



#ساندوا السودان  
#StandWithSudan

## Sudan Media Forum Weekly Briefing

Issue [33] | 4 May 2026

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

---

Hello ,

Welcome to your weekly briefing. This week, military operations in Sudan escalated as drone strikes expanded to hit the capital, Khartoum, and multiple states, causing casualties and large-scale displacement, particularly in Blue Nile State. Politically, the United States is leading international efforts toward a ceasefire with broad backing, while the army maintains its position in favor of a military resolution. On the humanitarian front, the crisis is deepening with the near-collapse of the health system in Al-Dalang and the spread of dengue fever, alongside UN warnings of rising sexual violence. Meanwhile, violations against journalists continue despite their union winning a UNESCO award, amid a worsening economic downturn and declining exports.

---

### Top Story of the Week

**Sudan War Widens as Drone Strikes Hit Capital and Multiple States**



The week saw significant military and security developments, as drone strikes expanded to target all directions, including the capital, Khartoum, as well as the states of Al Jazirah, White Nile, Blue Nile, North Kordofan, Central Darfur and Al-Qadarif. This comes at a time when fighting and shelling are intensifying in [Blue Nile State](#), leading to large-scale displacement, with the number of those fleeing conflict areas in Blue Nile reaching 30,000.

Additionally, the shelling of a displacement camp in the city of Zalingei in Central Darfur resulted in the injury of 15 people, according to the General Coordination of Displaced Persons and Refugees in Darfur.

Meanwhile, drones have resumed flights and strikes targeting [the capital Khartoum](#). For three consecutive days since last Wednesday, drone attacks have hit the city of Omdurman west of Khartoum, Jabal Awliya south of the capital bordering White Nile State, as well as locations in El-Obeid city and the town of Rahad Al-Nuba in North Kordofan State.

At the same time, security tensions prevail in the capital, Khartoum, with growing fears among civilians over the spread of armed groups and militias affiliated with the army. Sources revealed that Sudanese Armed Forces ground air defenses intercepted a drone attack on the city of Omdurman at dawn on Sunday.

The [Emergency Lawyers](#) group said in a statement that “a drone belonging to the Rapid Support Forces targeted a civilian vehicle south of the city of Omdurman, one of the three cities of the capital, on Saturday morning, resulting in the killing of five civilians.”

Meanwhile, 11 people were killed in a drone strike on the city of Rabak in White Nile State, according to security and medical sources cited by Agence France-Presse on Tuesday.

The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement–North, led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu, [reported that 30 civilians](#)—most of them women and children—were killed or injured due to a drone strike carried out by the army on the Balila area in Al-Kurmuk locality, Blue Nile State, on Saturday. In a statement reviewed by Radio Dabanga, the movement said the attack led to the burning of commercial shops in Balila market, destruction of water sources, and the death of a significant number of livestock.

The Rapid Support Forces and the SPLM-N announced control over the Al-Kaili area, located 30 kilometers north of Al-Kurmuk, while the Sudanese Armed Forces announced repelling an attack on the Sali area, 27 kilometers north of Al-Kurmuk.

Also on Saturday, a drone—believed to belong to the Rapid Support Forces—targeted the home of the family of Abu Aqla Keikel, commander of the Sudan Shield Forces allied with the Sudanese army, in Al Jazirah State in central Sudan, killing six members of his family, including his brother, Major Azzam.

Meanwhile, multiple sources reported that two drones, believed to be operated by the Rapid Support Forces, targeted a fuel station and depot in the Kenana area of White Nile State on Sunday.

In [North Kordofan State](#), army ground defenses intercepted a kamikaze drone belonging to the Rapid Support Forces as it attempted to strike the headquarters of the 5th Infantry Division of the army in El-Obeid on Thursday night. The Rapid Support Forces also carried out a strategic drone strike on the town of Rahad Al-Nuba in North Kordofan State, targeting military sites in the army-controlled area.

Eastern Sudan, Al-Faw town in Al-Qadarif state, was struck by drone attacks. Local authorities accused the Rapid Support Forces of carrying out the attack. Local authorities accused the Rapid Support Forces of carrying out the attack.

