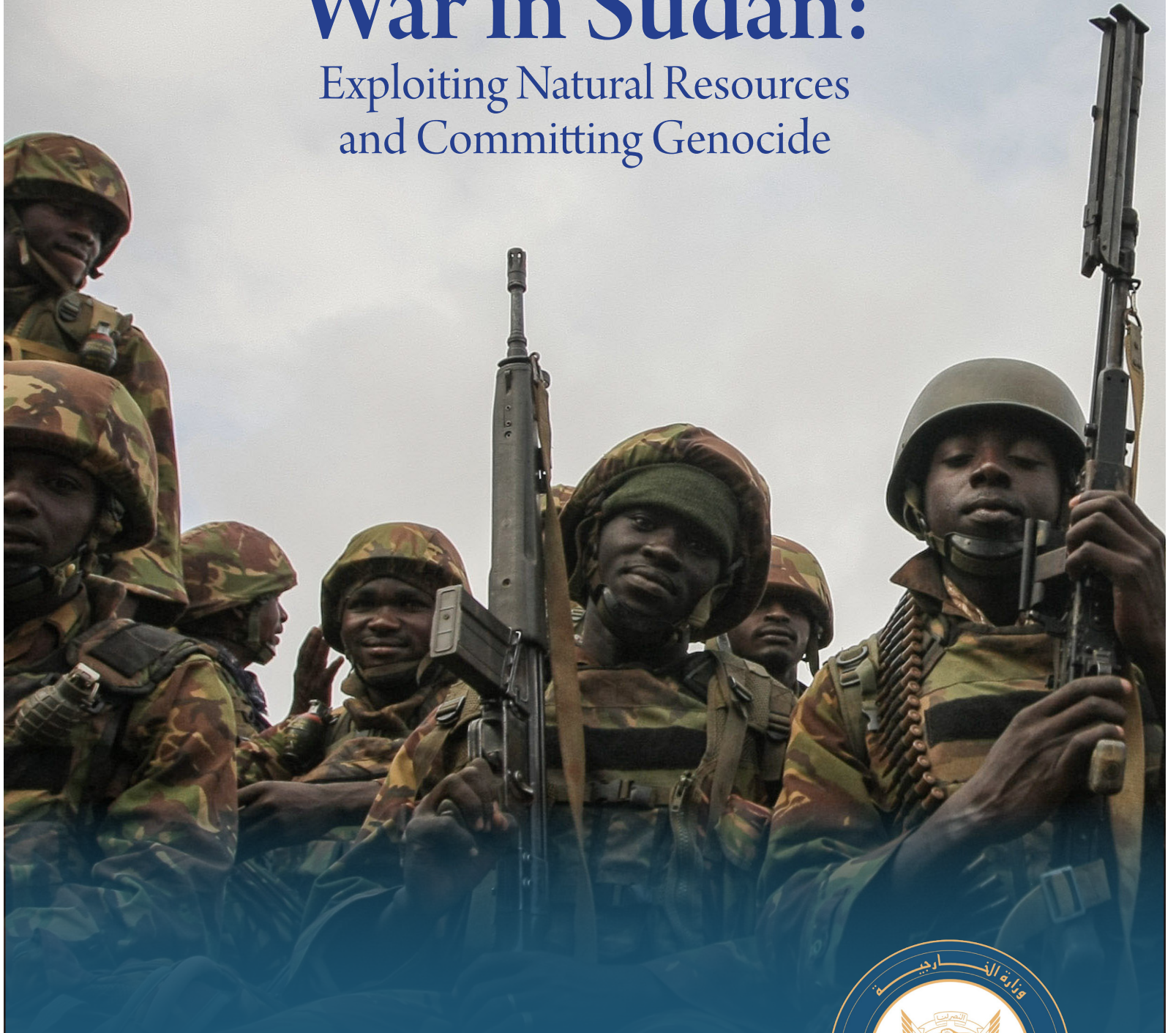


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UAE's Proxy War in Sudan:

Exploiting Natural Resources
and Committing Genocide



**Media Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Sudan**



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Background to the Conflict

The conflict in Sudan is not a civil war between different segments of the population, nor is it merely a power struggle between rival armed forces. Rather, it is a proxy war waged by the UAE through the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia to control and exploit the country's rich natural resources as well as its significant geopolitical location. The UAE-backed militia operates with impunity and will not stop at anything, even at the expense of destroying the state order in the country. In fact, the militia is openly calling for dismantling the "1956 state", the year of Sudan's independence. This latter scenario may make it easier for the UAE to appropriate the nation's mineral resources and seize strategic posts on its long Red Sea Coast as it did in Yemen.



