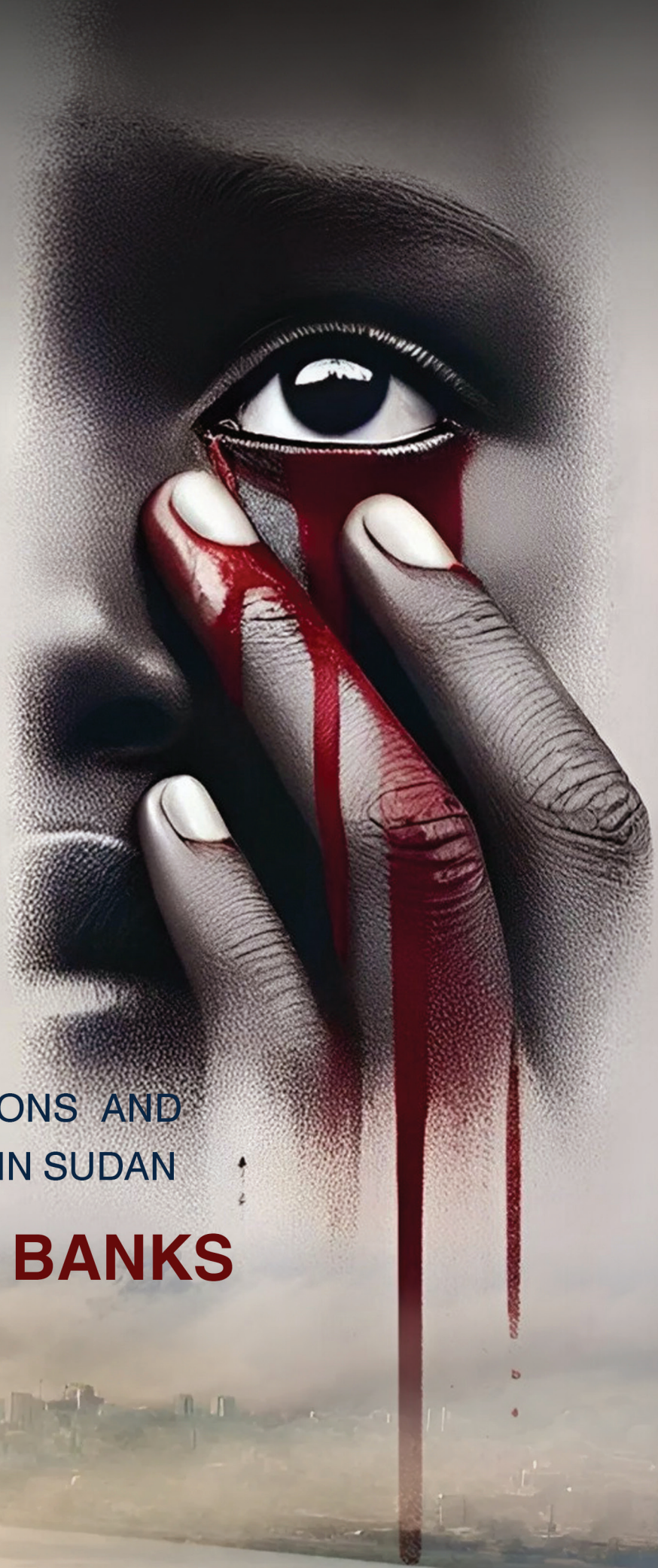




Women
Journalists
Without
Chains



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND
INTERNATIONAL CRIMES IN SUDAN

BLOOD ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE



Executive Summary

This report highlights critical human rights violations and international crimes committed in Sudan since the outbreak of conflict in April 2023. Drawing on a robust methodology, it synthesizes field testimonies, international reports from organizations like the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, and verified visual materials, including photos and videos from media and social media. The methodology included a comprehensive analysis of these sources to uncover patterns of violations and their impact. Despite significant challenges, such as security risks and restricted access to affected areas, the report provides a detailed account of these violations and their profound consequences.

The findings of this analysis document widespread violations, including indiscriminate attacks on civilians, systematic sexual violence, forced displacement, and looting. The analysis also reveals patterns of genocide targeting ethnic groups, the use of civilians as human shields, and other breaches of international humanitarian law. These actions have displaced over 11 million people internally and forced millions to flee to neighboring countries. Furthermore, extensive destruction of infrastructure and essential services has deepened the humanitarian crisis.

Evidence points to the involvement of both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in grave violations. The Sudanese Armed Forces are implicated in indiscriminate airstrikes on residential areas, while the Rapid Support Forces have engaged in systematic violence, including genocide in Darfur and sexual assaults aimed at terrorizing communities. Allied militias on both sides have also been documented engaging in widespread looting and destruction of civilian and cultural property.

The report underscores the Sudanese state's failure to protect civilians, a legal obligation under international law, and highlights the complicity of the warring parties in actions amounting to war crimes. The absence of justice and accountability has hindered international efforts to end these atrocities and protect victims. To address the crisis, the report calls for independent investigations to



