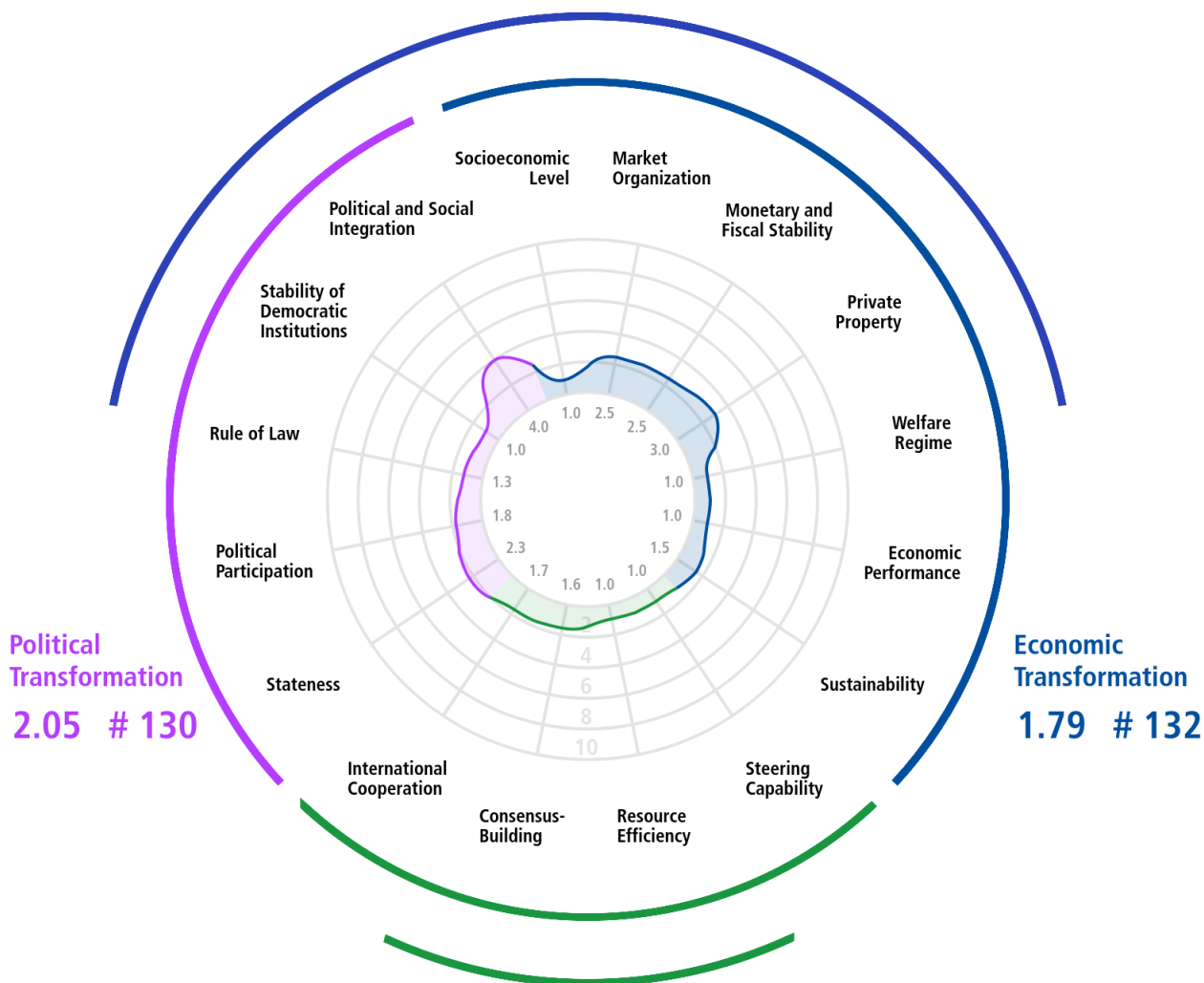


# Sudan

## Status Index

**1.92 # 132**

on 1-10 scale out of 137



## Governance Index

**1.30 # 134**

on 1-10 scale out of 137

This report is part of the **Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2024**. It covers the period from February 1, 2021 to January 31, 2023. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries. More on the BTI at <https://www.bti-project.org>.

Please cite as follows: Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Sudan. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024.

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**Key Indicators**

|                          |        |             |                                |              |                      |               |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Population               | M      | <b>46.9</b> | HDI                            | <b>0.508</b> | GDP p.c., PPP \$     | <b>4216</b>   |
| Pop. growth <sup>1</sup> | % p.a. | <b>2.6</b>  | HDI rank of 189                | <b>172</b>   | Gini Index           | <b>34.2</b>   |
| Life expectancy          | years  | <b>65.3</b> | UN Education Index             | <b>0.348</b> | Poverty <sup>3</sup> | % <b>49.7</b> |
| Urban population         | %      | <b>36.0</b> | Gender inequality <sup>2</sup> | <b>0.553</b> | Aid per capita \$    | <b>82.5</b>   |

Sources (as of December 2023): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | UNDP, Human Development Report 2021-22. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$3.65 a day at 2017 international prices.

## Executive Summary

Sudan's young and initially hopeful transition faced serious setbacks that led to the military capturing power through a military coup on October 25, 2021. The Beja tribes of eastern Sudan protested their marginalization in the Juba Peace Agreement, which was signed in October 2020, by closing the main port, Port Sudan and the federal highway toward the capital, Khartoum, in October 2021. This paralyzed the economy and blocked many strategic commodities, such as wheat, fuel and medicine, which put significant pressure on the transitional government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. This pressure was magnified by international and regional factors, most notably COVID-19, the Russian-Ukrainian War, the Tigray War and the annual flooding periods of the river Nile.

Deep divisions among civilians and between civilians and the military reached their peak in late summer 2021. Between October 16 and 25, 2021, elements from the former Islamist regime, the traditional administration and armed groups organized a sit-in near the National Palace. They called for dissolving the transitional government but sparing the military, which had shared power during the transitional government with the civilians. The demands of the sit-in aligned with the promises of the commander-in-chief of the Sudanese army, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, in his speech after capturing power in the October 2021 military coup.

Meanwhile, approximately 20 entities, including political parties and armed groups, defected from the Forces for Freedom and Change–Central Council (FFC-CC) and formed the Forces for Freedom and Change–National Accord (FFC-NA). Later on, the FFC-NA joined forces with other political parties, such as the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Sudanese Ba'th party, to establish the Forces for Freedom and Change–Democratic Bloc (FFC-DB) in November 2022.

On that day, the partnership between civilians and the military ended. Many civilian political leaders were detained, including Abdalla Hamdok. General Burhan dissolved the Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC) as well as the Empowerment Removal Committee (ERC) – full name “Committee for Dismantling the June 30, 1989 Regime, Removal of Empowerment and Corruption, and Recovering Public Funds” – created by Hamdok after the fall of Omar al-Bashir

and meant to remove the former regime members from public positions. He declared a state of emergency, fired all ministers and state governors, and shut down the internet for several days. While the FFC-NA supported the military coup, the FFC-CC rejected it. Several political forces called for civil disobedience, and many people started protesting, which has continued to this day. Security forces suppressed the protests violently, resulting in 124 killed thus far and thousands of injured. Externally, the military coup was condemned by the United States, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, the African Union (AU), France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Türkiye and other countries in the region. In response, the United States, the World Bank, and the IMF froze all development aid and debt relief to Sudan. The AU has suspended Sudan's membership ever since. In the wake of this intense international pressure and continuous demonstrations calling for civilian rule, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan eventually signed a political agreement with Abdalla Hamdok in November 2021, aiming to end the political stalemate. However, this agreement failed, and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigned in January 2022.

The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) has launched a political process aimed at achieving democratic transformation in Sudan. Initially, the FFC-CC and the resistance committees expressed little enthusiasm for this initiative, but their involvement later grew as the AU and IGAD joined to establish the Tripartite Mechanism. The Quad Mechanism, composed of the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has provided support for the Tripartite Mechanism. In September 2022, consultations were held among relevant stakeholders to address the crisis.

A framework agreement was signed on December 5, 2022, between the military and the FFC-CC. They agreed that the military must transfer power to a civilian government, merge the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) into the army, initiate reforms within the police and justice institutions, implement the Juba Agreement, dissolve the economic powers of the former regime, commence the process of crafting a constitution, and prepare for general elections. This agreement faced opposition from several political forces due to its lack of specificity regarding the removal of the military from politics. Additionally, the agreement provides the military with an opportunity to escape accountability for the committed atrocities. It also neglects the issue of justice and fails to represent the demands of the resistance committees. Supporters of the agreement view it as a unique opportunity to establish civilian rule in Sudan, foster stability and reintegrate Sudan into the international community. However, by January 31, 2023, the army had assumed complete control over Sudan and reinstated former transformative institutions, like the "Sovereignty Council," entirely comprised of army representatives.

## History and Characteristics of Transformation

Ever since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1956, Sudan has experienced a recurring pattern of short-lived democratic governments followed by prolonged military regimes. This cycle has led to political instability, economic failure and a prevalence of armed conflicts in different regions of the country. In the postcolonial era, the political and socioeconomic landscape of Sudan has largely been influenced by traditional leaders who were empowered under British rule, as well as their allies, such as the educated, merchants and tribal sheikhs. Over time, these individuals have continued to maintain their hold on both wealth and power, a situation that persists to this day.

Today's situation was shaped by a long civil war that started in South Sudan as a rebellion against British rule in 1955. From this guerrilla war grew a liberation movement that fought successive central governments, punctuated by periods of peace from 1972 to 1983.

The Inqaz ("Salvation") regime, which ruled Sudan between 1989 and 2019, redefined the war as a religious one between Arab Muslims in the north and non-Arab "infidels" in the south and adopted the terminology of Islamic jihad against the southern rebel groups. The war, which cost more than four million lives and forced 10 million to flee, officially ended with the signing of the power-sharing Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Six years later, the South Sudanese conducted a referendum granted by the CPA and voted for their independence in July 2011.

By the time the conflict in South Sudan was easing, another conflict broke out in the Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile regions over claims of marginalization. The war in the Darfur region broke out in February 2003 when two rebel groups – the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) – began fighting the Sudanese government. Disputes over land and water between semi-nomadic shepherders and non-nomadic farmers have been cited as major causes of the conflict. The government responded with a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the non-Arab population of Darfur, resulting in the killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians and displacement of millions. The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague issued an arrest warrant against then-President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Subsequently, the Inqaz regime adopted economic liberalization policies, and the state retreated from various sectors, including education and health, as well as subsidies for marginalized groups in society. Distanced from the conditions of the neoliberal development model, the privatization policies in Sudan were far from fair and transparent, implemented within a market lacking competition and an independent private sector. Coupled with the negative consequences of listing Sudan on the United States' list of states that have sponsored terrorism since 1993, the aforementioned malpractice resulted in market failure and a monopoly on the network of loyalists to the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), which was dominated by military businesses. Under

these policies, Sudan experienced hindered economic development, increasing inequality rates and corruption, which created social tension and frustration, culminating in popular uprisings in December 2018.

Until April 2019, people from various regions of Sudan took to the streets demanding freedom, peace and justice. Although the uprisings started as protests against miserable economic living conditions, protesters gradually called for the fall of the regime because of corruption, human rights abuses and oppression. The government responded with violence, killing many protesters and detaining activists.

In April 2019, the Military Council ousted former President al-Bashir, and the Transitional Military Council (TMC) led the country for the following months. Negotiations started between the TMC and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), resulting in the signing of an agreement and the Constitutional Declaration in August 2019. This replaced the 2005 Interim Constitution. The power-sharing agreement brought Abdalla Hamdok to power as prime minister, a position he held until his resignation in January 2022.

In August 2020, the Juba Peace Agreement was signed between the Transitional Government of Sudan and the armed groups that had fought against the Inqaz regime. Then, in October 2021, the commander-in-chief of the Sudanese Army, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, led a military coup in Sudan, dissolving the transitional government and the 2019 Constitutional Declaration.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

## Transformation Status

### I. Political Transformation

#### 1 | Stateness

As we enter 2023, Sudan's security landscape is primarily shaped by two armed groups: the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the official national army, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The emergence of the RSF can be traced back to the final years of Omar al-Bashir's presidency when Sudan grappled with a weakened state, escalating violence and the ongoing conflict in Darfur. Over time, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as "Hemedti," who leads the RSF, amassed significant wealth through various channels. This included economic support from the former regime, funding from Saudi Arabia and the UAE for RSF's involvement in the Yemeni war, and control over gold mining production and smuggling. Gradually, the RSF expanded its influence to assume critical roles, such as managing the issue of illegal migration to Europe through Sudan, which received funding from the European Union. More recently, the RSF has established a counter-terrorism unit within Sudan. The ascendance of the RSF as a paramilitary force in Sudan is a direct consequence of the state's deterioration.

In an environment marked by political instability, economic turmoil, conflict and the disintegration of the Sudanese state, these militias have not only plundered resources but also imposed levies on populations residing in areas beyond the state's control, notably in South Kordofan State. Sudan's borders with neighboring countries have become particularly precarious regions where militias operate due to the absence of state authority. These areas include eastern Sudan, the southern borders shared with South Sudan, and the western border with Chad. Following the uprisings that began in December 2018, this situation deteriorated further, with the power of militias appearing to grow, especially in light of the central government's dysfunction and delayed efforts to counter militias that control the country's resources.

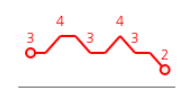
The government's effective control over the use of force remains relatively unchallenged in the capital and major cities, where its presence is essential for self-preservation. However, in the provinces, such as Darfur and South Kordofan, this control becomes fragile, as militias and armed communities exert influence. These

Question  
Score

Monopoly on the  
use of force

2

'06 '24 10



groups employ their force to maintain a semblance of security while simultaneously sowing discord. They contribute to destabilizing security situations, leveraging their ability to traverse regional boundaries and operate with relative impunity. Their expertise in managing ethnic diversity in these areas serves their interests. This freedom of movement allows them to engage in illicit border activities, including smuggling, human trafficking and collaboration with terrorist organizations.

Sudanese society was historically divided into various factions. During the 30-year rule of the former Islamist regime, social groups hailing from regions like South Sudan, Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile did not associate with the state's endorsed Islamic and Arab identities. To them, the state-imposed identity not only felt forced but also led to their marginalization, treating anyone outside of this identity as a second-class citizen. Consequently, they were denied access to full citizenship, leading to the formation of liberation movements that fought against the government for many decades.

In 2011, South Sudan successfully seceded, but conflicts persisted in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Following the 2019 revolution, achieving peace became a central goal of the transitional government, resulting in peace negotiations with various rebel groups and the eventual signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in August 2020 between the government of Sudan and these rebel factions.

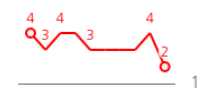
Simultaneously, a separatist movement emerged in North and Central Sudan, advocating for the creation of a new state separate from Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile. Their rationale was that African and Arab identities could not coexist in Sudan, necessitating separation to form their own states. This separatist call gained traction in the north and was partly fueled by the perception that rebel leaders who arrived in Khartoum after the Juba Peace Agreement had betrayed the revolution and aligned with the military against the civilians.

The persistent lack of security and safety deepened citizens' mistrust in the state's ability to provide protection. This mistrust stemmed from the political leadership's indifference to the suffering of marginalized societal groups grappling with extreme poverty and hunger. In addition to the growing influence of militias, people began to act as if the state did not exist, seeking protection from their tribes instead. The constitution was repeatedly violated, laws lost their significance, and the state's management primarily served the interests of the ruling regime.

State identity

2

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During the Ingaz regime, the state operated as a theocracy. Religious doctrines frequently influence political institutions, with rulers using religion for their own political gain. While many people revolted against this system, their goal wasn't necessarily to establish a completely secular state.

The debate regarding the relationship between the state and religion in post-revolution Sudan remains a sensitive issue. Although the new regime has abolished certain laws that were previously seen as aligned with Shariah, such as the apostasy law and the use of flogging as a punishment, and non-Muslims are no longer penalized for consuming alcohol, it has failed to eliminate or reform many other laws and provisions that discriminate against women.

Presently, many political actors are hesitant to engage in these discussions. Consequently, numerous structures and legal frameworks put in place by the former Islamist regime remain untouched. This practical outcome underscores that the state is still far from adopting secular norms as its foundation.

“State collapse” is an expression ordinary Sudanese increasingly use to describe the difficult living conditions in their daily lives due to the inability of state institutions to provide basic services to the population and to perform their duties.

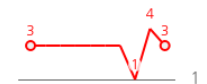
Since 2019, there haven't been any improvements or investments in public health care, education and infrastructure. According to the World Bank, in 2020, 60.4% of the Sudanese population had at least basic access to a water source, 36.9% had access to at least basic sanitation, and 55.4% had access to electricity. The general economic situation has deteriorated significantly during the past three years, so it is likely that the mentioned percentages have decreased and fewer people have access to the services mentioned.

The Minister of Finance declared that the state had failed to pay the wages of state employees. Currently, many key sectors are on strike, paralyzing the country, including schoolteachers, taxed employees, doctors, professors, justice authorities and many more. Haidob Seaport, built by Chinese companies, went operational in late 2021 but shut down again in August 2022 after local citizens blocked it with sit-ins in protest against unfulfilled promises, including missing compensation for prior land confiscation. Until the end of this reporting period, it had not been reopened.

No interference of religious dogmas

3

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Basic administration

2

'06 \_\_\_\_\_ '24 10



## 2 | Political Participation

The term “state collapse” has become increasingly common among ordinary Sudanese to describe the challenging living conditions they face daily. This situation arises from the incapacity of state institutions to provide essential services and fulfill their responsibilities.

Since 2019, there has been a lack of improvement and investment in public health care, education and infrastructure. According to the World Bank, in 2020, only 60.4% of the Sudanese population had basic access to a water source, 36.9% had access to basic sanitation, and 55.4% had access to electricity. Given the significant deterioration in the overall economic situation over the past three years, it is likely that these percentages have decreased further, resulting in even fewer people having access to these vital services.

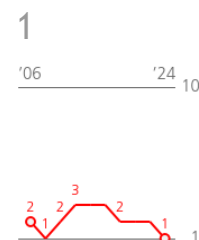
The Minister of Finance has confirmed the inability of the state to pay the salaries of government employees. Currently, several key sectors, including schoolteachers, tax collectors, doctors, professors, and judicial authorities, are on strike, leading to a paralysis of the country. Additionally, the Haidob seaport, constructed by Chinese companies, became operational in late 2021 but was subsequently shut down in August 2022 due to local citizens staging sit-ins in protest against unmet promises, including compensation for previous land confiscations. As of the end of this reporting period, the seaport had still not reopened.

On October 25, 2021, the army commander, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, overthrew the civilian government and his civilian partners, justifying it as “re-correcting the path of the revolution” after a small group of political parties dominated the transitional process.

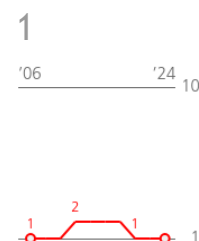
The power struggle in Sudan between the military and civilians as well as that among civilians themselves, has diverted attention from the tasks of the overall transitional process. This includes, in particular, efforts to rebuild effective governing institutions and prepare for general elections that produce forces with real representative capacity.

Given the lack of political legitimacy and inclusion, hundreds of peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators have demonstrated on the streets of Sudan on a regular basis, demanding an end to the military coup and a full civilian government. However, security forces have responded to these demonstrations with violent suppression and the excessive use of force to disperse them. Since the coup on October 25, 2021, the consequences have been severe. Hundreds of individuals have either lost their lives or been imprisoned, while thousands have suffered injuries, and some have been forcibly disappeared. Despite the Constitutional Declaration, which governs the transitional period and guarantees the freedom of association and

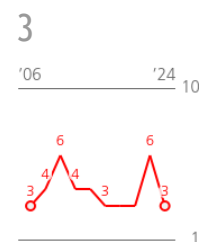
Free and fair elections



Effective power to govern



Association / assembly rights



assembly, these laws are far from being effectively enforced. Moreover, these assembly restrictions seem to be selectively applied, with demonstrators who support military actions, particularly those affiliated with the former regime, facing different treatment.

Following a period of improved freedom of expression, the situation has taken a troubling turn, particularly after the military coup on October 25, 2021. Citizens who publicly criticize the military or the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the media now face harassment and threats of legal prosecution. For example, journalist Rishan Oshi was taken to court by the RSF in December 2022 for referring to them as “militias,” and there have been numerous similar cases.

After the October 2021 coup, the suppression of journalists escalated and manifested in various ways. Journalists who expressed criticism of the military have been detained. The military administration sought to control the media by targeting newspapers, disrupting the internet, cutting TV broadcasting signals and arresting personnel from state radio and TV. Journalists working for international media outlets and broadcasters, including the BBC, Chinese News Agency, London-based al-Araby Press Agency, al-Arabiya and al-Hadath, have also been detained. Media outlets’ facilities and equipment were raided, and some journalists were assaulted by pro-military protesters, preventing them from covering the protests. In response to these violations, journalists organized mass protests and rallies, demanding the protection of freedom of expression in Sudan.

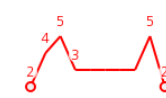
In August 2022, the Sudanese Journalist Syndicate (SJS) was established through elections, signifying a new era for journalism in Sudan after decades of suppression. However, this newly formed syndicate faced delegitimization by the Journalist Union, which was established during and in support of the former regime. Since then, the elected SJS has been monitoring the status of press freedom in Sudan, documenting violations against journalists, including oppression, targeting, restricted access to information, threats, equipment destruction and abuse.

Sudan’s media landscape, comprising print media, radio, TV, digital media and social media, is heavily controlled by the state and regulated through the Ministry of Media. The Sudan News Agency (SUNA) serves as the official news agency for broadcasting news in Sudan. Sudan TV is the national television network covering the entire country and international audiences via satellite. Additionally, there are several private satellite TV channels and regional channels. The National Radio and Television Corporation (NRTC) oversees Sudan TV and the Sudanese radio station. Furthermore, the country’s numerous newspapers are regulated through the National Press Council.

Freedom of  
expression

2

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1

### 3 | Rule of Law

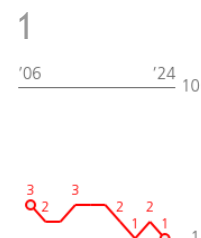
Following the overthrow of the 30-year-old Islamist military regime in 2019, one of the foremost priorities of Sudan's pro-democracy movement has been to reestablish the rule of law in the country. Central to this effort has been the aim to reinforce the principle of the separation of powers. The general public has expressed concerns regarding the processes for appointing trusted candidates to key positions, such as the Supreme Judicial Council, chief justice and deputies, the president and members of the Constitutional Court, and the attorney general. However, the military coup led by General Burhan on October 25, 2021, shattered hopes of restoring the separation of powers in Sudan. Upon seizing power, the military dictators swiftly suspended the Constitutional Declaration, disregarding the established amendment procedures within it. Since October 25, 2021, military leaders have consolidated both legislative and executive powers, clearly indicating a lack of commitment to the principle of the separation of powers.

Reforming the judiciary and legal institutions has been a critical priority for the transitional government in Sudan, given the distortions that occurred during the al-Bashir regime. However, as of the present day, crucial entities such as the Supreme Judicial Council and the Constitutional Court have not yet been established, resulting in obstacles to the administration of justice in the country.

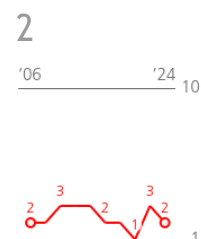
Currently, there is a heated debate surrounding the methods for selecting judicial and justice agencies. This debate emerged in the context of the signing of the framework agreement between military and political forces (FFC-CC) in December 2022. Some judges argue that the framework agreement compromises the independence of the judiciary by granting political forces control over it. They would have the authority to appoint key figures like the Supreme Judicial Council, the chief justice, their deputies, members of the Constitutional Court and the attorney general. Concerns arise that if the cabinet appoints the Judiciary Reform Commission, it will inevitably lead to the politicization of the judiciary. Conversely, supporters of the framework agreement believe that it does not politicize the judiciary, as the reform commission would consist of judges, not politicians.

Pro-democracy forces harbor skepticism toward the current state of the judiciary system. They question its integrity entirely and advocate for the creation of a special committee called the Empowerment Removal Committee (ERC) to handle the dismantling of the former Islamist regime independently, without involving the judiciary. Additionally, they demand a comprehensive overhaul of the entire judiciary system before it can regain public trust.

Separation of powers



Independent judiciary



The popular uprising of 2019 resulted in a change of regime, but the fundamental political system remained intact. Unfortunately, the corrupt practices that were prevalent in the former regime, including the abuse of power and the misappropriation of public funds, persist without consequences for those responsible.

One incident that has sparked significant public controversy revolves around the alleged financial and administrative misuse of funds designated for COVID-19 protective measures. This misconduct is reported to have been committed by Mubarak Ardol, who serves as the head of the Sudanese Mineral Resources Company (SMRC) and is a former spokesperson for the SPLM-N. Despite the intervention of the prime minister in March 2022, Ardol was not prosecuted and he retained his position, which gives him control over significant portions of Sudan's profitable (and often illicit) mining industry.

Within government agencies, the abuse of power for personal gain is widespread. Politicians and high-ranking public officials often view state positions as opportunities for personal enrichment rather than as tools for equitably distributing wealth among the population. Additionally, individuals who are perceived as unwanted by the regime may occasionally face baseless legal actions, as seen with members of the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC-CC) in February 2022. These activists from the ERC (Empowerment Removal Committee) were accused of mismanagement, wastefulness of public funds and dishonesty. However, they were released two months later due to the inability to substantiate these charges.

Consequently, political corruption remains largely unaddressed by the government, and the creation of the Anti-Corruption Commission and Funds Recovery Committee, which were intended to tackle these issues, has not yet materialized.

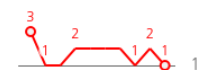
Civil rights in Sudan face multiple threats, with citizens experiencing various violations daily without effective protective mechanisms. Throughout Sudan's history, militias have been deployed by governments to supplement the regular army, carrying out missions that the army cannot undertake alone. For instance, the al-Bashir government authorized Arab militias to combat rebels in Darfur. However, in recent years, the presence of militias has become normalized and increasingly mainstream. They now operate openly in the public streets of the capital, Khartoum, as well as across all regions of Sudan, posing a significant risk to public safety. These militias commit crimes and engage in daily violence in Darfur and Khartoum, and communities remain vulnerable to their attacks. There have been instances of demonstrators being shot, such as the shooting of at least nine protesters in Khartoum during the June 30, 2022, commemoration of Omar al-Bashir's removal.

Following his four-day visit to the country in November 2022, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk urged Sudan's authorities to respect human rights. However, activists continue to endure torture and prolonged detentions without fair trials. Cases of enforced disappearances have reached unprecedented

#### Prosecution of office abuse

1

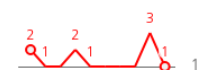
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#### Civil rights

1

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levels in recent years. Gender-based violence has increased both in conflict zones and relatively calm areas, with justice rarely being served to the victims. Furthermore, women in Sudan suffer from inadequate political representation and participation. Discriminatory laws within the legal framework and the absence of gender-specific policies perpetuate current structural inequalities in the country. Gender-based violence, wage disparities, limited employment opportunities and exclusion from decision-making processes are everyday challenges faced by Sudanese women, with little attention given to addressing these issues by the political leadership.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation is pervasive in Sudan. Individuals who identify as or are perceived to be gay, lesbian or bisexual encounter harassment, differential treatment and criminalization of their sexual orientation, which is punishable by law. Members of the LGBTQ+ community do not feel safe in Sudan, as they face targeting and attacks from both citizens and the state due to their sexual orientation, the prevalence of homophobia and the absence of legal protections.

Sudan is a multiethnic society with diverse ethnic groups, consisting of those with African (native) and Arab origins from the Arabian Peninsula. However, a clear hierarchy persists, with individuals of real or perceived Arab origin often considering themselves superior to those with African origins. Historically, Sudanese Arabs have dominated the state and discriminated against Sudanese Africans, resulting in grievances and alienation that have fueled long-standing conflicts. In addition to Arab supremacy, colorism is widespread in Sudan, where individuals with darker skin tones face discrimination from lighter-skinned groups. The issues of ethnicity, racism, and colorism are intricate and have remained unaddressed due to a reluctance to acknowledge the crimes committed as a result of these chronic problems. The fear of losing historical privileges held by dominant groups poses a significant obstacle to addressing racism in Sudan.

Sunni Islam is the predominant religion in Sudan, and religious minorities do not enjoy the same rights as Muslims.

#### 4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

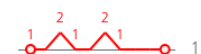
Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan's political history has been marked by short periods of democratic governance followed by long spells of military rule. This pattern has fostered a political culture where military leaders believe they are the sole legitimate authority to rule Sudan and maintain control over power. They often argue that political parties are weak, divided and plagued by internal conflicts.

After the 2018/2019 popular uprising that ended Omar al-Bashir's autocratic 30-year rule, the transitional period began with the goal of steering the country toward a democratic transition. This transition was intended to culminate in general elections at the conclusion of the transitional period. The Constitutional Declaration (CD),

Performance of  
democratic  
institutions

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signed in 2019 between the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the civilian Forces of Freedom and Change to govern this transitional period, mandated the formation of the Legislative Council (LC) within the first year. The LC, consisting of 300 members with a requirement for at least 40% women representation, was tasked with creating the laws and regulations for the transitional period, overseeing the government and approving its budget.

However, the LC was never convened. After the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in October 2020, the CD was amended to allocate 25% of LC seats to armed groups that were signatories to the peace agreement. Despite numerous postponements, the LC's formation gradually faded from the agenda of political actors and was eventually replaced by a legislative body comprising the Sovereignty Council and the cabinet.

The military coup led by General Burhan on October 25, 2021, resulted in a political deadlock as the CD was effectively suspended. For over a year, Sudan has lacked an executive government. Military leaders announced their intention to hold early elections as a way to resolve the crisis. Many observers view this call for early elections as a strategy to pressure civilians into participating in negotiations, as it is nearly impossible to hold an election without adequate preparation, such as establishing an election commission, enacting election laws and securing funding. Consequently, the call for early elections is seen as a means to legitimize the military coup.

The military in Sudan led a coup on October 25, 2021, and took control of the government, arresting civilian senior officials, including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. This step was followed by an internet shutdown, the dissolution of the Sovereignty Council, the dismissal of cabinet members and governors, and the declaration of a state of emergency. The popular demonstration rejecting the military coup was suppressed violently by security forces. With these developments, the democratization agenda that started in 2019 has been suspended, and by capturing power, the military does not show a commitment to the development of democratic institutions.

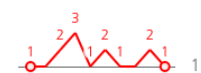
## 5 | Political and Social Integration

Under the authoritarian Inqaz rule (1989 – 2019), the regime systematically destroyed Sudan's former multiparty landscape through banning and repressing opposition parties and through creating their own elitist parties, such as the National Congress Party (NCP).

Other parties, such as the Nasserist Democratic Unionist Party and the Umma Party, which both predated Sudan's independence, as well as parties that were founded later, such as the Sudanese Congress Party, the Sudanese Communist Party, the Popular

Commitment to democratic institutions

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Party system

4  
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Congress Party, the Sudanese Ba’th party, or the Unified Democratic Unionist Party, lost any relevance under the Inqaz regime. The politicization of ethnic identities and the promotion of tribalism have instead shaped the policies formulated by the Inqaz regime. These policies, in turn, have further destabilized the party system.

During the transitional period following the 2018/2019 popular uprisings, there was optimism that political parties would assume a pivotal role in leading the democratic transition and fulfilling the people’s aspirations. However, these hopes have been tempered by the ongoing fragmentation and significant weaknesses within political parties. In October 2021, a faction of the Forces of Freedom and Change – Central Council (FFC-CC) defected, establishing the Forces for Freedom and Change – the Founding Platform (FFC-FP). This development not only weakened the civil component of the government but also introduced a military element into the political landscape.

As a result, many political parties in Sudan are still perceived as elitist, lacking grassroots support, tainted by corruption and disconnected from national interests. This perception arises from the accusation that numerous political parties rely on foreign funding sources, reflecting a colonial-era classist mindset, rather than depending on contributions from their members. The framework agreement that several political parties signed with the military in December 2022, while seen as a crucial step by some toward a peaceful return to transformation, has faced criticism from those who oppose a return to military rule.

The polarization between the revolutionaries advocating for a radical change in Sudan’s power structures and political forces seeking to maintain the status quo has reached its zenith.

Several significant organizations emerged during the course of the revolution, including:

**The Sudanese Professionals’ Association (SPA):** Founded in August 2016 as an umbrella organization for trade unions, SPA’s primary objective was to improve wages and working conditions for various sectors, including lecturers, doctors, teachers and others. SPA played a pivotal role in organizing protests, demonstrations and rallies against the former regime during the December 2018 uprisings.

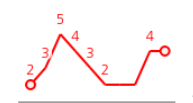
**The Women of Sudanese Civic and Political Groups (MANSAM):** Established in 2018, MANSAM is a coalition of women’s groups affiliated with political parties, with a specific focus on women’s rights. The organization played a crucial role during the revolution.

**The “No to Women’s Oppression Initiative”:** Created in 2009, this initiative has been instrumental in defending women’s rights through advocacy, legal aid and monitoring gender-based violations.

Interest groups

4

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Sudanese Resistance Committees (RC): Also known as neighborhood committees, these grassroots political organizations were formed in 2013 to coordinate protests and acts of civil disobedience during the al-Bashir regime. RCs played a central role in organizing protests, providing services and monitoring the transitional period during and after the December 2018 revolution.

All of these organizations are affiliated with the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance, which led negotiations with the military and oversaw the transitional period until the October 2021 coup.

Despite the passage of several years since the December 2018 uprisings, hundreds of protesters in Khartoum and across Sudan continue to organize regular demonstrations. Their demands include civilian rule, the reversal of the October 25, 2021 coup, and justice for the at least 125 individuals, including children, who have been killed by security forces since the coup. Concurrently, a political process is underway between civilian forces and the military aimed at reaching a political agreement. This process is preceded by a framework agreement signed in December 2022 and enjoys the support of the Trilateral Mechanism, consisting of the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the United Nations.

According to an Afrobarometer poll conducted in spring 2021, which surveyed 1,800 adults across Sudan, approximately two-thirds of Sudanese citizens express support for democratic ideals and reject one-party systems. Specifically, 54.7% of respondents indicated their rejection of any form of military rule, and a significant majority, 70.6%, believed that the country was “heading in the wrong direction.”

However, a 2022 Arabbarometer poll revealed somewhat less enthusiastic findings. In this survey, 53% of respondents expressed a preference for democracy over any other political system, with a notably higher preference among those in the 18 to 29 age range. Interestingly, about half of the Sudanese individuals polled in this survey also expressed the view that “democracies are not effective at maintaining order.” For these respondents, the success of democracy was seen as contingent on its ability to deliver tangible results, a concept known as “output legitimacy.”

It’s worth noting that a previous Arabbarometer poll, conducted in the fall of 2018 before the eventual fall of Omar al-Bashir, also surveyed Sudanese citizens. At that time, support for democracy was notably lower, with only 42% of respondents consistently preferring democracy over any other form of political governance.

Approval of  
democracy

n/a

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n/a 1

Due to the dysfunction of both the central government and local authorities, many Sudanese individuals are grappling with substantial economic challenges and face the looming threat of hunger. In this context, reliance on societal self-help organizations has become a crucial necessity in Sudan. These organizations have traditionally stepped in and continue to fill the void left by absent state authorities. This strong sense of solidarity among citizens has been particularly evident during significant events, such as the historic sit-in in 2019 in front of the military headquarters, where individuals shared essential resources like food, shelter and medical supplies. However, the scale of self-help organizations' activities has seen a significant decline compared to previous years. This reduction appears to be linked to the ongoing political and economic crisis, which has eroded the sense of trust and unity among the population that was initially forged during the early years of the popular uprising. The fragmentation and division observed among politicians and elites at the national level have also trickled down to the societal level. As a result, feelings of exhaustion and frustration have permeated various aspects of life, leading to a significant decrease in people's willingness to initiate and participate in self-help efforts.

Social capital



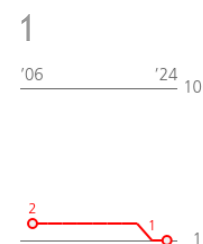
## II. Economic Transformation

### 6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

Poverty and inequality are widespread in Sudan. According to the 2021 Human Development Index (HDI), Sudan is ranked very low, at 172 out of 191 countries with a score of 0.508. The poverty index shows that 49.7% of Sudanese citizens live on less than \$3.20 per day. Sudan scores 0.553 on the Gender Inequality Index, which reflects inequality in achievements between women and men in reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market. The overall loss in the HDI is significant, reaching 33.9%. For example, internally displaced and refugee communities are fundamentally excluded from society due to poverty and inequality.

Inequality takes various forms in Sudan, including gender, rural-urban and regional disparities, as well as inequalities in resource sharing. In the 1990s, the government embraced neoliberal structural adjustment policies that led to a substantial decrease in public expenditures, despite a rise in military spending. Currently, 70% of the federal budget is allocated to security, while health and education combined receive only 3.3%.

According to the World Inequality Database, the wealthiest 1% of the population controls 26% of the country's wealth, while the top 10% of the affluent individuals in Sudan control 59.5% of the wealth. In comparison, the bottom 50% of the least prosperous citizens possess only 4.7% of the country's wealth. Moreover, there exists

Question  
ScoreSocioeconomic  
barriers

significant inequality between rural and urban populations, with the most susceptible communities residing in rural areas. Notably, disparities in service provision, particularly in the health and education sectors, are prevalent across rural and urban areas, as well as various regions of Sudan.

| Economic indicators       |          | 2019    | 2020    | 2021    | 2022           |
|---------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| GDP                       | \$ M     | 32338.1 | 27034.6 | 34229.5 | <b>51662.2</b> |
| GDP growth                | %        | -2.2    | -3.6    | -1.9    | <b>-1.0</b>    |
| Inflation (CPI)           | %        | 51.0    | 163.3   | 359.1   | <b>138.8</b>   |
| Unemployment              | %        | 17.6    | 19.3    | 19.1    | <b>18.7</b>    |
| Foreign direct investment | % of GDP | 2.6     | 2.7     | 1.5     | <b>1.1</b>     |
| Export growth             | %        | 7.0     | 5.2     | 2.0     | <b>4.5</b>     |
| Import growth             | %        | 13.8    | -9.0    | -0.5    | <b>6.0</b>     |
| Current account balance   | \$ M     | -4779.8 | -5841.2 | -2620.2 | <b>-4442.8</b> |
| Public debt               | % of GDP | 200.2   | 275.2   | 187.9   | <b>186.2</b>   |
| External debt             | \$ M     | 22476.5 | 23444.9 | 22165.4 | -              |
| Total debt service        | \$ M     | 195.6   | 149.9   | 2999.5  | -              |
| Net lending/borrowing     | % of GDP | -       | -       | -       | -              |
| Tax revenue               | % of GDP | -       | -       | -       | -              |
| Government consumption    | % of GDP | 6.2     | 14.4    | 11.0    | <b>17.9</b>    |
| Public education spending | % of GDP | -       | -       | -       | -              |
| Public health spending    | % of GDP | 1.0     | 1.0     | -       | -              |
| R&D expenditure           | % of GDP | -       | -       | -       | -              |
| Military expenditure      | % of GDP | 1.6     | 1.0     | 0.9     | -              |

Sources (as of December 2023): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database.

## 7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

A Market Competition Act is in place to regulate market competition, along with a council for market competition and the prevention of monopolies at the Ministry of Trade and Manufacturing. However, their role is not consistent. The absence of state-guaranteed rules for market competition has reduced economic efficiency and compromised consumer welfare. Sudan's weak institutional framework has resulted in low-quality goods and services, uncontrolled prices due to unobserved market competition, and a lack of awareness of fair competition. Widespread illegal market competition and rule violations by market participants are also prevalent.

Moreover, the rules for market participants are vague and ill-defined. For example, the law did not establish clear criteria for defining market competition violations. This necessitates a revision of the legal framework to clearly identify these violations. Additionally, the legal framework lacks implementation, and market participants who violate the law are not held accountable. In general, Sudan's market system is designed to protect established companies with large capital instead of emerging businesses. Aside from the unclear legislation, widespread corruption and significant red tape make market entry difficult for new businesses.

The weak institutional framework of economic policy and the inefficient application of the rules resulted in a large informal sector, which accounted for 87% of the market.

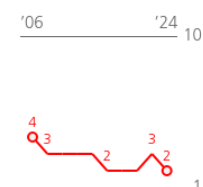
Competition laws exist, although they are rarely enforced against monopolization. The current laws are ambiguous and vague and cannot effectively address cartels, collusion and other market competition violations. A Council for Market Competition was established in 2013, but it faces challenges due to insufficient office space, staff and funding. Aside from a few awareness workshops, its impact has been negligible, especially in terms of legal reforms; monopolistic practices continue to be prevalent in Sudan.

The Sudanese economy's openness to foreign trade is constrained by several factors, primarily political instability, widespread corruption, a complicated bureaucracy, a collapsed financial sector, and high business tax and fees. The economy and regulatory framework are viewed as lacking innovation, and multiple laws, such as those pertaining to taxation, customs, levies and investments, require revision. The convoluted procedures and state bureaucracy limit the liberalization of foreign trade in Sudan. The institutions and entities associated with foreign trade in Sudan are dysfunctional, necessitating reform.

Protesting citizens provoked the closure of Sudan's most important seaports along the Red Sea coast in fall 2022, including parts of Port Sudan, which handles about 90% of the total import/export volumes. The closure also affected the newly opened Haidob port, specializing in cattle and livestock exports to the Arab Gulf monarchies

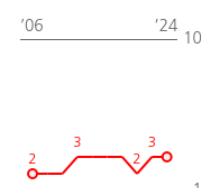
Market organization

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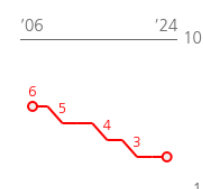
Competition policy

3



Liberalization of foreign trade

3



and China, as well as Bashar ports 1 and 2. As a result, economic losses of up to \$2 million per day were incurred, and Sudanese importers were forced to utilize Egyptian seaports and transport goods over land into Sudan.

Decisions on issues related to the economy and trade are made by small circles outside the Ministry of Trade. Consequently, there is a lack of transparency and important stakeholders, such as trade unions, customer protection associations, and professionals, are marginalized. The challenges faced in developing this sector include a scarcity of qualified personnel and insufficient data.

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Sudan's simple average most-favored nation (MFN) applied rate in 2021 was 21.6%.

In September 2021, there was a scandal surrounding the Minister of Finance, Jibril Ibrahim, who also serves as leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). He issued customs exemptions and waived wharfage costs for his nephew's car. The minister refused to recognize that exempting his nephew's car from customs is a form of power abuse, nor did he acknowledge it as a form of corruption. JEM justified this exemption by claiming it was legal under the Juba Peace Agreement, which grants returning members of rebel movements signatory to the agreement the right to be exempted from customs. According to JEM, this practice is standard in peace agreements and is meant to incentivize members to pursue peace. However, many experts disapproved of this justification, viewing it as a clear example of selectiveness and misinterpretation of the Juba Agreement.

Internal economic and political turmoil has heavily impacted the banking system in Sudan, especially after the coup of October 25, 2021. Despite the United States having lifted its sanctions on Sudan, apprehension among international banks continues, and they have not resumed dealing with Sudanese banks.

In March 2022, the central bank unified the exchange rate and floated the Sudanese pound as part of its plan for comprehensive and sustainable monetary reform to stabilize the exchange rate in the country. This policy led to a substantial increase in the cost of essential goods and services, which had a severe impact on society. However, the currency floating policy has effectively stabilized the currency and attracted resources to the banking system. Currently, exchange rates are determined through banks and exchange firms.

Sudan implemented Basel II banking standards, but one of the remaining challenges is that the central bank is controlled by the Ministry of Finance and has failed to gain independence. The Ministry of Finance borrows from the central bank to finance the budget deficit, neglecting the central bank law that sets predetermined limits for government borrowing.

The Khartoum Stock Exchange – founded in 1962 – joined the Africa Market Union in 2007.

#### Banking system

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## 8 | Monetary and fiscal stability

In 2021, the inflation rate reached 382.8%, after 16.9% in 2015 and still 51.0% in the revolutionary year 2019. To stabilize the pound exchange rate, the government announced in February 2022 that it would float the currency. Many Sudanese felt the effects of the floating policy as the prices of commodities increased. In 2021, the bank exchange rate was 55 pounds for every \$1. With the currency floating, this rate was canceled, and it was made identical to the illicit market rate at 375 pounds per \$1. In January 2023, the exchange rate was 590 pounds for \$1 – an additional depreciation of 57%, leading to a total loss of purchasing power against the U.S. dollar of 87%. Observers criticize that not the floating eventually led to the pound's relative stability but the decrease in demand for U.S. dollars due to the increase in poverty.

The former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok's government measures aimed at debt relief under the HIPC have frozen since the military captured power in the coup of October 2021. In 2020, the current account balance was -\$5.841 billion, public debt reached 182% of the GDP, and government consumption was estimated to be 11% of the GDP. A long-standing burden on the Sudanese economy is external debt, estimated to be about \$22.9 billion in 2020, while the debt service amounts to \$148 million. No figures are available on net lending/borrowing or total reserves.

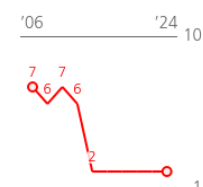
In September 2022, Sudan's central bank announced its policy to achieve monetary stability, which includes reducing the inflation rate, controlling monetary expansion, and limiting the role of the central bank and banks in financing the government. Instead, it declared its intention to strengthen private sector financing in order to better serve the productive sectors. As a result, the central bank began to tighten direct and indirect financing from banks, government agencies and institutions.

## 9 | Private Property

During the May 2021 Paris Conference to support the Sudanese transition, the government announced a variety of reforms, encompassing legal, financial and economic aspects, as well as measures aimed at safeguarding investors' properties against confiscation. However, instead of witnessing an increase, international investment in Sudan has actually decreased. This decline can be attributed to a number of obstacles, such as inadequate infrastructure, convoluted administrative procedures, exorbitant fees, complex money transfer mechanisms and unresolved land disputes with local inhabitants. As a result, international investors exhibit minimal confidence in the government's dependability and commitment to protecting their assets.

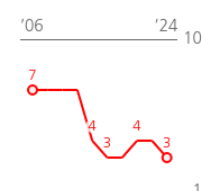
### Monetary stability

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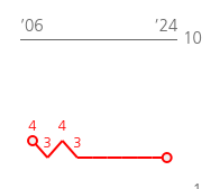
### Fiscal stability

3



### Property rights

3



Land issues in Sudan are problematic and chronic due to political corruption, arbitrary state intervention and illegal infringements. The state in Sudan has increasingly engaged in land grabbing without providing adequate compensation in both urban and rural areas. Following the secession of South Sudan in 2011, the government lost 70% of its revenues from oil resources, prompting it to turn to the sale of land to investors as a key source of revenue. Moreover, government officials responsible for land corruption face no accountability.

A recurring scenario in various regions of Sudan is the government's seizure of substantial tracts of land from their historical owners, either for lease or sale to investors and transnational companies, or for the construction of modern residential areas. Typically, the affected communities respond by resisting the government's plans and demanding the return of their confiscated lands through the organization of peaceful protests. Initially, the government often disregards the protests and proceeds with its land appropriation, ignoring the rights of the people. In response, the resistance intensifies, employing diverse strategies like sit-ins and the blocking of national roads, prompting a violent reaction from the government as it represses the peaceful demonstrators. As the pressure mounts, committees composed of representatives from both sides are formed, leading to negotiations between the government and community representatives. Frequently, the government fails to reach a settlement, leaving the people steadfast in their assertion of their land rights. The government makes empty promises and engages in delays, allowing the dispute to persist without resolution, thereby exacerbating long-term grievances.

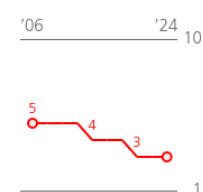
Sudan's private sector has been marginalized in various ways, particularly in policymaking, the enactment of laws and development programs. The private economy faces constraints not only due to the unfavorable business and investment environment but also as a result of being isolated from international partnerships as a result of the lengthy sanctions. Even though the sanctions have been lifted, international investors still approach Sudan with caution. Within the country, state-owned companies, particularly those associated with the army and security sectors, exert control over the economy. These entities not only compete with the private sector but also marginalize its role in development.

In June 2022, the government announced plans to completely shut down or privatize most of the 650 state-owned companies, excluding those engaged in military manufacturing. This decision followed the suspension of financial support by the United States, the European Union and the World Bank after the army regained power in October 2019. Particularly significant were the existing or new port infrastructure developments along the Red Sea. China has been involved in upgrading or constructing various seaports as a part of their Belt-and-Road Initiative.

A lack of legal safeguards that organize the economy, clientelist practices, and a lack of transparency have transformed the private sector to serve elitist self-interests in key sectors such as telecommunications, energy, transportation, the construction of dams and financial services. Unfortunately, these sectors have failed to benefit the economy from their revenues.

Private enterprise

3



## 10 | Welfare Regime

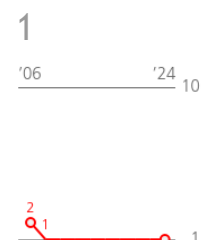
The National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) covers a significant portion of the population in the formal sector. Subscribers receive services for their families, including parents, spouses and children under 18 years old. The National Pensions and Social Security Fund provides pensions and social security benefits to public employers. However, the actual services of all funds have been greatly affected by the financial and economic crisis because they lack sufficient budget allocations.

The Zakat Fund is a significant additional social safety net. Sudan is one of the few countries that has regulated Zakat, and it is collected and distributed by the government, with established offices across the country. Zakat is among the pillars of Islam that require Muslims to pay a prescribed amount of their wealth (2.5%) annually to the poor and needy. Besides direct cash transfers to the needy, Zakat funds implement services and production projects that are supposed to benefit the poor. However, the widespread political corruption within the government has not spared the Zakat system, resulting in a highly politicized Zakat system where politicians misuse funds for their personal interests, thus limiting the impact of Zakat as an effective social safety net.

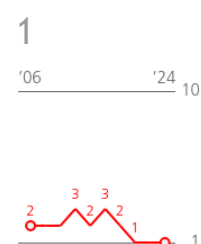
In September 2020, the government initiated a family support program called Thamarat (“Fruits”), primarily financed by the World Bank and the World Food Programme, to assist economically disadvantaged families through direct cash transfers, aimed at alleviating financial hardships. However, the program was halted following the military coup on October 25, 2021.

Segregation and discrimination characterize Sudanese society. Despite claims of unity and solidarity, individuals do not universally experience equal opportunities and lack equal access to participation in society. Social backgrounds matter; being a Sudanese citizen does not guarantee automatic access to education, public office or employment. Historically, ethnic groups from North and Central Sudan have controlled wealth and power in the country, leading to easier access to education, public office or employment. There is an imbalance in development between regions, with wealth and services concentrated in the central regions, leaving other regions, such as Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Nile and eastern Sudan, at a disadvantage in terms of services like education, health and security. People who grow up in these regions face greater challenges in accessing quality education compared to those in the capital, due to imbalanced development and conflicts causing instability. As a patriarchal society, women and girls in these regions encounter additional barriers to education compared to their male counterparts. In terms of literacy, the rate was 56.1% among females, compared to 65.4% among males. The gender parity index (GPI) indicates a ratio of 0.9 for primary schools and 1.0 for secondary and tertiary education, suggesting that girls face greater disadvantages than boys in terms of learning

### Social safety nets



### Equal opportunity





opportunities at the basic level. Sudanese women experience structural inequality, particularly in the workplace, which hinders their career advancement. Only 30.1% of the labor force is female.

Moreover, homosexuality is highly stigmatized in Sudan. Therefore, individuals whose sexual orientation does not align with societal norms face significant challenges that can jeopardize their personal security.

## 11 | Economic Performance

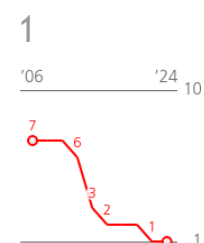
The economic performance in Sudan is very poor. The October 2021 coup has exacerbated the daily suffering of most citizens. The coup resulted in Sudan losing \$1.46 billion in aid that has been pledged by various international actors, including \$700 million from the United States, \$500 million from the World Bank's International Development Association, \$150 million from the IMF, and \$100 million from the EU.

Days after the October 2021 coup, inflation skyrocketed to unprecedented rates, at times reaching more than 400%. The local currency collapsed, and the exchange rate went from 47 Sudanese pounds (SDG) to 441 SDG per \$1. This collapse resulted in many firms and traders suspending the sale of their products because they feared severe losses. The coup also caused a sharp decline in foreign currency reserves, leading to severe shortages in fuel, bread, medicine and basic commodities. Poverty and unemployment rates continue to rise, and many people find it extremely difficult to afford basic needs such as rent and health services.

According to the World Bank's 2021 World Development Indicators, Sudan's GDP per capita (PPP) is \$4,217, reflecting a decline of 4.5% compared to the previous year. The total GDP reached \$34.3 billion. The CPI inflation rate stands at 382.8%, and unemployment is at 19.8%. Foreign direct investment remains at 2.7% of GDP in 2021.

Perhaps due to efforts made by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, the public debt has decreased to 182% of GDP in 2021, with gross capital formation at 3.5% of GDP. However, the current account balance recorded a deficit of -\$5.8 billion in 2020. Additionally, gross capital formation has experienced a significant decline from 31.9% of GDP in 2020 to a mere 3.5% in 2021.

Output strength



## 12 | Sustainability

Environmental concerns in Sudan receive significant attention among academic and scientific circles. They generate a substantial number of studies and reports that offer adequate evidence regarding environmental issues that necessitate action and intervention from policymakers. However, political leadership shows no concern for these issues and does not consciously or unconsciously recognize the immediate impact that environmental problems have on the population. The ruling regime lacks an environmental vision and considers environmental concerns a secondary issue in light of Sudan's ongoing political and economic crises.

Climate change is not a priority for the military government that seized power through a coup in October 2021. The government did not make any meaningful contributions due to a lack of adequate preparations prior to COP-27.

The prevalence of illegal deforestation in Sudan is a direct result of poor governance in the country. Local governments and the army exploit forests to benefit from the charcoal business – a practice that harms the ecosystem but becomes increasingly lucrative due to rising fuel prices. However, not all logging activities are driven solely by business interests. Farmers from the Nuba Mountains lost their livelihoods due to government land confiscation for the benefit of large investors. As a consequence of these unjust policies, communities were compelled to remove trees in order to acquire alternative land to sustain their agricultural livelihoods.

The illegal deforestation – coupled with climate change – also threatens Gum Arabic trees, one of Sudan's core strategic income resources.

Intertribal conflicts have a severe impact on the environment in various regions, including Blue Nile State and Darfur. Armed groups exploit natural resources – such as water, land and extractive resources – to finance themselves and acquire additional weapons, thereby prolonging the war. The state enables paramilitary militias to occupy resource-rich areas, such as those containing gold, displace local populations and exploit these resources for their own enrichment.

Unfortunately, unregulated gold mining has indeed surged in many regions recently. Since the secession of South Sudan in 2011, the Sudanese economy has lost significant oil revenues, exacerbating the economic crisis. Many individuals have entered the traditional mining sector, which accounts for 80% of Sudan's gold production, in search of fast money. Numerous reports have documented the pollution resulting from traditional gold mining, which has a severe impact on the health of the residents in these areas. In 2019, the government imposed restrictions on the use of chemicals employed by traditional miners in their gold mining activities. However, this decision was never enforced, and business continues to operate as usual.

Environmental  
policy

2

'06 '24 10



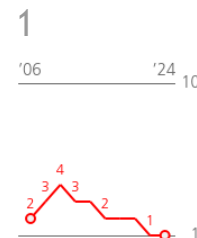
Sudan's education policy is influenced by commercialization and the state's withdrawal from investing in education. In recent years, an economic crisis has led to teachers going on strike due to low wages, resulting in schools being closed for extended periods. This, combined with the lack of security in conflict-affected areas, has disrupted the educational process. As a result of the low wages, teachers have become less committed and focused. Furthermore, teachers lack the necessary qualifications, and the curriculum suffers from significant deficiencies. The conditions of school environments are crucial to the educational process; however, many schools go without electricity and water supply for months, as well as lacking necessary furniture and books. Additionally, school buildings are not properly maintained, resulting in frequent accidents involving students and staff. In numerous regions of Sudan, students have to travel long distances or cross the Nile by boat to attend school. Sadly, drowning accidents involving students have become an almost annual tragedy in these areas.

Sudan scores 0.348 in the U.N. Education Index. It is estimated that seven million school-aged children have dropped out due to economic hardships and high school fees. Instead, these students become workers in informal sectors. The World Bank estimates Sudan's literacy rate at 60.7%. However, given the low school enrollment and high rates of school dropout in the past year due to education commercialization and economic crises, illiteracy rates are expected to rise to an unprecedented level.

The economic crisis has also impacted higher education and the research sector. University students have organized strikes to protest the significant rise in tuition, a key feature of university education privatization. The higher education crisis began during the previous regime when the higher education revolution was introduced, leading to the rapid expansion of universities without sufficient state resources. Consequently, underfunded universities across Sudan are producing low-quality education. The current regime further undermines the autonomy of the education system and reduces funding for higher education institutions.

Public universities were closed for many months during and after the 2018/2019 uprising, which caused serious delays in study plans. Students at different levels of education who were active in protests against the regime were arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared by Sudanese security forces, in an attempt to instill fear and disrupt their future studies. As a result, these students missed lectures and exams, hindering their ability to continue their education and participate in the protests. Some students who were able to afford it transferred to more stable private universities or pursued their studies abroad. However, those who couldn't afford this shift had to remain in Sudan for an additional two to three years before graduating. Upon the reopening of the universities, administrations implemented stricter security measures and increased the presence of security guards to restrict students' movements on campus.

Education policy /  
R&D



## Governance

### I. Level of Difficulty

The political leadership in Sudan inherited structural difficulties that constrain the regime's governance performance. The poverty rate is one of the highest in the world, and many families' survival is compromised by rising inflation and low wages that do not match the increasing prices of commodities. Workers in the informal sector are the most vulnerable, not only because they work in precarious conditions but also because they are at risk of hunger, homelessness and living in unsafe environments.

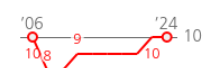
Displacement in Sudan is a long-term problem that represents a serious constraint on governance. Violence, conflicts, and insecurity have forced millions to flee their homes and live in displaced camps or in the peripheries of cities. Without achieving peace and ending displacement, the transformation of these communities will remain unachieved. Besides manmade disasters, such as war and conflicts, natural disasters regularly occur in Sudan and are among the structural constraints on governance in Sudan. Annual floods hit the country caused by heavy rains, resulting in the mass destruction of homes and infrastructure, displacement and the loss of lives. According to the U.N. OCHA, an estimated 460,000 Sudanese were displaced because of the floods in 2022, after 314,500 in 2021 and 885,480 in 2020.

Together, chronic economic crises, poverty, conflict and disasters have increased the rates of illiteracy. Sudan has lost a significant number of its highly educated workforce due to emigration. According to a recent study, Sudan has one of the highest shares of emigrant scholars worldwide. This brain drain is a serious problem because many qualified people feel unappreciated and see no use for their qualifications in the country – thus, they are forced to find opportunities elsewhere.

Over the years, Sudanese people have gained extensive experience with civic engagement due to the state's numerous failures. In times of disasters, such as the annual floods or COVID-19, individuals rely on one another rather than the state, fostering a strong sense of social trust and solidarity. Despite limited resources, many initiatives have been established to assist those in need. The holy month of Ramadan serves as a special time for communities to unite and provide food for the less fortunate. Primarily supported by diaspora networks, community initiatives encompass the provision of food, medications, shelter and the construction of schools, as well as the supply of drinking water. Unfortunately, instead of supporting these initiatives, the state displays hostility toward them, imposing restrictions on their activities and limiting their scope. Leaders of these initiatives often find themselves subject to government detention and interrogation.

Structural  
constraints

10



1

Civil society  
traditions

8



1

Similarly, Sudan's formal non-governmental organization (NGO) sector suffers from division along ethnic, tribal, regional and political lines, as well as a lack of good governance values within NGOs. In addition, most NGOs are located in urban areas and have little impact on rural areas. The former regime was highly hostile toward NGOs and employed tactics of repression, including exclusion, bans and weakening through arbitrary measures. They also established shadow NGOs that supported the regime. Through propaganda, the former regime systematically damaged the public's perception of civil society organizations.

Although civil society played a central role in the 2019 regime change, it still faces serious constraints, including repressive laws and deformed civil society structures. Civil society in Sudan suffers from a lack of democratic traditions, transparency and accountability.

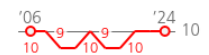
The modern history of Sudan is characterized by intense conflicts along sociopolitical, ethnic and religious lines. Because of the confrontational nature of politics in Sudan, the country has experienced severe violence carried out by both state and non-state actors in pursuit of political objectives. Social divisions and polarization are pervasive in Sudan and often escalate into mass mobilization and violent conflict. Many conflicts since Sudan's independence have been rooted in ethnic and religious differences.

Most causes of intensity and continuous conflict in Sudan trace back to the ruling authorities – whether military or democratic – who failed to effectively manage the situation since independence. As a result, the conflict transformed from tribal disputes over resources to an armed conflict due to the authorities' inability to control it. Previous governments exacerbated the situation by politicizing the native administration, leading to its weakening and escalating tensions among tribal members. This internal conflict then took on an ethnic dimension. Furthermore, the governments marginalized conflict areas and proved inept at containing them. Additionally, they failed in their attempts to manage borders, thereby facilitating the spread of weapons. Moreover, their adoption of urbanization policies further enabled armed groups to move into cities, creating additional conflict hotspots.

An outstanding armed conflict has been the war in Darfur, which started in 2003 when armed rebel groups such as the Justice and Equality Movement and Sudan Liberation Movement fought the government due to claims of marginalization of non-Arab Darfuris. The regime's counterinsurgency campaign capitalized on ethnic tensions and natural resource conflicts between the nomadic Arab tribes and non-Arab tribes, such as the Four, Zaghawa and Masalit. Due to mistrust in the regular army, whose members partly sympathized with the rebels, the government armed Arab groups (Janjaweed) to fight the rebels. These Janjaweed led a genocidal war against the population, resulting in hundreds of thousands of civilians losing their lives and millions being displaced from their villages. This conflict led to the International Criminal Court charging former President Omar al-Bashir with crimes

Conflict intensity

10



against humanity and genocide. Meanwhile, several cease-fire agreements and fragile peace agreements were signed between the government of Sudan and the rebel groups, but the conflict continues.

## II. Governance Performance

### 14 | Steering Capability

During political and economic crises, such as the current one, the political leadership in Sudan prioritizes the preservation of power over setting or maintaining long-term strategic goals. This is evident from the way the government manages the ongoing economic crisis – measures are not taken based on any expertise or evidence-based policymaking. Instead, ad hoc policy measures dominate, and the political elite prioritizes the policies that guarantee and extend their grip on power.

Rhetorically, government officials do not miss any occasion to declare that targeting social progress is their strategic priority, but their actions serve to preserve power and clientelism. The Constitutional Declaration, which has governed the transitional period in Sudan since August 2019, targeted November 2021 as the start of the process of restructuring the army's companies, so the revenues feed into the national treasury. However, the military captured power in October 2021, suspending that process. The military continues to control key economic activities, preventing the wider society from benefiting from them.

Although there is no way to achieve political stability in Sudan without a comprehensive reconciliation, the regime does not appear to be willing to undergo a conciliation process. This process should include addressing the crimes committed during their thirty-year rule, expressing regret for those actions, and providing a genuine apology to the innocent individuals impacted by these crimes.

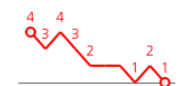
One of the main constraints that disrupts institutional reforms in various parts of the government is the remnants of the former regime, which still control key positions in the country. Notably, the transitional government inherited a weak and neglected health system, for which the COVID-19 pandemic posed a real challenge when it hit all regions across Sudan.

Question  
Score

Prioritization

1

'06 '24 10



Policy implementation is a chronic problem in Sudan, either because the government has not been genuine about implementing and achieving these policies or because the policies are not evidence-based. For example, only a small part of the Juba Peace Agreement, signed between the government and rebel groups, has been achieved. In 2022, the government promised to raise wages but failed to do so, resulting in continuous worker strikes in different sectors.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government formed the Supreme Committee of Health Emergency (SCHE) to coordinate all governmental and non-governmental efforts to tackle the pandemic. The SCHE included representatives from various governmental entities, including the Ministries of Health, Labor, Social Development, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Communication and Technology, Finance, the Central Bank of Sudan, the military, the police and the intelligence. The SCHE has been the main entity responsible for issuing policies related to the pandemic. One of the policies declared by the SCHE was restricting travelers entering Sudan and placing them in isolation centers. However, this policy was not implemented, and many travelers sneaked into the country without observing the isolation rules. The SCHE also declared curfews, banning social gatherings and collective praying in the mosques. However, people disregarded these measures and always found a way to go around the rules, and the government failed to implement and enforce its own policies. The government was unable to implement the strategy proposed by the Ministry of Health due to the failure of the health system, despite receiving support from the World Health Organization and the United Nations.

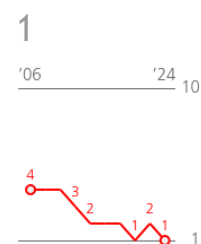
As mentioned earlier, achieving social progress is not a genuine goal of the political leadership in power. Instead, their priorities are shaped by the preservation of power for the longest time period. In such a system, the government is not concerned about innovation and learning in policymaking and policy formulation. Lacking effective monitoring and evaluation measures, the government systematically repeats past mistakes. Indeed, the government demonstrates no willingness or ability to observe and learn from good practices. Hence, academic experts and practitioners' knowledge is not considered in policy formulation.

If the government demonstrates flexibility and a willingness to optimize policy decisions, it does so for selfish, personal enrichment, but it falls short of achieving social progress because such opportunities generally do not benefit the broader society. Analysts argue that the current government has received crucial support and guidance from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) regarding the handling of post-coup developments. This includes obscuring the number of victims in the “Khartoum Massacre” that took place on June 3, 2019, ending collaboration with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, avoiding effective security sector reform, and ultimately obstructing the formal transfer of power to civilian forces.

#### Implementation



#### Policy learning



## 15 | Resource Efficiency

Sudan's government has proven incapable of efficiently utilizing all available human, financial and organizational resources. Administrative stagnation and bureaucratic inefficiency characterize the government as a whole, resulting in resource waste. Consequently, the state provides an inefficient and expensive service.

For a long time, government positions in Sudan have been viewed as opportunities for personal gain and social status. As a result, they are frequently used as rewards for loyalty or as a means to control potential adversaries. Likewise, changes in the regime in Sudan have consistently resulted in the widespread removal of public servants from the previous administration. Even at lower levels of administration, new managers typically replace existing staff with relatives, which highlights the absence of a well-established system. Consequently, politically motivated dismissals and appointments of public servants are common in Sudan.

In addition, recruiting in the civil service is neither competitive nor protected against political influence. Every government in Sudan has its own set of political criteria to which it expects personnel to adhere – a principle ensured during the recruitment process.

The state has lost millions of pounds in tax income through its numerous economic breakdowns, whether resulting from war and violence, uncondusive regulations, or, as recently happened, major strikes. Those sectors in public administration that provide some income to the government, such as passport and migration, customs, and taxation, are somehow functioning. However, the revenues from these sectors are not managed wisely for the benefit of the Sudanese citizens; instead, the funds are used to finance the army, militias and armed groups that signed the Juba Peace Agreement.

The absence of a national vision in Sudan and the lack of long-term strategic plans result in its inability to coordinate conflicting objectives. Imbalanced trade-offs between policy goals lead to disaster. For example, when the government adopts an economic policy that disadvantages many people, it fails to consider the associated security hazards. Consequently, there is increased spending on security, leading to the loss of additional resources.

The statements of members of the executive branch not only contradict each other but also demonstrate a lack of coherent policy. One official says something; the next day, another official declares a completely contradictory statement, confounding citizens and reinforcing their mistrust of the political leadership. Often, when individuals find themselves dealing with bureaucratic circles, they encounter conflicting policies between different state administrative departments. The absence of government transparency contributes to incoherent policy coordination, which leads to negligence and redundancies in the government's day-to-day operations.

Efficient use of assets

1



| Year | Score |
|------|-------|
| '06  | 2     |
| '07  | 4     |
| '08  | 3     |
| '09  | 2     |
| '10  | 1     |
| '24  | 1     |

1

Policy coordination

1



| Year | Score |
|------|-------|
| '06  | 3     |
| '07  | 2     |
| '08  | 1     |
| '09  | 1     |
| '24  | 1     |

1



Although corruption is a serious problem that constrains transformation in Sudan, the government's anti-corruption policy is at the bottom of its priorities. Government agencies in Sudan continue to be politicized and lack mechanisms to hold accountable members who break the law.

Since the coup of October 25, 2021, all efforts to initiate the anti-corruption commission, which was supposed to be established by the Constitutional Declaration, have been suspended. In parallel, the activities of the committee for dismantling the empowerment of the former Islamist regime have been stopped, and its members have been arrested. Committee chairman Wagdi Salih, a leftist politician of the FFC-CC, was released from prison again on December 3, 2022. Observers suspected a direct connection with the agreement signed two days later between FFC-CC, other parties and the army.

In sum, state spending is far from audited, media personnel are denied access to information, and mechanisms to hold officeholders accountable are suspended.

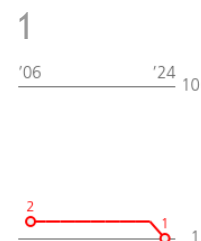
The institutional reform of state agencies is lacking, and political balancing remains in control over accountability. Without enhancing regulatory institutions, such as the General Audit, limiting conflict-of-interest practices, and establishing a parliament and local councils, political corruption will continue.

## 16 | Consensus-Building

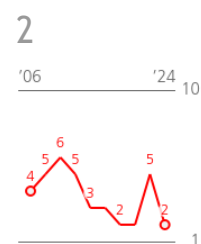
The popular uprisings in Sudan from 2018 to 2019 resulted in a regime change in April 2019 and the signing of a power-sharing agreement in August between the Transitional Military Council and the pro-democracy movement represented by the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC). One of the goals of the transitional government is to hold general elections at the end of the transitional period in order to ensure a smooth transition toward a democratic system. However, this process is far from smooth and is interrupted by disagreements among major political actors regarding long-term goals, such as the state-religion relationship and the military-politics relationship. While both military and civilian political actors have signed multiple agreements to achieve development and transformation in the country, none of these agreements have been implemented, impeding the successful transformation of Sudan into a democracy.

Major political actors in Sudan do not agree on a market economy as a strategic, long-term goal. Resistance committees, which are grassroots entities that played a major role in mobilizing and organizing the popular uprisings that overthrew the previous regime, criticize the market economy in their charters, advocate for pro-poor policies and emphasize state-led economic policies.

### Anti-corruption policy

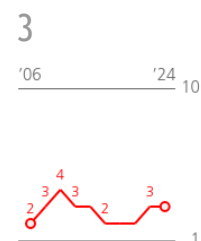


### Consensus on goals



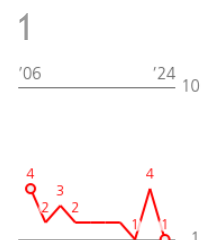
The struggle between the pro-democracy movement and anti-democratic actors in Sudan is long-standing. Anti-democratic actors, including the military, militias and members of the former regime, impede the reforms and obstruct the democratic transformation of the country and the transition to civilian rule, which is the primary demand of the pro-democracy movement. In recent years, reformers have utilized various strategies to achieve their goals but have failed to eliminate the anti-democratic actors who control the arms and economic power in the country.

