



## Sudan Media Forum Weekly Briefing

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

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Hello ,

Welcome to your weekly briefing. This week, Sudan’s conflict is rapidly escalating, with drone warfare increasingly targeting civilian areas across Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur. Reports document mass atrocities, including over 6,000 killed in El Fasher within just three days, alongside widespread displacement and humanitarian collapse. International efforts to secure a ceasefire intensify as civilians face growing risks, forced returns, and shrinking access to aid. Amid the devastation, Sudanese voices—from activists to women publishers—continue to resist, document, and rebuild under fire.

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### Top Story of the Week

#### Escalating Drone Warfare in Sudan Hits Civilian Sites in Kordofan and Blue Nile



Military operations have sharply escalated in Sudan's [Kordofan and Blue Nile](#) regions, as fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) intensifies in what observers describe as some of the fiercest attacks to date.

On Wednesday, RSF drones struck three locations across South and North Kordofan, including a Quranic school, killing at least one student and injuring others. In parallel, the Sudanese army carried out strikes on RSF positions around the [town of Bara](#) in North Kordofan. On Friday, the Sudan Doctors Network reported that two people were killed and four others injured in drone strikes carried out by the RSF on the Al-Kurqal area, located between the cities of Dilling and Kadugli in South Kordofan.

Local sources told Sudan Tribune that at least one student was killed and around 18 others were wounded in varying degrees when an RSF drone targeted a Quran memorization complex in the city of Al-Rahad, North Kordofan. The sources added that drones also struck civilian targets in the village of Tandalti, west of Al-Rahad, causing casualties among civilians. Another drone attack targeted a secondary school in Dilling, South Kordofan, resulting in extensive damage to the facility.

Military sources said army drones continued to hit both fixed and mobile RSF targets inside and around the city of Bara in North Kordofan. The same drones reportedly attacked an RSF vehicle convoy in the town of Tayba in South Kordofan.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese army shelled the towns of Malkan and Yabus in the far south of the Blue Nile region, near the Ethiopian border, where RSF forces and the SPLM-N—aligned against the army—are reportedly concentrated. [Local sources](#) reported on Saturday that civilian casualties were recorded following shelling by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) targeting the government headquarters of Qeisan locality in the Blue Nile region.

Army [spokesperson](#) Brigadier General Asim Awad said that military units had successfully detected and destroyed a number of hostile drones and their operating systems with high precision. Speaking to Al-Sudani newspaper, he added that the operations targeted drone warehouses, control units, and air defense systems.

The spokesperson also released images showing the destruction of Chinese-made CH-95 drones deployed by the RSF in Darfur and Kordofan, as well as FK-2000 air defense systems that had been installed to bolster defenses against army airstrikes. Military sources confirmed that these advanced systems and drones are being operated with the support of foreign experts in Darfur and Kordofan

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## □ **Political & Security Update**

### **U.S. Pushes for Sudan Ceasefire as International Coalition Warns of Worsening Civilian Crisis**



A senior adviser to the U.S. president for Arab and African affairs, [Musaad Boulos](#), said that the United States is determined to continue pressing for a ceasefire agreement in Sudan. His remarks come as the international “Quint” group on Sudan expressed deep concern over the ongoing escalation of the conflict, calling for an immediate halt to military operations. According to the American outlet Politico, Boulos said a meeting on Sudan will be held next week at the United Nations to outline a framework for upcoming discussions. He added that U.S. President Donald Trump is concerned and wants the war in Sudan to end as soon as possible.

In a joint statement, [the Quint](#)—comprising the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Arab League, the European Union, and the United Nations—voiced particular concern over the rapidly deteriorating situation for civilians in Kordofan and Blue Nile.

The group cited reports of deadly drone strikes, tightened sieges on populated areas, and the targeting of vital civilian infrastructure, alongside forced displacement and severe restrictions on humanitarian access.