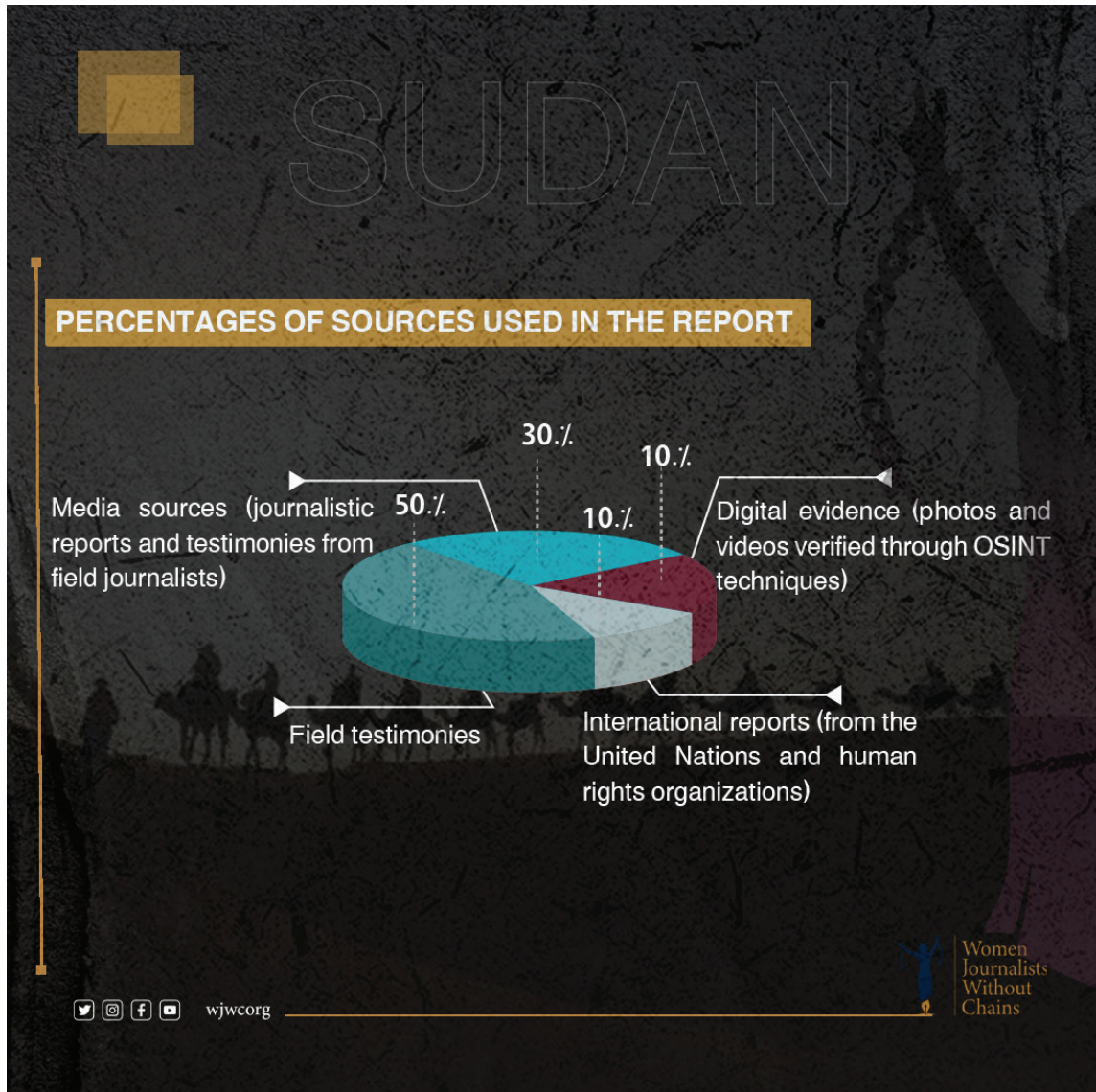
ensure accountability and justice for victims. It emphasizes the need for urgent measures to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian aid, and strengthen the international community's role in supporting justice and peace in Sudan.

Report Methodology

This report, prepared by Women Journalists Without Chains, employs a meticulous approach to document serious human rights violations and crimes committed in Sudan since the conflict erupted in April 2023. The methodology includes collecting and analyzing field testimonies alongside international reports issued by reputable organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch.

In addition to these sources, the report draws on data and studies from open sources, including reliable journalistic accounts. The team reviewed numerous videos and photos circulated on social media, subjecting them to rigorous analysis and verification to ensure authenticity and accuracy.

The working team encountered significant challenges during the preparation of this report. Chief among these were restricted access to some areas due to the absence of security guarantees and the ongoing armed conflict. The interruption of communication networks further hindered the collection of direct information from certain regions, adding to the complexities faced in compiling a comprehensive account of the violations.



Historical and Political Background

Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has experienced persistent political turmoil and internal conflicts that have disrupted its stability and unity. Among the most notable was the Darfur conflict, which began in 2003 and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and the displacement of millions. During this period, the Sudanese government was accused of supporting militias responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, leading to international legal actions against former President Omar al-Bashir.

In 2018, widespread economic hardships triggered mass protests that culminated in the ousting of al-Bashir's regime in 2019. This ushered in a transitional phase involving a power-sharing arrangement between civilian and military leaders



aimed at fostering peace and steering the country toward democracy. However, this period faced significant challenges in achieving national stability.

In December 2022, a framework political agreement was signed between Sudanese military leaders and civilian forces. This agreement sought to restructure the transitional government and prepare for democratic elections. Despite its potential as a step toward stability, the agreement failed to gain broad popular support, particularly from resistance committees representing key segments of the popular movement. This lack of consensus undermined the agreement's effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

Against this fragile political backdrop, tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces, led by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), escalated. The primary source of contention was the integration of the RSF into the national army, a crucial aspect of restructuring the military institution to ensure unified control over the country's armed forces. These tensions ultimately erupted into full-scale armed conflict in April 2023, plunging the nation into chaos and intensifying the humanitarian crisis.

On April 15, 2023, violent clashes broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF in the capital, Khartoum. The conflict rapidly spread to other regions, including Darfur and Kordofan, with both sides employing heavy weaponry and conducting airstrikes in densely populated areas. This widespread violence has caused extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, markets, and schools.

The human toll of this conflict is staggering. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed, while over 11 million people have been displaced within Sudan. Additionally, more than 3.19 million have sought refuge in neighboring countries, compounding the humanitarian crisis. Civilians face dire conditions, with limited access to protection and essential services, exacerbating their suffering.

The destruction of infrastructure reflects a systematic violation of human rights, particularly the rights to health and education. Hospitals are unable to provide



medical care, and schools remain closed, depriving children of their education. These actions constitute a severe breach of international humanitarian law, which mandates the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflicts.

Parties Involved in The Conflict

The conflict in Sudan is a complex and multifaceted war involving both internal and external actors. The primary struggle centers on the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with the involvement of local militias and external interventions further complicating the situation.

Internal Parties

1. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF):

The Sudanese Armed Forces, led by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-



Burhan, are the official military body responsible for safeguarding Sudan's sovereignty. The SAF played a pivotal role in the 2012 coup that removed former President Omar al-Bashir. Currently, they are one of the main parties in the ongoing conflict. The SAF has been accused of carrying

out indiscriminate airstrikes on residential areas, resulting in significant civilian casualties.

2. Rapid Support Forces (RSF):



The RSF is a paramilitary organization that evolved from ethnic militias known as the "Janjaweed," originally supported by the Sudanese government in the early and mid-2000s. The RSF, primarily composed of mem-



bers of Arab tribes from western Sudan, is vying for control of the government and the capital. Since the conflict erupted in April 2023, human rights reports have implicated the RSF in widespread atrocities, including mass arrests and abuses in Khartoum and Darfur.