Anti-democratic actors



The military government has exploited and fueled existing cleavages for its own advantage, including inciting society against the political parties. In doing so, the military capitalizes on the mistrust that the former regime instilled in the political parties, which are seen as weak, fragmented and lacking influence among the population. While there may be some truth to this categorization, it is expected that the government would instead strengthen these political parties and prepare them for the upcoming elections, if it genuinely wants to facilitate the country’s democratic transition.

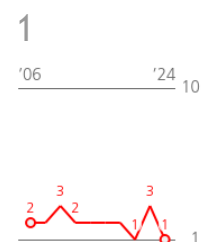
Cleavage / conflict management



But as of now, Sudan’s political leadership cannot moderate cleavage-based conflict, either because it is on the side of the conflict or because the divide is of interest to the political leadership. The political leadership in Sudan is not keen on conflict management and does not demonstrate a willingness to establish broad consensus across cleavages. Instead, officials’ irresponsible statements often feed into polarization and deepen divisions in society.

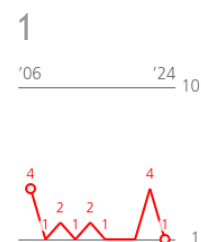
The government’s relationship with civil society actors has historically been adversarial. Nevertheless, following the revolution in December 2018, there was optimism that this dynamic would shift, with civil society actors becoming more involved in political leadership. These actors acknowledge their role in shaping policy, engaging in deliberation and participating in decision-making processes. They are willing to assist the political leadership in policy implementation and monitoring performance. Unfortunately, since the military seized power in October 2021 through a coup, all these hopes have been dashed, and civil society actors have been marginalized from the policymaking process.

Public consultation



Public debates in Sudan are not short of calls for reconciliation with all actors, including the ousted former ruling National Congress Party (NCP). Reconciliation experiences from Rwanda and South Africa are often present during these debates as examples to follow.

Reconciliation



Some actors argue that the former regime continues to present a significant danger to the transition, and achieving political stability in Sudan necessitates a comprehensive reconciliation. However, if there is any change in regime, it appears that the new leadership, like the military coup of 2019, is unwilling to engage in a conciliation process that involves openly acknowledging the crimes committed during their 30 years in power, expressing remorse, and offering a sincere apology to those innocent individuals who have suffered as a result of their actions.

The reconciliation process in Sudan faces several challenges, including fragmented political forces, a lack of institutional and party reforms, and a lack of democratic values in the country. The corrupted judiciary system is believed to sympathize with the former regime. However, legal experts emphasize that bypassing the judiciary in the process would have serious repercussions and would question the constitutionality of the process.

Omar al-Bashir is detained in Kobar prison in Khartoum north with regular stays in the military hospital for health concerns. There has been no progress on the International Criminal Court's (ICC) verdict against him because the military leadership keeps postponing his handover to The Hague, asserting that the national judiciary system is capable of prosecuting the former president in Sudan – a statement that many Sudanese, particularly those from Darfur, perceive as provocative. Regardless of the judiciary's competence and the outcome of the process, a lengthy trial resembling a charade is currently underway against the former regime's leaders, including al-Bashir. The trial is regularly broadcast on national television, sparking controversy between his supporters and opponents.

Some members of Sudan's current political leadership are perpetrators themselves – they were personally involved in committing crimes, such as the genocide in Darfur (2003 – 2004) and the “Khartoum Massacre” of June 3, 2019, which resulted in hundreds of dead and injured victims. The criminal acts of the former regime have also inflicted suffering on numerous prisoners who were subjected to torture by former security agents.

Addressing or overcoming a conflict-laden past requires serving justice, and individuals found guilty should be removed from office. In cases of serious human rights violations, impunity must be eradicated. The political leadership of Sudan fails to hold its members responsible and disrupts investigations. Therefore, the political leadership does not reconcile victims and perpetrators but rather further exploits existing cleavages and conflicts.

## 17 | International Cooperation

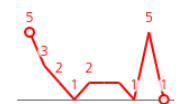
Political leaders in Sudan do not utilize international assistance to implement long-term strategic development because they lack a clear and consistent development agenda. Neither a long-term strategy nor a detailed road map toward such aims exists, and the regime does not formulate any input required from international partners.

The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) is a political mission established in 2020 to support the transition to democratic rule in Sudan. In this regard, UNITAMS supports the peace process, the implementation of the peace agreement, and the establishment of political and development initiatives for peacebuilding. UNITAMS works toward achieving the goals of the constitutional

Effective use of support

1

'06 '24 10



declaration, coordinating economic and development aid, and protecting citizens' human rights. Its work supports political stability, the constitution-making process, holding elections and institutional reform. In response to the political crisis that followed the 2021 coup, UNITAMS joined hands with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) to form the Trilateral Mechanism, reaching a framework agreement between the military and civilian forces in December 2022.

Yet, for the political leadership in Sudan, international assistance is primarily perceived as an opportunity for short-term expediencies, policy inconsistencies and rent-seeking. For example, the Family Support Program, funded by the World Bank to provide direct cash transfers to Sudanese families, has failed due to structural and sociocultural problems. In this case, the political leadership's failure to utilize international assistance can be attributed to a lack of long-term strategy.

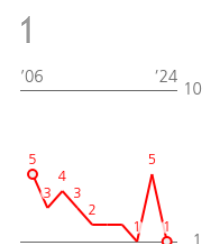
The Sudanese government has limited credibility with the international community, and its reliability as a partner is highly questioned. The government shows little to no commitment to existing international agreements. When the military captured power on October 25, 2021, through a coup, many international donors stopped supporting the government because it lacked credibility. Most importantly, the United States, the World Bank and the IMF froze all development aid and debt relief to Sudan, while the African Union (AU) has suspended Sudan's membership ever since.

The international actors mediating the framework agreement in Sudan seemed to be less cautious about trusting the military. The military must be judged by their actions, not by what they say. The military may well sign the agreement but not implement it. The October 2021 coup staged by the military happened just one month before the date of handing the political leadership to civilian actors, according to the 2019 Constitutional Declaration. Therefore, there is no proof that the military will ever respect other crucial stipulations of the framework agreement.

The military's actions demonstrate no genuine desire for a democratic transition in Sudan. It prolongs the transitional period to empower themselves and always blames the civilian factions for all the faults of the transitional government that they are leading.

Another instance of the government's unreliability in international cooperation is its lack of cooperation with the ICC regarding the atrocities committed in Darfur.

Credibility



The crisis in Sudan has significant regional implications, and stability in Sudan is a priority for the entire region. Therefore, regional actors have initiated numerous efforts and initiatives to resolve the political crisis in Sudan following the military coup on October 25, 2021 and the subsequent surge of protests and military suppression against peaceful protesters.

Since January 2022, Saudi Arabia has supported and played a key role in the U.N. initiative for the political process in Sudan, which concluded with the signing of a framework agreement on December 5, 2022, between the ruling military and the Forces of Freedom and Change. Egypt has also launched an initiative to address political stagnation in Sudan, which has generated controversy in the country. The military and the Forces of Freedom and Change–Democratic Bloc (FFC-DB) have accepted it, whereas the Forces of Freedom and Change–Central Committee (FFC-CC) have rejected it.

The African Union (AU) appears to be more supportive of the military, even though the military ended the partnership mediated by the AU between civilians and the military in 2019/2020.

The Quad Mechanism – composed of the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia – is an international initiative that aims to end the Sudanese crisis following the 2021 coup. As a mediator, the Quad Mechanism attempts to bring together various political forces, civilians, rebels, and the military in order to achieve an agreement that will ultimately transfer power to a civilian government.

The Tripartite Mechanism is composed of UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD. It was established in 2022 to facilitate dialogue between the civilian and military components in Sudan, aiming to reach a political settlement that would end the political stalemate in the country.

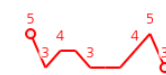
In March 2021, Sudan and Egypt signed a defense agreement and military cooperation agreement to acknowledge the common national security threats faced by both countries.

In September 2021, Sudan and South Sudan signed an agreement to resume trade activities and cooperation after the relationship between the two neighboring countries had been suspended for 10 years since the secession of South Sudan in 2011. The agreement stipulates that as of October 2021, the two countries will cooperate in several fields, including security, trade exchange, transportation, and export and import – a step that was considered timely and beneficial for both countries.

Regional cooperation

3

'06 \_\_\_\_\_ '24 10



1

## Strategic Outlook

During the period under review (2021 – 2023), Sudan backslid on its path toward developing into a democratic nation-state. The military coup, led by General Burhan on October 25, 2021, cost Sudan numerous opportunities to establish functioning state institutions that could generate integrative policies and represent the national interests of all Sudanese people. It also disrupted the process of dismantling former President Omar al-Bashir's regime.

At this point, there are many urgent needs that deserve immediate consideration. The most pressing need is the pacification of enduring conflicts and a solution to the economic crisis. This includes countering corruption, implementing investment environment reforms, controlling inflation, reforming the banking system, managing government spending and promoting production in key economic sectors. The political leadership must prioritize economic plans over their own power struggles.

In a second step, there should be a renewed focus on democratic transformation alongside economic transformation.

Furthermore, the process of dismantling the former Islamist regime's empowerment must resume and continue until its goals are achieved.

Crucial for a better future is also a thorough security sector reform, which involves ending the military's dominance over politics and power. The various military forces should integrate into a unified national army, and the military coup must be brought to an end, enabling the transfer of power to a civilian government. Additionally, attention must be given to addressing justice issues, and an independent legislative council should be established. The achievement of justice and the accountability of those who committed atrocities are crucial elements in Sudan's transformation.

Political actors and forces currently negotiating the political process in Sudan must ensure that national and internal interests prevail over personal gains and external interests. In recent years, the government has signed several political agreements with various actors, including the opposition and rebel armed group leaders. However, these agreements have largely remained on paper, with little implementation due to a lack of genuine commitment by political actors. It is essential for political forces to actively work toward building effective governance institutions, establishing a new constitution and leading the transitional period toward holding fair and free elections. Throughout these processes, transparency is crucial, and it is mandatory to involve the public in order to rebuild trust between wider society and political forces.

The government must prioritize environmental protection in Sudan, where the population and resources are managed in a sustainable manner, with the aim of protecting the environment. The government needs to improve its crisis management capacity to effectively respond to identified threats. Sudan's poor infrastructure has been a major constraint on the country's development, making rebuilding it a pressing priority. The international community has made promises and commitments to support Sudan's transition into democracy. The political leadership in Sudan needs to put the country back on track to enable cooperation with the international community.