SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS HUB

SUDAN TRANSPARENCY AND POLICY TRACKER

Sudan Conflict Monitor

Issue 30 September, 2026

Executive Summary

Over the past seven weeks, Sudan's war widened without a decisive military breakthrough. Rapid Support Forces–Sudan People's Liberation Movement- North (SPLM-N) pressure in Blue Nile and Sudan Armed Forces advances in North Kordofan intensified competition over supply routes and strategic infrastructure. Long-range drone attacks extended to dams, a Blue Nile state capital, and WFP aid convoys, exposing civilians and national infrastructure far beyond front lines, while the UN Fact-Finding Mission documented transnational networks sustaining military operations. New chemical-weapons allegations against SAF require an independent Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) investigation.

Political initiatives risk consolidating the country's division. The SAF-backed internal dialogue and Tasis's parallel institutional proposals seek to shape the terms of a future settlement around competing wartime authorities. SAF's open rejection of a US-proposed 90-day ceasefire, which an adviser to Burhan warned could produce a Libya-style partition, shows how far apart the belligerents and the main external mediator remain. The Quintet's Khartoum engagement improved diplomatic access but did not resolve questions of independence and legitimacy. Emerging and rapidly coalescing anti-war civilian coordination offers an alternative, allowing women, youth, and grassroots constituencies to influence the process rather than receive symbolic representation.

Civilian conditions may deteriorate regardless of battlefield changes. Damaged water and health systems, insecure aid routes, poor harvest prospects across Sudan are reinforcing one another. Currency depreciation and banking-app outages have further constrained purchasing power and access to essentials. Parallel national school examinations, uneven financial access, and the Al-Zara mine disaster illustrate how territorial fragmentation increasingly determines access to rights, services and protection.

Regional instability adds economic and security risks. Houthi advances near Bab el-Mandeb and the developing Saudi–Pakistani–Turkish defense partnership could increase shipping costs and complicate Sudan's external alignments. International investigations and gold restrictions offer opportunities to constrain the war's support networks, but their impact depends on coordinated enforcement and Sudanese response. The immediate priorities are sustained civilian access, independently agreed political processes, and accountability measures that reach the actors financing and enabling the conflict.

Security developments

In Pursuit of an Elusive Military Breakthrough

From Hemedti's "Now, the gun is doing the talking," to Burhan's "Glory to the Gun."

The principal battlefield change during the reporting period was the emergence of Blue Nile as a consequential eastern theater. From mid-August, the RSF-SPLM-N alliance intensified operations around Geissan and Kurmuk, then advanced through positions around Bakori and Sarkam. By early September, fighting was moving closer to Ed Damazin, prompting SAF reinforcements and a visit by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to assess military readiness. A drone swarm subsequently struck Damazin, while air defenses reportedly engaged drones targeting the Upper Atbara and Setit dam complex and Khashm al-Girba dam on September 15.

The RSF-SPLM-N alliance is not necessarily poised to capture Damazin. Territorial claims by the belligerents remain difficult to verify, and SAF retains substantial forces and supply routes in the area. However, the alliance has created a new front that SAF must defend while sustaining operations in Kordofan. Damazin also protects the approaches to the Roseires Dam, one of Sudan›s main hydroelectric assets. Any sustained fighting near the dam could carry national consequences for electricity generation, water management, and civilian protection well beyond Blue Nile. The Blue Nile front is also inseparable from the Ethiopian border. In a September 13 interview, SAF Chief of Staff Yasser al-Atta claimed that satellite imagery, intelligence, and components recovered from intercepted drones indicated launches from Asosa and other Ethiopian airfields. The evidence he cited has not been released publicly or independently verified, while Ethiopia has rejected earlier allegations of directly supporting the RSF. Even if Ethiopian state involvement is not proven, escalation remains a risk: SAF's attribution of attacks to Ethiopian territory could lead it to lean more heavily on Egypt and Eritrea and increase regional tensions.

North Kordofan remained an important theater. SAF and allied forces captured Hamrat al-Wiz and improved their hold on parts of the east-west supply corridor linking Omdurman and El Obeid. The RSF, however, claimed on September 18 that it had repelled a SAF attempt to recover Abu Qu›oud. On September 26, SAF retook Sodari town in North Kordofan. Neither development altered the strategic balance on its own. However, they show a continuing contest over the roads, towns and staging areas that determine whether SAF can supply Kordofan and whether the RSF

can renew pressure on El Obeid.

These gains build on SAF's late-July seizure of Jabrat al-Sheikh and Bara, which reopened the principal Khartoum-El Obeid supply route for the first time since the war began. Control of the road could relieve pressure on El Obeid and support advances toward Dilling, Kadugli and RSF-held western Sudan.

SAF Chief of Staff Yasser al-Atta also described Kordofan as a staging ground for a westward offensive toward Darfur and claimed that the roads to Dilling and Kadugli had been secured. The statement clarifies SAF's operational intent but not necessarily SAF's durable control of routes that remain exposed to RSF attacks. The RSF has repeatedly retaken or contested settlements along it and retains mobility through the surrounding desert. SAF›s recent advances are important but reversible.

