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Sudan: Security situation

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Contents

Executive summary	4
Assessment	5
About the assessment	5
1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals	5
1.1 Credibility	5
1.2 Exclusion	5
2. Convention reason(s)	6
3. Risk	6
4. Internal relocation	8
5. Certification	8
Country information	9
About the country information	9
6. Geographic context	9
7. Political context	10
8. Security situation before 15 April 2023	13
9. Security situation post 15 April 2023	14
9.1 Overview	14
9.2 Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)	15
9.3 Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	15
9.4 Ceasefires	17
Geographic scope of the violence	18
9.5 General	18
9.6 Khartoum	21
9.7 Darfur	24
9.8 North Kordofan	26
9.9 Other areas	27
9.10 Who controls what?	28
10. Scale of violence	29
10.1 Number of incidents	29
10.2 Number of casualties	30
11. Impact of the conflict	32
11.1 Lives and livelihoods	32
11.2 Damage to infrastructure	34
11.3 Lawlessness	35
12. Displacement	36
12.1 Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	36

12.2 External displacement.....	37
13. Freedom of movement – within and out of the country	38
13.1 General.....	38
13.2 Air	38
13.3 Land.....	38
Research methodology.....	40
Terms of Reference	41
Bibliography	42
Sources cited	42
Version control and feedback.....	48
Feedback to the Home Office.....	48
Independent Advisory Group on Country Information	49

Executive summary

Updated on 9 June 2023

On 15 April 2023, following weeks of tensions, fighting broke out between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdelfattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary force led by Mohamed 'Hemedti' Hamdan Dagalo, in multiple cities across the country. Significant clashes occurred in Khartoum, Al Fasher in North Darfur, El Obeid in North Kordofan, Nyala in South Darfur, Kassala in Kassala and Port Sudan in Red Sea. Fighting was reported in 13 out of Sudan's 18 States.

Since then, clashes between the SAF and RSF, and insecurity as a result of inter-communal conflict, has been concentrated in and around Khartoum, the Darfur states, and North Kordofan. Khartoum has seen the heaviest fighting and large areas of the city remain contested and it is unclear which armed party controls key infrastructure and installations. Despite attempts by international actors to broker ceasefires, the fighting continues.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed and thousands more injured have been reported, although the actual number is likely to be higher. The insecurity has led to internal displacement of over 1.2 million people with a further 400,000 choosing to leave the country.

The fighting has also damaged homes, shops, schools, water and electricity installations, mosques, hospitals, and other health facilities resulting in shortages of food, water, medicine, fuel and electricity.

The conflict has restricted travel both by air and road. Sudan airspace remains closed to civilian flights and fighting continues around Khartoum International Airport. Major battles have also centred in urban areas along major roadways. Nonetheless, hundreds of thousands of people have managed to escape in search of safety in other parts of Sudan and neighbouring countries.

In general:

- the level of indiscriminate violence in Khartoum and its hinterlands, Darfur and North Kordofan is such a high level to mean that, within the meaning of paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules, there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm to a civilian's life or person solely by being present in these areas
- elsewhere the level of indiscriminate violence is not such at a level to mean that there is a general risk of serious harm to civilian's life or person solely by being present there

Internal relocation to areas where there is not a generalised risk of serious harm may be possible in some circumstances.

Each must be considered on its facts.

[Back to Contents](#)

Assessment

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is information in the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general**:

- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

[Back to Contents](#)

1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#),

[Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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[Back to Contents](#)

2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 A state of civil instability and/or where law and order has broken down, which might exist in some places outside of government control, does not of itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Convention reason.
- 2.1.2 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee Convention grounds necessary to be recognised as a refugee, the question to address is whether the person will face a real risk of serious harm in order to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.1.3 However, before considering whether a person requires protection because of the general humanitarian and/or security situation, decision makers must consider if the person faces a reasonable degree of likelihood of persecution for a Refugee Convention reason. Where the person qualifies for protection under the Refugee Convention, decision makers do not need to consider if there are substantial grounds for believing the person faces a real risk of serious harm and a grant of HP.
- 2.1.4 Decision makers must consult the relevant group-based [Country Policy and Information Notes \(CPIN\) on Sudan](#) before making a decision on whether a person qualifies for HP.
- 2.1.5 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.6 For further guidance on Humanitarian Protection see the See also the Asylum Instruction on [Humanitarian Protection](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

3. Risk

- 3.1.1 At the time of writing armed conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Force (RSF), which began on 15 April 2023, continues to occur across Sudan, the nature and severity of which vary by location and over time (see [Security situation post 15 April 2023](#)).
- 3.1.2 In general:
 - the levels of indiscriminate violence in Khartoum, and its immediate hinterland, Darfur and North Kordofan are at such a high level to mean that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm to a civilian's life or person solely by being present there

- in all other parts of the country, while periodically experiencing armed conflict between the SAF and RSF and inter-communal violence, the level of violence is not at such a high level as to mean there is a real risk of serious harm to a civilian's life or person solely by being present there
- 3.1.3 However, the situation remains volatile and each case will need to be considered on its facts.
 - 3.1.4 On 15 April 2023, longstanding tensions between the SAF, commanded by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, led by Lt General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemeti, erupted into armed conflict. Fighting was reported across Khartoum, with especially heavy clashes reported around the Presidential Palace, state television buildings and Khartoum International Airport. There was also fighting in the cities elsewhere in the country including Omdurman, Bahri, Port Sudan, Al Fasher, El Obeid, Nyala, Kassala, Merowe and Al-Jerif East (see [Geographic scope of the violence](#)).
 - 3.1.5 According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) clashes initially occurred in 13 out of 18 states during the first week of the conflict, with only West Kordofan, Sennar, Al Jazirah, White Nile and Abyei special Administrative reporting no clashes. During the second week, the number of states where fighting was reported decreased to 9. As of 24 May ACLED observed that most clashes were concentrated in Khartoum and urban areas along major roadways with two-thirds of the fighting occurring in cities with over 100,000 people. Clashes continue, especially in and around Khartoum, el-Obeid (North Kordofan) and Ag Geniena (West Darfur) (see [Geographic scope of the violence](#)).
 - 3.1.6 There have been repeated ceasefires, including agreements brokered by the US and Saudi Arabia authorities in May to allow humanitarian assistance into Sudan, but these have broken down and hostilities continue (see [Ceasefires](#)).
 - 3.1.7 Civilians have been caught in the crossfire of the conflict and been directly targeted. As of 24 May 2023, Federal Ministry of Health had reported at least 730 deaths and over 5,000 injured with the majority of the reported casualties are in Khartoum and Darfur. While the proportion of civilian casualties is relatively small compared to the size of the population, figures are likely to underestimate the full impact of the violence. Sources also note a rise of lawlessness in conflict areas with reports of looting, carjackings and gender-based violence including by combatants (see [Civilian fatalities](#) and [Impact of the conflict](#)).
 - 3.1.8 The conflict has led to significant population displacements. Sources estimate that around 1.2 million people had been internally displaced by the end of May, primarily moving away from Khartoum and parts of Darfur where the conflict is concentrated, into surrounding, more stable states. In addition, over 400,000 people are estimated to have left the country (see [Displacement](#)).
 - 3.1.9 The armed clashes have caused damage to infrastructure including hospitals, electricity supply, water supply, destruction of homes, mosques and shops (see [Damage to infrastructure](#)).
 - 3.1.10 The fighting has severely restricted travel. Khartoum International Airport

and civilian air space remains closed. (see [Freedom of movement – within and out of the country](#)).

- 3.1.11 Paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules – which set out that a real risk of serious harm as a serious and individual threat by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict - only apply to civilians who must be non-combatants. This could include former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.
- 3.1.12 Even where there is not in general a real risk of serious harm by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of armed conflict, decision makers must consider whether there are particular factors relevant to the person's circumstances which might nevertheless place them at risk. The more a person is able to show that they are specifically affected by factors particular to their personal circumstances, the lower the level of indiscriminate violence required for them to be at a real risk of serious harm.
- 3.1.13 Therefore, a person may still face a real risk of serious harm even where generally there is not such a risk if they are able to show that there are specific reasons over and above simply being a civilian for being affected by the indiscriminate violence.
- 3.1.14 For guidance on considering serious harm where there is a situation of indiscriminate violence in an armed conflict, including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

4. Internal relocation

- 4.1.1 Internal relocation to areas where there is not a general risk of serious harm – in particular states in eastern, south-eastern and northern Sudan – may be possible in some cases. Overland travel from areas where there is ongoing conflict and in which there is a general risk of serious harm – namely Khartoum, Darfur and North Kordofan - is unlikely to be safe. Each case will need to be considered on its facts, taking into account the person's background and living conditions in the area of relocation (see [Freedom of movement – within and out of the country](#) and [Demography](#))
- 4.1.2 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Certification

- 5.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 5.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

About the country information

This contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content of this section follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

Decision makers must use relevant country information as the evidential basis for decisions.

[Back to Contents](#)

Section updated: 9 June 2023

6. Geographic context

6.1.1 Sudan is located in north-eastern Africa and is bordered by 7 countries: Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and South Sudan. Khartoum is the country's capital city. The country is divided into 18 states excluding Abyei Special Administration Region which is claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan. See map below for states, state capitals and other major cities/towns¹.



6.1.2 According to the CIA World Factbook, Sudan has a total area of 1,861,484 square kilometres of which land is 1,731,671 sq. km and water is 129,813 sq. km². Sudan is about 8 times bigger than the United Kingdom whose size

¹ UN Geospatial, [Sudan](#) 1 March 2012

² US CIA World Factbook, [Sudan](#) (section on Geography), last updated 22 February 2023

according to the CIA World Fact Book is 243,610 square kilometres³.

- 6.1.3 The UN Population Division estimated the population to be around 48 million⁴, while the CIA World Factbook reckoned on it being 49,197,555 as of 2023. The CIA World Factbook also estimated the populations of the country's 2 largest cities: '6.344 million KHARTOUM (capital), 1.057 million Nyala'⁵.
- 6.1.4 The CIA WFB also noted that Sudan has over 500 ethnic groups, Sudanese Arab make up approximately 70% of the population, Arabic and English are the official languages and a majority of the population is Sunni Muslim with a small Christian minority⁶.
- 6.1.5 The CIA World Factbook last updated 22 February 2023 noted:

'With the exception of a ribbon of settlement that corresponds to the banks of the Nile, northern Sudan, which extends into the dry Sahara, is sparsely populated; more abundant vegetation and broader access to water increases population distribution in the south extending habitable range along nearly the entire border with South Sudan; sizeable areas of population are found around Khartoum, southeast between the Blue and White Nile Rivers, and throughout South Darfur.'⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 7 updated 19 May 2023

7. Political context

- 7.1.1 In April 2019, President Omar Al-Bashir, who had been in power since 1989, was ousted in a military coup following months of pro-democracy protests that began in mid-December 2018⁸. The protests were led by the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), an umbrella alliance of opposition groups⁹. In the coup's aftermath, a Transitional Military Council (TMC) assumed power¹⁰.
- 7.1.2 In August 2019 the TMC and FFC signed an agreement to form a civilian-led transitional government (CLTG)¹¹ which was composed of a Sovereign Council, a Council of Ministers headed by the prime minister, and a Legislative Council¹². Freedom House's report covering events in 2021 observed: 'Military and security organizations that used force to oppose the 2019 prodemocracy protests...retained significant power within the [Transitional sovereign Council] TSC [which headed the CLTG]. The [paramilitary Rapid Support Force] RSF... was incorporated into the transitional government structure, with its commander, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (commonly known as Hemeti), serving as deputy chairman

³ US CIA World Factbook, '[United Kingdom](#)' (section on Geography), last updated 22 February 2023

⁴ UN Population Division, '[World Population prospects 2022](#)' (Sudan), 2022

⁵ US CIA World Factbook, '[United Kingdom](#)' (section on Geography), last updated 22 February 2023

⁶ US CIA World Factbook, '[United Kingdom](#)' (section on Geography), last updated 22 February 2023

⁷ US CIA World Factbook, '[Sudan: Country summary](#)' last updated 22 February 2023

⁸ USSD, '[2019 country report: Sudan](#)' (Executive summary), 11 March 2020

⁹ USSD, '[2019 country report: Sudan](#)' (Executive summary), 11 March 2020

¹⁰ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2021](#)', 3 March 2021

¹¹ USSD, '[2019 country report: Sudan](#)' (Executive summary), 11 March 2020

¹² USSD, '[2019 country report: Sudan](#)' (Executive summary), 11 March 2020

of the TSC.¹³

7.1.3 Following the outbreak of conflict between the SAF and RSF, the International Crisis Group in a report dated 20 April 2023 (ICG report April 2023) explained:

‘The roots of this severe and mounting crisis lie in the late years of former President Omar al-Bashir’s disastrous 30-year reign. Distrustful of the army, traditionally Sudan’s strongest institution and one with a history of staging coups, Bashir fragmented the security forces into competing centres of power, so that none could unseat him. The paramilitary RSF, in particular, grew from a brutal counter-insurgency militia in Darfur into something like a praetorian guard for Bashir. The outsider status of Hemedti, the RSF leader, served as a check on challenges to the former president from the riverine centre, whose elites have ruled the country since independence in 1956. Hemedti rose from humble beginnings in Darfur near the Sudan-Chad border to become an agile, canny operator, expanding into gold mining and mercenary activity, all while building a political base at home and forging ties abroad.

