

Security Council

MetMUNC XLVIII

Topic: War in Darfur (The Situation in Sudan)

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Sudan is among the most unstable places in the world. The Fund for Peace's well-known Fragile States Index ranks Sudan as the 8th-most unstable state in the world, behind Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.¹ The reasons for this are numerous; however, the most notable is the coup d'état which occurred in April 2019. Authoritarian leader Omar al-Bashir was removed from power by the military after nearly 30 years of rule fraught with controversy and appalling human rights abuses. To understand the current political climate of Sudan, a brief summary of recent political issues will be given.

War in Darfur:

Darfur, a region in western Sudan, became the site of a brutal civil war in 2003 when the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) retaliated against the government's ethnic cleansing of non-Arab groups, especially the Fur people. The government, led by al-Bashir, was directly responsible for extensive murder, rape, and destruction of villages in the region.² In fact, al-Bashir himself was indicted by the International Criminal Court in 2008 for several cases of crimes against humanity.³ Government troops were accompanied by members of the counter-insurgent militia, the Janjaweed. Attacks on civilian

¹ <https://fragilestatesindex.org/data/>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/darfur-destroyed-ethnic-cleansing-government-and-militia-forces-western-sudan>

³ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur/albashir>

villages were done cooperatively, with the Sudanese air force attacking and bombing first followed by Janjaweed troops, who murdered, raped, and kidnapped countless innocent people.⁴

The war dragged on for many years with many failed peace agreements and attacks on African Union troops. One such agreement, the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, was not signed by the JEM and a faction of the SLM.⁵ Eventually, the Security Council decided to send a massive peacekeeping operation into Darfur in 2007 with



Figure 1: An image of a burning Darfur village following a government-sponsored attack (Human Rights Watch).

Resolution 1769.⁶ The operation (UNAMID) was a collaboration with the African Union that consisted of nearly 20,000 troops. Currently, the mission of UNAMID (United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur) is to protect civilians, provide security for humanitarian missions, monitor the implementation of agreements, assist in fair political processes, promote human rights and the rule of law, and monitor the border situation with Chad and the Central African Republic. As of March 2019, there are a total of 10,683 personnel at Darfur, amassing strength from countries like Rwanda, Pakistan, Egypt and China.⁷ However, the international effort to provide aid in Darfur has been hindered by embargo loopholes exploited by some member countries. Although the UN placed an arms embargo on South Sudan in the region of Darfur in 2005 in UN

⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Janjaweed>

⁵ <https://enoughproject.org/blog/darfur-conflict-timeline>

⁶ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20SRES%201769.pdf>

⁷ <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unamid>

Resolution 1591, China and Russia, who have both approved the resolution, sold arms, helicopters, and bombers to Sudan's military regime.⁸

Recently, however, violence and conflict in Darfur appears to have died down, due to a unilateral ceasefire declared by Omar al-Bashir, until peace could be achieved in the country.⁹ However, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces continue to attack villages in the Jebel Mara region of Darfur.¹⁰ Also, despite the ceasefire, Sudan is still deemed an unsafe place to travel to and living there is considered extremely dangerous.¹¹ Most importantly, the UN was supposed to withdraw the UNAMID peacekeeping operation this year, but stopped the action as the country continues to be afflicted by violence and political struggles.¹²

April 2019 Coup:

The ousting of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir can be traced back to the end of 2018, with the eruption of massive protests by Sudanese citizens.

The instability was caused by government-incurred austerity that raised the cost of living and prices of fuel and bread. Eventually, protestors urged Sudan's military to overthrow al-Bashir and his government, which was finally accomplished on April 11th, 2019. Soon afterwards, the military declared a state of emergency that would last for over three months and announced that a military



Figure 2: Sudanese troops announce al-Bashir's ousting.

