

III. Security Implications of the Sudanese Civil War

Introduction

The Republic of the Sudan is located in northeastern Africa and shares borders with the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, and South Sudan.¹ Sudan is currently the third-largest state in Africa by land, with its territory accompanying a population of roughly 50 million people.² Prior to South Sudan's independence in 2011, Sudan's economy was largely focused on its oil exports, but today, Sudan's exports are more centered on its agricultural production.³ Sudan has been a focal point for the UN due to various political issues that have prevented Sudan from being considered a stable and peaceful state by the international community.⁴ Sudan has experienced many violent struggles since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1956, undergoing numerous military coups and civil wars.⁵ These conflicts are attributed to the religious and ethnic differences between the predominantly Arab and Muslim northern region and the southern region, whose population is made up of ethnic minorities that practice various religions.⁶ The British government favored the northern region, primarily due to its quick submission to British authority, unlike the southern region, which chose to prolong its struggle against British colonial rule.⁷ The British granted the northern region the majority of political powers during the decolonization process, creating a harsh division between the north and south.⁸ This division worsened when the Arab-dominated Sudanese government sought to impose the Arabic language and culture on the southern peoples while also creating an economic disparity in Sudan that favored the north.⁹ Additionally, the existence of strategic oil fields on the border of the two regions worsened economic tensions, with northern Sudan seeking to take control of the oil reserves from South Sudan.¹⁰ The people of South Sudan longed for independence from Sudan's governance for decades before South Sudan was finally granted independence from Sudan at the beginning of the 21st century.¹¹

Sudanese Civil Wars

The First Sudanese Civil War erupted in 1955, just a few months before Sudan was granted independence in the following year.¹² The war was fueled by tensions between the northern and southern regions of Sudan, with South Sudan seeking the right of self-government without influence of the Arab northerners but being consistently denied that right by the Sudanese government.¹³ In August 1955, several members of the Sudan Defense Force rebelled in response to a leaked telegram allegedly urging northern officials to oppress southerners.¹⁴ The Sudanese government quickly suppressed the rebellion, causing those who rebelled to flee and begin small insurgency operations in areas surrounding the Equatoria region within southern Sudan.¹⁵ In 1963, the Anyanya, an insurgent group primarily composed of southern tribes and former mutineers, formed with the intent of coordinating the various insurgent efforts.¹⁶ Anyanya rebelled against the Sudanese government for years, but was marred by a lack of cohesiveness

¹ Britannica, "Sudan," July 3, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sudan>, (accessed August 28, 2024).

² Britannica, "Sudan."

³ The World Factbook, "Sudan," United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2024, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/sudan/>, (accessed August 8, 2024).

⁴ UN Peacekeeping, "United Nations Mission in the Sudan," United Nations, 2024, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unmis/background.shtml>, (accessed August 28, 2024).

⁵ Britannica, "Sudan."

⁶ Britannica, "Sudan."

⁷ Britannica, "Sudan."

⁸ Britannica, "Sudan."

⁹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "A Country Divided," 2024, <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/sudan/a-country-divided>, (accessed July 8, 2024).

¹⁰ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*, Cape Town: Inst. for Justice and Reconciliation, 2007, http://www.ijr.org.za/home/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/sudan_book.pdf.

¹¹ Britannica, "South Sudan," July 6, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan>, (accessed July 7, 2024).

¹² Britannica, "Sudan."

¹³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "A Country Divided."

¹⁴ O'Ballance, Edgar, *The Secret War in the Sudan, 1955-1972*, London: Faber, 1977.

¹⁵ O'Ballance, Edgar, *The Secret War in the Sudan, 1955-1972*.

