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Background

In April, intense armed clashes erupted between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitaries, led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti), in the capital, Khartoum. The clashes quickly spread to other areas, including Darfur and North Kordofan. The fighting came after months of tensions between the two groups over security force reforms, proposed as part of the negotiations for a new transitional government, among other issues.

Despite multiple ceasefire declarations, fighting intensified. According to the UN, more than 12,000 people were killed between April and December nationwide. In October, it was reported that about 15 million people – 31% of the population – were acutely food insecure.

Fighters, mostly RSF, engaged in widespread looting of homes, businesses and public institutions, including hospitals, humanitarian organizations' warehouses, and banks in Khartoum and in the Darfur region.

Meanwhile, the 20-year-old Darfur conflict continued to cause immense suffering in the region.

Indiscriminate attacks

Many civilians were caught in the crossfire as members of the SAF and RSF, often using explosive weapons with wide area effects, launched frequent attacks in and from densely populated civilian neighbourhoods. People were consequently killed inside their homes, or while desperately searching for food and other necessities. Others were killed and injured while fleeing from the violence, and in places where they had sought safety. In most cases, it was difficult to establish which side fired the munitions that killed and injured civilians.¹

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

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

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

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

On 14 June, dozens of civilians were killed and injured, including Gamra Mustafa, who was hit by two bullets while inside her home in the al-Madaris neighbourhood of El Geneina. On the same

day, in the nearby neighbourhood of Hay al-Riadh, seven-year-old Adnan Is'haq was killed inside his home by a stray bullet which struck him in the chest.

Unlawful attacks and killings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sexual and gender-based violence

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

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

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

Right to truth, justice and reparation

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

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

Internally displaced people's rights

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

Refugees' and migrants' rights

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