

AN APPRAISAL OF AFRICAN UNION'S LEGAL REGIME FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF AFRICAN REGIONAL SECURITY AND SOCIO-POLITICAL STABILITY: THE SUDANESE CONFLICT IN PERSPECTIVE*

Abstract

*African Union (AU) is a Regional International Organization whose membership comprises of independent sovereign countries of Africa. Many African countries are currently grappling with internal armed conflicts, trans-border security challenges and political instability which has left Africa in the worst humanitarian condition globally. The Constitutive Act of the AU and other instruments were enacted *in alia*, to facilitate the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. This is in recognition of the impacts of the scourge of conflicts which constitutes a formidable social malady that is crippling economic development and political stability in the continent. The pertinent question here is: to what extent has the AU achieved its cardinal mandate of preserving security and stability in Africa as to justify its essence and relevance? This research will highlight AU's legal and institutional framework for the promotion of peace and security. It will also examine AU's capacity to curtail the surge of conflicts and instability in Africa based on its paradigm and approach to the management of the recent Sudanese conflict that erupted in 2023. This work will be relevant to AU's organs, institutions and agencies, African Sub-regional Organizations, governments and political leaders of AU countries, non-African International Organizations, humanitarian agencies, diplomats, political and public affair analysts, scholars, researchers and the general public as it will disclose some major impediments to AU's conflicts control capacity and will prescribe pragmatic measures that if adopted, will galvanize and consolidate AU's potentiality for the maintenance of security and regional stability. Doctrinal research approach is adopted here comprising of primary and secondary sources of relevant materials including the Constitutive Act of the AU, newspaper publications, journal articles and other material publications from the internet source. It is recommended that the African Standby Force (ASF) must be adequately equipped and mobilized for prompt, strategic and effective interventions to restore order and stability in the emergence of war or armed conflicts in any part of Africa.*

Keywords: African Union, Legal Regime, Maintenance, Regional Security, Political Stability, Sudanese Conflict.

1. Introduction

The state of Sudan that was jointly colonized by Britain and Egypt, known as the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, from 1899 officially gained independence in 1956. From inception, Sudan has been engrossed in series of successive civil wars, political instability and civil unrest. Sudan is divided along ethnic, economic and religious lines between the Arab/Muslim dominated north and the Christian/animist dominated southern region. The scramble for power and resource control is central to Sudan's conflicts. The first civil war that lasted for 17 years (1955-1972) was instigated by a protest against perceived political and economic marginalization against the Christian/animists southern population. The war was temporarily halted when the southern region was granted a measure of autonomy by a 1972 agreement signed in Addis Ababa.

A second civil war was triggered when President Gaafar Nimeiry in 1983 revoked the autonomy and imposed Islamic (sharia) law across Sudan. The conflict lasted from 1983 to 2005 leading to the loss of about 2,000,000 lives and approximately 4,000,000 internal displacements of persons.¹ The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) on 9th January 2005 heralded an end to the protracted conflict. The CPA created a framework for autonomy by which the Southern region will administer its affairs for 6 years to culminate in a referendum for self-determination by the region. In January 2011, Southern Sudan conducted a referendum with overwhelming majority votes of 99% in support of independence. This ushered in the new Republic of South-Sudan on 9th July 2011. While the new republic enjoys relative peace and stability, the northern region (Republic of Sudan) is the country now enmeshed in a devastating conflict.²

Following the ousting of Omar al-Bashir as President of Sudan on 11th April 2019, a joint military-civilian government was formed which was equally overthrown by a coup in October 2021 with the head of the armed forces Gen. Abdul Fattah al Burhan and his deputy, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) becoming President and vice-President respectively. Agitation for democratic rule reignited arms confrontations which escalated on 15 April 2023 between the two major belligerents and combatants: the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RAF)³ whose mutual aggression and antagonism has degenerated Sudan into an

*By Agbor Itu BASSEY, PhD (Law), LL.M., BL, LLB. (Hons.), Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Calabar, Nigeria, Email: dragborbassey@gmail.com; Tel: 08035819883

¹ I. Sapa, *Sudan Civil war: History and Implications* 26/10/2025 www.sapa-usa.org

² *ibid*

³ N. Booty, *et. al. Sudan War: A Simple Guide to what is Happening*. 13/1/2025 www.bbc.com

arena of protracted hostilities, gruesome carnage and nefarious atrocities leaving civilians as the major casualties and victims.

Due to the duration, intensity and poor reporting of the conflict, it has been described as a 'forgotten war', as it seems to be ignored, abandoned and even tolerated.⁴ In February 2025, the RSF formed a parallel government in opposition to the internationally recognized government supported by the SAF. The rival government was denounced by the AU, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and other organizations as constituting a threat to the diplomatic initiatives to resolve the conflict.⁵

2. The Nature and Causes of the Conflict

Since the clash between the SAF and RAF was triggered in April 2023, hostilities have exacerbated and prospects for reconciliation have been undermined.⁶ The scramble for power control and governance between the SAF and RAF instigated severe violence that is predicated on the struggle for resource control, ethnicity, religion and national politics. The conflict is identified as one of the most catastrophic humanitarian crisis globally that has inflicted untold hardship and has intensified instability. Communities have been decimated, livelihood disrupted and atrocities proliferated with allegations of ethnic cleansing.⁷ In July 2024, an NGO report claimed that over 235 fires were set in villages across Sudan. Hostilities continued in 2025 as SAF recaptured key areas. They drove out RSF forces and claimed a vital oil refinery.⁸ The major causes of the conflict include the following:

Ethno-Religious Diversity: - Sudan comprises of diverse population with multiple ethnic affiliations. The majority Arab-Muslim population of the north contrasts with the predominantly Christian/animist marginalized minority population of the south. This dichotomy has historically been exploited economically and politically to intensify discord and disharmony.

Colonial Legacy: - The arbitrary territorial boundary delimitation and demarcation orchestrated by the British/Egypt led colonial powers generated dissatisfaction and sowed the seed of disaffection thereby creating alloyed national loyalty which has hampered post-independence unity and national integration.

Economic Disparity: - The oil-rich southern region has alleged economic injustice and marginalization in the allocation of resource and the administration of national patrimony. The reversal of this misfortune has been a cardinal agenda in their agitations.

Political Discrimination: - Political power in Sudan has predominantly been controlled by the northern elites from inception, to the detriment of the southern peripheral population. This marginalization in national leadership apparatus has precipitated the uprising of rebel groups that perpetrate myriads of civil unrest.

Religious, Cultural and Legal Discrepancies: - The imposition of sharia (Islamic) law in Sudan by the northern dominated government which impacts on the religious, legal and cultural life of the people generated dissatisfaction and resistance from the non-Muslims dominated southern region. The forced homogenization of these diverse symbols of identity and heritage relegated the southern population to the background, culminating in rebellion and bloodbath.

Discovery of Oil Resources: - The location of oil deposit and reserves in the southern Sudan and the associated scramble for oil revenue control and infrastructural management is instrumental to arms confrontations among the elites themselves and between the political class and the marginalized population.⁹

3. Impact of the Conflict on Sudan

The Sudanese conflict has precipitated devastating humanitarian consequences like mass displacement, excruciating famine and unmedicated illnesses. A former United States (US) envoy has suggested that approximately 400,000 people have been killed since the conflict erupted in April 2023 with more than 11million people displaced, signaling the worst displacement catastrophe globally.¹⁰ Meanwhile, mediations efforts aimed

⁴ N. Malik, *The Guardian. An Existential Battle of Interest: What the Sudanese War is Actually About.* 19/11/025 www.theguardian.com

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *THINK-TANK EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. Understanding the War in Sudan: The Cost of Geopolitics.* 4/11/2025 www.europarl.europa.eu

⁷ Sapa, *op. cit*

⁸ CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION. *Civil War in Sudan.* 6/11/2025 www.cfr.org

⁹ Sapa, *op. cit*

¹⁰ J. Spaulding. *Sudan-Civil War, Dictatorship, Conflict.* 3/12/2025 www.britanica.com

at resolving the conflict have proven abortive. A statement by the United Nations (UN) indicated that between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed in 2023 from RSF inflicted violence. In April 2024, the US ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield highlighted evidence indicating that women and girls as young as 14 years old have been victims of sexual violence perpetrated by the RSF.¹¹ Hospitals and other critical infrastructures have been vandalized by belligerents. RSF attack local rebels, SAF personnel and civilians with reports of widespread atrocities. They also prevent humanitarian services, food supply and hospital operations thereby escalating the degree of casualties.