⁸ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1551053/Russia-and-China-break-Darfur-arms-embargo.html>

⁹ <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article66984>

¹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/sudan>

¹¹ <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/sudan-travel-advisory.html>

¹² <https://www.stripes.com/news/africa/un-puts-brakes-on-peacekeepers-pullout-from-sudan-s-darfur-1.58804>

council would rule the country during a transitional period of over two years, at the end of which powers would be given to a civilian government.¹³

After the April coup, many believed that instability in the region would finally be cured. However, some continued to protest against the military's control, and this eventually came to a head on June 3, when security forces opened fire on a protest camp, killing at least 128 people (according to opposition doctors). Despite the apparent crackdowns, the military council claimed that it had the people's safety and security as its first interest, and would defend its actions no matter the circumstances. By August of 2019, however, tensions between the military and civilians had lowered significantly.¹⁴

In August 2019, military and civilian representatives signed an agreement that would shape the transitional government that would run the country until the civilian government was in place. The deal was signed by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, deputy chief of the Transitional Military Council (TMC), and Ahmed al-Rabie, a representative for the Alliance for Freedom and Change umbrella group. The agreement aims to create a joint military and civilian sovereign council to rule for a little over three years until a stable and fair election can be held. A military leader would head the 11-member council for the first 21 months, followed by a civilian leader for the next 18. The deal would also establish a cabinet appointed by activists and a legislative body for the creation of new laws. However, despite the agreements, instability still rocks the country, with the extreme violence that occurred in June remaining in recent memory.¹⁵

¹³ <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1145659.shtml>

¹⁴ <https://www.thenational.ae/world/africa/sudan-thousands-march-for-protesters-killed-in-june-violence-1.885890>

¹⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/sudan-protest-leaders-military-sign-transitional-government-deal-190817122225172.html>

Current Situation

Despite the agreement, many Sudanese citizens are skeptical about the event. The military officials that overthrew al-Bashir were part of his regime, and many think that the takeover will be a continuation of the same policies, only with different power brokers.¹⁶ But beyond the governmental issues, the problems faced by civilians are massive.

Although poverty and underdevelopment is prevalent throughout the country, (corroborated by a GDP per capita of 1855.6 US dollars), the issues are exacerbated by conflict and political tensions.¹⁷ According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, regions with acute humanitarian needs include the Darfur region, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, eastern Sudan, and other areas. In total, the Sudan 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview states that 5.5 million people need humanitarian assistance, with over 3.1 million of those people living in Darfur. In recent years, these areas have experienced unpredictable rainfall and extreme drought, with serious consequences to potential harvests and food supply. The result is extensive food insecurity and population displacement, which leads to the destruction of livelihoods and quality of life. Getting humanitarian aid to stricken areas, however, has been extremely difficult. In the Jebel Marra region of Darfur, humanitarian access and assistance has made little progress, as a majority of the areas are controlled by the Sudan Liberation Army. Although the situation has been getting better, thousands of people still lack the humanitarian aid they require. The final detriment that afflicts Sudan is the instability of Sudan's borders. Since the secession of South Sudan in 2011, there has

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<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/africa/2019/04/sudan-president-bashir-gone-shadow-his-government-remains>

¹⁷ <https://tradingeconomics.com/sudan/gdp-per-capita>

been an influx of refugees into Sudan from South Sudan, with over 770,000 people arriving since the 2013 conflict in South Sudan began.^{18 19}

The overall situation in Sudan is complex, and it requires extreme oversight from the UN. From violence in Darfur, government instability, and the lack of basic living necessities, Sudan is in desperate need of international assistance. As the Security Council is one of the most powerful organs of the UN, it must take several actions to prevent the further loss of human life and to place Sudan on the path to prosperity and peace, no matter what that path may be. The Security Council should consider: the surveillance of the transitional government, the implementation of a fair civilian government free from human rights abuses, and the management of UN peacekeeping activities, embargoes, and more.

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14019208>

¹⁹ <https://www.unocha.org/sudan/about-ocha-sudan>

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent has your country documented and recognized the war in Darfur?
2. To what extent does your country participate in UN Peacekeeping Operations?
3. Has the war in Darfur affected your diplomatic relations with other countries?
4. How should the Security Council exercise its power to maintain fair elections?
5. How should further humanitarian aid be contributed given the current situation?
6. How should the Security Council take measures to stabilize conflict in the region?

Helpful Links:

- <https://news.un.org/en/tags/darfur> (Documented events by the UN in Darfur)
- <https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-un-security-councils-response-to-darfur-a-humanitarian-perspective/> (Real life responses by the Security Council in Sudan)
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/sudans-military-expected-to-announce-overthrow-of-president-following-months-of-popular-protests/2019/04/11/bedcc28e-5c2b-11e9-842d-7d3ed7eb3957_story.html (More information about the April 2019 Coup)
- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/07/1041941> (UN perspective on transition government)
- <http://sd.one.un.org> (Current UN plans for Sudan)