

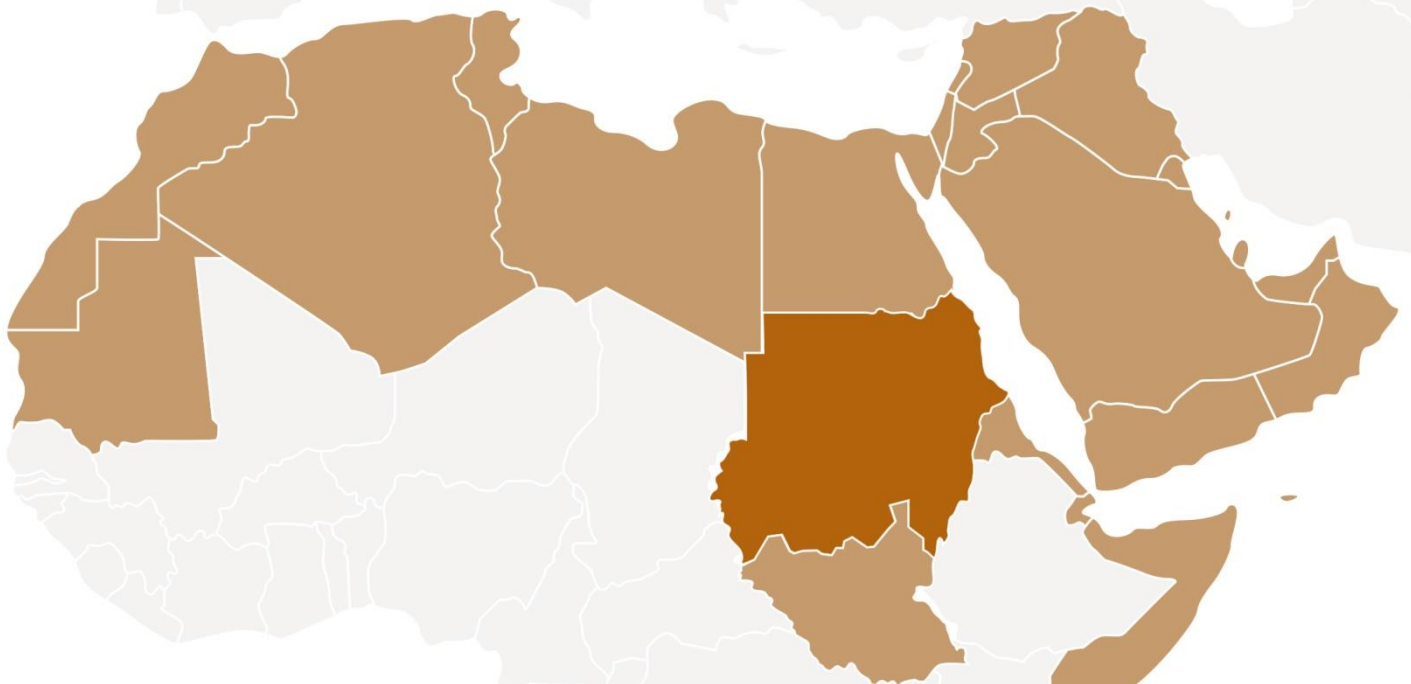


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The Sudan Crisis

Towards an Exit Strategy



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Table of Contents

Crisis Background.....	5
The Crisis Components and Elements	9
The Motives and Reasons behind Crisis	13
The New Structure of the Transition Phase and its Challenges.....	13
The Local Players' Positions	15
The Regional and International Players' Positions	18
Possible Scenarios	23
Exit Strategy	31
Executive Summary	35



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The Sudan Crisis: Towards an Exit Strategy

Executive Summary

The political change in Sudan since 19 December 2018 formed a new Arab crisis with many consequences for the political, security, and economic situations in the country and the Arab world at large. As a result, the Arab Crises Team decided this issue will be devoted to further researching the Sudan problem to focus on its environment, background, description, effects. It would also focus on the new structure of the transition phase, the role of players, including the government, and the stands of the local, regional, and international parties. The report would investigate possible future scenarios and suggest an exit strategy.

Sudan witnessed a political and economic crisis. The protests erupted and spread throughout the country, to different cities and towns with the participation of broad social and political sectors of the society. It called for the downfall of the regime. This ACT's report discusses the reasons that stand behind such a crisis. It includes the increase in prices of primary commodities, the internal political tension, the crackdown on freedoms, and political activities. It also consists of the U.S. international embargo and the separation of the south and the previous of significant economic returns, in addition to the military insurgency, especially in Darfour.

The protests witnessed much violence resulting in 10s of deaths, which in turn occurred in the spread and acuteness of these demonstrations. The failure of the government to contain the demonstrations and the declaration of the state of emergency in the whole country on 23 February 2019 inflamed broader actors to participate in these protests. As a result, by 6 April 2019, the mass protests moved to take place in front of the Ministry of Defense, army headquarters, and the republican palace. Such development led to worsening the crisis with risks to increase political instability.

On 11 April 2019, the Security Committee under the leadership of the Defense Minister decided to remove Al Bashir from office with a Transitional Military Council (TMC) taking over under Awad Bin Ouf, ruling the country for two years. They claimed that such change would lead to political reform, general elections for Popular Council, and a civil government. In the following days, however, Ben Ouf and his vice-deputy, the Chief of Staff, resigned. Abdul Fatah Al Burhan was appointed as Council chairman with his deputy being Mohammad Hamdan Doqlo.

By such internal change in the ruling elite, the crisis developed with people's demands becoming increasingly higher. The protesters have been calling for full authority transfer for civilians and to



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Arab Crises Team

الأزمة السودانية.. استراتيجية الخروج

neutralize the army from any political role. As a result, the so-called "Freedom and Change" leadership of demonstrators came to represent the street as a legitimate force. Hence negotiations started with the TMC on 13 April 2019, just two days after the resignation of Al Bashir.

The negotiations witnessed much tension, especially concerning the transitional period and the composite of the ruling council from both military leaders and civilians. The action of security forces to disperse the protestors from the front of the general headquarters of the army has heightened the tension on 3 June 2019. It led to a halt in the negotiation process.

Despite that, the mediation led by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abi Ahmad, together with the African Union, could succeed in bringing up the breakthrough of negotiations between the two sides. It led to the signing of a constitutional document agreed upon by the TMC and "Freedom and Change" representatives in an official ceremony on 7 August 2019. The document stipulated that the transitional period should be no more than three years with the administrative rule of the country on three governing levels: A Sovereign Council with equal membership between military men and civilians with its president alternating in two periods.

The second level of governing is the Council of Ministers that is concerned with the administration of ministries and governmental corporations and the execution of policies. It is to be formed by Freedom and Change leadership. The third level is a Transitional Legislative Assembly composed of 67% of its members by Freedom and Change leaders, and the rest of its members, 33%, to be appointed from other political powers in consultation with Freedom and Change leadership. They agreed to alienate the National Congress Party, which had been the ruling party under the Al-Bashir regime.

This report summarizes the local players' positions. The Ex-ruling Congress Party, the Islamic movement, and their supporters with other factions and all have their priorities and capabilities to affect the general scene in Sudan.

The regional and international players' positions are explicitly illustrated in the report. They didn't stand against the change but supported the transitional constitutional agreed document as well as the interim government. However, their priorities were different according to their interests and visions, as interpreted by members of the Transitional Council.

Furthermore, the Arabs and African players focus their priorities on the role that Sudan might play on specific files and issues concerning the Gulf crisis, war in Yemen and the Nahda Dam



فريق الأزمات العربي
Arab Crises Team

الأزمة السودانية.. استراتيجية الخروج

Project in Ethiopia, nonetheless the vision towards political Islam which is considered the basis of the former regime in Sudan.

As to other regional and international players, some prioritize building good relations with Sudan as a vital country to the African continent. Other players have sought to change Sudan's positions towards the Palestinian cause. As such, they prefer to focus on commercial relations with Sudan, especially in the petroleum and mineral fields. The U.S. is slowly removing Sudan from its list of countries that support terrorism to assure Sudan's new position not allied with Palestinian resistance. They offer other incentives to encourage Sudan to change as such, including financial support, the exempt, or reschedule of Sudan's external debt.

The report puts forward three scenarios that may govern the future of the Sudan crisis: First, the realization of inclusive national reconciliation; Second, the escalation of disputes, confrontations, and clashes; Third, the continuation of crisis with its grave consequences. The ACT report puts forward the number of parameters/specifics that play an influencing role in defining the crisis and its future. The most prominent determinants are the stands of local parties and flexibilities or rigidity in the management of the crisis. It also includes the dynamics, activism, and role of the Sudanese people in dealing with the crisis. Furthermore, the stands of the regional and international parties and their effective behaviors towards the crisis play a crucial decisive role in the future of the crisis, not to mention the economic pressures.

In light of these defining features, the report concludes that the current "givens" point to the fact that the governing authorities didn't show a real willingness to deal with the rest of the political and ideological players, including the realization of national reconciled social partnership. As far as for the regional players, they have different perspectives on the future Sudan. The new government, up-to-date, has yet been able to realize the demands of people and its achievements still under consideration by people.

As such, the report argues that the crisis will remain to veer between the political and ideological scenarios and towards escalation and confrontation with the last being of higher risk on the unity of Sudan and threats its stability and regional security as well. The report's conclusion encourages the inclusive reconciliation accompanied by earlier general elections to be considered.

The ACT report presents several recommendations in the framework of laying down an exit strategy out of the crisis to guarantee the political stability, security, and the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country and to end the series of alternating rule between civilians and the military. These recommendations include ending internal wars to be replaced by comprehensive



فريق الأزمات العربي
Arab Crises Team

الأزمة السودانية.. استراتيجية الخروج

peace, the confronting of the economic crisis facing the country, and perpetuate the active role of Sudan in its Arab-Islamic depth and its African regional duties.

Four recommendations include 1) Realization of inclusive national reconciliation and the adoption of partnership as the right approach with general elections to be held in the country for legitimacy of governance; 2) Adoption of the democratic route to peaceful authority and widen the space of liberties and freedoms; 3) Good governance and transparency; 4) Respecting the diversity and national identity of the Sudanese people; 5) Establish the government to preserve the national sovereignty, independence, federal decision and preservation of the territorial integrity of Sudan.