



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## Sudan

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

For almost 30 years, Sudan was a significant outlier in the context of the United States' robust engagement with Africa. As a state sponsor of terrorism headed by a president indicted by the ICC for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, Sudan was subject to strict economic sanctions. In 2019, U.S.-Sudan relations improved significantly after a wave of popular protests led to the ouster of President Bashir and the creation of a technocratic civilian-led transitional government. In December 2020, Congress acknowledged Sudan's reform efforts by removing it from the state sponsor of terrorism list. The U.S. government sent an ambassador to Sudan for the first time in 25 years in August 2022.

On October 25, 2021, Sudan's military leaders seized power, arresting several members of the government and subjecting the prime minister to house arrest. The military takeover halted the transition, weakened already fragile government institutions, cost the Sudanese people international financial aid, and damaged what little stability had been established. On December 5, 2022, civilian and military parties signed a Framework Political Agreement (FPA) representing an essential first step to restoring civilian rule.

Progress toward resuming the transition and improving the security environment was shattered when armed conflict erupted in Khartoum on April 15, 2023, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Since then, fighting has displaced more than eight million people internally and sent 2.3 million Sudanese to neighboring countries, precipitating what the UN has identified as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Up to six million people will be at risk of starvation by mid-2024. The conflict continues to destroy health, education, and other infrastructure in Khartoum, Darfur, Gezira, Kordofan, and elsewhere. Several foreign governments, including Russia, the UAE, Iran, and others, are reportedly providing military support to the RSF or the SAF.

The outbreak of conflict led the U.S. Mission in Sudan to suspend in-country operations on April 22, 2023. Engagement with Sudan is now conducted through the Office of Sudan Affairs (OSA), based primarily in the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Consular services are provided in Cairo, Egypt, and the USAID Sudan team is based in Nairobi, Kenya. OSA staff engage with the belligerent parties, