
The Armed Conflict in Sudan

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the armed conflict in Sudan that broke out on April 15, 2023, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Methodologically, the research is based on a qualitative, case study approach, using documentary analysis of UN and UNHCR reports, official communiqués from the governments involved, resolutions and statements from international organizations, as well as the international and regional press. These sources are correlated so as to highlight both the military and geopolitical dimensions, as well as the humanitarian and consular dimensions of the Sudanese crisis.

The results of the research show that Sudan has become an arena for geopolitical competition in which the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Russian Federation project their own interests through military, financial, or diplomatic support to the parties involved in the conflict. A specific result of the analysis is the evaluation of Romania's response as a case study of consular management of a major foreign crisis.

Keywords:

Sudan; Armed Conflict; Abdel Fattah al-Burhan; Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo; RSF; SAF.

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Prolegomena

Sudan is one of the most fragile and conflict-ridden countries on the African continent, its recent history being marked by coups, civil wars, identity fragmentation, and interventions by external actors. Since gaining independence in 1956, the country has endured two major North-South civil wars, the prolonged crisis in Darfur, and, subsequently, the secession of South Sudan in 2011, all of which have eroded internal political cohesion and the capacity of state institutions to manage the competition for power (Collins 2026).

The current conflict has many competing and overlapping dimensions. The violence unleashed by the two rival factions for acquiring control of Khartoum and the surrounding areas has trapped civilians, exposing them to abuse and potential war crimes, food shortages, and the collapse of essential services. The conflict has spread to other regions of the country, with a clear risk of escalation. In addition, Sudan's central importance to regional stability amplifies the stakes for regional and international actors and increases the complexity of finding a negotiated solution to the crisis (Jok, et al. 2023). Studies in *Third World Quarterly* emphasize that *proxy* wars in fragile states tend to be self-perpetuating, as external actors have no real incentives for rapid stabilization.

In this fragile structural context, the current main actors in the conflict emerged and consolidated their positions: the *Sudanese Armed Forces* (SAF) and the *Rapid Support Forces* (RSF). The SAF represents the national army, the traditional pillar of successive regimes in Khartoum, with major political influence in the power structure. Over the decades, the army has been directly involved in coups and the repression of opposition movements, positioning itself not only as the guarantor of territorial integrity but also as a central political actor.

With the support of the regime, the RSF has gradually transformed itself into a powerful paramilitary actor with its own economic resources (including from gold mining) and with a command structure loyal to Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (*also known as Hemedti*) (Al Jazeera 2023).

Politically, the collapse of O. al-Bashir's regime in 2019¹ created a window of opportunity for a mixed civilian-military government. Civilian leaders, united in coalitions such as the Forces of Freedom and Change, attempted to negotiate a transition to a democratic regime, with Abdalla Hamdok² as prime minister. However, competition for control of the state apparatus, disagreements over security sector reform, and, in particular, the integration of the RSF into the SAF

¹ On April 11, 2019, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir was removed from power by the Sudanese armed forces following widespread protests against his authoritarian regime, thus setting in motion a process of political transition involving both civilian and military leaders.

² In 2019, after Bashir's removal, various civilian and military groups, including the *Forces of Freedom and Change* (FFC), negotiated a transitional co-governance agreement intended to lead Sudan toward democratic elections.

have generated major tensions between the army, the RSF, and civilian actors. The military coup of October 25, 2021³, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, blocked the transition process, undermined public confidence in the promises of reform, and repositioned the army and the RSF as direct rivals in the competition for power ([Al Jazeera 2022](#)).

When religious divisions between communities coexist with other visible structural differences, such as economic inequalities, class affiliation, or linguistic differences, they can become catalysts for separatist movements. These potential flashpoints are often compounded by historical legacies that reinforce perceptions of separation and antagonism ([Badal 1976](#)). Analyses in *African Affairs* show that militias partially integrated into state structures eventually become autonomous actors that challenge central authority. This combination of conflictual history, institutional rivalry, and failed political transition shapes the motivation behind the outbreak of armed conflict on April 15, 2023: an open confrontation between the SAF and the RSF for control of the Sudanese state, in an environment where civil institutions are weakened, and regional and international actors exploit Sudan's vulnerability to project their own geopolitical interests.