---

## Political & Security Update

### U.S.-Led Push for Sudan Ceasefire Gains Broad International Backing



Well-informed sources told [Sudan Tribune](#) on Thursday that the U.S. administration is moving on multiple fronts to bring the parties to the conflict in Sudan back to the negotiating table. Meanwhile, U.S. Presidential Advisor for African Affairs, Massad Boulos, confirmed that a broad international coalition has agreed on the urgent necessity of an immediate end to the war in Sudan.

The sources affirmed that current arrangements include developing plans for an agreement that addresses the root causes of Sudan's crisis, stressing that the U.S. administration continues to exert pressure on the parties to the conflict and on international actors linked to it.

These statements come hours after remarks by Sudanese army commander Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who ruled out negotiations with the opposing side and affirmed the continuation of fighting until victory is achieved.

In a post on the platform "X," Boulos noted that the coalition meeting in Berlin was unprecedented, bringing together the African Union, the European Union, and host countries (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States), alongside Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Switzerland, Chad, Turkey, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the League of Arab States. He added: "In line with this unified message, there is strong international support for urgent measures, including: an immediate humanitarian truce followed by a ceasefire; the delivery of humanitarian aid and full funding; acknowledgment that there is no military solution; cessation of all forms of external military support; and an urgent and sustained push toward a negotiated peace—

through a comprehensive political process, a civilian-led national dialogue, and a transition to a civilian-led government.”

### **Berlin Roadmap Calls for Immediate Truce, Civilian Transition, and Accountability in Sudan**

Foreign ministers from international and regional countries, along with representatives of international organizations participating in [the Berlin Conference in support of Sudan](#), adopted on Thursday a roadmap aimed at ending the armed conflict in Sudan. The roadmap includes the declaration of an immediate humanitarian truce paving the way for a permanent ceasefire, while reaffirming their commitment to Sudan’s unity and sovereignty.

The final communiqué of the Berlin Conference, issued on Thursday, stressed the importance of securing agreement on an immediate humanitarian truce, to be followed by a sustainable ceasefire, and an independent, inclusive, and transparent dialogue and civilian transition process to lay the foundations for lasting peace and the restoration of civilian rule. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to Sudan’s sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, and to advancing a civilian-led transition. They also pledged to support the full implementation of de-escalation measures, including confidence-building steps and the establishment of monitoring and verification mechanisms as part of ceasefire arrangements, with the support of regional and international partners. The statement emphasized respect for the aspirations of the Sudanese people, who should determine the future governance of their country through a comprehensive Sudanese-led political process.

It further noted that sustainable peace in Sudan requires the full and equal participation of women in all political and peace processes. The communiqué called for an end to all forms of direct and indirect external support—whether logistical, financial, or military—that could fuel the continuation of the conflict.

The participants also urged all parties to ensure rapid, safe, unimpeded, and sustained humanitarian access; to protect civilians and treat them humanely at all times; and to safeguard civilian infrastructure. They announced their commitment to addressing the humanitarian funding gap and to continuing efforts to deliver assistance to all those in need, including through networks of local responders in Sudan and emergency response rooms. The statement also recommended investigating war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other grave atrocities, and prosecuting those responsible.

### **UAE Refers Sudanese Nationals to Trial Over Arms Trafficking and Money Laundering Charges**



The Attorney General of the [United Arab Emirates](#), Hamad Saif Al Shamsi, announced on Thursday the referral of 19 Sudanese nationals—including former intelligence chief under President Omar al-Bashir, Salah Gosh—as well as

six companies registered in the UAE, to the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal, on charges related to illicit trafficking in military equipment, forgery, and money laundering.

Previously, on April 30, 2025, the Abu Dhabi Public Prosecutor had announced that security services had foiled an attempt to smuggle weapons and military equipment to Port Sudan through illegal means. Authorities arrested members of a network involved in illicit arms trafficking and money laundering, in an incident that formed the basis of the investigations leading to this referral.

The decision to refer the case to court followed extensive investigations by the Public Prosecution, which revealed that the defendants had attempted to pass a shipment of ammunition to the Sudanese army through UAE territory. The investigations further showed that the case is linked to transactions carried out at the request of the Armament Committee within the Sudanese government.

