soldiers loyal to the former regime tried to seize control of the state media building.

Tensions between the SAF and the RSF emerged in 2022 and gradually intensified in early 2023 as both sides took part in negotiations over a transition to civilian leadership. Armed clashes broke out in April, and fighting escalated and continued through 2025 as the rival groups fought to assert political and military control across the country. The SAF and the RSF have each received support from foreign powers, including Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), respectively.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

0 /
4

Sudan's political system has traditionally favored the predominantly Arab and Muslim ethnic groups concentrated around Khartoum, and marginalized other groups, particularly those in Darfur and the southern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The 2019 interim constitution committed Sudan to a decentralized system in which citizens would be free to exercise their rights without discrimination based on race, religion, gender, regional affiliation, or other such grounds. A new draft constitution proposed by the Sudan Bar Association in 2022 featured the same provisions.

Women played an influential role in the 2019 protest movement and have since demanded greater representation at all levels of government and in peace negotiations. Although two women were named to the TSC in 2019, one resigned in 2021 to protest the military's dominance of the council. LGBT+ people are politically marginalized and face serious deterrents to open participation, including a criminal ban on same-sex sexual relations.

Since the fighting between the SAF and the RSF began in April 2023, civilians' ability to participate in Sudanese politics has been severely curtailed, and the little political power held by

women and members of other marginalized groups was effectively eliminated.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

0 / 4

The country lacks any elected executive or legislative body. Since the civil conflict between the RSF and the SAF erupted in April 2023, administrative functions across the country have been fractured as the two sides seek to assert control over the territories they occupy.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

0 / 4

There are no effective anticorruption laws or institutions in Sudan, which is a signatory to but has not ratified the UN Convention against Corruption and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption.

Following the October 2021 coup, General al-Burhan suspended the ERC, which was created by transitional authorities to investigate financial crimes by former regime officials in 2019. A new anticorruption commission called for under a law approved by the TSC in April 2021 has yet to be established.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

0 / 4

The interim constitution required members of the TSC and TLC, the cabinet, and state governors to file disclosures about their personal assets, but there are no clear mechanisms for enforcement, and compliance is reportedly poor in practice.

Important military and government figures, including RSF leader Hemedti, are often accused of secretly amassing wealth through the illicit exploitation of Sudan's natural resources, but state institutions lack the capacity and power to document or punish malfeasance.

Add Q

Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?

-4

Former President al-Bashir faces outstanding arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Darfur, where an insurgency by members of local ethnic minority groups began in 2003. The transitional government reached an agreement with Darfuri rebel groups in 2020 to turn over to the ICC five Sudanese suspects accused of war crimes, including al-Bashir, and signed the JPA with the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) alliance and another rebel group, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) Minni Minnawi faction, but terms for al-Bashir's extradition to the ICC remained under discussion.

Despite the 2020 agreements, localized ethnic or communal conflicts and accompanying violence surged across Sudan even before the outbreak of civil war between the RSF and the SAF in April 2023. Hundreds of people died and hundreds of thousands were displaced in communal clashes

between tribes in the Blue Nile, Kordofan, and Darfur areas. The government responded by deploying additional security forces, declaring states of emergency, imposing curfews, and engaging in peacebuilding initiatives. However, government interventions at times worsened the humanitarian situation, as security forces detained and abducted people arbitrarily. The RSF had a long history of committing violence against non-Arab civilians in Darfur.

Since the onset of the civil war, the RSF and allied militias have carried out concerted attacks on non-Arab populations in Darfur, particularly the Massalit, in an attempt to expel those groups from certain areas. Sexual violence against women and girls in Darfur has been pervasive. The RSF has also reportedly burned neighborhoods, health clinics, and humanitarian aid offices, preventing survivors of its attacks from accessing help. Reports indicated that over 19,000 people were killed in the first year of the conflict, most of them in Darfur, and the death toll has continued to rise rapidly.

In October 2025, the RSF allegedly killed more than 6,000 people—repeatedly targeting members of non-Arab ethnicities—when it captured the state capital of North Darfur, El-Fasher, after a lengthy siege. More than 100,000 others were forcibly displaced from city and its environs by December, and reports of sexual violence were widespread. Separately, scores of civilians were killed in December after conflict escalated among the SAF, the RSF, and the RSF-allied Sudan People’s Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N) in the Kordofan region. The United Nations and other humanitarian actors warned that in addition to the killings, civilians in areas that were besieged or isolated by fighting were at risk of famine.