Origins and Role of the RSF

- The RSF is the current edition of the Janjaweed militia, notorious for committing genocide and atrocities in Darfur in the early 2000s. It was reorganised by the ousted regime of President Omar al-Bashir to counter Darfurian armed movements. Wary of the possibility of the national army withdrawing its support to his ailing regime, Al-Bashir later used the RSF to counterbalance the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) – the national army.
- After months of mass protests against the al-Bashir regime, thousands of young people staged a sit-in at the SAF headquarters in Khartoum on March 26, 2019, demanding military intervention. Consequently, on April 11, 2019, the then Vice President and Minister of Defence announced the removal of al-Bashir, and the SAF assumed power. Protests, however, continued until General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, then Inspector General of SAF, became the head of the Transitional Military Council (TMC).
- Informed by the desire to unite the country and integrate all armed groups, including RSF and the insurgent movements that it had been fighting, into the national army, the TMC gave the RSF leader the position of its deputy head. The other rebel movements became integral part of the Transitional Government as per the Juba Peace Agreement October 2020.

External Meddling

- The already precarious transition, as the country emerged from multiple internal conflicts and external isolation and facing formidable economic crisis, has been exacerbated by the meddling of external actors. These actors have been pursuing their selfish agenda and fragmented political elites in the wake of 30 years of dictatorship that created a huge abyss between the youth and political parties.
- The UAE, eager to manipulate the vulnerability of the country to further its regional ambitions in competition within other more powerful regional players, sought to maintain the RSF as a proxy armed force, having previously used it in military interventions in Yemen.
- Amid the post-revolution fluid political and security environment, RSF grew by ten-fold, thanks to UAE's unlimited support. It has been able to acquire weapons that are only available to professional national armies. It has also been appropriating the largest portion of the country's gold wealth as well as mass smuggling to Dubai. Many Western powers, including the EU, cultivated ties with the RSF, under the guise of controlling illegal migration. Such a cooperation later proved to have disastrous implications, as it availed RSF a pool of new recruits from illegal migrants it detained.
- Driven by an almost declared design to seize power in the country, the RSF built an economic empire and a web of extensions among political elites, media, traditional community leaders, civil servants, as well as a number of leaders of neighbouring states. Some of these states also receive financial support to their respective electoral campaigns; others became business partners to the Daglo family, the leadership of RSF.
- Given the above, the RSF unsurprisingly rejected plans for its integration into the SAF within 2-3 years, instead insisting on a 10-15-year period to remain a parallel army, modelled after Hezbollah in Lebanon. Unfortunately, certain political groupings that have little popular support sided with RSF, and were influenced by UAE. Major Western powers were either silent on the issue or gave tacit approval of the RSF's position.

RSF Coup Attempt and Its Aftermath

- On 15 April 2023, the RSF launched a coordinated, large-scale attack targeting SAF command centres, strategic sites, the national media, airports, and the presidential palace. The initial aim was to seize power. Shortly after the coup had failed, the RSF tried to dismantle the Sudan order. To the majority of RSF fighters, mobilised along ethnicity, this is viewed as a prerequisite to establishing a “national home” for Darfur Arabs and their kinsmen from Sahel region, often called diaspora Arabs.
- The SAF successfully repelled the attempted coup, crippling the RSF’s command and communication network. As such RSF turned its guns on civilians as well as forcefully expelling and occupying homes of millions of ordinary people – several thousands of whom have been detained as hostages. The RSF also seized dozens of hospitals, universities, public utilities, malls, banks, churches and mosques, turning them into centres for military operations. The militia unleashed an unprecedented campaign of blind terror against civilians, especially women and children, through random killing, mass rape and sexual violence, pillage, extortion and kidnapping. In some rural areas, a number of women committed suicide, as RSF advanced to their villages to escape rape. The aim was obviously to depopulate urban centers and farming regions to resettle the militia’s elements, most of whom are now mercenaries from Sahel and neighbouring countries.
- On 11 May 2023, the Jeddah Declaration was signed by both SAF and RSF, which was aimed at protecting civilians in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. The Declaration obligates RSF to immediately evacuate all civilian objects it occupies. Instead, the militia used the humanitarian truce agreed under the Declaration to seize more homes, hospitals, universities and utilities – often used as detention centres of thousands of civilian hostages it had kidnapped. The RSF also invaded new territories, including Gazira, Sinnar, Blue Nile, Kordofan as well as Darfur, where they had been originally deployed by the ousted regime. It seized a number of villages deep into the countryside, where there is no police presence, perpetuating a series of massacres, whose victims run in thousands.

- The worst massacre, however, took place in Western Darfur where between 10-15 thousand people of the African Masalit community were slaughtered between June-July 2023. The US Administration concluded in January 2025 that this was an act of genocide, after the Congress reached a similar conclusion in December 2024. The Government of Sudan is pursuing the UAE government through the International Court of Justice in the Hague for complicity in genocide in Darfur.
- All these atrocities were enabled by the UAE's uninterrupted supplies to RSF of arms, munitions, equipment, financial and logistical support, as well as recruiting a large number of mercenaries from as far as Colombia, South America. The New York Times has cited an EU internal memo estimating the number of foreign mercenaries fighting alongside the RSF in January 2024 at 200,000.

Current Military Situation

- Faced with this elaborate and foreign-financed War of Terror and aggression, the Sudanese Armed Forces, backed by the armed struggle movements (signatories of Juba Peace Agreement and fully supported by the Sudanese people), launched a formidable counter offensive against the RSF in September 2024.
- In the space of a few months, the SAF and its supporting forces have reclaimed most RSF-occupied territories, except for Darfur and West Kordofan. Currently SAF controls almost all of the states of Khartoum, Gazira, Sinnar, Blue Nile, and White Nile. The rest of the country's 18 states, especially in the east, central north and north were never seriously threatened.
- The RSF continues to lay siege on Al-Fashir in North Darfur and shelling civilians. It has also resorted to naked acts of destruction by attacking power and water plants, hospitals and markets. The SAF, alongside Darfur armed movements, is actively defending civilians in affected areas. The situation in Darfur is now similar to what it was like 20 years ago when the Janjaweed orchestrated acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing. The major difference now is that their number and capabilities are far greater, thanks to the support of the UAE. While the Sudanese

government, its people, the national army backed by the Darfur armed movements are united and resolute to defeat the terrorists, the international community sadly remains indifferent.

- After major defeats, the RSF is planning, under the supervision of the UAE and with help of Kenya's president, to announce a parallel government in Darfur to gain access to weapons restricted to legitimate state entities. The UN, US, the UK, and several members of the international community have voiced their deep concern over the move. However, a more robust response is required.

The RSF's Transboundary Threat

- RSF is recruiting fighters and criminals from the African Sahel, including individuals from terrorist groups.
- It seeks to establish an ethnically supremacist "national home" for Sahelian Arab nomads in Darfur and Sudan's central and fertile lands, dismembering the country and fueling ethnic strife in the region.
- If left unchecked, the RSF's destabilising influence will increase terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking, and illegal migration throughout the region.

The Stakes: State Survival Vs. Chaos

- The core issue is not civilian vs. military rule but the survival of Sudan's statehood and territorial integrity.
- Sudan's collapse could lead to widespread regional insecurity, enabling international terrorism and criminal enterprises.
- The SAF remains the only institution capable of preserving national unity, stability, and order.

SAF's Role in Civilian Protection

- SAF has proven to be the primary protector of Sudanese civilians.
- After liberating Al-Jazirah, Sinnar, White Nile, and Khartoum states, nearly two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned home.
- The jubilant mass rallies welcoming SAF's advancement highlight its legitimacy as Sudan's national army and symbol of its nationhood, having existed as a professional armed force for 100 years.

Resumption of Inclusive Civilian Transition

The existing dispensation in Sudan is designed to attain a civilian, inclusive, and democratic transition leading to fair and free elections. Towards this end, and anticipating a close end of the war, the President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, after consultation with political and societal powers, has put forward a road map, which consists of:

- Forming a civilian government from independent technocrats to oversee recovery from war and beginning of reconstruction.
- Renewing amnesty of those who lay down arms and renounce violence.
- Introducing the necessary amendments to the Constitutional Document, the governing legal framework of the transitional period.
- Launching an all-inclusive national dialogue to agree in the way forward.



Call to Action

Role of the United Kingdom and the International Community

The UK government needs to reassess its position, acknowledging the RSF's existential threat to state order, peace, stability and social cohesion in Sudan and beyond. The UAE involvement must similarly be identified as the single most important factor prolonging the war.

Urgent measures that the UK should adopt and push for, including:

1. *Pressurising the UAE, Chad, and General Haftar and all regional countries to stop arming RSF and recruiting mercenaries.*
 2. *Utilising international criminal jurisdiction against RSF leaders, who freely travel abroad including to the UK.*
 3. *Implementing the Jeddah Declaration, ensuring RSF withdraws from civilian areas and foreign mercenaries are expelled.*
 4. *Enforcing Security Council Resolution 2736 to prevent El-Fashir from falling into RSF hands, which could trigger another genocide far worse than the earlier one in West Darfur.*
- Deploying UN peacekeepers, as often advocated, will merely sustain the status quo, allowing the RSF to solidify its control and permanently displace Darfur's population with associated need for endless humanitarian assistance and continued traffic of irregular migrants to Europe. This is the lesson learnt from the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAM ID), 2007-2021, which left the majority of the African communities threatened by the Janjaweed either IDPs or refugees.

- An unconditional and immediate ceasefire will also produce a similar outcome, enabling the RSF to continue its ethnic-cleansing in Darfur and beyond.
- The UK Foreign Minister is convening the London Sudan Conference on April 15, 2025, to discuss peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Government of Sudan has not been invited, under the pretext of being “a warring party”. Ironically, the UAE, effectively a party to the war, is invited. Interestingly, the conference concept paper identifies participants as “states and international organisations focused on, and invested in supporting a peaceful way forward for the Sudanese”. The participation of the UAE will only render the conference a little more than a public relations stunt and to whitewash its image as it is being pursued for genocide at the International Court of Justice.
- Almost a year ago, the former UK Government blocked a discussion at the UN Security Council on the UAE role in the Sudan war. That act emboldened UAE to pursue its role in abetting and enabling genocide in Sudan with impunity. It is rather absurd that the main stakeholder, the Sudanese government, is absent from the meeting but is expected to agree and implement its decisions.

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