### **Rape Used as Weapon of War in Sudan as UN Agencies Warn of Hidden Crisis and Rising Suicides**



United Nations agencies and local [non-governmental organizations](#) have warned of the grave consequences of the widespread use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war in Sudan.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) revealed in a report last month that between January 2024 and November 2025, at least 3,396 survivors of sexual violence—almost all of them women and girls—sought medical care at facilities supported by the organization in North and South Darfur, condemning these crimes, which have become a “hallmark” of the conflict in Sudan. The World Health Organization warned that the available figures represent only “the tip of the iceberg.”

Avni Amin, head of the Gender-Based Violence Unit at the World Health Organization, said that access to support services after rape is extremely difficult. Amin pointed in particular to insecurity and the difficulty of accessing functioning health facilities, in addition to the “severe stigma” faced by victims, and the shortage of trained healthcare staff to care for them. She added: “For every woman who speaks out, there are likely eight or nine others who have been raped and will suffer in silence.”

Shoko Arakaki, Director of Humanitarian Response at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), confirmed rising suicide rates among women, stating that she is aware of a significant number of women taking their own lives in Al Jazirah State, southeast of the capital Khartoum, out of fear of rape.

### **Boat Tragedy off Tobruk Kills Sudanese Refugees as UNHCR Urges Safe Pathways**



The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) announced that 17 Sudanese refugees lost their lives following a boat sinking incident off the coast of the Libyan city of Tobruk on April 29. In a statement issued on Thursday, the agency said the boat was carrying 33 people; only 7 survived, while 9 remain missing.

It indicated that the survivors were rescued in critical condition, suffering from exhaustion, hypothermia, and dehydration, and are currently receiving medical care from the Red Crescent Society, Tobruk branch. The agency explained that this tragedy is a painful reminder of the risks refugees are forced to face when safe options are unavailable, emphasizing that ending the war in Sudan and expanding safe and legal pathways are the only way to prevent such tragedies from recurring.

### **On World Press Freedom Day – Sudanese Journalism: Suppression, Killing, and Violations**



Several [Sudanese press and media](#) entities marked World Press Freedom Day, which falls on May 3, at a time when the country is witnessing tightening restrictions on press freedom. This year's global observance is held under the theme: "Shaping a Future of Peace."

The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate said in a statement that the war has targeted the public sphere and freedom of expression. It noted that 34 journalists, including 5 women journalists, have been killed since the outbreak of the war, and documented 680 violations including killings, displacement, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, physical assaults, threats, harassment, confiscation of equipment, and direct targeting of media institutions.

The Syndicate renewed its demand for the immediate release of all journalists. It also rejected all attempts to control the media, called for protection for journalists, and urged the establishment of an independent and transparent mechanism to investigate crimes committed against them. It stressed the need to end impunity, guarantee access to information, and respect the independence of media institutions.

For its part, the Sudan Media Forum stated in a statement that journalists in Sudan have suffered grave violations. It strongly condemned all violations against journalists and media workers in Sudan, calling on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all forms of targeting against them and to ensure their safety and protection in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The Forum called for the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained journalists and the disclosure of the fate of those subjected to enforced disappearance. It urged the international community to intensify pressure on the warring parties to stop violations and to carry out independent investigations to hold those responsible for crimes against journalists accountable.

The Sudanese Women Media Network affirmed that press freedom is not a luxury, but a fundamental pillar of any society seeking justice and transparency, and an inherent right that cannot be undermined. In a statement, it called for the immediate cessation of the war and the protection of civilians.

### **Sudanese Journalists Syndicate Wins UNESCO Press Freedom Prize 2026**



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) announced on Thursday that the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate has won the **UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize for 2026**, in recognition of its pivotal role in exposing grave violations against journalists and media professionals amid the ongoing war in Sudan.

UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany said that members of the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate have demonstrated exceptional courage and unwavering dedication. He noted that, despite immense challenges, they continue to work tirelessly to provide accurate and life-saving information to their communities at a time of urgent need, adding that their commitment stands as an inspiring example for all and as an essential service to truth, accountability, and peace. He added that the award “once again underscores the central role of independent journalism in safeguarding democratic values and amplifying the voices of civilians affected by war.”

