GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1

BUILDING TRUST AND COOPERATION IN THE ARMED CONFLICT IN SUDAN

German International School
of The Hague
Model United Nations

Letizia Grössl

Forum: General Assembly 1

Issue: Building trust and cooperation in the armed conflict in Sudan

Student Officer: Letizia Grössl

Position: Deputy President

Introduction

The ongoing conflict in Sudan represents a profound humanitarian and political crisis, demanding urgent attention from the international community. Originating from deep-seated tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), this conflict has not only resulted in widespread displacement and loss of life but also threatens the stability of the entire region. The breakdown of trust between key actors, coupled with external interference, has exacerbated the situation, making it increasingly difficult to find a path toward sustainable peace. *Addressing this crisis requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes building trust, fostering cooperation, and addressing the root causes of the conflict.* This research report will delve into the key aspects of the conflict, exploring its origins, the major parties involved, previous attempts at resolution, and potential solutions for fostering trust and cooperation.

Definition of Key Terms

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF):

The national army of Sudan, under the command of the Chair of the Sovereignty Council and de facto President of Sudan.

Rapid Support Forces (RSF):

A paramilitary group that grew out of the Janjaweed militias, formerly commanded by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti).

Armed conflict:

A situation of violence between separate groups or states, involving the use of armed force.

Trust-building:

The process of developing confidence and reliability between parties in conflict.

Cooperation:

The act of working together towards a common goal or purpose.

Peacebuilding:

Activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence, or continuation of armed conflict and creating conditions for sustainable peace.

Reconciliation:

The process of restoring friendly relations between conflicting parties.

Trust-Building Measures:

Actions taken to increase confidence and reduce suspicion between conflicting parties, such as ceasefire agreements, joint monitoring mechanisms, and dialogue initiatives.

Sovereignty Council:

The collective head of state of Sudan. It was formed in August 2019 as part of the transition towards democracy.

General Overview

Historical Context

Sudan's conflict stems from colonial-era marginalization of peripheral regions, post-independence centralization of power, and competition over resources like oil and arable land. Post-independence governments continued this centralization, leading to economic disparities and political exclusion. Competition over vital resources, including oil and arable land, further deepened tensions. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005) but failed to address systemic inequities, leading to South Sudan's secession in 2011. Subsequent governments maintained authoritarian rule, exacerbating grievances, and triggering armed rebellions in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan.

Conflict areas in Sudan — ISPI
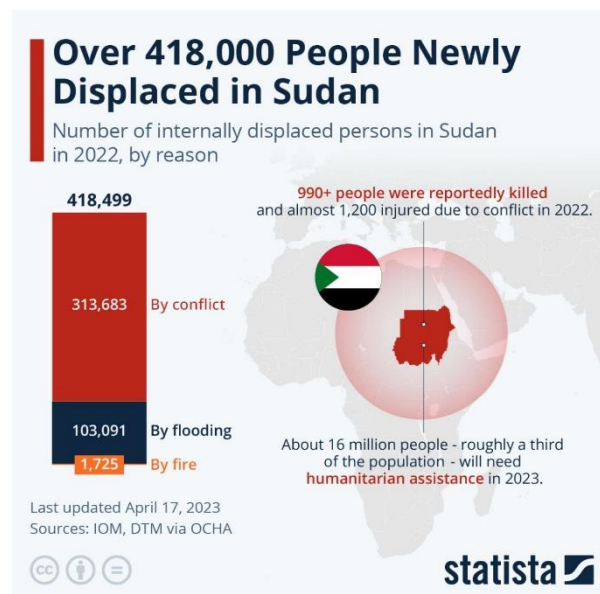
Current Situation (2023–2025)

The 2023 power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) over military integration has escalated into a nationwide war, resulting in over 15,000 deaths and the displacement of 8.2 million people (OCHA, 2025). Ethnic violence in Darfur, coupled with heavy urban warfare in Khartoum, underscores the multifaceted nature of the crisis. Despite periodic ceasefires, humanitarian corridors remain inaccessible, leaving 25 million Sudanese in urgent need of aid (UNHCR, 2025).

Regional Impact

The conflict's repercussions extend beyond Sudan's borders, straining neighbouring countries such as Chad and South Sudan, which are grappling with mass refugee influxes and cross-border militia incursions. The African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have facilitated multiple rounds of peace talks, yet progress remains stymied by fragmented leadership, internal factionalism, and external geopolitical rivalries involving actors like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Russia.

Social and Economic Impact

The prolonged conflict has led to the collapse of essential services, with healthcare systems on the brink of failure due to attacks on hospitals and supply chain disruptions. Food shortages have been exacerbated by the destruction of agricultural infrastructure and the disruption of trade routes. Inflation has soared, making basic necessities unaffordable for much of the population. The war has also disproportionately affected women and children, with reports of gender-based violence and child recruitment by armed groups. Schools have been shut down in many regions, depriving an entire generation of access to education and further fuelling cycles of poverty and instability.

Over 418,000 People Newly Displaced in Sudan

Number of internally displaced persons in Sudan in 2022, by reason

418,499

313,683 — By conflict

103,091 — By flooding

1,725 — By fire

990+ people were reportedly killed and almost 1,200 injured due to conflict in 2022.