The World Food Programme has reported that more than 24,000,000 people in Sudan are confronted with acute food insecurity. In 2024, the Sudanese Finance Minister affirmed that state revenue had shrunk by 80%. Aid volunteers informed the BBC that more than 1,000 or more than 80% of the Emergency Food Kitchen have been compelled to shutdown thereby aggravating the impression that the Sudanese conflict is a 'Forgotten War' of the world.¹² Over 30,000,000 Sudanese now require humanitarian aid, representing about two-third of the population and marking the largest starvation crisis on record. Since April 2023, more than 12,000,000 people have either been internally displaced or are seeking refuge in neighboring countries like Chad and South-Sudan. About 2,000,000 people rely on humanitarian assistance as approximately 3,700,000 children are under acute malnutrition.¹³ Children have been forcefully conscripted into armed groups. Access to humanitarian services has been restricted with sporadic attacks on humanitarian service workers and health facilities.¹⁴

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) team has reported cases of dead bodies littered about with wounded individuals crying for help. Over 170 children, many who are too young to state their names or identify their origin are reported to migrate to neighboring towns without parents or relatives. According to Arjan Helenkamp, leader of the IRC Darfur crisis, 'the sight of these small children arriving alone without knowing the whereabouts or the fate of the rest of their family is harrowing.' Disturbing reports and satellite imagery confirms that some people are unable to flee to safe places, suggesting that they are trapped, detained or are victims of something worst.¹⁵ While neighboring countries welcome the refugees, they lack the resources to cater for their immediate humanitarian needs. The US aid cuts has aggravated the crisis, thereby compelling organizations to halt some essential services to refugees. Displaced people scramble for access to clean water, food and healthcare services. People living in starvation in Sudan are more than the aggregate number of people living in famine in the rest of the world combined. The vandalization of over 70% of Sudanese hospitals has left the people without access to essential medicine as epidemic outbreak like cholera surges, leading to over 120,000 confirmed cases with over 3,000 deaths.¹⁶

4. The Role of External Actors in Fueling the Conflict

The Sudanese conflict has also been described as a 'Proxy War', giving the impression that external forces are behind the contending parties. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is allegedly the major backbone of the RSF supplying them with finances and arms. For the UAE, registering her impact in Sudan will significantly spread the emirate's political and economic influence in the gold-rich and fertile land.¹⁷ The RSF has equally been accused of using the UAE as a trade destination for illicit gold marketing. Amnesty International has alleged that weapons manufactured in Serbia, Russia, China, Turkey, Yemen and UAE are being used in Sudan. Leaked report from UN experts alleged that the smuggling route is through the UAE to Chad then to Darfur. For the SAF, evidence suggests that Iran is their source of weapons supply.¹⁸

Over 10 countries in Africa, Middle East and Asia are known to be involved in the conflict. They are: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, Algeria, Libya, UAE, Turkey, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Russia, China, Chad and South-Sudan. Ethiopia and Eritrea are alleged to be supporting the RSF. Egypt has always supported the SAF which was founded during the British-Egyptian colonial administration. Chad, which shares more than 20 ethnic groups with Sudan is accused of facilitating weapons supply from UAE to the RSF as media report and the UN have independently confirmed the movement of weapons from UAE to the Sudanese RSF.¹⁹ The UAE built a hospital in Chad for the provision of free medical services to Sudanese refugees and Chadians. However, reports have suggested that

¹¹ CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION. *Op. cit*

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Sapa, *op. cit*

¹⁴ THINK-TANK EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, *op. cit*

¹⁵ CRISIS IN SUDAN. *What is Happening and How to Help*. 17/4/2023. www.rescue.org

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ N. Malik, *op. cit*

¹⁸ N. Booty, *op. cit*

¹⁹ Z. Salih, *Conflict in Sudan: A Map of Regional and International Actors*. 19/12/2024 www.welsoncenter.org

medical facilities in Chad have been used for military activities and weapons smuggling, although this has been denied by doctors in the facility.

Paradoxically, both Russia and Ukraine support the SAF diplomatically and militarily. Russia's support for Sudanese extends to the UNSC. Reports have it that the Ukrainian team went to the SAF's base to fix some of the fighter jets damaged by the RSF weapons. Ukraine and Russia fighters have been seen in various parts of Sudan. Turkey has reportedly offered its famous Bayraktar drone to the SAF. Qatar is equally supporting the SAF. Iran is reportedly supporting the SAF, offering the Muhajir-6 drones which helped push the RSF out. Algeria has offered 2 fighter jets to the SAF.²⁰

While accusing the UAE of supporting the RSF, the SAF has refused to participate in any dialogue where UAE is a mediator or supervisor. SAF has also filed a complaint against UAE and Chad at the UNSC. The SAF has rejected African initiatives proposed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to end the war while accusing the AU, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia of aiding the RSF. On the contrary, the RSF is open to any initiative through pacific and diplomatic avenues from any country, targeted at ending the conflicts except Egypt which has been accused of supporting the SAF.²¹

In October 2025, the UK government came under attack from its own legislator (MP) who alleged that British-made weapons were ending up in the hands of the RSF who were using them to perpetrate atrocities. He demanded an embargo to all arms supplies to the UAE until there is proof that UAE is not arming the RSF. In response, the UK Foreign Secretary, Yvette Cooper said 'The UK has extremely strong control on arms exports, including to prevent any diversion. We will continue to take that immensely seriously.'²² At the later summit of G7 foreign ministers, the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio called for international action to cut-off the supply of weapons to the RSF.²³

5. AU's Legal and Institutional Framework for Conflicts Management, Prevention and Resolution

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: - This is the AU's instrument that guarantees the fundamental rights of AU citizens which they are entitled to enforce. Article 4 stipulates that 'Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one maybe arbitrarily deprived of his right.' Article 20 stipulates that 'All people shall have the right to existence.' Article 23 stipulates that 'All people shall have the right to national and international peace and security.' Article 30 establishes the African Commission on Human ad Peoples' Rights which is saddled with the mandate of promoting and ensuring the protection of human and peoples' rights.

The Constitutive Act of the AU:- The essence of the AU which reflects on the need to promote peace and stability to foster the socio-economic development of Africa is captured in the Preamble to the Constitutive Act (CA) which provides in part, thus '... conscious of the fact that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda ...' This essence inspired the Objectives and Principles of the AU. The AU's Objective that underscores conflicts prevention and control is captured in Article 3(f) of the CA. it provides for the promotion of peace, security and stability in the continent. AU's guiding Principles that regulate conflict management is reflected in Article 4(e) which provides for the peaceful resolution of conflicts among member states of the Union. Article 4(f) prohibits the use of force or threat to the use of force among member states. Article 4(h) confer on the Union the right to intervene in a member state in respect of grave circumstances of war crimes, genocide and crime against humanity. The principle of respect for the sanctity of human lives is captured in Article 4(o) of the CA.

Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU: - The Protocol establishes certain institutions including the following:

The Peace and Security Council of the AU (PSCAU): The PSCAU is the main institution saddled with the responsibility of conflicts prevention, management and resolution in Africa. As highlighted in the Preamble to the PSCAU's Protocol, the establishment of the PSC was inspired by the need to curtail the prevalence of armed conflicts which has significantly undermined socio-economic development, culminating in untold suffering and

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

²² N. Booty, *op. cit*

²³ *ibid*

humanitarian crisis in Africa including famine, displacements, scourge of refugees, loss of livelihood and gross human rights violations. The Protocol captures the Objectives of the PSC, which includes (a) to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, (b) to foresee and prevent conflicts and where conflicts have occurred, to undertake peace-making and peace-building functions to resolve the conflicts, (c) to promote and implement peace-building and post-conflicts reconstruction activities to consolidate peace and prevent the resurgence of violence.²⁴ The guiding Principles of the PSC are captured in the Protocol, which includes (a) peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts, (b) early response to address crisis to prevent degeneration into large-scale or full-blown conflicts, (c) respect for the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, the security of human lives and international humanitarian law.²⁵ The PSC is saddled with certain responsibilities including the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa; issuing of early warning to contending parties and the exercise of preventive diplomacy, humanitarian and disaster management.²⁶ The PSC has the powers to recommend to the AU Assembly of Heads of States and Government, an intervention in a member state in respect of grave circumstances of war crimes, genocide and crime against humanity.²⁷ In the event of humanitarian crisis arising from the outbreak of conflicts, the PSC has a duty to coordinate and actively participate in humanitarian actions to restore life and normalcy to the affected region.²⁸

The Panel of the Wise: The PSC Protocol also establishes the Panel of the Wise as an advisory body vested with the duty of advising the PSC and the AU Commission Chairperson on all issues pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa.²⁹

African Standby Force: The Protocol further establishes the African Standby Force (ASF): an AU institution responsible for intervention in member states for the prevention of conflicts escalation and the restoration of peace and stability. The Protocol saddles the ASF with the following mandates: intervention in member states in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a member state to restore peace and security; preventive deployment to prevent disputes or conflicts escalations or the spread of ongoing violent conflict to neighboring locations; to prevent the resurgence of violence after the conflicting parties have reached an agreement; provision of humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of civilians in conflict areas.³⁰

6. AU's Response to the Sudanese Conflict

In reaction to the outbreak of hostilities and violent aggressions in Sudan, the AU made efforts to restore peace, security and stability through some of her institutions.

