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Security Council Background Guide

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Topic: The Situation in Sudan

Message from the Director of the Security Council

Delegates,

It is my honor to welcome you to this year's WrightMUN Conference. My name is Eliza Hendrix and I look forward to seeing the work you all will put forth as a part of the Security Council (SC). The SC is perhaps the most important organ of the United Nations (UN) system, being responsible for the maintenance of global peace and security. Each delegate will represent one of the 15 Member States that make up the SC and each hold one vote. Five of those members (the Permanent Five or "P5")- The United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France- have the additional benefit of the veto: a single negative vote from any of the P5 on a draft resolution ensures the defeat of its passage.

Under the Charter of the UN, all Member States are obligated to comply with the Council's decisions. The Council will call on the parties involved in any issue to settle any threat to international stability through peaceful means and will recommend methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. While the SC will try to solve crises through peaceful and diplomatic means, the SC is also imbued with the authority to take coercive measures, including sanctions or authorizing the use of force, to maintain or restore global peace and security.

This background guide is intended to offer delegates a starting point for their research on the ongoing crisis in the Red Sea and Yemen. Delegates are encouraged to broaden their research on the topic to the greater context of the situation and to their Member State's policies. The background guide will offer the necessary information to begin delving deeper into the topic and will provide delegates the necessary tools to cooperate with other delegates in the committee.

Remember to have fun during your time at WrightMUN and that the staff are here to support you to provide you with any guidance you may experience. While there will be awards, this is ultimately a learning experience. I highly encourage you to take advantage of the committee staff to ask any questions you may have and to help make the most of your time working alongside your fellow delegates.

Sincerely,

Eliza Hendrix
Director, Security Council

Topic: The Situation in Sudan

Introduction

The current conflict in Sudan started as a political disagreement between the heads of Sudan's two largest military branches and quickly renewed ethnic tensions in the country resulting in over 11 million displaced people and the world's largest hunger crisis.¹ Armed conflict broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023 near the capital, Khartoum, and quickly spread across the country, particularly to the Darfur region in western Sudan.²

Ethnic tensions in Darfur first came to a head in 2003, when non-Arab militias revolted against Omar al-Bashir's regime.³ President al-Bashir utilized the SAF and the Janjaweed, a coalition of local Arab militias, to combat the insurgency, prompting the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue arrest warrants in 2010 for al-Bashir and several military leaders on charges of genocide for their deliberate targeting of non-Arab Darfuri civilians, specifically those belonging to the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit ethnic groups.⁴ In 2013, al-Bashir formally established the RSF, primarily made up of former Janjaweed militiamen and leaders.⁵

After months of protests for a civilian government in Sudan, the SAF and RSF ousted al-Bashir in 2018 under the leadership of Abdelfattah al-Burhan and Mohamad Hamdan Dagalo, respectively.⁶ This led to the adoption of Sudan's Constitution of 2019, which put the country on the path to democracy until the two commanders led a military coup that ousted civilian prime minister Abdallah Hamdok in 2021, leaving al-Burhan and Dagalo in control of the government.⁷ Tensions between the two military leaders grew over the following years and eventually led to the eruption of armed conflict in April 2023.⁸ Since the outbreak of the fighting, the RSF has taken control of Khartoum and the four southern Darfur states, while the SAF has continued fighting across much of the country, particularly in North Darfur.⁹ As of October 2024, the RSF has continued its campaign in North Darfur by laying siege to the state's capital city, El Fasher,

¹ United Nations. Security Council. Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary General (S/2024/759). 2024. p. 2, 5.

² United Nations. Security Council. *Letter Dated 15 January 2024 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/65)*. 2024. p. 5.

³ Human Rights Watch. *Darfur Destroyed*. 2005. p. 1, 7.

⁴ United Nations. General Assembly. Report of the International Criminal Court (A/68/314). 2013. p. 6-7.; International Criminal Court. *The Prosecutor vs. Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir*. 2010. p. 15.

⁵ Human Rights Watch. *The Massalit Will not Come Home*. 2024. p. 18.

⁶ Government of Sudan. *Sudan's Constitution of 2019*. 2019. p. 5.

⁷ UN Human Rights Council. *The Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan (A/HRC/RES/S-32/1)*, 2021, p. 2.

⁸ Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2024*. 2024. p. 591.

⁹ United Nations. Security Council. *Situation in the Sudan and the Activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary General (S/2023/861)*. 2023. p. 4-5.

leaving over 900,000 civilians trapped in the crossfire between the two warring parties.¹⁰ As of the latest briefing by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan in February 2025, pursuant to SC resolution 2715, an estimated 2/3 of the country's 47.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, over 12.4 million have been displaced, and almost 25 million suffer from food insecurity.¹¹

International and Regional Frameworks

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Guidance outlines a framework for the UN's support to countries in achieving their national development goals such as improving peace and security, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹² UNDAF provides Sudan with a comprehensive roadmap for the UN's support to the country's national development priorities, with a focus on addressing Sudan's political instability, economic hardship, and the aftermath of conflict.¹³ The UN's Cooperation Framework (UNCF) for the Republic of South Sudan replaces the 2016-2018 Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF), which served as a bridging program due to the absence of a national development strategy and was extended until December 31, 2018.¹⁴ The framework serves as a key document guiding UN agencies' work in South Sudan, strengthening capacity and institutions at the community, state, and national levels; this will include focusing on vulnerable areas with potential for strong partnerships.¹⁵ The United Nations Refugee Agency has reported serious concerns about violations of international humanitarian law in Sudan, including attacks on civilians, healthcare facilities, and the use of famine as a weapon of war resulting in the displacement of more than 10.2 million people.¹⁶ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is coordinating efforts with authorities and partners to provide support to refugees and internally displaced persons in Sudan and neighboring countries.¹⁷ UNHCR aims to aid Emergency teams establishing transit centers and distributing essential supplies, Assistance, with shelter, non-food items, and protection services, and Support for education programming for displaced children.¹⁸ Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRRP) coordinated by UNHCR and partners, address the peace and security of refugees fleeing Sudan to neighboring countries.¹⁹ However, The South Sudan Situation RRRP's are currently funded at just 24%, creating a substantial gap in the resources required to fully address the needs of the response.²⁰ The European Commission has a multifaceted plan for South Sudan, centering around three priorities to foster stability, resilience, and peace in the country.²¹ To implement these priorities, the European Commission has established the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for South Sudan,

¹⁰ United Nations. Security Council. *Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary General (S/2024/759)*. 2024. p. 3.

¹¹ "Sudan: Briefing and Consultations." February 25, 2025

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2025/02/sudan-briefing-and-consultations-10.php>

¹² United Nations sustainable development group. *The UN Development Assistance Framework*. 2024. p. 6.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ United Nations South Sudan. *The UN's Cooperation Framework*. 2019. p.1

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ United Nations Refugee Agency. *Sudan crisis explained*. 2024. p. 1, 2.

¹⁷ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *UHCR data report*. 2024

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. RRRP progress report may-august 2024. 2024. p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The United Nations office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs. Humanitarian update. 2024. p.1.

which allocates €208 million for the period of 2021-2024.²² In addition to the MIP, a multi-annual financing decision outlines a multi annual action plan for South Sudan for 2021-2022. This plan includes actions in "Peace, reconciliation and rule of law," and "Integrated support to education in South Sudan."²³ The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) oversees the coordination of the overall humanitarian response in Sudan, collecting and analyzing data, publishing situation reports, and advocating for greater funding and access.²⁴ The central emergency response fund (CERF) has emerged as a vital funding source for Sudan.²⁵ In 2024, the CERF stands out as the largest contributor to Sudan's humanitarian needs with allocations directed towards addressing the food crisis and supporting vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas.²⁶ Save the Children reported that over 2 million babies born during the 18 months of conflict are at risk from the decimated healthcare system.²⁷ The UN's Children's Fund (UNICEF) focuses on protecting children in emergencies, addressing their specific needs for healthcare, nutrition, education, and protection from violence.²⁸