To counter an eventual SAF ground offensive into Darfur, the RSF's commander on September 22 sent thousands of freshly minted fighters, fully equipped with columns of technicals and battlefield gear, to the frontlines, proclaiming "Now, the guns are doing the talking," likely in response to Burhan's "There is no glory for burning tires anymore; glory belongs to the gun," in a July 2026 speech. ("Burning tires" is in reference to the peaceful pro-democracy protests that brought down his predecessor Bashir).

Drone warfare and external enablers

The September report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), Fueling Sudan's Conflict, provides the clearest account yet of how long-range strike capacity is changing the war. The mission found that both parties can now attack far beyond their immediate ground positions. It documented strikes by both the SAF and the RSF affecting hospitals, schools, markets, water and electricity facilities, displacement sites and residential areas, including conduct that may amount to war crimes. In North Kordofan, repeated RSF attacks on El Obeid between May and July damaged electricity, fuel and water systems. In Blue Nile, the mission found reasonable grounds to believe that a SAF drone struck Yabus market and its water-pump area in March, disrupting health services and commercial activity.

The FFM also traced a transnational network supplying the RSF with weapons, logistics, training and foreign personnel through Chad, southeastern Libya and Bosaso in Puntland. Colombian contractors were linked to advanced weapons and drone systems and to operations in Zamzam and El Fasher. The UAE rejected allegations that it provided military support, while Chad also denied involvement. Findings on foreign support to SAF are explicitly preliminary, although the mission documented foreign-supplied drones and other munitions used in SAF operations.

On September 24, the RSF claimed it downed a Turkish-made Bayraktar strategic drone in an area under its control in Blue Nile state. The SAF air defenses routinely down RSF suicide and strategic drones attacking El-Obeid and other SAF strongholds. Ample independent evidentiary reporting exists on the supply routes, type of drones, and foreign states supporting the two sides of Sudan's deadly war, with little international political will to hold to account the foreign suppliers of these instruments of mass civilian deaths to the belligerents.

Evidence of chemical weapons use grows

Evidence of a possible SAF chemical-weapons program strengthened during the period. A newly disclosed dossier, supported by additional and credible reporting, reportedly contains documents, images and communications concerning the development and possible use of chlorine-based munitions between July 2024 and January 2025. It identifies Brigadier General Tariq Hussain as overseeing the program and reportedly indicates that senior commanders, including Burhan, had knowledge of it. SAF has publicly rejected the allegations. Chief of Staff Al-Atta described them as politically motivated, but said Sudan would accept an international investigation. Neither the

dossier nor SAF's denial provides a conclusive legal finding. The stated willingness to cooperate should therefore be tested through a formal Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) inquiry with access to alleged sites, samples, medical records and witnesses. Until that happens, SAF's failure to act on its proclaimed intention of allowing an independent international investigation will continue to cast a shadow over its credibility.

The battlefield is widening faster than either side can consolidate a durable political order. Pressure on Blue Nile forces SAF to defend infrastructure of national importance and raises the risk of increased Egyptian and Ethiopian involvement. Long-range drones reduce the protection once provided by distance from the front, while foreign supply networks give both parties means to continue fighting despite domestic exhaustion. Failure to investigate the chemical-weapons evidence would further erode compliance with international prohibitions and reinforce the perception that external actors will condemn escalation without imposing meaningful verification or accountability.

Political developments

Belligerents move to consolidate dialogue while debates about ownership continue

Burhan's proposed internal dialogue moved from rhetoric toward institutional preparation. A committee began consultations in August; Burhan pledged legal, political, and security guarantees; and the authorities later granted temporary procedural immunity and dropped state-initiated cases against people returning to participate. Burhan also said military forces, including the RSF, would be excluded from the dialogue and pledged to implement its eventual outcomes.

Those guarantees do not resolve the central legitimacy problem. Somoud, the Cairo Declaration forces and leading civil-society umbrella groups have rejected the process using many of the same arguments used to raise concern about the process before these details were release. They oppose a process convened by one belligerent and conducted inside territory controlled by that belligerent. They also argue that it could translate SAF's wartime authority into political

legitimacy. Supporters describe the initiative as Sudanese-owned and free from excessive international control. As described in our prior Sudan Conflict Monitor, parties dispute is over who has authority to set up the process and what its rules of engagement should be.

Opposition concerns were heightened by recent comments from Al-Atta in which he laid out his postwar vision. Although claiming that the army did not seek to govern directly, he argued that SAF's commander-in-chief should remain head of state for three or four electoral cycles until political parties became stronger and noted that military leaders would push Burhan to carry this out. Although this is not yet settled, it shows that influential SAF leaders envisage prolonged military guardianship rather than an immediate transfer to civilian authority. It also undermines confidence in the SAF-convened dialogue by indicating that it would not entertain open discussion about the future of the military's role.

Tasis is constructing a parallel answer. Its August 26-30 leadership meeting approved a vision for the future which endorsed creating what it calls a new national army. This goes beyond administering RSF-held areas. It defines who would negotiate and what the security architecture Tasis would bring into a settlement.

A belligerent-controlled process, regardless of which side controls it, cannot structurally provide equal guarantees to constituencies outside its territory or political coalition. It would more likely consolidate the country's *de facto* territorial, political and economic partition than reverse it. Sudanese ownership therefore cannot mean government ownership or Tasis ownership. It must rest on independently agreed rules, credible civilian participation and a mechanism able to engage the belligerents without subordinating the civilian political process to them.

SAF advisers now make the same partition argument against the US ceasefire proposal (see Section 7).

The Quintet's access and internal contradictions

The Quintet's September 8-10 Good Offices mission was its first joint visit to Khartoum. It met Burhan, other *de facto* state authorities, civilian actors and the internal dialogue's preparatory committee. The visit improved direct access and may enable more effective mediation. But it also exposed a divergence of partner views on the status of the SAF authorities. The African Union and League of Arab States have been more ready to engage the SAF-controlled government in ways that may confer political legitimacy. The UN, EU and IGAD deal with Burhan as the *de facto* head of state, but avoid formal recognition of the post-coup order. The AU's posture within the Quintet blatantly contradicts the organization's official position on the status of the de facto government, as Sudan remains suspended from the organization following the October 25, 2021, coup.

The problem is not contact; mediators must engage authorities that control territory and armed forces. The risk is that treating SAF-controlled institutions as central risks unduly influencing the outcome of talks. It will be necessary for the Quintet to adopt a common position to avoid this

This is not a contest between an internal and international dialogue. It is a contest over who can participate in defining the future and which wartime institutions survive into the postwar order. If the Quintet does not reconcile its own positions and articulate minimum standards for an independently guaranteed process, its engagement may unintentionally validate the same institutional fragmentation it seeks to overcome.

Civilian developments

Civilian anti-war forces widen their base as the AU's backing of dialogue exposes divisions

Building on the joint position adopted in Addis Ababa in August and the Umma Party's follow-up roadmap (covered in SCM 29), this period's developments came from new places. The African Union's endorsement of Burhan's internal dialogue tested the emerging consensus and drew divergent reactions.

This convergence should not be understood to imply that groups have formed a unified coalition. The participating groups still differ on several issues, including the sequencing of a ceasefire and political dialogue, engagement with military-aligned initiatives, and the criteria governing participation by former-regime constituencies. Meanwhile, women and youth activists separately called for grassroots communities to shape—not merely attend—any future process and warned against another top-down dialogue. The Sudan Youth Parliament similarly proposed expanding the political role of women's initiatives, youth groups, Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) and other local networks. The significance of the period is therefore not the formation of a unified civilian front, but an emerging shared vision of the political process and a growing expansion of coordination alongside demands for a more representative civilian process.

The national certificate becomes a test of parallel governance

The Sudanese High-School Certificate examination system provides a concrete illustration of what institutional division means for ordinary people. Tasis authorities conducted separate examinations in June and announced results on September 1 for approximately 9,551 reported candidates. The SAF-controlled Ministry of Education announced the nationally recognized 2026 results on September 10 and does not recognize the parallel process. Students' credentials, eligibility for university and ability to move across jurisdictions now depend on the authority controlling where they live.

Wartime Secondary Certificate Examinations: Possible Leaks and Oversight Gaps Threaten the Integrity of Sudan's Secondary School Certificate

On September 10, 2026, the Federal Ministry of Education announced the results of the Secondary School Certificate examinations for the 2025–2026 academic year, held in areas under SAF-controlled territories. At a press conference held at the Ministry's headquarters for the first time since the outbreak of the war in April 2023, the Ministry stated that the pass rate stood at 69.9% and that 837,558 students sat the examinations at 3,333 examination centers, including 84 centers abroad spread across 14 countries. These are the third such examinations the authorities have held in SAF-controlled areas since the outbreak of the war; the five Darfur states and West Kordofan State, which are controlled by RSF, were excluded. Parallel Secondary School Certificate examinations were also held in RSF-controlled areas, administered by the government of the Tasis in June 2026. Approximately 9,551 students sat these examinations at 77 centers located in RSF-controlled areas of the Darfur and Kordofan regions.

Some indications and allegations of surrounded the Secondary School Certificate examinations held from April 213 to 23, 2026, most notably serious allegations that some examination questions were leaked before the scheduled sittings. In this regard, media outlets published news items and reports on these leaks based on messages and images circulated on social media. A report by Khartoum Sport newspaper on April 24, 2026 referred to images, shared by activists on social media, said to be of the Specialized Mathematics examination; the report also mentioned a circulating video of a female student stating that she had received images of the English Language examination before it was held.[1] Likewise, Medameek newspaper published a special report from Cairo on April 23, 2026 featuring screenshots of WhatsApp messages containing some of the Specialized Mathematics examination questions, which, according to the newspaper, had circulated hours before the examination began. The newspaper also carried testimonies from several female students at Secondary School Certificate examination centers in Cairo, who stated that the questions circulating on the application matched those on the examination paper. The newspaper noted, however, that it could not independently verify the original source of the images, leaving the incident in the realm of suspicion that warrants investigation.[2] Along the same lines, a reliable source reported having observed, in one social media group, the circulation of questions from the Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry examinations hours before those examinations were held, while, according to an anonymized source, the same group had circulated the English Language questions one day before the examination date. The source further indicated having surveyed a number of male and female examinees, who confirmed that the circulated questions matched those on the examination papers.[3]