‘Thus, when [Sudan’s popular uprising](#) ousted Bashir in 2019, the army and RSF needed to collaborate in seizing power. The protests – an awe-inspiring, millions-strong movement – toppled Bashir in a matter of months but then struggled to also sweep away his generals. Hemedti became Burhan’s number two, first in a Transitional Military Council, and then as deputy chair of a Sovereign Council, after the generals agreed to a power-sharing deal with the country’s civilian opposition, which had been protesting the military takeover for months after Bashir’s downfall.

‘The Burhan-Hemedti partnership was [shaky from the start](#), as Crisis Group warned it would probably be. It grew increasingly unstable as military rule persisted, especially as Hemedti’s power and ambitions grew along with his paramilitary force, which expanded across the country. The rivalry showed even more signs of strain after Burhan and Hemedti deposed the civilian government in an October 2021 coup. The [coup backfired](#), doing little to assert military authority, and Hemedti started to distance himself from Burhan, whom he saw as increasingly linked to Bashir-era Islamists. Meanwhile, the listless economy, whose woes were a major cause of the 2019 uprising, tipped further into sclerosis, exacerbating social unrest as Sudanese continued to press for restoration of civilian government. Increasingly, the RSF leader tried to align himself with the public’s demands, even presenting himself as an unlikely reformer. He cultivated an unofficial partnership with members of Khartoum’s civilian elite, who were negotiating in fits and starts with the military to bring the above demands to fruition.

‘Subsequently, Hemedti’s rift with Burhan grew wider still. In courting the civilian elites, Hemedti exploited the fact that many of them – much as they distrust the RSF – view the army as their historical enemy, a redoubt of Bashir sympathisers including Islamists who had staffed the former president’s bureaucracy. In December 2022, a framework agreement promising to restore civilian rule accentuated their rivalry. While Burhan

¹³ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2021](#)’ (section A1), 3 March 2021

signed the deal only under heavy external pressure, Hemedti championed it, due to clauses he saw as giving him autonomy from Burhan and the army. The agreement recognised the RSF as a regular entity affiliated with the armed forces but placed it under the direct command of a civilian head of state, rather than the army chief, during a transition period. The deal also required the RSF to integrate into the army but left the timetable open to negotiation. This arrangement only deepened the distrust between Sudan's two military overlords.

'Tensions escalated in February and early March, following intense competition between the army and RSF to recruit new members across Sudan and particularly in Darfur, Hemedti's stronghold. Rumours that the army was re-establishing a border guard historically tied to Hemedti's long-time rival, Musa Hilal, head of a tribal militia that had helped suppress the Darfur revolt in the 2000s, further intensified the animosity between the regular army and its paramilitary foe. Burhan's proposal to dissolve the Sovereign Council and form a new military council also heightened frictions, as it implied that Burhan could strip Hemedti of his formal political position as deputy chair. After an alarming military build-up in the capital, Burhan and Hemedti reached a deal to de-escalate the situation on 11 March. Hemedti agreed to withdraw forces from greater Khartoum, and the two military leaders agreed to form a new joint security committee.

'But the final negotiations to form a new civilian government soon put the country back in the pressure cooker, as the parties missed the early April deadline. Talks about security-sector reform, one of five sticky issues put off for further discussion in December, dragged on, postponing the entire process. While most of the negotiations pitted the civilian elite against the military as a whole, the wrangling over security arrangements pitted Burhan and Hemedti against each other. In particular, the two disagreed over the timetable for merging the RSF into the army and the leadership structure of an integrated force. The civilians and Hemedti rallied around a proposal for a ten-year integration period. Burhan and the army demanded a two-year timetable, unwilling to give the RSF a decade in which to continue extending its influence and entrenching its autonomy outside the army's supervision. Amid mounting mutual suspicion, Hemedti reportedly accused Burhan of reneging on deals on integration schedules and the chain of command under pressure from other army generals. More generally, it is clear that Burhan faced stiffening resistance inside the army to the December framework agreement as tensions with Hemedti spiked.'¹⁴

- 7.1.4 The conflict is also about economic resources. Mo Ibrahim, head of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, told the 17 April 2023 Financial Times that 'neither man was willing to relinquish power and the control of lucrative resources that went with it. "Each of them has so much at stake, not just power but economically and financially".¹⁵

- 7.1.5 Tounsel April 2023 opined:

'We are not talking about two men, or factions, with ideological differences

¹⁴ ICG, '[Stopping Sudan's Descent into Full-Blown Civil War](#)', 20 April 2023

¹⁵ FT, '[Sudan conflict pitches military leaders into struggle for control](#)', 17 April 2023

over the future direction of the country. This cannot be framed as a left-wing versus right-wing thing, or about warring political parties. Nor is this a geo-religious conflict – pitting a majority Muslim North against a Christian South. And it isn't racialized violence in the same way that the Darfur conflict was, with the self-identified Arab Janjaweed killing Black people.

'Some observers are interpreting what is happening in Sudan – correctly, in my opinion – as a battle between two men who are desperate not to be ejected from the corridors of power by means of a transition to an elected government.'¹⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

section updated 9 June 2023

8. Security situation before 15 April 2023

8.1.1 USSD Human Rights Report 2022 noted:

'... Violence increased around the country with sudden flareups of intercommunal fighting throughout the year, especially in Darfur, Blue Nile, Kassala, and Kordofan States. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 211,000 individuals fled their homes in Darfur and Kordofan because of violence. In Blue Nile, more than 97,000 persons were displaced since fighting in July and October [2022] killed more than 300 persons, according to the OCHA... Military personnel, paramilitary forces, and tribal groups reportedly committed killings in Darfur and the Two Areas. Most reports were difficult to verify due to continued prohibited access to affected areas ...'¹⁷

8.1.2 A March 2023 report by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project (ACLED) stated:

'Last year [2022] was the deadliest year in Sudan since 2016, with identity militia activity resulting in over 86% of the reported fatalities. Darfur region especially bore the brunt of this violence. In West Darfur alone, political violence resulted in almost 500 reported fatalities in 2022, as Arab-identifying Rizeigat militias carried out retaliatory attacks against other ethnic groups.

'The main drivers of conflict in the region include ongoing competition between communities affiliated with General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemeti who now shares executive power in Khartoum after commanding the original Janjaweed and creating the notorious Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – and those affiliated with Darfuri opposition to the national government and its affiliates. At the community level, resource and land pressures erode cooperation between groups and lead to an increase in violence related to land authority and access. The Arab tribes in the area are mostly pastoralists whereas many of the farmers that settled in the region are from other minority ethnic groups, such as the Gimir and Masalit tribes.'¹⁸

8.1.3 The report, 'Sudan: Security situation in Darfur and the Two Areas' by

¹⁶ Tounsel, C., '[Sudan crisis explained: What's behind the latest fighting and how it ...](#)', 17 April 2023

¹⁷ USSD, '[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Sudan](#)' (Section 1g), 20 March 2023

¹⁸ ACLED, '[Context Assessment: New Political Deal Amid Rising Disorder in Sudan](#)', 3 March 2023

Cedoca, the Belgium Country of Origin Information (COI) research unit, 23 March 2023 (Cedoca report March 2023) observed:

‘As the political struggle in Khartoum deepened, violence in the peripheral states resumed, fuelled by a power vacuum and the divided loyalties of the security forces. The violence is also driven by a recent influx of fighters and funds from Libya, where many Darfuris have fought as mercenaries in recent years. Non-Arab communities, such as the Masalit, have begun forming self-defense militias to resist attacks by Arab communal militias as the Sudanese security forces have seemed impotent or unwilling to stop the violence ...

‘The Sudanese authorities are portraying the violence in the peripheries as purely “tribal conflicts”. Different sources, however, point to complex causes of the violence. Most of violent incidents in 2022 were linked to disputes over land, competition for scarce natural resources, political uncertainty, socioeconomic inequalities, civil unrest, and the increased presence of multiple signatory groups in Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile. The rise in clashes has resulted in an increase of cases of looting and burning of villages, and the loss of livelihood assets and livestock.’¹⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

section updated: 9 June 2023

9. Security situation post 15 April 2023

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 International Crisis Group (ICG) explained on 20 April 2023:

‘Fighting broke out on 15 April, after days of escalating armed manoeuvres by the rivalrous forces. Tensions had run high for days amid a dispute related to demands from the army that the RSF dissolve, with its members to be integrated into regular military ranks. It is unclear who fired the first shot, but both sides had clearly prepared for battle. Clashes erupted first in Khartoum, spreading rapidly to major towns to the north, south, east and west. Since then, the momentum has swung back and forth, with the two sides issuing conflicting claims to be in control of key institutions.’

9.1.2 The Economist in an article in its Graphic detail section of 4 May 2023 noted

‘At its heart, this is a battle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)—the national army, which seized power in 2019—and a paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The RSF is commanded by Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo (better known as Hemedti), a warlord from the Darfur region who has in effect been Sudan’s vice-president since the coup. At first glance this appears to be a narrow fight between two armed factions struggling for power. But it is in fact one which threatens to reshape not just Sudan but the wider region—with the potential to [draw in neighbours](#) such as Egypt or allied countries in the Gulf.’²⁰

9.1.3 For updated information on the fighting see

- [BBC News Africa](#)

¹⁹ Cedoca, ‘[Sudan: Security situation in Darfur and the Two Areas](#)’ (page 9), 23 February 2023

²⁰ The Economist, ‘[Sudan’s spiralling war, in maps](#)’, 4 May 2023

- [UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UN OCHA\) flash updates](#)
- [Crisis24 | Actionable Risk Management \(garda.com\)](#)
- [Sudan | Today's latest from Al Jazeera](#)
- [International Crisis Group Sudan](#)
- [Middle East Monitor Sudan](#)
- ACLED [Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

9.2 Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)

9.2.1 According to the CIA World Factbook updated 25 October 2022 the SAF consist of the Ground Force, Navy, Sudanese Air Force, Rapid Support Forces, and Border Guards²¹. The same source added: 'The Sudanese military has been a dominant force in the ruling of the country since its independence in 1956; in addition, the Sudanese military and security forces have a large role in the country's economy, reportedly controlling over 200 commercial companies, including businesses involved in gold mining, rubber production, agriculture, and meat exports.'²²

9.2.2 A 16 April 2023 article by Al-Jazeera commented:

'... When the uprising that toppled al-Bashir took place in April 2019, ending his nearly 30-year rule, al-Burhan was inspector general of the army and Sudan's third-most senior general.

'Amid popular protests against the Bashir-era defence minister leading the post-removal Transitional Military Council (TMC), al-Burhan was made the head of the TMC.

'A few months later, international pressure led to the formation of the Sovereign Council (SC), a civilian-military partnership to steer the country towards elections this year, in place of the TMC.

'As head of the SC, al-Burhan became the de facto head of state, working alongside the civilian pro-democracy forces in the country.

'In 2021, however, al-Burhan and his second-in-command Hemedti led a coup, seizing power and derailing Sudan's short-lived path to democracy.

'As de facto head of state, al-Burhan has forged closer ties with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt ...'²³

[Back to Contents](#)

9.3 Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

9.3.1 The CIA World Factbook updated 23 February 2023 noted:

'The RSF is a semi-autonomous paramilitary force formed in 2013 to fight armed rebel groups in Sudan, with Mohammed Hamdan DAGALO (aka

²¹ US CIA, World Factbook, '[Sudan](#)' (section on military and security) updated 23 February 2023

²² US CIA World Factbook, '[Sudan](#)' (section on military and security), updated 23 February 2023

²³ Al-Jazeera, '[Who is al-Burhan, Sudan's military de facto head of state?](#)', 16 April 2023

Hemeti) as its commander (he is also a member of the Sovereign Council); it was initially placed under the National Intelligence and Security Service, then came under the direct command of former president Omar al-BASHIR, who boosted the RSF as his own personal security force; as a result, the RSF was better funded and equipped than the regular armed forces; the RSF has since recruited from all parts of Sudan beyond its original Darfuri Arab groups but remains under the personal patronage and control of DAGALO; the RSF has been accused of committing human rights abuses against civilians; it is also reportedly involved in business enterprises, such as gold mining; in late 2019, Sovereign Council Chairman and SAF Commander-in-Chief General Abd-al-Fatah al-BURHAN said the RSF would be fully integrated into the SAF, but did not give a timeline.²⁴

9.3.2 According to an April 2022 United Institute for Peace (USIP) article by Jérôme Tubiana, a researcher specializing in conflict and migration across Sudan and published (Tubiana April 2022) ‘By 2021, the RSF was estimated to number between 75,000 and 100,000 men, compared with the SAF’s 120,000 to 200,000 troops. Yet in spite of its smaller numbers, the RSF is widely considered to be the more militarily effective force.’²⁵

9.3.3 ACLED April 2023 report noted:

‘The RSF is a paramilitary force established in 2013 in response to anti-government rebel movements in Darfur and has been accused of human rights abuses in Darfur and elsewhere. In the four years since the ouster of al-Bashir, the RSF has been involved in over 155 civilian targeting incidents and over 300 reported civilian fatalities... The RSF has also been accused of arbitrarily detaining civilians, with Human Rights Watch calling on Sudan’s transitional government to “rein in” the RSF.’²⁶

9.3.4 Regarding Hemetti, Tubiana April 2022 observed:

‘... [A] Darfuri, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo—more commonly known as Hemetti—has leveraged his military position as leader of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to become a leading figure in the country’s transitional institutions.

‘Since 2013, Hemetti has been the leader of Sudan’s paramilitary RSF, which gradually became the Bashir regime’s praetorian guard. He achieved this position as one of many young Darfuri Arab war chiefs armed by Khartoum against Darfur’s largely non-Arab rebel movements... President Bashir regarded Hemetti as the most loyal of these Darfur Arab allies and made him the RSF leader.

‘For some time before the 2019 revolution, Hemetti and the RSF defended an increasingly isolated Bashir against the possibility of a coup by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). However, Hemetti claimed to have distanced himself from Bashir from late 2017, partly for economic reasons. Hemetti asserted that companies close to the Bashir regime were threatening his personal interests in gold mining in Darfur and fueling Sudan’s economic crisis by black market trading. In April 2019, he allied with senior army officers to

²⁴ US CIA World Factbook, ‘[Sudan](#)’ (section on military and security), updated 23 February 2023

²⁵ Tubiana, J., ‘[Darfur after Bashir: Implications for Sudan’s Transition and ...](#)’ (page 6), April 2022

²⁶ ACLED, ‘[Political Process to Form a Transitional Civilian Government and the ...](#)’, 14 April 2023

remove and detain Bashir and declare the formation of the Transitional Military Council (TMC), which sought to preserve the military's power but without some of the most visible figures of the Bashir regime. Hemetti then reportedly played a crucial role in weakening the National Intelligence and Security Service and its forces and preventing its leader, Salah Abdallah "Gosh," from taking control of the TMC.

'Hemetti's position was further strengthened when he became deputy head of the Sovereignty Council... A Darfur power base and the military weight of the RSF have allowed Hemetti to seek power in Khartoum and to challenge the historic domination of Sudanese politics by elites from the center of the country ...'²⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

9.4 Ceasefires

- 9.4.1 The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in its travel advice for British citizens, updated on 12 May 2023 and still current as of 9 June 2023, noted: 'Military conflict in Khartoum and other parts of Sudan is ongoing. There have been several ceasefires, but these have been regularly broken.'²⁸
- 9.4.2 The RSF and SAF signed a 'Declaration of Commitment' in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to protect civilians and allow safe passage for humanitarian aid on 11 May 2023^{29 30}. The parties subsequently signed 'A seven-day Agreement on a Short-Term Ceasefire and Humanitarian Arrangements' was signed by the parties on 20 May and will enter into force after 48 hours.'³¹ The UN's Agency, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in a situation report of 30 May 2023, noted 'In view of the expiration of the ceasefire agreement on the evening of 29 May [2023], SAF and RSF negotiated an extension to the ceasefire for five additional days.'³²
- 9.4.3 However, the BBC reported on 1 June 2023 that on 30 May 2023 'the army and its rivals from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had agreed to extend last week's humanitarian ceasefire deal for another five days, in talks brokered by the US and Saudi Arabia. But the next day the army withdrew from the talks, alleging the RSF was not committed to the terms.' Fighting subsequently broke out as the talks collapsed³³.
- 9.4.4 An IOM situation update of 6 June 2023 observed: 'The fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has not ceased as negotiations for a ceasefire have halted with SAF pulling out of the talks.'³⁴
- 9.4.5 The BBC reported on 9 June 2023 that:

²⁷ Tubiana, J., '[Darfur after Bashir: Implications for Sudan's Transition and ...](#)' (page 6), April 2022

²⁸ FCDO, '[Foreign travel advice](#)' (Sudan), updated 12 May 2023

²⁹ UNOCHA, '[Sudan - Situation Report](#)' (page 4), 28 May 2023

³⁰ USSD, '[Jeddah Declaration of Commitment...](#)', 11 May 2023

³¹ UNOCHA, '[Sudan - Situation Report](#)' (page 4), 28 May 2023

³² UN IOM, '[Sudan: Escalating Conflict Situation](#)', 30 May 2023

³³ BBC, '[Sudan conflict...](#)' 1 June 2023

³⁴ UN IOM, '[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)', 6 June 2023

‘Saudi Arabia has announced another attempted ceasefire between the warring military factions in Sudan... due to begin on Saturday [10 June] at 05:00 GMT. Saudi Arabia and the United States have made repeated mediation efforts since the fighting erupted in April. The foreign ministry in Riyadh warned that if the ceasefire failed, it would consider suspending peace efforts. Previous truces have been largely ignored.’³⁵

Section updated: 19 May 2023

Geographic scope of the violence

9.5 General

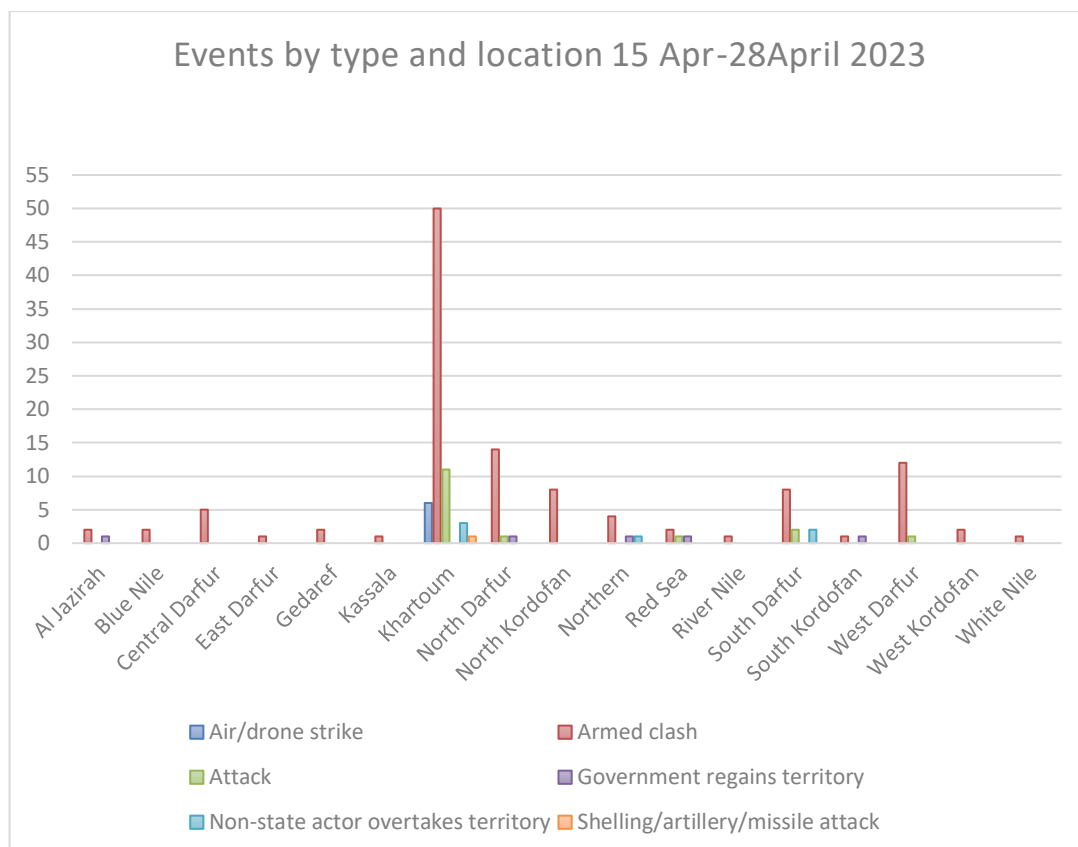
- 9.5.1 The Economist in an article in its Graphic detail section of 4 May 2023 noted: ‘By early May, an uneasy calm prevailed in much of the country outside of Khartoum where, despite multiple ceasefires, fighting continued almost without pause. Localised peace agreements brokered by elders, activists and religious leaders had put a stop to the big battles in Darfur. The countryside around Khartoum, too, was more or less stable. Thousands of foreign nationals and Sudanese civilians rushed to be evacuated from Port Sudan, in the country’s [poor and troubled east](#), which was quickly secured by the SAF.’³⁶
- 9.5.2 The UN Secretary General in his report on the situation in Sudan covering the period 19 February to 6 May 2023 and published on 19 May 2023 (UNSG report 2023) observed that ‘... fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, with large-scale heavy aerial bombardment, shelling, shooting and the use of artillery. Khartoum State remained the epicentre of the violence, with continued sporadic clashes in the Darfur region and North Kordofan.’³⁷
- 9.5.3 CPIT has created figure below based on ACLED data showing location and type of events from 15 April to 28 April 2023³⁸. Attacks refers to targeted attacks on civilians.

³⁵ BBC, ‘[Sudan rivals agree 24-hour truce, Saudi Arabia says](#)’, 9 June 2023

³⁶ The Economist, ‘[Sudan’s spiralling war, in maps](#)’, 4 May 2023

³⁷ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan...](#)’ (paragraph 21), 19 May 2023

³⁸ ACLED, ‘[Dashboard](#)’, no date



9.5.4 ACLED in its ‘Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan’, updated on 24 May 2023, based on a range of sources, observed

‘With the escalation of fighting in the capital, the epicenter of political violence has shifted to Khartoum... Violence also escalated in other areas like North Kordofan state and Northern state, which typically experience lower levels of political violence. As the conflict has progressed, fighting between the two sides has become more concentrated geographically. While battle events between the SAF and RSF were reported in 17 states during the first two weeks of fighting, that number decreased to nine during the following weeks.

‘Most clashes were concentrated in Khartoum and urban areas along major roadways... Over two-thirds of the fighting between the SAF and RSF has taken place in cities of over 100,000 people... Outside of battles in Khartoum and neighboring Omdurman and Bahri, fighting was highest in the cities of Nyala, El Geneina, El Obeid, and El Fasher. Fighting between the RSF and SAF outside of Khartoum underscores the RSF’s persistent involvement [in Sudan’s peripheral areas](#). ACLED also records over a dozen territory transfer incidents during the reporting period, with the RSF taking control of areas in at least four locations, including a short overtake of Merowe Airport, and in Nyala, Khartoum, and Khartoum North. In turn, the SAF took control of several RSF headquarters and camps in Port Sudan, Kadugli, and El Fasher. Control of many strategic locations and resources is currently split between the two groups...’³⁹

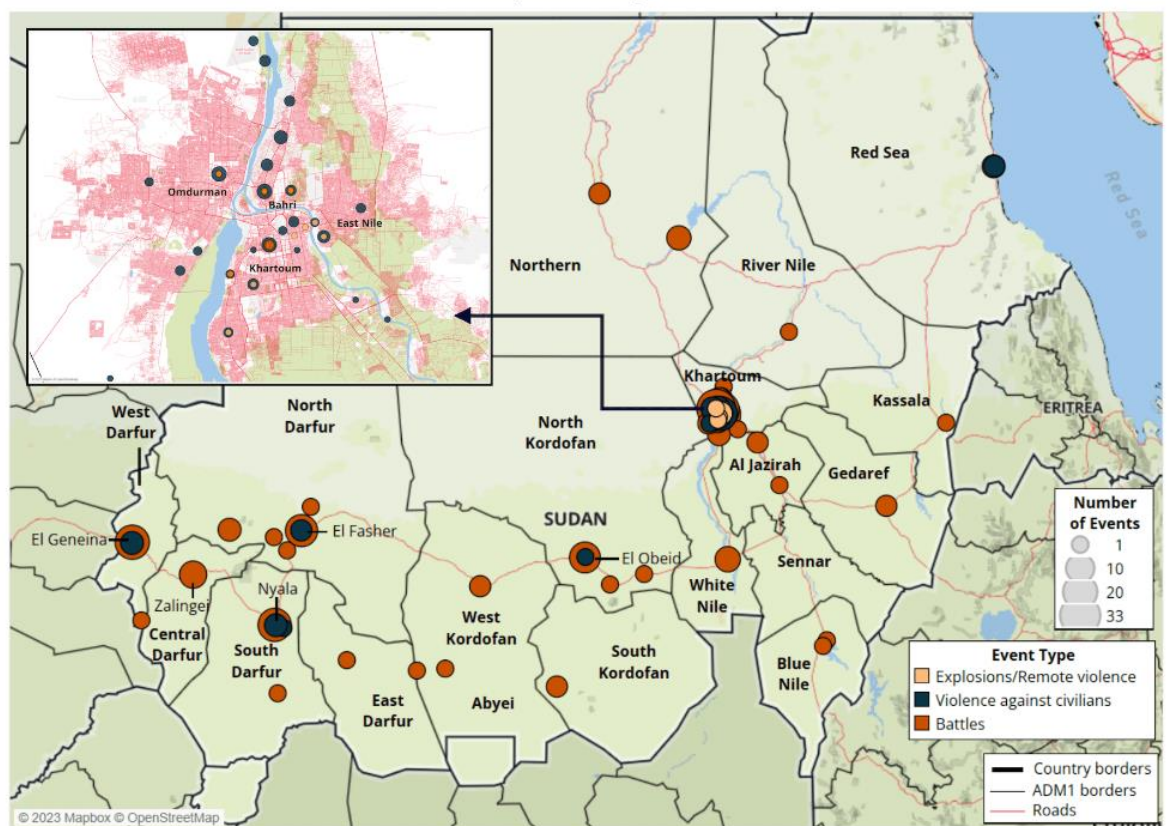
9.5.5 The ACLED in its ‘Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan’, updated on 24 May

³⁹ ACLED, [‘Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan’](#), 24 May 2023

2023, based on a range of sources, summarised:

- 'Conflict has been concentrated in Khartoum state, which has accounted for over 60% of all recorded political violence incidents during this period
- ACLED records nearly 60 civilian targeting incidents since the beginning of the conflict, with over 75% occurring in Khartoum...
- Over two-thirds of the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces has taken place in cities of over 100,000 people
- Battles outside Khartoum have centered in urban areas along major roadways, especially east-west corridors from Kassala to West Darfur⁴⁰

9.5.6 ACLED has produced the map below⁴¹ describing the location of reported security incidents between 15 April and 19 May 2023.



9.5.7 UNOCHA in its situation report update of 6 June 2023 provided the map below⁴² which notes the location of clashes between SAF and RSF forces since 15 April. However, the map does not provide an indication of when, frequency or scale of the incidents.

⁴⁰ ACLED, ['Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan'](#), 24 May 2023

⁴¹ ACLED, ['Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan'](#), 24 May 2023

⁴² UNOCHA, ['Sudan - Situation Report'](#) (page 1), 28 May 2023

the city of Bahri, north of the capital.⁴⁶

- 9.6.2 On 22 April 2023 BBC published the following map showing verified locations of fighting in Khartoum⁴⁷.



- 9.6.3 On 1 May 2023, Al-Jazeera reported that heavy artillery was used in proximity to the presidential palace, which is under the control of the RSF and that fighting had extended to new areas, including Al-Jerif East in the eastern part of the Blue Nile to the east of Khartoum. According to the report, 'The most violent confrontations were in Khartoum Bahri, specifically in Al-Halfaya, Shambat, North Kafouri, and the industrial area'.⁴⁸
- 9.6.4 ACLED in its 'Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan', updated on 24 May 2023, based on a range of sources, observed
- 'With the escalation of fighting in the capital, the epicenter of political violence has shifted to Khartoum... during the period of 15 April-19 May 2023, political violence reported in Khartoum grew from the weekly average of 14% of all incidents to over 60%... Most clashes were concentrated in Khartoum and urban areas along major roadways... ACLED also records over a dozen territory transfer incidents during the reporting period, with the RSF taking control of areas in at least four locations, including a short overtake of Merowe Airport, and in Nyala, Khartoum, and Khartoum North...'⁴⁹
- 9.6.5 UNOCHA reported on 28 May 2023 in its situation update 'Clashes between SAF and RSF that broke out on 15 April 2023 have continued for five consecutive weeks, especially in and around Khartoum, as of 20 May.'⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, '[Fighting in Sudan: What we know so far](#)', 16 April 2023

⁴⁷ BBC, '[Sudan fighting: Khartoum violence mapped as civilians flee city](#)', 22 April 2023

⁴⁸ Al Jazeera, '[UN refugee agency warns more than 800,000 may flee Sudan](#)', 1 May 2023

⁴⁹ ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', 24 May 2023

⁵⁰ UNOCHA, '[Sudan - Situation Report](#)' (page 5), 28 May 2023

9.6.6 The BBC reported

- 16 May –
 - ‘The police have been inactive in conflict-hit areas, including the capital, Khartoum, since the fighting erupted on 15 April. As a result, acts of lawlessness, including looting and robbery, have been widely reported in these areas.’
 - ‘There have been fierce clashes between the Sudanese army and the rival Rapid Support Forces in the capital Khartoum and neighbouring cities of Omdurman and Bahri, across the River Nile. The military has continued to carry out air strikes and residents sheltering in their homes are hearing loud explosions.’
- 18 May – ‘Air strikes have pounded parts of the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, as further fighting erupted near a military camp in the south of the city.

‘The army has used air power and heavy artillery to try to drive back the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) from residential areas of Khartoum and its adjoining cities of Bahri and Omdurman.

‘The Sudanese Doctors’ Syndicate accused the RSF of attacking three ambulances and arresting their drivers and a doctor in Khartoum.

‘The union said it had documented attacks on 20 hospitals.’⁵¹
- 21 May – ‘RSF fighters in about 20 trucks are positioned east of the Nile, and are trying to cross a bridge to reach the Wadi Saeedna airfield. The Sudanese military has retaliated by firing heavy artillery. The battle has been going on for several days, but it has escalated.’⁵²
- 22 May – ‘A seven-day ceasefire mediated by Saudi Arabia and the United States [which was]... due to come into force in a few hours. Gunfire and explosions have continued in the capital Khartoum...’
- 24 May –
 - ‘There has been a reduction in the fighting since a ceasefire came into effect on Monday [22 May]. But people in Khartoum say clashes have continued in some parts of the city.’
 - residents in Omdurman reported intense fighting following the crash of fighter plane
- 26 May – ‘... eyewitnesses again reported sporadic clashes between Sudan's army and a Rapid Support Forces (the RSF) in the capital Khartoum.’
- 1 June 2023 ‘Rockets hit a market in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, killing 18 people and leaving more than 100 wounded, doctors and residents say... Wednesday's [31 May] violence around a market in Mayo in the south of Khartoum included artillery fire and aerial bombardment. It caused the

⁵¹ BBC, ‘[Sudan](#)’, regularly updated

⁵² BBC, ‘[Sudan conflict: Army fights to keep Wadi Saeedna airbase...](#)’, 21 May 2023

most civilian casualties in a single incident in the capital since the war began in April.⁵³

- 9.6.7 The IOM situation report of 6 June 2023 stated ‘Heavy fighting continued in Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri.’⁵⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

9.7 Darfur

- 9.7.1 OCHA update report 16 April 2023 that ‘significant clashes were reported throughout the day in Al Fasher in North Darfur and Nyala in South Darfur⁵⁵. In an update on 20 April 2023, OCHA reported: ‘heavy gunfire, air strikes and shelling in North, Central and South Darfur states, North Kordofan and in the capital, Khartoum⁵⁶.

- 9.7.2 The Economist in an article in its Graphic detail section of 4 May 2023 noted: ‘Fierce fighting between RSF and SAF units was also reported in the provincial capitals of the Darfur region—el-Fasher, el-Geneina and Nyala—where Mr Dagalo and the RSF are dominant. Nyala and el-Geneina airports soon fell to the RSF. Some of the clashes in Darfur took on an ethnic dimension, with Arab tribal militias aligned with the RSF attacking non-Arab tribes. In many places they ransacked homes and looted businesses. Warehouses storing food aid and medical supplies were also stripped bare. According to Mohamed Lemine, head of the UN’s sexual and reproductive health agency in Sudan, almost all un offices (and those of other aid agencies) in Darfur have been robbed.’⁵⁷

- 9.7.3 On 1 May 2023, MEE on 1 May 2023 commented: ‘Darfur is known to be a stronghold of the RSF ... Yet the RSF and its leader ... have many enemies in the region: former rebel movements, Sudanese displaced by previous rounds of fighting, and a former Janjaweed militia led by Hemeti’s rival Musa Hilal. Meanwhile, the RSF commands the allegiance of many tribal militias, including from the Rezeigat, Messiria, Habani, Salamat and Bani Halba tribes. These tense dynamics are already playing out in the region’s different states, with violent and deadly consequences.’⁵⁸

- 9.7.4 The UNSG report 2023 noted: ‘In Darfur, the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces was concentrated in North, South, Central and West Darfur. In East Darfur, the situation remained more stable, although skirmishes were reported. In North Darfur, on 20 April, the state governors – assisted by native administration and religious leaders, armed signatory movements of the Juba Peace Agreement and the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee chaired by UNITAMS – negotiated a threeday local ceasefire for Eid al-Fitr, which contributed to significantly decreasing the violence. This truce was renewed indefinitely after the Eid al-Fitr period, contributing to relative calm.