3. Local Militias:

- **Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (al-Hilu Faction):** Led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu, this rebel group emerged from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, which spearheaded South Sudan's independence in 2011. The movement controls large parts of South Kordofan state. Since the conflict began, it has exploited the army's weakness to expand its influence and territory while maintaining an independent stance without formally allying with either the SAF or the RSF.
- **Joint Force of Armed Struggle Movements Forces (JSAMF):** This coalition of former rebel groups, including the Sudan Liberation Army (led by Minni Minnawi), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the Sudan Liberation Forces Gathering, was established after the Juba Agreement. Concentrated in El Fasher and rural North Darfur, the JSAMF was initially planned as a joint force of 12,000 soldiers but fell short due to the government's failure to contribute troops. Since the outbreak of war, the JSAMF has remained neutral, focusing on securing trade routes between Port Sudan, West Kordofan, and Darfur.
- **Justice and Equality Movement (JEM):** Active in Darfur and Kordofan since 2002, the JEM split into two factions after the current conflict began. One faction is led by Gibril Ibrahim, Sudan's Minister of Finance since 2021, who is politically aligned with Burhan's government. The other faction is led by Suleiman Sandal Haqar. While politically aligned, JEM's armed elements have not fully integrated into the SAF and have mostly abstained from active combat, apart from isolated incidents. Many JEM fighters serve in the JSAMF under Minni Minnawi's leadership.

External Parties

The Sudanese war has drawn significant attention from neighboring countries



and international stakeholders, whose involvement has added complexity to the conflict dynamics. This intricate web of internal and external actors highlights the multifaceted nature of the Sudanese conflict. Competing interests and power struggles are exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and hindering efforts toward peace.

1. Egypt:

Since the war began, there have been numerous reports of Egyptian intervention in support of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). While the full extent of Egypt's involvement remains unclear, the country is believed to have played a supportive role in the conflict.

2. United Arab Emirates (UAE):

The Sudanese Armed Forces have accused the UAE of providing financial and military support to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). A report by Human Rights Watch bolstered these claims, stating there is "increasing evidence" that the UAE has supplied weapons to the RSF. The report highlights that the RSF has committed numerous atrocities, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region. It also indicates that both warring parties have acquired new weapons, including those the UAE military obtained from manufacturers.

3. Neighboring Countries:

Countries bordering Sudan, such as Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, have been deeply affected by the conflict, primarily due to the massive influx of refugees fleeing the violence. However, accusations of interference have also been directed at Sudan's neighbors:

- **Kenya:** The Sudanese government, represented by the SAF, strongly criticized Kenyan President William Ruto's statement suggesting that "Sudan urgently needs new leadership to address its humanitarian catastrophe."
- **Ethiopia:** Similar allegations were leveled against Ethiopian Prime Minister



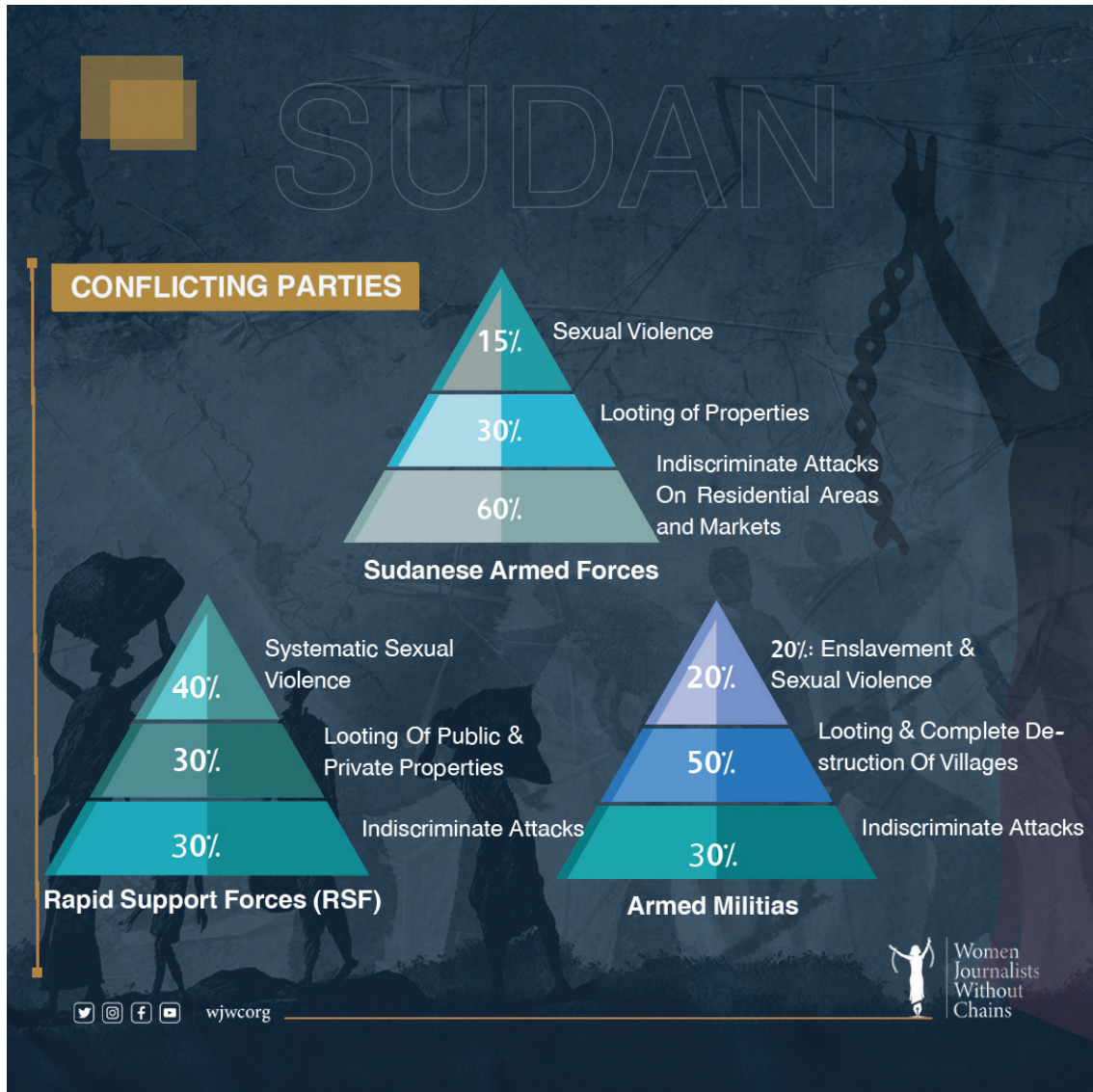
Abiy Ahmed after he remarked on a "leadership vacuum" in Sudan, implying a lack of recognition for the current state leadership under the SAF.

