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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Sudan – January to June 2024

30 June 2024

22 January 2024

General situation and ongoing fighting

On 18.01.24, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, commander of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), met with leading members of IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) in Kampala to discuss his vision for ending the conflict in the country. He also met with the UN Special Envoy to Sudan and the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa and reaffirmed his readiness to engage in negotiations. Due to Dagalo's participation in the IGAD meeting, Sudan's government withdrew its participation and announced it was suspending its membership in the IGAD organisation.

On 20.01.24, ten civilians were reportedly killed by a landmine in the north of the country. Twelve people were allegedly killed in airstrikes carried out in the RSF-controlled region of El Zurug (North Darfur) on 17.01.24. Meanwhile, fighting in and around Khartoum has led to power cuts and the interruption of water supply.¹

Humanitarian situation

According to the UN, organisations are considering transporting their aid supplies via a new route through South Sudan in order to reach as many parts of the country as possible. It says that currently, the majority of aid deliveries are being coordinated and distributed via Port Sudan. Many deliveries are allegedly later being looted and aid workers are being attacked. The organisations hope that the new route will make the distribution process less bureaucratic and more direct. With the takeover of Wad Mandani by the RSF in December 2023, aid organisations have lost important access to a humanitarian hub (cf. BN of 18.12.23 and 08.01.24). This further restricts the possibilities for aid deliveries. Healthcare is severely limited, particularly in the Khartoum region, and only a few healthcare facilities are operational. At the beginning of 2024, for the first time in 90 days, some aid organisations were granted a limited number of travel permits to access areas controlled by the RSF.

The UN expert on human rights in Sudan, Radhouane Nouicer, expressed concern about ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. In particular, the displacement of the civilian population, the increasing human rights violations and the growing famine needed to be stopped. He said an increase in ethnically motivated and sexual violence and reports of the recruitment of children were also worrying. According to a recent UN report, 10,000 to 15,000 people were killed by members of the RSF and Arab militias in El Geneina (West Darfur) for ethnically motivated reasons in the course of 2023 alone.²

29 January 2024

Ongoing fighting

On 22.01.24, eight to 11 people were reportedly killed and others injured in airstrikes. The targets of the attacks were Rapid Support Forces (RSF) locations, and the bombings had accidentally hit the villages of Um Sukina, Batikha, Taiba and Um Samoua in West Muglad (West Kordofan State), according to a report. It said that heavy fighting had continued in West Kordofan State in the days following 22.01.24, particularly in Babanusa.³

Humanitarian situation

Since the increase in fighting in December 2023 and the attack on the once-safe haven of Wad Madani (cf. BN of 18.12.23), the country has had around 6.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). In addition, there are more than 3.8 million people who were already counted as IDPs prior to the conflict. With a total of over 9 million IDPs, Sudan is currently the country with the highest number of internally displaced persons in the world. Almost half of the IDPs who are affected by the current conflicts are minors. Up to 14 million children across the country are dependent on humanitarian aid, and almost 7 million children have no access to educational facilities due to the conflict. A large proportion of the total population is affected by a severe malnutrition crisis.

The Sudanese Journalists Network has expressed concern about targeted attacks on, and arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings of, journalists by the Sudan Armed Forces and the RSF.⁴

05 February 2024

General situation

According to the WFP, almost five million people are experiencing emergency levels of hunger, and a total of 18 million people are facing acute hunger. The WFP says there are already reports of famine-related deaths and explains that, although food aid is available to the WFP, it is not reaching its destinations due to the lack of access for humanitarian aid that is being affected by a lack of security, blockades and other obstacles. It adds that the conflict centres with the highest need for food aid are currently in the regions of Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan and Gezira.

Meanwhile, the fighting continues. According to reports, four people were killed and others injured in El Fasher (North Darfur) on 01.02.24.⁵

12 February 2024

General situation

Since the beginning of February 2024, communications have been partially or completely cut off in large parts of Sudan. The government holds the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) responsible for the network outage as it largely controls the areas in which the providers operate. The RSF has denied the accusation. The network disruption primarily affects the civilian population, who are dependent on information and online payments to be able to buy food, among other things. Communications outages of this kind have occurred frequently during the conflict, including months of power cuts in parts of Darfur and Kordofan, which in some cases are still ongoing.⁶

Humanitarian situation

According to the aid organisation Doctors Without Borders, at least one child dies every two hours in Zamzam Camp (North Darfur), one of the largest camps for internally displaced persons. It says that, in total, up to 13 children per day die due to a lack of food. Aid deliveries and healthcare are inadequate and irregular. UNICEF has also reported that in 2024, more than 700,000 children will be at risk of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 3.5 million children will be at risk of acute malnutrition.⁷

19 February 2024

General and security situation

Parts of the telecommunications and internet services that have been completely or partially cut off in many regions of the country since the beginning of February 2024 have been restored (cf. BN of 12.02.24). The two network operators El Sudani and Sudatel announced on 12.02.24 that their networks were available again in all cities of Sudan without exception. According to further reports, however, only four of the 18 states are back up and running. Networks of other service providers reportedly remain disconnected.

