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Sudan

# Mobilization continues in Sudan

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**A loaf of bread cost five Sudanese pounds in October 2021. Six months later, Sudanese women have to pay fifty pounds! This economic slump is accompanied by repression of demonstrators who tenaciously maintain the mobilization against the coup d'état led by al-Burhane and Hemidti. The putschist generals are trying to break their isolation by a rapprochement with Russia.**

Economic problems are hitting the vast majority of people hard. The Sudanese pound has lost a quarter of its value on the black market, making it more expensive to import basic necessities such as oil, soap or energy. In the agricultural sector, the country has experienced a decline of almost a third in production of wheat and sorghum. The main causes are climatic, with a succession of droughts then torrential rains, diseases in the case of sorghum especially and finally irrigation problems related to the shortage of electricity for motor pumps.

## Continued mobilization

This economic situation obviously affects the poorest in a country where more than half the inhabitants live below the poverty line. The struggles continue therefore on two fronts. Against poverty and against the putschists who ended the transitional period resulting from the 2019 revolution that overthrew Omar al-Bashir.

Despite the passing of time and repression, the mobilization has not weakened. The dictatorship is trying to muzzle the opposition with more arrests, most often at night at the homes of those targeted. Human rights organizations report systematic torture of opponents. Each demonstration is repressed by security forces who do not hesitate to fire live ammunition.

Along with their actions in support of this combativeness, the resistance committees, the linchpin of the anti-dictatorship struggle, have finalized their work of developing a political project. A document that was discussed by many committees at grassroots level throughout the country. This "Charter for the Establishment of the Authority of the People" aims to organize a new transition. It provides for a Prime Minister appointed by the Forces of Change. It will govern with an assembly that will also have a constituent role at the end of the transition period. Elections will be held, though elements of the old al-Bashir regime and supporters of the putschists will not be able to participate.

This text is presented as a proposal and aims to unify the disparate elements of the opposition, whether trade unions, associations or campaign groups. This charter rules out any negotiations with the putschists and thus opposes the strategy of the United Nations and the African Union, which are trying to return to a two-headed military-civilian transition.

## Russia, lifeline of the putschists

The new situation created by the aggression against Ukraine has allowed Generals al-Burhan and Hemedti to play the Russian card to consolidate their regime. While they benefited from the leniency of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates during the 2019 coup, Russia allows them to break out of their isolation on the international scene. A situation favoured by the ambivalence of the Gulf dictatorships in the war against Ukraine.

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Russia is continuing to strengthen its presence in the country. Thus, the mercenaries of the Russian company Wagner are mainly deployed on gold mines in collaboration with Hemedti in a totally opaque traffic. Meanwhile, the various army and police corps continue to take over the country's main economic resources. Another strategic asset for Russia is the installation of a Russian naval base in Port Sudan allowing access to the Red Sea. This would be the Russian Federation's first military base in Africa.

The Biden administration is beginning to threaten economic sanctions against Sudan's leaders, officially as pressure against the coup. However, the virtual inaction of the US during the months following the coup suggests that the object of the pressure is to undermine the over-close alliance between Putin and the putschists.

With or without the Russians, the generals have failed to inflict a defeat on the social movement, as evidenced by the recurrent demonstrations of people who block the roads leading to Egypt to protest against the increase in the price of electricity.

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