Women Journalists Without Chains believes that interference in the Sudanese crisis by neighboring countries and international parties continues unabated, despite the high number of victims and the tragedies resulting from the war. These external interventions, whether direct or indirect, underscore the geopolitical complexities of the Sudanese war, which extends beyond internal power struggles to involve regional and international players with competing interests.

Patterns of Violations

This section delves into the complex and devastating patterns of human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law during the ongoing Sudanese conflict. The war has exposed civilians to heinous atrocities, including indiscriminate attacks, systematic sexual violence, forced displacement, and the deprivation of essential services. These actions represent grave violations of international norms such as the **Geneva Conventions**, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, and even Sudan's own constitution, which guarantees the right to life, dignity, and personal safety.

A comprehensive analysis of the nature and methods of these violations is provided, with a focus on their profound effects on vulnerable groups, especially women and children, as well as on the overall social fabric of Sudan. The humanitarian crisis is exacerbated, and efforts aimed at achieving peace and reconciliation are obstructed.



Attacks on Civilians and Infrastructure

The indiscriminate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, including **Article 51 of Additional Protocol I** to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. During the conflict, such attacks have been carried out systematically, resulting in massive civilian casualties and the destruction of critical facilities.

These actions, which fail to distinguish between military and civilian targets, amount to war crimes under **Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**. The disproportionate harm inflicted on civilian populations highlights the warring parties' disregard for the fundamental rules of warfare.



This section explores the extensive repercussions of the conflict on civilians and essential services, assesses the responsibilities of the warring parties under international law, and evaluates the degree to which these obligations have been upheld.

1. Humanitarian Impact in El Fasher

The siege imposed by the **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** on El Fasher, lasting more than seven months, has resulted in a dire humanitarian crisis. On December 20, **Volker Türk**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, reported that intensive bombings targeting densely populated residential areas led to the deaths of **782** civilians and injured over **1,143** others. These figures, documented by the United Nations, are based on verified evidence, including interviews with displaced individuals fleeing the affected areas.

2. Healthcare System Collapse

The prolonged conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF has brought Sudan's health system to the brink of collapse. According to **Haitham Mohammed Ibrahim**, Sudan's Minister of Health, the estimated initial damage to the health sector amounts to **\$11 billion**, with over **60** health workers losing their lives. Hospitals, clinics, and medical facilities have been extensively damaged or destroyed, leaving millions of civilians without access to critical healthcare services.

3. Education Crisis

The war has devastated Sudan's education system, with catastrophic consequences for children and youth:

- A study conducted by the United Nations Development Program (**UNDP**) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (**IFPRI**) revealed that over **70%** of children in urban areas have been unable to attend school due to the conflict.
- Infrastructure damage has crippled about **120** universities and colleges, primarily in Khartoum, which serves **500,000** students. Educational institutions in Al Jazeera State and Darfur have also suffered severe



damage, including the destruction of **six** universities and other educational facilities.

- UNICEF estimates that **19** million children, equivalent to one-third of Sudan's child population, are out of school. Additionally, **6.5** million children have lost access to education due to escalating violence and insecurity, while **10,400** schools in conflict-affected regions have been forced to shut down.

Location	Responsible Party	Damages	Facility Type
El Fasher, Khartoum, Al-Jazeera, Darfur	Rapid Support Forces and Conflict Parties	-Collapse of the health sector - Estimated losses of \$11 billion - Loss of over 60% of healthcare personnel	Health Facilities
Khartoum, Al-Jazeera, South Darfur	Rapid Support Forces and Conflict Parties	- Destruction of 120 universities and colleges - 70% of urban children ceased education - Closure of 10,400 schools	Educational Facilities
El Fasher	Rapid Support Forces	- Widespread destruction - 782 civilians killed - 1,143 injured due to shelling	Residential Areas
Khartoum, Darfur, South Kordofan	Unknown	- Severe damage to hospitals, educational facilities, and homes	Public Infrastructure
Khartoum, Darfur	Unknown	- Targeting of ambulances - Disruption of medical supply delivery	Medical Transport

Sexual Violence and Slavery

Sexual violence and slavery represent some of the most horrific crimes committed during the Sudanese war, reflecting the inhumane dimensions of the conflict. These acts are classified as war crimes and crimes against humanity under



the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the ICC, particularly when committed on a systematic or large scale.

Field reports indicate a disturbing rise in these violations in Sudan, underscoring the urgent need for measures to ensure accountability, protect victims, and provide rehabilitation. Numerous women and girls, some as young as **12**, have been subjected to conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, perpetrated by members of the warring parties, particularly the Rapid Support Forces (**RSF**) and allied militias.

Many victims, primarily Sudanese, but also nationals of other countries, were abducted and assaulted either in their homes or while searching for food and basic necessities. In one particularly harrowing incident, RSF members abducted **24** women and girls in Nyala and held them in a hotel under conditions amounting to sexual slavery for several days, during which they were repeatedly raped.

Shanya Lewis, a representative of the Prevent and End Mass Atrocities (PEMA), described the brutality witnessed in Sudan during a UN Security Council session. She shared the account of a young woman from Darfur who was gang-raped in her home. Her father, who tried to intervene and rescue her, was shot dead by RSF forces as punishment for his attempt to protect her. Lewis emphasized that the Security Council must act to protect Sudan's **49** million citizens, condemning the abandonment of civilians to the mercy of armed groups as a gross violation of international obligations.

In a related statement, **Mohammed Al-Amin**, the representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Sudan, revealed that an estimated **seven** million women and girls in the country face a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, exacerbated by the ongoing conflict.

A UN report issued in July **2024** documented **400** cases of conflict-related sexual assault since the outbreak of the war, acknowledging that the actual numbers are likely much higher due to challenges in documentation. The report attributed the majority of these violations to the RSF, with incidents concentrated in Greater Khartoum, Darfur, and Al-Jazeera. Victims ranged in age from **8 to 75**,



with many in dire need of medical care as health facilities, including hospitals, have been extensively damaged or destroyed.

Mohammed Shandi Osman, head of the UN committee behind the report, described the findings as evidence of a "dangerous escalation" in sexual violence, noting that the documented cases had reached "unprecedented levels."

The **Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa**, a women's rights organization, reported in July that it had verified over **70** cases of sexual and gender-based violence, most of which were committed by the RSF. In **El Geneina**, RSF forces and allied militias raped dozens of women and girls between April and June as residents fled the violence. Victims reported that attackers used ethnic slurs and targeted **Masalit** and other non-Arab groups, highlighting the racial and ethnic dimension of these crimes.

Responsible Party	Time Period	Geographic Location	Number of Cases	Type of Violation
Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	April - August 2023	North El Fasher, Kutum, Tawila, El Geneina, and Nyala (Darfur states)	262 cases documented by local monitors	Widespread rape
Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	April - September 2023	Khartoum, South Darfur, and West Darfur	126 cases documented by the Unit for Combating Violence Against Women (reported by DW)	Various forms of sexual violence
Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	Until July 2024	Darfur, Greater Khartoum, and medical support centers	Over 400 cases documented by the UN report	Mass rape
Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	Until October 2024	Al-Jazeera State	Undetermined number documented by DW	Forced marriage
Rapid Support Forces (RSF)	Until October 2024	Various locations in Darfur	79 cases documented by Human Rights Watch	Sexual slavery

In 2024, Women Journalists Without Chains reported over 350 cases of rape across various regions, including Al-Jazeera, Greater Khartoum, and Darfur. The organization asserts that sexual violence in Sudan, particularly perpetrated by the Rapid Support Forces, is employed as a tactic to instill



fear and exert control over communities.

Detention of Women

Arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention of women have emerged as another egregious pattern of human rights violations. Women detained by warring factions often endure severe physical and psychological abuse, including torture and rape. These acts represent blatant violations of international humanitarian law, notably the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which explicitly prohibit the detention of civilians and mandate special protection for women during armed conflicts. Furthermore, such practices contravene the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees personal freedom and security, and explicitly forbids torture and cruel or inhuman treatment.

Human rights reports have documented numerous cases of women being held in dire conditions, where they were subjected to rape and torture—acts that starkly violate the core principles of human dignity and international law.

Ms. **Salima Ishaq**, Director of the Unit for Combating Violence Against Women, highlighted in a statement to **DW** that grave violations, including rape, ransom demands, and forced marriages, have surged since the entry of the Rapid Support Forces (**RSF**) into the region. She cited alarming data from the Al-Jazeera region, where as of October last year, **126** cases of rape were recorded.

Ishaq noted that these numbers continue to rise, particularly in displacement shelters, which were intended to provide refuge but have instead become hotspots for unreported incidents of sexual violence. Tragically, she revealed that the worsening conditions have driven some women to take their own lives in desperation. Field reports from one village documented **17** cases of rape, alongside a harrowing incident of gang rape targeting all nurses at a health center.

The organization "**WJWC**" confirmed its ongoing efforts to monitor and document these violations. However, it acknowledged significant challenges in obtaining accurate information due to the social stigma attached to such crimes, which often deters victims and their families from coming forward. Despite these



hurdles, the organization is working to liaise with other human rights bodies to collect detailed records of names and locations affected.

In a related investigation, **HRW** documented, through interviews with survivors, witnesses, and family members, the rape of **79** girls and women in conflict zones. These violations included heinous acts such as sexual slavery, an egregious breach of international human rights laws, particularly those safeguarding women and girls in armed conflict settings.

Looting and Destruction of Property

The looting and destruction of property during armed conflicts represent grave violations of international humanitarian law, threatening the fundamental rights of individuals and communities. In the ongoing Sudanese war, these violations have escalated into organized and systematic operations targeting both public and private properties. This deterioration underscores a profound disregard for the principles of war and the protections afforded under international law.

International law unequivocally categorizes looting as a war crime. The Fourth Geneva Convention of **1949**, in **Article 33**, explicitly prohibits looting, while the First Additional Protocol of **1977** mandates in **Article 52** the safeguarding of civilian property against unjustified attacks or destruction. Similarly, **Article 8** of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) identifies looting and property destruction as war crimes in both international and non-international conflicts. These legal frameworks unequivocally classify the ongoing looting and destruction in Sudan as flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, necessitating accountability for those responsible.

1. Evidence of Violations

A report by Human Rights Watch has revealed satellite imagery showing evidence of looting and widespread fires in **Habila** and **Fayo**, along with significant fire damage in four nearby villages. The report highlighted a video that geolocated one of these villages, located **13** kilometers southwest of **Habila**. The footage depicts individuals in Rapid Support Forces (RSF) uniforms riding motorcycles through the village as houses burn along the road.



2. Threats to Cultural and Public Assets

UNESCO has expressed grave concern about the escalating threats to Sudan's cultural heritage, citing reports of looting at museums, archaeological sites, and private collections. The organization reminded all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law to refrain from destroying or misusing cultural property for military purposes.



In **Ei Fasher**, the RSF has conducted near-daily artillery shelling since April 2024, causing extensive damage to public infrastructure. These attacks have rendered numerous hospitals completely inoperable and devastated essential markets, including the Grand Market, Livestock Market, and Umm Dafso Market—key sources of livelihood for the local population.

In Sudan, organized looting has escalated, targeting both public and private property, and reflecting a broader deterioration of respect for international humanitarian law. Those responsible for these violations must be held accountable to safeguard civilian property during times of war.



3. Targeting Humanitarian Workers

The conflict has also seen a disturbing rise in attacks on humanitarian personnel. A statement from [Sudanese Emergency Lawyers](#) reported the killing of three World Food Program employees in Blue Nile State on December 20, 2024, following an attack by the Sudanese Armed Forces on the organization's headquarters in Yabus, near the Ethiopian border. These employees were engaged in critical humanitarian activities.

Other incidents underscore the pervasive nature of these violations:

- In May 2023, the RSF killed three Red Cross workers and injured three others in South Darfur.
- In September 2023, an attack in Al-Shajara, Khartoum State, during a civilian evacuation resulted in three fatalities and seven injuries.
- In June 2023, Doctors Without Borders (**MSF**) staff were assaulted, with four workers beaten and their vehicles stolen in Khartoum State.

Local volunteers engaged in emergency response efforts have also been subjected to killings, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests while assisting civilians in conflict zones.

Using Civilians as Human Shields

The use of civilians as human shields has emerged as one of the gravest violations in the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan. This practice represents a blatant breach of international humanitarian law, which unequivocally prohibits the exploitation of civilians for military purposes. The First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in **Article 51**, explicitly forbids the use of civilians as tools for military maneuvering, storage for weapons, or as shields against attacks.

Similarly, **Article 28** of the Fourth Geneva Convention mandates the protection of civilians during armed conflicts, stressing that any act endangering civilians or using them as shields constitutes a war crime. Despite these legal protections, numerous reports have documented cases where civilians in Sudan have been deliberately placed in combat zones or used as protective cover, directly



jeopardizing their lives.

