

## Stopping Sudan's hidden war

### A briefing and solidarity toolkit for trade unionists

The US, UK and Western governments bear a huge responsibility for the war which has been ripping Sudan apart since April 2023. They legitimised the Sudanese military and Rapid Support Forces militia which are fighting each other, and put constant pressure on Sudanese civilian and democratic forces to negotiate power-sharing agreements with them after the peaceful revolution which overthrew dictator Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

#### From revolution to coup

A transitional government was set up in August 2019. The popular revolutionary movement saw independent unions being formed, strikes by teachers unions and other 'demand-based' groups, and thousands of neighbourhood Resistance Committees organising across the country. This was too threatening to the military and the militia leaders and they seized power in a coup in October 2021. Ordinary people continued to organise against military rule and for bread, peace and social justice, but Western governments argued that the Resistance Committees and other revolutionary groups should go back to the negotiating table with the coup-leaders.

#### War, disease and hunger

In April 2023 the Rapid Support Forces, formerly the Janjaweed who committed genocidal acts in Darfur, and the Sudanese Armed Forces, also guilty of civilian massacres, went to war. Around 12,000 people were massacred in one city in West Darfur alone according to UN sources, and at least a further 13,000 across the rest of the country.

Meanwhile 7.5 million have been displaced, with many forced to walk for days with barely any food or water. Eighty percent of hospitals are non-functional and disease is rife. Nineteen million children are out of school. Sexual violence is pervasive, a deliberate strategy by armed groups. The number of Sudanese facing emergency levels of hunger, one stage before famine, has tripled to 5 million people.



Sudanese activists demonstrate in London for an end to the war in March | Photo: Sadatu Futa

#### Regional powers

The two warring sides are backed by regional powers who have fuelled the conflict by transferring weapons and providing military and diplomatic support. Western allies and governments opposed to the US can be found on both sides of the conflict. Egypt and Iran have been supporting the Sudanese military, while Russia and the UAE have backed the Rapid Support Forces. The UAE, along with Saudi Arabia is heavily involved in land grabs for agricultural production in Sudan, and also wants to dominate Port Sudan. Port workers recently went on strike in protest at privatisation plans and increasing UAE control. Israel also has supported both warring generals.

#### Refugees welcome

The Canadian government recently agreed to allow those fleeing the war in Sudan to join relatives in Canada. But a petition calling for a similar humanitarian refugee scheme in the UK, as was extended to Ukrainians was rejected by the British government, which is ramping up racist rhetoric

against refugees.

Sudan needs an immediate and lasting ceasefire, the provision of humanitarian aid, and a ban on arms transfers to Sudan and regional powers involved in the conflict. Solidarity to the Resistance Committees, trade unions, demand-based campaigns and revolutionary activists.

#### SOLIDARITY TOOLKIT:

- **Pass a motion in your union branch demanding an end to arms sales to the regional powers fuelling the war and changes to visa rules to allow Sudanese refugees to find safety in Britain.**
- **Write to your MP and press them to speak up.**
- **Invite a Sudanese anti-war activist to speak to your union branch or Palestine solidarity group**
- **Download resources, posters, model letters and motions here ([tinyurl.com/sudanwartoolkit](https://tinyurl.com/sudanwartoolkit))**