According to local resistance committees, there has been an increase in violent attacks and looting in villages around the regional capital of Wad Madani (Gezira state) since the blackout. The paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is said to be responsible. The committees add that due to insufficient information from the affected villages, the exact number of victims of the attacks is currently unknown.

According to reports from the city of Omdurman, units of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have managed to advance into the city for the first time since the fighting began in April 2023. According to the report, SAF units stationed in the north of the city managed to break through the siege of a barracks of the Corps of Engineers in the south of the city, which had been in place since the start of the fighting. The SAF had already been able to take control of isolated areas of the city in the previous week. The advances in Omdurman were preceded by warnings and requests to the civilian population to leave the city. However, some civilians who remained were reportedly arrested and abused by army soldiers.⁸

26 February 2024

Ongoing fighting

According to media reports, airstrikes carried out by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on the capital of East Darfur, El-Daein, have claimed the lives of at least 10 people. The city was captured by the paramilitary militia Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in November 2023 and has since been bombed three times by the SAF air force. With reference to eyewitness accounts and statements made by the RSF, it is reported that an industrial area, a market and two residential neighbourhoods were bombed. The SAF, on the other hand, claims to have hit a weapons depot and several RSF fighters. Due to the internet and telecommunications network outages in the city, there is hardly any way of verifying this information.

Fighting is also continuing unabated in several places in Khartoum and Omdurman, which is reported to have resulted in more than 12 civilian deaths over the past week.⁹

Humanitarian situation

During a press conference, the WFP Sudan Director said that less than five percent of the country's population could currently afford a "square meal" a day. According to other reports, the operation of communal kitchens in the capital has been suspended due to the lack of food supplies and the difficult security situation. In addition, fruit and vegetable prices have reportedly skyrocketed due to the disruption of web-based payment services and online banking and the hike in fuel prices. It is further reported that many merchants are therefore no longer able to pay suppliers and farmers for produce.

The UN and the US have also criticised the actions of the SAF, particularly in Darfur, whereby aid organisations have been prevented from providing cross-border humanitarian aid from Chad to Darfur. The US also criticised the fact that the SAF was generally preventing aid deliveries to areas under RSF control and that RSF units were still looting markets, homes and camps of humanitarian aid organisations. The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has rejected the blockade allegations as false.¹⁰

04 March 2024

Ongoing fighting

Attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on villages around the town of Habila (South Kordofan) caused more than 40,000 people to flee on 01.03.24. According to media reports, dozens of people were killed and 15 young

women were abducted by RSF units. Habila was captured by the RSF on 04.01.24, before an alliance of armed residents and units of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North led by Abdelaziz El Hilu (SPLM-N El Hilu) recaptured the town on 09.02.24. This was followed by numerous deaths, looting and sexual assaults by RSF units on neighbouring villages.

In the region around the city of Wad Madani (Gezira), there have also been repeated attacks and looting of villages by the RSF. Local resistance committees have reported 53 such attacks since the capture of Wad Madani by the RSF on 09.12.23. The RSF is also accused of human rights violations. As a result of military operations by the Sudanese army (SAF) in this region, fierce battles have raged with RSF units since 01.03.24. It has been reported that the army tried unsuccessfully to advance against the RSF positions in Wad Madani.

Further fighting and bombardments by the SAF took place in the towns of Giteina (White Nile) and El-Fasher (North Darfur), among others. Following the RSF's success in bringing four of the five Darfur regions largely under its control, North Darfur is still being fought over.¹¹

Humanitarian situation

According to media reports, on 01.03.24, the Sudanese Foreign Minister rejected a request from the WFP to provide humanitarian aid across the border from Chad. The Foreign Minister justified his refusal by stating that weapons had been delivered to the RSF via Chad (cf. BN of 26.02.24) and that the border must therefore remain closed for security reasons.

Citing UNHCR data, several media sources report that the fighting in Sudan has claimed the lives of at least 14,600 people since it broke out on 15.04.23. According to the data, more than 26,000 people have been injured. However, it is assumed that the number of unreported cases is much higher.¹²

11 March 2024

Ceasefire efforts

On 08.03.24, the UN Security Council, with 14 votes in favour, adopted Resolution 2724 (2024) calling on all parties to the conflict in Sudan to cease hostilities at the beginning of Ramadan. The Council also called for the development of a sustainable solution to the conflict through dialogue between all the parties involved and the immediate provision of unhindered access for humanitarian aid.

Representatives of the Sudanese army announced on 09.03.24 and 10.03.24 that the army would only agree to a ceasefire if the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia fulfilled certain conditions. Among other things, the RSF was to guarantee that its fighters would withdraw from all civilian and public buildings. Furthermore, the commander of the RSF was to give up all future political and military ambitions and not hold any offices in these areas from now on. According to media reports, the RSF has welcomed the Security Council's resolution. However, detailed reactions from the RSF are not known.¹³

Ongoing fighting

One day before the UN Security Council called for a ceasefire to coincide with the fasting month of Ramadan, fierce fighting broke out between army and RSF units in the regional capitals of El Fasher (North Darfur) and Sennar (Sennar). El Fasher is the last regional capital in Darfur that remains under SAF control. According to media reports, more than 30 people were killed in the recent fighting around El Fasher.¹⁴

15 April 2024

Humanitarian situation

As of 15.04.24, the conflict in Sudan has been going on for exactly one year, with no end to the fighting in sight. In addition to the ongoing armed conflict, the population is threatened by displacement, outbreaks of disease and hunger due to the deteriorating supply situation. Referring to WHO figures, media report that 15 million people in the country are in urgent need of medical assistance, with most health facilities no longer functioning. In areas that are difficult to access, the healthcare system is particularly vulnerable due to destroyed or looted facilities and a lack of staff, medicines, and equipment.

The current situation in Sudan is described as the largest displacement crisis and one of the worst hunger crises in the world. Around 18 million people, more than a third of the population, are threatened by acute food insecurity. The education sector is also severely affected. According to UNICEF, more than 90 percent of school-age children no longer have access to formal education facilities and programmes.

On 08.04.24, the special envoys of the USA, Great Britain, France, Norway, and the EU called on all actors in Sudan to engage in peace talks and implement a ceasefire. On 15.04.24, an international conference will take place in Paris, organized by the EU in cooperation with France and Germany. The aim is to call for additional humanitarian aid and an end to the conflict. However, this plan is met with criticism from the Sudanese government, as they were neither invited nor consulted at this conference, although they themselves are the subject of the event.¹⁵

22 April 2024

Ongoing battles

Although the international community has openly and directly addressed the conflict in Sudan through several channels and called for a ceasefire and peace talks (cf. BN of 15.04.24), fighting continued between the Sudanese army (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia, as well as between their respective allies. In mid-April 2024, fighting and attacks broke out across the country, with the SAF bombing targets in the regions of South Darfur, North Darfur, El Gezira (also Al Jazirah, Al Jazeera, Al Jazira) and Sennar, while RSF units attacked, looted, and partially captured several villages in North Darfur and Kordofan. Also, a military base in North Kordofan was attacked and looted by the RSF.

Media report that the military intelligence service is acting more frequently and more openly than before. On 16.04.24, Sudan's military intelligence service detained and beat in custody 24 employees of the French NGO Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) in Singa, the capital of the Sennar region. While four employees who do not hold Sudanese citizenship were released on the same day, other employees who are Sudanese nationals are still detained. Further reports say that in the state of White Nile, three leaders of the National Umma Party (NUP) are in the custody of the military intelligence service, as is a lawyer and activist in El Gezira.¹⁶

06 May 2024

Fighting continues

Since mid-April 2024, the capital of North Darfur, El Fasher, has been under siege by forces of the paramilitary militia Rapid Support Forces (RSF), preventing relief aid from reaching the city. As a consequence, there are severe shortages of medical supplies, food, and raw materials such as oil and diesel. Due to the lack of fuel, two health centres have been unable to operate their own generators to produce energy and have had to stop work. Electricity has not been available for some time. As local militias, many of them members of the Zaghawa ethnic group, are preparing to defend themselves in El Fasher, besides the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), representatives of the international community expect widespread violence, from sexual violence against civil society to ethnically motivated killings.

To the east of Wad Madani, capital of the Al-Jazira State region, fierce fighting has erupted between SAF and RSF forces. Wad Madani was captured by the RSF in December 2023. According to media reports, the Sudanese army is attempting to capture the town of Shabarqa, 25 kilometres east of Wad Madani, in order to advance from there against the regional capital.