1. Escalation of Violations

In Sudan, the targeting of civilians has intensified, with reports indicating that such violations are particularly prevalent in areas controlled by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Civilians are often caught in crossfires or subjected to violent sieges, compounding their vulnerability. According to **Tigere Chagutah**, [Director of the Regional Office for East and Southern Africa](#) at **Amnesty International**, violence has escalated significantly in El Fasher, located in **North Darfur State**, leaving civilians trapped in an increasingly volatile environment. **Chagutah** emphasized the urgent need for the international community—including the African Union and the United Nations—to take decisive action to halt these brutal practices, safeguard civilians, and ensure accountability for those responsible.

El Fasher is home to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have fled violence from other parts of Darfur. Despite their displacement, these civilians continue to endure relentless attacks. Reports confirm that residential areas, including the **Abu Shouk IDP camp**, have been subjected to indiscriminate shelling, causing significant civilian casualties. Many victims are unable to escape the violence, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

2. Failure of the International Community

Efforts to address these violations have been hindered by geopolitical dynamics. On **18 November 2024**, the UN Security Council [failed](#) to pass a resolution demanding that both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF adhere to their commitments to protect civilians. Although **14** out of **15** member states supported the draft resolution, Russia's veto prevented its adoption.

Violations on Ethnic Grounds

The ethnic dimension of the conflict in Sudan has exacerbated the already dire human rights situation, with devastating consequences for specific communities. [According to Mohammed Hager Ali](#), a researcher at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (**GIGA**), framing the conflict along ethnic lines has



proven an effective strategy for mobilizing support. However, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have struggled to fully achieve this in Khartoum due to a lack of political backing and the absence of a secure base of operations. Compounding this, Sudan faces a deepening political and administrative vacuum, marked by the diminished capacity of central authorities to impose control, highlighting the fragility of governance structures.

1. Ethnic Violence in El Geneina and Beyond

The city of **El Geneina**, located in West Darfur, has witnessed some of the most egregious ethnic violence in the ongoing conflict. [A UN report](#), reviewed by Reuters, estimated that between **10,000 and 15,000 people** were killed in the violence, largely targeting the Masalit community. This violence began on **15 April 2023**, with the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias launching attacks against **El Geneina**. Clashes erupted with the **Sudanese Alliance**, supported by **the Sudanese Armed Forces** and **Masalit fighters**, leading to mass civilian casualties, widespread destruction, and the decimation of key infrastructure, including the **El Geneina Teaching Hospital**.

Reports [indicate](#) that Masalit men and boys were systematically executed, while civilians of all ages and genders were caught in crossfire during the clashes. **Amnesty International**, through interviews with displaced persons in eastern Chad, confirmed that the militias backed by the RSF carried out the attacks using heavy weaponry. Witness accounts revealed that the attackers specifically targeted Masalit individuals, accusing them of supporting resistance efforts against the RSF.

The ethnic violence extended to neighboring towns such as **Tendelti**, where civilians faced deliberate killings and indiscriminate violence. In Tendelti, near the Chadian border, the violence was fueled by preexisting tribal tensions. For example, in March **2023**, the killing of two Arab tribesmen, who were accused of murdering a prominent businessman, ignited violent clashes between Arab militias and armed groups from the Masalit tribe. The escalation of the broader conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF intensified



these local tensions, leading to further bloodshed.

2. Personal Accounts of Suffering

The ethnic violence has claimed countless lives, including those of civilians attempting to flee or protect their livelihoods. In one tragic incident, **Mariam Mohammed Ahmed** and her cousin **Hassan Ibrahim** were killed as they sought refuge in Chad. Similarly, **Yassin Ibrahim Omar**, a baker, was killed in June 2023 while returning to El Geneina to retrieve his bakery equipment, which had been destroyed in the attacks. His father recounted that Yassin was shot dead, one of many who have fallen victim to the relentless cycle of violence in the region.

Forced Displacement

Forced displacement is one of the most severe consequences of armed conflict, compelling civilians to flee their homes due to violence and insecurity. In Sudan, the escalation of hostilities has displaced hundreds of thousands, particularly in Darfur, where civilians endure relentless military attacks and assaults. This widespread displacement violates international humanitarian law, which obligates warring parties to protect civilians during conflicts.

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 explicitly prohibits the forced transfer or evacuation of civilians, except in cases of absolute military necessity. Human rights principles further emphasize the right to adequate housing, protection, and voluntary return, underscoring the urgent need to ensure the safety and dignity of displaced individuals.

According to the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix (**IOM DTM**), the number of internally displaced Sudanese has reached **9.9** million across the country's **18** states. This includes **2.8** million displaced prior to the April 2023 war and an additional **7.1** million displaced since the conflict began. Alarming, **70%** of displaced individuals reside in famine-prone areas, exacerbated by expanding combat zones and restricted humanitarian access.

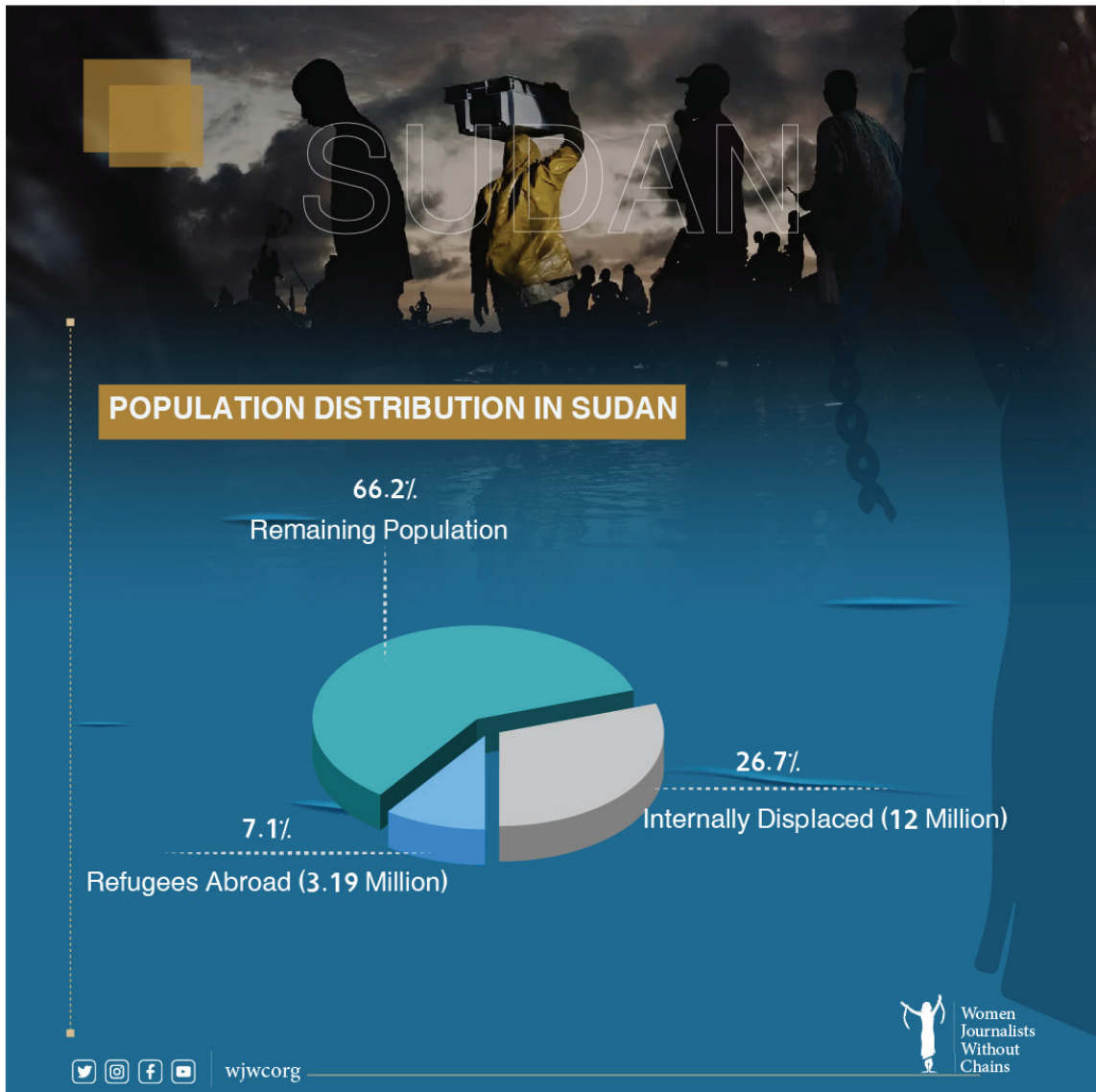
Since April 2023, Sudan has experienced one of the largest displacement crises globally, with over **5.8** million people [internally](#) displaced, including **4.5** million between April 15 and October 19 alone, according to the United Nations.



Among these were refugees from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan who had previously sought safety in Sudan but are now displaced again. This crisis has been compounded by acute shortages of essential resources, including food, water, medicine, and fuel, while disrupted trade routes have driven prices beyond affordability for most.

Internationally, nearly one million individuals fled Sudan by early August, seeking refuge in Egypt, Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and other neighboring countries. Sudanese citizens comprised two-thirds of these escapees, with the remainder including South Sudanese nationals and refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and other regions. Many faced significant obstacles, such as limited access to safe legal routes and the loss of documentation. Diplomatic missions, evacuated early in the conflict, reportedly abandoned or destroyed Sudanese passports held in their offices, leaving affected individuals stranded without alternatives to facilitate their escape.

As of January 2024, the International Organization for Migration [estimated](#) that Sudan's internally displaced population due to the recent conflict surpassed **six** million, in addition to the more than **three** million previously displaced by earlier conflicts in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan. In al-**Qadarif** State alone, approximately **400,000** displaced persons are housed across more than **30** shelters, reflecting the immense strain on local and international relief efforts.



Legal Analysis

The conflict in Sudan has resulted in a severe humanitarian and legal crisis with extensive impact beyond its borders. This conflict is not merely a military confrontation between warring parties but encompasses grave violations such as indiscriminate attacks on civilians, sexual violence, forced displacement, and looting. These acts starkly contravene the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Despite the 2005 Sudanese Constitution's guarantees of individual rights, the reality demonstrates significant shortcomings in enforcing relevant provisions. Sudan is also obligated under international agreements like the Geneva



Conventions and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to protect civilians, even in conflict.

This analysis examines the legal responsibilities of Sudan's ruling authorities and the warring factions, highlighting the violations committed within the context of the conflict. It also examines the international community's role in holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring respect for civilians' fundamental rights amidst the crisis, highlighting that the absence of justice and accountability exacerbates civilian suffering and obstructs efforts to attain sustainable solutions to the conflict.

Responsibility of the Sudanese State

The Sudanese state holds the primary obligation to protect its citizens' rights and prevent violations, as mandated by its constitution and international legal commitments. **Article 28** of the Sudanese Constitution affirms every individual's right to life and personal safety, which requires the government to safeguard citizens from violence and harm during armed conflicts.

However, the state has failed to fulfill these obligations, particularly in protecting civilians in conflict zones and addressing severe violations against them. This inaction represents a significant breach of its constitutional and international responsibilities. The state has also failed to hold accountable those responsible for crimes such as indiscriminate attacks, sexual violence, and forced displacement. These omissions highlight a critical failure to enforce national and international laws, undermining the protection of human rights on the ground.

Responsibility of the Conflicting Parties

1. Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are directly implicated in numerous violations, including:

- **Indiscriminate attacks on civilians:** These attacks violate **Article 51** of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which prohibits such actions.



- **Use of residential areas as human shields:** This practice further endangers civilians and breaches international humanitarian law.

The actions of these forces constitute serious war crimes, reflecting a blatant disregard for the rules of armed conflict.

2. Armed Militias

Armed militias operating within the conflict have perpetrated egregious violations, including:

- **Looting and destruction of property.**
- **Sexual slavery of women and girls.**

These acts are clear violations of national and international law and, under **Article 7** of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, qualify as crimes against humanity.

Responsibility of the International Community

1. Geneva Conventions

States Parties to the Geneva Conventions bear a collective responsibility to ensure compliance with these treaties, particularly by:

- **Taking measures to halt serious violations.**
- **Protecting civilians in conflict zones.**
- **Pressuring Sudan to hold perpetrators accountable.**

When national mechanisms fail, the international community must act decisively, including by referring cases to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

2. United Nations and Security Council

The UN Security Council has the authority under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to enforce measures against conflict parties, such as:

- **Imposing sanctions.**
- **Referring cases to the ICC.**

The international community must provide robust support to protect civilians



and uphold their fundamental rights, in line with international law.