Role of the International System

The United Nations Security Council has taken several actions, having determined in S/Res/2750 (2024) and elsewhere that the situation in Sudan "continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region."²⁹ The Security Council created and maintains a sanctions regime against Sudan. SC resolutions 1556, 1591 and 2035 have stipulated measure and criteria as far back as 2004. Most recently, Security Council resolution 2750 extended the asset freezes, travel bans and arms embargo through 12 September 2025.³⁰

The Security Council has taken measures to support South Sudan, including extending a mandate until November 15, 2025 of The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei's (UNISFA) a peacekeeping force that monitors the border between Sudan and South Sudan, and facilitates humanitarian aid.³¹ This mandate was extended through Security Council resolution 2760 resolution maintaining the authorized troop and police ceilings for UNISFA while also calling for a review of UNISFA's effectiveness and alignment with the regional security situation.³² The African Union (AU) is a continental organization dedicated to fostering unity, prosperity, and peace throughout Africa by facilitating dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms.³³

The Security Council passed several resolutions on the Darfur region in response to the revolt against al-Bashir's government in 2003, including referring the situation to the ICC in resolution

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/The central emergency response fund. Sudan situation report. 2024. p.1.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The UN's children's Agency. Emergency Response. 2024. p.1

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ S/res/2750 (2024)

³⁰ SC resolution 2750 (2024) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4061079?ln=en&v=pdf>

³¹ United Nations. Maintain international peace and security. 2019, p.1.

³² African Union. *About the African Union*. 2024. p.1.

³³ Ibid.

1593 (2005), giving the court jurisdiction in the region to the present day in accordance with The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998).³⁴ The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, known by its acronym UNAMID, was established on 31 July 2007 through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1769.³⁵ UNAMID's primary mandate is the protection of civilians, but it is also responsible for ensuring security for humanitarian aid, monitoring and verifying the implementation of agreements, supporting an inclusive political process, promoting human rights and the rule of law, and monitoring and reporting on the situation along the borders with Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) by creating a safe environment for aid workers to operate in.³⁶ The African Union Peace and Security (PSC) Council suspended Sudan's participation in all AU activities until a civilian-led Transitional Authority is effectively established, viewing this as the only path for Sudan to resolve its current crisis.³⁷ The Chairperson of the AU emphasized that there is no military solution to the crisis in Sudan, stressing that the ongoing fighting only extends the suffering of the Sudanese people and exacerbates the devastation in Sudan, including Darfur, after decades of conflict and forced displacement.³⁸ The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) was established on June 3, 2020, by Security Council resolution 2524, with an initial twelve-month mandate aimed at supporting Sudan's democratic transition through political reforms, human rights protection, peacebuilding, and economic development.³⁹ Resolution 2579 (2021) emphasized ceasefire monitoring as part of the implementation of the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan (2020), support for the National Plan for Civilian Protection, and capacity building for the Sudanese police and justice sector.⁴⁰ However, The Security Council decided to end the mandate of the UNITAMS in Sudan (UNITAMS) through Resolution 2579 (2021).⁴¹ Security Council resolution 2715 (2023) called for a safe transition and the closure of the mission, with the transfer of its tasks to other UN agencies, funds, and programs to be completed by February 29, 2024.⁴² Since the beginning of the conflict, the international community, spearheaded by Saudi Arabia and the United States, brought the SAF and RSF together to address the humanitarian situation on two occasions in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 2023.⁴³ Security Council resolution 2736 (2024) called on both sides to adhere to the resulting Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan (2023).⁴⁴

Weapons Supply and the Proliferation of Arms in the Region

³⁴ United Nations. Security Council resolution 1593 (2005); International Criminal Court. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. 1998.

³⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping. UNAMID fact sheet. 2024. p.1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ African Union. Sudan suspended from the African Union. 2024. p.1, 2.

³⁸ African Union. AU commission chairperson expresses grave concern over the alarming situation in EL Fasher, Darfur. 2024. p.1 Darfuriian militias and civilians on their side of the conflict, contributing to the overall conflict and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) throughout the region.

³⁹ United Nations. S/RES/2579 (2021). p.1.

⁴⁰ United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan. Closure of UNITAMS. 2024. p.1

⁴¹ United Nations. S/RES/2715 (2023). p.1

⁴² African Union. About the African Union. 2024. p.1

⁴³ United Nations. Security Council. *Letter Dated 15 January 2024 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/65)*. p. 37.

⁴⁴ United Nations. Security Council resolution 2736 (2024); United States Department of State. Bureau of African Affairs. *Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan*. 2023.

Arms supply to warring parties in the Darfur region are in direct violation of the arms embargo established by Security Council resolution 1556 (2004) and greatly increases the illicit flow of weapons in the region, impeding progress towards SDG 16.4.⁴⁵ During the current conflict, al-Burhan and the Sudanese government have accused the United Arab Emirates (UAE) of violating the arms embargo by giving financial and military aid to the RSF.⁴⁶ The Panel of Experts on the Sudan created by Security Council resolution 1591 (2005) found credible reports that the UAE flew arms to AmDjarass airport in Chad where they were brought across the border into Darfur disguised as humanitarian aid.⁴⁷ Additionally, the panel also cited evidence that both the SAF and RSF were in violation of the arms embargo by arming local Darfurian militias and civilians on their side of the conflict, contributing to the overall conflict and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) throughout the region.⁴⁸ According to General Assembly resolution 60/68 (2006), the proliferation of SALW poses a direct threat to stability, peace, and security in conflict and post-conflict areas.⁴⁹ In response to these revelations, the Security Council adopted resolution 2736 in June 2024, reminding Member States of their obligations to adhere to the arms embargo in the Darfur region and calling on Member States to cease external interference with the conflict at large.⁵⁰

Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan

Security Council resolutions 2573 (2021) and 2417 (2018) condemn attacks on civilians and emphasize the importance of protecting food supply in conflict-affected areas; however, fighting in Sudan has resulted in human rights violations, 8.1 internally displaced persons (IDPs), and nearly 26 million people experiencing acute food insecurity, making the situation in Sudan the world's largest displacement and hunger crises.⁵¹ The World Food Programme (WFP) has declared famine in the Zamzam refugee camp, home to over 500,000 IDPs near El Fasher, and declared thirteen additional areas in Sudan at risk of famine.⁵² Additionally, 14 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance with 19 million out of school due to the conflict.⁵³ According to Human Rights Watch, 70% of healthcare facilities in conflict-affected areas throughout Sudan were not functioning as of October 2023.⁵⁴ OCHA reported to the Security

⁴⁵ United Nations. Security Council resolution 1556 (2004). p. 4.; United Nations. General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1). 2015. p. 25.

⁴⁶ United Nations. Security Council. Letter Dated 6 May 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the UN Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/362). 2024.

⁴⁷ United Nations. Security Council. Letter Dated 15 January 2024 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/65). 2024, p. 15-16.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ United Nations. General Assembly. Addressing the Negative Humanitarian and Development Impact of the Illicit Manufacture, Transfer, and Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Their Excessive Accumulation (A/RES/60/68). 2006, p. 1.

⁵⁰ United Nations. Security Council resolution 2736 (2024), p. 3.

⁵¹ United Nations. Security Council resolution 2573 (2021), p. 3.; United Nations. Security Council. resolution 2417 (2018). p. 3.; United Nations. Security Council. *Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary General* (S/2024/759), p. 2, 5.

⁵² World Food Programme. *Emergencies - Sudan*. 2024.

⁵³ United Nations. Security Council. *Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary General* (S/2024/759). 2024, p. 4-5.

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2024*, p. 591.

