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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's war is escalating on multiple fronts, as drone strikes kill civilians and cripple critical infrastructure, while hunger and displacement push millions closer to catastrophe. International calls for a truce grow louder, but sanctions, mounting threats to press freedom and a collapsing economy underscore the deepening crisis. This week's edition also explores the plight of Sudanese refugees in Egypt and Europe, the struggle for justice, and the Sudanese photographers keeping the country's stories alive beyond the war.

Top Story of the Week

Sudan's Drone War Escalates, Hitting Cities and Critical Infrastructure



Both sides in Sudan's war have intensified their use of kamikaze and long-range drones in recent days, targeting markets, cities, vehicles, fuel depots and power stations, leaving dozens of people dead or injured. The Sudanese army has continued airstrikes against Rapid Support Forces (RSF) positions and troop concentrations across Darfur

and Kordofan, targeting multiple locations in both regions. About two weeks ago, the army launched a large-scale aerial campaign, carrying out near-daily strikes on cities under RSF control in the two regions. Witnesses in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, told “Sudan Tribune” that army drones had attacked RSF positions at the former government headquarters, the main market and the ministerial complex in the city centre, as well as deployments in a residential neighbourhood.

[The witnesses](#) said the attacks destroyed military equipment and caused extensive damage to civilian property in El Fasher’s market. They also damaged the Sultan Ali Dinar Mosque in the city centre.

In East Darfur, witnesses said airstrikes targeted Abu Jabra, an oil-rich area, setting fuel tanker trucks ablaze. Military vehicles belonging to the RSF and civilian cars were also hit. The air campaign extended to Babanusa in West Kordofan State. The cities of Nyala and Ed Daein also came under heavy drone attacks. In Ed Daein, the strikes targeted RSF facilities, while in Nyala they hit homes belonging to military commanders, ammunition and fuel depots, and the city’s airport.

The RSF and its allies in the Tasis coalition accused the army of killing dozens of civilians in airstrikes on Nyala, Ed Daein, Al-Dibab and Al-Naaam Market, as well as Al-Nuhud, Al-Odaya, Abu Zabad and Wad Banda, over the past week.

In the Blue Nile region, the Sudanese army regained control of three areas, including a strategically important military base, following clashes with an alliance of the RSF and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). Several battles took place last week in the southeastern part of the region after the RSF-SPLM-N alliance attacked locations there.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said 306 Sudanese people had been killed and hundreds wounded in drone attacks during the first three weeks of October. In September, the UN Human Rights Office documented 1,120 civilian deaths resulting from drone strikes, accounting for more than 80 per cent of all civilian fatalities recorded that month.

[RSF drone attacks](#) have also targeted infrastructure in North Kordofan, Gedaref, Al Jazirah and White Nile states. On Monday, RSF drones struck power stations in Al Jazirah and Sennar states in central Sudan, Gedaref in the east, and White Nile State in the south, cutting electricity supplies across the affected areas. On Sunday, the drones attacked fuel stations and depots in Umm Rawaba, North Kordofan, and east of Wad Madani, the capital of Al Jazirah State, damaging both facilities and causing injuries. On Friday, RSF drones targeted fuel stations in a city about 150 kilometres east of El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan State. Last Thursday, RSF drones struck [four fuel stations](#) in Al-Rahad, about 80 kilometres east of El Obeid, killing one person. The previous week, an RSF long-range drone also struck a local power station in Tendelti, White Nile State.

Political & Security Update

International Meeting Calls for Urgent Truce and Inclusive Political Process in Sudan



[An international meeting in Geneva](#) involving 22 countries and regional and international organisations stressed that there is “no military solution to the crisis in Sudan”. It called on the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to agree to an urgent humanitarian truce as a step towards a permanent ceasefire and to engage in a credible, inclusive political process. The meeting also urged an end to external interference fuelling the war. Participants emphasised the need to protect civilians and critical infrastructure, rejected the establishment of parallel governments, and called for the preservation of Sudan’s unity, sovereignty and state institutions. They warned of the worsening humanitarian catastrophe and the risk of the conflict spreading to neighbouring countries. The talks were hosted by Switzerland and the United Nations on Wednesday, marking the sixth round of consultations among international and regional actors seeking to change the course of Sudan’s war, which has been raging for three and a half years.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister [Abdalla Hamdok](#), head of the Civil Democratic Alliance for Revolutionary Forces (Sumoud), warned that the ongoing war posed an existential threat to Sudan and risked the country’s fragmentation.

Hamdok presented a civilian roadmap built around five main objectives: a humanitarian truce leading to a permanent ceasefire; an inclusive and independent Sudanese-led political process; the restoration of legitimate civilian rule; security sector reform to establish a professional, unified military institution under civilian authority; and a new social contract based on equal citizenship, justice, and the equitable distribution of power and resources.

[Abyei Drone Strikes: South Sudan Accuses Sudanese Army, Khartoum Denies Blame and Calls for Investigation](#)



The [United Nations has reported](#) that at least 80 people were killed, while dozens more were injured or reported missing, in drone attacks last week targeting Abyei, the disputed area between Sudan and South Sudan. Reuters quoted Abyei’s caretaker government information minister on Tuesday as saying the death toll from the attacks had more than doubled, rising from 73 to 153.

The South Sudan government accused the Sudanese army of bombing the main Al-Naaam Market in Abyei. South Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Sudanese ambassador and formally protested the attack. The Sudanese government, however, denied responsibility for the bombing.

[Major General \(Ret.\) Al-Khair Abdullah](#) Abu Mureidat, head of Sudan's side of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, called on the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to launch an urgent and transparent investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding the attack and identify those responsible, ensuring accountability and preventing impunity. Abu Mureidat also stressed the need for firm action against armed groups operating outside state authority and mercenaries competing for influence within and around the area. UN Secretary-General's spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said UNISFA continued to engage with the governments of Sudan and South Sudan, as well as other relevant parties, in support of efforts to de-escalate tensions.

UK Sanctions 15 Sudanese Military and Militia Leaders Over Alleged War Crimes



The UK Foreign, [Commonwealth and Development Office](#) (FCDO) has imposed sanctions on 15 leaders from the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allied militias, accusing them of committing serious violations of international humanitarian law during military campaigns in Gezira State, El Fasher and Zamzam displacement camp.

All 15 individuals are subject to asset freezes, travel bans and disqualification from holding management positions. Seven of those sanctioned are members of the RSF, alongside former RSF commanders Al-Nour Al-Qubba and Ali Rizq Allah, known as "Al-Safina", who have defected from the force. The remaining six are commanders from the Sudanese Armed Forces and allied forces.

Those named on the sanctions list include Abu Zaid Talha Al-Misbah, commander of the Al-Baraa bin Malik Battalion, and Major General Awad Al-Karim Ali Saeed, commander of the 1st Infantry Division in Gezira State. British authorities say both played roles in systematic violence against civilians, including attacks motivated by ethnic or religious identity.

Other figures linked to the Sudanese Armed Forces who were sanctioned include Major General Abdel Moneim Abdel Basit and Brigadier General Ahmed Brair Haj Ahmed, who was identified as being linked to the Wad Madani massacre. Several RSF commanders were also sanctioned over alleged atrocities committed in Darfur.

Sudanese Journalists' Union Rejects Legal Amendment as Press Crackdown Deepens and Journalists Remain Detained

The [Sudanese Journalists' Union](#) has strongly rejected an amendment to Article 51 of the 1991 Criminal Act and a decision by the government's prime minister to establish a "National Mechanism to Combat Cybercrime", warning that the measures could have serious implications for press freedom, freedom of expression and the public's right to access information.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the union said the addition of the phrase "including publication through electronic or media platforms" to Article 51, which addresses acts deemed to threaten state security, raised serious concerns that the scope of criminal liability could be expanded to encompass publishing activities and the expression of opinions. The union called on human rights organisations, professional associations and international bodies concerned with press freedom to take a clear position and exert pressure to protect journalists and safeguard the public's right to access information.

Sudanese authorities recently announced an amendment to Article 51 of the 1991 Criminal Act, which concerns waging war against the state. Paragraph (a) criminalises acts including assembling or training individuals, collecting weapons or military equipment, attempting to do so, or inciting or otherwise supporting such activities. The authorities added the phrase "including publication through electronic and media platforms". The offence carries penalties ranging from the death sentence to life imprisonment or a shorter prison term, alongside the confiscation of all assets.

Separately, the union condemned restrictions and repeated security summonses targeting [journalists in White Nile State](#), warning that such measures undermine press freedom and the public's right to know and access information. The condemnation followed the arrest of journalist Rasha Hassan and repeated summonses issued to two other journalists in the state.

In a separate [statement](#), the union called on the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to immediately release journalists Mustafa Fadl al-Mawla and Muammar Ibrahim, who it said were being held in harsh conditions. It also demanded that the RSF disclose the fate of four journalists who remain forcibly disappeared.

Sudanese Asylum Applications in Europe Near 31,000 as War Drives Displacement



Sudanese nationals lodged nearly 31,000 [asylum applications in European Union](#) countries and associated states between March 2025 and August 2026, while more than 11,000 applications were still awaiting a first-instance decision as of early August, according to data from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). The agency's report, published in October 2026, showed that Greece and France accounted for more than 75% of asylum applications submitted by Sudanese nationals, with approximately 13,000 applications in Greece and 11,000 in

France. The countries concerned issued around 20,000 first-instance decisions on these applications, including 8,000 in Greece and 7,900 in France.

More than 11,000 cases remained pending at the first-instance stage, including around 5,400 applications in Greece. The agency attributed the rise in asylum applications to the ongoing war in Sudan, which erupted in April 2023. Asylum applications continued to increase during the first eight months of 2026, approaching 15,000—an increase of nearly two-thirds compared with the same period in 2025.

♥ Humanitarian Focus

Sudan Hunger Crisis Deepens as Rights Groups Call for 90-Day Humanitarian Truce



Sudan's [General Coordination for Displaced Persons](#) and Refugees has warned of a worsening risk of famine and acute food insecurity threatening millions of lives, holding both warring parties—the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)—primarily responsible for the deteriorating humanitarian situation. It called for an immediate humanitarian truce lasting at least 90 days to save civilians and displaced people.

Adam Rijal, the coordination body's official spokesperson, said in a statement that civilians were trapped between the bullets of war and the threat of death by starvation, amid the widespread collapse of essential services and dwindling chances of survival. He cited a joint report issued by 32 international organisations, which found that around 19.5 million Sudanese people were experiencing acute food insecurity, including five million facing emergency levels of hunger, amid growing risks of famine in the coming months.

Meanwhile, the [Emergency Lawyers](#) group has warned that the ongoing war is expanding the scale of Sudan's humanitarian catastrophe. In a statement issued on Saturday, the group said the hunger crisis was worsening because of failed agricultural seasons, water shortages and declining vegetation cover. These conditions have forced many people to dispose of their livestock because they can no longer afford to provide them with food and water. The group said soaring prices, restrictions imposed by the army and the RSF on civilian movement and the transportation of goods, looting by armed groups, and the obstruction and targeting of humanitarian aid had all contributed to worsening food insecurity.

The crisis is unfolding alongside continued waves of displacement in western and central Sudan, the collapse of essential services and ongoing military operations that place civilian safety and basic needs at risk. Emergency

Lawyers called for the urgent establishment of relief centres in the worst-affected areas, particularly those at risk of becoming depopulated, to provide food, drinking water, healthcare and other essential supplies.

Economic Snapshot

Sudan Tops Global Public Debt Rankings as Pound Plunges Past 10,000 per Dollar



Sudan has topped the global public debt rankings, with public debt reaching 334.4% of gross domestic product (GDP), according to 2026 data from the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#). The figure reflects the severe deterioration of the country's economy and the growing debt burden relative to the size of its national economy.

The figures place Sudan well ahead of other countries covered by the report, with its public debt exceeding three times the country's total economic output. Japan ranked second globally, with public debt at 199.4% of GDP, followed by Singapore at 166.4%.

Meanwhile, the [Sudanese pound](#) has plunged to unprecedented lows, with the US dollar exceeding 10,000 Sudanese pounds amid a shortage of foreign currency and rising demand. Prices of essential goods and services have also surged, further increasing the cost-of-living burden on citizens.

Market participants have criticised the government's failure to introduce effective economic measures to address imbalances in the foreign exchange market. They said that, when faced with crises, the authorities resort to raising customs duties, taxes and other levies rather than seeking fundamental solutions to the country's economic problems. They argued that these policies have further aggravated the shortage of foreign currency.

The latest depreciation of the Sudanese pound comes as the foreign exchange market faces mounting pressure from increased demand for hard currencies, particularly to meet the fuel sector's needs. This coincides with continued fluctuations in gold prices, with gold remaining one of Sudan's most important sources of foreign currency.

Culture & In-Depth

Four Sudanese Photographers Selected for African Street Photography Exhibition



Four Sudanese photographers have been selected to represent Sudan in the second edition of [“Streets as Archive”](#), an exhibition and book project documenting African street photography. Sari Omar, Ola Al-Sheikh, Hafsa Bira’i and Ahmed Mohamed Osman will showcase their work in “Streets as Archive” 2, an annual black-and-white street photography exhibition organised by Unpublished Africa. This year’s exhibition brings together 32 photographers from 10 African countries, documenting the street as a living archive of memory, movement, labour, identity, architecture and change. Photographer Sari Omar told “Madameek” that Sudan had participated in the exhibition only once since its launch seven years ago. This year’s selection of four Sudanese photographers marks the country’s largest representation to date, reflecting the success of Sudanese photographers in securing opportunities to showcase their work internationally.

This year, “Streets as Archive” explores how streets document everyday life, public spaces, movement, labour, architecture, memory and change. It also highlights the role of photography in preserving a record of what happens in communities, cities and public spaces at a particular moment in time. The exhibition also connects photography with efforts to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including decent work and economic growth, as well as industry, innovation and infrastructure.

Further Reading

One Year After the El Fasher Massacre: Documented Crimes Await Justice



A year after the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) stormed El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, and committed widespread violations against civilians, the horrors of war remain etched in scenes that time cannot erase. As families fled for their lives, pursued by the threat of death, some were forced to make agonising choices: leaving behind elderly relatives, the wounded and those too weak to continue walking, sheltering them beneath trees with

little water, while pressing on to save the lives of women and children. Yet the deepest pain lies in the bitter disappointment of seeing justice and accountability remain absent. [Read more](#)

Sudanese Refugees in Egypt Caught in Limbo as Residency Appointments Stretch to 2028



As Egypt moves to transfer responsibility for managing asylum affairs from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to a national committee, Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers face growing fears of detention and deportation due to expired residency permits and delays in administrative procedures. Procedural gaps have also raised concerns about the limited safeguards available to ensure effective protection and prevent refugees from being left in a legal limbo. [Read more](#)

Delayed Justice: How Reporting Digital Violence Puts Sudanese Women at Risk



Since the outbreak of war in Sudan, digital spaces have become tools of harassment, intimidation and threats, particularly against women activists, politicians, journalists and humanitarian workers. As digital violence against women continues to escalate, the justice system has been paralysed by the war, forcing many women who have faced threats to flee the country. [Read more](#)

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