



DEBATE PACK

CDP-0158 (2019) | 18 June 2019

Political situation in Sudan

Westminster Hall

Thursday 20 June 2019

1.30pm to 3.00pm

Debate initiated by Dr David Drew MP

Relevant Library briefing

[Military coup in Sudan](#), Commons Briefing Paper 8546, 11 April 2019

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](#)

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Compiled by:
Tim Robinson
Nigel Walker

Subject specialists:
Jon Lunn
Louisa Brooke-Holland

Contents

1.	Background	2
2.	Press articles	5
3.	Press releases	7
4.	Human Rights and Democracy Report: Sudan	11
5.	Parliamentary material	14
5.1	Parliamentary questions	14
5.2	Urgent question	24

1. Background

On 11 April 2019 the Sudanese army [announced](#) it had removed President Omar al-Bashir, Sudan's long-time President, from power.

President Omar al-Bashir has ruled Sudan since taking power in a coup in 1989 but, as long-time Africa watcher Alex de Waal observes "during his last years in office, he used his formidable political talents simply to stay in power, and did nothing for the country". Protests against rising bread and fuel costs morphed into wider, organised protests against Bashir's rule. The army removed Bashir from power after protestors peacefully occupied the square outside the Ministry of Defence and Army HQ (elements of the security forces had forcefully cracked down on the various demonstrations held since mid-December, resulting in an estimated 50 deaths, numerous injuries and reports of sexual assaults and violence).

A consortium of civil society, labour and political organisations issued a [Declaration of Freedom and Change](#) at the beginning of the year calling for a civilian-composed transitional government to serve for four years.

In May the army-led Transitional Military Council agreed with the consortium a [three-year transition period to civilian rule](#).

However, on 3 June, the military scrapped these agreements and announced that instead, it will hold elections within nine months. Observers suggested this was simply a means by which the army would retain hold on power.

Security forces have also stepped up their efforts to violently disperse protestors. On 3 June members of the security forces stormed a protestors camp killing dozens of people and injuring many more. There have been [reports of multiple rapes](#) and sexual violence. The UN Secretary-General [deplored](#) the violence and use of force, as did the UK Government, who said the Transitional Military Council "[bears full responsibility](#)".

In response, the opposition Forces of the Declaration of Freedom and Change announced they were [terminating negotiations](#) with the Transitional Military Council (which it renamed the 'coup council'), who it held responsible for the civilian deaths, and called for a campaign of civil disobedience until "the regime is overthrown". On 6 June the Declaration Forces [issued their demands, calling](#): for those responsible for the violence to be held to account; transfer of power to a civilian government, and the immediate dissolution of the Janjaweed militia.

The Transitional Military Council has since arrested members of the opposition and [restricted access](#) to the internet to disrupt the protestors ability to communicate.

The leader of the Rapid Support Forces, which emerged from the feared Janjaweed militia in Darfur, is General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (commonly known as Hemeti). He is now the deputy chief of the TMC. A [profile of Hamdan](#) in Foreign Policy magazine observes “by creating the janjaweed and relentlessly empowering them under Hemeti, the Sudanese regime has created a monster it cannot control and who represents a security threat not only for Sudan but also for its neighbours”. It notes how under Hemeti the RSF “became uncontrollable and engaged in looting, killing, and rape in Darfur, as well as in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states” before eventually turning into a “third pole of power within Sudan’s security apparatus, rival to both army and intelligence”. The UK Ambassador to Khartoum expressed concern at the past role of the RSF in a [meeting](#) with Hameti on 15 April.

The situation in Sudan is further complicated by the competing influences of external actors. Long-time Sudan watcher [Alex De Waal](#) notes that all the security bosses have foreign ties, be that with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (the RSF has [thousands of troops](#) in Yemen fighting alongside the Saudi-led coalition) or Qatar and Turkey.

The Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed flew to Khartoum on 6 June to try to mediate a resolution. On the same day, the African Union announced it had [suspended Sudan](#) and demanded a transition to civilian rule.

The UN has [suspended the handover](#) of any more camps for displaced civilians in Darfur to the Sudanese military because of the worsening violence and insecurity across the country. The head of the joint African Union-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) told the UN Security Council it cannot agree to a demand by the TMC to hand over all camps to the Rapid Support Forces.

The EU Foreign Affairs Council condemned the 3 June attacks and held the Transitional Military Council responsible. In a [statement](#) following a meeting of the Council on 17 June, the EU called for an immediate cessation of violence, the release of opposition leaders and lifting restrictions on freedom of assembly, media and access to the internet. The EU is calling for an immediate resumption of negotiations between the TMC and the Forces for Freedom and Change.

UK Government position

Jeremy Hunt [tweeted](#) his condemnation of the violence on 3 June, describing it as a “an outrageous step that will only lead to more polarisation and violence”. He added “the Military Council bears full responsibility for this action and the international community will hold it to account”.

The Troika, consisting of the UK, US and Norway, issued a [statement](#) of condemnation on 4 June. The UK reaffirmed previous calls for an orderly transition to a civilian-led government rather than “rushed elections imposed by the TMC’s security forces”:

The Troika condemns the violent attacks in Sudan on June 3, which resulted in the killing and injuring of many peaceful civilian protesters. By ordering these attacks, the Transitional Military Council has put the transition process and peace in Sudan in jeopardy. We call for an agreed transfer of power to a civilian-led government as demanded by the people of Sudan. We welcome the statement of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) and support the important role of the AU in solving the crisis in Sudan, including its demand for an immediate handover to a civilian-led government.

The Troika also expresses its serious concern over the TMC’s announcement that it will cease negotiations with the Forces for Freedom and Change, retract all previous agreements with them on formation of an interim government, and will hold elections within nine months. The people of Sudan deserve an orderly transition, led by civilians, that can establish the conditions for free and fair elections, rather than have rushed elections imposed by the TMC’s security forces.

Harriet Baldwin, the Minister for Africa, responded to an [urgent question](#) from Sir Henry Bellingham on the situation in Sudan on 13 June. The Minister called for the Sudanese authorities to refrain from all violence, describing the attacks by Sudanese security forces on 3 June and “sickening and brutal acts” and deplored the terrible atrocities committed. Shadow Minister Liz McInnes called on the Government to call for an external-led investigation into the killings, to halt all deportations and removals to Sudan, support regime change and help ensure a peaceful transition to civilian rule.

2. Press articles

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

[**Sudan at a crossroads: The leadership of the African Union needs to be stepped up**](#)

Daily Maverick
Patrick Hajayandi
18 June 2019

[**Sudan crisis: What is happening, and where does it go from here?**](#)

Telegraph
Roland Oliphant
18 June 2019

[**If you want to help Sudan, amplify the voices of those suffering its horrors**](#)

Guardian
16 June 2019
Nesrine Malik

[**Sudan's Bashir appears in public for first time since being ousted**](#)

Guardian
16 June 2019

[**Sudan's Crisis Puts the Country on The Brink Of Disaster**](#)

HuffPost
Nick Robins-Early
15 June 2019

[**Sudan military acknowledges violations in sit-in dispersal**](#)

Washington Post
Bassam Hatoum and Noha Elhennawy
14 June 2019

[**George Clooney: How Congress Can Help Stop the Killing in Sudan**](#)

Politico Magazine
George Clooney and John Prendergast
11 June

[**Bloated bodies in the Nile show Sudan protesters were right to fear the arrival of Saudi and UAE money**](#)

Independent
Robert Fisk
10 June 2019

[The Observer view on the crisis in Sudan](#)

Observer
9 June 2019

[Sudan military rulers want Sharia law to form basis of any new legislation](#)

Telegraph
8 May 2019

[Sudan coup leader Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf is on US sanctions list for Darfur genocide](#)

Independent
Samuel Osborne
12 April 2019

3. Press releases

Sudan: Foreign Affairs Council statement
Council of the European Union
17 June 2019

The Council today discussed the situation in Sudan and adopted the following statement:

Over the past six months the people of Sudan, with the strong participation of women and youth, have clearly and bravely demanded a new path for their country, one of democracy, political plurality, security and prosperity. This represents a historic opportunity for Sudan. A peaceful, united, democratic and prosperous Sudan remains crucial, including for the peace and stability of the region, and is a priority for the European Union.

The EU firmly condemns the violent attacks in Sudan on 3 June 2019, which resulted in the killing and injuring of many peaceful civilian protesters, as well as sexual and gender-based violence. It is clear that the responsibility lies with the Transitional Military Council (TMC) as the authority in charge of protecting the population. All human rights violations and abuses committed must be investigated in an independent and transparent manner, and perpetrators held accountable for their acts.

The EU calls for an immediate cessation of all violence against the Sudanese people, including extrajudicial, arbitrary and summary killings, beatings and sexual and gender-based violence, arrests and disappearances. It is the duty of the TMC to ensure the safety of all in Sudan. Members of the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) and other civilians that have been arrested and detained during recent events must be immediately released. Restrictions placed on freedom of assembly, freedom of the media, civic space and access to the internet must also be lifted.

The EU remains deeply concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sudan, and remains committed to help addressing the needs of the population. Obstacles to the timely delivery of the humanitarian assistance need to be removed immediately, including in Khartoum. Staff and supplies need to be brought in urgently to provide humanitarian assistance to more than 8 million people in need. Attacks against hospitals, medical staff and patients must stop. Respect of international humanitarian law and protection of civilians must be ensured, including safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

The EU supports the call of the African Union (AU) for the establishment of a civilian-led transitional authority. To that end, the EU calls for the immediate resumption of negotiations between the TMC and the FFC, based on agreements reached so far. The EU also calls on the TMC to implement the required confidence-building measures, on the FFC to

respond accordingly, and on both parties to refrain from unilateral moves.

The EU supports the leadership role of the AU and the mediation efforts led by the AU envoy to help to move the political transition process forward, in cooperation with Ethiopia, IGAD Chair. The EU commends the role of Ethiopia in facilitating the resumption of the talks. The EU also commends the decision of the AU's Peace and Security Council to suspend Sudan from participation in all AU activities until the effective establishment of a civilian-led transition authority, including the announcement that AU punitive measures would be applied if transition to such an authority is obstructed. The EU further calls on other regional and international actors to play a constructive and coordinated role in support of the leadership of the AU on this basis and stands ready to work with international partners in that regard.

The aspirations of the Sudanese people can only be met through an orderly, peaceful, inclusive and civilian-led transition that establishes the conditions for the return to constitutional order and democratic rule through transparent and credible elections, and full respect of human rights. The EU seizes this opportunity to recall the obligation of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court pursuant to the UNSC Resolution 1593.

A civilian-led transitional authority is the only partner with which EU-Sudan relations can be normalised. When Sudan embarks on a transition to civilian rule, the EU looks forward to supporting the country in tackling the social, economic and political challenges and implementing the necessary reforms, and will provide assistance accordingly.

[Sudan: Troika statement, June 2019](#)

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

4 June 2019

The text of the following statement was issued jointly by the governments of the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom:

The Troika condemns the violent attacks in Sudan on June 3, which resulted in the killing and injuring of many peaceful civilian protesters. By ordering these attacks, the Transitional Military Council has put the transition process and peace in Sudan in jeopardy. We call for an agreed transfer of power to a civilian-led government as demanded by the people of Sudan. We welcome the statement of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) and support the important role of the AU in solving the crisis in Sudan, including its demand for an immediate handover to a civilian-led government.

The Troika also expresses its serious concern over the TMC's announcement that it will cease negotiations with the Forces for Freedom and Change, retract all previous agreements with them on formation of an interim government, and will hold elections within nine months. The people of Sudan deserve an orderly transition, led by civilians, that can establish the conditions for free and fair elections, rather than have rushed elections imposed by the TMC's security forces.

**Standing by the people of Sudan (Transcript of the speech delivered by Ambassador Jonathan Allen)
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
17 April 2019**

Thank you, Mr President. We all know this meeting takes place amidst uncertain times in Sudan.

The African Union's Peace and Security Committee issued a clear statement two days ago. Recent developments and what happens over the coming days have an impact on Darfur and potentially the wider region. The Council has to consider the implications of these important political developments. I will therefore divide my intervention into two: firstly, on the wider situation in Sudan and secondly, the impact of that wider situation on Darfur and UNAMID.

Mr President, on the 11th of April, we witnessed the climax of four months of peaceful protests demanding change and a better future for Sudan. Let us admire the bravery and determination of the Sudanese people, which saw the removal of a president who had headed a brutal regime for 30 years. However, the legitimate change that the Sudanese people are demanding has not yet been achieved. The Transitional Military Council must listen to the people who continue to protest.

And first and foremost, Mr President, the authorities must protect the ongoing peaceful protests and continue to exercise restraint. The Sudanese authorities have a responsibility to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly. There must be no violence, no forced removal of protesters.

We are at a moment when the Sudanese authorities have an opportunity to build trust with their people and the international community. They should seize this opportunity and demonstrate that they are genuinely committed to ending Sudan's history of violent repression. The people are saying that Sudan needs a political system which is inclusive, respectful of human rights and the rule of law and properly constitutionally rooted. The United Kingdom stands with the Sudanese people and supports the African Union's call for Sudan to return swiftly to civilian rule.

All need to work together in an inclusive political transition. And in particular, women have played a critical role in the protest movement. Their contributions will be vital in the political transition process and the subsequent civilian government.

Mr President, the protesters have, from the beginning, demanded accountability. The United Kingdom supports that call. We believe there must be justice for the crimes committed by individuals within the former government of Sudan. It is right that the Sudanese people should hold those individuals accountable. Of course, we fully support the International Criminal Court and expect full cooperation by all States with the Court and its Prosecutor.

Mr President, the latest political developments have a direct impact on Darfur. We, like others, are concerned by reports of violent clashes in

several locations in recent days, which have resulted in civilian death and injury. In particular, on 15 April, as reported by UNAMID, in Kalma internally displaced persons camp, 16 IDPs were killed. I have a question for the Joint Special Representative: what was the response of the two UNAMID-formed police units stationed in Kalma to this incident?

We have also seen the negative impact of recent political turmoil on the door for peace process, which is currently stalled. It is vital for the future stability of Darfur, but also wider Sudan and the region, that we, as a Council, maintain our expectation that progress is made in finding a peaceful solution to the root causes of the conflict.

Mr President, throughout UNAMID's drawdown, the United Kingdom has consistently called for a gradual and sensible approach, guided by the situation on the ground. And we share the Secretary-General's assessment that ongoing political and economic uncertainty pose a number of challenges for a responsible exit of UNAMID and the transition to peace building. The international community must not abandon its responsibility to ensure that a handover of UNAMID responsibilities and assets is done appropriately and to those with capacity to manage the ongoing tasks. There remains a high level of need in Darfur and the root causes of conflict have not yet been resolved. An immediate step the Transitional Military Council could take to build confidence and alleviate need would be to abolish the burdensome system of approvals and permits which hinders delivery of humanitarian assistance.