AU Commission's Efforts

Soon after armed conflicts ensued between the SAF and the RSF, AU prioritized securing a ceasefire, civilians' protection and infrastructural preservation. The AU Commission's Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mohamat, swiftly convened a high-level diplomatic initiative that converged global stakeholders including the UN, IGAD, Arab League, EU and other regional powers, resulting in an AU-UN mechanism to coordinate international pressure on the warring parties and support stakeholders in achieving peaceful resolution.³¹ On 15 April 2023, the Commission Chairperson issued a statement urging the SAF and RAF to immediately stop the fighting and called on the international community to pressurize the parties to halt military operations and initiate negotiations. On 20th April, he hosted a special ministerial meeting on Sudan with bilateral, regional and international actors where participants called for immediate humanitarian ceasefire and establishment of humanitarian corridors. On 27th April, he appealed to neighboring countries and the international community to speedily extend humanitarian assistance to civilians fleeing the Sudanese conflicts. On 18 December, he expressed 'growing concern' over the deteriorating security situation in Sudan, urging the belligerents to immediately deescalate hostilities and engage in constructive peace negotiations. He reaffirmed AU's commitment to collaborate with national, regional and global actors including IGAD, Arab League and the UN to address the conflict. On 8th March 2024, he issued a communiqué calling for a total ceasefire across the national territory. On April 26, he issued a statement calling on the warring parties to halt hostilities and return to the local truce in El Fasher and commence implementation of the May 2023 Jeddah Ceasefire Agreement and resume a fresh round of dialogue unconditionally. He also demanded immediate stoppage of the supply of ammunitions to the fighters by foreign countries in blatant violation of the legally binding UNSC sanctions. Following the drone attack on Port Sudan allegedly

²⁴ AUPSC Protocol, Article 3

²⁵ Article 4

²⁶ Article 6(a) (b) &(c)

²⁷ Article 7

²⁸ Article 15

²⁹ Article 11

³⁰ Article 13(c)(d) & (f)

³¹ L. Iroulo, *Walking the Tightrope: The African Union's Struggle for Peace in Sudan*. 9/12/2025 www.amaniafrica.et.org

masterminded by the RSF, the AU Chairperson on 4th May 2025 issued a communiqué condemning the attack, describing it as 'dangerous escalation' and direct threat to the lives of civilians, humanitarian access and regional stability.³²

AU Peace and Security Council's Efforts

During the Emergency Session on the Situation in Sudan hosted on 16th April 2023, the PSC strongly condemned the armed confrontations between the SAF and RSF while calling for immediate unconditional ceasefire. In the communiqué adopted by the Summit Level Session on Sudan on 27th May the PSC: (i) urged the contending factions to stop mobilization and reinforcement; (ii) adopted AU's roadmap for the resolution of the Sudanese conflict; (iii) stressed the importance of a single, inclusive and consolidated peace process coordinated by the joint auspices of the AU, IGAD, Arab League and the UN; (iv) reaffirmed the necessity for adequate representation and inclusive representation of Sudanese stakeholders in peace talks; (v) directed the AU commission to develop and execute strategy for implementation of the AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Sudan Conflict.

In a session on the Horns of Africa convened on June 15, the PSC called for demilitarization and the establishment of humanitarian corridors. The council understood the centrality of genuine and inclusive dialogue as the only viable approach for sustainable solution to the conflict. At its 1185th Ministerial Level Meeting held on 15 November, the PSC adopted a communiqué where it condemned the devastating conflicts between the RSF and SAF generating severe security and humanitarian atrocities; expressed concern about the humanitarian condition while urging unrestricted humanitarian access throughout Sudan. She repeated the call for urgent and immediate ceasefire by the RSF and SAF and stressed against military and financial support to the contending parties.³³

In its 1213th session of 21st May 2024, the PSC urged the parties to embrace negotiations. She requested the AU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to investigate human rights situations and report to the Commission. It also urged the AU High-Level Panel to work in synergy with the new AU Special Envoy for the prevention of Genocide to generate proposal on how to address the atrocities and douse escalations with plans for civilians' protection. In its 1218th Session of 21st June, the PSC adopted a communiqué where she instructed the AU Chairperson to urgently setup ad-hoc presidential committee led by led by Ugandan President and the PSC Chairperson for June 2024 to facilitate direct engagement between the SAF and RSF leaders. She directed the PSC sub-committee on sanctions to liaise with AU Commission and the Committee on Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) to identify all external supports of the warring factions militarily, financially and politically and propose measures for containing them within 3months. She also requested the AU Commission and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to recommend practical measures for the protection of civilians to the PSC.³⁴

In its 1264th Session of 1st May 2025, the PSC called on AU states and the international community not to recognize any parallel government or any entity seeking to govern part of Sudanese territory or institution. It further urged AU states to desist from supporting or aiding any armed or political group to establish parallel government or state entity in Sudan.³⁵

7. Reactions from Other International Organizations and International Agencies

African Governance Architecture (AGA)

The AGA which is African Peace and Security Architecture, in its Statutory Political Meeting, hosted a High-Level Panel discussion on Sudan on 11th February 2025. The Panel deliberated on the status of the crisis and ongoing initiatives to restore peace and stability, and stressed the need for a coordinated approach by the various actors involved in the peace process including the AU organs and institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs)³⁶ to resolve the conflict.

The United Nations Organization (UN)

The UN Secretary-General has called on the International Community to urgently scale up funding and diplomatic actions to ease the suffering of millions of Sudanese facing hunger and displacement as rival militaries continue battling each other for control.³⁷ Addressing the High-Level Humanitarian Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

³² AU Timeline on Diplomatic Efforts. 10/12/2025 www.amaniafrica.org

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ AFRICAN UNION. *The Sudan War Calls for Our Relentless Collective Action: High Level Dialogue on Sudan Concluded.* 11/2/2025 www.au.int

³⁷ UN NEWS. *In Focus: Sudan Conflict.* 12/12/2025 www.amnesty.ca

Antonio Guterres described the situation in Sudan as a catastrophe of ‘Staggering Scale and Brutality.’ He asserts that the crisis demands sustained and urgent attention. He emphasized the need for civilians’ and humanitarian workers’ protection, as well as the stoppage of arms and ammunitions supply which has facilitated horrendous bloodshed and destruction of civilians.³⁸ In August 2024, the UN stated that the conflict in Sudan was ‘spiraling out of control’ as refugees continue to flee the country while health system collapsed, raising the apprehension of disease outbreak. The UN Humanitarian and Emergency Relief Chief has labeled Sudan as one of the worst humanitarian nightmares in recent history.³⁹ On March 8 2024, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution calling for immediate cessation of violence in Sudan.⁴⁰ On the second anniversary of the conflict, the UN Secretary-General said ‘Two years into a devastating war, Sudan remains in a crisis of staggering proportions with civilians paying the highest price ... the only way to ensure the protection of civilians is to end this senseless conflict.’⁴¹ Investigation by a UN team discovered that both the RSF and SAF had committed war crimes, meanwhile the UN determined in January 2025 that the RSF and allied militias have committed genocide.⁴² The UN’s humanitarian response plan for Sudan remains grossly underfunded.⁴³

The European Union (EU)

The EU has intensified its humanitarian response and plays a leading role in coordinating peace initiatives. The EU Parliament has consistently urged the EU and other stakeholders to maintain pressure on all parties to cease hostilities and to ensure that Sudanese civil society is genuinely included in dialogue towards a sustainable solution.⁴⁴

International Agencies

In October 2021, the SAF and RSF orchestrated a coup against the civilian Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok and suspended the constitution. In response, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund suspended debt relief and other aids to Sudan.⁴⁵ On December 2024, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) declared the situation the largest humanitarian crisis ever recorded with 30.4million people needing humanitarian support.⁴⁶ According to IRC’s Country Director for Sudan, Eatizaz Yousif, the conflict is entirely artificial and has decimated livelihoods, displaced millions and blocked life-saving aid from reaching those in critical situation.⁴⁷ The IRC has improved humanitarian response and aid to Sudan. They are supplying the following: integrated water, hygiene materials, sanitation infrastructure, cholera kits, infection prevention and control gadgets to curb the spread of diseases; child protection services and support to women and girls including victims of gender based violence; health and nutrition services through 32 health facilities with 2 facilities providing primary care, response to disease outbreak and malnutrition alleviation; livelihood assistance through multi-purpose cash aid to internally displaced persons and members of the communities hosting them.⁴⁸

The IGAD and the AU welcomes: (1) the call for rapid humanitarian access and protection of civilians with 3months humanitarian truce as first step towards a permanent cessation of hostilities, (2) inauguration of a civilian-led transition process within 9months to ensure inclusivity, legitimacy and accountability, (3) the firm rejection of foreign military support and extremist influence, (4) support for Jeddah process as the channel for cessation of hostilities in close coordination with regional and international partners.⁴⁹ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi warned that the current violence is emblematic of the UN recognized genocide in Darfur that killed an estimated 300thousand people between 2003 and 2005.⁵⁰

In March 2024, the Human Rights Watch, said it was possible that the RSF and allied militias were carrying out a genocide in Darfur against the Massalit people and other non-Arab communities.⁵¹ The UN Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/60/L.18 calling for immediate ceasefire with full and unhindered humanitarian access throughout Sudan. It underscored the imperative for inclusive and comprehensive Sudanese-