The allegations and indications casting doubt on the integrity of the examinations were not limited to the reported leaking of questions; they also extended to lax invigilation at some rural centers, which, according to certain sources and reports, were marked by weak supervision and widespread cheating. In this regard, an informed source in one of the states of central Sudan confirmed having observed male and female students, from both within and outside the state's towns, registering to sit the examinations at certain rural centers in the state that, according to the source, were known for lenient invigilation.[4] Similarly, a report by journalist Hassan Abdel-Radi, published in Al-Rakoba newspaper in January 2026, pointed to widespread open cheating and to students entering examination halls with their mobile phones at some centers in Al-Managil Locality during examinations held in the past two years in Al-Jazirah State. According to the report, leniency and cheating at these centers sometimes reached the point of answers being written on the blackboard. The report further stated that in some areas with no more than 50 students, the number of candidates sitting the examinations at local centers ranged from 400 to

1 Khartoum Sport newspaper, report published on 24 April 2026, titled "What Is the Truth Behind the Leak of the Mathematics and English Language Examinations in the 2026 Secondary School Certificate?", available at: https://khartoumsport.com/41701

2 Medameek newspaper, special report from Cairo published on 23 April 2026, titled "Testimonies and Earlier-Timestamped Screenshots Raise Suspicions of a Mathematics Examination Leak in the Secondary School Certificate in Cairo", available at: https://www.medameek.com/?p=198577

3 Interview conducted with a reliable, anonymized source, May 2026.

4 Interview conducted with an informed, anonymized source, May 2026.

500.[5] It should be noted that the transfer of a student's file to another examination center, whether within or outside their state, must be justified by the student's inability to sit the examination at the original center for reasons related to displacement or a change of residence. This procedure is carried out by submitting an application to the school, the competent education administration, and the Examinations Administration at the Federal Ministry of Education, which must approve it before the student is entered on the candidate list and assigned a seat number at the new center.

Numerous factors have weakened the controls and oversight procedures that safeguard the integrity of the examinations. Foremost among them are the fragility of state institutions and the weakened oversight and supervisory systems brought about by the war, in addition to holding examinations in some areas experiencing security tensions arising from the armed conflict. Moreover, the war's impact on the educational environment and the displacement of large numbers of students and teachers have led to a severe shortage of experienced and qualified personnel to administer and secure the examinations.

Despite the allegations and indications reported in the press, circulated on social media, cited by several sources, and confirmed by some examinees regarding the leaking of questions in certain subjects, as well as lax invigilation and cheating at some rural examination centers, the Federal Ministry of Education, according to statements made by its Undersecretary, Ahmed Khalifa, to Ultra Sudan on April 23, 2026,[6] merely denied that the Mathematics examination had been leaked. Those statements were not based on the findings of any investigation conducted by the Ministry into the leak allegations. They also failed to address media reports of cheating and lax invigilation at some rural centers and ignored reports of leaked questions in subjects other than Mathematics. Before rushing to issue this truncated denial, the Ministry of Education should have conducted a transparent investigation into the veracity of these allegations and indications; without it, many questions remain unanswered. What is the truth about the leaking of questions in certain examination subjects? Are there disparities in invigilation across examination centers, and is there open corruption and cheating at some rural centers? And has the Ministry looked into the phenomenon of students relocating to sit their examinations at these centers?

This issue sits within a wider education emergency. Schools have been destroyed, occupied by armed actors or converted into shelters. Some students have crossed front lines or international borders to reach recognized examination centers, while displacement, insecurity and cost have excluded others. The core issue is not simply the right to sit an examination. It is preserving a single portable national credential in a country developing rival administrations. A relevant precedent is the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the government and the M23 rebel movement set aside their conflict to allow national secondary-school examinations to proceed in areas under rebel control. In June 2025, tens of thousands of students in North and South Kivu sat for the state examinations—essential for admission to higher education—after the two sides reached practical arrangements to deliver examination materials and ensure the security of examination centers. The experience shows how even parties to an armed conflict can agree to protect students' educational future by keeping national examinations outside the scope of hostilities. Evidently, the education of future generations does not count in SAF and the Tasis' priorities.

Access to money becomes a test of civilian inclusion

The outage of Bankak, the Bank of Khartoum's digital transfer application and primary means of doing business in Sudan, and the mandatory national customer-data update campaign show an emerging contest over financial access. The Central Bank extended the deadline for the data

5 Al-Rakoba online newspaper, report by journalist Hassan Abdel-Radi Al-Sheikh dated 17 January 2026, titled "The Tragedy of Education in Al-Jazirah State: Al-Managil Locality, Where Educational Justice Is Assassinated in Full View of the State", available at: https://tinyurl.com/3t4kbvvm

6 Ultra Sudan, news report by journalist Rasha Hassan dated April 23, 2026, titled "Ministry of Education Clarifies to Ultra Sudan the Truth About the Disclosure of the Mathematics Examination in the Secondary Shool Certificate", available at: https://tinyurl.com/7c5ucsry

update to the end of 2026 and said that the SudaPass digital identity would support the process. Although verification can serve legitimate ends, it can place undue burdens on displaced people, residents of areas without functioning branches, including in RSF-controlled territories, and Sudanese abroad, as the system relies on in-person presence. The campaign has also created an opening for fraud: an August 27 verification report identified a phishing scheme impersonating the Bank of Khartoum and soliciting customer information under the pretext of the mandatory update. Banks and regulators therefore need verifiable public notices, remote verification and appeal options, and accessible reporting of suspected fraud so that conflict-affected customers are not forced to choose between exclusion and unsafe disclosure.

