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#StandWithSudan

## Sudan Media Forum Weekly Briefing

Issue [26] | March 2, 2026

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

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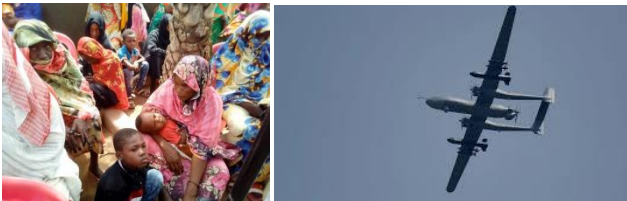
Hello ,

Welcome to your weekly briefing. This week, Sudan's war is escalating with expanded drone attacks targeting civilian sites, causing a sharp rise in casualties, particularly among women and children. UN and human rights reports document a surge in violations, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and attacks on healthcare facilities. The humanitarian crisis is deepening with mass displacement, worsening mental health conditions, and the collapse of basic services, amid stalled ceasefire efforts. Meanwhile, reports highlight severe economic losses and continued targeting of vulnerable groups, including journalists, people with disabilities, and refugees.

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### Top Story of the Week

## Drone War Escalates in Sudan: Civilian Sites Hit Across Blue Nile and Kordofan, Dozens Killed



The alliance between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North has expanded the scope of its drone attacks in the Blue Nile region, targeting the towns of Qaisan and Kurmuk near the Ethiopian border. According to a [senior official](#) in the Blue Nile regional government, speaking to "Sudan Tribune", drones struck a girls' primary school in Qaisan as well as another school located a few kilometers outside the town. The governor of Kurmuk, Abdelati Al-Faki, said the alliance's drones targeted three neighborhoods in the city, triggering a wave of displacement.

The escalation of drone strikes across several locations in the Kordofan and Blue Nile regions has resulted in dozens of casualties, including women and children, amid accusations from both sides over responsibility for the attacks. Meanwhile, the Sudanese army and its allies repelled a large-scale assault launched by the RSF on the [town of Al-Tina](#) in North Darfur state. On Saturday, RSF drones [attacked El-Obeid](#), the capital of North Kordofan state, causing significant damage to shops and workshops in the city's industrial zone. Local sources reported that the attacks also hit the main transport station, resulting in losses to passenger buses and offices, in addition to a second strike on the University of Kordofan.

The [Sudan Doctors Network](#) reported last week that three people were killed and seven others injured in a drone strike carried out by the RSF on a hospital in Sennar state in the Blue Nile region, marking the fourth attack on a medical facility in February.

The Emergency Lawyers group announced that at least 28 people were killed in an aerial drone strike targeting a market in Al-Safiya area in North Kordofan. [Media reports](#) also indicated that the Sudanese army conducted heavy strikes last week on RSF positions in Kordofan.

Activist Buthaina Hammad told [Radio Dabanga](#) that attacks on a displacement center and a drinking water station in Umm Rassoum, in Al-Sunut locality in West Kordofan, killed more than 40 people—mostly women and children—and left dozens injured, following what she described as a direct drone strike carried out by the Sudanese army.

UNICEF reported that at least 15 children were killed and 10 others injured in a drone airstrike targeting a displacement camp in Al-Sunut, West Kordofan. Widespread condemnation has followed the recent drone attacks on civilian sites in the area. In a separate incident, a drone believed to belong to the Sudanese Armed Forces struck a fuel storage facility inside a local market in Adi Kong.

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## Political & Security Update

### US Push for Sudan Ceasefire Meets Firm Rejection as Army Vows to Continue War



Massad Boulos, Senior Adviser to the U.S. President for Arab and African Affairs, confirmed that both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have received the final version of a proposed settlement, without disclosing any details of its content.

Boulos reiterated that the U.S. administration is working to launch a comprehensive political process, while the Sudanese government, in its response to proposals received from Washington aimed at ending the war, stated that “any proposals in this regard must take into account the country’s supreme interests and the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan.” The government stressed that receiving or discussing proposals does not necessarily imply acceptance or approval. Boulos also called on the warring parties in Sudan to agree to an immediate humanitarian ceasefire without preconditions. In response to earlier proposals put forward by Boulos, Sudan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed that Sudan would not accept any initiatives that fail to safeguard its national interests. Meanwhile, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan reaffirmed his commitment to continuing the war. Addressing a graduation ceremony at the Karari Military Academy, he said: “We have no option but to continue the battle to its end, or for the enemy to surrender and be eliminated.”

### **UN Rights Chief Warns of Sharp Rise in Civilian Casualties and Abuses in Sudan Conflict**



[Volker Türk](#), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has reported a dramatic increase in civilian casualties in Sudan in 2025, estimating them at 2.5 times higher than the previous year. Thousands remain missing or unidentified. The office documented 500 cases of sexual violence, some resulting in death. Civilian death toll figures from the conflict, now in its 34th month, remain disputed, though the World Health Organization recorded 40,000 injuries due to the war. Human rights groups warn that actual cases of sexual violence are likely much higher, as cultural stigma leads some victims to flee their families or even commit suicide to avoid shame.

Türk stated that both the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese army continue to use explosive weapons in densely populated areas, usually without prior warning, while the increased use of drones has expanded civilian harm and targeted critical infrastructure. Drone strikes alone have caused around 600 civilian casualties since January.

The office has also recorded a sharp rise in summary executions of civilians, often accused of collaborating with opposing forces, and widespread arbitrary detention used as a tool of intimidation by all parties and their allied

militias. Civilians detained in army-controlled areas have reportedly been convicted without fair trial guarantees, with many facing death or life imprisonment.

Türk emphasized that attacks on humanitarian convoys and food supplies have severed vital lifelines, exacerbating one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. He expressed particular concern over deliberate attacks on healthcare and aid workers, as well as the increasing militarization of society, including the recruitment of children and youth into armed activities.

### **Over 50 Civilians Killed in Two Days ; 30 European Countries Express Deep Concern**



Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission has accused the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of [shelling an aid convoy](#) en route to South Kordofan state, killing at least three civilians. Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed concern over reports that more than 50 civilians were killed in drone strikes carried out by parties to the conflict in Sudan over two days last week.

More than 30 European and Western countries also voiced deep concern in a joint statement over the continued unlawful and deadly attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure, and humanitarian operations, amid ongoing heavy fighting in the Kordofan and Darfur regions. The statement noted that up to 100,000 people have been displaced in recent months in Kordofan states alone. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the violations and abuses committed by the RSF and allied militias in and around El Fasher last October raise fears that similar patterns could be repeated in the Kordofan region.

### **Chad Closes Sudan Border Crossings as Fighting Escalates and Displacement Surges in Darfur**

Chadian authorities last week closed several border crossings with Sudan, including the [Adré crossing](#) with West Darfur, amid concerns over the infiltration of Sudanese armed groups into Chadian territory. The decision comes as fighting in the area intensified, forcing more than 400 families to flee the town of Al-Tina following deadly clashes between the Sudanese army and its allied forces against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The move coincides with ongoing battles between the Sudanese army and allied Joint Forces against the RSF in the border area of Al-Tina in North Darfur, as well as in areas north of El Geneina in West Darfur state. Chadian media reports indicated that an RSF unit attacked a Chadian army camp in the town of Al-Tina, resulting in casualties and the destruction of military vehicles, although Chadian authorities have not issued an official statement.

Traders from the border city of El Geneina told "Sudan Tribune" that "Chadian authorities have closed the Adré crossing and prevented the movement of goods." The crossing has long been a vital route for dozens of traders transporting food supplies and fuel from Chad into Sudan. The RSF has also been accused of exploiting the border crossing to move weapons and military equipment allegedly supplied by the United Arab Emirates to the town of

Umm Jaras in Chad. Meanwhile, Chadian forces have deployed heavily along the border with West Darfur, in addition to stationing various units at the Al-Tina crossing in North Darfur.

### **RSF Leader Admits Use of Foreign Fighters as Report Exposes Alleged Arms Airlift Network**



Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, commander of the [Rapid Support Forces](#) (RSF), has acknowledged the involvement of Colombian mercenaries fighting alongside his forces inside Sudan, stating that they are responsible for operating drone systems. At the same time, he accused Sudan's intelligence services of bringing in fighters from the Somali group Al-Shabaab to take part in the ongoing conflict.

An investigation by the French newspaper [Le Monde](#) revealed the existence of a new airline registered in Burkina Faso that is allegedly operating an air bridge to smuggle weapons from the United Arab Emirates to RSF forces, while also transporting senior commanders. According to the investigation, "the company, owned by a Sudanese businessman and registered in Burkina Faso, is engaged in running a covert airlift to transport military equipment from the UAE to the Rapid Support Forces." It added that Batot Air was established and registered in Burkina Faso in August 2024, and began operations in November 2025. The report indicated that the airline operates near-daily flights between the UAE and the Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia and Chad. It further stated that Batot Air has carried out at least 36 flights between the UAE and Ethiopia since its establishment. According to the investigation, the aircraft deliberately switch off their transponders while flying over the Red Sea to avoid detection, before landing at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa or at the Bishoftu Air Base. The newspaper also reported that this logistical network supports a recently discovered RSF base in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz region.

### **Deadly RSF Attack in Mistariha North Darfur Kills 28, Destroys Only Health Facility**

The Sudan Doctors Network has reported that 28 civilians were killed and 39 others injured, including 10 women, following an attack on the Mistariha area in North Darfur state, allegedly carried out by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), according to preliminary information from the region. The network added that the rocket shelling destroyed the area's only health center, while medical personnel working there were assaulted. One healthcare worker was also arrested, and their fate remains unknown. The assault on Mistariha, accompanied by intense fighting, has triggered a wave of displacement to nearby villages, as residents flee deteriorating humanitarian conditions.

### **MSF Treated 167 Drone Victims in Two Weeks as WHO Reports 69 killed in Attacks on Health Facilities**



Médecins Sans Frontières ([MSF](#)) has warned that the escalating use of drone strikes by both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is inflicting widespread damage on civilian areas and critical infrastructure across Sudan, including schools, markets, healthcare facilities, and water sources. In a statement, MSF said its medical teams treated 167 patients during the first two weeks of February who suffered from severe injuries linked to drone attacks, including penetrating chest and abdominal wounds, multiple fractures, head trauma, and shrapnel injuries.

The organization cautioned that such attacks place civilians and humanitarian workers at extreme risk, urging their immediate protection. Esperanza Santos, MSF's head of emergency operations, said the conflict is increasingly being waged with drones far from traditional front lines. "Our teams are regularly treating large numbers of people wounded by these drones, including women and children," she said, warning that the strikes are often aimed at disrupting supply routes and damaging civilian infrastructure, raising the risk of siege-like conditions in contested areas.

Meanwhile, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the [World Health Organization](#), called for an immediate halt to attacks on healthcare facilities in Sudan, highlighting their deadly consequences. In a post on the platform X, he said that five attacks on healthcare facilities have been recorded since the beginning of 2026, resulting in dozens of casualties. He added that attacks documented during the first 50 days of the year have killed at least 69 people and injured 49 others

### **[HRW: RSF Committed Executions and Abuses Against People with Disabilities in El Fasher](#)**



[Human Rights Watch has accused](#) the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of carrying out executions and serious abuses against people with disabilities during their control of El Fasher in North Darfur, western Sudan, warning that these actions may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. A report by the organization details that violations in El Fasher began with the initial RSF attack in May 2024, during which civilians were killed and critical infrastructure, including hospitals, water sources, and markets, was destroyed. The situation escalated into mass killings after the RSF consolidated control over the city on 26 October 2025. According to victims and eyewitnesses cited by HRW, RSF fighters specifically targeted people because of their disabilities, accusing some of being wounded fighters while mocking and humiliating others. The organization emphasized that targeting civilians or

subjecting them to cruel or degrading treatment, including those with disabilities, constitutes a war crime and may amount to crimes against humanity if part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population.

The report highlighted similar abuses in other regions of Sudan. One nurse recounted that fighters ordered a woman to lower her brother, who had Down syndrome, before executing him. In another incident, a young woman with a physical disability and her mother, who was carrying her, were shot. In a separate case, a blind boy was executed after his mother told fighters that he could not see.

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## ♥ Humanitarian Focus

### Over 840 Women Detained in Sudan, Thousands of Sexual Violence Cases Documented Amid War



Human rights activist Hala Al-Karb revealed before the United Nations Security Council that more than [840 women](#) are being held in areas under the control of the Sudanese army, with some detained in civilian facilities that have been converted into detention sites. Al-Karb stated that these women face multiple violations, including arbitrary detention, mistreatment, and denial of legal safeguards. She highlighted that some detentions occurred in schools, hospitals, and other civilian buildings, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. These practices, she emphasized, have further compounded the suffering of women, particularly in the absence of effective accountability and protection mechanisms.

According to Al-Karb, women's and human rights organizations have documented 1,294 cases of sexual violence since the outbreak of the conflict across 14 Sudanese states, including rape, gang rape, sexual assault, abduction, and forced marriage. She noted that 87 percent of cases in which perpetrators could be identified were attributed to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), while stressing that violations were not limited to one side, and civilians—especially women—remained the most vulnerable targets in the conflict. The reports also documented 225 cases of sexual violence against children, most of them girls aged 4 to 17, representing approximately 18 percent of all documented cases. Al-Karb warned that these figures likely underestimate the true scale of abuses due to social stigma, lack of safe reporting mechanisms, and difficulty accessing conflict-affected areas.

### WHO Reports Widespread Mental Health Crisis in Khartoum Amid Sudan Conflict



The [World Health Organization](#) has revealed a significant rise in depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in Sudan's capital, Khartoum. The prevalence of mental health disorders was estimated at 12% among high school students and over 59% among displaced populations. According to the WHO report, prolonged conflict in Sudan has generated a heavy burden of mental health disorders, with children being particularly vulnerable. They face risks including abduction, sexual violence, forced recruitment, and child marriage, all of which contribute to long-term psychological trauma. The report notes that severe psychotic disorders remain relatively rare, but more than one in five people living in conflict-affected areas are estimated to suffer from a mental disorder. The ongoing conflict and destruction of healthcare infrastructure have also weakened the country's capacity to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases. Mortality related to such diseases rose from 32% in 2022 to 54% in 2025.

WHO further warned of a projected increase in cardiovascular diseases, estimated at 2.5% in 2011, primarily including hypertension, rheumatic and ischemic heart disease, and cardiomyopathy. Patients with heart conditions face heightened risks due to disrupted medication supplies and limited access to medical care.

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### Economic Snapshot

## **Sudan Reports Massive Mineral Reserves: 1,500 Tons of Gold and 30 Billion Tons of Iron , \$7 billion losses**



The Sudan Geological Research Authority has announced the discovery of substantial mineral reserves in Sudan, including approximately 1,500 tons of confirmed and probable gold and more than 30 billion tons of iron ore. The authority emphasized that these figures represent scientifically assessed reserves and do not reflect the country's full mineral potential, as large areas still require detailed surveys.

Ahmed Haroun Altom, Director-General of the Authority, said the discoveries represent a real opportunity to attract strategic investments in the mining sector, with a focus on local processing and adding value to minerals to boost

Sudan's economic returns. He also revealed that the mining sector has suffered losses of around \$7 billion due to the ongoing war, with the Authority's operations shrinking from 18 states before the conflict to just six states today. Iron ore deposits are concentrated in the Northern, River Nile, Red Sea, and Kassala states, as well as parts of Darfur and Kordofan. Some of the ores require beneficiation and processing to meet industrial quality standards for major steel and iron plants.

The Authority plans in 2026 to update geological databases and launch new exploration programs, prioritizing strategic and energy-related minerals to support the government's plans to maximize the mining sector's contribution to the national economy.

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## Culture & In-Depth 🗺️

### Queen Elizabeth's "Rolls-Royce Phantom": A Wounded Witness to Sudan's War



[A Rolls-Royce Phantom](#) convertible stands in the courtyard of the Republican Palace like a wounded relic, telling the turbulent story of Sudan's history. Once an icon of royal protocol, the classic car has become a target of gunfire during the civil war that erupted in 2023. The vehicle, famously ridden by the late Queen Elizabeth II during her historic 1965 visit to Sudan, now bears severe damage to its iconic bodywork, while its "Spirit of Ecstasy" hood ornament is missing—likely broken or stolen for scrap during two years of RSF control over the palace complex and its museums.

Amid Sudan's efforts to restore what the war has destroyed, Minister of Information Khalid Al-Aisir has issued a call to classic car enthusiasts and experts in the United Kingdom, seeking help to revive this piece of shared heritage. The country faces a shortage of specialized mechanical expertise and rare spare parts, which exist only in private collections and vintage car garages in the UK.

