

Sudan Update - August 2022

Preparing for the general strike

From resisting cost of living rises to the struggle against military rule

Across Sudan activists are mobilising to support a call by the Resistance Committees (bodies based in local neighbourhoods which coordinate and mobilise for protests and build the popular revolutionary movement) for a general strike on 24 August. The strike aims to bring down the ruling military regime, led by generals who threw civilian politicians out of office in October 2021, bringing to an end to a period of cooperation between Sudan's military and representatives of opposition parties who entered government following the popular uprising against dictator Omar El Bashir in 2019.

The coup leaders have faced months of mass protests, civil disobedience and strikes in some sectors. They have failed to crush the popular movement and the Resistance Committees have continued to mobilise regular demonstrations, preventing the generals from establishing a stable government. Their refusal to negotiate with the generals, grant them legitimacy or participate in government is supported by millions of people. They have also developed initiatives proposing reform of the existing state institutions, such as the Charter for the Establishment of the People's Authority and the Revolutionary Charter for People's Power through a process of democratic discussion in neighbourhoods and with grassroots organisations.

Meanwhile, the economic situation has massively worsened for ordinary people, with prices spiralling, leaving millions scrambling to afford basic goods, electricity and cooking gas bills and transport costs. In parallel with the revolutionary mobilisations in the streets against the generals, there have also been big strikes in some sectors over wages and conditions. Teachers across Sudan went on strike and boycotted exam marking in the spring this year, succeeding in forcing some concessions over pay and conditions. There were also strikes by civil servants and bank workers. After years when the trade unions were just arms of the ruling party, new unions are being built from below.

Following their gains in the strike, activists from the Sudanese Teachers' Committee (STC) are organising mass meetings across Sudan to create a democratically elected leadership for a new teachers' union, with a mass base among



Resistance Committee activists at a sit-in near Khartoum on 30 June | Photo: via Facebook

teachers at primary and secondary level.

The challenge for activists in the Resistance Committees and workplace organisers is how to link the anger over the cost of living and working conditions to questions about the nature of the state and the role of the generals within it so as to bring the economic and political wings of the revolutionary mobilisation together. In the education sector, the connections are clear to see: the military regime has hit back after being forced into concessions by the successful mass teachers' strike by victimising STC activists and is now trying to reactivate the old regime-supporting teachers' union with the backing of Hemedti, current Vice-President and leader of the brutal Rapid Support Forces militia. The regime's plan is to take back full administrative control of education and stop teachers organising independently of the state.

In response STC activists have launched an appeal for teachers and activists from the revolutionary movement to work together to counter Hemedti's plan, and take control of the education sector. In Khartoum state, STC committees are contacting the Resistance Committees to coordinate a campaign to defend education and the right to organise.

The health sector also has strong independent union organisation through the doctors' and pharmacists' unions which have played a key role in the revolution. However the regime has been successful in sacking many revolutionary activists in other key

sectors such as civil aviation, the electricity sector and banking since the October 2021 coup. There is also the question of how to link across generations of activists - most of the leaders of the Resistance Committees are young people, students and recent graduates who are not embedded in workplaces.

Sudanese activists continue to call for solidarity from the international trade union movement. Western governments have condemned the coup leaders' violence towards protesters, but they constantly put pressure on the revolutionary forces to compromise over their demands for democratic civilian rule. The coup leaders are supported by regional powers such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Israel which are all armed and backed by the US, Britain and European governments.

Take action

- **Send a message of solidarity for the general strike email action@menasolidaritynetwork.net or message us on Facebook. We will collect the messages and pass them on <https://www.facebook.com/MenaSolidarityNetwork/>**
- **Sign our statement condemning repression in Sudan <https://menasolidaritynetwork.com/sudan30june/>**

www.menasolidaritynetwork.com

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