⁵³ BBC, ‘[Sudan](#)’, regularly updated

⁵⁴ UN IOM, ‘[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)’, 6 June 2023

⁵⁵ UNOCHA, ‘[Clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces & and Rapid Support ...](#)’, 16 April 2023

⁵⁶ UNOCHA, ‘[Sudan: Clashes between SAF & RSF - Flash Update No. 03](#)’, 20 April 2023

⁵⁷ The Economist, ‘[Sudan’s spiralling war, in maps](#)’, 4 May 2023

⁵⁸ MEE, ‘[Sudan: Bloodshed in Darfur as Hemeti’s allies and enemies vie for control](#)’, 1 May 2023

In West Darfur, fighting in El Geneina, near the Chadian border, that initially began on 15 April resumed on 25 April, along with reports of communities arming themselves and joining the fight. In Central Darfur, following initial clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in Zalingei, on 25 April a committee formed of community leaders announced a permanent ceasefire agreement between the parties and called upon the population to return to their homes. The situation there remains tense but stable. Heavy fighting was also experienced in North Kordofan State, particularly around El Obeid airport, resulting in civilian casualties as well as in displacements and the destruction of infrastructure.⁵⁹

9.7.5 ACLED in its factsheet noted

‘In West Darfur, violence increased by over four times in El Geneina during the past month compared with the monthly average for the preceding year, as clashes between the SAF and RSF triggered deadly intercommunal clashes between Masalit militias and Arab militias affiliated with the RSF... In El Fasher, an Arab militia attacked Shala prison in the city, releasing prisoners. Five armed groups that are signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement – Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Minni Minnawi, SLM-Transitional Council, Justice and Equality Movement, Gathering of Sudan Liberation Forces, and Sudanese Alliance Movement – deployed forces in the city to maintain security. On 8 May, Minnawi withdrew his forces stationed in northern Omdurman to North Darfur... These developments have raised fears of a renewed civil war in Darfur.’⁶⁰

9.7.6 The ACLED factsheet updated to 24 May 2023 also noted in its summary of trends:

- ‘In West Darfur, fighting between the two sides triggered deadly intercommunal clashes in El Geneina, with a more than fourfold increase in violence in the city compared with the monthly average over the preceding year
- ‘Over 700 fatalities have been reported in El Geneina since 15 April [2023]’⁶¹

9.7.7 The UNOCHA’s update of 28 May 2023 noted ‘Renewed clashes have been reported in Zalingei, Central Darfur, and Nyala, South Darfur, while fighting has escalated in Ag Geneina, the capital of West Darfur.’⁶²

9.7.8 The BBC reported:

- 26 May – ‘Fighting has... been reported in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. Heavy artillery was heard this morning and 11 people are said to have been wounded. Five former Sudanese rebel groups have deployed hundreds of their combatants to El Fasher to try to stop the violence.’⁶³
- 29 May – according to a local journalist ‘Widespread looting and the

⁵⁹ UNSC, ‘[Situation in the Sudan...](#)’ (paragraph 14), 19 May 2023

⁶⁰ ACLED, ‘[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)’, 24 May 2023

⁶¹ ACLED, ‘[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)’, 24 May 2023

⁶² UNOCHA, ‘[Sudan - Situation Report](#)’ (page 5), 28 May 2023

⁶³ BBC, ‘[Sudan](#)’, regularly updated

destruction of vital infrastructure has left many with little to no access to food, clean water, and medicine. A ceasefire between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has led to a lull in the violence around the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. But fighting has continued in Darfur, and as the conflict there enters its seventh week, the region appears to have plunged into chaos.⁶⁴

- 30 May – ‘The Sudanese army and its rivals from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have accused each other of repeated violations [of a ceasefire agreement], particularly in the Darfur region.’⁶⁵

9.7.9 The IOM situation report of 6 June 2023 noted:

‘In Darfur, the situation remains volatile. In North Darfur, IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) reported that on 3 June, clashes erupted between RSF and SAF in Kutum. Reportedly, at least 50 individuals have been killed, while about 50 were injured. In Nyala (South Darfur), local sources continue reporting widespread looting as citizens move towards the southern part of the city, masked gunmen reportedly take advantage of the situation targeting four-wheel drive vehicles and motorbikes, especially in neighborhoods controlled by the RSF. In Zalingei (Central Darfur), the situation remains very tense under the control of RSF and Arab militias with reported lootings and robberies targeting various government offices, UN/ humanitarian premises and local population. El Geneina (West Darfur) remains under the control of RSF and Arab militias, with the security and humanitarian situation further deteriorating. East Darfur continues to receive newly displaced individuals from Nyala, El Fasher (North Darfur) and Khartoum...’⁶⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

9.8 North Kordofan

9.8.1 On 18 April 2023 Radio Dabanga reported:

‘Fierce fighting between SAF and RSF in El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, have left at least 56 people dead, mostly civilians. Thousands of people were forced to leave their homes ... [B]oth army and RSF forces instructed people living in the west of El Obeid, adjacent to the main RSF base, and in neighbourhoods surrounding El Obeid Airport, which also serves as an army’s base, to leave their houses. The ongoing clashes left the airport’s facilities and aircraft completely destroyed.’⁶⁷

9.8.2 On 21 April, an IOM aid worker was killed in El Obeid which forced IOM to relocate its staff to safer areas⁶⁸. Islamic Relief also suspended operations in North Kordofan ‘due to the extreme insecurity.’⁶⁹

9.8.3 OCHA April 2023 update reported fighting in El Obeid⁷⁰. ACLED 5 May 2023 report observed that El Obeid is one of the cities with the highest fighting⁷¹.

⁶⁴ BBC, ‘[Sudan Darfur crisis...](#)’, 29 May 2023

⁶⁵ BBC, ‘[Sudan](#)’, regularly updated

⁶⁶ UN IOM, ‘[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)’, 6 June 2023

⁶⁷ Radio Dabanga ‘[More than 50 dead following Sudan Army-RSF clashes in El Obeid](#)’, 18 April 2023

⁶⁸ IOM ‘[Sudan: Escalating Conflict Situation Update](#)’, 25 April 2023

⁶⁹ Islamic Relief, ‘[We pray the ceasefire holds so we can deliver urgent aid](#)’, 25 April 2023

⁷⁰ OCHA, ‘[Sudan: Clashes between SAF & RSF - Flash Update No. 03](#)’, 20 April 2023

⁷¹ ACLED, ‘[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)’, 28 April 2023

On 11 May 2023, Al-Jazeera reported fighting and explosions in el-Obeid.⁷² On 12 May 2023 the Guardian reported that the first round of fighting in El Obeid killed 10 people and wounded more than 20 and a second killed 15⁷³.

- 9.8.4 On 17 May 2023 James Copnall, a BBC Newsday presented, tweeted that Dr Abdel Rahim Mohamed Ibrahim in El Obeid told Newsday that his hospital has reported over 1,000 gunshot wounds and 100 deaths but many more could not reach the hospital because of the fighting⁷⁴.
- 9.8.5 The IOM noted in its updated of 30 May 2023 that '... clashes continued to be reported in... in Al Obeid (North Kordofan).'⁷⁵ And similarly noted in its situation report of 6 June 2023 noted 'Heavy gunfire between the SAF and the RSF continued to be heard in El Obeid (North Kordofan).'⁷⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

9.9 Other areas

- 9.9.1 On 16 April 2023 Al-Jazeera reported: 'There was... gunfire heard in the Red Sea city of Port Sudan, where there had been no earlier reports of fighting.'⁷⁷ However, on 1 May 2023, The New York Times reported that thousands of people had fled Khartoum for Port Sudan in an attempt to escape to Saudi Arabia by Sea. According to the report, there was no fighting in Port Sudan, restaurants and grocery stores were open and the army was in control of the city⁷⁸.
- 9.9.2 On 16 April 2023 OCHA reported clashes in Kassala, Kassala state and unrest and rising tensions in Gedaref, in eastern Sudan⁷⁹. However, on 10 May 2023 UNHCR noted that the security situation in Kassala and Gedaref remained calm with IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers continuing to arrive in Gedaref in large numbers after relocating from Khartoum and other unsafe area⁸⁰.
- 9.9.3 The UNSG report 2023 noted:

'In Eastern Sudan, fighting broke out on 15 April but quickly de-escalated. Calm gradually returned across the region, which is controlled mainly by the Sudanese Armed Forces. Port Sudan in Red Sea State became a main relocation and evacuation point for Member States and their nationals, the staff of international organizations and Sudanese nationals. This influx of people increased the challenges faced by the city in terms of accommodation and provision of basic services and the increased prices of commodities. Kassala and Gedaref States welcomed many internally displaced persons, mainly from Khartoum.'⁸¹

⁷² Al Jazeera '[Sudan fighting in its 27th day: A list of key events](#)', 11 May 2023

⁷³ The Guardian, '[Communal violence and civilian deaths in Sudan fuel fears of ...](#)', 12 May 2023

⁷⁴ James Copnall, '[#Sudan](#)', 17 May 2023

⁷⁵ UN IOM, '[Sudan: Escalating Conflict Situation](#)', 30 May 2023

⁷⁶ UN IOM, '[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)', 6 June 2023

⁷⁷ Al Jazeera, '[Fighting in Sudan: What we know so far](#)', 16 April 2023

⁷⁸ The New York Times, '[Thousands Flee to Sudan's Main Seaport, Seeking Ships...](#)', 1 May 2023

⁷⁹ OCHA, '[Clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces & and Rapid Support ...](#)', 16 April 2023

⁸⁰ UNHCR, '[Sudan Situation - UNHCR External Update #6 - 9 May 2023](#)', 10 May 2023

⁸¹ UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan...](#)' (paragraph 15), 19 May 2023

- 9.9.4 The IOM situation report of 6 June 2023 noted: ‘The situation in Abyei PCA Area North has improved in comparison to prior weeks and the inter-communal tensions have somewhat eased. Eastern Sudan and the Blue Nile region remain very tense but stable with limited access to basic services, strained telecommunication and financial services; and large numbers of IDPs seeking refuge in the region or transiting through to neighboring countries.’⁸²

[Back to Contents](#)

9.10 Who controls what?

- 9.10.1 On 15 April 2023, Reuters reported that the RSF had issued a statement stating that it had taken control of the presidential palace, the residence of army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Khartoum’s international airport, and the airports in the northern city of Merowe and El-Obeid in the south⁸³. On 1 May Al-Jazeera reported that ‘Heavy artillery was used in proximity to the presidential palace, which is under the control of the RSF.’⁸⁴
- 9.10.2 The Economist in an article in its Graphic detail section of 4 May 2023 noted: ‘Fighting in the in the first few days centred on military facilities in Khartoum, the capital, and air bases elsewhere in the country... In a bid to neutralise the Sudanese air force, the SAF’s key asset, the rsf quickly seized control of the international airport in Khartoum. Sudanese fighter jets bombed it in response. The RSF also took over the Merowe airfield in northern Sudan, capturing some Egyptians (it is unclear whether they were soldiers or pilots). Egypt is the SAF’s closest foreign ally, and has reportedly been sending it military aid. The saf retook Merowe about a week later.’⁸⁵
- 9.10.3 However, as OCHA 17 April 2023 update noted: ‘It is unclear which side currently controls which key facility or areas.’⁸⁶
- 9.10.4 On 8 May 2023 Crisis24 reported:
- ‘As of May 8, large areas of the city remain contested, including in the city center near Khartoum International Airport (KRT), the Presidential Palace, and the Army Command, as well as in Khartoum North, the twin city of Omdurman, and along the Nile bridges. SAF airstrikes targeting RSF positions are occasionally reported. It is unclear which side retains control of key infrastructure and military installations, though de facto ruler General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has claimed that the SAF controls all the country’s airports except for KRT ...’⁸⁷
- 9.10.5 On 1 May 2023, The New York Times reported that SAF was in control of Port Sudan⁸⁸.
- 9.10.6 On 1 May 2023, MEE reported:
- ‘Darfur is known to be a stronghold of the RSF ... Yet the RSF and its leader

⁸² UN IOM, [‘Regional Sudan Response Situation Update’](#), 6 June 2023

⁸³ Reuters, [‘Sudan’s paramilitary RSF says it took control of presidential palace. ...’](#), 15 April 2023

⁸⁴ Al Jazeera, [‘UN refugee agency warns more than 800,000 may flee Sudan’](#), 1 May 2023

⁸⁵ The Economist, [‘Sudan’s spiralling war, in maps’](#), 4 May 2023

⁸⁶ OCHA, [‘Sudan Situation Report’](#) (page 1), last updated 17 April 2023

⁸⁷ Crisis24, [‘Further clashes likely nationwide in coming days as fighting ...’](#) 8 May 2023

⁸⁸ The New York Times, [‘Thousands Flee to Sudan’s Main Seaport, Seeking Ships to ...’](#) 1 May 2023

... have many enemies in the region: former rebel movements, Sudanese displaced by previous rounds of fighting, and a former Janjaweed militia led by Hemeti's rival Musa Hilal. Meanwhile, the RSF commands the allegiance of many tribal militias, including from the Rezeigat, Messiria, Habani, Salamat and Bani Halba tribes. These tense dynamics are already playing out in the region's different states, with violent and deadly consequences.