The Sudanese conflict has exposed severe violations that endanger the fundamental rights of civilians. The state's failure to provide adequate protection, coupled with the grave actions of conflicting parties, underscores a breakdown in legal accountability. The international community has an essential role in addressing these violations, ensuring justice for victims, and preventing further abuses. A concerted global effort, grounded in the Geneva Conventions and other international covenants, is critical to mitigating the ongoing crisis and achieving accountability.

Local and International Reactions to the Sudan Conflict

Accusations and Complaints

1. **Chad:** Sudan's Justice Minister, Moawia Osman, announced that Sudan has filed a complaint against Chad with the African Union. The complaint accuses Chad of involvement in transferring weapons and ammunition to rebel militias, potentially referring to the Rapid Support Forces that have been in conflict with the Sudanese army for over a year and a half.
2. **United Arab Emirates:** A report from Human Rights Watch indicated that the UAE has provided support to the Rapid Support Forces, citing evidence of arms transfers.
3. **Other Countries:** Human Rights Watch also reported on the involvement of Iran, Russia, Serbia, and China in supplying weapons to both parties in the conflict.

International Responses and Humanitarian Efforts

1. **United Nations:** UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the severe conditions faced by the Sudanese people, including violence, hunger, and displacement. He warned about the conflict's repercussions on regional stability and stated that current conditions are unsuitable for deploying a UN force in Sudan.
2. **Ethiopia and Kenya:** The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which includes Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya,



requested the deployment of peacekeeping forces in Sudan. However, the Sudanese government issued a statement rejecting this proposal, perceiving it as interference in its affairs and subsequently suspended its IGAD membership.

Regional Support and Concerns

- 1. Eritrea:** Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki expressed support for the Sudanese government and opened borders to Sudanese fleeing the conflict, allowing them entry without visas and providing residency and healthcare.
- 2. South Sudan:** The South Sudanese government expressed concern over the conflict's impact on regional stability, particularly regarding the influx of refugees and economic relations. South Sudan has received thousands of refugees, adding pressure to its infrastructure and services.
- 3. Saudi Arabia:** Saudi Arabia, in cooperation with the United States, facilitated talks between the conflicting parties in Jeddah aimed at reaching a ceasefire. The Kingdom also provided humanitarian assistance, including the evacuation of its nationals and support for those affected by the conflict.



Country/Agency	Position	Additional Details
Chad	Accused of aiding militias	Provided support to militias and supplied weapons to the Rapid Support Forces.
United Nations	Expressed concern over the conflict	Highlighted the risks of escalating violence and sexual violence, while ruling out peacekeeping deployment.
United Arab Emirates	Support for the militia	Supplied arms to the Rapid Support Forces, according to Human Rights Watch.
Ethiopia and Kenya	Advocated for peacekeeping efforts	Proposed deploying peacekeeping forces, a move rejected by Sudan, leading to the suspension of IGAD membership.
South Sudan	Raised concerns about regional effects	Expressed worry over the impact of the conflict on refugee flows and oil exports reliant on Sudanese routes.
Eritrea	Provided support for Sudan	Declared support for Sudan's government and opened borders to refugees, offering them residency and assistance.
Saudi Arabia	Mediated talks and offered aid	Facilitated peace talks in Jeddah, delivered humanitarian aid, and coordinated evacuations.
Egypt	Accused of siding with the army	Allegedly backed the Sudanese army in its conflict with the Rapid Support Forces.
United States and European Union	Attempted mediation	Attempting to mediate between the conflicting Sudanese parties, though their intentions have been questioned.
Iran, Russia, Serbia, and China	Supplying weapons to both sides	Accused of providing arms to the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.

Recommendations

Field testimonies collected by Women Journalists Without Chains, together with UN and international reports up to December 2024, provide compelling



evidence of severe human rights violations in Sudan. These reports implicate multiple parties, with the Rapid Support Forces identified as the primary perpetrators, but also highlight the involvement of the Sudanese Armed Forces and local militias. The following recommendations are aimed at addressing these violations, prioritizing civilian protection and ensuring accountability for all responsible parties.

Recommendations to the Sudanese Government

1. Investigate Violations and Halt Attacks

- **Initiate comprehensive investigations into crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces, Sudanese Armed Forces, and allied militias.**
- **Issue immediate directives to end attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, ensuring the safety of vulnerable populations in conflict zones.**

2. Strengthen Legal and Institutional Frameworks

- **Establish independent national courts to prosecute crimes against civilians, aligning with constitutional provisions prohibiting torture and sexual violence (Articles 28 and 33 of the 2005 Sudanese Constitution).**
- **Facilitate the work of local and international human rights organizations in conducting investigations and legal proceedings.**

3. Protect Civilians and Provide Aid

- **Deploy trained security personnel to safeguard displaced persons and protect residential areas, while setting up humanitarian aid delivery points.**
- **Offer emergency medical and psychological support to women and children affected by sexual violence and forced displacement, including access to shelters.**

4. Cooperate with International Efforts



- Grant access to international humanitarian relief teams to assist civilians in conflict-affected regions.
- Collaborate fully with the International Criminal Court to investigate crimes against humanity and ensure justice for victims.

Recommendations to the Warring Parties

1. Cease Hostilities

- Immediately halt all indiscriminate attacks on civilians and public infrastructure, in line with international laws of war.
- Commit to a ceasefire to reduce civilian suffering and create an environment conducive to peace efforts.

2. Uphold International Humanitarian Law

- Adhere strictly to international humanitarian laws, particularly the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.
- Train military personnel on international legal standards to prevent violations during operations.

3. Prioritize Civilian Protection

- Avoid using residential areas as military sites and ensure the evacuation of civilians from areas under threat.
- Establish secure humanitarian corridors to facilitate the safe evacuation of civilians and the delivery of critical aid.

4. Engage in Peace Talks

- Actively participate in comprehensive peace negotiations under UN mediation to end hostilities.
- Collaborate with regional and international stakeholders to develop long-term solutions for stability.

Recommendations to the International Community

1. Enhance Humanitarian Assistance

- Provide emergency relief, including food, water, and medical care, to displaced persons and refugees in conflict-stricken areas like Darfur and Khartoum.



- Increase funding to international organizations operating in Sudan to scale up relief efforts.

2. Ensure Accountability for Crimes

- Impose targeted sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for human rights violations, including leaders of the warring factions.
- Support the International Criminal Court in investigating and prosecuting crimes committed during the conflict, while ensuring cooperation from Sudanese authorities.

3. Strengthen Monitoring and Reporting

- Deploy independent international missions to monitor human rights violations and report findings to the UN Security Council.
- Activate investigative committees to examine all crimes committed during the conflict and recommend actions for accountability and justice.



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