Humanitarian developments

Poor rains and unaffordable inputs threaten the next harvest

The most consequential humanitarian risk may be forming before food is harvested. Farmers across rain-fed areas of Kordofan, Darfur, and Gedaref reported delayed or insufficient rainfall, while irrigated schemes in Gezira, Northern, and River Nile states face high fuel, fertilizer, and maintenance costs. FEWS NET's August outlook warned that conflict and poor rains could create famine risk. Gedaref's disruptzon undercuts a key safeguard that often supplies grain to other regions.

The problem is exacerbated by poor rainfall, but war has disrupted the supply of seeds, fertilizers, credit, machinery, labor, transport and market access. Even where land can be planted, a farmer may be unable to obtain diesel or move produce safely. A weak harvest could therefore arrive in a country where household purchasing power has already collapsed, and humanitarian agencies are reducing assistance due to funding shortfalls.

Payment failure compounds humanitarian need

Bankak›s early-September instability has humanitarian consequences distinct from its macroeconomic effects. Households use digital balances to receive salaries and family support and to purchase food, medicine and other essentials. When merchants cannot verify settlement, an account balance may not be usable for purchases. Electricity and telecom damage also interrupts SMS verification and makes access geographically unequal. Cash and voucher programs, community responders and diaspora-supported households therefore need contingency channels. The announced availability of banking USSD services may help in low-connectivity areas, but it remains a limited backup whose reach depends on both banks and telecom operators.

Kordofan's interdependent systems are failing together

Systems essential to civilian survival are collapsing in Kordofan. El Obeid continues to face water shortages and rising food prices as damaged infrastructure and insecure supply routes compounded civilian hardship. Sudan Human Rights Hub's (SHRH) field reporting describes disrupted hospital services across the' region and sexual violence and exploitation affecting displaced women and girls, including demands for sex in exchange for food. These accounts make safe aid distribution, confidential survivor referrals and women's participation in response design essential components of humanitarian access.

The August 30 aerial attack on two clearly marked World Food Programme (WFP) trucks outside Dilling demonstrated the fragility of delivery routes. It destroyed more than 50 tonnes of food bound for Kadugli—enough for 5,800 people for a month. WFP reported eight aerial attacks affecting its premises or operations since the beginning of 2026. Permission to move aid therefore does not ensure that assistance reaches civilians safely or consistently.

Funding cuts are also eroding the capacity to respond. On September 8, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) warned that shrinking aid budgets were forcing clinic closures, reducing access to medicines and overwhelming remaining facilities across Sudan. The combined pressure of attacks, service disruption and reduced assistance means conditions could deteriorate without a major territorial shift. Restoring water and health services, protecting market and aid routes, and financing sustained delivery are therefore as important as securing individual convoys.

Human rights developments

Prolonged detention without due process sparks hunger strike

Eighty-three detainees at Port Sudan prison began an open-ended hunger strike on August 25 over prolonged detention and delayed proceedings under Articles 50 and 51 of the 1991 Criminal Act (undermining the constitutional order and waging war against the state). The Committee for Justice reported that some had remained detained without timely trial or effective review. Judicial authorities subsequently promised additional judges and faster case processing, demonstrating that organized pressure produced at least a procedural response.

The case is part of a pattern of detention. Human Rights Watch has documented arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and denial of due process by SAF-affiliated security and military forces across Khartoum, Gezira, Gedaref, Red Sea and Northern states. Field-informed reporting also alleges torture, disappearance and extortion in RSF facilities, including detention sites around Nyala. A Sudanese government memorandum to the Security Council cited 19,800 detainees at Dagris (Digreis) prison in Nyala. That figure has not been independently verified, but the Sudanese Committee for Justice has documented unprecedented overcrowding and grave violations there.

The missing persons file also exposes a large documentation gap. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) recorded more than 11,000 missing-person cases by April 2026, a tracing caseload that is not equivalent to a formally admissible enforced-disappearance submission. According to SHRH's account of its September 9 meeting in Geneva, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances said that only around 30 Sudan cases had been formally transmitted and that state responses had been received in eight. SHRH reported a similarly limited flow of usable submissions to the special procedure on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. The disparity does not mean that most missing persons had forcibly disappeared; it shows that insecurity, low awareness, weak referral systems and the evidentiary demands of international procedures are preventing many allegations from reaching mechanisms able to seek state responses.

FFM report highlights long-range aerial attacks

The FFM's September report also highlights civilian harm enabled by long-range drone warfare. More than 1,000 civilians were reported killed in drone strikes during the first five months of 2026. The mission documented civilians struck in homes, markets, schools, hospitals, displacement sites, and places of worship and found that some attacks may amount to war crimes. Technical capacity has expanded faster than target verification, precautions, or accountability.

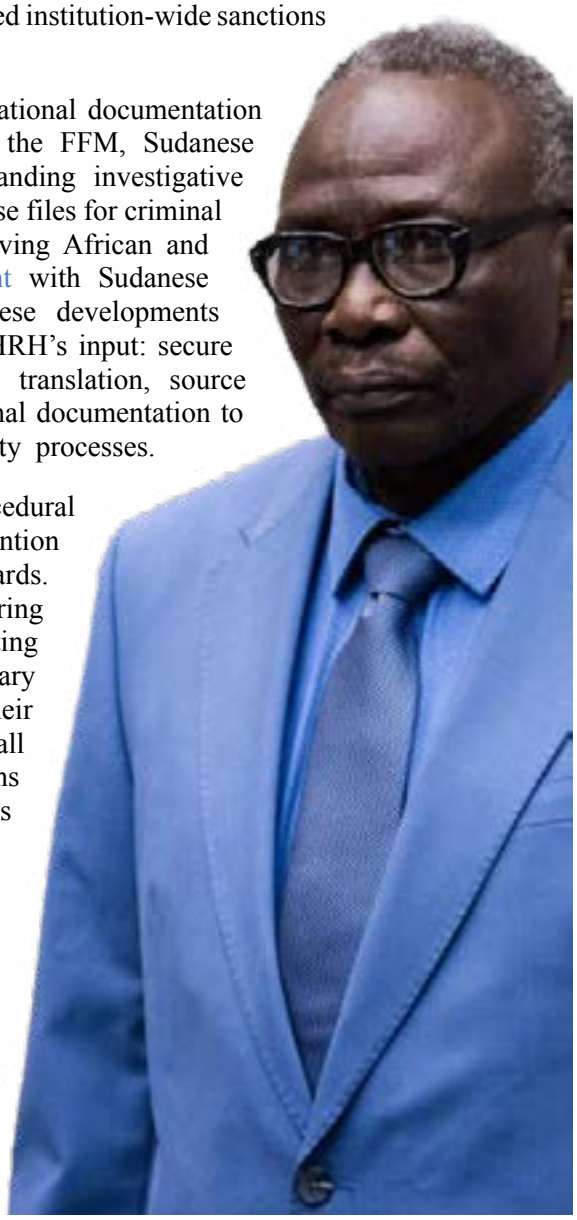
Accountability mechanisms face a decisive period

Sixty-eight civil-society organizations have called for the FFM's mandate to be renewed for two years with adequate resources. Its nationwide investigative mandate remains central to accountability, while the continued non-cooperation and failure to provide access of the Sudanese authorities constrain its work.

At the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Abd-Al-Rahman, or Ali Kushayb, case reached a reparations hearing on September 8, following his conviction and 20-year sentence in 2025. Darfuri victims hope that additional accountability may be forthcoming, but this could be undermined if the US imposes threatened institution-wide sanctions on the ICC.

International accountability also depends on national documentation capacity. Alongside the campaign to renew the FFM, Sudanese and international legal experts proposed a standing investigative mechanism to preserve evidence and prepare case files for criminal proceedings. A September 9 discussion involving African and UN mechanisms emphasized safe engagement with Sudanese documenters, victims and civil society. These developments reinforce the practical priority identified in SHRH's input: secure evidence intake, informed survivor consent, translation, source protection and referral support, enabling national documentation to contribute safely to international accountability processes.

The Port Sudan strike hunger shows that procedural concessions are possible, but does not repair a detention system operating without effective safeguards. Renewing and resourcing the FFM, securing OPCW access, preserving evidence and supporting ICC victim participation are complementary rather than competing accountability tracks. Their credibility will depend on applying scrutiny to all parties while retaining the evidentiary distinctions between verified facts, reasonable grounds findings and belligerent claims.



Ali Kushayb

Economic developments

Currency collapse and payment outages interrupt everyday trade

Sudan's economic fragmentation increasingly affects the ability to transact and the value of money. Parallel-market dealers quoted approximately SDG 7,000 per US dollar on September 2 and SDG 7,300 on September 5. These are reported market rates; there is no uniform national one. Depreciation raised import and replacement costs, while simultaneous electronic payment disruptions compounded pressure on households and traders.

Repeated Bankak and other banking-app outages in early September interrupted purchases, utility payments and transfers, with some traders demanding cash. Digital banking has become essential during the war as cash shortages and damaged bank infrastructure restrict alternatives. Disruption also threatens the channels through which Sudanese abroad support families inside the country. The resulting vulnerability is systemic: large numbers of households with funds in their account may be unable to use them.

The Central Bank reported more than 100 million account-to-account transactions through EBS between January and May 2026. This measures national transaction activity, not Bankak users or the share of payments that have replaced cash.

Bank of Khartoum acknowledged service instability, but the available statements do not establish its underlying cause. Allegations of deliberate restrictions on currency trading or a cyberattack remain unverified. The concentration of everyday payments in services with limited accessible alternatives, compounded by insufficient public explanation of disruptions and recovery arrangements remain causes of concern. Customer-verification requirements discussed above create a separate risk of exclusion. Payment-system restoration offers partial progress. The Central Bank reports that EBS restored the national switch and interbank settlement and is connecting 26 banks through its SWIFT service bureau. These measures support connectivity but do not establish that customers have reliable alternatives during an app outage. The Basel Committee's resilience principles provide a useful benchmark for continuity planning and disruption testing, rather than evidence of Sudanese compliance. Restoring trust requires clear incident reporting, tested recovery

arrangements, alternative access channels and transparent complaint and redress procedures.

The Al-Zara collapse exposes the governance of wartime extraction

At least 82 people were reported killed after interconnected shafts collapsed at the artisanal Al-Zara gold mine near Al-Nuhud in West Kordofan. The CBIJ and the Associated Press reported that dozens remained missing while rescuers worked with basic tools and only one available forklift at depths exceeding 30 meters. The area is under RSF control, and the mine operated without adequate safety standards, inspection, or emergency capacity.