We need to think carefully about how best we tackle these issues after UNAMID's eventual departure and, in particular, what sort of AU and UN presence on the ground is needed to provide the expertise and programmatic ability and to ensure a proper flow of financial support to address ongoing challenges. We therefore encourage the African Union and the United Nations to make recommendations to the Council on what those future arrangements should be.

Mr President, Sudan is at a crossroads. The Transitional Military Council faces a choice. It should listen to the Sudanese people, respect their legitimate demand for civilian rule and enable the transition to a system which respects human rights, democracy and fundamental freedoms and delivers accountability. Making that choice would mean a new Sudan. It would be a Sudan respected in the international community of nations. It would bring support and resources from across the globe, both to underpin the resolution of longstanding peace processes including Darfur and also to support Sudan's own economic and social development. It would herald a new chapter in Sudan's relations with its region and with the world.

The people of Sudan have shown incredible bravery and perseverance in their dignified demands for an end to a brutal, unaccountable regime, which has impoverished its own people through decades of economic mismanagement. The Sudanese people have forced change in their country. I salute them. Let us stand by them.

4. Human Rights and Democracy Report: Sudan

[Human Rights and Democracy: the 2018 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#)

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
5 June 2019**

Extract of the report – section on Sudan:

Sudan

The human rights situation in Sudan was mixed, with positive engagement and policy changes contrasting with the worsening situation on the ground. The decision to hold over 200 political activists without trial for peacefully protesting in February and March, and the use of violence against protestors in December, were particular low points. The daily lives of Sudanese people continued to be affected by laws relating to public order and emergency, with reports of women and young men in particular being harassed, and of human rights violations resulting from military policing deployments in civilian areas. A lasting peace deal covering Darfur and the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile remained elusive, and we continued to have grave concerns about the threat to the human rights of internally displaced people and of those within conflict zones.

Sudan engaged constructively with the UK on these and wider human rights issues, although commitments to sign up to major international treaties were not met, and routine human rights violations continued. The UK welcomed Sudan's decision to support the opening of an Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights before September 2019.

The UK continued to press the case for clear conditions to govern the planned drawdown of the UN/African Union Hybrid Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). In December, the UK welcomed a statement by the President of the UN Security Council which prioritised the protection of human rights in Darfur, as UNAMID withdraws.

Threats to the freedom of the media remained a very serious concern, with the security services regularly harassing journalists, and seizing newspapers in retribution for critical articles. We continued to engage with parliamentarians and government on the draft media law, making clear the importance of protecting freedom of the media.

Over 200 individuals were arrested by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) during political demonstrations at the start of 2018, with a number of further arrests during the protests which started in December. We were very concerned by reports that demonstrators had been mistreated in NISS detention.

The UK made clear that the Sudanese government needed to enact the promised reforms to the National Security Act, and to ensure that all detainees were treated according to international standards. In March, the British Embassy funded a workshop for senior Government of Sudan

representatives, which focused on the steps needed for Sudan's ratification of the Convention against Torture.

While freedom to worship is generally accepted in Sudan, we expressed concern at ministerial level and via public messaging, over a range of infringements of religious freedoms. These include restrictions on Christian schools, the refusal of permits for places of worship, and cases of church seizures and demolition – although we are pleased to note that this situation after UK interventions and constructive engagement with faith leaders has resulted in positive change.

The situation faced by women and girls in Sudan remained of deep concern. Sexual and gender-based violence continued to be carried out with impunity. The plight of 19-year-old Noura Hussain attracted international attention when she was sentenced to death for killing her husband after he raped her. We called for the sentence to be overturned, and welcomed the court's subsequent decision to do so.

Through DFID's Sudan Free of Female Genital Cutting programme we continued to advocate for the passing of the draft law making FGM illegal. We supported the passing of laws in two states banning the practice, and worked with state bodies, organisations and communities to build support for efforts to end FGM in a generation. We also committed to a further £15 million programme to combat FGM in Sudan.

We continued to lobby the Government of Sudan to effect meaningful change to the country's human rights situation, including at the April and November rounds of the UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue. The Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, and Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, each visited Sudan, meeting key activists, and encouraging senior ministers to introduce human rights reforms. In September, the UK successfully led negotiations for a resolution on Sudan at the UN Human Rights Council. The resolution renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert on Sudan, and called for the establishment of a country office for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

We engaged constructively with the Government of Sudan on issues relating to forced labour and people trafficking, including the need to improve processing and protections for those freed from traffickers. We expressed concern about reports of abuse by officials in adult detention facilities of child victims of trafficking, of raids on safe houses, and of intimidation by security forces of community safe house employees. UK project funding supported victims of trafficking, rule of law work in conflict areas, the effective participation of women and members of marginalised groups in the peace and other political process, the strengthening of parliament, and capacity building for political parties.