If anything, the war with the Sudanese armed forces that is centred in Khartoum ... is more aggressive and bloodthirsty in Darfur, where hundreds are believed to have been killed and at least 20,000 civilians forced to flee into neighbouring Chad.'

- 9.10.7 Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state, is renowned as the homeland of Hemeti's allied Arab tribes, particularly the Rizeigat. Its conquest by the Sudanese army, therefore, has been seen as a shocking blow for the RSF.

'... Some 200km away, in North Darfur state capital Al-Fasher, fighting concentrated in the first week of the conflict over the city's air base, eyewitnesses told MEE ... But in the end, it's now in the hands of SAF [the Sudanese armed forces].

'The scene in al-Geneina, capital of West Darfur state, is completely different. There, the RSF and its allies have complete control, with the army nowhere to be seen.

'Sources in the city told MEE that the RSF and its allied tribal militias quashed any hint of resistance by killing civilians and setting much of al-Geneina on fire, including government offices, homes and the market.'⁸⁹

- 9.10.8 On 17 May 2023 James Copnall, a BBC Newsday presented, tweeted that Dr Abdel Rahim Mohamed Ibrahim in El Obeid told Newsday that 'SAF controls the city, but RSF has the three roads into El Obeid, and fighting is continuous.'⁹⁰

- 9.10.9 The ACLED factsheet updated to 24 May 2023 noted they recorded '...over a dozen territory transfer incidents during the reporting period, with the RSF taking control of areas in at least four locations, including a short overtake of Merowe Airport, and in Nyala, Khartoum, and Khartoum North. In turn, the SAF took control of several RSF headquarters and camps in Port Sudan, Kadugli, and El Fasher. Control of many strategic locations and resources is currently split between the two groups...'⁹¹

[Back to Contents](#)

section 10 updated: 9 June 2023

10. Scale of violence

10.1 Number of incidents

- 10.1.1 The ACLED fact sheet updated to 24 May 2023 summarised

- 'Since fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on 15 April, ACLED has

⁸⁹ MEE, '[Sudan: Bloodshed in Darfur as Hemeti's allies and enemies vie for control](#)' 1 May 2023

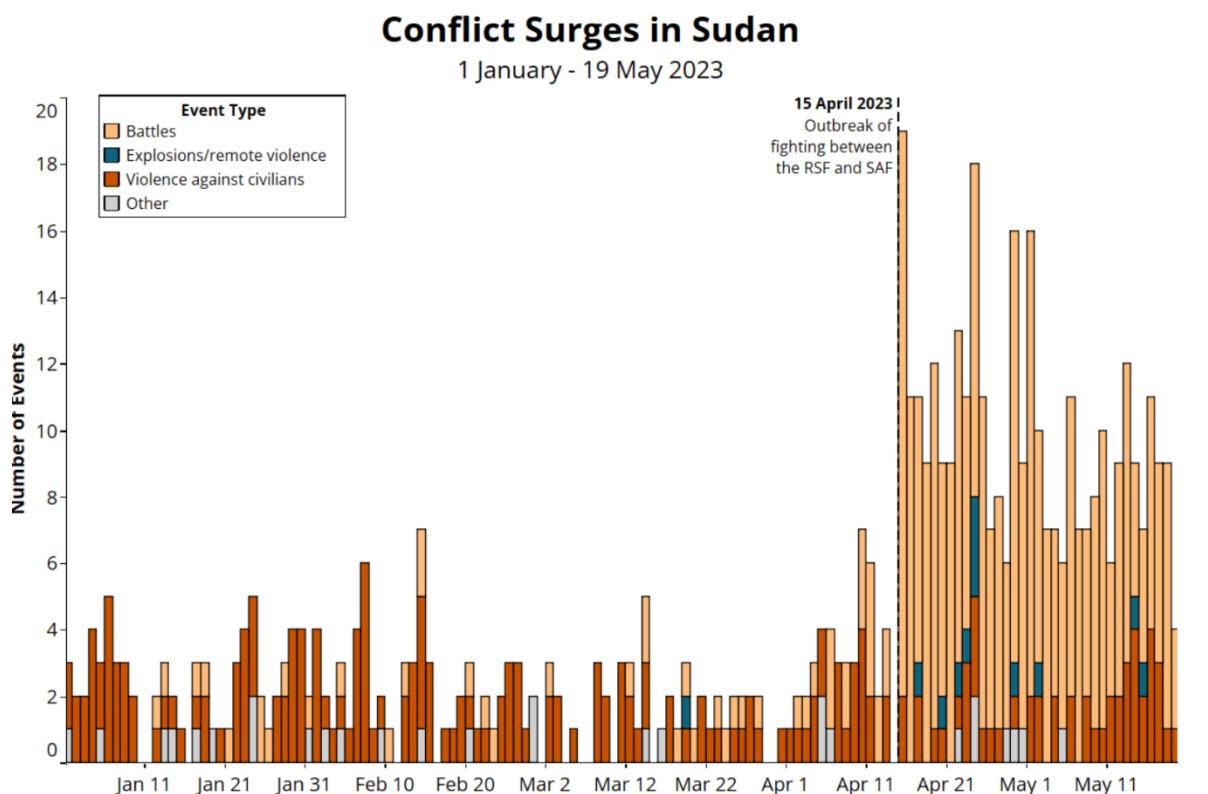
⁹⁰ James Copnall, '[#Sudan](#)', 17 May 2023

⁹¹ ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', 24 May 2023

recorded over 340 incidents of political violence around the country, including 275 battle events

- 'From 15 April to 19 May, clashes increased nearly eightfold compared to the same time period prior'⁹²

10.1.2 ACLED has provided below figure showing different events of political violence from 11 January to 19 May 2023⁹³



[Back to Contents](#)

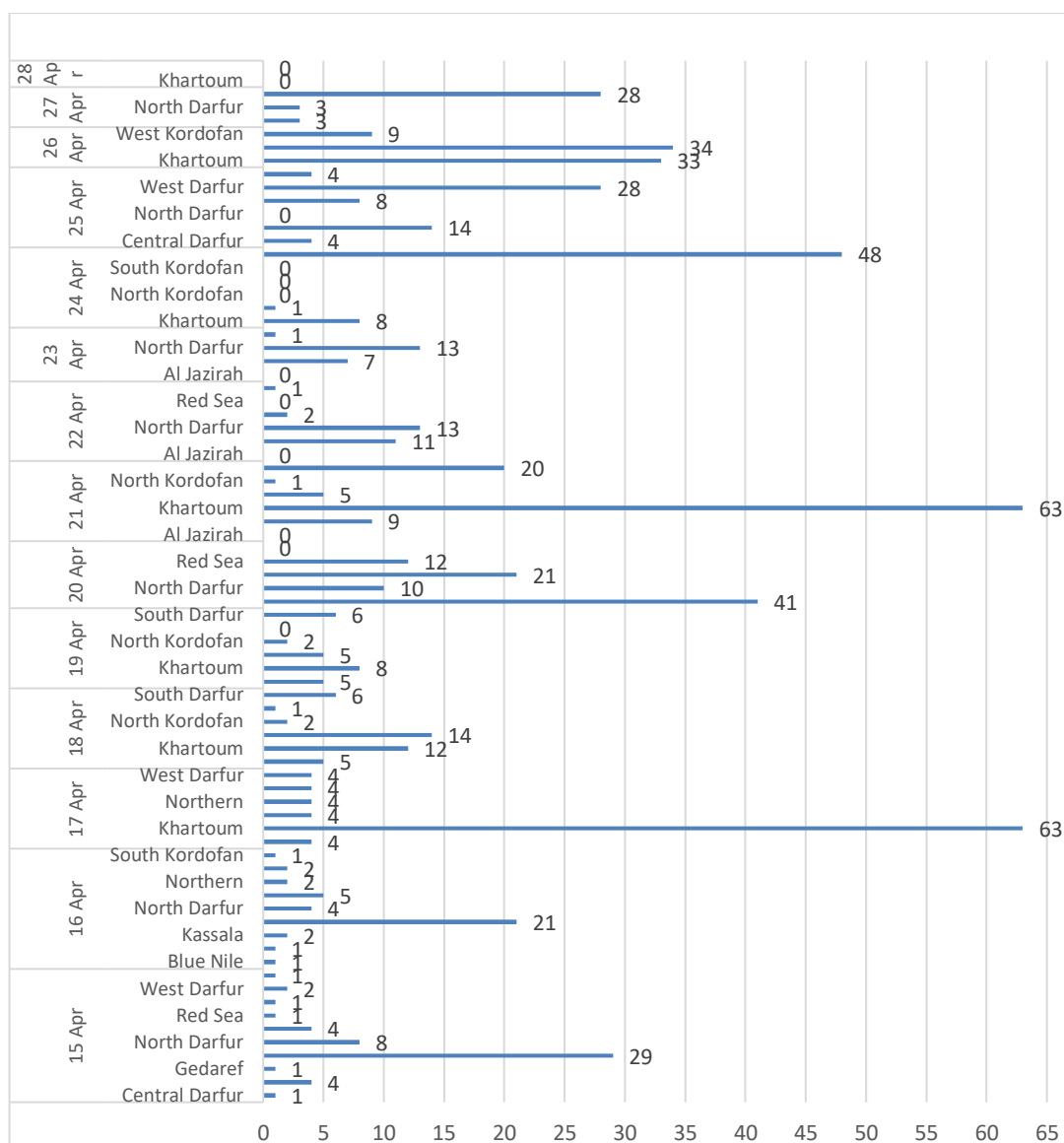
10.2 Number of casualties

10.2.1 CPIT has produced the figure below based on ACLED Data showing number and location of fatalities from 15 April to 28 April 2023⁹⁴.

⁹² ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', 24 May 2023

⁹³ ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', 24 May 2023

⁹⁴ ACLED, '[Dashboard](#)', no date



10.2.2 OCHA in a 10 May 2023 update observed: ‘Clashes between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)... [have led to] At least 604 people have been killed and over 5,100 injured since the fighting began, according to the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) as of 9 May. Out of these, 199 deaths and 3,157 injuries were in Khartoum. In addition, in West Darfur at least 450 people died during recent violent clashes in Ag [sic] Geneina and surrounding areas, according to FMOH.’⁹⁵

10.2.3 On 15 May 2023 Al Monitor, which self describes as an independent source of news and analysis of Middle East news, quoting the Committee of Sudan’s Doctors Trade Union reported that 280 people were killed and another 180 injured in two days of fighting in in Al Geneina in West Darfur between RSF and armed groups.⁹⁶

10.2.4 The ACLED fact sheet updated to 24 May 2023 noted: ‘More than 1,800 fatalities [civilian and combatant] have been reported since the start of the

⁹⁵ UNOCHA ‘[Clashes between SAF and RSF - Flash Update No. 11](#)’, 10 May 2023

⁹⁶ Al Monitor ‘[Sudan: 280 killed as fighting rages in West Darfur](#)’, 15 May 2023

fighting⁹⁷.

- 10.2.5 The UNHCR's Protection Brief, posted 4 June 2023, (UNHCR brief June 2023) noted 'On 24 May [2023], the Sudanese Ministry of Health announced that hospitals throughout Sudan recorded 730 deaths, and 5500 injuries since the fighting started until May 23, but the actual figures are likely to be much higher.'⁹⁸
- 10.2.6 The BBC reported on 1 June 2023 that 'the civilian death toll in the conflict...[was] 883.'⁹⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

section 11 updated: 9 June 2023

11. Impact of the conflict

11.1 Lives and livelihoods

11.1.1 On 4 May 2023 HRW report stated:

'... Sudan's military and the RSF have used explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas— including tanks, artillery, rockets, and air-delivered munitions in the case of the SAF—that frequently result in indiscriminate attacks in violation of the laws of war. Many civilians in Khartoum and elsewhere have been forced to remain in their homes, enduring water and power shortages in sweltering heat, and lacking access to medical care. Many hospitals and other medical facilities have had to close.'¹⁰⁰

11.1.2 The ACLED fact sheet updated to 24 May 2023 noted:

'Clashes between the SAF and RSF have constituted over 70% of all political violence events recorded in Sudan since 15 April. Although attacks using explosives and remote violence have been uncommon in Sudan, making up only 2% of political violence over the past 12 months, the most recent fighting has included frequent airstrikes and shelling incidents targeting military and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals. For example, SAF airstrikes have hit RSF bases in several areas, including the Kafouri area of Bahri, Omdurman, and multiple other areas in Khartoum.

'Many civilians have been caught in the crossfire of the conflict and have also been directly targeted outside of the clashes by both sides, with cases including incidents of sexual and gender-based violence... While figures from early reports vary as the situation continues to develop, estimates from the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate put civilian fatalities at over 800.. At least 58 civilian targeting events took place during the reporting period, with over 75% occurring in Khartoum. For example, a SAF airstrike hit a residential area south of Khartoum on 24 April, killing several and injuring dozens while destroying houses.

'In multiple civilian targeting incidents, RSF and SAF forces have detained and attacked civil society actors and journalists, including an RSF arrest,

⁹⁷ ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', 24 May 2023

⁹⁸ UNHCR, '[Protection Brief – Sudan](#)' (page 5), June 2023

⁹⁹ BBC, '[Sudan](#)', regularly updated

¹⁰⁰ HRW, '[Sudan: Explosive Weapons Harming Civilians](#)', 4 May 2023

interrogation, and physical assault of a spokesperson for the Sudanese Democratic Alliance for Social Justice in Khartoum. At the start of the fighting, a SAF soldier detained and assaulted a BBC journalist in Omdurman. ACLED also records at least nine incidents of violence targeting foreign diplomatic personnel and convoys in Omdurman, Khartoum, and en route to Port Sudan. In addition to these attacks, looting and destruction of civilian property are widespread, especially in Khartoum and throughout Darfur, as armed groups exploit the outbreak of conflict to steal from banks, shops, humanitarian offices, hospitals, and homes. The looting of aid has further exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the country.⁹ As a result, thousands of people have fled the conflict zones to other areas of Sudan and neighboring countries, while thousands remain trapped amid fighting...

'On 29 April, the SAF deployed the Central Reserve Police, locally known as Abu Tira, in Khartoum to purportedly "maintain security." Abu Tira forces have been accused of serious human rights violations due to their use of violence against protesters during anti-coup demonstrations in Sudan. ACLED records over 100 civilian targeting events involving the group since 2019, resulting in more than 50 civilian fatalities.'¹⁰¹

11.1.3 The UNSG report 2023 noted:

'The outbreak of fighting on 15 April led to a dramatic deterioration in the human rights and protection of civilians situation across the Sudan, exacerbating an already precarious situation... Civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals, shops, mosques and schools, were indiscriminately attacked using heavy artillery and shells, including explosive weapons with wide-area effects, resulting in widespread destruction and thousands displaced in Khartoum and elsewhere. The parties' failure to fully adhere to humanitarian pauses resulted in many civilians risking their lives to access supplies or medical care. Reports of the widespread looting of homes, carjackings and attempted sexual assaults by armed elements further compounded the risk to civilians.'¹⁰²

11.1.4 The UNHCR brief 2023 noted:

'Civilians have been killed, injured, assaulted, and robbed, especially in areas of intense fighting in Khartoum, Kordofan and Darfur States... The ongoing conflict has completely disrupted daily life, with civilians sheltering with no access to electricity or running water and with depleting access to food and potable water. Civilians are at imminent risk of attack and conflict has escalated despite agreed ceasefires and commitments by the parties to abide by international humanitarian law. Consultations with IDPs who managed to arrive to safer locations in the East as well as newly arrived refugees in Chad and CAR have indicated how persons with specific needs, including GBV survivors, persons with disabilities, and older persons, have not been able to access safe areas for assistance.

'While civilians have often been involuntarily caught in the confrontation between RSF and SAF, particularly given the urban character of the conflict, in locations such as West Darfur the physical safety and security of the

¹⁰¹ ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', 28 April 2023

¹⁰² UNSC, '[Situation in the Sudan...](#)' (paragraph 31), 19 May 2023

civilian population has been threatened by the unleashing of intercommunal violence based on tribal affiliation. This has included the deliberate destruction of hundreds of homes, IDP sites, marketplaces, water points and other civilian infrastructure, aggravating sufferance and triggering multiple displacement. Conflict has also led to family separation and loss of contact with loved ones, both within the country, and across borders. Many incidents of forced disappearance were also tracked in Khartoum state.¹⁰³

- 11.1.5 The IOM situation report of 6 June 2023 noted ‘... reports from Khartoum indicate an increasing number of kidnappings, including of women.’¹⁰⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

11.2 Damage to infrastructure

- 11.2.1 In remarks to the Security Council on 25 April 2023, Volker Perthes, UNITAMS representative in Sudan said: ‘Residential areas near the headquarters of the Army, RSF installations, and the airport have come under persistent attacks. Homes, shops, schools, water and electricity installations, mosques, hospitals, and other health facilities have been damaged or are now fully destroyed.’¹⁰⁵

- 11.2.2 OCHA update report 2 May 2023 stated:

‘Access to water remains one of the main challenges. In Khartoum, several neighbourhoods face severe water shortages due to blackouts, lack of fuel and damage to water supplies. In Eltahir, the water quality treatment unit and drilling rig and other equipment have been destroyed, according to UNICEF. In Al Fasher, access to water was interrupted due to an electrical outage. Limited access to water in camps for internally displaced people was also reported due to lack of fuel.

‘Across Sudan, more than two-thirds of hospitals are not functional due to direct attacks, occupation by fighting parties, access, lack of electricity, water supply or fuel, or stock out of medicine, according to WHO. Cold chain equipment, vehicles, records and assets have been either looted or destroyed and it is estimated half of the vaccines have been lost. Medical stockpiles are running critically low in conflict affected areas, with shortage of all medical and surgical supplies, including oxygen and blood bags, according to the Sudan Doctors Trade Union. An increasing number of children and parents need mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Meanwhile, 80 metric tonnes (MT) of emergency medical supplies, including 59MT of IV fluids, 8MT trauma kits and around 12MT of kits for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM), are in Port Sudan awaiting customs clearance, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), and a further 3MT of medical supplies—including trauma kits, inter-agency health kits, gloves and other supplies—are ready for shipment from WHO’s Logistics Hub in Dubai.’¹⁰⁶

- 11.2.3 OCHA update 10 May 2023 noted that

¹⁰³ UNHCR, ‘[Protection Brief – Sudan](#)’ (page 5), June 2023

¹⁰⁴ UN IOM, ‘[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)’, 6 June 2023

¹⁰⁵ UNITAMS, ‘[UNITAMS SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes remarks ...](#)’, 26 April 2023

¹⁰⁶ OCHA, ‘[Sudan: Clashes between SAF and RSF - Flash Update No. 9](#)’, 2 May 2023

‘Healthcare facilities continue to be attacked and occupied by parties to the conflict. In Khartoum, fewer than one-fifth of health facilities remain fully functional, and 60 per cent are not functioning at all, according to WHO ... In West Darfur’s Ag Geneina town, the building of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) was reportedly burned down on 6 May. Ag Geneina Teaching Hospital, the major referral hospital in the state, has been directly affected by fighting and parts of the hospital have been looted, according to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

‘... Shortages of food, water, fuel and cash in many parts of the country continue. In eastern Sudan—many parts of which usually rely on essential supplies from Khartoum, which has become impossible with the ongoing crisis—the prices of goods have increased almost four-fold compared to prior 15 April, according to humanitarian partners on the ground. In Blue Nile, markets in Ed Damazine are reportedly open but prices of the communities are increasing. Many banks across the country, especially in areas affected by conflict, remain closed.’¹⁰⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

11.3 Lawlessness

- 11.3.1 In remarks to the Security Council on 25 April 2023, Volker Perthes, UNITAMS representative in Sudan said: ‘Reports of home invasions, looting of homes and shops and cars at checkpoints have been rampant. These have included the homes and the cars of Sudanese citizens, United Nations staff, humanitarian workers, and the diplomatic community.’¹⁰⁸
- 11.3.2 OCHA update report 28 April 2023 stated: ‘Reported cases of sexual violence are surging, particularly among displaced people who are on the move, seeking shelter and safety, according to women-led organizations in Sudan. Gender-based violence (GBV) services and supplies have been severely impacted, especially in Khartoum, and Blue Nile and Darfur States.’¹⁰⁹
- 11.3.3 Crisis24 reported on 30 April 2023: ‘The situation has caused an uptick in criminal incidents, with frequent reports of looting, home invasions, assaults, and carjackings. Civilians fleeing Khartoum and evacuation convoys have been attacked by artillery fire or criminal elements.’¹¹⁰
- 11.3.4 ACJPS report dated on 30 April 2023 noted:

‘On 21 April 2023, approximately 7000 prisoners were released from Alhuda prison in Khartoum State as the prison guards claimed that RSF had attacked the prison. Similarly, on 22 April 2023, in Suba and Omdurman Women prisons, RSF accessed the prisons and thus the prisoners broke out and escaped.

‘On 23 April 2023, prisoners detained in Kober prison in Khartoum Bahari broke out of the prison. Sudanese police forces released a statement indicating that former president Omer Al-Bashir and other two prisoners

¹⁰⁷ OCHA ‘[Clashes between SAF and RSF - Flash Update No. 11](#)’, 10 May 2023

¹⁰⁸ UNITAMS, ‘[UNITAMS SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes remarks to the Security Council ...](#)’ 26 April 2023

¹⁰⁹ OCHA ‘[Clashes between SAF and RSF- Flash update No 8](#)’, 28 April 2023

¹¹⁰ Crisi24, ‘[Sudan: SAF and RSF agree to extend current ceasefire through May 3 ...](#)’, 30 April 2023

indicted by the ICC (former NCP leaders arrested after April 2019) were moved to a safe location guarded by police. ACJPS however cannot verify this information.