It stressed that these developments require immediate action to prevent further atrocities, recalling the violations that took place in El Fasher despite repeated warnings that went unheeded, leading to devastating consequences for civilians. The statement emphasized that civilians must not bear the brunt of continued hostilities. The Quint also called for coordinated and effective collective efforts, including from influential actors, to de-escalate the conflict, create conditions for civilian protection, and halt the flow of weapons, fighters, and other forms of support that fuel violence and contribute to the fragmentation of the country.

## **UN Chief Urges End to Sudan War as African Union Maintains Membership Suspension**

Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, called for an immediate end to the war in Sudan during his address at the opening session of the 39th Summit of the African Union.

Meanwhile, the African Union’s Peace and Security Council reaffirmed on Thursday its decision to suspend Sudan’s membership in the continental bloc, despite repeated calls from Khartoum for reinstatement. The Council also reiterated its rejection of the parallel government and welcomed an initiative by Prime Minister Kamil Idris.

The Peace and Security Council convened a ministerial-level meeting at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, during which it heard a briefing from Sudan’s Foreign Minister Mohi Eldin Salem. Sources told Sudan Tribune that most Council members refused to consider lifting Sudan’s suspension following the 2021 coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. The sources noted that all members—except Egypt and Algeria—based their position on the AU’s founding principles rejecting unconstitutional changes of government, including Article 30 of the Constitutive Act and the 2000 Lomé Declaration.

In its statement, the Peace and Security Council reiterated its rejection of the parallel government formed by the Sudan Founding Alliance led by the Rapid Support Forces. It called on all member states and international partners not to recognize it, while reaffirming Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### **Drone Strikes Hit West Darfur Market, Dozens Killed and Injured Amid RSF-Sudanese Army Clashes**



On Sunday, drones believed to belong to the [Sudanese Armed Forces](#) carried out heavy strikes on a market in West Darfur near the border with Chad, leaving multiple dead and injured, including members of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Over the past few weeks, Sudanese army air units have intensified attacks on RSF-controlled sites across Darfur, which is largely under the paramilitary group's control. The army stated that it is targeting military equipment, including advanced air defense systems and drones.

Meanwhile, the RSF accuses the army of striking civilian areas and destroying essential infrastructure in the region. An eyewitness in the town of Adiconq in West Darfur told Sudan Tribune that "a drone fired four missiles across different areas of the town." The strikes completely destroyed the fuel market controlled by the RSF, as well as trucks belonging to the same forces that had arrived from neighboring Chad and were en route to Al-Junaynah. The eyewitness added that the attack caused numerous casualties among civilians, as the strikes coincided with the weekly market, which is attended by residents from many surrounding villages.

### **RSF Committed War Crimes in El Fasher: Over 6,000 Killed in Just Three Days**



The United Nations [High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) said that the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) committed war crimes and may also have committed crimes against humanity during their takeover of El Fasher, confirming that at least 6,000 people were killed in the first three days.

Several reports documented massacres, rape, and abductions during the paramilitary group's seizure of the city in western Sudan in October. In a statement accompanying the release of its report, the UN human rights office said that "the violations committed by the Rapid Support Forces during their control of El Fasher amount to war crimes and potential crimes against humanity." It also leveled accusations against "Arab militias" allied with the RSF.

Based on interviews conducted in late 2025 with more than 140 victims and witnesses in Northern State in Sudan and eastern Chad, the UN documented the killing of more than 6,000 people during the first three days of the RSF assault on El Fasher.

The agency warned that “the actual death toll from the week-long attack is undoubtedly far higher,” noting that “thousands remain missing.” The report estimates that at least 4,400 people were killed inside El Fasher, with more than 1,600 others killed while fleeing the city.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said in the statement: “Credible and impartial investigations must be carried out to determine criminal responsibility, including that of commanders and other officials.” . Türk had previously indicated, on February 9, that the findings of the UN human rights office were consistent with conclusions reached by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, which stated that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed during the takeover of El Fasher.

### Deaths of Sudanese Detainees in Egypt and Chad Spark Rights Concerns Over Refugee Treatment



Media reports have confirmed [the death of an 18-year-old Sudanese man](#) last week while in police custody in Cairo, days after a 67-year-old Sudanese man died in detention at Al-Shorouk police station. The reports said that the young man, Al-Nazir Al-Sadiq, died after being held for several days in dire conditions, while the older man, Mubarak Abu Hawa, died following their arrest as part of a campaign targeting refugees and foreigners in Egypt for deportation. The incidents have prompted rights groups to call on Egyptian authorities to halt deportations, describing such measures as violations of international law.

In Chad, also reported the death of a 38-year-old Sudanese man in police detention in the city of Abéché. Forensic investigations have not disclosed the cause of death, marking the third such incident in the city, which has witnessed multiple deaths under unclear circumstances inside police facilities.

Al-Sadiq Ali Hassan, acting head of the Darfur Bar Association’s board of trustees, told [Sudan Tribune](#) that the Sudanese embassy in Cairo, through its representatives, had asked families of some secondary school students—who hold valid residency permits—to pay fees of 12,000 Egyptian pounds (over \$250) in exchange for deporting their detained children back to Sudan.

He explained that the embassy is demanding these payments despite the fact that the students have not committed any violations related to residency or otherwise. He also noted that arrest campaigns have continued, targeting dozens of Sudanese refugees across various police stations in Cairo, including individuals with valid identification documents and residency permits.

Hassan criticized what he described as a significant failure by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide protection for Sudanese refugees and prevent deportations. He said the agency had not taken basic steps, such as checking on the conditions of detainees' families, particularly following the two deaths recorded in police custody.

### **Majority of Sudanese Returnees Report Protection Risks Despite Rising Returns**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that 65 percent of Sudanese returnees from neighboring countries—whose total number has reached 721,000—reported facing protection risks in host countries. It added that 55 percent had applied for asylum in their countries of departure, while 26 percent said they had left family members behind. According to the agency, 721,000 Sudanese have returned from neighboring countries since July 2024, including 475,000 from Egypt, 209,000 from South Sudan, 33,000 from Chad, 2,500 from Libya, and 1,000 from Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 2.9 million internally displaced persons have returned to their homes, contributing to a 21 percent decline in displacement compared to the peak recorded in January 2025, when the number of displaced reached 11.5 million. The conflict, which erupted in April 2023, has forced around 4.4 million Sudanese to flee the country in search of safety in neighboring states.

### **Satellite Images Reveal Ethiopia Hosts UAE-Funded RSF Training Camp with 4,300 Fighters**



On Tuesday, [Reuters reported](#) verified information that Ethiopia is hosting a training camp for thousands of fighters from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), who are engaged in combat against the Sudanese army with Emirati financial and logistical support. Eight sources, including a senior Ethiopian government official, confirmed that the United Arab Emirates funded the construction of the camp and provided military trainers and logistical support—a fact also documented in an internal Ethiopian security memorandum and a diplomatic cable reviewed by Reuters.

Reuters spoke to 15 individuals familiar with the camp's construction and operations and analyzed satellite imagery of the site. Two Ethiopian intelligence officials and the imagery corroborated the details in the security memorandum and diplomatic cable. The satellite images show recent expansion over the past few weeks, including the construction of a ground control center for drones at a nearby airfield. Activity at the camp, located in the remote Benishangul-Gumuz region near the Sudanese border, reportedly increased in October.

By early January, 4,300 RSF fighters were receiving military training at the site. An Ethiopian security memorandum stated that “the UAE provides them with logistical and military supplies.” Six officials said that

recruits are mostly Ethiopian nationals, along with citizens from South Sudan and Sudan, who are expected to join RSF operations in Blue Nile State.

A November diplomatic cable described the camp as having a capacity for 10,000 fighters, noting that activity began in October with the arrival of dozens of Land Cruisers, heavy trucks, RSF units, and Emirati trainers.

### Over 3.5 Million Sudanese Return Home as Displacement Declines



The International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) revealed that more than 3.5 million people have returned to their homes from within Sudan and abroad, across nine of the country's 18 states.

The return movement began from displacement sites and host countries after the Sudanese army regained control of the states of Sennar, Al Jazirah, and Khartoum. This development has led to a 21 percent decrease in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) compared to the peak recorded in January 2025, when displacement reached 11.5 million people.

In a statement, the IOM said that “2,915,306 individuals have returned from internal displacement, while 585,176 people have come back from outside Sudan.”

The organization noted that returnees have settled in 2,575 locations across 65 localities in nine states. About 97 percent have returned to their areas of origin, while the remainder have resettled in nearby locations. Khartoum State recorded the highest number of returns, with 1,363,071 people going back out of a total of 3,770,161 who had fled their homes since the conflict began 33 months ago.

Since regaining control of Khartoum State from the Rapid Support Forces, the government has begun restoring essential services—including electricity, water, healthcare, and education—while working to rebuild infrastructure damaged during the war. The report also indicated that the number of displaced people has declined to 9,139,309 individuals, currently residing in 11,356 sites across all 185 localities nationwide. Darfur states continue to host 62 percent of the total displaced population.

### Deadly Fire Destroys Displacement Camp in North Darfur, Leaving Thousands Homeless



At least [two people were killed](#) after a massive fire swept through hundreds of makeshift shelters for displaced people in the town of Tawila, North Darfur. Tawila, located about 60 kilometers west of El Fasher, has become a refuge for approximately 655,000 displaced people, most of whom fled El Fasher. Around 21 percent of them are living in camps, while 74 percent have settled in informal settlements and open gathering sites.

Yahya Ibrahim, a member of the Tawila Emergency Room, said that “at least two people, including a 12-year-old child, were killed in a fire that broke out in a displacement camp.” He added that the blaze destroyed dozens of shelters built from local materials, leading to the total loss of displaced families’ belongings and leaving large numbers without shelter amid dire humanitarian conditions.

In a statement, Adam Regal, spokesperson for the Coordination of Displaced Persons, described the fire that affected camps hosting people displaced from El Fasher as a disaster exposing the fragility of humanitarian conditions in Darfur. He warned that the loss of shelter under such circumstances puts thousands at risk of hunger, disease, and exposure to harsh weather, further deepening the suffering of communities already exhausted by years of conflict and forced displacement.

He called for the urgent provision of alternative shelter for affected families, as well as food, clean water, and emergency healthcare, in addition to support for rebuilding the camp and strengthening its capacity to withstand future disasters.

### [Rights Groups Demand Halt to Trial of Sudanese Activist, Decry ‘Arbitrary Detention’](#)



A coalition of lawyers, civil society groups, legal entities, and activists has [called for the suspension](#) of the trial of Sudanese activist Muneeb Abdelaziz and accountability for violations committed against him.

Last week, a court in Dongola, northern Sudan, began proceedings against Muneeb, who faces charges under three articles of the criminal code, including inciting discontent among members of regular forces, undermining the prestige of the state, and disturbing public safety, in addition to two charges under the Cybercrimes Act.

In a statement, [the Emergency Lawyers](#) group said, “We firmly affirm that the detention of Muneeb Abdelaziz is arbitrary and unlawful, and we demand his immediate and unconditional release and the suspension of his trial.”

The group called for all charges against him to be dropped and for all legal measures taken against him to be deemed null and void, holding the authorities responsible for his physical and psychological safety.

Security authorities in Northern State arrested Muneeb Abdelaziz on December 19, following his participation in commemorations marking the seventh anniversary of the December Revolution that led to the ousting of former president Omar al-Bashir. The group also urged investigations and accountability for those involved in his enforced

disappearance and other violations he allegedly endured, rejecting the use of criminal law and cybercrime legislation as tools of political repression. Security authorities have continued to target members of political groups, activists, human rights defenders, and volunteers calling for an end to the war. Some face charges carrying severe penalties, including lengthy prison terms or even the death penalty, while others have reportedly died in detention.

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## ♥ Humanitarian Focus

### WHO Warns of Dire Humanitarian and Health Crisis in Sudan Amid Three-Year Conflict



The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) has warned of an extremely dire humanitarian situation in Sudan due to the ongoing war, which has persisted for nearly three years. The conflict has directly impacted the health sector, leading to the spread of infectious diseases, malnutrition, and the suspension of many essential services.

The organization highlighted that displacement represents one of the biggest health challenges, with around 3.9 million internally displaced people struggling to access food, water, and healthcare. Returnees and displaced populations face severe shortages of services amid deteriorating economic conditions.

WHO representative and head of mission in Sudan, Shible Sahbani, told reporters in Port Sudan that health facilities suffer from severe shortages of medicines, personnel, and financial resources. Access to care is also hindered by security challenges, as health facilities, ambulances, and medical staff have been repeatedly targeted during the conflict, resulting in the destruction of infrastructure and equipment and causing deaths and injuries among healthcare workers and patients.

Sahbani noted that over two and a half years, the organization recorded approximately 2,002 attacks on the health sector, resulting in 1,883 deaths. He confirmed the widespread outbreak of infectious diseases and the spread of cholera in more than 18 states, causing 3,500 deaths. Dengue fever claimed 1,084 lives, and more than 2.7 million malaria cases were recorded. In addition, about 44,000 children were admitted to hospitals due to severe malnutrition, maternal mortality during childbirth has increased, and chronic diseases such as hypertension have become more prevalent.

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## Sudan's Pharmaceutical Sector Loses Over \$1 Billion as War Halts Production



The Sudan Chamber of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers reported that the [pharmaceutical manufacturing](#) sector has suffered losses exceeding \$1 billion due to the ongoing conflict. Around 85 percent of the industrial sector has been affected, including drug factories in Khartoum, which previously produced 80 different medications; some facilities were destroyed, while production in others halted due to insecurity, according to official statistics.

Khalid Wadaa, a member of the Chamber, said: “Direct structural losses in the pharmaceutical sector are estimated at over \$200 million, while total losses—including production disruptions—have surpassed \$1 billion.”

He explained that the losses include theft of electrical cables, damage to production lines, and the emigration of 40–60 percent of specialized technical staff, posing a major challenge to a sector reliant on highly skilled expertise.

Wadaa noted that the pharmaceutical industry is among the most strategically sensitive sectors due to its direct link to health and economic security, encompassing more than 30 factories. He revealed that production has resumed in six facilities despite the damages, focusing on essential medicines.

He expects more than 10 additional factories to resume operations by the end of March after completing rehabilitation and technical calibration, with the rest projected to restart before year-end if electricity supply improves and funding is secured.

Electricity remains the main obstacle to full operational recovery, with factories currently relying on gasoline generators and solar power, increasing operating costs and financial pressure.

Wadaa highlighted that the pharmaceutical sector provides around 8,000 direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs in transport, printing, and packaging, supporting more than 50,000 families and serving as a key driver of industrial activity and the national economy.

The Chamber called for the creation of a financing portfolio through banks to purchase raw materials and rehabilitate factories, urging the government to provide electricity, adopt supportive customs and financial policies, and protect the domestic pharmaceutical industry as a strategic security sector.

A report from the National Medicines and Poisons Board published in mid-2024 indicated that the ongoing war has brought the pharmaceutical sector—previously a pillar of national self-sufficiency—to near paralysis. The National Medical Supplies Fund noted that the conflict has caused the collapse of the national medicine distribution system and reduced the strategic stock of essential medicines to less than 20 percent of pre-conflict levels.