The disaster should not be treated as an isolated occupational accident. Gold is one of the few sectors still generating foreign exchange and war revenue, while artisanal miners absorb the physical risk. Control of territory allows armed authorities, traders and intermediaries to tax or profit from production without supplying the regulatory institutions, rescue services or environmental protections normally associated with public authority. The incident therefore connects the human cost of small-scale artisanal gold mining to the larger war economy.

SAF continues to pursue reconstruction agreements before a end to war

SAF-controlled Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport continued to pursue reconstruction and investment agreements during the war. Sudan signed memoranda with Saudi Arabia›s Twaik Group on rehabilitating the Khartoum refinery and a coastal facility, and four preliminary agreements with Malaysia›s Al-Wafaa Development Company and Spain›s ESESE for water, shipping finance, and solar projects. Public announcements reviewed for this SCM do not identify SAF-owned or Defense Industries System companies as signatories, but they could be engaged in implementation, subcontracting, land, or procurement roles; the ownership, financing, guarantees, and beneficial parties have not been disclosed in detail.

Payment outages and currency collapse can now paralyze markets even where roads are open, and goods are physically available. The policy issue is no longer whether Sudan should digitize payments, but whether its digital infrastructure has independent channels, tested recovery, transparent incident management, and meaningful consumer protection. The mine disaster shows the opposite problem: economic activity continues, but without regulation or public protection. Reconstruction agreements may restore vital services, yet they also risk allocating strategic assets and future revenue before Sudan has an accountable national government. Contract publication, beneficial-ownership disclosure and conflict-of-interest screening should therefore be treated as core reconstruction safeguards.

International developments

Washington's ceasefire push meets open SAF resistance

On September 30, Amjad Farid, Burhan's adviser on political and international affairs, told Reuters that the proposal advanced by US Senior Advisor for Arab and African Affairs Massad Boulos, a 90-day ceasefire followed by negotiations to end the war and resume the civilian transition, "seems to be putting pressure on us to accept a de facto partitioning of the country similar to [the] Libyan model." He added that the approach "appears to accommodate the militia›s continued existence and preserve a place for it in Sudan›s political future." It is the strongest criticism of the plan by a Sudanese official so far. According to Reuters, Burhan›s visa to attend the UN General Assembly was withheld because he had not accepted the proposal, and a planned meeting in Washington between a Sudanese delegation and Boulos was canceled. The State Department maintains that neither SAF nor the RSF "represent[s] legitimate, constitutional governance for Sudan."

The partition argument cuts both ways. A ceasefire that freezes current front lines without an agreed political framework could entrench rival administrations, as Libya›s experience shows. But as Section 2 argues, an internal dialogue convened by one belligerent on its own territory carries the same risk. Farid›s objection is mainly about the RSF›s political future, not division as such. The plan should be judged on whether the 90-day pause is tied to independent monitoring, unimpeded humanitarian access and independently agreed rules for a civilian-led process. Neither belligerent›s preferred end state is the test.

External support moves from background condition to object of policy

The FFM's September report highlights new details of foreign involvement by examining weapons, foreign personnel and military supply networks. It identifies individuals and entities involved in external support, retaining confidential dossiers for accountability purposes. This offers a firmer basis for investigating commercial and logistical facilitators under applicable law, without making every investigation dependent on proving direct command by a foreign government.

The UN Security Council remained divided over a US proposal to expand the existing Darfur arms embargo nationwide. On September 11, members adopted a one-month technical rollover of the mandate, deferring the question to next month. Russia, China, the three African Council members, and Pakistan all opposed the extension. The mismatch between nationwide military supply networks and a Darfur-only embargo strengthens the case for expansion, but effective implementation would also require monitoring capacity, clear exemptions for humanitarian operations and civilian-protection equipment, and enforcement across supply routes.

Switzerland's gold restrictions, effective September 10, align its measures with the EU's July decision. They prohibit the purchase, import, and transit of Sudan-origin gold, related services and financing, and the supply of specified gold-mining chemicals to Sudan. Their significance lies in targeting a source of conflict financing alongside designated individuals and entities. Their effectiveness will depend on identifying Sudanese origin through intermediaries and refining hubs—a concern highlighted by SWISSAID. Pressure on individual suppliers or routes may otherwise displace trade rather than interrupt it.

Diplomatic engagement, sanctions and investigations nevertheless remain insufficiently connected. The Quintet's Khartoum meetings provided opportunities for engagement, but do not by themselves demonstrate increased influence over the belligerents. The question is whether these separate initiatives create consistent incentives and consequences capable of changing conduct.

At the operational level, the September 9 Geneva discussion involving African and UN mechanisms emphasized evidence preservation, witness protection, and safe engagement with Sudanese civil society. This reinforces SHRH's emphasis on national documentation capacity. Donors should pair support for international mandates with sustained funding of Sudanese rights groups for secure documentation, legal review and protected referrals, so that local evidence can contribute safely to accountability.

International policy is beginning to target the systems enabling the war, but those systems are adaptive and transnational. Effective pressure requires evidence sharing, end-use controls, corporate and financial investigations, aviation and maritime monitoring, and protection for humanitarian exemptions. Sanctions or an embargo should be judged by whether they disrupt military supply and illicit revenue without blocking civilian trade, not by the number of formal designations adopted.