For his part, the President of the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate, Abdel Moneim Abu Idris, described the win as “a tribute and recognition to all Sudanese journalists who continue to defend truth and press freedom under extremely difficult and dangerous conditions.”

---

♥ **Humanitarian Focus**

**Al-Dalang’s Health System Nears Total Collapse After Sustained Attacks on Hospitals**



The [Sudan Doctors Network](#) said that systematic shelling of medical facilities in the city of Al-Dalang has led to the near-total collapse of the healthcare sector and a severe shortage of medical supplies, noting that four hospitals have been fully or partially put out of service, in addition to 10 health centers.

Medical facilities in Al-Dalang, South Kordofan State, have been repeatedly targeted by shelling from the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu.

The network's spokesperson, Dr. Tasneem Al-Amin, said the shelling forced a large number of the city's functioning medical facilities out of service, including the teaching hospital, which sustained significant damage despite attempts to operate it partially. Meanwhile, Al-Tawamat Referral Hospital has remained out of service for some time. She added that the Military Medical Hospital was completely destroyed, while Mother Bakhita Hospital is now limited to providing maternity services only. The network also noted that the shelling has put the majority of health centers—estimated at around 10—out of service, including those providing nutrition and reproductive health services. The network stressed that this systematic targeting has led to the near-total collapse of the city's healthcare system, amid a severe shortage of medical personnel and a lack of medicines, equipment, and essential medical supplies.

### **Dengue Outbreak Spreads Across Sudan as Cases Surge and Health System Struggles**



The Regional Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Eastern Mediterranean, Hanan Balkhy, stated that Sudan had recorded more than [75,500 confirmed case of dengue fever](#) of April 24, along with 169 deaths across 15 of the country's 18 states. In a post on the platform "X," she confirmed that Khartoum, Al Jazirah, and Al Qadarif are among the most affected areas.

She expressed deep concern over the continued spread of dengue fever in the country, noting that the scale of infections and deaths reflects the severity of the outbreak. She added that the collapse of surveillance systems, weak vector control, and limited access to healthcare have all contributed to the continued transmission of infectious diseases and the worsening of the crisis.

The latest official report from the Ministry of Health in River Nile State indicated that more than 6,000 cases have been recorded in the state alone since the beginning of the year, including 205 cases reported within just two days, along with a cumulative total of 12 deaths.

The River Nile State Ministry of Health also announced that the Humanitarian Aid Commission has issued an urgent appeal to UN agencies, national organizations, and humanitarian partners for rapid intervention to curb the spread of the outbreak in cities and towns across the northern states. Federal Minister of Health Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim confirmed that dengue fever has now spread across all 18 states of Sudan.

---

### Economic Snapshot

#### Sudan's Cotton Exports Collapse Amid Sharp Decline in Cultivated Areas and Production Costs



The head of the [Exporters Chamber in Sudan](#) has revealed a significant decline in cotton exports, coinciding with an unprecedented contraction in the cultivated areas of the cash crop.

Historically, Sudan was one of the world's leading cotton producers, particularly through the Gezira Scheme, which once formed a key pillar in supplying textile factories in the United Kingdom. However, the country has now fallen into the ranks of the least-exporting nations of this crop.

The head of the Exporters Chamber, Wajdi Mirghani, told *Sudan Tribune* that cotton cultivation areas have gradually shrunk from more than 1.2 million feddans during the 2021–2022 season to just over 300,000 feddans currently, a decline of nearly 70%. He added that exports fell to around 64 million US dollars last year.

He pointed to sharp declines across several states: in Al Qadarif, cultivated areas dropped from over 500,000 feddans to around 100,000 feddans; in the Blue Nile region, from more than 400,000 feddans to less than 200,000 feddans; and in Al Jazirah State, from around 180,000 feddans to between 20,000 and 30,000 feddans. In New Halfa, they fell from about 30,000 feddans to around 13,000 feddans, while in the Rahad Scheme they declined from roughly 70,000 feddans to about 9,000 feddans, in addition to a decrease in Sennar State. He attributed this decline to a severe contraction in financing and the withdrawal of the Agricultural Bank from the financing process, alongside a sharp rise in production inputs.

