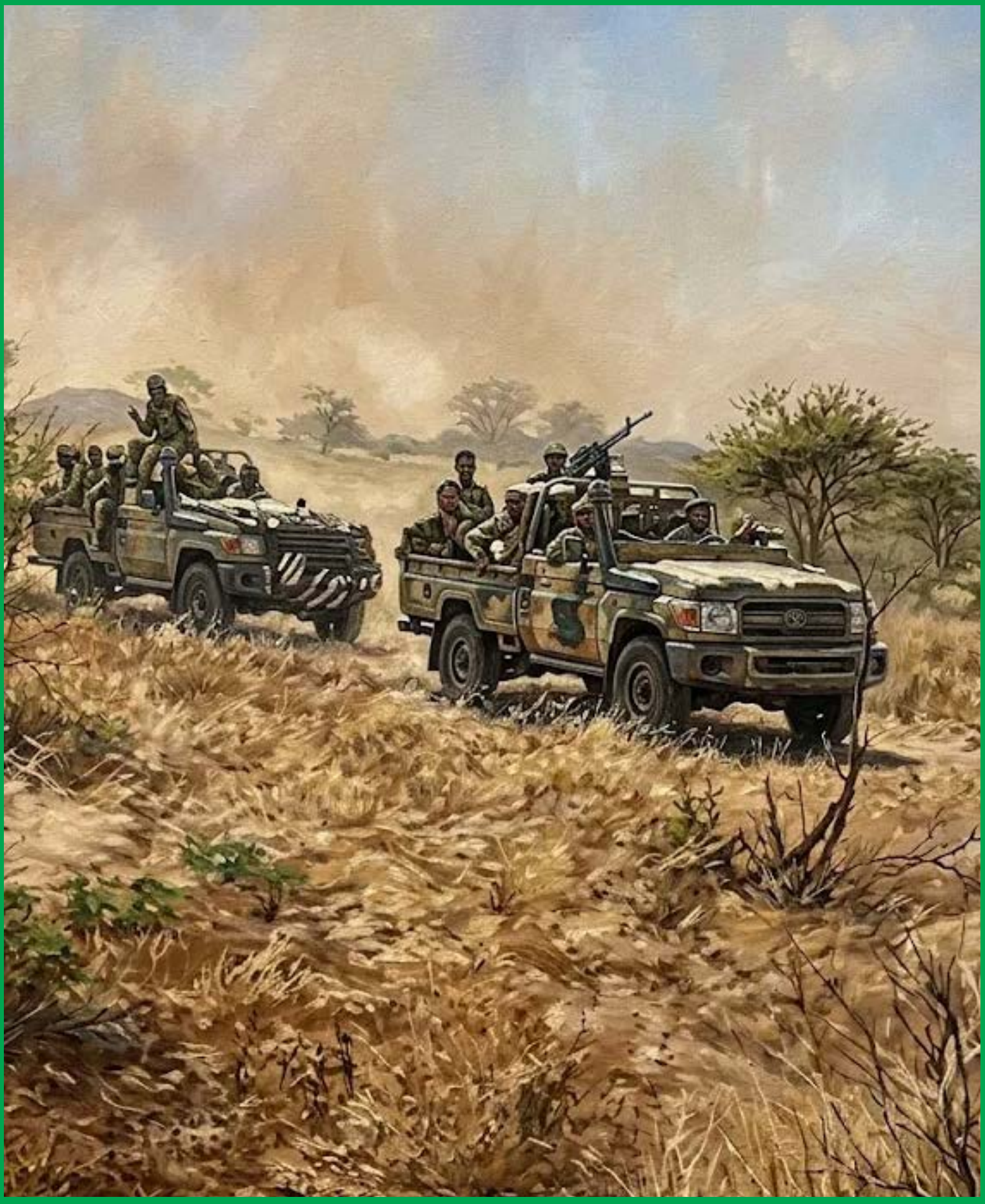
SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS HUB

SUDAN TRANSPARENCY AND POLICY TRACKER

Sudan Conflict Monitor

Issue 31 October, 2026



Executive Summary:

In October, Sudan's war took on new cross-border dimensions, and negotiations seemed out of sight. Burhan took seemingly incongruous positions, publicly ruling out negotiations with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and vowing to fight on across Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile, even as he assured Washington of his commitment to US-backed peace efforts, positions that are difficult to reconcile. Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and allied Joint Forces claimed gains in North Kordofan and West Darfur, and an RSF commander reportedly defected with 300 fighters. The UN Fact-Finding Mission (UN-FFM) said October saw more drone attacks on civilians than any month of the war. A SAF drone strike on Amiet market in the disputed Abyei Area, known in Darfur as Soug Al-Naam, killed at least 153 people, and widely reported Egyptian airstrikes on artisanal gold miners near the border killed at least 72 artisanal miners. RSF retaliated to a similarly deadly drone strike on a market in Nyala, the proclaimed capital of its parallel government, by launching a systematic drone strikes campaign against power generation facilities and critical transformers in the national power grid, temporarily disrupting electric supplies in SAF-controlled areas.

Political tracks continue to diverge. Burhan's internal dialogue gained external backing from the African Union (AU) chair and France's special envoy, but a legal clarification that returning dissidents receive only procedural immunity, not amnesty, limits its guarantees. Tasis added policing, emergency powers, and a planned tax system to its parallel administration in RSF-held areas. The anti-war civilian coalition, led by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, engaged the AU High-Level Mechanism on its own roadmap to peace. The United States re-engaged Burhan, broadened its mediation circle to include Norway, Qatar, Germany, and the United Kingdom, and pressed for a humanitarian truce at a 27-country meeting in Geneva, but no truce has emerged.

Humanitarian conditions are deteriorating ahead of the harvest. An Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) alert warned of rapidly worsening conditions and rising famine risk in Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan, driven by conflict, displacement, and El Niño-related drought. Dengue fever, malaria, and malnutrition are causing rising deaths in Darfur, Sennar, and Jebel Marra. Economically, the parallel-market dollar passed SDG 10,000 for the first time on October 22, the customs exchange rate rose by nearly 30%, and record official gold revenues of $2.29 billion masked a large gap between estimated production figures and recorded official exports, with a reported 50-tonne gap between output and exports.

The international community renewed mechanisms to address the war, but tentatively. The UN Human Rights Council renewed the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) for one year rather than the two years civil society pressed for, and the Security Council again extended the arms embargo for only two months without expanding it beyond Darfur. On the first anniversary of El Fasher's fall, new evidence showed continuing RSF detention, torture, and forced labor there, while

the FFM documented mass SAF-affiliated arrests in El Obeid.

Concerns about the conflict's regionalization are increasing. Egyptian border strikes, the Ethiopia–Eritrea confrontation, and tensions with South Sudan following SAF's airstrike of a market in Abyei show that Sudan's war is increasingly entangled with its neighbors' disputes.

Immediate priorities include independent investigations into the Abyei and Egyptian border strikes, protecting humanitarian access before the lean season, and ensuring mediation ties belligerent assurances to verifiable commitments.

Security developments



SAF pushes west while Burhan rules out negotiations

October opened with SAF and allied Joint Forces retaking Al-Mazroub in North Kordofan, which an army spokesman described as a turning point because it links army-held North Kordofan with RSF-held West Kordofan. Ayin reported SAF units advancing toward Al-Khuwai, with Al-Nuhud named as the next goals. Despite SAF's claims, the RSF retains positions across West Kordofan and has repeatedly retaken contested towns.

In West Darfur, the Joint Force of Armed Movements announced it had captured Bir Sleiba, repelling RSF assaults. The West Darfur governor later said the army and allied forces had taken Bir Kelekel in eastern Jebel Moon. These claims remain unverified.

Building on this military success, Burhan ruled out negotiations with the RSF and said the army

would fight until it defeats the group across Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile. A week later, in contrast, he wrote to President Trump affirming his commitment to US-backed peace efforts. The two positions are difficult to reconcile and suggest SAF is pursuing battlefield leverage while avoiding an open break with Washington.

Defections and pressure inside the RSF coalition

An RSF special-tasks commander announced his defection to SAF with 300 officers and soldiers and 30 combat vehicles. Analysts suggest such defections could shift local balances, though numbers are rarely verifiable. In the Nuba Mountains, a senior RSF military and tribal delegation arrived in Kauda to mediate deadly clashes between Sudan's People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) and Otoro fighters. Fighting within the SPLM-N›s own base is a vulnerability for the RSF–SPLM-N alliance fighting on the Blue Nile and South Kordofan fronts.

In South Darfur, the RSF civilian administration imposed a three-month emergency order banning firearms in markets and at public gatherings. The order points to insecurity in RSF-held cities as mobilization continues on the Kordofan front.

The Blue Nile front threatens strategic infrastructure

On October 2–3, heavy fighting displaced thousands in the Al-Kadalo area of Al-Roseires, 50–60 kolmeters from the Roseires Dam, which houses the country's second-largest hydroelectric power plant. Tasis claimed control of Al-Kadalo; SAF›s Fourth Infantry Division said it repelled the attack and claimed heavy RSF–SPLM-N losses around Minza and Bashkarkad. Drones targeted the governor›s residence in Ed Damazin. Later in the month, SAF said it thwarted another assault in the Al-Baraka area of Kurmuk locality. Blue Nile now hosts tens of thousands of displaced people, including about 64,000 from Geissan in Wad Al-Mahi.

October brought the most drone attacks of the war

The chair of the UN Fact-Finding Mission said October saw the highest number of drone attacks on civilians since the war began. Both sides contributed.

- **RSF strikes on infrastructure and SAF-held cities.** An RSF drone hit the Tendelti transformer station in White Nile, cutting the main transmission line to North Kordofan. Air defenses intercepted drones targeting Gedaref and Kassala, including dam infrastructure at Khashm el-Girba, and near Khartoum International Airport. In El Obeid, strikes on a university dormitory killed five and injured 47.
- **SAF strikes in RSF-held areas.** SAF said it destroyed RSF command centers in Nyala, in strikes reported to have killed 30 civilians. A local monitor reported that 16 civilians had been killed by SAF drones in Gbeish and Al-Nuhud over 48 hours. The RSF-led alliance claimed a SAF strike on a truck stop at Al-Debab, West Kordofan, killed 80, later increasing its estimate to 120. An RSF media official, Bashar Al-Nahli, was killed in an airstrike on the North–West Kordofan border.
- **The Abyei market strike.** On October 19, a drone strike on Amiet market in the disputed Abyei Area killed at least 153 people, according to the Abyei administration, which blamed SAF. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) estimated 150–220 dead and about 8,000 displaced. An anonymous SAF officer told AP that the army targeted fuel tankers bound for the RSF. The market, known in Darfur as Soug Al-Naam, lies in a United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)-monitored demilitarized zone, and the UN Fact-Finding Mission is investigating.
- **Blue Nile displacement site.** A drone strike near a displacement site in Blue Nile killed at least 31 civilians, mostly women and children; the UN humanitarian coordinator condemned it without attributing responsibility.

Airstrikes hit gold miners near Egypt

On October 10, airstrikes hit artisanal gold-mining camps at Jabal al-Uqaydat in the Shamal al-Wadi area, near the disputed Halayeb Triangle. The Emergency Lawyers reported at least 72 dead; survivors cited by Sudan Tribune put the toll above 200 and blamed the Egyptian military. Egypt said it was combating illegal mining in the Eastern Desert, but did not directly address claims regarding its responsibility for the strikes. Burhan ordered a fact-finding investigation. Section 8 discusses the diplomatic consequences.

The war is expanding. Drones now reach dams, power stations, airports, and border markets, and military force against civilians is being used by a neighboring state on contested ground. Each side›s ability to strike deep reduces the protective value of distance while doing little to change who holds territory. Battlefield gains in Kordofan and West Darfur will matter less than whether either side can protect the roads, power lines and markets behind them.

Political developments



The SAF-convened dialogue gains external sponsors, but not stronger guarantees

Burhan›s internal dialogue acquired new international support in October. AU Chairperson and Burundian President Évariste Ndayishimiye invited the dialogue›s preparatory committee to Bujumbura. During a visit to Khartoum, French special envoy Jean-Marie Safa urged the Quintet to unite behind the internal process, though also stressing that it needed to take significant action to build confidence. Reporting from Cairo describes the Quintet as still trying to engage all competing initiatives rather than endorsing one.

The AU chair's invitation sharpens the contradiction noted in SCM 30: Sudan remains suspended from the AU following the October 2021 coup, yet the AU›s leadership is lending standing to

a process convened by the coup›s leader. The French intervention also departs from the more cautious European posture of engaging Burhan as a *de facto* authority without endorsing the post-coup order.

The dialogue›s guarantees also proved narrower than previously presented. Prominent jurist Nabil Adib clarified that Burhan›s late-August decree grants returning dissidents procedural immunity, not substantive amnesty. Charges can be suspended, but not extinguished. For opposition figures facing politically motivated cases under wartime laws, this leaves participation contingent on the goodwill of the authority convening the process.

Burhan›s statement that the army would fight until the RSF is defeated further colors the process. A dialogue that excludes one belligerent while its convenor rejects negotiation with that belligerent is not a peace process. At best, it is a framework for organizing politics in SAF-held territory.