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## Sudanese Women Publishers Reinvent Publishing and Distribution



The entry of [women into Sudan's publishing sector](#) dates back to the 1960s, when politician Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim founded the first publishing house, Mahira, in 1974. She was followed in the late 1990s by novelist and short story writer Bathina Khidr Maki, who established Dar Sidra for Publishing.

According to Noor Al-Huda Mohamed, Secretary-General of the Sudanese Publishers Union, "Several new women publishers have recently entered the field, including Sana Abu Qosayseh of Dar Madarat, novelist Sarah Al-Jak of Dar Al-Fal, and Israa Al-Rais with Dar Al-Rais and Nartaqi Publishing and Distribution." In a cultural landscape facing existential challenges due to war, the experience of writer and publisher Israa Al-Rais, CEO of Nartaqi Publishing & Distribution and Al-Rais Publishing & Translation, stands out as one of resilience and vision. Israa describes her project as "transcending the concept of a publishing house to become a cross-border cultural institution."

"The main driving force was to bridge the gap between the wealth of Sudanese creativity and the limited channels available to present it to the world," she said. Regarding distribution methods, she added: "We established strategic partnerships with major distributors in the Gulf and internationally to ensure our publications reach readers wherever they are. We also invested in cross-border publishing through printing and distribution at regional hubs, ensuring a continuous flow of knowledge despite the challenges of war and displacement."

Israa Al-Rais emphasized that the publications of Nartaqi and Al-Rais go beyond literature, tackling intellectual fields essential to national consciousness. These include: Project on Re-reading Sudanese History, producing books that revisit Sudanese identity with rigorous research tools. Series on Studies and Research, focused on social and human sciences, providing scientific approaches and analyses with contributions from leading intellectuals.

"Qantara" Series supervised by novelist and translator Dr. Atef Al-Haj Saeed, aiming to build a knowledge bridge between the Arab world and the rest of the globe through well-researched translations in narrative, humanities, entrepreneurship, and personal development.

Similarly, novelist Sarah Al-Jak of Dar Al-Fal highlighted her experience in identifying a "clear gap" between readers and publishers. To address this, she said: "We experimented with various approaches to bridge the gap between our printed work and readers, extending the effort to other publishing houses. We introduced 'young female distributors,' training young women in writing and reading within the center, who read, discussed, and distributed

books while earning a percentage of sales as an economic support in their daily lives.” . Sarah Al-Jak described her venture as a long and challenging journey, but one worth pursuing. She emphasized that each step forward revealed new opportunities to make publishing more accessible, desirable, and replicable. She noted that their efforts are ongoing, undertaken carefully, focusing on high-quality publications, continuous development in artistic design, and smart, innovative approaches to distribution and promotion.

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### □ Further Reading

#### Darfur: A Region in Crisis as Displaced Families Face Hunger in Forgotten Camps



When Saleha, (44), arrived in the town of Karnoy after fleeing the Zamzam camp following an attack, she had run out of money after paying transportation costs and bribes at checkpoints operated by armed elements of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). She was forced to change her plans and decided to head toward refugee camps in Chad, hoping conditions would eventually allow her to continue her journey to safety. Saleha said: “The assistance we received at different stages of displacement is not enough to sustain us or prevent hunger. Even in Chad, aid is scarce.” Saleha and her family are now living in Touloum refugee camp in eastern Chad, waiting either for the opportunity to continue their journey or for peace to return so they can go back home. [Read the full story](#)

#### Sudan: War Through the Eyes of Women as Conflict Deepens Social Struggles



In Sudan, civilians trapped in conflict zones are not only besieged by the direct violence of war, but also by entrenched social and economic challenges and harmful practices that civil society organizations and community initiatives have spent years trying to combat—particularly those related to gender-based violence. In a series of

community sessions organized by Al-Alag Center in Khartoum, powerful testimonies emerged, revealing the human suffering of women who have been striving to confront harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. [Read the full story](#)

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