³⁸ UN NEWS. *In Focus: Sudan Conflict*. 15/4/2025 www.news.un.org

³⁹ CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION. *op. cit*

⁴⁰ CFR. Center for Preventive Action. *Civil War in Sudan*. 6/11/2025 www.cfr.org

⁴¹ UN NEWS, 15/4/2025 *op. cit*

⁴² N. Booty, *op. cit*

⁴³ N. Malik, *op. cit*

⁴⁴ THINK-TANK EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, *op. cit*

⁴⁵ CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION. *op. cit*

⁴⁶ N. Milak, *op. cit*

⁴⁷ CRISIS IN SUDAN, *op. cit*

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ AFRICAN UNION. *African Union Commission and Intergovernmental Authority on Development Welcomes the QUAD Outcome on Sudan*. 14/9/2025 www.au.int

⁵⁰ CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION. *op. cit*

⁵¹ N. Booty, *op. cit*

owned and Sudanese-led political transition to democratically elected national government following a civilian-led transition process.⁵² The International Crisis Group Think-Tank has described diplomatic efforts to end the war as 'Lackluster', while Amnesty International has labeled global responses as 'Woefully Inadequate.'⁵³

8. Responses from National Governments

The United States (US) has continued to solicit for more support as over 30,000,000 people require humanitarian assistance and deteriorating food crisis is catalyzing the world's greatest hunger catastrophe.⁵⁴ The US has called on the UNSC to authorize aid deliveries through Chad as humanitarian access remains a critical concern.⁵⁵ Former US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken said 'The RSF and allied militias have systematically murdered men and boys, even infants on ethnic basis and deliberately targeted women and girls from certain ethnic groups for rape and other forms of brutal sexual violence. These same militias have targeted fleeing civilians, murdered innocent people escaping conflict and prevented remaining civilians from accessing life-saving supplies. Based on this information, I have now concluded that members of the RSF and allied militias have committed genocide in Sudan.' The US accordingly imposed sanctions on Gen. Dagalo and Gen. Burhan⁵⁶ (leaders of the RSF and SAF respectively).

The US facilitated a temporary ceasefire to evacuate diplomats, their families and foreigners. When the peace dialogues proposed by US failed, the US insisted on having seamless humanitarian corridors to facilitate aid delivery.⁵⁷ The US appointed a special envoy, Tom Perriello to Sudan in 2024. In attempt to consolidate efforts at resolving the conflict, the US sought a dialogue in Jeddah including UAE and Egypt. Same attempt was made in Geneva, to be co-hosted by Switzerland and Saudi Arabia with Egypt and UAE as observers. These initiatives were fruitless.⁵⁸ At the later summit of G7 foreign ministers, the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio called for international action to halt supply of weapons to the RSF.⁵⁹

Trump's administration has cut humanitarian aids, which seriously impacts on Sudan. The Sudanese now fear that US will ignore them while Africa believes that the rest of the world has completely ignored Sudan and US has outsourced its foreign policy in the region to its allies like Saudi Arabia and UAE to address urgent issues on their behalf. The war was never mentioned by any of the candidates during the 2024 US presidential election campaign.⁶⁰ In December 2024, Turkey offered to mediate between the SAF and UAE (RSF's major supporters). This proposal failed for difficulty of satisfying external interests to persuade the contending factions to negotiate.⁶¹ Sudanese Government filed a suit at the International Court of Justice against UAE accusing them of complicity in genocide and funding of the RSF. The Court declined jurisdiction to hear the suit⁶²

9. Brief Evaluation of AU's Intervention Efforts

The persistence of the conflict beyond 2years raises questions about AU's capacity to influence conflict dynamics in Africa. AUPSC's principles on Sudanese conflicts resolution remains in theory thereby exposing its institutional fragility. The organization practically operates as a diplomatic platform without imperative force to compel restraint from warring factions and demonstrate continental leadership. AU has shown inability to strike a balance between eliciting cooperation from foreign partners to suppress the conflict while at the same time preventing those of them with vested interest from aiding the conflict. This paradox of diplomatic engagement has undermined AU's conflict management potentials in Sudan. AU's emphasis and insistence on the resort to dialogue when the factions remained mutually aggressive highlights AU's impotency. AU's diplomatic interventions have failed to protect civilians and critical infrastructures as belligerents operate with impunity and flagrant contravention of international humanitarian laws and disregard for AU's directives.⁶³

