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Sudan

Conflict between putchists in Sudan

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In Sudan, there is a pitched battle between the army and paramilitary groups. The two are waging a merciless war for control of the country, jeopardising negotiations to establish a civilian government.

They were together to overthrow the civilian government that emerged from the Sudanese revolution that ended the regime of Omar al-Bashir. Almost three years later, the existing rivalries between Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the regular troops, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo, known as Hemidti, have turned into an open and deadly conflict.

A war that spreads

The two factions are fighting over strategic locations in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, with heavy weapons. The RSF are trying to seize the official media, the presidential palace and the airport. The SAF, on the other hand, does not hesitate to use the air force to bomb the FRL camps located in the various residential areas.

The inhabitants have no choice but to stay at home and hope that the shells do not hit their homes. Already dozens of civilians have been killed and hundreds injured.

Fears that the conflict will spread throughout the country are confirmed. Fighting is taking place in several other major cities, in Port Sudan, Kabkabiya in North Darfur, El Obeid in North Kordofan, Zalingei in Central Darfur and also in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur.

Paramilitary power

The FRLs originate from the Janjaweed. These militias were widely used by Omar al-Bashir to spread terror during the Darfur conflict twenty years ago. This led to Bashir being indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. Under Hemidti's leadership, the Janjaweed helped build the paramilitary group RSF. The latter maintain control over the country's gold mines, allowing their leader to be one of the richest men in Sudan. The RSF also acted as border guards. They were involved in human trafficking. They arrested and sold migrants who tried to cross the border to Libyan militias. At the request of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab States, the RSF played the role of mercenaries in the war in Yemen against the Houthis, in return for payment.

If Hemidti, for the past few months, has not ceased to criticise the coup d'état of which he is one of the authors, and calls on civilians to support him, no one has forgotten that the RSFs were responsible for the massacres of the sit-in of 3 June 2019, where more than a hundred demonstrators were assassinated, and remain largely involved in the repression against opponents.

What is at stake in the conflict

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Paradoxically, it was the agreement to hand over power to civilians, negotiated for months between the military and part of the democratic forces, that set the conflict alight. A first framework agreement had been signed. This agreement left some sensitive issues unresolved, including the integration of the RSF into the SAF. Burhan proposed a gradual integration while Hemidti, on the contrary, aimed at integrating the FRLs as such. This allowed him to remain a key figure in Sudan. He never hid his ambitions to be at the head of the country. A sort of revenge for this former camel merchant from Darfur. At the same time, part of the SAF staff, led by General Shams el-Din Kabbashi, was not happy with the negotiation process with the civilians. Finally, the Islamist officers never forgave Hemidti for what they considered to be a betrayal. Hemidti had refused to support Omar al-Bashir to the end when his power wavered under street pressure in 2019.

The unfolding events can also be seen as a confirmation of the relevance of the position of the resistance committees. They have always refused to negotiate with a military power that has not ceased, since the country's independence, to carry out coups and to betray its own commitments.

Let us recall that Burhan and Hemidti justified their putsch to avoid the country falling into chaos.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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