This paper aims to analyze this conflict, its internal and external dynamics, as well as the humanitarian and diplomatic consequences generated by its prolongation. Thus, the study follows: (1) the genesis and evolution of the RSF from the Janjaweed militias to the status of an autonomous paramilitary actor; (2) the dynamics of the SAF-RSF confrontation and its transformation into a prolonged war; (3) the role of regional and international actors in fueling or managing the conflict; (4) the humanitarian impact and main diplomatic responses, with a focus on Romania's consular protection efforts.

On the humanitarian front, the report highlights Sudan's transformation into one of the most serious humanitarian crises today, with tens of millions of people affected by famine, forced displacement, violence, and limited access to aid. According to Michael Newman⁴ the concept of *humanitarianism* can provide a basis for the protection of human beings, not only by conferring legitimacy on the use of military force in truly exceptional situations of human suffering, but also by addressing the problems of poverty and inequality, which are the root causes of the emergencies that humanitarian intervention usually seeks to remedy ([Newman 2009](#)). In other words, the intervention of other actors to shorten the conflict is desirable, except that, in this case, Sudan has become an arena for geopolitical competition in which

³ On October 25, 2021, the Sudanese army, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, took control of the government in a coup, arresting civilian leaders, including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, which compromised the democratic transition process and strained relations between the military (SAF), paramilitary (RSF), and civilian actors.

⁴ British professor and researcher in political science and international relations, known in particular for his contributions to theoretical debates on humanitarian interventions and the responsibility of states in the face of humanitarian crises and mass violence – author of *Humanitarian Intervention: Confronting the Contradictions* in *cadru Journal of Conflict Studies*.

the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Russian Federation are projecting their own interests through military, financial, or diplomatic support to the parties in conflict. The involvement of these actors does not shorten, but rather contributes to the prolongation and intensification of the war, despite the mediation initiatives of the UN, the African Union, the Arab League, and the Quad format.

A specific result of the analysis is the assessment of Romania's response, through the activation of an inter-institutional task force, the increase in the travel alert level, and the organization of evacuation and repatriation operations for Romanian citizens, as a case study of consular management of a major external crisis. The overall conclusion is that, in the absence of a political agreement between SAF and RSF leaders and coordinated pressure from external actors, the conflict tends to become chronic, with lasting effects on regional stability, security in the Red Sea area, and refugee flows to neighboring states. The selection of sources focuses on official documents from the UN, UNHCR, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as reports from international organizations, government statements, relevant international media sources, and academic analyses. This selection allows for a complex triangulation of information between the normative, political, and factual levels.

The contribution of the paper in bringing new elements

The paper highlights several new elements taken from the literature on contemporary armed conflicts and humanitarian crises, especially through an integrated approach to security with the humanitarian and diplomatic fields, treating the conflict in Sudan not only as an internal conflict or a regional proxy war, but, in fact, as a process of isolation and securitization of a humanitarian crisis with direct effects on regional stability (*Horn of Africa, Red Sea*) and on the consular protection policies of third countries. At the same time, the conflict is analyzed as a kind of *multipolar proxy war*, in which competition between regional and extra-regional actors, such as the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, but also Russia and the US, contributes to prolonging this confrontation, making Sudan a point of convergence for competing and current geopolitical interests.

To the same extent, the paper places Sudan within the paradigm of a failed and fragmented state, in which parallel military power factions (SAF vs. RSF) coexist, the absence of a central authority is felt, and there is an institutional inability to regulate and process political transition. In this sense, the correlation between armed violence and the progressive degradation of social order, which highlights the humanitarian crisis manifested in famine, forced displacement, and systematic violence, brings to the fore the instruments of strategic control, and not just the collateral consequences of a conflict.

By introducing the consular-diplomatic dimension as an original case study, through the evaluation of Romania's response to a major external crisis, the paper offers the

reader a rare element in the literature on African conflicts, which largely focuses on the major actors.

In short, the original contribution of the paper is based exclusively on a multi-level analysis, starting at the local level, reaching the regional level, and evoking possible effects at the international level, all of which are a result of the uncontrolled unfolding of the Sudanese conflict. Thus, an exclamation mark is raised in the area of humanitarian crisis and diplomatic implications for third countries.

1. Brief history

Sudan's recent history is marked by armed conflicts between various military groups. The RSF has its origins in the civil war in Chad, the country bordering Sudan to the west. In the 1980s, militias from Chad (supported by Libya) were threatening security in western Sudan (in the Darfur region). As a result, the Sudanese government decided to arm local tribes in Darfur to fight against the militias. The situation worsened in 1983 when the second Sudanese civil war broke out, providing a fertile environment for the militias to operate unchecked. In the following decade, the two groups formed a weak coalition that laid the foundations for the Janjaweed⁵ group.

Janjaweed fighters were recruited into the Sudanese state security forces. In 2013, President O. al-Bashir's regime in Sudan faced major and violent protests, which the president suppressed using a Janjaweed faction led by M. H. Dagalo (*Hemedti*). This faction was initially placed under the authority of the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service. In 2019, the group supported the Sudanese armed forces in overthrowing President O. al-Bashir, but the two subsequently came into conflict, partly due to plans to integrate the RSF into the SAF.

On October 25, 2021, the Sudanese army, led by General A. F. al-Burhan, took control of the Sudanese government in a military coup. As a result, a state of emergency was declared, many members of civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdook's cabinet were arrested, and the civilian population began to protest, refusing to cooperate with the coup organizers. Subsequently, General al-Burhan, observing internal and international resistance, signed a 14-point agreement whereby Hamdook would become prime minister again. Although Hamdook accepted, he resigned shortly thereafter, on January 2, 2022.

On December 5, 2022, military and paramilitary forces and most civilian leaders signed an agreement to facilitate the transition to civilian rule. However, the population continues to protest, demanding justice for those killed by A.F. al-Burhan's forces.

⁵ (Ray 2025) Many believe that this word derives from the Arabic words *jinnī* (spirit) and *jawad* (horse).

On January 8, 2023, civilian and military leaders meet to discuss controversial issues, including the integration of the RSF paramilitary forces into the armed forces. Subsequently, in April 2023, based on these discussions, tensions between the SAF and the RSF escalated, erupting into open conflict in the streets of the capital, Khartoum. Civilian leaders, the African Union, and the UN call for an immediate ceasefire, while the parties accuse each other of attacks on their own bases.

2. The armed conflict in Sudan

At present, the African continent is ravaged by armed conflicts, from the Horn of Africa, in the Sahel region, to central Africa. In the Horn of Africa, countries such as Ethiopia (ETH) and Somalia have fallen prey to Al-Shabaab⁶ rebels and terrorists from the Islamic State⁷, as well as the Tigray⁸ group. In the Sahel region, countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria are fighting against Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram⁹ militias. In the center of the continent, the M23 rebel group¹⁰ has once again become a major threat, especially following its military successes with significant territorial gains in North Kivu province, DR Congo. Also, in the center of the continent, since April 15, 2023, a war has been raging between pro-government armed forces (SAF – led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, leader of the internationally recognized government) and an anti-government paramilitary group (RSF – led by General M.H. Dagalo), plunging Sudan into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, leaving hundreds of thousands of civilians dead and millions of refugees in its wake.

Initially, fighting took place in the capital Khartoum and in the Darfur district (the western part of Sudan, bordering Chad and the Central African Republic), but it

⁶ A militant Sunni group with strong ties to al-Qaeda that controls central and southern Somalia and is engaged in fierce fighting against the Somali government.

⁷ The UN officially considers ISIS (also known as ISIL or Daesh) a terrorist group. The UN Security Council has unanimously adopted several resolutions condemning the group's actions and designating it as a threat to international peace and security. Among the most important is Resolution 2199 (adopted in February 2015), which aims, among other things, to block the sources of funding for ISIS and other entities affiliated with Al-Qaeda. ISIS is included on the sanctions list of the UN Sanctions Committee (known as the 1267 Committee), which initially targeted Al-Qaeda and the Taliban and was later expanded to include ISIS.

⁸ Officially named the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), it is a left-wing ethno-nationalist organization that was both a dominant political party and a major paramilitary force in Ethiopia. During the war, the Ethiopian government officially designated the TPLF as a terrorist organization in May 2021. This designation was later revoked in 2023 as part of the peace process.

⁹ A radical Islamist terrorist group, active mainly in Nigeria, but also in neighboring countries in the Lake Chad basin region (Chad, Niger, Cameroon). It is considered a terrorist organization by many governments and international organizations. The group also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS) in 2015. The Islamic insurgency in Nigeria, led by Boko Haram, has caused a major humanitarian crisis, resulting in thousands of deaths and millions of displaced persons in the West African region.