The car was more than a mode of transportation; it symbolized Sudan's first royal visit after independence, parading through Khartoum alongside the Sudanese president amid massive popular celebrations captured by international cinema.

Palace museum officials believe that the targeting of symbolic presidential vehicles was not accidental but may have been a deliberate act of cultural vandalism. As government ministries return to the ruins of Khartoum this year, the full scope of cultural devastation in national and ethnographic museums is becoming clear, with thousands of artifacts looted and some sold on the black market.

Restoring the Phantom is now a cultural priority for the Sudanese government, which hopes to enlist support from the UK's Ministry of Culture and Sports and the British Council, which has previously assisted in restoring historical sites such as Suakin Mosque and Peace Park in Kassala.

The effort to save Queen Elizabeth's Phantom is part of a broader project to rebuild Sudan's national memory, severely damaged by conflict. While the United Nations estimates that rebuilding Khartoum will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, restoring historically significant sites such as the old Republican Palace—where General Gordon was killed—remains a challenge that intertwines politics, heritage, and international support to salvage what remains of Sudan's golden era before years of war took their toll.

*Craig Simpson – The Telegraph*

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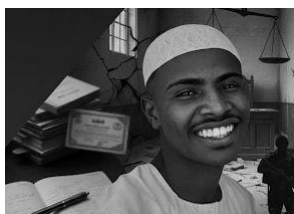
### Further Reading

#### Sudanese Refugees in Egypt: Unprotected Victims



More than 1.5 million Sudanese refugees in Egypt face growing threats of forced deportation amid widespread arrest campaigns that have targeted even those holding refugee cards issued by the UN Refugee Agency. Despite their refugee status, many find themselves without adequate protection. They are detained in harsh conditions inside detention centers, with reports of deaths resulting from neglect and deteriorating humanitarian conditions. [Watch the video](#)

#### A Generation Under Siege: The Tragedy of a Student Criminalized by Geography



Omar, a 21-year-old student, once carried only his pen, a blank notebook, and exam papers. Today, the ravages of war have condemned him to five years in prison—not for any crime he committed, but because of where he comes

from. Sudanese army suspicions toward residents of certain geographic areas have turned ordinary citizens into targets, and for Omar, his birthplace has made him a presumed enemy in a conflict that has raged for three years. [Read the full story](#)

### **People with Disabilities in Darfur Displacement Camps: Double Burden and Marginalization**

Amid the dilapidated tents of Darfur's displacement camps, thousands of Sudanese people with disabilities are confronting a new chapter of the country's war. For them, the danger is no longer only from the crossfire between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF); harsh living conditions and the lack of specialized care have become barriers that deepen their isolation and vulnerability. The absence of accessible infrastructure, medical support, and social services leaves many individuals unable to meet basic needs, while dependence on overstretched humanitarian aid further exacerbates their marginalization. [Read the full story](#)

### **Sudan: 34 Journalists Killed and 6 En forcedly Disappeared Since War Began**



In 2025 alone, 14 journalists and media workers were killed in Sudan, bringing the total to 34 since the outbreak of conflict in 2023. In addition, six journalists have been subjected to enforced disappearances, seven faced prolonged detention, and nine endured temporary arbitrary detention and imprisonment. The crisis also includes four cases of judicial harassment, eight cross-border violations against journalists in exile, and 19 instances of threats, hate speech, and defamation campaigns. [Read the full story](#) [watch the video](#)

### **Uncertain Future for 200,000 Sudanese Exam Candidates in Conflict Zones**

Former Minister of Education, Professor Mohammed Al-Amin Al -Tom, has warned that holding Sudanese secondary school certificate exams for students in Darfur and South Kordofan this year is “highly uncertain and extremely complex,” due to ongoing insecurity as well as political and bureaucratic obstacles. With nearly 200,000 students expected to sit for the exams, the continuing conflict poses serious challenges to organizing safe and accessible examination centers. [Read the full story](#)

### **Darfur: Lives Cut Off Without Communication or Internet**



Adam Othman returned his wife home after she had safely delivered their baby at the hospital through a normal birth. She was in stable condition when he left for work. Hours later, her health suddenly deteriorated, and she died. Neighbors and relatives tried to reach him to tell him what had happened—but all communication networks were down. [Read the full story](#)

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