In 2019, we will continue to urge the Government of Sudan to observe and protect the constitutional rights of all Sudanese citizens, and to implement the recommendations of the inclusive political discussions which took place in Sudan's National Dialogue, and Universal Periodic Review. We will continue to promote reform and work with the government to provide technical assistance and capacity building. We

will focus on freedom of the media, particularly in view of the 2020 presidential elections, and will work with OHCHR and the Government of Sudan to support the opening of a fully-mandated OHCHR country office. We will also support Sudan's ratification of international treaties including the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

5. Parliamentary material

5.1 Parliamentary questions

[Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo](#)

17 Jun 2019 | HL16170

Asked by: The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo in the transitional military council in Sudan and the activities of the Rapid Support Forces in that country.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK continues to engage with a range of opposition, Transitional Military Council and members of the protest movement. As part of these interactions our Ambassador to Khartoum met the Deputy Chair of the Transitional Military Committee, Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo ("Hametti"), on April 15 to call for steps to improve the situation in Sudan; a swift move to a civilian transitional government; and, the release of all political detainees. Our Ambassador also expressed concerns at the past role of the Rapid Support Forces. We have been consistent in public and in private that there must be accountability for the crimes committed by members of the former regime. We condemn the violent attacks by Sudanese security forces against peaceful protestors in Sudan last week, which left many dead or injured. The Transitional Military Council bears full responsibility.

[Sudan: Politics and Government](#)

17 Jun 2019 | HL16169

Asked by: The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they are making, through the UK–USA–Norway Troika and bilaterally, to ensure that leading opposition figures in Sudan such as Yasir Aman are (1) released, and (2) included in any future dialogue with the transitional military council.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government condemns the arrest and detention of Yasir Arman by the Sudanese security forces. We call for his immediate release and for the legitimate demands of Sudanese people to be respected. Violence must not be used, including against opponents.

The UK continues to engage with a range of opposition, members of the protest movement as well as the Transitional Military Council (TMC). The UK, alongside Troika partners Norway and the US, has called for all sides to engage in an inclusive dialogue that leads to a swift, orderly and peaceful transition to civilian rule. On 4 June in a joint Troika statement, we condemned the recent violent attacks by Sudanese security forces against peaceful protestors in Sudan which left many civilians dead or injured. We also expressed serious concern over TMC's

announcement that it would cease negotiations and called for an agreed transfer of power to a civilian-led government.

On 6 June, the Minister for Africa summoned the Sudanese Ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to express our grave concerns at the use of violence against civilians by the Sudanese authorities. The UK has called for the human rights of all Sudanese people to be respected, and for the resumption of the political process leading to an agreed peaceful transfer of power to a civilian-led government, as demanded by the Sudanese people. We will continue to engage with all sides to support a settlement that works for all Sudanese people.

Sudan: Politics and Government

17 Jun 2019 | HL16087

Asked by: Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made representations to the military leadership in Sudan for the release of Yasir Arman; and whether they have sought information on the number of peaceful protestors who have been detained in that country.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government condemns the arrest and detention of Yasir Arman by the Sudanese security forces. We call for his immediate release and for the legitimate demands of Sudanese people to be respected. Violence must not be used, including against opponents. We consistently made clear to the former Government of Sudan our expectation that all detainees should be treated in accordance with international standards; we continue to call upon the Sudanese authorities to do so. Our Ambassador in Khartoum made clear to the Deputy Head of the Transitional Military Committee, on 15 April, the steps that needed to be taken to improve the situation in Sudan, including the release of all political detainees. We also engage regularly with civil society groups on the issue of detainee treatment

Sudan: Demonstrations

17 Jun 2019 | 263806

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans the Government has to (a) assist independent investigations and (b) support accountability for any violations potentially committed during alleged recent attacks on protestors in Sudan.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Government condemns the violent attacks by Sudanese security forces against peaceful protestors in Sudan last week, which left many dead or injured. The Transitional Military Council (TMC) bears full responsibility. We have frequently called for the Sudanese authorities to ensure that peaceful protests are not met with violence and those responsible for the injuries and deaths of protestors are held to account.

We have been consistent in public and in private that there must be justice and accountability for the crimes committed by members of the former regime. The UK strongly supports the mission of the International Criminal Court; due legal process must be followed. The UK, through the UN Security Council issued a statement on 13 June that called for the violence to stop and emphasised the importance of human rights, protection of civilians, accountability and justice.

Sudan: Human Rights

17 Jun 2019 | 263666

Asked by: Stephen Timms

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what processes his Department has put in place to support the (a) promotion of human rights and (b) prevention of atrocities in Sudan.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department for International Development

The UK government is deeply concerned by the use of violence by the Sudanese military under the command of the Transitional Military Council against peaceful protestors and the human rights violations and abuses surrounding the disruption of the protest site on 3 June. On 6 June, the Minister for Africa summoned the Sudanese Ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to express our grave concerns at the use of all forms of violence, including sexual violence against civilians by the Sudanese authorities. The UK strongly supports calls for an independent international inquiry into the events of 3-4 June so those responsible can be held to account. We also continue to emphasise the importance of accountability for the human rights abuses committed by Sudan's former regime.

The UK is committed to supporting international community efforts to bring peace to Sudan's conflict areas, where there have been widespread atrocities in the past. We hold the pen on the mandate for the United Nations/African Union hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and provide support to community-based peacebuilding programmes in Sudan's conflict areas. The humanitarian situation in Sudan is increasingly fragile and access is threatened by violent attacks on aid workers, facilities and supplies. The UK is working closely with our partners across the United Nations and international NGOs to continue to provide life-saving support to those affected and to pressure the authorities in Sudan to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Sudan: Politics and Government

17 Jun 2019 | 263158

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent diplomatic discussions he has had with his regional counterparts on a civilian-led Government in Sudan.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Since the removal of Bashir as President and the establishment of a Transitional Military Council the UK has engaged with international counterparts bilaterally and in multilateral fora to shape an international response that supports the demands of the people of Sudan to deliver a swift and inclusive move to civilian rule. The Foreign Secretary spoke with Kenyan Cabinet secretary for Foreign Affairs on 3 May and Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs on 25 April on the importance of international partners' engagement to support a swift transition to civilian rule.

The UK has ensured that the situation in Sudan has been discussed at the highest levels, including in the UN Security Council, most recently on 4 June. The UK also continues to promote comprehensive peace negotiations through our role in the Troika. Alongside the US and Norway we engage regularly with the African Union (AU) building on long standing support to the AU's mediation efforts to encourage peace and security in Sudan. The UK welcomes the leadership of the AU in calling for a swift move to civilian rule; it is vital that the transition credibly delivers the demands of the people of Sudan.

The UK has called for the human rights of all Sudanese people to be respected and for the resumption of the political process with the protestors and the opposition, and an agreed transfer of power to a civilian-led government, as demanded by the Sudanese people, in a swift, orderly and peaceful manner.

[Sudan: Politics and Government](#)**12 Jun 2019 | 259841****Asked by: Dr David Drew**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan on recent trends in the level of violence in that country; and what recent discussions he has had with his Sudanese counterparts to help the development of democracy in that country.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK condemns the recent violence in Sudan which resulted in the killing and injuring of many peaceful civilian protestors. We made this clear in the E8 statement issued following the Sudan briefing at the UN Security Council and alongside Troika partners (US, Norway and UK) in our statement of 4 June. The following day I summoned the Sudanese Ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to set out the grave concerns of the United Kingdom at the use of violence by the Sudanese authorities against civilians this week.

We have stressed to the Sudanese authorities the need for an agreed transfer of power to a civilian-led government, followed by a process of reform leading to eventual free and fair elections, as demanded by the people of Sudan. The UK has consistently called for a transition to a political system that is inclusive, supported by a sound constitutional

basis that is respectful of human rights and the rule of law and that ensures accountability for crimes committed. Our Ambassador to Khartoum has met with the Transitional Military Council, opposition members and protestors and continues to deliver these messages.

[Sudan](#)

06 Jun 2019 | 798 cc178-180

Asked by: Baroness Cox | Party: Crossbench

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent events in Sudan, following attacks against protestors by Sudanese security forces.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My Lords, we condemn the violent attacks by the Sudanese security forces against peaceful protesters in Sudan this week, which left many civilians dead or injured. The Transitional Military Council bears full responsibility. The United Kingdom calls for the human rights of all Sudanese people to be respected, the resumption of the political process with the protesters and the opposition, and an agreed transfer of power to a civilian-led Government, as demanded by the Sudanese people, in a swift, orderly and peaceful manner.

Asked by: Baroness Cox

My Lords, I thank the Minister for his reply. Is he aware that, according to reliable sources in Sudan, the death toll this week from the crackdown on peaceful protesters is now well over 100? Men have reportedly been hacked with machetes and thrown into the Nile. Women were raped in front of their children. As one survivor said, "It was a massacre". Given that the attacks against civilians continue outside Khartoum in at least 11 towns, what are Her Majesty's Government doing to support those valiant, peaceful protesters, and what steps will the United Kingdom take to ensure that the military junta is called to account?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

I agree totally with the noble Baroness. I have seen reports over the last few days and I got a full update about the situation this morning. As she will know, our embassy is not far from where the camp was set up. The official toll from the military authorities is 46, but media reports indicate that the number is more in line with the one she raised. On the UK's representation, our ambassador on the ground, with his team, is in direct contact with the military authorities. I pay tribute to him. To answer the noble Baroness's second question, I can say that he is also directly meeting the leaders of the opposition, including the Forces of Freedom and Change. We are working hand in glove with the troika and the African Union to ensure that those committing these crimes, including those involved with the Transitional Military Council, are held fully to account.

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

My Lords, a few weeks ago everyone would have hoped that a peace process would happen and that we would see a transition. Of course,

that hope has been dashed by the recent press reports. One report yesterday in the Guardian said that the US Government had approached the Saudi Government to influence the Sudanese military to hold back. Have we been working with the US Government to place that sort of pressure on the Saudis, who seem to have a far greater role than most people realised?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

The noble Lord is quite right. He will recall that the Saudi Arabian Government, along with the Emirati Government, have offered £3 billion of assistance to Sudan. Of that money, about £500 million has been deposited. I assure him that the US Government are raising this with the Saudis, as we are. On working specifically with US Government, I had a conversation about 10 days ago, in advance of the latest situation, with Ambassador Sam Brownback on freedom of religion, which is a key part of ensuring that there is a new Sudan with a full civilian Government incorporated. We continue to work closely with the United States Government, but also with the Saudi and Emirati Governments.