Score Change: The score declined from –3 to –4 due to evidence that the RSF committed ethnically motivated mass killings, sexual violence, and forcible displacement of non-Arab civilians after seizing control of El-Fasher in North Darfur State.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? | 0 / 4

After the civil war broke out in April 2023, both the RSF and the SAF were accused of attempting to curtail journalists’ activities. Media personnel have since faced harassment, arrest, and in some cases lethal violence in the course of their work. At least nine journalists and media workers were killed in Sudan during 2025, for a total of 16 over the course of the conflict, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Media outlets and journalists in the country are effectively unable to operate independently and safely, and many outlets have been shuttered or destroyed.

The 2018 Law on Combating Cybercrimes, which increased prison sentences for crimes such as disseminating false information, remains in effect.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? | 2 / 4

Sudan’s population is mostly Muslim, with a small Christian minority. The 2019 interim constitution guaranteed freedom of worship and did not give Islam an official status. The TSC that year pledged to issue clear guidelines for those seeking permission to build new churches, and Christians welcomed the appointment of a Coptic Christian judge to one of the TSC’s civilian seats.

In 2020, the transitional government adopted the Miscellaneous Amendments Act, which repealed the criminalization of apostasy, abolished corporal punishment for blasphemy, and permitted non-Muslims to trade and consume alcohol, among other provisions.

Constitutional and legal protections for religious freedom have not been upheld by the SAF or the RSF during the civil war, as worshippers and places of worship have been subjected to shelling, looting, and other violence.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?

0 / 4

Prior to 2019, the university system was dominated by NCP-affiliated officials, and these were replaced with more independent figures after al-Bashir's ouster. Following the 2021 coup, authorities arrested deans and professors at Al-Gezira University who had criticized the military takeover. In addition, security forces attacked student protesters on university campuses. In November of that year, several universities closed their campuses and suspended classes, citing political instability.

Many more of the country's schools and universities closed in April 2023 due to the civil conflict. The war has since disrupted learning across different levels of education, and some data suggest that over three-quarters of school-age children were out of school by the beginning of the 2025 academic year. With millions of people displaced from their homes by fighting, many educational facilities have been used as shelters or otherwise repurposed.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?

1 / 4

The 2019 interim constitution affirmed the right to freedom of expression and privacy, including citizens' right to engage in private correspondence without interference. Restrictive laws remained in place, however, and by 2020 transitional authorities were arresting and harassing individuals for critical speech. After the 2021 coup, al-Burhan issued a decree expanding security forces' and intelligence agencies' powers to conduct home raids, surveil citizens, and detain suspects. Neighborhood resistance committees and human rights groups argued that the decree violated citizens' rights to privacy and due process. Since 2023, widespread violence associated with the civil conflict has further deterred unfettered discussion and criticism of the RSF and the SAF among ordinary citizens.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? **0 / 4**

The TSC reaffirmed the right to assemble in the 2019 interim constitution, and citizens regularly participated in demonstrations in the subsequent years, calling for more rapid democratic reforms and the advancement of women's rights, among other demands. However, security personnel routinely responded to acts of protest with lethal violence. Women protesters reported being raped by security officers, who also blocked demonstrators' access to medical care. To prevent demonstrations in the wake of the 2021 coup, the military shut down the internet, blocked bridges and roads in Khartoum, arrested organizers, and banned trade unions. Although large prodemocracy

protests were held through early 2023, most demonstrations ceased after the civil conflict began, as activists and organizers fled the fighting.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

1 / 4

After the 2019 ouster of al-Bashir, the transitional government loosened the restrictions and impediments that had been placed on civil society organizations. However, conditions deteriorated after the outbreak of the civil war in April 2023. Aid workers and employees of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been subjected to lethal violence and other attacks, including sexual assault. Many have been forced to flee, and numerous organizations have relocated or suspended operations in the country. Although mediation and pressure from international actors has helped humanitarian groups gain access to some areas of Sudan, aid efforts were undermined during 2025 by cuts in funding from the United States and some European governments. With many international organizations struggling to work in Sudan, millions of displaced people have had to rely on local community groups for health, food, and safety services.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

0 / 4

Independent trade unions were largely absent under al-Bashir; his government banned them after taking power in 1989, and instead co-opted the Sudan Workers' Trade Unions Federation (SWTUF). The independent Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), founded in late 2016, was instrumental in the protest movement that led to al-Bashir's ouster, and it later played a role in the transitional government.

The 2019 interim constitution affirmed workers' right to form and join trade unions. As part of the transitional government's efforts to dismantle the former ruling party and affiliated institutions, it controversially dissolved the SWTUF and the Sudan Journalists Union in late 2019. The Trade Unions Law of 2021 laid the groundwork for union organizing. However, in February 2021, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) condemned the government's arrest and detention of union leaders and the creation of government-appointed steering committees to oversee union affairs.

Following the October 2021 coup, al-Burhan dissolved all trade unions and professional associations. Multiple union and association leaders were detained and assaulted during the anticoup protests that continued into 2023. Labor activism has largely been suppressed since the outbreak of the civil war, with workers and union members reportedly subjected to a variety of physical and economic abuses by both the SAF and the RSF, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced labor.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?

0 / 4

The interim constitution envisaged the establishment of an independent judiciary to replace the politically influenced judiciary of the al-Bashir era. Following the 2021 coup, however, al-Burhan installed Abdulaziz Fath al-Rahman Abdeen, a deputy chief justice under al-Bashir, as chief justice; Abdeen then issued a directive ordering the reinstatement of all judges who had been dismissed by the ERC during the transitional period. In August 2025, al-Burhan appointed Wahbi Mohamed

Mukhtar as president of the Constitutional Court, a post he had previously held under al-Bashir. The court itself had been dormant since the terms of its last members expired in 2020.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? | 0 / 4

Although the interim constitution enshrined the right to due process, it also contained a provision allowing the government to invoke emergency powers and suspend some due process rights. In practice, security forces have continued to engage in arbitrary arrests and detentions since the 2021 coup and the 2023 outbreak of civil war. Political detainees, activists, and journalists have been held incommunicado without access to legal representation.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? | 0 / 4

In 2020, the transitional government formally banned forced confessions and the “infliction of torture” on suspects, and abolished the penalty of public flogging for some criminal offenses. However, demonstrators protesting the 2021 coup faced lethal violence and mistreatment by security forces. Political detainees who were subsequently released reported experiencing torture or inhumane treatment while in custody.

More than 150,000 people are estimated to have been killed since civil war broke out in April 2023. Both the SAF and the RSF have been regularly accused of indiscriminate shelling and other attacks on populated areas, as well as extrajudicial killings and physical abuse of civilians.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? | 0 / 4

The 2019 interim constitution committed the transitional government to upholding the human rights of all citizens without discrimination and ensuring their equal treatment under the law. The charter also called for accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of human rights. However, extreme violence based on racial or ethnic identity remains common, particularly in Darfur since the outbreak of the civil war.

Despite the guarantees of equal treatment in the interim constitution and some legal improvements adopted in 2020, women continue to face disadvantages in many areas of the law, and perpetrators of widespread crimes against women—including during armed conflicts—have generally enjoyed impunity.

Same-sex relations are illegal in Sudan, though 2020 reforms eliminated flogging and execution as potential punishments under an antisodomy law that has been used to persecute LGBT+ people. Discrimination and violence against LGBT+ people remain common.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? | 0 / 4

The 2019 interim constitution affirms freedom of movement and the right to travel—including overseas—for all citizens. These rights are still impeded in practice by state security forces and other armed groups across the country. The civil war has severely limited individuals' movement since 2023. Although many have been able to flee combat zones, their options are largely dependent on security conditions imposed by armed groups. As of December 2025, more than seven million people were displaced within Sudan, while another four million had sought refuge outside the country.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

0 /
4

Weak land rights have been a chronic driver of conflict in Sudan. In a succession of opaque deals, al-Bashir's regime leased large parcels of arable land to foreign countries for export crop production. In some cases, local populations were forced from their land or had their water supplies depleted.

The 2019 interim constitution guaranteed the right to own property and protected citizens from expropriation by the state without compensation, but such safeguards have been widely disregarded during the civil war. Fighters from both sides have looted and occupied civilian properties, sometimes as a form of retaliation after taking control of areas previously held by their opponents. Although property destruction and theft are not uniform across the country, reports indicate large-scale destruction in Khartoum and other major civilian centers.

Women are denied equal rights to property and inheritance under laws based on Sharia (Islamic law) and through discriminatory customary practices.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

1 /
4

Although the transitional government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2021, it failed to endorse provisions recognizing equality in marriage, divorce, and parenting, which would conflict with the country's Sharia-based laws. Among other restrictions, a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man, and adultery can be punished with execution by stoning.

Sexual violence against women remains a major problem. Although female genital mutilation was criminalized in 2020, the practice is still widespread. UN investigators have reported a high rate of domestic and sexual violence in households, as well as sexual violence against women in informal jobs, displaced and refugee women outside of camps, children in Quranic schools, and people with disabilities. High rates of forced, arranged, and child marriages have also been reported.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

0 /
4

Economic mismanagement and corruption under al-Bashir's regime led to mass unemployment and high prices for basic goods, which left residents more vulnerable to exploitation. Such bleak economic conditions were among the root causes of the 2019 revolution. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons remain especially vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation, including by armed groups involved in the civil war and criminal networks engaged in human trafficking. Some armed forces in the country have allegedly recruited children as fighters.

The war and related destruction of infrastructure and health care facilities have devastated economic activity and led to famine and outbreaks of cholera in some areas.