Fighting continues unabated in the capital Khartoum. SAF forces are attempting to capture RSF positions with artillery fire and airstrikes. Since fighting broke out in April 2023, the RSF has controlled large parts of the capital and its neighbouring towns of Omdurman and Bari.¹⁷

13 May 2024

Ongoing battles

UN OCHA reports that at least 27 civilians have been killed and 130 injured in fighting around the capital of North Darfur, El Fasher. Heavy artillery fire and air strikes began on the morning of 10.05.24, initially in the east of the city. As the day proceeded, the attacks shifted to the centre, forcing residents to flee to southern parts of the city. Access to the city is severely restricted, making it almost impossible to deliver humanitarian aid.

Over 1,500 tonnes of goods are currently stuck at the border crossings with Sudan. Deliveries by sea are also being delayed. This is due to bureaucratic delays and insecurity along the transport routes.

Fighting is also continuing in the country's capital Khartoum. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) fired artillery at neighbourhoods held by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), including the occupied Republican Palace, which has been in RSF hands since April 2023.¹⁸

Unlawful arrests and killings

Media report an increase in recent weeks in cases of detention, torture, and murder of Sudanese activists by both the RSF and the security forces of the transitional government. Lawyers, resistance committee members and other activists have reportedly been detained, tortured and in some cases killed in detention. There are also reports that in some regions of the country, anyone suspected of having contacts with the RSF is being arrested and interrogated by the SAF, the police or one of the secret services. In the eyes of the Sudanese army, people who speak out against the war are so-called "sleepers" of the RSF and are also under suspicion.¹⁹

27 May 2024

Ongoing fighting

Several media report that the fighting around the besieged capital of North Darfur, El Fasher, has continued unabated since it intensified on 10.05.24. The NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) says that only two hospitals in the city are still functional. Recently, more than 130 wounded died of their injuries in one of the two hospitals alone. The high number of wounded patients means that the two hospitals are overstretched. The remaining medical supplies still available last for another week at most. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia is currently attacking El Fasher from three directions and has cut off all supply routes.

As the RSF shelled the town, the Abu Shouk refugee camp to the north was also targeted on 22.05.24, forcing more than 60 percent of the people living there to flee. There are currently around 2.8 million people living in El Fasher, 800,000 of whom are internally displaced persons who have taken refuge there. RSF bombardments have been met with massive airstrikes by the Sudanese army (SAF), which in turn have repeatedly caused civilian casualties.²⁰

03 June 2024

Humanitarian situation

Due to the precarious situation, the UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is calling for immediate measures to prevent further suffering and mass starvation. The IASC mainly coordinates humanitarian aid between UN and non-UN agencies.

According to the report, the situation is particularly acute in the regions of Darfur, Kordofan, Al Jazirah and Khartoum. Various obstacles, such as administrative or systemic hurdles or access restrictions imposed by the parties to the conflict, have rendered supply routes inaccessible or unsafe, while aid workers are not adequately protected.

The IASC calls on both the paramilitary militia Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) to prioritise the protection of civilians and ensure unhindered access for humanitarian aid. International donors are urged to honour their pledges and provide additional funding. So far, only 16 percent of the USD 2.7 billion pledged so far this year has been received.

Unless immediate and comprehensive measures are taken, there is a risk of widespread famine, mass displacement, increased child mortality and increased problems for women and girls, the IASC says.²¹

10 June 2024

Ongoing fighting

According to media reports, the Sudanese Army (SAF) has broken the encirclement of the 22nd infantry division after several months of siege by forces of the paramilitary militia Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and subsequently regained control of several neighbourhoods in Babanusa town in West Kordofan. The 22nd Infantry Division has been besieged by the RSF since January 2024. More than 50,000 people have been displaced as a result of the fighting in West Kordofan. SAF representatives attribute the success partly to disputes within the Misseriya tribe, from which many RSF recruits come.

Following an attack by the RSF on 09.06.24, the last functional hospital in the town of El Fasher, the South Hospital, was forced to cease operations, at least for the time being. During the attack, RSF soldiers stormed the building, attacked patients, visitors and staff and stole money, mobile phones, medication and an ambulance. An undisclosed number of visitors were apparently abducted. After fierce fighting, the attackers were driven back. The number of dead and injured is unknown. Since 10.05.24, the South Hospital has repeatedly been the scene of fighting between the SAF and RSF, although no weapons have so far been used inside the hospital.

North of El Fasher town, a camp for internally displaced people was shelled with artillery by RSF forces on 06.06.24. According to media reports, four people were killed in the incident. The camp had been repeatedly under fire for several weeks. As a result of the ongoing attacks, an estimated 85 percent of the population of El Fasher's northern parts have fled their neighbourhoods and sought shelter either in the south of the town or towards Libya.²²

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Briefing Notes
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