



Sudan - Kordofan

Situation report



CURRENT SITUATION - SUDAN

On April 15, 2023, Sudan experienced a violent outbreak of conflict involving two principal factions: the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group, and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). This escalation of violence marked a significant intensification of the ongoing tumultuous situation within the country. Initially concentrated in the capital city of Sudan, Khartoum, this conflict rapidly extended its reach to encompass other regions. Despite the declaration of several ceasefires, none have yielded substantial improvements in the overall security landscape. In early September 2023, intense hostilities persisted in various towns and urban areas, with particular emphasis on the Darfur and Kordofan regions, as well as Khartoum.

The conflict has continued to intensify in key areas, including Khartoum, Omdurman, South Kordofan State, and the Darfur region, following the expiration of the ceasefire agreement on June 17. In Darfur, the security situation has been further complicated by inter-communal violence. Frequent occurrences of airstrikes, explosions, and heavy machine-gun fire have been observed in various locations throughout the Sudanese capital, including in proximity to Khartoum International Airport (KRT). Widespread disruptions in telecommunication services have had a nationwide impact, while the availability of essential commodities such as food, water, medicine, and fuel remains severely constrained. As of September 20, the ongoing clashes have resulted in a minimum of 5,000 casualties, with approximately 12,100 individuals sustaining injuries.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION

The complexity of the conflict has grown as additional parties have joined the conflict, beyond the SAF and RSF. Among these is the al-Hilu faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), which clashed with the SAF in South Kordofan. The RSF has also been active in South Kordofan, and as of mid-August, each of these conflict parties (RSF, SAF, and SPLM-N) reportedly controlled various areas within the state. In North Kordofan, the Kababish people have taken up arms, engaging in clashes with the RSF, while in Darfur, multiple tribes have pledged allegiance to the RSF.

Both the RSF and SAF have recently called for a ceasefire, emphasizing its critical role in ensuring the stability and well-being of the state. Despite these appeals, the speeches and declarations advocating to end of the conflict have yielded no tangible results. Instead, the relentless strife within Sudan persists, casting ominous shadows over the nation's future. This ongoing conflict has prompted analysts to delve deeper, leading to a disconcerting conclusion: there is a risk that this conflict may escalate into a full-blown civil war or, worse yet, spill over Sudan's borders, potentially engulfing neighbouring regions in turmoil.

Efforts to resolve this crisis through regional and international diplomatic channels have, unfortunately, proven to be unsuccessful. Despite the tireless endeavours of mediators and peacekeepers, both sides engaged in the conflict remain unwavering in their pursuit of a military victory, rendering diplomatic initiatives largely ineffective. This refusal to cooperate has not only made it harder to achieve a ceasefire but has also made the two fighting groups trust each other even less, making it even harder to agree on a solution.

The current situation of the Kordofan Region:

Some of the most recent developments in this region:

- In the first week of September, clashes between SAF and RSF in Um Rawaba (North Kordofan).
- The security situation between Jabal Kordofan and El Obeid town in North Kordofan delayed the movement of the trucks carrying humanitarian deliveries.
- All commercial, private, and humanitarian convoys from Kosti (White Nile) to El Obeid (North Kordofan) have been banned by local authorities.
- World Food Programme (WFP) trucks were attacked and looted in Um Rawaba town, North Kordofan.
- In the second week of September, Several humanitarian deliveries had to be postponed or cancelled due to insecurity and/or lack of commitment from parties to the conflict to provide safe passage. These include deliveries to North Kordofan, West Kordofan, and South Kordofan.
- RSF unit attacked El Odeya in West Kordofan (22/09/2023)
- El Mujlad, security remains stable despite service deficiencies (West Kordofan)
- South Kordofan's Tadamon locality recently received 265 displaced families.

An evaluation of the security situation in the Kordofan region indicates a notable variance depending on each specific location within the region. Significantly, the current month has witnessed an increase in confrontations, particularly in Northern and Southern Kordofan. Conversely, regions situated in the western parts of Kordofan have recently been characterized as relatively stable. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that the presence of the SAF, the SPLM-N, and various other militia groups dispersed throughout the region introduces inherent volatility, meaning that the current situation can rapidly evolve. Clashes between the SPLM-N and the SAF have been ongoing since June. However, reports suggest that the two parties have engaged in as many as two rounds of discussions; officers from the SAF Kadugli garrison convened with SPLM-N counterparts. While no formal ceasefire had been officially announced, the SPLM-N refrained from launching any new attacks. On the other hand, clashes between the SAF and RSF have continued in North and South Kordofan, which have led to casualties. Sources have highlighted that roads, in particular the road between El Nehoud in West Kordofan and Kosti in White Nile state that passes El Obeid are worse than ones compared to the roads in Darfur. This is due to the number of random checkpoints and hotbeds of armed robberies on this road is very large.

ACCESS/ BORDERS:

Research conducted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has revealed that several countries, namely Egypt, Chad, Central African Republic (Am Dafock), Ethiopia, Libya (Al Kufra), and South Sudan, maintain open borders for both Sudanese nationals and foreigners departing from Sudan. At the beginning of the month, Chad announced the partial re-opening of the border with Sudan allowing for the commercial movement of goods between the two countries. In South Sudan, it has been reported that Wunthow/Juda, near Renk, Upper Nile State, continues to be the point of entry (PoE) for most new arrivals to the country.

In light of these findings, prominent organisations like the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) operating in Sudan have made public appeals to humanitarian and human rights organisations to extend their assistance within the country. There has been a notable increase in online solicitations for aid, suggesting that obtaining a visa and gaining access to Sudan may be feasible when compelling reasons are substantiated. Presently, the predominant organisations operating within the country are those that had established a presence prior to the onset of the conflict. This is due to the acknowledged challenges associated with movement in and out of Sudan during this period.