About 16 million people - roughly a third of the population - will need humanitarian assistance in 2023.

Last updated April 17, 2023
Sources: IOM, DTM via OCHA

statista

Major Parties Involved

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF):

Led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the SAF aims to maintain its control over the state and ensure the integration of the RSF under its command. The SAF views the RSF as a threat to its authority and the stability of the country.

Rapid Support Forces (RSF):

Commanded by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), the RSF seeks to secure its position within the Sudanese security apparatus and protect its economic interests. The RSF accuses the SAF of attempting to marginalize and eliminate it.

Regional actors

Neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, which have significant interests in Sudan's stability.

Civilian Political Groups:

Various civilian political groups, including the **Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC)**, aspire to restore a civilian-led government and complete the democratic transition. These groups seek an end to the conflict and the establishment of a government that represents the interests of all Sudanese people.

International Actors:

Various international actors, including the **African Union (AU)**, the **United Nations (UN)**, and regional powers, are involved in efforts to mediate the conflict and provide humanitarian assistance. However, their influence has been limited by the complexity of the situation and the lack of a unified approach.

Timeline of Events

Date	Event
Jan. 1956	Sudan gains independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule
1983	Second Sudanese Civil War begins
2003	Darfur conflict erupts
Jan. 2005	Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed
2011	South Sudan gains independence
Apr.2019	Overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir following mass protests
Aug. 2019	Formation of a transitional government led by civilian and military leaders
Oct. 2020	Juba Peace Agreement signed between the government and rebel groups
Apr. 2023	Clashes erupt between SAF and RSF, escalating into full-scale conflict
Ongoing	Multiple failed ceasefire attempts, worsening humanitarian crisis

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Attempts have been made to resolve the conflicts in Sudan and build trust among the parties involved:

1. **The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005):**
   Ended the Second Sudanese Civil War and laid the groundwork for South Sudan's independence.

2. **Darfur Peace Agreement (2006):**
   Aimed to end the conflict in Darfur but failed due to limited participation and implementation challenges.

3. **Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (2011):**
   A more inclusive agreement that sought to address the root causes of the Darfur conflict.

4. **Juba Peace Agreement (2020):**
   Aimed at integrating rebel groups into the government but failed to include all factions.

5. **Ceasefire Agreements (2023-Present**):
   Multiple short-term ceasefires have been brokered by the UN, AU, and regional mediators, but violations occur frequently.

6. **International Sanctions:**
   The U.S. and EU have imposed sanctions on Sudanese leaders, but their effectiveness remains debated.

Possible Solutions

Strengthening Ceasefires in Sudan: A Path to Sustainable Peace

The establishment and maintenance of effective ceasefires represent a critical step towards achieving sustainable peace in Sudan. However, past attempts to implement ceasefires have often faltered due to a lack of commitment, inadequate monitoring, and a failure to address the underlying causes of the conflict. To overcome these challenges, a more robust and comprehensive approach is needed.

First, a **robust monitoring mechanism** must be established. This mechanism should be led by a neutral international body and should comprise a team of experienced monitors drawn from organizations like **the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** and the **African Union (AU).** This team should include both civilian and military professionals. The presence of such a team would not only help to verify compliance with ceasefire agreements but would also send a clear message to the warring parties that the international community is paying attention.

Moreover, a **phased implementation approach** should be adopted. Rather than attempting to impose a nationwide ceasefire immediately, it may be more realistic to begin with short-term ceasefires in specific regions. These initial ceasefires could focus on areas where the humanitarian situation is particularly dire, such as North Darfur and al-Jazira states. By focusing on these limited areas, the parties can demonstrate their commitment to humanitarian access and aid delivery, building trust and creating momentum for broader agreements.

To ensure that ceasefire agreements are effectively implemented, a **dedicated humanitarian task force** should be created. This task force would be responsible for following up with both parties to the conflict, addressing any obstacles or challenges that may arise. The task force should include independent experts with national and contextual knowledge of the conflict to avoid repeating past failures. The task force would monitor the effectiveness of implementation efforts and make recommendations for improvements.

Civilian inclusion is key to the sustainability of peace in Sudan. Marginalized and conflict-affected communities must be engaged in ceasefire negotiations and implementation.

In conjunction with these efforts, a **strict arms embargo** must be enforced. This requires strengthening monitoring to ensure that no weapons or military equipment are supplied to either the SAF or the RSF.

To deter violations of ceasefire agreements, it is essential to establish clear consequences for those who break the peace. This could include targeted sanctions, travel bans, or other measures designed to hold individuals and entities accountable for their actions.

Bibliography

History of Sudan | Events, People, Dates, Map, & Facts | Britannica

Sudan needs an exceptional humanitarian endeavour to end its horrific civil war | Mukesh Kapila | The Guardian

Sudan | Crisis Group

World Report 2025: Sudan | Human Rights Watch

In Sudan, a Deadly Reckoning for Rival Forces - New Lines Magazine

Negotiated solution only way to end Sudan war: senior UN official | UN News

Resolving Sudan's crisis means removing those fighting | Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank

Sudan conflict: 'There cannot be a military solution to this war' | UN News

Appendix

The Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan