
United Nations Security Council Background Guide

2026-2027

**Cleveland Council on
WORLD AFFAIRS**



United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Background Guide

Written by: Marie Chuparkoff, University of Virginia

Written July 2026

The United Nations Charter, established in 1945 after World War II, delegates “the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security” to the UN Security Council.¹ This means that the Council must respond to threats to peace and disputes leading to hostilities. In these cases, the Council may set forth principles for peace agreements, appoint special envoys, issue ceasefire directives, or dispatch peacekeeping forces to reduce tensions and separate opposing forces. Unlike other organs of the United Nations, which can only make recommendations to member states, the Council has the unique power to make binding decisions that member states are obligated to follow. The Council can enforce these mandated decisions through economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial penalties and restrictions, travel bans, severance of diplomatic relations, blockades, or even collective military action.²

The Council is composed of 15 member states, including five permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The five permanent members are known as the P5, and each nation has veto power. Veto power for permanent members has been a controversial issue since the founding of the Security Council. For example, in 1946, the Council was poised to mandate the withdrawal of French forces in Syria and Lebanon until the Soviet diplomat vetoed it; this set the precedent of permanent members vetoing resolutions that do not align with their interests, which has limited the Council’s effectiveness and functionality. The remaining 10 seats of the Council are assigned to regions and are held by elected representatives for two-year terms. The African States hold three seats; Asia-Pacific States (excluding China) hold two; Eastern European States (excluding Russia) hold one; Latin America and the Caribbean States hold two; and Western Europe and Other

¹ Notre Dame International Security Center. “A History and Overview of the United Nations Security Council.” The University of Notre Dame, April 13, 2023. <https://ondisc.nd.edu/news-media/news/a-history-and-overview-of-the-united-nations-security-council/>.

² United Nations. “Security Council: About.” Accessed July 22, 2026. <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/current-members>.

States (excluding the US, UK, and France) hold two.³ A resolution requires 9 votes to pass the Security Council, plus a non-veto by each of the five Permanent Members.

Topic I: Peacekeeping and Peace Talks in the Sudanese Civil Conflict

Statement of the Issue:

The civil war in Sudan began in April 2023 as a conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the official military of Sudan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a powerful paramilitary force whose origins date back to the paramilitaries employed by former Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir to suppress rebellions in Darfur and other peripheral regions of Sudan in the early 2000s. Al-Bashir ruled in Sudan for 30 years after seizing power in a 1989 coup; he was ousted by the military in 2019 following massive nationwide protests over economic conditions. The coup was led by General Adbdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, led by Mohamed Hamdan “Hemedti” Dagalo, and briefly led to a civilian government under Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Hamdok was ousted by the SAF and RSF in October 2021 and officially resigned in January 2022. Despite efforts to manage competition between the two leaders, the struggle for power between Burhan’s SAF and Hemedti’s RSF resulted in the resumption of armed conflict in April 2023.⁴ The conflict has led to the death of between 150,000 and 400,000 people and the displacement of more than 11 million Sudanese inside Sudan or to neighboring countries. It is by far the largest and most deadly conflict on earth.

The Council has used a variety of tools to address previous conflicts in Sudan, as well as the current conflict. These have included the appointment of special envoys, the use of economic sanctions, as well as the deployment of several peacekeeping missions. Peacekeeping operations involve the deployment of troops and civilian police, and these missions typically follow three principles: consent of parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate. While the Council has previously used peacekeeping to mediate the

³ United Nations. “Security Council: Members.” Accessed July 22, 2026.
<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/current-members>.

⁴ Center for Preventive Action. “Civil War in Sudan.” Council on Foreign Relations, July 14, 2026.
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/power-struggle-sudan>.

Sudanese conflict, the future of peace operations in Sudan is unclear. While the Council has previously used peacekeeping to mediate the Sudanese conflict, the ongoing and increasing violence and power struggles have left the future of peacekeeping operations in the country unclear. It is up to this committee to decide the Security Council's future role in achieving a lasting peace in Sudan.

History:

From 1899 to 1956, Sudan was a joint protectorate of Egypt and the United Kingdom. When Sudan gained sovereignty as an independent republic, the internal divide between the wealthier northern region, made up predominantly of Arabs and Muslims, and the less-developed southern region, who were predominantly Africans and either Christian or animists, sparked two civil wars. The First Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972) started when southern leaders organized a guerilla movement known as Anya-Nya in response to a negligent northern-dominated government and repressive policies against the south. Over 500,000 people died, and the conflict ended with a treaty establishing limited southern autonomy. In 1983, Sudanese president Gaafar Muhammad al-Nimeiri declared Sudan an Islamic state and institutionalized Sharia law, which sparked the second civil war.⁵ The Second Sudanese Civil War was fought between the central government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which represented the southern that faced suppression and discrimination. The Second Sudanese Civil War cost over one million lives across Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in central Sudan. The war was characterized by extreme violence against civilians, including deadly air raids by the Sudanese Armed Forces on villages across Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains as well as mass killings by militias on both sides of the conflict. It ended in 2005, when the two parties signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which provided Southern Sudan with a high degree of autonomy within Sudan, while also placing Southern Sudanese in leadership positions in Khartoum, for a six-year Interim Period. At the end of the Interim Period, Southern Sudanese participated in a referendum on independence in which they voted overwhelmingly to succeed from Sudan. In July 2011, South Sudan officially became an independent state.⁶

⁵ Welliver, T. K. "First Sudanese Civil War Erupts." EBSCO, 2023. <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/first-sudanese-civil-war-erupts>.

⁶ Cain, Seth. "Second Sudanese Civil War 1983-2005." Study of Internal Conflict: Case Studies, 2024. https://media.defense.gov/2025/Feb/25/2003651741/-1/-1/0/20250204_SECONDSDUDAN_1983-2005.PDF.

As the Second Civil War was concluding, violence erupted in the western region of Sudan known as Darfur, comprised largely of non-Arab Muslims. Armed locals, fearing that Southern Sudan independence would leave them more vulnerable to abuse from Khartoum, began an uprising to push for greater autonomy inside Sudan. The Sudanese government responded with overwhelming force, with the SAF and their allied local militias, known as Janjaweed, targeted civilians based on their ethnic identity in a campaign the International Criminal Court found to be genocide. Between 2003 and 2005, an estimated 300,000 people died and more than two million were displaced. The Janjaweed militias formed the core of what would later become the Rapid Support Forces, a key party to the current civil war.

The post-colonial period in Sudan is defined by the regime of Omar al-Bashir, who seized power in a 1989 coup and reigned throughout the Second Sudanese Civil War, the Darfur genocide, and the secession of South Sudan. Bashir's regime concentrated wealth and power within a small group in and around Khartoum, excluding Sudan's peripheral regions, and leveraged private militias to keep the periphery in line. After the succession of South Sudan in 2011, Sudan's economy struggled, and nationwide protests over commodity prices erupted in 2018. The protests undermined Bashir's grip on power, and in April 2019, the SAF and the RSF jointly usurped Bashir. Prior to the ousting of Bashir, Bashir hired the RSF to protect him from coups and assassination attempts. However, the RSF, alongside the SAF, ultimately revolted and established the Transitional Sovereignty Council led by SAF General Burhan with RSF leader Hemedti as his deputy. The Council appointed Abdalla Hamdok as Prime Minister, but he was pushed out in October 2021 by the SAF and RSF, who also suspended the new constitution.

The alliance between the two armed groups did not last, however. In 2023, internationally facilitated negotiations to transition Sudan back to civilian government included the elevation of Hemedti to Burhan's equal as well as the integration of the RSF into the Sudanese Armed Forces. Hemedti rejected these moves, ultimately picking up arms against the SAF and sparking the current civil war in Sudan.⁷ The RSF quickly took control of Khartoum as well as other metropolitan cities, displacing millions of Sudanese. Additionally, the RSF targeted Darfur, renewing genocidal attacks against the region's ethnic minorities. The conflict has been marred

⁷ Center for Preventive Action. "Civil War in Sudan." Council on Foreign Relations, July 14, 2026.
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/power-struggle-sudan>.

by ethnic violence and war crimes, including attacks that have destroyed hospitals and other vital infrastructure, uprooted the health system and increased risk of disease outbreaks, and caused widespread food insecurity and even famine.

The United States, Saudi Arabia, and other regional players have facilitated ceasefire talks among the parties on multiple occasions. In May 2023 the parties agreed to a week-long ceasefire and the distribution of humanitarian aid within Sudan; however, the agreement was broken a day later, and after an additional two weeks of both sides negotiating and repeatedly violating agreements, the SAF suspended their participation in the talks.⁸ On March 8, 2024, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for the immediate cessation of violence in Sudan, and the SAF agreed to indirect negotiations with the RSF, facilitated by Libya and Turkey. However, on March 11, just three days later, the talks broke down when the SAF rejected the proposed ceasefire agreement unless the RSF withdrew from civilian sites. The SAF instead launched coordinated offensives around the cities seized by the RSF. Four months later, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that he invited the SAF and RSF to new peace talks in Geneva in August built on the Jeddah foundation. The US-led peace talks in Geneva failed to broker a ceasefire, but there was success in gaining greater humanitarian aid.⁹ In 2025, the SAF regained momentum, including regaining control of Khartoum for the first time since the war began. In addition to Khartoum, the SAF drove RSF forces out of the cities of Omdurman and Obeid. However, the RSF has solidified its control of the periphery, including Darfur. In October 2025, RSF captured El Fasher in North Darfur State, and, according to UN fact-finding missions, committed mass killings, sexual violence, and other atrocities, in one case killing more than 6,000 people in just three days the RSF's targeting of non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur continues to raise concerns of genocide.¹⁰

The Security Council has authorized a record number of peacekeeping missions in Sudan since the early 2000s, all with the (reluctant) consent of the Government of Sudan. The UN

⁸ "Treaty of Jeddah (2023)." Wikipedia. Accessed July 29, 2026.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Jeddah_\(2023\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Jeddah_(2023)).

⁹ Schlein, Lisa. "Sudan Peace Talks End With Breakthrough On Humanitarian Aid." Voice of America, August 23, 2024. <https://www.voanews.com/a/sudan-peace-talks-end-with-breakthrough-on-humanitarian-aid/7754746.html>.

¹⁰ Gavin, Michelle. "Shelling, Drones, and Hunger in El Fasher." Council on Foreign Relations, October 24, 2025. <https://www.cfr.org/articles/shelling-drones-and-hunger-el-fasher>.

Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was established in 2005 to help implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the Second Civil War; it ended with South Sudanese independence and became the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). UNMIS was composed of up to 10,000 military personnel, including 750 military observers, 715 civilian police, and 214 UN Volunteers. Personnel were divided across six regional sectors with military observers tasked with observing and maintaining the ceasefire and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. After the Darfur genocide, the Security Council authorized the first joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission, UNAMID, in Darfur; UNAMID concluded its mandate in 2020. In 2011, the Security Council authorized the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to maintain the peace in the disputed region of Abyei on the border between Sudan and South Sudan; that mission continues today. UNISFA is composed of up to 5,326 peacekeepers and is tasked with enforcement of peace agreements and civilian security on the border between Sudan and South Sudan. Even though UNISFA is meant to deter wider escalation, the region is increasingly unstable due to conflicts on both sides of the border. Even though the UNISFA has been renewed annually since 2011, the effectiveness of the mission has been questioned. In 2024, a UN peacekeeper was killed when the UN base in Agok was attacked.¹¹ In 2020, after the fall of Bashir, the Council established UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to support Sudan during its transition to democratic rule. The mandate of UNITAMS was extended for an additional two years until the Council terminated UNITAMS in December 2023.¹²

Analysis:

UNISFA is the only active peacekeeping force in Sudan, but its scope is limited to the Abyei region. It is up to this committee to determine whether the deployment of a more comprehensive peacekeeping operation, or other UN engagement in Sudan is necessary.

In September 2024, a UN fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council concluded the extensive human rights violations and international crimes had been committed by the SAF and the RSF. The mission also found that both warring parties targeted civilians through

¹¹ “United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei.” Wikipedia. Accessed July 29, 2026.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Interim_Security_Force_for_Abyei.

¹² “UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan.” Relief Web, 2023.
<https://reliefweb.int/organization/unitams>.

sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and other atrocities. Citing these human rights violations, the fact-finding mission called for the immediate deployment of an independent and impartial force to protect civilians.¹³ Despite this strong recommendation, the feasibility and effectiveness of a peacekeeping operation during an active conflict, and in a state so large is questionable. Other experts have called for a more limited deployment of security forces focused on the protection of civilians, since there is no longer any regional or international presence in Sudan responsible for civilian security. One solution to the challenge with limited forces in a large country might be providing targeted protection in so-called “green zones,” areas where internally displaced people are sheltering and greater humanitarian aid is needed. Concentrating peacekeeping forces in green zones could be an effective use of limited forces, though it comes with significant challenges.

In addition to limited resources and a vast region to cover, another challenge to peacekeeping in Sudan is attaining the consent of Sudanese authorities. Although the Security Council can deploy peacekeepers without the consent of the receiving state, a lack of consent from the host-state often leads to significant deployment challenges, which can undermine the success and effectiveness of missions. For example, this can lead to freedom of movement restrictions, threats to peacekeepers, delay or rejection of visa approvals, imposition of undue taxes and fines, and bureaucratic hurdles.¹⁴ The Council must keep these challenges in mind when considering approving a peacekeeping mission that may be actively resisted by the SAF or RSF. The Council has also deployed hybrid missions to Sudan in the past, especially in Darfur, where the UN and AU jointly formed UNAMID. While Sudanese authorities may regard the AU as a more politically palatable source of peacekeepers, past joint deployments have encountered significant political and logistical challenges, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been reluctant to repeat this experiment. Some researchers have also suggested that the Security Council should consider utilizing Resolution 2719, a resolution unanimously adopted in

¹³ OHCHR. “Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission Outlines Extensive Human Rights Violations, International Crimes, Urges Protection of Civilians.” UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, September 6, 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/sudan-un-fact-finding-mission-outlines-extensive-human-rights-violations>.

¹⁴ Gregory, Julie and Lisa Sharland. “Host-Country Consent in UN Peacekeeping.” Stimson, September 25, 2023. <https://www.stimson.org/2023/host-country-consent-in-un-peacekeeping/>.

2023 to allow up to 75% of an AU-led peace operation to be financed through UN assessed contributions.

Another critique of a new UN peacekeeping missions in Sudan is the lack of an effective political process for the mission to support. Typically, UN peacekeeping missions are deployed to support an ongoing political process and should be guided by a strategy to support that. Deploying a peacekeeping mission amid an active armed conflict with no political resolution in sight would pose fundamental questions about the ultimate objectives of the mission. In Chad, for example, a UN mission was deployed from 2007 to 2010 to protect civilians from violence spilling over from neighboring Sudan, but the lack of a political mandate resulted in a lack of leverage with the Chadian government, which undermined the effectiveness of the mission and ultimately led to its withdrawal. The Council may be hesitant to deploy a mission without a clear political mission because the mission will lack strong direction and leverage with government authorities.¹⁵

The SAF and RSF will only cooperate with peacekeeping missions if they see it as supportive of their military objectives. At the moment, SAF and RSF leadership have little incentive to engage in peace talks and peace operations while they and their regional allies profit from the conflict. In particular, both parties benefit from controlling parts of Sudan's significant gold reserves. In 2023, at the start of the war, only 6.4 tons of gold were produced in Sudan, but that number reached 64 tons in 2024 and 70 tons in 2025, revealing how the war has fueled the gold trade from which SAF and RSF leadership profit. The gold trade also facilitates both parties' continued acquisition of arms, and incentivizes the parties to continue the war, alongside external actors like the United Arab Emirates and Russia who participate in both arms and gold sales. Until sanctions, embargoes, or other efforts limit the ability of the parties to finance the war, the SAF and RSF are unlikely to meaningfully participate in negotiations, much less peacekeeping efforts.

¹⁵ Russo, Jenna. "More Peacekeeping for Sudan?" The Global Observatory, September 30, 2024. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/09/more-peacekeeping-for-sudan/>.

Conclusion:

The current civil war in Sudan has cost anywhere from 150,000 to 400,000 lives, and both the SAF and RSF have been credibly accused of committing atrocities and war crimes.¹⁶ Multiple rounds of negotiations have failed, and ceasefires have been violated by both the SAF and RSF. Previous peacekeeping operations and political mission, including UNITAMS, UNMIS, and UNAMID have all been withdrawn. UNISFA is the only active peacekeeping operation in Sudan and is limited to the Abyei Area. It is the responsibility of this committee to determine whether a more comprehensive and extensive peacekeeping operation or other political engagement in Sudan is necessary and how such a mission could be effective under the circumstances. This committee is also responsible for establishing the Council's role in peace talks to resolve the underlying conflict and promote civilian security.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the appropriate role of the Council in facilitating peace talks? Should the Council leave negotiations up to individual states such as the United States and Saudi Arabia or play a direct role?
2. Should the Council approve a peacekeeping operation in Sudan? An African Union mission or African Union-UN hybrid operation? Or none of the above?
3. Without political direction, how might a peacekeeping operation in Sudan gain leverage to keep the peace between the SAF and RSF? What steps might the Council take to disincentivize the SAF and RSF from continuing the war?

¹⁶ CSIS. "The Sudan War in 10 Charts." Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 17, 2026.
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/sudan-war-10-charts>.

Bibliography

- Cain, Seth. "Second Sudanese Civil War 1983-2005." Study of Internal Conflict: Case Studies, 2024.
- Center for Preventive Action. "Civil War in Sudan." Council on Foreign Relations, July 14, 2026. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/power-struggle-sudan>.
- CSIS. "The Sudan War in 10 Charts." Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 17, 2026. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/sudan-war-10-charts>.
- Gavin, Michelle. "Shelling, Drones, and Hunger in El Fasher." Council on Foreign Relations, October 24, 2025. <https://www.cfr.org/articles/shelling-drones-and-hunger-el-fasher>.
- Gregory, Julie and Lisa Sharland. "Host-Country Consent in UN Peacekeeping." Stimson, September 25, 2023. <https://www.stimson.org/2023/host-country-consent-in-un-peacekeeping/>.
- Notre Dame International Security Center. "A History and Overview of the United Nations Security Council." The University of Notre Dame, April 13, 2023. <https://ondisc.nd.edu/news-media/news/a-history-and-overview-of-the-united-nations-security-council/>.
- OHCHR. "Sudan: UN Fact-Finding Mission Outlines Extensive Human Rights Violations, International Crimes, Urges Protection of Civilians." UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, September 6, 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/sudan-un-fact-finding-mission-outlines-extensive-human-rights-violations>.
- Russo, Jenna. "More Peacekeeping for Sudan?" The Global Observatory, September 30, 2024. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/09/more-peacekeeping-for-sudan/>.
- Schlein, Lisa. "Sudan Peace Talks End With Breakthrough On Humanitarian Aid." Voice of America, August 23, 2024. <https://www.voanews.com/a/sudan-peace-talks-end-with-breakthrough-on-humanitarian-aid/7754746.html>.
- "Treaty of Jeddah (2023)." Wikipedia. Accessed July 29, 2026. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Jeddah_\(2023\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Jeddah_(2023)).
- "UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan." Relief Web, 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/organization/unitams>.
- United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei." Wikipedia. Accessed July 29, 2026.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Interim_Security_Force_for_Abyei.

UN. "Security Council: About." United Nations. Accessed July 22, 2026.

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/current-members>.

UN. "Security Council: Members." United Nations. Accessed July 22, 2026.

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/current-members>.

Welliver, T. K. "First Sudanese Civil War Erupts." EBSCO, 2023.

<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/first-sudanese-civil-war-erupts>.

https://media.defense.gov/2025/Feb/25/2003651741/1/0/20250204_SECONDSUDAN_1983-2005.PDF.

Topic II: Displacement and Humanitarian Aid in the Sudanese Civil War

Statement of the issue:

Mass displacement, famine, and a collapsed health system have made the Third Sudanese Civil War the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world.¹⁷ The war has cost hundreds of thousands of lives, and is currently the world's largest displacement crisis, having forcibly displaced twelve million people, some of whom have fled to Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan as refugees and asylum seekers. On August 1, 2024, famine was first confirmed by the Famine Review Committee, and between 2016 and 2024, the percentage of Sudanese facing severe hunger increased from 12% to over 50%. Additionally, only 39% of Sudan's health system is reportedly partially operational; this has exacerbated outbreaks of fatal diseases like cholera and malaria.

To address these problems, the Council can work with UN agencies such as the World Food Programme and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, which have responsibility for providing humanitarian aid and refugee protection and adopt resolutions strengthening the UN's commitment to ending the use of starvation of civilians and denial of humanitarian access as methods of warfare. Additionally, the Council can impose sanctions or place arms embargoes on countries that undermine international peace and security, for example by supporting warring parties to target civilians.

History:

Sudan faces the world's largest displacement crisis, accounting for roughly 11 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of April 2026. An additional 4 million people have fled to Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan as refugees and asylum seekers, and another 900,000 people who originally fled to Sudan for safety have had to return to their dangerous circumstances. Before the war in 2022, there were 3.6 million IDPs, 86,800 asylum seekers, and 837,200 refugees in Sudan. Many of the four million refugees and asylum seekers who fled to neighboring countries have been detained and forcibly deported back to Sudan, and flow of Sudanese refugees has contributed to instability in neighboring countries like Egypt, Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Egypt has received more than 1.5 million refugees from Sudan, and Ethiopia already hosts one

¹⁷ CSIS. "The Sudan War in 10 Charts." Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 17, 2026.
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/sudan-war-10-charts>.

million refugees, of which 184,000 are from Sudan. Similarly, Chad has hosted almost 600,000 refugees from Sudan but is already struggling with the same number of IDPs caused by its own instability. In addition, many South Sudanese have crossed over into Sudan due to violence and instability in South Sudan, even as tens of thousands of Sudanese have crossed the border in the other direction.¹⁸ These host nations, burdened by the economic and security challenges of refugees, have resorted to deporting some refugees back to Sudan. Egypt, although regarded globally as a model for asylum policy, has deported the largest number of refugees. These deportations violate the 1951 Refugee Convention which outlines the legal protections, rights, and assistance refugees are entitled to, including the core principle of non-refoulement, which means a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.¹⁹ However, there is no global enforcement of this international treaty, so refugees and asylum seekers typically rely on domestic courts to hold the host country accountable. To counter the refoulement of refugees, one possible solution is using key donors to push back on restrictive asylum policies. For example, the European Union, who has given billions of dollars in aid to Egypt, could hold aid until Egypt has reformed their refugee and asylum policies and has ceased refouling Sudanese refugees.²⁰

Another facet of the war in Sudan is the hunger crisis, which has reached famine levels. In 2022, 12 million Sudanese (nearly a quarter of the population), faced acute food insecurity, defined as a sudden, life-threatening inability to consume adequate food. At the start of the war that number nearly doubled, and by 2024, more than half of Sudan's population--some 25.6 million people--suffered from acute food insecurity; this famine was first confirmed on August 1, 2024. The RSF has been found to have intentionally targeted agricultural communities in order to starve people. In El-Fasher, Darfur, the RSF has deliberately killed and displaced farmers as well as destroyed necessary farming infrastructure.²¹ Both the RSF and SAF have blocked, looted,

¹⁸ "Sudan Conflict Straining Fragility of Its Neighbors." Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 1, 2026.

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/sudan-conflict-straining-fragility-of-its-neighbors-displacement-refugees/>.

¹⁹ HIAS Staff. "Deep Dive: Legal Obligations to Refugees." Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, May 18, 2026.

<https://hias.org/news/deep-dive-legal-obligations-refugees/>.

²⁰ Cone, Devon and Daniel P. Sullivan. "No Model of Refuge: Sudanese Refugees in Egypt." Refugees International, February 21, 2025. <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/no-model-of-refuge-sudanese-refugees-in-egypt/>.

²¹ Raymond, Nathaniel, et al. "Special Report: Rapid Support Forces Intentionally Targeted Agricultural Communities to Starve People in El-Fasher." Yale School of Public Health, March 10, 2026. <https://ysph.yale.edu/news-article/hrl-report-rsf-intentionally-targeted-agricultural-communities-el-fasher/>.

and exploited humanitarian assistance. Ongoing violence and the deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers and local volunteers has caused some humanitarian organizations to withdraw or scale back their operations in Sudan, while the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has prevented shipments of fuel, fertilizer, medicines, and aid from reaching Sudan.²² The trade disruption has also driven up costs of food and medicine for the average Sudanese, resulting in many becoming unable to afford food and medicine.²³

The war has also caused Sudan's health system to collapse. As of September 2025, only 39% of health service delivery points, which include hospitals, standalone clinics, private practices, and pharmacies, were somewhat functional. 80% of all hospitals have closed, and approximately 61% of health facilities have been destroyed. Only 16% of health facilities are operating optimally in Khartoum. The SAF and RSF have perpetrated over 721 attacks on health facilities, medical staff, and healthcare supply chains since April 2023. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has similarly driven up the cost of medical supplies and created shortages. Burdened by the mass influx of refugees, the healthcare systems of neighboring countries have faced additional stress as well.²⁴ Sudan's fractured health system has hindered the deployment of vaccinations and routine immunizations, with immunization rates for Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTP) dropping from 84% to 39%. While Sudan carried out its first national malaria vaccination campaign in late 2024, the war has nevertheless prevented many children from receiving the vaccine, with coverage plummeting from 85% to less than 50% countryside, and only 30% in the active conflict zone.²⁵ In 2024, Sudan accounted for 44.6% of all malaria cases within the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, and there were over 1.3 million cases and 850 deaths from malaria in 2025 alone. With a devastated health system, Sudan is unable to provide the necessary care and vaccinations to combat diseases like measles, cholera, and malaria.

²² OHCHR. "Using Starvation as a Weapon of War in Sudan Must Stop: UN Experts." Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, June 26, 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/using-starvation-weapon-war-sudan-must-stop-un-experts>.

²³ Krugman, Allison. "How the Iran War Is Straining Humanitarian Aid, in Three Charts." Think Global Health, April 1, 2026. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/how-the-iran-war-is-straining-humanitarian-aid-in-three-charts>.

²⁴ Musa, Muhammad Kabir et al. "Public Health Consequences of Armed Conflict in Sudan in the Face of Global Donor Fatigue." National Library of Medicine, January 30, 2024. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12039585/>.

²⁵ UNICEF. "Sudan Rolls Out First Malaria Vaccines." UN Children's Fund, November 4, 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/press-releases/sudan-rolls-out-first-malaria-vaccines-0>.

Analysis:

Compared to humanitarian aid, the Council discusses the issue of displacement far less, disproportionate to the central role forced displacement plays in global conflicts. The Council's three solutions for helping IDPs are return, local integration, and settlement elsewhere; however, the Council has devoted the most attention to return in resolutions even though returning IDPs cannot be ensured in the long-term without local integration and orchestrated settlement elsewhere.²⁶ Local integration is a neglected long-term solution that could be an effective alternative to refugee camps; local integration refers to the use of official assistance to permanently settle refugees in host communities to promote economic development in host countries and protect refugees in the long-term. In the case of Sudan, neighboring countries that refugees already consistently flee to may not be suitable for local integration because host countries such as Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia already face IDP crises of their own which are only compounded by incoming Sudanese refugees. Libya similarly suffers from an ongoing IDP crisis coupled with anti-migrant campaigns; there have been widespread protests against the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and hostile anti-refugee rhetoric on social media demanding the cessation of resettlement initiatives and the expulsion of foreign workers.²⁷

In Egypt, which does not have an IDP crisis, Sudanese refugees have been subjected to racism and an "intensifying campaign of arbitrary arrests and human rights violations" according to the UN. Refugees reportedly risk detention if unable to provide proof of residence at the time of arrest; affordable housing in Egypt is already a struggle for many Sudanese. Consequently, many refugees are leaving Egypt for Europe, and some are traveling through Libya to arrive in Italy.²⁸ While local integration should be the Council's next focus to counter displacement, there remains the two challenges of anti-refugee campaigns and IDP crises in host countries. It is up to

²⁶ Ferris, Elizabeth, and Sanjula Weerasinghe. "The UN Security Council and Prevention of Displacement." Brookings Institution, December 1, 2012. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-u-n-security-council-and-prevention-of-displacement/>.

²⁷ "Sudanese Refugees Face Severe Risks in Libya Amid Anti-Foreigner Campaigns." Sudan Tribune, June 4, 2026. <https://sudantribune.com/article/314705>.

²⁸ Ruisch, Simon. "Poverty, Racism and Forced Disappearances: Why Sudanese War Refugees Are Leaving Egypt for Europe." The Guardian, May 26, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/may/26/poverty-racism-forced-disappearances-sudanese-war-refugees-leaving-egypt-europe>.

this committee to decide to what extent local integration should be implemented in host countries already combatting IDP crises, and for others, how anti-refugee sentiment should be combatted.

While many of the Council's resolutions on Sudan already call for reducing barriers to the provision of humanitarian aid, these resolutions have not always been adhered to. The UN's humanitarian aid system is supposed to step in when food and health systems collapse. However, amidst Sudan's civil war, the SAF and RSF have refused to cooperate with international humanitarian actors and have at times prevented access to humanitarian actors. For example, in February 2024, the SAF declared that humanitarian aid would not be allowed to enter RSF-controlled areas; the RSF then declared the same for SAF-controlled areas. After regaining control in Darfur, the SAF closed a key aid route from Chad into the region, essentially preventing humanitarian aid from reaching civilians in the region. Both parties have also perpetrated attacks on aid workers. On June 11, 2024, an explosion killed eight hunger aid workers at a project site in North Darfur. Since the start of the conflict, over 130 aid workers have been killed, resulting in more aid organizations leaving Sudan or suspending operations. As a result, many local Sudanese staff have also lost jobs, and the burden of supporting at-risk populations has shifted to Sudanese volunteers and local organizations, which lack adequate resources and training.²⁹

Humanitarian aid in Sudan is also severely underfunded. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), at least \$10 billion is needed to cover humanitarian needs for over 30 million people in Sudan and 5 million refugees abroad. In 2024, the top five sources of humanitarian funding in Sudan were the United States with 42.8%, the United Kingdom with 8.2%, the European Commission with 7.2%, Saudi Arabia with 5.5% and Germany with 5.4%. After USAID was dismantled, however, US aid to Sudan was cut by approximately 83%, resulting in the loss of \$661 million in funding. Between 2025 and 2026, total international aid funding dropped from \$450.5 million to \$131.1 million. In 2023, humanitarian funding met 38% of estimated needs, but in 2026, that number dropped to 8%.³⁰ In early 2026, the UN launched the 2026 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan which would seek \$1.6 billion to aid 5.9 million Sudanese refugees across the Central African Republic, Chad,

²⁹ Bishop, Tim and Christina Wille. "Sudan's Genocide Deepens Famine." Think Global Health, January 29, 2025. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/sudans-genocide-deepens-famine?>

³⁰ Mithika, Dennis. "Ten International Humanitarian Organizations Creating Impact in Sudan's Crisis in 2025." Development Aid, September 25, 2025. <https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200379/ten-international-humanitarian-organizations-creating-impact-in-sudans-crisis>.

Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, and Uganda. The largest UN recipients of this aid are the World Food Programme, which has received 30.6% of total funding, then UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) with 10.3%, and UN High Commissioner for Refugees with 8.3%. Some states have also been providing military support for either the SAF or RSF. Iran, Egypt, Ukraine, Russia (including through the Wagner Group), and Turkey have all provided military support to the SAF, while the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Libya have provided military support to the RSF. These states seek to use Sudan's civil war to gain leverage and achieve other interests in the region. For instance, Russia aims to secure port access and a strategic naval base on the Red Sea in exchange for providing the SAF with military equipment. Until 2024, however, Russia sided with the RSF because Russia's mercenary Wagner Group collaborated with the RSF in gold smuggling.³¹

Gulf states are divided in their support, with the UAE supporting the RSF and Saudi Arabia supporting the SAF. The Red Sea, a key strategic trade route, has become even more important since the closure of Strait of Hormuz, and external actors are eager to gain more control along its coasts. External influence is helping to prolong the war. To disincentivize external powers from fueling the conflict, economic sanctions and arms embargoes could be imposed.³² For example, the UN placed an arms embargo on the Darfur region of Sudan in 2004 in order to help end the genocide there. That embargo remains in place, but does not cover the entirety of Sudan, and unsurprisingly there are weapons from Russia, Serbia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen being imported in large quantities to Sudan and then transferred to Darfur, effectively evading Darfur's arms embargo.³³ While a prohibition on UAE arms exports to Sudan specifically has been discussed, a major obstacle is the UAE's suppliers; the United States supplies 54% of the UAE's arms, and France supplies 13%. If the Council intends to limit

³¹ ADF. "Sudan's Proxy War." Africa Defense Forum, August 5, 2025. <https://adf-magazine.com/2025/08/sudans-proxy-war/>.

³² Sakane, Koji. "Sudan in Turmoil: A Proxy War of the Middle East and the Risk of State Collapse." Sasakawa Peace Foundation, July 24, 2026. https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane_16.html.

³³ "Sudan: Constant Flow of Arms Fuelling Relentless Civilian Suffering in Conflict – New Investigation." Amnesty International, July 26, 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/sudan-constant-flow-of-arms-fuelling-relentless-civilian-suffering-in-conflict-new-investigation/>.

foreign arms sales to Sudan's warring parties, it must work with member states to address the financial and security incentives for their continued support.³⁴

Conclusion:

The Sudan War has caused mass displacement, widespread famine, and the crumbling of the health system, leaving children increasingly threatened by diseases like cholera, malaria, and tetanus. The Security Council's mandate covers these issues as an integral aspect of maintaining international peace and security. To address mass displacement, the Council can work with neighboring countries to ensure the protection of refugee rights and prevent life-threatening refoulement back to Sudan. To address the hunger and health crises, the Council can push member states to fully fund humanitarian needs and push the warring parties to cooperate with international aid efforts. Additionally, the Council must work to prevent external financing of the war and disincentive third-party actors who have perpetuated the conflict.

As the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world, the Sudan war should be a priority for the Security Council and all UN member states. With millions of people displaced and hundreds of thousands suffering from hunger, it is imperative that the Council act to effectively and urgently address these issues. It is the responsibility of this committee to promote international peace and security by addressing the humanitarian and security implications of Sudan's civil war that, if not addressed, threaten both Sudan and its neighbors.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can the Council promote the protection of Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries?
2. How can the Council help protect aid workers and the delivery of humanitarian aid to Sudan despite a lack of cooperation from the parties to the conflict? How can the Council encourage member states to fully fund Sudan's humanitarian needs?
3. What is the most effective way the Council can disincentive external actors from funding, arming, and politically supporting the ongoing conflict? (Ex. Sanctions, embargoes, negotiations on the Red Sea trade route, etc.)

³⁴ "UN: Impose Arms Embargo On UAE For Aiding In Sudan Genocide." DAWN, July 13, 2026.
<https://dawnmena.org/un-impose-arms-embargo-on-uae-for-aiding-in-sudan-genocide/>.

Bibliography

- ADF. "Sudan's Proxy War." Africa Defense Forum, August 5, 2025. <https://adf-magazine.com/2025/08/sudans-proxy-war/>.
- Bishop, Tim and Christina Wille. "Sudan's Genocide Deepens Famine." Think Global Health, January 29, 2025. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/sudans-genocide-deepens-famine?>.
- Cone, Devon and Daniel P. Sullivan. "No Model of Refuge: Sudanese Refugees in Egypt." Refugees International, February 21, 2025. <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/no-model-of-refuge-sudanese-refugees-in-egypt/>.
- CSIS. "The Sudan War in 10 Charts." Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 17, 2026. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/sudan-war-10-charts>.
- HIAS Staff. "Deep Dive: Legal Obligations to Refugees." Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, May 18, 2026. <https://hias.org/news/deep-dive-legal-obligations-refugees/>.
- Ferris, Elizabeth, and Sanjula Weerasinghe. "The UN Security Council and Prevention of Displacement." Brookings Institution, December 1, 2012. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-u-n-security-council-and-prevention-of-displacement/>.
- Krugman, Allison. "How the Iran War Is Straining Humanitarian Aid, in Three Charts." Think Global Health, April 1, 2026. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/how-the-iran-war-is-straining-humanitarian-aid-in-three-charts>.
- Mithika, Dennis. "Ten International Humanitarian Organizations Creating Impact in Sudan's Crisis in 2025." Development Aid, September 25, 2025. <https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200379/ten-international-humanitarian-organizations-creating-impact-in-sudans-crisis>.
- Musa, Muhammad Kabir et al. "Public Health Consequences of Armed Conflict in Sudan in the Face of Global Donor Fatigue." National Library of Medicine, January 30, 2024. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12039585/>.
- OHCHR. "Using Starvation as a Weapon of War in Sudan Must Stop: UN Experts." Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, June 26, 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/using-starvation-weapon-war-sudan-must-stop-un-experts>.

- Raymond, Nathaniel, et al. "Special Report: Rapid Support Forces Intentionally Targeted Agricultural Communities to Starve People in El-Fasher." Yale School of Public Health, March 10, 2026. <https://ysph.yale.edu/news-article/hrl-report-rsf-intentionally-targeted-agricultural-communities-el-fasher/>.
- Ruisch, Simon. "Poverty, Racism and Forced Disappearances: Why Sudanese War Refugees Are Leaving Egypt for Europe." The Guardian, May 26, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/may/26/poverty-racism-forced-disappearances-sudanese-war-refugees-leaving-egypt-europe>.
- Sakane, Koji. "Sudan in Turmoil: A Proxy War of the Middle East and the Risk of State Collapse." Sasakawa Peace Foundation, July 24, 2026. https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane_16.html.
- "Sudan Conflict Straining Fragility of Its Neighbors." Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 1, 2026. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/sudan-conflict-straining-fragility-of-its-neighbors-displacement-refugees/>.
- "Sudan: Constant Flow of Arms Fuelling Relentless Civilian Suffering in Conflict – New Investigation." Amnesty International, July 26, 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/sudan-constant-flow-of-arms-fuelling-relentless-civilian-suffering-in-conflict-new-investigation/>.
- "Sudanese Refugees Face Severe Risks in Libya Amid Anti-Foreigner Campaigns." Sudan Tribune, June 4, 2026. <https://sudantribune.com/article/314705>.
- UNICEF. "Sudan Rolls Out First Malaria Vaccines." UN Children's Fund, November 4, 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/press-releases/sudan-rolls-out-first-malaria-vaccines-0>.
- "UN: Impose Arms Embargo On UAE For Aiding In Sudan Genocide." DAWN, July 13, 2026. <https://dawnmena.org/un-impose-arms-embargo-on-uae-for-aiding-in-sudan-genocide/>.