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Sudan Media Forum Weekly Briefing

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A curated weekly update on the most significant news from Sudan.

Hello ,

Welcome to your weekly briefing. This week, Sudan faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis as war escalates across Darfur and Kordofan. Drone strikes, air raids, and armed clashes have killed dozens, displaced tens of thousands, and left civilians trapped in besieged cities. Children suffer from catastrophic malnutrition, while essential services and infrastructure collapse. Women journalists face targeted attacks, and restrictions on goods deepen civilian hardship. Amid the devastation, cultural heritage and traditions endure, reflecting resilience in the face of war.

Top Story of the Week

Escalating Bloodshed in Kordofan and Darfur: Dozens Killed and Mass Displacement as Drone Warfare Expands



Dozens of people, including military personnel, were killed and others injured in Sudan's Kordofan and Darfur regions as artillery shelling and drone strikes intensified between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid

Support Forces (RSF), and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N), which is allied with the RSF.

[Sources reported that](#) dozens were killed in an airstrike carried out by an RSF drone targeting multiple locations in the besieged city of Dilling in South Kordofan. The attack reportedly hit the headquarters of the SAF's 54th Infantry Brigade, as well as a medical facility where wounded soldiers were being treated.

Meanwhile, the parallel “Founding Alliance Government,” affiliated with the RSF, [accused the Sudanese army](#) of carrying out what it described as a “terrorist attack” using an “Akanji” drone, deliberately targeting Al-Firdous village in Central Darfur. According to the statement, the strike killed more than 35 civilians—mostly women, children, and the elderly—and wounded dozens. The attack also reportedly killed the security adviser to the RSF commander along with several senior military leaders.

The escalation comes as attacks intensify on Dilling, the second-largest city in South Kordofan, alongside aerial bombardments on Kadugli, amid a race by both sides of the conflict to seize key urban centers.

RSF [drones also targeted](#) White Nile State in central Sudan, as well as several strategic sites in El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, including the main power station, causing a complete blackout across the city.

The latest military escalation and sustained air attacks on cities in South Kordofan have [forced thousands of civilians](#) to flee in successive waves toward North Kordofan, amid an increasingly dire humanitarian situation.

The Sudan Doctors Network warned that continued heavy shelling of Dilling by the RSF and SPLM-N is causing daily civilian casualties, with exact figures impossible to verify due to the collapse of communication networks. The group cautioned that the siege on the city could trigger an imminent health and humanitarian catastrophe, citing severe shortages of food supplies and medical materials.

In a related development, the Chief of Staff of [the SPLM-N](#)—an ally of the RSF—called on officers and soldiers of the Sudanese army stationed at the 14th Infantry Division in Kadugli and the 54th Infantry Brigade in Dilling to surrender the two cities to avoid further loss of life and destruction of property and institutions.

Separately, military sources aligned with the Sudanese army announced field advances after consolidating control over several locations in North and South Kordofan, including Al-Riyash, Kazgeil, Al-Hamadi, and Al-Dibibat, following intense battles with the RSF. In contrast, the RSF claimed it had seized a town located about 18 kilometers from Kadugli. The SPLM-N also announced it had cut the main highway linking Kadugli and Dilling after taking control of strategic areas along the vital route.

Al-Burhan Vows to Continue War as U.S. and African Union Push for Negotiated Peace in Sudan



Sudanese army chief [Abdel Fattah al-Burhan reaffirmed](#) his commitment to continuing the fight against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), describing it as an “existential battle of dignity.”

The United States expressed deep concern over statements by the leadership of the Sudanese Armed Forces calling for military solutions to the crisis and setting preconditions for any ceasefire, at a time when tens of millions of Sudanese are suffering. In a statement, the U.S. State Department said: “Sudanese military leaders should pursue peace, not prolong the conflict.” It stressed that achieving lasting and stable peace requires negotiated arrangements that immediately halt the violence, enable sustained humanitarian access, and pave the way for a permanent ceasefire and a civilian-led dialogue.

Meanwhile, [Massad Boulos](#), the U.S. President’s adviser on Arab and African affairs, said he remains in contact with al-Burhan and his team, as well as with the RSF and other parties to the conflict. “We must ignore these statements and focus on the core issue: the humanitarian crisis and the violence,” he said. He noted that the crisis in Sudan is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, as described by President Trump, adding that there is no military solution to the conflict. A negotiated settlement, he said, is necessary to end the fighting and give the Sudanese people—not the warring parties—the opportunity to determine the country’s future.

The [African Union](#), for its part, reaffirmed its full readiness to work closely with all relevant Sudanese stakeholders, as well as regional and international partners, including IGAD, the United Nations, and the League of Arab States, to support efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire in Sudan, facilitating humanitarian access, and reaching a comprehensive political solution.

Sudanese Army Accused of Drone Strikes on Hospital and Market in North Darfur, Killing Dozens



The Civil Democratic Alliance of the Forces of the Revolution, known as “Somoud,” [condemned a drone strike](#) that targeted Al-Zurug Hospital and the Qurair market in North Darfur.

On Saturday, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) accused the Sudanese army of bombing Al-Zurug Hospital, a small rural settlement considered a stronghold of the family of RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan “Hemedti”, which also hosts a military base. The attack reportedly killed 64 people, including medical staff.

In a statement, the Somoud alliance said it “condemns the aerial bombardment by military drones operated by the Sudanese Armed Forces, which targeted Al-Zurug Hospital and the Qurair market in North Darfur, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties.”

The alliance renewed its call for an immediate and unconditional humanitarian ceasefire across the country, with guarantees for humanitarian access, civilian protection, the prevention of attacks on vital infrastructure, and the creation of conditions for achieving sustainable peace.

In a related development, the Sudan Founding Alliance (“Ta’sis”), led by the RSF, accused the army of carrying out airstrikes against civilians in the Um Qumrah area of North Darfur.

The alliance said the army launched drone strikes using a Turkish-made “Akinci” UAV on Um Qumrah, killing dozens of civilians and setting the local market ablaze.

[UN Mission Says Civilians in El Fasher Live in “Degrading and Unsafe Conditions” After Two Years of War](#)



The first [United Nations mission to El Fasher](#), in western Sudan, has reported that traumatized civilians are living in “degrading and unsafe conditions” after two years of war and the takeover of the city by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

Denise Brown, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, said: “These people are living in extremely fragile conditions,” adding that large parts of the city have been destroyed. Brown described El Fasher as

“an epicenter of human suffering in this war,” noting that the city—once home to around one million people—has become “a shadow of its former self” and “a crime scene.”

During the visit, which lasted several hours and was conducted without security escorts, the UN delegation visited locations agreed upon with the RSF, including the Saudi Hospital, displacement shelters, and five UN offices. The Saudi Hospital was the site of an attack in October that killed at least 460 people, according to the World Health Organization. Brown said that the hospital building is still standing and appears to have been cleared.

She also warned of the presence of detainees inside the city, saying: “We were not able to see them, but we are confident that detainees are being held.” Brown noted that armed men were visible in the streets, explaining that the mission moved only within areas coordinated with the RSF, stressing: “What we saw was only the tip of the iceberg.”

Solidarity Campaign Condemns UAE’s Continued Detention of Sudanese Politician Mohamed Farouk Suleiman



The Unified Solidarity Campaign for the release of Sudanese politician Mohamed Farouk Suleiman, who is being held in prisons in the United Arab Emirates, has condemned his continued unlawful detention since January 19, 2025, without being brought before a court.

In a statement, the campaign said that engineer Mohamed Farouk has remained under arbitrary arrest and detention since being detained by UAE security authorities. It noted that Farouk has been away from any recent political activity, despite his well-known political background as an active political figure and a defender of freedoms, democracy, and democratic change in Sudan. The statement added that he is also responsible for supporting his young family and extended relatives, whom he provides for.

The campaign stressed that the unjustified deprivation of engineer Mohamed Farouk’s liberty places a responsibility on all political actors, activists, and defenders of freedoms, democracy, and human rights—as well as Sudanese people at large—to show solidarity and mobilize in a unified campaign to secure his release.

Severe Child Malnutrition Reaches Catastrophic Levels in North Darfur, UNICEF Survey Finds



Recent data from the latest Unified Relief and [Transition Operations Monitoring](#) and Assessment Surveys (URTOMAS) conducted by UNICEF in Um Baru locality, North Darfur, reveal that more than half of the children assessed are suffering from acute malnutrition, while one in six is affected by severe acute malnutrition—a life-threatening condition that can claim a child’s life within weeks if left untreated. The nutrition survey, carried out between 19 and 23 December and covering nearly 500 children, found that the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate reached 53 percent, with 18 percent of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 35 percent from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). These figures rank among the highest ever recorded globally in standardized nutrition surveys and are more than three times the World Health Organization’s emergency threshold of 15 percent. Alarming, the crude mortality rate has also reached emergency levels, underscoring the imminent and deadly risk facing children in the area.

Economic Snapshot

Wheat Farming Shrinks in Sudan’s Gezira as Costs Soar and Financing Dries Up



[Farmers in Sudan’s Gezira state](#) are facing severe challenges in cultivating wheat during the winter season, driven by soaring production costs, limited access to financing, and reluctance to seek loans from the Agricultural Bank due to what they describe as punitive conditions. Farmers say the bank requires them to pay 25 percent of total financing costs upfront to complete agricultural operations, leading to a sharp decline in planted wheat areas to less than 25 percent of their usual size.

Abdeen Barqawi, a member of the Farmers' Alliance, said the cost of cultivating a single feddan has exceeded 1.2 million Sudanese pounds—an unprecedented figure in the region's agricultural history. He warned that such high costs expose farmers to losses unless yields exceed 15 sacks of wheat per feddan, noting that any lower productivity could result in direct financial losses and potential liability to banks. Farmers also said the rising cost of agricultural inputs for the winter wheat season has pushed many to reduce the land allocated to wheat and switch to less expensive alternative crops. They expressed concern over delays in water delivery for wheat and chickpea crops as January—a critical period for irrigation—approaches.

Meanwhile, the governor of the Gezira Scheme, Ibrahim Mustafa, said preparations for the winter season have begun, with a target of cultivating 400,000 feddans of wheat, financed by the Ministry of Finance through the Agricultural Bank.

The ongoing war has caused widespread destruction to the Gezira Scheme, which supports more than 130,000 farmers across 3,000 villages and about 2,200 settlements, and sustains nearly four million farmers, seasonal laborers, and permanent workers. The project's infrastructure, machinery, and agricultural inputs have been extensively looted and destroyed.

Culture & In-Depth 🌀

UNESCO Inscribes Sudan's "Al-Jartiq" Ritual on Intangible Cultural Heritage List



UNESCO has inscribed Sudan's ["Al-Jartiq"](#) ritual on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, during the meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in New Delhi from 8 to 13 December 2025.

According to the official spokesperson's platform, UNESCO officially recognized Al-Jartiq as an element of practices, rituals, and expressions associated with protection, preservation, abundance, and fertility in Sudan, and included it on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The statement explained that Al-Jartiq is one of the most important living Sudanese rituals, rich in symbols deeply rooted in popular consciousness, with origins tracing back to the Meroitic civilization. It

embodies values of abundance, fertility, and protection, combining tangible elements such as gold, silk, henna, and traditional perfumes with social and spiritual meanings that strengthen community cohesion. The recognition comes at a time when Sudan's cultural heritage faces major challenges due to the ongoing war, highlighting the importance of national efforts to protect it.

Dr. Asaad Abdelrahman, Secretary-General of the National Council for Cultural Heritage and the Promotion of National Languages, said that the inscription of Al-Jartiq reflects the resilience of Sudanese communities and their steadfast attachment to their heritage, describing it as a pivotal step in ensuring the transmission of this tradition to future generations as an integral part of Sudan's cultural identity and the shared memory of humanity.

Further Reading

Shocking Accounts of Displacement: Tens of Thousands Flee El Fasher After RSF Takeover



recounts a survivor of the El Fasher massacre after arriving at Al-Afad camp in Northern Sudan. Approximately 80,000 families fled El Fasher following the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) takeover in October 2025, after a two-year siege. Many have found refuge in camps in the Tawilah and Al-Dabba areas of Northern Sudan. The number of arrivals continues to rise daily, prompting authorities to consider opening new camps to accommodate the influx of displaced families. These harrowing testimonies highlight the dire humanitarian situation and the perilous journeys undertaken by civilians escaping the violence in El Fasher. [Read the full story](#)

The Perils of Being a Female Journalist in Sudan: Targeted Violence Against Women Reporters



Sudanese female journalists face a wide range of violations, targeted both for their professional work and their gender. They have been subjected to killings, displacement, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, judicial harassment, property confiscation, and travel bans. In addition, many women journalists have suffered digital violations and online harassment, including cyberbullying, defamation, verbal abuse, and

online assaults, particularly on social media platforms. These threats illustrate the extreme risks and systemic obstacles that women journalists in Sudan endure while carrying out their work, reflecting both the broader dangers of reporting in conflict zones and the gender-based challenges specific to female reporters. [Read the full story](#)

Blocking Goods to Western Sudan: Another Blow to Civilians Amid Ongoing Conflict

Decisions to block the movement of goods and supplies to areas under the control of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Darfur and Kordofan, imposed by several states, have sparked widespread condemnation from segments of Sudanese society. Critics view the measures as a way to entrench the societal divisions created by the war and as a threat to national unity. According to surveys, 85% of citizens believe that these decisions punish civilians in Kordofan and Darfur by affecting their daily livelihoods, exacerbating the hardships faced by communities already suffering from the ongoing conflict. [Read the full story](#)

Delayed Return to Khartoum: Who Can Go Back Amid Devastation and Insecurity?



Displaced residents interviewed reported that their original communities are either completely destroyed or lack even the most basic services, including clean water, healthcare, and education, alongside ongoing insecurity and the proliferation of weapons. Mohamed A., a displaced person from Gezira State, said: “How can we return when our homes are looted, and there is no police or hospital? Returning means risking our lives.” These accounts align with reports from humanitarian organizations, which confirm that more than 60% of potential return areas are uninhabitable, highlighting the formidable challenges facing efforts to facilitate the return of displaced populations to Khartoum. [Read the full story](#)

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