Not only is AU's call for ceasefire and inclusive dialogue ignored, its agitation for humanitarian corridors and protection for aid workers remains ineffective due to unenforceability. The continuous support emanating from external forces to the warring factions contrary to AU's position against external aid supplies to belligerents, has

⁵² DEFENDERS. *Sudan: As War Rages, UN Extends Human Rights Investigations*. 6/10/2025 www.defenddefenders.org

⁵³ N. Booty, *op. cit*

⁵⁴ CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION. *op. cit*

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ N. Booty, *op. cit*

⁵⁷ Z. Silah, *op. cit*

⁵⁸ CRISIS GROUP. *Bolstering Efforts to End Sudan's Civil War*. 30/1/2025 www.crisisgroup.org

⁵⁹ N. Booty, *op. cit*

⁶⁰ Z. Silah, *op. cit*

⁶¹ CRISIS GROUP. *op. cit*

⁶² N. Booty, *op. cit*

⁶³ L. Iroulo, *op. cit*

elicited no censure from AU's bureaucrats who have maintained diplomatic disposition in their official statements and public gestures. This demonstrates the fruitlessness of AU's amicable approach in the face of unrelenting arms antagonism that is devoid of commitment to pacific settlement. AU's limited revenue curtails its resources and funds allocated for specific projects cannot be diverted and appropriated for conflicts resolution in the event of inadequacy or lack of resources to finance intervention operations. Consequently, where the scale or duration of conflicts extends beyond projections and estimation like the Sudanese war, AU becomes handicapped. Even if AU decides to compromise other continental commitments, there is no guaranty of containing the crisis.⁶⁴ AU regards the war as a scuffle between SAF and RSF leaders, (even when they lack absolute control of their armies) while ignoring the broader dynamics of conflicting interests triggering the war. This myopic conflict assessment informs AU's emphasis on dialogue which has proven to be a futile approach to the conflict's resolution. The contending parties lack confidence in AU's mediation initiatives which is perceived as devoid of impartiality. For instance, when Kenya, a close ally of UAE was to lead the IGAD in a mediation initiative orchestrated by the AU, the SAF refused to participate in the process.⁶⁵

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

AU's abysmal management of Sudan conflict substantially undermines its credibility as Africa's premier peace and security custodian. The persisting violent aggression in Sudan highlights the fact that AU requires more formidable regional security and stability enforcement mechanism.⁶⁶ AU must adopt a reorientation that prioritizes the security and welfare of Africans such that conflicts resulting in the destruction of lives and property, the violation of human rights and the deprivation of basic necessities of life will attract urgent effective military intervention to restore order. AU members must discountenance the sentiment of prioritizing selfish parochial interests and demonstrate maturity by emerging as a united structure when confronted with threat to regional security from armed conflicts. AU must learn to develop efficient and pragmatic conflict analysis paradigm based on the peculiarity of the crisis rather than play to the gallery by adopting abstract and non-pragmatic conflict management approach as seen in Sudan's conflict. AU leaders must demonstrate political will and commitment to the maintenance of regional stability and security rather than respond to conflict situations with rhetoric and narratives that are saturated with inconsequentialities. AU should not be comfortable with permitting bureaucratic bottlenecks to becloud the disposition towards proactive conflicts resolution. The respect for the sanctity of human lives must be accorded utmost priority and preference which should compel the AU to forestall all forms of carnage in the continent. AU must encourage her members to prioritize economic development, social welfare, political inclusivity and equity in resource allocation in their respective countries to promote social equality and curtail multidimensional marginalization. This is because vices like economic injustice and social-political discrimination which is the root of conflicts in Africa is being exploited by external enemies to instigate conflicts in Africa. AU must consolidate and fully mobilize her security enforcement institutions and structures like the African Standby Force for prompt deployment and strategic interventions to restore stability, security and order in appropriate circumstances rather than leave them as toothless bulldogs who sit by to watch while destructive armed hostilities prevail in the region. AU members must demonstrate loyalty to the Objectives and Principles of the Organization by facilitating and actively supporting peacekeeping missions. AU must reject the politicization of armed conflicts and rather treated it as a grave menace to the cohesion, integration and advancement of the continent. AU members' solidarity to the Union must reflect in their financial commitment to the Union as inadequate funds and resources is substantially responsible for AU's seeming incapacity to intervene and terminate conflicts.

⁶⁴ *ibid*

⁶⁵ DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA. *Peace in Sudan: A Fresh Mediation Effort is Needed. How it could work.* (Accessed 11/12/2025) www.democracyin africa.org

⁶⁶ L. Iroulo, *op. cit*