¹⁶ Sudan Tribune, "1955-1972 | First Sudanese Civil War / Anyanya / Anya-Nya Movement," Sudan Tribune, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20181127041659/http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?mot1989>, (accessed July 8, 2024).

and in fighting regarding leadership.¹⁷ However, in 1972, founder of Anyanya, Colonel Joseph Lagu, assumed total control of the group, brought cohesion to its campaign, and renamed the group to South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM).¹⁸ The SSLM received material support from Israel and quickly seized control of large parts of Equatoria, which prompted the Sudanese government to negotiate peace with Lagu.¹⁹ In March 1972, the Sudanese government and the SSLM drafted the Addis Ababa Agreement to promote peace by clearly defining the division of powers between the northern and southern regions, as well as by giving the regions of southern Sudan more autonomy.²⁰ Sudan had planned to use this time of peace to invest funds that were previously allocated towards civil war efforts into improving infrastructure and expanding its domestic production of sugar, cotton, and wheat.²¹ However, the implementation of these projects was flawed, and deadlines were repeatedly missed, resulting in a downward spiral of increasing debt, rising inflation, and declining living standards for the Sudanese people.²² Additionally, the decade following the implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreement was riddled with continued uprisings in the south, resulting in the agreement doing little to quell the tensions between the northern and southern regions.²³

Hostilities reignited between the north and South Sudan in 1982.²⁴ Sudanese president Gaafar Nimeiry attempted to take total control of the oil fields in South Sudan by shifting the border between the Northern and Southern regions.²⁵ This action violated the terms of the Addis Ababa Agreement, which had since been incorporated into the Sudan Constitution.²⁶ In 1983, Nimeiry violated the agreement further by declaring the entirety of Sudan an Islamic state and dissolving South Sudan's autonomy.²⁷ This action led to the Second Sudanese Civil War, which officially began in June 1983 between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).²⁸ The SPLM was an insurgent movement formed in response to Nimeiry's actions and was separate from the SSLM, which itself chose to stay out of the second civil war.²⁹ The SPLM initially aimed to unify Sudan and set aside its religious differences, but their goal shifted to granting southern Sudan complete autonomy from the north.³⁰ In the years immediately following the start of the civil war, the Sudanese government experienced numerous military coups by political parties due to the failure of the Sudanese government to make peace with the SPLM.³¹ Most notably, a coup occurred within the Sudanese government on June 30th, 1989, installing Lieutenant Omar al-Bashir as a military dictator over Sudan.³² Bashir sought to bolster the military response to the war, quickly terminating the Sudanese parliament and banning political parties after being brought to power.³³ However, Bashir's militaristic stance failed to improve Sudan's position in the war, as the SPLM captured large amounts of territory in South Sudan and along Sudan's eastern border from 1991 to 2003, pushing the Sudanese government to begin peace talks with the SPLM in late 2003.³⁴ On January 9th, 2005, the SPLM and the Sudanese government signed the

¹⁷ Sudan Tribune, "1955-1972 | First Sudanese Civil War / Anyanya / Anya-Nya Movement," Sudan Tribune, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20181127041659/http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?mot1989>, (accessed July 8, 2024).

¹⁸ Sudan Tribune, "1955-1972 | First Sudanese Civil War / Anyanya / Anya-Nya Movement."

¹⁹ Sudan Tribune, "1955-1972 | First Sudanese Civil War / Anyanya / Anya-Nya Movement."

²⁰ United Nations Peacemaker, "Addis Ababa Agreement on the Problem of South Sudan," United Nations, February 27, 1972, <https://peacemaker.un.org/sudan-addisababa-southsudan72>, (accessed July 4, 2024); Britannica, "Sudan - The Addis Ababa Agreement," July 6, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sudan/The-Addis-Ababa-Agreement>, (accessed July 7, 2024).

²¹ Britannica, "Sudan - The Addis Ababa Agreement."

²² Britannica, "Sudan - The Addis Ababa Agreement."

²³ Britannica, "Sudan - The Addis Ababa Agreement."

²⁴ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*, Cape Town: Inst. for Justice and Reconciliation, 2007, http://www.ijr.org.za/home/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/sudan_book.pdf.

²⁵ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*.

²⁶ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*.

²⁷ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*.

²⁸ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*.

