

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8904>



Sudan

Sudan : Towards partition

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP602 - March 2025 -

Publication date: Saturday 22 March 2025

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Although with little media coverage, the war in Sudan remains the most costly conflict in the world from a humanitarian point of view: 11 million people have been displaced and half the population is in a situation of food insecurity. The creation of a parallel government has broken the unity of the *Taqaddum* coalition led by former minister Abdallah Hamdok from the transitional government which emerged from the Sudanese revolution.

Propagation of the conflict

Initially only the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) led by Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Hemedti faced each other. The other forces, whether civilian or armed, observed a neutrality. This is no longer the case now. War is raging including inside the refugee camps, like Zamzam where aid workers have had to leave.

The RSF commits the worst atrocities against non- Arab communities, practices which already existed during the Darfur conflict in 2003, implemented by the *Janjawid*, precursors of the RSF. These crimes against humanity push civilians to self-defence. This is what happened in the town of El-Fasher, encircled by the forces of Hemedti for some months, where the inhabitants, including women, have taken up arms to repel RSF incursions. The consequence is that the war has slowly generalised among the people.

Inasmuch as the support from foreign countries — the United Arab Emirates and Chad for Hemedti, Egypt and Turkey for Burhan — continues, and in the absence of sanctions, the war will go on, driving the different organisations to depart from their neutrality, while the RSF and SAF try to widen their social and military bases.

Second government

This situation has led to the breakup of the *Taqaddum* coalition which had tried to represent an alternative to the two military forces. A part of this coalition has signed a “founding charter” for the establishment of a parallel government in the territories occupied by the RSF. Among the signatories are armed organisations such as a faction of the SPLM/N of Abdelaziz al-Hilu and of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) as well as the political party Oumma and members identifying with civil society. If the text of this charter affirms equal rights for all Sudanese, there are no illusions with respect to ethnic cleansing - some even speak of genocide perpetrated by the RSF.

Division of Sudan

The SAF have linked up with the ethnic militias and the partisans of the former regime of Omar el-Bashir, who are also accused of war crimes. Sudan will have two governments, one led by Hemedti for the west, integrating the regions of Darfur and North Kordof, and the other based in Port-Sudan in the east, led by Burhan. The capital, Khartoum, is still subjected to intense battles for its control. This Libyan style scenario could rapidly lead to partition of the country, indeed to fragmentation since the RSF and SAF coalitions are only aggregates of disparate elements with often opposed agendas.

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PS:

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