Tasis adds police and fiscal institutions; issues emergency decree

Tasis continued building state functions in RSF-held territory. Its Ministry of Interior graduated a new batch of Federal Police personnel in Nyala. The South Darfur administration issued a three-month emergency order. Tasis also announced plans for a new tax and revenue system, including resource-sharing between central and local authorities and unified financial accounts.

Together with the decentralization laws drafted in August and the planned "new national army," Tasis is now preparing a new package of laws to advance its new policies. The August arrests of East and South Darfur administrators show that these institutions remain subordinate to RSF military authority. Their significance lies less in their effectiveness than in the facts they create for any future negotiation over how revenue and security will be shared.

Both belligerents are now using the language of institutions—dialogue committees, decrees, police forces, revenue laws—to convert military control into political claims. Forming institutions entrenches separation and lets additional, hard-to-resolve differences flourish, complicating settlement.

Civilian developments



Anti-war coalition moves from negotiating positions to direct engagement with mediators

During October, the anti-war civilian coalition took its roadmap directly to mediators. Building on its Addis Ababa joint position, the coalition, led by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, held talks with the AU High-Level Mechanism and international envoys on efforts to end the war. The AU mechanism engaged the civilian coalition in the same month the AU chair invited Burhan›s dialogue committee to Bujumbura, highlighting inconsistency in the AU's positions. The coalition›s task is now to convert access into influence over the political process.

Views among young Sudanese remain divided. Some see the proposed Sudanese–Sudanese dialogue as a necessary entry point; others warn it could reproduce past elite settlements that failed to address the war›s root causes. A field study found that about 75% of women and youth are civically engaged, but only 16.8% of women and 14% of youth participate in political processes and decision-making. The gap reflects a concern repeatedly raised by women›s and youth networks: civic energy is not translating into political voice.

Local peace-making increasingly passes through armed actors

A reconciliation conference in Nyala in October ended with a Masalit–Fulani agreement following deadly clashes in Qureida in September. In Kauda, the RSF sent a military and tribal delegation to mediate between the SPLM-N and Otoro fighters. Unlike the Zalingei mediation led by native administration in July (see SCM 29), these processes are convened under, or by, an armed authority. Agreements reached this way may reduce violence, but they may also tie communal security to the patronage of the belligerent that hosts them.

Sudan marks World Teachers Day

On World Teachers' Day, Sudanese educators described low pay and poor conditions forcing many into second jobs. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Ministry of Education marked the day in Khartoum, placing teachers at the center of education recovery. Recovery planning anchored in the SAF-held ministry, however, does not reach teachers or students in Darfur and West Kordofan, where Tasis's parallel examinations were

held (see SCM 30).

Civilian politics is organizing faster than the formal processes designed to include it. The coalition›s engagement with the AU, the youth debate and local reconciliation efforts all show demand for a process that civilians shape. Participation data show how far current processes are from meeting that demand.

Humanitarian developments



Drought turns harvest risk into famine risk

An October 12 IPC alert found rapidly worsening conditions and rising famine risk across Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan. According to the alert, a severe El Niño drought covers more than half of Sudan and late-September rains came too late to save most cereal crops. As a result:

- Acute malnutrition among children in two displacement camps in eastern Jebel Marra measured 38% and 30.8%, above the famine threshold.
- 13 of 17 nutrition surveys in Greater Darfur since January found critical levels of acute malnutrition.
- 64% of cropland in North Darfur shows poor plant growth.
- Only 26% of children expected to need treatment for complicated severe acute malnutrition had received it by August.
- Markets in Greater Kordofan were hit by more than 170 airstrikes, looting, or clashes this year.

The Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) warned that famine risk is expanding to parts of South Darfur. Action Against Hunger said nearly 29 million people face acute food insecurity. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator warned on October 15 that malnutrition and illness will inevitably follow the rainfall deficits. In Jebel Marra, the civil authority of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur reported 1,852 deaths

from acute malnutrition, a figure that has not been independently verified.

The government plans to cultivate three million feddans of winter crops and says it has recovered most of its war-depleted crop gene bank. However, irrigated winter crops in SAF-held areas cannot offset rain-fed losses in Darfur and Kordofan, where famine risk is concentrated and where government planning does not reach.

Disease outbreaks follow the rains and the displacement

On October 16, the General Coordination of Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Darfur Region reported that it had recorded 927 up from reports of just over 500 four days earlier. Malaria killed more than 55 people in three weeks in West Darfur, including 39 children.

These outbreaks are straining already-eroded health resources. Dengue and malaria are straining Singa Teaching Hospital in Sennar. The World Health Organization (WHO) said health needs in Darfur far exceed available resources. Chronically ill patients face choices between food and medicine as currency collapse drives up drug prices.

Aid workers and convoys remain targets

An airstrike hit two World Food Programme (WFP) trucks traveling from Dilling to Kadugli on October 3, killing a driver, a day after an improvised explosive device hit another WFP truck in Dilling. The attacks drew calls for an independent investigation. A Sudanese Red Crescent volunteer was killed on October 13 while providing first aid after a bombing in Blue Nile. Less than half of the humanitarian appeal was funded as of October 8.

The push for "early recovery"

The SAF government urged donors to shift toward development assistance and government-led early recovery. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Ministry of Finance convened a private-sector meeting in Khartoum that secured over $200 million in provisional investments. A nationwide livestock vaccination campaign targets 9.8 million animals.

Recovery investment can protect livelihoods, but a shift toward government-led programming now could concentrate resources in SAF-held areas while famine risk peaks in Darfur and Kordofan. Donors should keep humanitarian funding needs-based and impartial, and apply the beneficial-ownership and procurement safeguards proposed in SCM 29 and 30 to recovery financing. Internationally financed early-recovery interventions must also reach populations in need in RSF-controlled areas. Failure to do so would risk deepening existing divisions and entrenching the de facto partition of Sudan.

Human rights developments



FFM renewed for one year as investigators document detention on both sides

The UN Human Rights Council renewed the Fact-Finding Mission›s mandate for one year by 28 votes to 10, with nine abstentions, and called for an immediate ceasefire and a civilian-led transition. The 68 civil-society organizations cited in SCM 30 had sought a two-year extension. The government, which denies the mission visas, condemned the renewal. The Council also condemned drone strikes on civilians and said there is no military solution to the conflict.

On October 28, the mission released a report on El Obeid. It found that RSF drone strikes there may amount to war crimes, with only about 30% of the city›s hospitals still functioning. It also found that SAF-affiliated security cells have arrested thousands of people and held them in unofficial sites and El Obeid Central Prison, which reportedly holds about 2,000 people against a capacity of 450. One former detainee described up to 40 people being held in a 2.5 by 2 meter cell. SAF-affiliated actors have increased surveillance of people doing humanitarian, human-rights and peace work.

RSF detention is equally severe. The Sudan Doctors Network warned of worsening conditions and rising daily deaths among more than 6,500 people held by the RSF in El Geneina. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it continues visits to detainees but that its actions are constrained by limited access to detention centers.

El Fasher one year on

The October 2026 anniversary of the RSF's capture of El Fasher brought new evidence that abuses continue. Amnesty International documented unlawful killings, torture, ransom-based release and forced labor, with Zaghawa and Masalit residents reportedly more likely to be detained. Seventeen of the 19 residents it interviewed had been detained by the RSF for months. The city's population has fallen from over 1 million before the war to fewer than 70,000. At a UN event on October 28, the FFM chair said conduct in and around El Fasher bore hallmarks of genocide, and UN officials warned that sieges of cities in Kordofan and Blue Nile could produce a new wave of atrocities.

Sexual violence against men and boys

A Sudanese rights group documented 3,708 cases of rape and sexual violence against men and boys since 2023, including cases of severe abuse in detention centers. This form of violence is heavily underreported. Its scale reinforces the need for survivor services and documentation protocols designed for male survivors, and for detention monitoring to be a priority in any humanitarian negotiation.

Economic developments



The pound's slide passes on to fuel, bread and customs

The parallel-market dollar rose from about SDG 8,300 on October 3, according to traders, to about SDG 9,000 by October 10, and passed SDG 10,000 for the first time on October 22. Atar's price bulletin recorded SDG 10,203 buying and 10,313 selling, about %24 above the rate at the start of the month; quotes stayed around SDG 10,000-10,200 through October 2026. Traders attributed the pressure to fuel importers scrambling for scarce foreign exchange during a petroleum shortage. The official bank rate remains less than half the parallel rate: Omdurman National Bank sold dollars at SDG 4,533.75 on October 22, so no uniform national rate exists.

This affected the costs of household staples. Khartoum bakeries raised bread to SDG 1,000 for two loaves. The government raised the customs dollar rate by 29.57%, from SDG 4,346.65 to SDG 5,631.76, which will raise import costs. A ban on Egyptian fava bean imports pushed a sack to about SDG 1.05 million, putting a staple out of reach for many families. Importers also called for scrapping a new Advance Cargo Declaration system that they say raises costs and gives a foreign company access to sensitive commercial data. To finance a widening deficit and absorb liquidity, the Central Bank is accelerating domestic debt sales, despite investor distrust after wartime defaults.

Fuel scarcity exposes a concentrated import market

Fuel shortages in Khartoum and army-held states brought overnight queues. By late October, petrol sold for about SDG 37,000–39,000 per gallon at Khartoum stations, against about SDG 70,000 for petrol and 80,000 for diesel on the city's black market, according to Sudan Tribune; in Ed Daein, petrol reached SDG 100,000. Prime Minister Kamil Idris denied a shortage. A group of 24 petroleum import and distribution companies urged Burhan to end rules requiring importing firms to deposit gold to qualify as importers, saying that this unduly restricted importation. On October 20, Burhan re-established the Sudanese Petroleum Corporation, without saying how fuel imports would be financed. The Ministry of Energy opened Jet A-1 and furnace-oil imports to qualified local companies. Tankers waiting on dirham payments and rising transport fares show how foreign-exchange access, import licensing and fuel prices form one system. Opening one segment of the market is a start; transparency on who receives import allocations and foreign exchange is the test.

Record gold revenue, a 50-tonne gap and a deadly border

Sudan posted record gold revenues of about $2.3 billion in the first nine months of 2026, representing about 20 tons. However, industry sources flagged that with reported production of 70 tons, this meant 50 tons were smuggled. This is a slight improvement over 2025, when an estimated 70 tons were produced but only 14 tons were exported. This represents stronger, but far from complete, control over the sector. STPT›s Bypassing Sanctions, Sustaining the War Economy highlights how smuggling and origin obfuscation operate. The human costs are rising. An unregulated gold boom in River Nile and Northern states, where hundreds of thousands of displaced people have turned to hazardous extraction, is causing severe environmental and health damage. Russia›s Alliance for Mining rejected community claims of unpaid dues in eastern Sudan and demanded the handover of two mines. Strikes by miners near the Egyptian border show that informal mining in contested areas now carries lethal cross-border risk. In Washington, Congressman Jim Baird introduced legislation proposing a minerals and agriculture partnership conditioned on progress toward civilian rule.

Belligerents plan social protection efforts

The Ministry of Social Welfare plans 22,000 micro-projects to secure household incomes. Bank of Khartoum and other lenders launched a SDG 35.6 billion facility for solar-powered agriculture and small businesses in River Nile. In RSF-held areas, Tasis plans its own tax and revenue system.

The war economy is consolidating around a few chokepoints: foreign exchange, fuel import licenses, and gold. Actors with privileged access to each gain from scarcity, while households absorb rising prices. Publishing fuel import allocations, foreign-exchange auctions, and gold-export data by exporter would allow monitoring of who benefits.

Zadna's Road Deals in Gezira: Concessions Without Competition

Since the war began in April 2023, companies owned by the armed forces have steadily expanded their economic footprint, drawing on the military's dominance over political and economic decision-making.

Gezira state's road contracts with Zadna International Company for Investment show expansion into early reconstruction. Zadna is almost wholly owned by SAF.

The state first announced a deal with the company to pave 20 kilometers of roads in October 2023, but it stalled when fighting reached Gezira that December. After the SAF retook the state, local authorities signed a memorandum of cooperation in December 2025 granting Zadna broad investment concessions in several sectors, including road paving. A contract followed

on December 18 to reconstruct 20 kilometers of internal roads in Wad Madani for SDG 24 billion (USD 6.5) million at the parallel rate. In October 2026, the Gezira governor announced a review of the memorandum and said work had begun on 11 roads. He also confirmed that the firm would build the first 26-kilometer phase of the Madani–Managil highway and a planned dry port in Managil. He gave no figures, but an informed source told the Monitor that he had asked the state Ministry of Finance to revise the original sum in line with the local currency's depreciation (interview with an anonymized key informant source).

None of these projects appear to have gone to public tender, and Gezira officials did not respond to the Monitor's questions about how they were awarded. A legal expert interviewed for this story noted that Article 3 of the Public Procurement, Contracting and Disposal of Surplus Act 2010 excludes licenses, concessions and permits from its definition of procurement, and authorities have tended to read this as exempting such rights from competitive bidding. Thus, by defining road works as concessions, they are excluded from bidding, even though they are delivered for a fixed price paid by the state, which makes them procurement in substance and should be open to tender. The risks also extend beyond the two parties. Zadna has been sanctioned by the European Union, United Kingdom, and United States. Washington described the company as a key part of the army's business empire. Tying reconstruction projects to a sanctioned entity may deter donors and international lenders from financing future development and rehabilitation projects.

The case reflects a broader governance problem. Awarding contracts directly to military-linked firms, without competition or independent scrutiny, concentrates public resources outside the institutions meant to manage them. These awards should be reviewed, oversight strengthened, and future works opened to transparent bidding.

This piece is part of a series documenting *everyday corruption during Sudan's war, examining how weakened institutions, declining oversight, and the erosion of the rule of law have embedded corrupt practices in daily life. By focusing on often-overlooked forms of corruption, it highlights their role in sustaining broader systems of abuse and impunity.*



International developments



Washington re-engages Burhan and widens the mediation circle

After withholding Burhan›s UN General Assembly visa in September, Washington appeared to re-engage in October. Senior Advisor Massad Boulos met Burhan in Egypt early in the month, and separately discussed an expanded UN presence in Darfur with UN envoy Pekka Haavisto. Burhan followed with letters to President Trump affirming commitment to US-backed peace efforts and to German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

With talks stalled, efforts expanded the mediation, as Norway, Qatar, Germany and the United Kingdom were invited to join consultations between the Quad and Quintet facilitation mechanisms on October 21-22, bringing together 27 countries. Boulos described the Quad›s meetings there as productive, focused on a humanitarian truce, a path to a permanent ceasefire and aid access, and said there is no military solution. At the UN, US deputy envoy Jeff Bartos called for an immediate humanitarian truce and a halt to weapons flows.

The gap between process and positions remains wide. Burhan›s written commitments to Washington seem inconsistent with his public refusal to negotiate with the RSF. A broader mediation group adds leverage only if its members, several of whom have close ties to one belligerent or the other, apply it consistently and in a coordinated way. The test is whether a truce proposal emerges with monitoring, access guarantees, and consequences for non-compliance.

US extends policy tools on Sudan

Washington also extended its national emergency on Sudan for another year, preserving a legal basis for sanctions. It listed Sudan under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, which restricts certain military assistance and sales absent a presidential waiver. Temporary deportation protections for Sudanese in the United States were maintained for now.

Arms embargo: a two-month extension, still limited to Darfur

On October 8, the Security Council unanimously extended the Darfur sanctions regime, including the arms embargo, until December 11, and the Panel of Experts until January 11, 2027. The short-

term renewal deferred full consideration of the US proposal to expand the embargo nationwide, which Russia and China oppose. FFM members renewed calls for a nationwide embargo, and the mission chair said states supplying weapons cannot claim ignorance. Throughout this deferral, drones and munitions continue to move through routes far outside Darfur.

Pressure on external enablers

Research on foreign-made drones used in Sudan adds to the FFM›s September findings on supply networks. England›s Premier League refused a petition for the third time to hold Manchester City›s owner, UAE Vice President Mansour bin Zayed, to account over his country›s alleged role in the war; the UAE denies supporting the RSF.

International engagement intensified in October, but the tools remain disconnected. Washington is talking to Burhan, the Security Council is deferring the embargo, the Human Rights Council is extending investigations, and new mediators are joining talks. Without linking these into one sequence—truce, monitoring, embargo enforcement, accountability—belligerents can absorb each initiative by engaging diplomatically while escalating militarily.

Regional dynamics



Egypt: patron, neighbor, and now party to civilian deaths

The October 10 strikes on gold miners tested SAF's most important state relationship. Egypt did not claim responsibility for the strikes but acknowledged a campaign against illegal mining in the Eastern Desert while stressing strong ties with Sudan. Earlier strikes in June reportedly killed 23 miners, which Egypt said took place within its territory. Days after the October strikes, two Egyptian truck drivers were killed, and a third was wounded in a shooting south of Khartoum, in apparent retaliation; Sudanese authorities arrested the gunman.

Khartoum and Cairo moved quickly to contain the fallout. They are discussing a new security framework for their eastern border, and Burhan received the credentials of Egypt's new ambassador. Darfur governor Minni Minnawi urged both sides to establish the facts and warned

against collective blame.

The episode exposes SAF's military and diplomatic dependence on Egypt, which limits its ability to press for accountability for Sudanese deaths. Commentators have argued that Egypt cannot act as both mediator and patron; its role in the Quad in Geneva makes that tension more visible. A joint border framework negotiated without transparency risks settling the Halayeb question and the status of artisanal miners by force rather than by agreement.

Ethiopia–Eritrea confrontation threatens Sudan's eastern front

Increased fighting between the Tigray People's Liberation Front and Ethiopian federal forces pushed fighting near the Eritrean border town of Zalambessa. This is increasing tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Ethiopia accused Eritrea at the Security Council of an "all-out invasion"; Eritrea said it faced a war of aggression. Following an El Alamein summit of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia, Ethiopia accused Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea of backing rebel factions, which all three denied.

For Sudan, the risk is that two conflicts merge along a shared border. SAF accuses Ethiopia of facilitating RSF–SPLM-N drone launches and troop movements into Blue Nile (SCM 30); Ethiopia accuses Sudan of backing its rebels; and reporting alleges Eritrean soldiers continue fighting alongside SAF while President Afwerki publicly calls for non-interference. Analysts now ask whether eastern Sudan is becoming a base for the next regional war. None of these allegations has been independently verified, but each raises the incentive to support proxies in return.

Abyei and South Sudan

The October 19 strike on Amiet market killed at least 153 people in an area both Sudan and South Sudan claim, inside a UNISFA-monitored zone. Sudan's new head of the Abyei joint oversight committee reaffirmed Khartoum's claim to the territory. It is unclear if South Sudan's first general election, set for December 22, will proceed as voter registration has not begun. With fuel and gold flowing between South Sudan and RSF-held areas, Abyei risks becoming a battleground over supply lines and sovereignty.

Chad and wider health risks

A drone strike in Chad's Wadi Fira province, near the border, killed four people and injured at least 14, the latest spillover into Chad. Chad's planned withdrawal from the ICC raises concerns about investigators' access to Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. Separately, Congo's Ebola outbreak has surpassed 9,000 confirmed cases and 4,300 deaths, and Kenya has confirmed eight cases. Sudan has no reported cases, but its collapsed health system and population movement through South Sudan and Uganda leave it poorly placed to detect or contain an introduction.

Implications. Sudan's war is now intersecting with three neighboring disputes at once: Egypt's border and mining campaign, the Ethiopia–Eritrea confrontation, and the contested status of Abyei. Each gives an external actor its own reason to use force on or near Sudanese territory. A settlement process that treats neighbors only as mediators will miss the ways they are becoming parties.

Looking ahead



The next period will test whether SAF›s westward push can be sustained and whether both sides› aerial campaign continues to escalate. Key indicators include SAF progress toward Al-Nuhud and in Jebel Moon, the durability of RSF positions in West Kordofan, further defections, and RSF–SPLM-N pressure near the Roseires Dam. The UN›s warning that sieges of Kordofan and Blue Nile cities could bring a new wave of atrocities should guide early-warning attention, particularly around El Obeid, Dilling, Kadugli and Ed Damazin.

On the political track, watch whether the dialogue committee›s Bujumbura visit translates into formal AU endorsement despite Sudan›s suspension, and whether the Quintet adopts a common position. Tasis's police and revenue institutions should be judged by their reach and by whether civilian administrators retain any autonomy from RSF command. For the anti-war coalition, the measure is whether engagement with the AU High-Level Mechanism yields influence over participation criteria and sequencing.

Humanitarian deterioration will accelerate as the harvest fails. Indicators include new IPC or Famine Review Committee findings for North and South Darfur and Kordofan, cereal prices, malnutrition admissions, dengue and malaria deaths, and humanitarian funding levels. Donor responses to the government›s early-recovery push will show whether assistance remains needs-based.

On accountability, the questions are whether the FFM receives resources to match its renewed mandate, whether its El Obeid and Abyei findings prompt responses, and whether any independent inquiry examines the Egyptian border strikes. Detainee access for the ICRC in both SAF and RSF facilities, and the long-unresolved OPCW question, remain tests of the belligerents› stated commitments.

Economically, watch whether the parallel-market rate holds above SDG 10,000; the pass-through of the customs-rate increase and the duty exemptions on staples; fuel import financing; and the gap between gold output and recorded exports. Regionally, the Security Council›s December 11 decision on the arms embargo, the Ethiopia–Eritrea confrontation, the Egypt–Sudan border framework, and South Sudan›s December 22 election will shape whether Sudan›s war remains contained within its borders or becomes part of a wider regional conflict.