Mirghani explained that the price of a ton of fertilizer increased from 400 US dollars to 850 US dollars, a rise of over 100%, in addition to significant increases in fuel and pesticide costs, stressing that cotton production depends

heavily on these inputs. He noted that cultivated areas during the 2020–2021 season reached about 400,000 feddans in irrigated agriculture and 800,000 feddans in rain-fed agriculture.

Wajdi Mirghani confirmed that Sudan has become absent from the global market that depends on abundant production, pointing to its disappearance from the list of major exporters, while countries such as China, Brazil, and the United States, along with West African states, have gained prominence. He further stated that Sudan’s current exports do not exceed 30,000 to 40,000 tons, generating around 64 million dollars in revenue, compared to a peak ranging between 150,000 and 200,000 tons during the 2020–2021 season.

---

### Culture & In-Depth

#### [“Faces of Sudan: Women in Wartime” Exhibition Highlights Refugee Stories and Resilience at UN Headquarters](#)



[“Faces of Sudan: Women in Wartime”](#) is a photo exhibition organized by the Permanent Missions of Denmark, Liberia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the United Nations headquarters in New York. It features photographs taken by UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Helena Christensen during her visit to Chad last year, where she met women and girls affected by the brutal conflict in Sudan.

The images document the stories of Sudanese women and girls who fled across borders, among approximately 12 million people forced to flee within and outside the country due to the ongoing war that has lasted for more than three years.

Speaking to UN News, Diana Battesti from the UN Refugee Agency said the exhibition’s images reflect the lived realities of women and girls who fled the conflict and are now trying to rebuild their lives in Chad.

She explained that women and girls bear the greatest burden of the conflict’s consequences, including sexual violence and exploitation during their search for safety, noting that Christensen’s visit to Chad provided an opportunity to hear their stories and share them with the world.

She added: “When Helena Christensen traveled with UNHCR to Chad, she spoke with these women and girls about their experiences and the reasons they fled. They asked her to share their stories with the world. This exhibition is a true testament to that.”

Despite the harsh conditions, the photographs also show moments of resilience and hope. “It documents suffering and tragedy, but it also shows joy. Many of the images show women behind me—mothers who want to protect their children, and children who simply want to play and go to school,” Battesti said.

---

## Further Reading

### Sudan ... How can Justice Mechanisms Deliver Justice for Women



As the war in Sudan enters its fourth year, since its outbreak on April 15, 2023, one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises continues to deepen, with women and girls topping the list of the most affected groups. Human rights organizations have documented multiple [cases of sexual violence](#), including gang rape, sexual slavery, and abduction, with reports indicating that some victims are no older than 12 years. [Read the full story](#)

### Sudanese journalism despite the siege... when the voice of truth rises above the roar of artillery

May 3, World Press Freedom Day, comes in 2026 under a darker shadow, as Sudanese journalists and the press face an unprecedented escalation of violations and a continued decline in press freedom. The 2026 report by Reporters Without Borders ranked Sudan 161st out of 180 countries, a drop of seven places from the previous year. [Watch the Video](#)

### Sudanese Women .... How are They Charting the Path to Peace



Between the Kampala workshop in 2024 and the Berlin conference in 2026, it is clear that Sudanese women have not merely demanded participation; they have worked to build its tools, shape its agenda, and move it from training rooms to platforms of international influence. This process reflects a qualitative shift: from learning about peace to redefining it through a feminist perspective. [Read the full story](#)

### “Sarkab” ... Stories from Inside the “Graveyard of the Living”



In one of the harshest forms of detention during the war in Sudan, the name “Jabal Sarkab Detention Center” has emerged as a place etched in survivors’ memories as one of slow death and systematic abuse. There, stories unfold—similar in detail, different in the faces of those who lived them—but all converge on one reality: severe human suffering taking place out of sight. [Read the full story](#)

---

**Thank you** for reading. Your awareness and engagement are crucial. Please consider sharing this newsletter with others who may find it informative.

---

Feedback is always welcome! Just reply to this email.

Best regards,

[Newsroom Team/Sudan media Forum]



[Sudan Media Forum](#)



[facebook](#)



[X](#)

*To unsubscribe from this newsletter, please reply to this email with the word "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.*

---

---