Council in February 2025 that collapsing health services and acute hunger among over half of the Sudanese population requires “unprecedented” action in 2025.⁵⁵

In response to the growing humanitarian crisis, the international community facilitated talks between the SAF and RSF that culminated in the Jeddah Declaration in May 2023.⁵⁶ The Panel of Experts on the Sudan found that indiscriminate bombing in densely populated areas by both warring parties only make up a portion of the violence against civilians, as Sudan, specifically Darfur, has experienced significant amounts of ethnically motivated violence against civilians.⁵⁷ Both the SAF and RSF have engaged in ethnic-based recruitment of child soldiers and detainment and torture of civilians.⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch reported on the RSF’s ethnically motivated campaign against the Masalit population in El Geneina, West Darfur, where they engaged in mass executions of civilians, mass sexual assaults of women and girls, forced displacement, and the destruction of Masalit neighborhoods and IDP camps.⁵⁹ Security Council resolution 2736 (2024) demanded both sides take steps to protect the civilians of Sudan and adhere to the Jeddah Declaration.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The conflict in Sudan continues to intensify as the SAF tries to hold off the RSF in El Fasher, leaving millions of civilians in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.⁶¹ As of October 2024, the two warring parties continue to pursue military victory and have failed to engage in humanitarian talks with each other since the second round of Jeddah talks adjourned in November 2023.⁶² Continued military aid to the two sides in Darfur constitute violations of the arms embargo and contribute to the proliferation of SALW, threatening peace and security in the region as a whole.⁶³ The conflict directly deteriorates the well-being of women and children in Sudan, as both women and children are victimized by forced displacement and indiscriminate bombing campaigns, women and girls are subject to systematic, often ethnically motivated, sexual assaults, and children are adversely affected by the destruction of schools and the recruitment of child soldiers by both sides.⁶⁴ Despite SC resolution 2736 demanding that the RSF halt the siege of El Fasher and that there be an immediate halt to fighting there,⁶⁵ as of November 2024, the 900,000 civilians caught in the crossfire in El Fasher and the 500,000 IDPs experiencing famine in the Zamzam refugee camp urgently need assistance from the international

⁵⁵ OCHA. “Sudan crisis requires unprecedented action, OCHA tells Security Council.” February 26, 2025 <https://www.unocha.org/news/sudan-crisis-requires-unprecedented-action-ocha-tells-security-council>

⁵⁶ United States Department of State. Bureau of African Affairs. *Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan*. 2023.

⁵⁷ United Nations. Security Council. *Letter Dated 15 January 2024 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/65)*. 2024, p. 18-20, 31.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch. *The Massalit will not Come Home*. 2024, pp. 94-101, 113-116, 126.

⁶⁰ United Nations Security Council resolution 2736 (2024).

⁶¹ UN Security Council. *Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan – Report of the Secretary General (S/2024/759)*. 2024.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ United Nations. Security Council. *Letter Dated 15 January 2024 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/65)*. 2024.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ S/Res/2736 (2024)

community.⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch most recently released a report urging investigations of both government-aligned forces attacking villagers in central Sudan, as well as SAF-aligned groups such as the Sudan Shield Forces in Gezira state.⁶⁷ With increasing accusations of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocide, the urgency to address the 20-month civil war is increasing as well.

Questions to Consider

As delegates conducting further research and consider how to address this topic, consider:

1. How can the Security Council help bring conflict in Sudan to a conclusion? What is your Member State's position on the conflict? Which side if any does it support?
2. How has your Member State contributed to solving the humanitarian crisis?
3. What risk does the proliferation of arms and the conflict at large pose to Member States in the surrounding region?

⁶⁶ United Nations. *Security Council. Recommendations for the Protection of Civilians in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary General (S/2024/759)*. 2024, p. 3, 5.

⁶⁷ "Sudan: Armed Group Allied to the Military Attacks Village." HRW, February 25, 2025 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/25/sudan-armed-group-allied-military-attacks-village>