Asked by: Lord Chidgey

My Lords, civilians are being killed close to military headquarters by soldiers in uniform. Journalists are being expelled on the orders of men in uniform. Supplies are being looted by men in uniform. I think we are getting the message that the military leaders look more and more like the regime they claim to have overthrown. Yesterday, the Transitional Military Council arrested opposition leader Yasir Arman and are holding him in an unknown location. Surely action is now vital through the African Union suspending Sudan, while condemning the massacre; through convening an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to force Russia and China's hand; by beginning a process to prevent the TMC from representing Sudan in the General Assembly; and through insisting on the immediate release of Yasir Arman. Does the Minister agree that, without these actions, words of remorse, regret or disapproval are merely feckless and expedient measures?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

I agree with the noble Lord, and assure him that with the United Nations—in terms of the Security Council in New York and the Human Rights Council in Geneva—the United Kingdom as a penholder is taking these responsibilities very seriously. I am in discussions with our ambassadors in both places to see what next steps we can take. On the Security Council, we are co-penholders with Germany and will continue our discussions. The troika is focused on these issues, and, as I said in an earlier answer, we are impressing on the Sudanese authorities—including the ambassador in the United Kingdom—that all options are on the table, including looking at the current sanctions policy. Those who are culpable will be held to account.

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Leeds

My Lords, I was in Khartoum in January. I too pay tribute to the ambassador, whose communication on social media has been superb, despite internet problems. The other country involved is Egypt, which seems to have a vested interest in not putting too much pressure on

Sudan. Can the Minister say anything about our conversations with Egypt and its influence over events in Sudan?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

I put on record my thanks to the right reverend Prelate for his interventions in Sudan. Working with Her Majesty's Government, he was instrumental in the opening of Christian schools despite the restrictions imposed, and we are grateful. I am sure he agrees that the different communities of Sudan have a key role in establishing the new Sudan. As for our working with international partners, he mentioned Egypt. I said to the noble Lord, Lord Collins, that we are also working with the Saudi Arabians and the Emiratis. Intense international pressure is required to ensure that civilian rule can be incorporated at the earliest opportunity. We are working through the good offices of the African Union, where Egypt again has a pivotal role.

[Sudan: Politics and Government](#)

21 May 2019 | HL15658

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the request of the former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi that the UK help Sudan to create a modern democracy and support the handing over of Field Marshall Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK has received no official request from Mr al-Mahdi, although we are aware of reports of the request in the media. Since Bashir's removal on 11 April, the UK has made clear public statements calling for all sides to engage in an inclusive dialogue that leads to a swift and peaceful transition to civilian rule. The UK has called for a transition to a political system that is inclusive, supported by a sound constitutional basis that is respectful of human rights and the rule of law and that ensures accountability for the crimes committed by members of the former regime. The UK strongly supports the mission of the International Criminal Court; due legal process must be followed. We continue to engage with national and international actors, articulating the UK's readiness to work with Sudan's people in order to make the political transition a success.

[Sudan: Military Coups](#)

07 May 2019 | HL15324

Asked by: The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of events in Sudan since the recent army coup; and what action they have taken in response to that coup, in particular to encourage the formation of a new provisional government which represents opposition parties and civil society.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Since Bashir's removal on 11 April and the establishment of a Transitional Military Council the UK has made clear public statements via the Troika (US, Norway and UK), the Foreign Secretary and our Ambassador in Khartoum calling for all sides to engage in an inclusive dialogue that leads to a swift and peaceful transition to civilian rule. In support of this we are regularly engaging with all Sudanese parties and civil society, both in Khartoum and London. The UK is working closely with international partners and welcomes the leadership of the African Union (AU); it is vital that the transition credibly delivers the demands of the people of Sudan. As the Foreign Secretary made clear on 24 April, during this once in a generation opportunity for change it is essential the proposed extension of the AU deadline for the return to civilian rule in Sudan is used effectively and that protestors, politicians and military council reach an agreement.

[Sudan](#)

30 Apr 2019 | 797 cc860-2

Asked by: Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to recent developments in Sudan.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My Lords, since President Bashir's removal on 11 April, the United Kingdom has engaged with the protest movement, opposition parties and the transitional military council to encourage all to agree a process for a swift and peaceful transition to civilian rule. We are also working closely with international partners and welcome the leadership of the African Union in its clear push for a political transition. Sudan's long-suffering people expect their leaders to seize this opportunity for change.