Regional dynamics

Blue Nile raises the stakes for Ethiopia, Egypt and Eritrea

Kurmuk and Geissan sit directly on the Ethiopian frontier, while Damazin and Roseires connect border security to Sudan›s national power and water systems. Reciprocal allegations of cross-border support are therefore dangerous. Ethiopian facilitation of the RSF-SPLM-N offensive, if confirmed, would be interpreted in Khartoum and Cairo through the lens of the wider dispute over Nile security and waters and competing regional alignments. Egypt, already SAF›s most important state supporter, would have stronger incentives to protect Roseires and prevent an RSF-aligned authority from controlling the Blue Nile corridor.

Eritrea also matters. Burhan›s engagement with Asmara and the possibility of renewed Ethiopia-Eritrea confrontation mean that Sudan›s eastern border can no longer be analyzed as a self-contained front. The immediate risk is not a declared interstate intervention but incremental escalation through intelligence, training, logistics, air defense and proxy support.

A new Red Sea security order is forming south of Port Sudan

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey moved to institutionalize their defense partnership during the period. Following the signing of the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement on August 7, their first committee meeting on August 31 agreed to establish a secretariat in Saudi Arabia and deepen joint military activities, defense-industrial cooperation and technological development. These steps give the partnership an institutional basis; a combined operational response may not be ready for deployment.

Meanwhile, Houthi forces captured Mocha and reached the Hanish islands on September 10, pushing Yemeni government-aligned forces south toward Dhubab, opposite Perim Island. These advances strengthened their ability to threaten Bab el-Mandeb shipping but, as of the reporting cutoff, they did not completely control it. Houthi officials maintained that navigation remained safe except for Saudi vessels; that assurance did not remove the risks posed by their territorial advances and missile and drone capabilities.

For Sudan, the principal implications are economic exposure and diplomatic pressure. Disruption

at Bab el-Mandeb could exacerbate disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, further raising freight and insurance costs for Port Sudan-bound cargo and increasing import costs and foreign-exchange requirements. This exposure varies by route: cargo arriving through Suez does not cross Bab el-Mandeb. Wider disruption to regional energy supplies could also increase the domestic costs of transport, agriculture and humanitarian delivery. These are likely outcomes, not demonstrated effects during the period.

The crisis could also increase competition for access to Sudan's coast and complicate SAF's external partnerships. A more operational Saudi-Turkish-Pakistani security arrangement might generate demands for diplomatic or logistical alignment, while drawing additional scrutiny to Sudan's military ties with Iran. The FFM's findings provide firmer evidence of regionalization through military supply networks. The mission identifies locations in Chad, southeastern Libya and Puntland as transit and logistical hubs for weapons, personnel and supplies reaching RSF-controlled territory, and links UAE-based individuals and entities to these arrangements. It also documents Colombian contractors' involvement in advanced weapons and drone systems. They do not conclusively establish state responsibility, but they do show that Sudan's war depends on supply chains spanning multiple jurisdictions, making coordinated investigations and enforcement essential.

Implications. Blue Nile and Bab el-Mandeb create two different but interacting regional pressures: a land-border escalation that may pull Egypt and Ethiopia further into the war, and a maritime crisis that may raise prices and reshape security alignments without a shot being fired inside Sudan. Sudan›s political process cannot be insulated from these dynamics. Any settlement will need regional guarantees addressing border support, Red Sea security, arms routes, and the governance of ports and strategic infrastructure.

Looking ahead

The next period will test whether military pressure deepens Sudan's territorial and institutional division without producing a decisive breakthrough. Key indicators include the sustainability of RSF–SPLM-N operations toward Damazin, SAF's ability to secure supply routes to El Obeid, and the effects of drone attacks on water, electricity, markets, and humanitarian deliveries. Territorial gains will offer limited civilian relief unless they restore reliable access to essential services.

Politically, attention should focus on participation rules, security guarantees, and civilian influence over the proposed dialogue. The Quintet's access to the authorities will matter most if it helps secure an independently shaped process. Anti-war coordination should be assessed through joint action and meaningful participation by women, youth and grassroots constituencies, while Tasis's institutional proposals should be judged by their implementation and reach.

Humanitarian deterioration may precede further battlefield changes. Harvest prospects, staple prices, water availability, clinic closures and aid coverage will provide earlier warning than territorial maps alone. For Bankak and the wider payment systems, the tests are credible explanations of outages, reliable alternative access channels and customer-verification procedures usable by displaced people and clients abroad. Interbank connectivity alone will not resolve exclusion or restore confidence without functioning complaints and redress mechanisms.

International accountability will depend on implementation: whether chemical-weapons allegations prompt an independent and effective OPCW inquiry; whether the FFM receives adequate resources; and whether evidence on military supply networks leads to investigations or enforcement. Support for secure Sudanese documentation and protected referrals will remain essential. Disclosure of procurement decisions, reconstruction contracts, and responses to corruption allegations will provide a parallel test of domestic accountability.

Regional risks should be tracked through shipping disruptions, freight and insurance costs, and concrete military arrangements. Houthi advances near Bab el-Mandeb could increase Sudan's import costs, while implementation of the Saudi–Pakistani–Turkish defense pact could create new pressures on its external relationships. Neither development establishes an intervention mechanism for Sudan. The central question is whether these pressures further entrench fragmented governance and economic dependence—or generate enforceable measures that protect civilian access and constrain the war's support networks.