¹⁰ The M23 group, also known as the *March 23 Movement*, is an armed rebel militia composed mainly of former Congolese army soldiers who have defected. It operates primarily in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is an anti-government force fighting against the Congolese armed forces (FARDC). Reports by UN experts and Western governments, including the US and the EU, repeatedly accuse Rwanda and Uganda of providing military and logistical support to the M23, allegations denied by these countries. M23's activities have led to a major conflict, causing a severe humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands of people displaced and thousands dead. The group has taken control of key towns in North Kivu province, including Goma. M23 has been accused by human rights organizations of war crimes, including executions, rape, and the forced recruitment of child soldiers.

spread throughout Sudan, culminating in the RSF's capture of the city of El Fasher on October 26, 2025¹¹. Thus, at the end of October, the RSF had complete control over the Darfur region and most of the Kordofan region (*the region in central Sudan, to the left of the state capital, Khartoum*). The SAF recaptured much of the capital Khartoum in March 2025 and maintained control over most of the northern, eastern, and central regions, including Port Sudan, where its temporary headquarters are located. (Sudans Post 2025). The actions were condemned by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres ([United Nations 2025](#)).

Recently, media outlets affiliated with RSF have reported that General Al-Fatih Abdallah Idris¹² was arrested by RSF after a video posted on the Internet showed him killing civilians and soldiers who had surrendered in the city of El Fasher ([The Sudan Times 2025](#)). At the same time, the media sources cited mention legal committees investigating the acts committed, with RSF maintaining that they remain committed to respecting human rights and international law.

2.1. Involvement in Sudan's internal affairs by actors in the region, depending on their own geopolitical interests

According to analysts, international relations experts, human rights organizations, and several representatives of Western governments, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt (EGY), Saudi Arabia (SAU) and the Russian Federation (RUS) are involved in the conflict through various means, including the supply of weapons, financial and logistical support, and diplomatic support to one side or the other ([Kottasová 2025](#)).

Human rights experts and activists have noted that the weapons found in Darfur are of Emirati origin, and under the Biden administration, the US (a key ally of the UAE) has highlighted links between a number of companies based in the Gulf nation and the RSF rebels ([Kottasová 2025](#)). The accusations are supported by the fact that the UAE wants to destabilize Sudan, ruling out the possibility of democratic elections, an element taken from the UAE's regional campaign against the Arab Spring movements of 2013 ([Kottasová 2025](#)). In this context, it is assumed that the Emirati authorities support the commander of the RSF paramilitary organization in Sudan, M.H. Dagalo (*Hemedti*), who allegedly runs a network of companies based in the UAE, in anti-government insurgent actions in Sudan ([Kottasová 2025](#)). Despite the fact that a group of experts appointed by the UN Security Council declared (2024) that the allegations were "*credible*", the UAE vehemently denied the accusations ([Kottasová 2025](#)).

¹¹ On October 26, 2025, the RSF captured the city of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur district, the last major SAF stronghold in the region. The capture of the city followed a 500-day siege. Media reports focused on violent actions by the RSF, such as atrocities, mass killings, sexual violence, and the destruction of hospitals ([G4Media 2025](#)).

¹² Also known by the nickname *Issa Abu Lulu* or, more recently, the *Executioner of El Fasher*. He is a commander within the RSF.

Regarding EGY's interference in Sudanese internal affairs, according to international media (e.g., CNN), Egyptian authorities¹³ supported A.F. al-Burhan and M.H. Dagalo in their actions to launch the coup, with the aim of removing the Sudanese president (from 1989 to 2019) F.A. al-Bashir ([Kottasová 2025](#)). At the same time, in the current conflict between the RSF and SAF, RSF commander M.H. Dagalo accused EGY of supplying weapons to the Sudanese armed forces and allegedly attacking the RSF, accusations that have been rejected by the Egyptian authorities.

In the context of the SAU's involvement, its support for Sudan is well known, with the evacuation of thousands of civilians since the beginning of the conflict. Although the UAE continues to provide support to pro-government armed forces, implicitly to Commander A.F. al-Burhan, it declares itself neutral in the conflict and is seeking, together with the US, a diplomatic solution to the disagreements between the SAF and the RSF. Peace in the Red Sea is essential for the Saudi economy, given that this region is home to the waterways used for oil exports. Furthermore, the Kingdom's *Vision 2030* project, launched in 2016 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is an ambitious national roadmap aimed at transforming the kingdom's economy and society. The main objective of the plan is to reduce the KSA's dependence on oil exports by diversifying the economy and developing new sectors, as well as through major social and cultural reforms.

However, the most significant presence in Sudan is that of the RUS, which sees the conflict in Sudan as an opportunity to deepen its influence in Africa. Previously, according to CNN, the Russian mercenary group Wagner supplied the RSF with missiles through Syria, Libya, and the Central African Republic. The mercenary group has supported militant groups and authoritarian regimes in the Sahel for years in exchange for mineral resources, including major concessions in Sudan's gold mining industry ([Kottasová 2025](#)).

Another important element to mention is Moscow's desire to establish its first naval base in the region in Sudan. General Burhan is using this context to negotiate with both the US and RUS. Thus, the international press reports that General Burhan is seeking to establish a US military base, open channels of cooperation in the field of intelligence with Israel through a monitoring center in Port Sudan, and revise Russian, Iranian, and Turkish contracts in exchange for direct political and military support from the US ([Kottasová 2025](#)). In this context, this support would be seen as pressure on the UAE to cease military support for the RSF and also to recognize this group as a terrorist organization. In this regard, in his press statement on

¹³ Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is a former army general who came to power when he led the 2013 military coup, resulting in the removal of Egypt's first democratically elected president. Since then, A.F. el-Sisi has cracked down on dissent and civil liberties. Several international organizations, including the *United Nations* and *Human Rights Watch*, have expressed serious concerns about the human rights situation in Egypt.

November 11, 2025, Marco Rubio stated that declaring the RSF a terrorist organization is being considered ([Rubio 2025](#)).

2.2. The aftermath of the armed conflict in Sudan

According to UN estimates ([Ferguson 2025](#)), Sudan is currently experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with around 30 million people facing extreme hunger. Furthermore, most of the civilian population has fled their homes, heading for neighboring countries to the west, towards Chad, and to the north, towards Egypt.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the latest data from the Egyptian government indicates that since the outbreak of war (mid-April 2023) ([UNHCR 2024](#)), over 14 million Sudanese citizens have fled to other locations, leaving their homes, of whom 1.2 million have sought international protection in EGY. In this context, the *Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 - HRP*¹⁴ received \$1.52 billion in funding, representing 56.3% of the \$2.7 billion needed.

Despite this significant contribution, the funding gap remains substantial, underscoring the need for increased international support to meet the growing demands of the crisis ([UNHCR 2024](#)). In fact, after nineteen months of conflict in Sudan, thousands of people continue to relocate daily to escape one of the most severe crises in recent decades, which includes famine, brutal violence, abuse, deaths, disrupted services, and limited access to humanitarian aid ([UNHCR 2024](#)). Furthermore, on January 7, 2025, US authorities declared that RSF and allied militias had committed acts of genocide ([Blinken 2025](#)). *The Journal of Conflict Studies* highlights that securing humanitarian crises shifts the focus from protecting civilians to controlling refugee flows and managing regional risks, but in this case, not only are funds for refugee control insufficient, but attacks on the civilian population continue unabated, raising questions about the possibility of isolating the humanitarian crisis and the risks of regional escalation.

3. Diplomatic efforts

Between May and December 2023, there were numerous attempts at mediation between A. F. al-Burhan (leader of the SAF) and M. H. Dagalo (Hemedti, leader of the RSF), particularly through the initiative of Saudi Arabia and the US, during the negotiations in Jeddah.

Egypt also attempted to organize a direct meeting between the two leaders in the summer of 2024, according to Arab media (*Al-Arabiya, Middle East Eye*), but Burhan refused any meeting with Hemedti, considering the RSF a “rebel” and “illegitimate” organization ([Kiros 2024](#)). At the same time, Egyptian authorities were stepping

¹⁴ Initiated and coordinated by the UN, through its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), together with its humanitarian partners. This plan was a collective effort involving numerous UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Sudan, with the aim of providing assistance to people affected by the conflict in the country.

up their contacts within the African Union and the Arab League to confirm the illegitimacy of the RSF. However, later (September 2025), Ambassador Hossam Issa, former Deputy Foreign Minister of EGY and Head of the Department for Sudan and South Sudan, told the Al-Araby Al-Jadeed¹⁵ media trust that the group led by M.H. Dagalo “*will not have a direct impact on EGY, but it is a major problem for Sudan because it entrenches division and leads to the existence of two authorities and the absence of a central government*” ([Hornpulse 2025](#)).

According to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed (The New Arab 2025), negotiations were planned (November 25, 2025) between Trump administration representative Massad Boulos and the parties to the conflict, but A.F. al-Burhan refused any meeting with M.H. Dagalo and representatives of the UAE, citing the UAE’s bias and support for the RSF rebels, accusing Boulos of promoting a flawed ceasefire plan influenced by the UAE. Al-Burhan considered the US-backed Quad initiative (*US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt*) to be biased because of the involvement of the Emirates, seeing it as undermining the army while legitimizing the RSF ([Booty, Chothia and Chibelushi 2025](#)).

According to the Telegram channel *Middle East Spectator*, which promotes information about the Middle East from the media, contrary to all expectations, on November 6, A.F. al-Burhan and M.H. Dagalo agreed, in principle, to a three-month humanitarian ceasefire under international supervision. On the other hand, on the same date, information appeared ([Agenzia Nova 2025](#)) which denied the Sudanese army’s agreement to a ceasefire. Thus, according to the decision of the Sudanese Sovereign Council and the statements of A.F. al-Burhan: “*The Council has decided to mobilize the Sudanese people in support of the armed forces to eliminate the rebel militias, as part of the general mobilization and efforts of the state to end this rebellion*” while the SAF “*advances in defeating the enemy and protecting the Sudanese state to its furthest borders*” and “*the attack supported by oppressive and arrogant countries*” (a clear reference to the UAE, an ally of the RSF) would soon be quashed ([Agenzia Nova 2025](#)). Subsequently, A.F. al-Burhan promised to avenge the victims of the attacks in North and West Darfur¹⁶, Al Gezira¹⁷ region and other areas, insisting that they are “*on the road to victory very soon*” ([Agenzia Nova 2025](#)).

It should be noted, however, that the information appearing on Telegram channels before appearing in official online media outlets was not entirely false. Thus, RSF had accepted the humanitarian ceasefire previously proposed by the US-led mediation group, also known as *The Quad (which includes SAU, EGY, and UAE)*. This is confirmed in a statement issued by the militias led by General M.H. Dagalo, which

¹⁵ The Al-Araby Al-Jadeed media trust (also known by its English-language version, The New Arab) is a pan-Arab media outlet headquartered in London, UK. Although its headquarters and publishing operations are based in the UK, the trust is owned by the private Qatari company Fadaat Media. It therefore has close ownership and funding ties to Qatar. In addition to its London headquarters, the publication has offices and an extensive network of correspondents in various Arab capitals, including Doha and Beirut.

¹⁶ Administrative regions of the Sudanese state.

¹⁷ Administrative region of the Sudanese state.

stated that a ceasefire “*would ensure the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to all Sudanese*” (Agenzia Nova 2025).

In conclusion, the current situation is a belligerent one, with the active involvement of the UN, through mechanisms for providing humanitarian aid to refugees in Sudan, as well as countries such as the US, SAU, EGY and UAE, acting as mediators, each with different interests but, at least officially, the same objective.

4. Consular assistance and protection measures taken by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

On April 16, 2023, an inter-institutional *task force* was activated within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) to provide assistance to Romanian citizens in Sudan. The task force’s efforts were hampered by the fact that the activity of the Romanian Embassy in Khartoum was suspended in 2021, with consular assistance and protection services for Romanian citizens in Sudan being taken over and provided by the Romanian Embassy in Addis Ababa, ETH.

The MFA, through a larger number of Romanian diplomatic missions and in collaboration with institutional partners, took numerous steps to identify and contact Romanian citizens and their family members in Sudan, as well as to establish optimal evacuation methods.

On April 17, 2023, the travel alert level was raised to 8 out of 9 - *Avoid all travel*. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2025) and recommended that all Romanian citizens still in Sudan make their presence known by contacting the Romanian diplomatic mission in Ethiopia and requesting consular assistance if they wish to be evacuated (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023). Thus, from the convening of the interinstitutional task force by Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu (April 16, 2023) until May 3, 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023), 46 people (39 Romanian citizens and 7 of their family members, who are foreign nationals) were evacuated from Sudan. Evacuation operations from the conflict zone and repatriation to Romania were carried out and completed together with European partners. Thus, with a view to coordination at EU Member State level, representatives of the Consular Department participated in the extraordinary informal meetings of the Consular Affairs Working Group (COCON) of the CONS organized by the Swedish Presidency in videoconference format and accessed the CoOL (Consular online) platform, which proved to be a useful tool for the real-time exchange of information on various aspects of crisis management. Thus, with the support of the French, Swedish, Greek, and British authorities, air evacuations were carried out to various countries, such as Djibouti, Cyprus, and Greece. Support and assistance were also provided to Romanian citizens and their family members who traveled by road to EGY and ETH or by sea to SAU. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters and the Romanian diplomatic missions involved provided the necessary support for subsequent repatriation to Romania, including domestic transport and transport to the final destination, the issuance of travel documents to the Romanian citizens in question who no longer had valid documents, and the completion of all transit formalities.

Regarding the position of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the armed conflict in Sudan, its representatives hope for a peaceful and sustainable resolution of the situation in Sudan, as confirmed during the reception by Secretary of State Traian Hristea of the Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Romania, Almansour Ibrahim Bolad, on the occasion of his farewell visit ([Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2024](#)). Romania's position is linked to the fact that resolving the conflict, restoring the rule of law, and taking the necessary steps for the reconstruction of Sudan will allow for the consolidation and deepening of Romanian-Sudanese cooperation, including in the field of democratic transition.

Conclusions

Since April 15, 2023, Sudan has been embroiled in an armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and an anti-government paramilitary faction (RSF) fighting for power. African states are familiar with such conflicts, most of them facing them frequently.

Even though this conflict was predicted by the international media, analysts, and officials of other states to be short-lived, the two warring forces have taken actions that have prolonged the conflict to more than three years. As a result, Sudan is becoming increasingly vulnerable and weakened in the face of armed conflict, with its population turned into refugees and displaced persons, without any viable medium- or long-term solutions.

The population of Sudan, estimated at around 50 million in 2024, is currently facing severe famine. At the same time, since the beginning of the conflict, more than 150,000 civilians have been killed, mainly during the capture of El Fasher by the RSF, and more than 12 million people have been displaced by the fighting. Furthermore, violence, mass killings, and abuse of women are part of the RSF's strategy to dominate parts of Sudan. In the absence of diplomatic strategies initiated by mediating states to bring the two commanders (M.H. Dagalo and A.F. al-Burhan) to the negotiating table, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan will deepen to such an extent that neighboring states will feel the pressure of refugees, and the UN will have to find measures to rebuild a state and uprooted generations.

Implications for public policy

In terms of public policy, the paper conveys the need to correlate security and humanitarian policies in order to avoid treating refugees exclusively as a risk. Thus, it highlights the importance of strengthening consular response and coordinated evacuation mechanisms at the EU level, based on lessons learned from the Sudan case. Integrating humanitarian access into regional security strategies by increasing coordinated diplomatic pressure on external actors fueling the conflict, including through targeted sanctions, may be one of the most profoundly beneficial outcomes for the affected population in any type of conflict.

Limitations

The main limitations in writing this material were both the lack of access to data and information from the field, which could have been disseminated through interviews or transcribed through direct observation, and the fluid nature of the conflict, which could lead to the perishability of some assessments. It should also be noted that it was difficult to independently verify information from areas controlled by the RSF or SAF, and that it was only possible to consult certain biased media sources, potentially affiliated with regional actors involved in the conflict.

Proposals and future directions for research

In order to increase the visibility of strategies for resolving or, at least, managing societal crises arising from conflicts, numerous comparative analyses of the management of such crises at the consular level are needed. Thus, a study of the impact of proxy wars on displaced children and generations as a factor of long-term insecurity could be prepared and debated, from which lessons could then be drawn as a basis for further studies. Such a study could take into account factors such as the role of transnational companies and economic networks in financing armed conflicts, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of multilateral mediation formats in conflicts with autonomous paramilitary actors.

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