Asked by: Baroness Cox

My Lords, I thank the Minister for his encouraging and sympathetic reply, but is he aware that I visited Sudan 30 times during the war waged by President al-Bashir and witnessed personally the scale of brutality and suffering inflicted on the Sudanese people, while the UK Government allowed his regime to continue its genocidal policies with impunity, to the dismay of the Sudanese people? What are Her Majesty's Government now doing to help to redeem Britain's reputation by giving substantive political and humanitarian support to those valiant, peaceful protestors across Sudan who have suffered a brutal response from the military Government, including at least 67 killed, many injured and hundreds arrested?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

My Lords, of course I recognise the important role that the noble Baroness has played over the years in Sudan. I am sure that we are all grateful for the situation that is now emerging there. As the noble Baroness will know, the United Kingdom has supported Sudan with humanitarian aid to the tune of £30 million, and we continue to target

humanitarian aid to specific regions of the country. I assure the noble Baroness that the issue of impunity for those who have committed crimes has been raised at all levels, including with the current transitional military council. We remain committed as a Government to the ICC, and we believe that any indicted criminal under the ICC should be brought to the ICC.

Asked by: Lord Clarke of Hampstead

My Lords, following the street protests—especially those that took place between December 2018 and early 2019—hundreds of people were locked up. Can the Minister tell us if there is any evidence that these people are still incarcerated after the changes that have taken place? Secondly, can he say whether there has been any evidence of maltreatment during their incarceration in custody? I would be grateful if he could answer those two points.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

My Lords, the noble Lord is quite right to raise that issue. My understanding is that political prisoners have been released by the transitional military council. On the question of what or how they suffered, I am sure that in time their testimonies will be accounted for and appropriate action will be taken. The head of the transitional military council has also emphasised the importance of upholding justice systems within Sudan.

Asked by: Lord Howell of Guildford

My Lords, while we should do everything possible on the humanitarian side arising from these events, as the noble Baroness, Lady Cox, urges—not just in Sudan but throughout the Maghreb, where Algeria and Tunis also spring to mind—can we be careful about the political side? The Minister mentions engagement. Can he and his colleagues bear in mind that our political engagement, involvement and intervention in Libya were not a dazzling success?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

My Lords, I think we have learned the lessons of previous engagements. As far as Sudan is concerned, my noble friend will be aware that the United Kingdom is one of the troika of nations—together with the US and Norway—which have been leading the diplomatic engagement. Aside from Bashir, we have dealt with other members of the Administration, and I assure the noble Lord that we are working with, for example, the forces of the declaration of freedom and change, which is made up of professionals, trade unionists and other civil society leaders. During the time of Bashir's regime too, we dealt directly with civil society leaders who have played an important role in ensuring that all communities in Sudan, most notably the persecuted Christian communities, see their rights being restored.

Asked by: Lord Chidgey

My Lords, western Governments have supported the forces of freedom and change, but Sudan's key Gulf lenders back the military council, while African states have called for more time for the army to hand over power to civilians. There are wider issues coming into play, such as Sudan's support for the Saudi-led coalition war in Yemen, the deepening economic crisis and the call for Sudan to join the

International Criminal Court, with the repercussions of that, but surely the priority has to be the ongoing humanitarian challenge. What assistance are the Government mobilising, particularly to address the food crisis and malnutrition in Darfur and the Kordofans? What plans do the Government have to address the expected increase in returnees to South Kordofan and Blue Nile, putting pressure on already stretched resources?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

The noble Lord is right to raise the issue of humanitarian aid. The two regions he mentions are exactly where aid is currently being directed. He mentioned the broader issue of other partners. We are working very closely with the African Union and we have also engaged directly with the Emirati Foreign Minister and the Saudi Foreign Minister, Mr Jubeir, on the situation; my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has had calls with both of them. It is my understanding that those two countries have already pledged £3 billion of humanitarian aid.

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

My Lords, I welcome the statement by the troika saying that the transitional military council must move as speedily as possible to civilian rule. As the Minister knows, transitions can be extended and extended and extended. What is the United Kingdom doing to ensure that this transitional military council remains transitional and that we make every effort to ensure a speedy move to civilian rule?

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

I totally agree with the noble Lord: the word “transitional” is key. In our dealings with the African Union, the suggested timeline has been three months. We take encouragement from the new leader of the transitional military council and from the protests that continue to take place. There has been a reaching out: the individuals who were of deep concern to the protest movement have been removed from the military council; and there is direct engagement with the opposition forces. Having visited Sudan and seen the suppression of press freedom and of the freedom of minorities, I think we take great encouragement from the fact that those protests and that engagement continue, and the military has ceased from intervening to suppress the protests.

Asked by: Baroness Afshar

My Lords, are the Government aware that everything that Sudan is doing goes directly against the teaching of Islam? As a retired teacher of Islamic law, I can tell noble Lords that Islam recognises women as independent, both financially and personally, and in terms of the decisions they make for themselves and their children. In fact, women are entitled to payment should they choose to breastfeed their children. What the Sudanese Government are doing goes against every conception that Islam has of women; it is anti-Islamic. They really ought to be discouraged and not given any funds.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

I am sure that the noble Baroness is referring to the previous regime. In view of the time, I will just say that there is a Koranic verse, “La ’ikraha fi al-din”, which means that there is no compulsion or coercion in faith.

That should be understood not just by the new regime and Government in Sudan but by all Islamic Governments around the world.

5.2 Urgent question

[Sudan](#)

13 Jun 2019 | 661 cc823-831

Urgent question on the crisis in Sudan and ongoing human rights abuses.

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).