

Please cite as: EUAA, '1. General situation in Sudan' in *Country Guidance: Sudan*, June 2025.

1. General situation in Sudan

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2025

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Historical background and recent events

Sudan’s history since its independence in 1956 is characterised by authoritarianism, instability, numerous *coups*, and two major civil wars. Omar al-Bashir's Islamist-led government (1989–2019) played a key role in shaping the country’s politics, including fuelling the Darfur conflict when increasing tensions in the region were met with racially targeted attacks by government-backed Arab militias, known as *Janjaweed*. This led to the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictments against Bashir and some of his associates for genocide and crimes against humanity. The North-South civil war ended in 2005 with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), paving the way for South Sudan’s independence (2011).

After decades of authoritarian rule and economic decline, mass protests led to Bashir’s ousting in 2019. A transitional military-civilian government was formed, and in 2020 the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) was signed between the main armed rebel groups, while other declined to sign it (see also 2. Actors of persecution or serious harm).

Ultimately tensions between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) triggered by disagreements on the integration of the RSF into the military forces, escalated into a nationwide war in 2023. Both sides have been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity and have used weapons indiscriminately in civilian areas, the SAF through airstrikes, heavy artillery, and tanks, while the RSF employed hit-and-run tactics. The RSF also continued to employ tactics known from the Janjaweed era, including pillaging and looting, and deliberate killings to intimidate residents. In late 2024 and early 2025, Sudan’s military leadership reshaped the political landscape by replacing the Sovereignty Council with a SAF military-led council and amending the 2019 Constitutional Document, removing references to civilian forces like the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC). At the same time, the civilian coalition Taqaddum held talks in Kampala about forming a government in exile and eventually decided to split into

two groups.

Meanwhile, the RSF and allied political and armed groups signed the Sudan Founding Alliance Charter in Nairobi, aiming to establish a parallel government and joint army in RSF-controlled areas, formalising the territorial control of the RSF in Darfur and of the SPLM-N Al-Hilu in Kordofan. Following the signature, the RSF engaged in meetings with the SPLM-N Al-Hilu in Blue Nile and South Kordofan as well as with the Sudan Liberation Movement –Transitional Council (SLM-TC) and the Sudanese Alliance Forces (SA) Sudanese Alliance Forces in view of the definition of the structures of the Sudan Founding Alliance.

In the ongoing conflict, much of the violence in Sudan is targeted; civilians do not flee solely out of fear of crossfire but because they are actively persecuted based on ethnicity, (perceived) political affiliation. Women, children, and persons with diverse SOGIESC have also been reportedly targeted. Sources indicate the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. These attacks have been especially prevalent during invasions of cities, attacks on IDPs and IDP sites, as well as during the occupation of urban residential areas by armed fighters. Mostly attributed to the RSF, these acts have been a ‘defining’ characteristic of the current conflict. Both the SAF and the RSF are also using food and humanitarian aid control as a weapon and deliberately starving civilians, heightening the risk of imminent widespread famine.

Media restrictions and communication blackouts have further hindered reporting on the crisis, leading to significant underreporting of security incidents and underestimation of death counts. Although not officially documented, war-aggravated factors such as lack of emergency care, essential food, medicine and vaccination programmes have also indirectly led to numerous deaths.

The rule of law collapsed, leading to widespread human rights abuses such as extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary detentions. Meanwhile, the situation remains highly volatile, with territorial control constantly shifting amid unceasing offensives from both primary factions.

Humanitarian situation

The UN has described Sudan’s situation as one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises, due to ongoing armed conflict, attacks on civilians, and collapsing infrastructure, including healthcare, water, and sanitation systems. Sudan’s humanitarian crisis, already severe, had further intensified by early 2025, with an estimated 30.4 million people in need of assistance. Nearly two-thirds of the population required urgent humanitarian assistance, while 11.3 million people were forcibly displaced, including 8.5 million displaced internally and 3.9 million who have crossed Sudan’s borders into neighbouring countries. Over 25 million people faced acute food insecurity, with famine confirmed in several areas. Although some food aid resumed in late 2024, ongoing attacks on markets and logistical disruptions left millions without reliable access to basic supplies. Devastated agricultural activities, along with abandoned, looted, or destroyed crops, further deepened the crisis. By October 2024, UN experts warned that Sudan was facing an unprecedented level of starvation, affecting 13 million children. Gender-based violence and harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage, and child labour increased due to the crisis. Meanwhile, millions lacked access to clean water and sanitation, and the country’s health

system has been pushed to the brink of collapse, with disease outbreaks spreading rapidly and only a fraction of health facilities remaining fully operational. The suspension of U.S. aid severely affected 335 health facilities, especially in Darfur, while armed blockades and looting further hindered the delivery of humanitarian assistance and essential supplies. Despite humanitarian efforts reaching 12.4 million people, and the reopening of the border with Chad at Adré, the aid delivery continued to face severe obstacles, including bureaucratic restrictions, attacks on aid workers, and deliberate interference by warring parties.

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