²⁹ Raftopoulos, Brian, *Peace in the balance: The crisis in Sudan*.

³⁰ van Baarsen, M.V., "The Sudanese Civil War," *The Netherlands and Sudan: Dutch Policies and Interventions with Respect to the Sudanese Civil War*, Clingendael Institute, 2000, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05430.6>.

³¹ van Baarsen, M.V., "The Sudanese Civil War."

³² van Baarsen, M.V., "The Sudanese Civil War."

³³ van Baarsen, M.V., "The Sudanese Civil War."

³⁴ van Baarsen, M.V., "The Sudanese Civil War."

Comprehensive Peace Act (CPA), equally dividing the revenues from the contentious oil fields and granting South Sudan six years of full autonomy until becoming fully independent from Sudan in 2011.³⁵

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

The United Nations (UN) has facilitated several peacekeeping operations in Sudan since the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War. On June 11th, 2004, the UN Security Council (SC) adopted S/RES/1547 (2004), which established the UN Advance Mission in the Sudan (UNAMIS) to support peace operations in southern Sudan, the western Darfur region, and the capital city of Khartoum.³⁶ UNAMIS was intended to be a short-term operation that helped the warring parties transition into peace talks.³⁷ The signing of the CPA led to the Security Council (SC) adoption of S/RES/1590 (2005), creating the UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to replace UNAMIS and implement the peacekeeping measures established by the CPA.³⁸ UNMIS continued its mandate until the task force ended its mission in 2011 following the independence of South Sudan as a consequence of the CPA, as well as the end of the agreed-upon operation period.³⁹ The SC passed S/RES/1996 on July 8th, 2011, one day before South Sudan became an independent state, which affirmed the UN's support of South Sudan and established the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) to assist with peace and security within the new Member State.⁴⁰

However, despite ongoing peace efforts, the western Darfur region continued to struggle with the Sudanese government, motivated by Sudan's alleged neglect of its western regions.⁴¹ Tribal and political tensions between the Sudanese government and rebels in Darfur clashed in 2003, after rebels attacked a government post in Darfur.⁴² Sudan responded by attacking not only the responsible rebel groups, but also all non-Arabs in the Darfur region.⁴³ The SC referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court in March 2005, citing potential crimes against humanity and war crimes had occurred by the Sudanese government.⁴⁴ In 2006, the SC attempted to expand the mission of UNMIS into the Darfur region but ultimately failed to deploy into the region due to pushback by the Sudanese government.⁴⁵ As humanitarian conditions deteriorated, the SC attempted to provide aid in Darfur in 2007 by passing S/RES/1769, establishing a joint operation with the African Union (AU) known as the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).⁴⁶ UNAMID was intended to replace previous AU efforts to establish peace in Darfur but failed to eliminate conflict in the region after years of effort.⁴⁷ In 2013, the Sudanese government attempted to quell rebellions in Darfur by deploying the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group that was known for its brutality and lawless tactics.⁴⁸ Despite reports of sexual violence and the razing of numerous villages across Darfur by the RSF, UNAMID downsized its military presence in Darfur until withdrawing from the region

³⁵ United Nations Peacemaker, "The Comprehensive Peace Agreement," United Nations, 2005, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SD_060000_The%20Comprehensive%20Peace%20Agreement.pdf, (accessed July 9, 2024).

³⁶ United Nations Refugee Agency, "UN Advance Mission in Sudan," United Nations, 2024, <https://www.refworld.org/document-sources/un-advance-mission-sudan>, (accessed July 7, 2024); United Nations Security Council Resolution 1547, "Security Council resolution 1547 (2004) on establishment of a UN advance team in Sudan as a special political mission," S/RES/1547, June 11, 2004, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/523368/files/S_RES_1547%282004%29-EN.pdf?ln=en.

³⁷ UN Peacekeeping, "United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS)," United Nations, 2011, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unmis/>, (accessed August 31, 2024).

³⁸ UN Peacekeeping, "United Nations Mission in the Sudan.," United Nations Security Council Resolution 1590, "Security Council resolution 1590 (2005) on establishment of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)," S/RES/1590, March 24, 2005, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/544317/files/S_RES_1590%282005%29-EN.pdf?ln=en.

³⁹ UN Peacekeeping, "United Nations Mission in the Sudan.""

⁴⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1996, "Security Council resolution 1996 (2011) on establishment of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)," S/RES/1996, July 8, 2011, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/706698/files/S_RES_1996%282011%29-EN.pdf?ln=en.

⁴¹ Britannica, "Darfur," August 15, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Darfur>, (accessed August 31, 2024).

⁴² "Sudan – Darfur – South Sudan." World Without Genocide, August 2024, <https://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/darfur-genocide>, (accessed September 20, 2024).

⁴³ "Sudan – Darfur – South Sudan." World Without Genocide."

⁴⁴ "Sudan – Darfur – South Sudan." World Without Genocide."

⁴⁵ UN Peacekeeping, "United Nations Mission in the Sudan."

⁴⁶ Britannica, "Darfur."

⁴⁷ Britannica, "Darfur."

⁴⁸ Britannica, "Darfur."

completely in 2017 and ending its mandate in 2020.⁴⁹ Despite international efforts, violence and inequality in Darfur continue, as civilian protests against the government remain heavily suppressed and the humanitarian crisis grew.⁵⁰

In the years following the termination of UNMIS, President Bashir faced numerous protests from Sudanese citizens due to the growing economic crisis caused by Sudan's loss of the majority of its oil fields to South Sudan.⁵¹ These protests grew increasingly more violent, with many protesters calling for the dissolution of the Bashir regime.⁵² In April 2019, Bashir was overthrown in a coup led by an alliance between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Sudan's primary military force, and the RSF.⁵³ The coup responded to public calls for Bashir's resignation, but ultimately widened the gap between Sudan's new military authorities and the public.⁵⁴ Noticing this growing divide, the SC adopted S/RES/2524 (2020), creating the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to provide continued support towards peaceful transitions of power within the Sudanese government.⁵⁵ UNITAMS's mandate complemented ongoing UN programs and agencies conducting work in Sudan, with the mission providing economic and humanitarian aid to the Sudanese people.⁵⁶ Noting the significant progress made by UNITAMS, the SC passed resolutions throughout 2021-2023 to extend the mission's mandate.⁵⁷

Recent Developments

The actions of the SAF and the RSF have recently created a new crisis in Sudan. Though the SAF and RSF were once allied, tensions were created between the two groups when the international community called for the merger of the RSF with the Sudanese army and for Sudan to transition back into a civilian-led government after another military coup orchestrated in part by the RSF in 2021.⁵⁸ However, there was disagreement between SAF leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burha and RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo on who should be in command of this new combined military force.⁵⁹ The tension between the two generals increased, and in April 2023, culminated in the RSF revolting against the government, subsequently being labeled as an enemy of the state by the SAF.⁶⁰ The escalation has led to armed conflict centered in the capital city, Khartoum, as well as skirmishes in Darfur and other regions surrounding Khartoum.⁶¹ The SC terminated UNITAMS in December 2023 in S/RES/2715 due to the rapidly increasing violence and human rights abuses caused by the new civil war.⁶²

This conflict in Sudan has created a new humanitarian crisis in Khartoum and Darfur, with the deteriorating conditions of the conflict causing a statewide famine and the population displacement.⁶³ Additionally, mass flooding

⁴⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping, "UNAMID Fact Sheet," United Nations, 2020, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unamid>, (accessed August 31, 2024).

⁵⁰ "Sudan – Darfur – South Sudan." World Without Genocide, August 2024, <https://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/darfur-genocide>, (accessed September 20, 2024).

⁵¹ Hassan, Mai, and Ahmed Kodouda, "Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator," *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 4 (October 2019): 89-103, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/sudans-uprising-the-fall-of-a-dictator/>, (accessed August 7, 2024).

⁵² Hassan, Mai, and Ahmed Kodouda, "Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator."

⁵³ Hassan, Mai, and Ahmed Kodouda, "Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator."

⁵⁴ Hassan, Mai, and Ahmed Kodouda, "Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator."

⁵⁵ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2524, "Security Council resolution 2524 (2020) on establishment of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)," S/RES/2524, June 3, 2020, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3864102/files/S_RES_2524_%282020%29-EN.pdf?ln=en.

⁵⁶ United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, "UNITAMS," United Nations, 2024, <https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/unitams>, (accessed July 9, 2024).

⁵⁷ United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, "UNITAMS."

⁵⁸ Ferragamo, Mariel, and Diana Roy, "What Is the Extent of Sudan's Humanitarian Crisis?" Council on Foreign Relations, June 26, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-extent-sudans-humanitarian-crisis>, (accessed August 31, 2024).

⁵⁹ Stigant, Susan, "What's Behind the Fighting in Sudan?" United States Institute of Peace, April 20, 2023, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/04/whats-behind-fighting-sudan>, (accessed August 9, 2024).

⁶⁰ Stigant, Susan, "What's Behind the Fighting in Sudan?"

⁶¹ Ferragamo, Mariel, and Diana Roy, "What Is the Extent of Sudan's Humanitarian Crisis?"

⁶² United Nations Security Council Resolution 2715, "Security Council resolution 2715 (2023) on termination of the mandate of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)," S/RES/2715, December 1, 2023, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4029178/files/S_RES_2715_%282023%29-EN.pdf?ln=en.

⁶³ Ferragamo, Mariel, and Diana Roy, "What Is the Extent of Sudan's Humanitarian Crisis?"

in large parts of Sudan has wiped out critical infrastructure and worsened the famine across the Member State.⁶⁴ Northern Darfur has been severely impacted, with an estimated 500,000 individuals facing severe food insecurity due to violence and blockades propagated by the RSF.⁶⁵ To help provide aid to the people in Darfur, the SC passed S/RES/2736 (2024) to condemn the siege of El Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur, by RSF forces.⁶⁶ In March 2024, the SC called for an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan, but the SAF rejected the truce due to the failure of the RSF to withdraw its forces from civilian homes and facilities, a commitment that the RSF pledged to in May 2023.⁶⁷ In April 2024, the UN declared the war in Sudan a “crisis of epic proportions” that has wiped out years of development and peacekeeping efforts following the two civil wars.⁶⁸ The war between the SAF and RSF has shown little signs of slowing and has made it difficult for humanitarian aid to reach the Sudanese people in need.⁶⁹ As of September 2024, the civil war in Khartoum and Darfur has displaced over nine million people, with a casualty estimate nearing 15,000.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ UN News, “Famine now prevalent in parts of war-torn Sudan,” United Nations, August 1, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1152736>, (accessed August 31, 2024).

⁶⁵ UN News, “Famine now prevalent in parts of war-torn Sudan.”

⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2736, “Security Council resolution 2736 (2024) on halt to fighting and de-escalation in and around El Fasher, Sudan,” *S/RES/2736*, June 13, 2024, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4051915/files/S_RES_2736_%282024%29-EN.pdf?ln=en.

⁶⁷ UN News, “UN chief appeals for Sudan ceasefire, now: Values of Ramadan must prevail,” United Nations, March 7, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147352>, (accessed July 9, 2024).

⁶⁸ UN News, “War in Sudan is ‘a crisis of epic proportions’ as atrocities abound,” United Nations, April 19, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148791>, (accessed July 9, 2024).

⁶⁹ United Nations Regional Information Centre, “The UN and the crisis in Sudan,” United Nations, July 2, 2024, <https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-crisis-in-sudan/>, (accessed September 2, 2024).

⁷⁰ United Nations Regional Information Centre, “The UN and the crisis in Sudan.”