‘SAF accused RSF of breaking out prisoners out of prison while RSF also accused SAF and former NCP leaders of the same.’¹¹¹

- 11.3.5 On 1 May 2023 Al Jazeera reported that ‘The Central Reserve Police, a paramilitary unit, has been deployed across Khartoum to “protect citizens’ properties” from looting, the Sudanese police said, confirming an army statement.’¹¹² However, on 8 May 2023 Crisis24 reported ‘Criminal incidents persist in the Khartoum area, despite authorities deploying additional police forces to combat looting, home invasions, assaults, and carjackings. Civilians fleeing Khartoum and evacuation convoys have also been attacked by artillery fire or criminal elements.’¹¹³
- 11.3.6 ACLED factsheet of 24 May 2023, citing other sources, noted: ‘... looting and destruction of civilian property are widespread, especially in Khartoum and throughout Darfur, as armed groups exploit the outbreak of conflict to steal from banks, shops, humanitarian offices, hospitals, and homes. The looting of aid has further exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the country.’¹¹⁴
- 11.3.7 The UNHCR brief posted 4 June 2023 noted:
- ‘The safety and security of the civilian population appears to be threatened by the collapse of law and order and the related widespread rise of criminality. Prison breaks and the absence of law enforcement actors have contributed to episodes of assaults, robberies, and other violent acts perpetrated against people attempting to reach services as well as against families on the move to reach safe destinations. Consultations with newly arrived returnees in South Sudan and Sudanese refugees in CAR have repeatedly revealed such episodes, resulting in loss of family assets, as well as physical harm and emotional distress.’¹¹⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

section 12 updated: 9 June 2023

12. Displacement

12.1 Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

12.1.1 Updated [data on internal and external movements of people](#) is available on the UNHCR’s Sudan situation portal.

12.1.2 The IOM’s Sudan Situation report 6, 29 May 2023, stated:

‘The current total estimate of displaced individuals across Sudan reached 1,210,214 (242,666 households). The current assessment has observed the IDP caseload in all of Sudan’s 18 states (with the addition of East Darfur state since the previous updates). The highest proportions of IDPs have been observed in West Darfur (20.54%), White Nile (16.76%), River Nile

¹¹¹ ACJPS, ‘[Update on the armed conflict in Sudan: Continued killing and injuring of...](#)’ 30 April 2023

¹¹² Al Jazeera, ‘[Key events in Sudan as fighting hits 17 days](#)’, 1 May 2023

¹¹³ Crisis24, ‘[Sudan: Further clashes likely nationwide in coming days as fighting ...](#)’, 8 May 2023

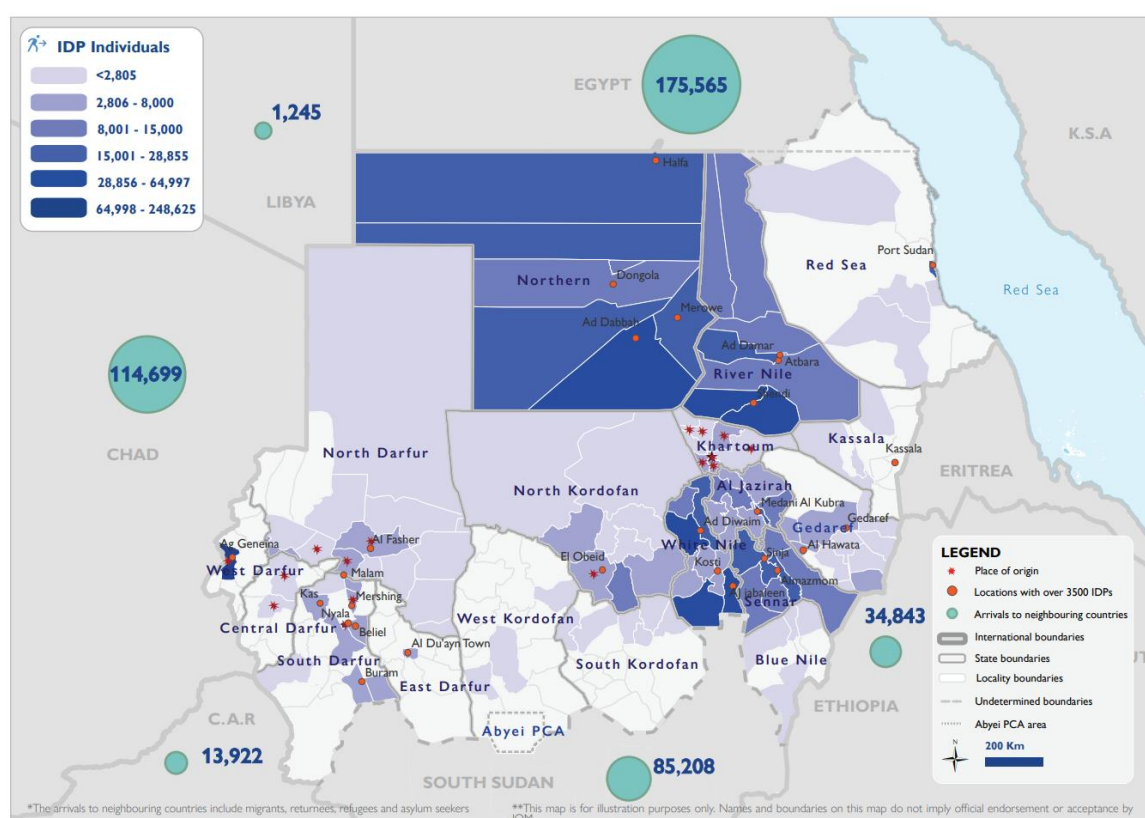
¹¹⁴ ACLED, ‘[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)’, 28 April 2023

¹¹⁵ UNHCR, ‘[Protection Brief – Sudan](#)’ (page 5), June 2023

(15.36%), and Northern (11.87%) states.

‘Field teams report that the IDPs arrived from six states. The majority (69.30%) have reportedly been displaced from Khartoum state; followed by West Darfur (20.86%), South Darfur (7.85%), North Darfur (1.64%), North Kordofan (0.21%), and Central Darfur (0.15%) states. Prior to the conflict commencing 15 April 2023, DTM Sudan estimated that Sudan had approximately 3.8 million IDPs - the majority of whom (an estimated 79%) were based in Darfur and in severe need of humanitarian assistance (HNO 2023). Due to the ongoing nature of the fighting, many of the reported areas remain largely inaccessible to humanitarian actors.’

12.1.3 The IOM situation report 6 provided the map¹¹⁶ below:



12.1.4 The IOM situation update of 6 June 2023 noted: ‘[There have been]... 1,428,551 displaced internally. The majority of IDPs are leaving Khartoum (66%), West Darfur (19%) and South Darfur (7%), Central Darfur (6%), North Darfur and North Kordofan states. The majority of IDPs (65.4%) fled to urban areas while the rest (34.6%) fled to rural areas, with 78.6% of IDPs seeking shelter with relatives and host communities.’¹¹⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

12.2 External displacement

12.2.1 The UNHCR protection brief posted on 4 June 2023 reported ‘Civilians are fleeing to neighbouring countries and as of 29 May [2023], more than

¹¹⁶ IOM, ‘[Sudan situation report 6](#)’ (page 1), 29 May 2023

¹¹⁷ UN IOM, ‘[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)’, 6 June 2023

360,000 people have crossed international borders... Displacement figures continue to rapidly change as the security situation evolves.’¹¹⁸

- 12.2.2 The IOM situation update of 6 June 2023 noted: ‘Mixed flow movements continue to increase with 476,811 people who have fled to neighboring countries - IOM, UNHCR and government sources indicate that as of 4 June at least 205,565 people have arrived in neighboring Egypt, 125,377 people in Chad, 90,796 people in South Sudan, 39,833 people in Ethiopia, 13,922 people in the Central African Republic and 1,318 people in Libya since the start of the conflict.’¹¹⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

section 13 updated: 9 June 2023

13. Freedom of movement – within and out of the country

13.1 General

- 13.1.1 The USSD human rights report 2022, covering events prior to the outbreak of armed conflict in April 2023, noted: ‘The law provides for the freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, and emigration, and while the government largely respected these rights, restrictions remained on travel to conflict areas... Armed opposition groups reportedly restricted the movement of citizens in conflict areas... Internal movement was generally unhindered for citizens outside conflict areas.’¹²⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

13.2 Air

- 13.2.1 Since the outbreak of the fighting, Khartoum international airport and Merowe airport have been major battle zones^{121 122}. General Burhan said that Sudanese armed forces were, as of 22 April 2023, in control of all of Sudan's airports except for the Khartoum International Airport and Nyala Airport in South Darfur¹²³. Khartoum international airport remains closed¹²⁴.
- 13.2.2 Reuters, citing a statement by the Sudan civil aviation authority on its Facebook page, reported that civilian airspace remained closed until 15 June 2023¹²⁵.

[Back to Contents](#)

13.3 Land

- 13.3.1 OCHA in its 21 April 2023 update noted that ‘neighbourhood committees in Wad Madani, Al Jazirah state, warned of clashes between SAF and RSF forces along the road from Khartoum to Madani — which has been one of the main routes used by those fleeing the capital.’¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ UNHCR, ‘[Protection Brief – Sudan](#)’ (page 2), June 2023

¹¹⁹ UN IOM, ‘[Regional Sudan Response Situation Update](#)’, 6 June 2023

¹²⁰ USSD, ‘[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Sudan](#)’ (Section 2d), 20 March 2023

¹²¹ OCHA, ‘[Clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces & and Rapid Support ...](#)’, 16 April 2023

¹²² Al Jazeera, ‘[Sudan fighting enters day 5: What to know](#)’ 19 April 2023

¹²³ MENA ‘[Sudan Army says not in control of Khartoum airport](#)’, 22 April 2023

¹²⁴ FCDO, ‘[Foreign travel advice](#)’ (Sudan), updated 12 May 2023

¹²⁵ Reuters, ‘[Sudan extends closure of its airspace until 15 June...](#)’, 31 May 2023

¹²⁶ OCHA, ‘[Sudan: Clashes between SAF and RSF - Flash Update No. 4](#)’, 21 April 2023

- 13.3.2 BBC reported on 22 April 2023: 'As the fighting has intensified, many have tried to escape the city - but routes out remain limited and fraught with risk. Travelling out is itself dangerous. On Wednesday, one resident told the BBC that the RSF had set up roadblocks around the capital and that paramilitary fighters had stolen his phone and a small amount of cash.'¹²⁷
- 13.3.3 ACLED 5 May report noted: 'Battles outside Khartoum have centered in urban areas along major roadways, especially east-west corridors from Kassala to West Darfur... Most clashes were concentrated in Khartoum and urban areas along major roadways'¹²⁸
- 13.3.4 On 5 May 2023 a Guardian report quoted Michelle D'Arcy, the Sudan country director for the Norwegian People's Aid organisation, saying: "There are no easy escape routes right now... The route they might choose depends on their location, connection and privilege as it is costing more and more to leave the country every day."¹²⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

¹²⁷ BBC '[Sudan fighting: Khartoum violence mapped as civilians flee city](#)', 22 April 2023

¹²⁸ ACLED, '[Fact Sheet: Conflict Surges in Sudan](#)', updated 5 May 2023

¹²⁹ The Guardian, '[Not safe for us': Sudanese in north Africa warn fleeing relatives of...](#)' 5 May 2023

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

All the COI included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s). Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared and contrasted to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The Home Office uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Geographic context
- Political context
 - Darfur and the Two Areas
 - April 2019 coup
 - October 2021 coup
 - Political Framework Agreement
- Scope and levels of violence
 - What has happened and where, who controls the territory
 - Targeting of civilians
 - Numbers of civilian casualties (fatalities / injuries) and where]
 - Damage to infrastructure
- Displacement – internally and externally
- Freedom of movement

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **June 2023**

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

Changes from last version of this note

None. First version

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to

support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy.

The IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

1st Floor

Clive House

70 Petty France

London

SW1H 9EX

Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

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[Back to Contents](#)