

## MOTIVES OF EXTREMISM MOVEMENTS OF SUDAN RAPID SUPPORT FORCES IN THE SUDAN CONFLICT 2023

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### ABSTRACT:

*The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is a purely internal conflict because both parties want to fight for civilian leadership. Since Leader General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan together with the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RSF) took over the power of al-Bashir's government. The struggle for power continues, marked by extremist movements from the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces Coup Movement. Since al-Burhan demonstrated the 2019 Constitutional agreement regarding political transition, extremist movements have been carried out by the Rapid Support Forces and in 2023 in the capital Khartoum to seize power from Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. This article aims to analyze 1) The influence of the Sudanese Rapid Support Force movement; 2) RSF's reasons for fighting SAF; 3) Impact on Sudanese State Security; 4) International laws violated in the RSF-SAF conflict. The method used in this paper is explanatory historical by collecting data on past events and using appropriate theories to explain the RSF-SAF conflict. Sudan is a failed state category where previous governments were unable to maintain Sudan's security and prosperity. The impact of attacks by RSF troops have intensified in the capital Khartoum, causing forced evacuations, damage to infrastructure, various looting of business shops, and difficulty in accessing humanitarian aid. Behind all the RSF's aggressive actions, Hemedti and his troops intended to overthrow Al-Burhan because he had betrayed the 2019 Constitution. As a result of the war between the RSF and SAF, Sudan turned into a country that contributed to immigrants and triggered a humanitarian crisis.*

**Keywords;** Rapid Support Force, Sudan Armed Force, Sudan

### A. Introduction

RSF (Rapid Support Force) is a Sudanese paramilitary group led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo usually called Hemedti. He currently serves as deputy head of the Sovereign Council of Sudan. The number of RSF troops is estimated at around 100,000 soldiers spread across the world. The Sudanese Rapid Support Forces are a paramilitary group used by the Sudanese government in 2003 in its battle in Darfur against the rebellion. RSF is recorded as having contributed to the country and has been recorded as having violated human rights. One of RSF's achievements is that RSF troops participated in the Yemen War in 2015 together with Saudi and UAE troops. Since then, the RSF's relations have been very close to

the Gulf countries. On the other hand, RSF troops have committed human rights violations such as coups in the democratic process and violence against several pro-democracy groups.<sup>1</sup>

As Sudan's economy worsens, Sudanese civilians demonstrate in mass protests. They demand economic reform and the removal of President al-Bashir. A military-civilian government was soon established, but that too was overthrown in 2021 when General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan took over. RSF is recorded as having participated in President al-Bashir's coup along with SAF, NISS (National Intelligence and Security Service), and several other police forces. The movement to equalize President al-Bashir itself is purely the desire of the Sudanese people to demand political reform, namely a transition from authoritarian power to power that is in the hands of the people. Initially, this movement was inspired by the worldwide phenomenon of the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring is a revolutionary movement to overthrow authoritarian rule if social and economic chaos occurs. In President al-Bashir's case, his policies are always contrary to the welfare of society. The Sudanese people's dislike of Bashir is due to his prioritization of the loyalty of the security forces over his party and society.<sup>2</sup>

Since then, the country has been controlled by a council of generals headed by two military figures at the center of the conflict, namely General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan who heads the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and is the country's president. His deputy, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, leads the Rapid Relief Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group. An agreement was signed by the military council to transition Sudan back to civilian rule in 2023, but debate between the two generals about the transition process led to increased tensions that erupted into conflict between their military groups on April 15.

According to the Washington Post, the Rapid Support Force was originally a paramilitary force formed and controlled by the Sudanese government. Originally named the Janjaweed, the RSF militia was deployed to the battlefield on behalf of the Sudanese government during the war in Darfur, western Sudan. They were used by the authoritarian leader at the time, Omar al-Bashir, to help the military put down a civil uprising. At that time, the Sudanese military only had a strong air force and heavy weapons but was less able

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<sup>1</sup> Umaya. (2023). "Profile of the Rapid Support Forces, a Paramilitary Group that Clashes with the Sudanese Army - Part 2". inews.id. <https://www.inews.id/news/internasional/profil-rapid-support-forces-kelompok-paramiliter-yang-bentrok-dengan-tentara-sudan/2>.

<sup>2</sup> Hassan, M & Kodouda, A. "Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 30 No. 4, 2019, p. 89-103. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/sudans-uprising-the-fall-of-a-dictator/>.

to mobilize for war as effectively as the arid rural areas of Darfur.<sup>3</sup>

In the 2010s, the Janjaweed transformed into a more formal rapid reaction unit and was named the Rapid Support Force (RSF). Bashir even provided them with financial support, so that the RSF commanders became rich and powerful. RSF was also sent outside Darfur to deal with tribal conflicts on the Sudanese border. In 2019, civil demonstrations forced Bashir's dictatorship out of power in Sudan. Two years later, the Sudanese military and RSF collaborated to carry out a coup, but due to international pressure, they gave power to the civilian-led government, as reported by Reuters. However, the agreement has not ended well to date.<sup>4</sup>

Deputy Leader of Sudan's Sovereign Council, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, or Hemedti, leads the Rapid Support Forces. Hemedti has been recruiting rapidly over the past two years to improve the RSF's reputation, and analysts estimate the militia group already has around 100,000 members. RSF troops come mostly from western Sudan, near Darfur, and areas long ignored by the government, such as near the Red Sea and on the border with South Sudan.<sup>5</sup>

On April 15, 2023, military clashes occurred between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. Even after three months, the battle was not over. In contrast, the capital, Khartoum, has suffered extensive damage, and fighting has spread, displacing more than 3 million people across the country and abroad. This is the first time that large-scale fighting has occurred in the Sudanese capital, although there have been many armed clashes since its independence in 1956. Unless the current armed clashes are stopped as soon as possible, Sudan will suffer irreparable damage and the political situation in the surrounding region become unstable.<sup>6</sup>

The beginning of the conflict between the SAF and the RSF stems from fighting in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid

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<sup>3</sup> Ziff, D.R. (2023). "Who Are the Rapid Support Forces Fighting in Sudan? Who Is Hemedti?". The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/04/15/sudan-fighting-paramilitary-hemedti-khartoum/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Sakane, K. (2023). "What Will the Military Clash in Sudan Bring about? - Intervention by the International Community Is Required". Sakaka Peace Foundation. [https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane\\_07.html](https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane_07.html).

Support Forces (RSF), quickly spreading throughout the country. SAF leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as "Hemedti," jointly carried out a coup against the country's transitional government in October 2021. Both forces have a history of violating international humanitarian and human rights law, especially in Darfur and during the crackdown on protesters. In 2022, the trial of Ali Kosheib, the former leader of the Janjaweed militia, who was charged with 31 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, began at the International Criminal Court. An arrest warrant for former president Omar al-Bashir and two of his associates has still not been issued.<sup>7</sup>

After fighting in the capital Khartoum, the Sudanese army claimed the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RFS) were rebels. The Sudanese army in a statement accused the RFS of attacking its troops in Khartoum and several other cities. The army said, "RSF rebels spread lies about our troops allegedly attacking them to cover up their defiant behavior." On Saturday morning local time, fighting broke out in Khartoum between the Sudanese army and RSF forces. According to the Anadolu report, gunshots and bomb explosions were heard near the army headquarters and the presidential palace. The RSAF said it had taken over Khartoum airport and the Merowe military base in northern Sudan. Since Thursday, the Sudanese army has stated that recent RSF movements were carried out illegally and without coordination, leading to conflict between the two sides. Amid proposals to establish a civilian government in Sudan, the dispute arose.<sup>8</sup>

In October 2021, the military overthrew the transitional government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, resulting in a state of emergency in Sudan. To resolve the months-long crisis, an agreement was signed between political parties and the Sudanese military last December. Civil society opposed the deal for military rule, and PM Hamdok briefly served again but then resigned.<sup>9</sup>

The urgency of creating this journal is to identify the problems behind the conflict

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<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2023). "First ICC Trial on Darfur Crimes: Ali Mohammed Ali, Known as Ali Kosheib or Kushayb, Janjaweed Leader". <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/29/first-icc-trial-darfur-crimes-ali-mohammed-ali-known-ali-kosheib-or-kushayb>.

<sup>8</sup> Antara News. (2023). "Sudanese Army Declares RSF a Rebel Force". <https://www.antarane.ws.com/berita/3490557/tentara-sudan-nyatakan-rsf-pasukan-pemberontak>. Diakses Mei 2024.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

between the SAF and RSF and the consequences for the security of the Sudanese state. The clash of interests between the SAF forces led by Al-Burhan and the RSF forces led by Hemedti has brought a humanitarian disaster to the Sudanese population. Human rights have been completely lost for the Sudanese population due to the civil war. Meanwhile, the international organization in this case, namely the International Court of Law (ICC) under the supervision of the United Nations (UN), has established the rules of war jurisdiction along with the treatment of civilians. This journal aims to determine the form of conflict between the SAF and RSF by analyzing the origins of the root causes of the conflict. Apart from discussing the origins of the Sudanese Civil War conflict, acts of war crimes involving both parties to the conflict will be analyzed using the law of war standards published by the ICC. Humanitarian violations committed by the RSF extremist movement will be fully discussed in this journal

## **B. Research Method**

The research method that will be used in this paper is explanatory historical. Historical means research is carried out by collecting data from past events to be used as material for analysis. Meanwhile, the explanatory research method is a method for explaining the causal relationship of existing variables based on the use of appropriate theory. The findings in this paper will be based on qualitative analysis methods. The data that will be searched is descriptive or non-numerical from online journals, online books, and other articles that are easy and accessible. The results of this research will then be interpreted by researchers in this paper.

## **C. Discussion**

### **1. Effect of Rapid Support Force**

Belligerent is a term that is frequently mentioned during a conflict event. This term usually refers to a rebel group or party in conflict to overthrow the government in power. Belligerent groups usually fight against a government they feel is carrying out acts of oppression against belligerent groups.<sup>10</sup> Belligerence groups have the right to determine their destiny and have the rights and obligations given by the state in a war situation. There are certain legal conditions in deciding whether a belief group is a subject of international law

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<sup>10</sup> Azizah, N.R et.al, "Recognition of the Existence of Belligerents in International Law (OPM Case Study)", *Jurnal Petikum*, Vol. 9 No. 2, 2023, p. 151-160.

or not. The requirements include having an organized group, obeying the laws of war, having a controlled territory, having the ability to establish relations with other countries, determining one's destiny, choosing one's own economic, political, and social system, and having natural wealth in the area they occupied.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of the extremist Rapid Support Force (RSF) led by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo or Hemedti, can be called a belief group that is fighting the Al-Burhan government. RSF troops have fulfilled several requirements, such as being an organized group because they have leaders and troops, have their territory, namely the Darfur region which the RSF once controlled in the 2003 rebellion, and have the right to determine their fate. Moreover, RSF received support from the United Arab Emirates, led by Mohammed bin Zayed. The purpose of the UAE supporting Hemedti is due to the influence of Saudi Arabia which supports Al-Burhan's government in Sudan.<sup>12</sup> Even though the RSF committed many violations such as attacking densely populated areas and carrying out acts of discrimination, the RSF is subject to the principle of State responsibility for Violations of International Law of 2001 in Article 4 of the Draft Article.<sup>13</sup> In the contents of the Draft Article, subjects of international law, including belligerent groups, are responsible for all violations of international law, including international humanitarian law. Belligerent groups such as the RSF are responsible both individually and as commands as stated in Article 5 Paragraph (1) of the Rome Statute.<sup>14</sup>

RSF deployments to Merowe appeared to be reduced when the SAF dispersed RSF convoys. However, three days later, on the morning of April 15, fighting suddenly erupted in Khartoum, with the RSF not only taking over Khartoum International Airport,<sup>15</sup> but also raided the private residence of SAF Supreme Commander Burhan.<sup>16</sup> This resulted in the

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Mohammad, Talal. (2023). "Sudan's Conflict Is Turning into a Saudi-UAE Proxy War for Gulf Hegemony". Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/12/sudan-conflict-saudi-arabia-uae-gulf-burhan-hemeti-rsf/>. Diakses Juli 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Novianty, R & Irawati. "Responsibilities of the Houthis Who Recruit Children as Soldiers in the Armed Conflict in Yemen Judging from International Law", Jurnal Prosiding Ilmu Hukum, Vol. 7 No. 2, 2021, pp. 623-627.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Abdelaziz, K & Eltahir, N. (2023). "Sudan's Army Says Paramilitary Mobilisation Risks Confrontation". Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudans-army-warns-rsf-movements-khartoum-other-cities-2023-04-13/>.

<sup>16</sup> Abdelaziz, K. (2023). "How Sudan's Paramilitary Forces Took Parts of Khartoum, Stormed Army Chief's Quarters". Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/how-sudans-paramilitary-forces-took-parts-khartoum-stormed-army-chiefs-quarters-2023-05-10/>.

bombing of Khartoum International Airport by the air force's planes. Although fighting is concentrated in the country's capital, Khartoum, the conflict has impacted other regions of the country. In Darfur, mass killings and displacement have led to reports of ethnic cleansing. More than 14,000 people have been killed, and around 6.4 million people have been internally displaced, making it the world's largest internal displacement crisis. More than 8 million people have fled their homes, seeking refuge at home and abroad, with children representing about half of the displaced. Sudan is now the country with the largest number of refugees and the largest child displacement crisis in the world.<sup>17</sup>

The expansion of conflict within Sudan has displaced more than 500,000 people and exacerbated the country's food crisis. Meanwhile, looting businesses, markets, and humanitarian aid warehouses are adding to food shortages.<sup>18</sup> While the conflict in Sudan continues to expand, humanitarian access is increasingly limited. Intense violence and movement restrictions on humanitarian actors have hampered the delivery of aid, especially in southern Sudan where needs are highest. ACAPS has rated humanitarian access constraints in Sudan as extreme (5 out of 5). As the conflict continues despite failed diplomatic efforts, humanitarian needs will continue to increase – and the ability to meet them will decline.<sup>19</sup>

Damage was caused to the capital's functions, major facilities and infrastructure in the capital were destroyed by gunfire and airstrikes, and 2 million people were evacuated in Khartoum State alone. This is equivalent to 40% of Khartoum's population of around 5 million people. RSF soldiers who have been living in empty houses will not be easy to move, even if the armed clashes end. Khartoum is home to wealthy Sudanese people and intellectuals, but these groups who fled the country may not return to Sudan even after the ceasefire. Many of the RSF soldiers who started living in empty houses have been recruited from Darfur and neighboring countries, but if their stay is prolonged, they could become a major part of Khartoum's population in the future.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> International Rescue Committee. (2023). "Crisis in Sudan: What Is Happening and How to Help". <https://www.rescue.org/article/fighting-sudan-what-you-need-know-about-crisis>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Sakane, K. (2023). "What Will the Military Clash in Sudan Bring about? – Intervention by the International Community Is Required". Sasaka Peace Foundation. [https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane\\_07.html](https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane_07.html).

The impact of armed clashes that will occur in the surrounding area. 700,000 people have fled to neighboring countries; 250,000 to Egypt, 240,000 to Chad, and 170,000 to South Sudan. Egypt has long had a tolerant policy towards Sudan as its former colony but has tightened restrictions on the entry of Sudanese citizens into the country as the country's economy deteriorates. Chad is at risk of destabilization as a large influx of Sudanese citizens could lead to changes in its ethnic composition. In addition, Wagner, which already operates in Sudan as well as the Central African Republic, could take advantage of the unstable situation in Sudan to strengthen its influence in these regions. Eritrea has strengthened its ties with Russia, which has been a source of concern as the situation across the “Horn of Africa” becomes more fluid.<sup>21</sup>

## **2. Reason why The RSF is Fighting Against The SAF**

Since President al-Bashir's leadership fell in 2019, an agreement regarding the future of Sudan's leadership has begun to be discussed by the former militant groups that carried out the coup. The agreement was made in the FFC (Force Freedom of Coalition) forum, which is a coalition formed by Sudanese militants to overthrow al-Bashir's leadership. The agreement includes policies that conflict with President al-Bashir. The first point in the FFC agreement is to give full power to the people, with the understanding that the Sudanese people have the right to participate in the Sudanese political environment. The second point is to create a political-free atmosphere, meaning that no leadership prioritizes personal interests. The third point in the FCC agreement is the most important and final, namely providing the widest possible opportunity for political participation. The points of the FCC agreement are entirely the wishes of the Sudanese people when protesting against President al-Bashir.<sup>22</sup>

President Abdel Fattah al-Burhan himself once promised to safeguard the desires of the Sudanese people to become a more democratic country. This promise was stated in the agreement between the military leadership and civil society regarding the distribution of power in the political sector after the ouster of President al-Bashir. The agreement between the military and civilians includes a schedule for Sudan's national elections which are

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Abdelaziz, K and Elthahir, N. (2022). “Sudan Generals and Parties Sign Outline Deal, Protesters Cry Foul”. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudanese-civilian-parties-sign-framework-deal-new-political-transition-2022-12-05/>.



planned for 2022. This agreement is valid from 2019 to 2022 after the new president has been elected. In preparing for the political transition toward democratization, Sudan's political parties have elected eleven Council members to oversee and ensure the continuity of the political transition.

During the political transition process, the vacancy in the interim government was filled by President Abdalla Hamdok as a replacement for the interim president. All guarantees regarding the political transition are guaranteed in the 2019 Constitution between the TMC (Transnational Military Council) and the FCC. This guarantee did not last long when in 2021, Sudanese Military General al-Burhan fired Abdalla Hamdok from his seat of government and detained him. As a reason, al-Burhan said Hamdok's arrest was intended to prevent fraudulent election results and prevent civil war.<sup>23</sup> As a result of al-Burhan's betrayal of the 2019 Constitution, elections planned for 2022 were canceled.

During President Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's reign, the SAF military group committed many immoral acts against civilians who were supported by the RSF. President al-Burhan has strong ambitions to become President and in addition, the SAF military group under al-Burhan's leadership has control over several economic and social sectors that are the needs of the Sudanese people. With the coming to power of Abdel Fattah al-Bashir as the new oligarchic president, al-Bashir himself wants to erase some traces of his evil past. Al-Bashir's elimination of bad traces is intended so that the SAF and Bashir gain legitimacy and public trust in the Sudanese people.<sup>24</sup> The 2003 Darfur massacre was one of al-Bashir's accusations to RSF that these troops carried out acts of genocide. In response, RSF said that al-Bashir's statement was presented as distorted information.

In a statement from the chairman of the RSF, Mohamed Hamdan Dangalo, or Hemedti, said that the RSF was involved in the Sudanese civil war due to SAF and Bashir's betrayal of the 2019 Constitution which contained Sudan's peace and guaranteed the right to power the people in politics. RSF makes claims that the SAF is an extremist military group that is trying to destroy the security and stability of the Sudanese military unification process (Incorporation of the RSF into the Sudanese armed forces). RSF deeply regrets the policy

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<sup>23</sup> Hasan, I & Hamdan, B. "OLIGARKY AND THE DELAY OF THE 2022 ELECTIONS IN SUDAN AFTER THE OMISSION OF PRESIDENT BASHIR", *Jurnal Penelitian Politik*, Vol. 19 No. 1. 2022, pp. 23-40.

<sup>24</sup> Hamza, A. (2023). "Sudan: Not Exactly a Fight between Good Guys and Bad Guys". *Responsible Statecraft*. <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/sudan-conflict/>.

taken by SAF by accusing RSF of being an extremist group and the actor behind attacks on SAF troops. However, RSF remains on its main path in upholding the 2019 Constitution which guarantees Sudan's democratization. Dagalo or Hemedti emphasized that the RSF is committed to achieving stability and security in Sudan and expressed its support for the Sudanese people.<sup>25</sup> Even though the RSF is fighting for the consistency of the 2019 Constitutional agreement, President al-Burhan still blames the RSF as a rebel group that has disrupted Sudan's democratic process. Burhan views the RSF as war criminals so the democratization process presented by Hemedti is very different from the reality on the ground. What was conveyed by Hemedti as the head of the RSF also did not match reality, where he emphasized that the RSF wanted the Sudanese people to return to their homes and that humanitarian assistance would be guaranteed. The RSF's hopes of becoming the legitimate leader of Sudan in public were destroyed by the arrogance of the RSF itself. RSF militants have always acted discriminatorily against local communities in Sudan. The non-Arab population of Masalit became one of the victims of the RSF genocide. RSF militants massacred the non-Arab Masalit group due to accusations from the RSF of their collaboration with the SAF.<sup>26</sup> What was conveyed by Hemedti as the head of the RSF also did not match reality, where he emphasized that the RSF wanted the Sudanese people to return to their homes and that humanitarian assistance would be guaranteed. The RSF's hopes of becoming the legitimate leader of Sudan in public were destroyed by the arrogance of the RSF itself. RSF militants have always acted discriminatorily against local communities in Sudan. The non-Arab population of Masalit became one of the victims of the RSF genocide. RSF militants massacred the non-Arab Masalit group due to accusations from the RSF of their collaboration with the SAF.<sup>27</sup>

Previously, the RSF and SAF had been trusted by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as the composition of the Sudanese armed forces. The task of the two militants is to ensure the implementation of the 2019 Constitution. RSF was appointed as a security trust by al-Bashir as head of the Sovereign Council. Bashir's trust in the RSF could not be maintained when RSF troops began using Arab soldiers to massacre non-Arab groups. As a result of

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<sup>25</sup> The Sudan Times. (2024). "RSF Leader Calls for Peace, Justice on Anniversary of Sudan Conflict.". <https://thesudantimes.com/sudan/rsf-leader-calls-for-peace-justice-on-anniversary-of-sudan-conflict/>

<sup>26</sup> Africanews. (2023). "Sudan's Burhan Accuses Rival RSF of 'war Crimes'". Africanews. <https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/14/sudans-burhan-accuses-rival-rsf-of-war-crimes/>.

<sup>27</sup> Gouja, A. (2023). "As Darfur Falls to the RSF, Where Is the Outrage at Their Atrocities?". The New Humanitarian. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/first-person/2023/12/11/sudan-war-darfur-rsf-atrocities>.

aggression from the Arab army, many local non-Arab residents began to flee on a large scale to neighboring countries. Apart from that, the RSF often controls and destroys important sectors in Darfur such as agricultural land.<sup>28</sup>

The origins of the internal conflict between the RSF and SAF in Sudan were caused by the previous government's failure to maintain state security. The events in Sudan are related to the Failed State theory introduced by Robert. I. Rotberg in the book "When State Fails: Causes and Consequences". The basic argument of the theory is that a country can be said to have failed if the government in power fails to overcome rebel groups which usually consist of one or more groups with the status of opposition to the government. In a failed state, the government is considered to have failed to control public satisfaction, giving rise to differences of opinion with the government. There are several main indicators of why a country can be said to have failed. First, violence is the main key to defining the condition of a failed state. This form of violence is often directed at the government or regime in power. Worse yet, rebel groups often brand their violent actions against the government as justified and reasonable. Second, attitudes of disharmony in the context of religion, ethnicity, language, and certain groups (SARA). Robert said that civil war occurs because there is an imbalance between one group and another, which can trigger conflict between groups which leads to regime resistance. Third, failed countries are considered unable to properly guard their borders with other countries. Robert believes that the less the geographic area of a country is controlled by the government, the more unsafe the country is because the potential for rebellion from other countries increases. Apart from that, Robert categorized the increase in crime, corruption, and decline in GDP as other indicators of a failed state.<sup>29</sup>

### **3. Impact on Sudan's Security**

The power struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RFS) erupted into a large-scale conflict in April 2023 and has since impacted humanitarian needs in the country. Even after 3 months, the fighting still has not stopped, resulting in the capital, Khartoum, suffering serious damage and the fighting becoming more widespread. After the conflict first occurred, approximately 14,700 people were killed and almost 30,000 were injured. Sudan was already experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis before the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces led

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<sup>28</sup> Reeves, E. (2023). "What Will Be Remembered? History and the Darfur Genocide.". Sudan Research, Analysis, and Advocacy. <https://sudanreeves.org/2023/07/22/9441/>.

<sup>29</sup> Rotbert, R. "State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror". Brooking Institution Press, 2006.

to long-term political instability and economic pressure, causing 15.8 million people to need humanitarian assistance. Sudan has become the country with the world's biggest displacement crisis since more than 8 million people were forced to flee their homes last April. Amid mass displacement and reports of mass killings, humanitarian access is severely restricted, making aid very difficult to reach for the Sudanese people.<sup>30</sup>

Various more severe impacts were caused by armed clashes that previously occurred in Sudan. Sudan experienced damage to the function of its capital, especially since the main facilities in the capital were destroyed due to gunfire and air attacks.<sup>31</sup> Around 40% of the population in Khartoum, amounting to around 5 thousand people, has been evacuated. This was exploited by the RSF to stay in empty houses and would not be easily displaced, even after the armed clashes ended. Khartoum is home to Sudan's rich people and intellectuals, but the groups of people who fled Sudan are unlikely to return even after the ceasefire is over. RSF soldiers living in empty houses are recruited from Darfur and neighboring countries, but if their stay is extended, they could become a major part of Khartoum's population in the future. This means that if an election is held, they constitute a certain number of voters. The RFS was renamed after an armed group called the Janjaweed, which carried out massacres and burned villages in Darfur, to displace residents and settlers in their territory. The same approach is now being taken in the capital, Khartoum.<sup>32</sup>

Then, the consequences of the RSF attack in Sudan had an impact on the surrounding area, as up to 700,000 Sudanese citizens fled to other countries. There are 250,000 people in Egypt, 240,000 people in Chad, and 170,000 in South Sudan. For quite a long time, Egypt maintained a policy of tolerance towards Sudan, a former colonial country, but as the country's economy declined, Sudan's entry boundaries into Egypt were tightened. Destabilization is a worry for Chad because significant influxes from Sudan could change the country's ethnic makeup. Wagner, who has experience operating in Sudan and the Central African Republic, may also be able to increase his influence in the area by taking advantage of Sudan's unstable position. With the situation in the "Horn of Africa" increasingly unstable,

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<sup>30</sup> International Rescue Committee. (2023). "Crisis in Sudan: What Is Happening and How to Help.", <https://www.rescue.org/article/fighting-sudan-what-you-need-know-about-crisis>

<sup>31</sup> Malik, N. (2023). "All That We Had Is Gone': My Lament for War-Torn Khartoum". The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/18/all-that-we-had-is-gone-my-lament-for-war-torn-khartoum>.

<sup>32</sup> International Organization for Migration, 2023, "DTM Sudan - Situation Report (13)". IOM UN Migration. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/dtm-sudan-situation-report-13>.

Eritrea's closer ties with Russia are worth watching.<sup>33</sup>

Not only that, the armed clashes between RSF and SAF also had an impact on the decline of democratization and the development of government through violence in the Sudanese region. Sudan's democracy movement persists despite harsh crackdowns. However, the presence of pro-democracy groups has disappeared since the armed clashes that occurred on April 15 and global attention has focused on the ceasefire between the SAF AND RSF.<sup>34</sup> Most public opinion was more "in favor of democratic groups and disapproving of the military" before the military clashes in April. However, evidence circulating on social media and other platforms suggests that after April, public views appear to have shifted to "disapproving of the RSF and supporting the SAF". Even if the SAF wins the current armed conflict and the RSF emerges victorious, it remains unclear whether the long-term democratization process can continue. Islamists, who support Bashir's regime, are increasingly involved in the fighting. After the 2019 democratic revolution, Islamist groups were disbanded and prohibited from participating in politics; however, as a result of prolonged fighting between the SAF and RSF, Islamist groups have become more prevalent in the ongoing armed conflict and have gained significant influence throughout the conflict. One of the biggest challenges to advancing democratization is the emergence of Islamist organizations.<sup>35</sup> Not only in Sudan but also in neighboring countries and across the African continent, the spread of democracy is anticipated to be hampered by the decline of military and democratic rule. Noteworthy, several armed groups and security organizations in politically unstable African countries continue to monitor developments in Sudan, plotting coups and seeking opportunities to establish military control.

#### **4. International Laws Violated in the RSF-SAF Conflict**

The Civil War in Sudan is a violation of international humanitarian law or what is usually called the law of war. International humanitarian law was formed as a response to the uncertainty of when and what wars will be international or non-international. International humanitarian law not only regulates war to make it more humane but the rights

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<sup>33</sup> Sakane, K. (2023). "What Will the Military Clash in Sudan Bring about? – Intervention by the International Community Is Required". Sasaka Peace Foundation. [https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane\\_07.html](https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/sakane_07.html).

<sup>34</sup> Idrissa, R. (2023). "Sudan's Repressed Democracy". The New York Review. <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2023/07/18/sudans-repressed-democracy/>.

<sup>35</sup> Abdelaziz, K. (2023). "Exclusive: Islamists Wield Hidden Hand in Sudan Conflict, Military Sources Say.". Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/islamists-wield-hidden-hand-sudan-conflict-military-sources-say-2023-06-28/>

of civilians and property affected by war are protected in the law of war. Two main sources regulate international humanitarian law, namely Hague Law and Geneva Law. The Hague Law regulates more mechanisms in war so that the effects of war do not become barbaric. The rules in the Hague Law include the regulation of primary weapons permitted by combatants, the assessment of military activists, the targeting of military targets, and the treatment of prisoners of war. Meanwhile, the Geneva Law regulates more humanitarian principles in war. The rules in Geneva Law include the placement of incompetent combatants and non-combatants, continuity of humanitarian assistance, guarantees of protection, and others.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from the rules of international law which prioritize humanity in war, international institutions have the authority to intervene in civil wars. There are two ways to intervene in a civil war, namely by deploying special forces from the UN Security Council (United Nations) or unilateral intervention which usually involves other countries under the supervision of the UN Security Council. Intervention by the UN Security Council aims to create a peace agreement as stated in the UN Charter Article 7 Paragraph 39 which reads:

*“The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken following Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security.”*

In the quote from the UN article, all forms of conflict, whether in the form of international or non-international war, must be reconciled if the UN Security Council forces have permission to intervene.<sup>37</sup>

In the case of the RSF and SAF conflict in Sudan, the UN Human Commissioner for Human Rights has identified several violations of the laws of war. The first violation was that the SAF and RSF groups had committed violations in the form of brutal attacks on densely populated areas and attacks on residents who had no place to live as stated in the Rome ICC Statute Articles **8b (i)** and **8e (i)**. The second violation is that the RSF and SAF groups use deadly weapons because they contain large explosive power such as jet missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, anti-air weapons, and artillery ammunition as stated in the ICC Rome Statute Article **8b (ii), (xx), (iv)**. As a result of the use of deadly weapons by the RSF

<sup>36</sup> Ardiata et.al. “INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW'S VIEW ON THE ISRAEL - PALESTINE ARMED CONFLICT.”, Ganesha Law Review, Vol. 4 No. 2, 2022, pp. 24-32.

<sup>37</sup> Fox, G. H. “International Law and Civil Wars.”, 1994, pp.633-645.

and SAF, several public service places such as markets were destroyed and caused the death of 70 civilians. The third violation, RSF has carried out acts of discrimination against non-Arab residents as stated in the Rome ICC Statute Article **8c (i)**. The location of the massacre occurred in the West Darfur region with 87 victims buried. The fourth violation, the civil war in Sudan has forced many Sudanese residents to forcibly flee to neighboring countries as stated in the Rome Statute ICC Article **8e (viii)**. The fifth violation, the SAF and RSF groups have recruited children and young people as militants who are ready to be sacrificed as stated in the Rome Statute ICC Articles **8b (xxvi)** and **8e (vii)**.<sup>38</sup>

Due to too many civilian casualties in the Sudanese civil war, the UN Security Council urged the conflict parties to cease fire and provide an opportunity for humanitarian aid to enter Sudan. In response to the conflict, the Security Council issued Resolution 2724 regarding Sudan requiring “all parties to ensure the removal of all obstacles to the delivery of aid and to enable full, rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, including cross-border and cross-border, and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.” The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said that “the deliberate denial of safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian agencies in Sudan is itself a serious violation of international law and may constitute a serious violation of international war crimes law.”<sup>39</sup>

#### **D. Conclusion**

Sudan has recently experienced various coups involving extremist movements, especially RSF troops. RSF's aggression began with an attack on the capital city of Khartoum and began to cause a humanitarian crisis in the form of forced displacement, food crisis, etc. Trust between the SAF and RSF began to fade as a result of each military leader throwing bad narratives at each other regarding the betrayal of the 2019 Constitution which guaranteed the democratization process in Sudan. Both Al-Burhan and Hemedti have ambitions to control the seat of Sudan's government. Al-Burhan as president of Sudan suddenly failed to prevent and overcome the RSF movement. The fighting between SAF and RSF troops was a bad event for Sudan. Sudanese people mostly agree that the RSF's actions amount to

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<sup>38</sup> Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024). “Sudan: Horrific Violations and Abuses as Fighting Spreads.” African Renewal. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/february-2024/sudan-horrific-violations-and-abuses-fighting-spreads-report>.

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2024). “World Report 2024: Sudan.”, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/sudan>.

military violence and ignore the democratic process. The war in Sudan brings with it several violations of international law. The RSF has committed so many violations of the Rome Statute regulations that the UN Security Council was forced to pass a resolution to enforce a ceasefire and expedite humanitarian assistance.

#### E. Suggestion

The conflict in Sudan is one of the conflicts that entered after 2020. Scientific data regarding the impetus that made the RSF carry out a rebellion against the SAF is still very rare. Most sources come from news reports and are not in journal form. The lack of sources for the results of scientific research in the form of journals, theses, and so on means that this conflict is classified as having very little interest in being discussed. Discussions regarding legal violations are also not yet widely discussed in scientific writing. For this reason, the researcher recommends that further research develop this topic.

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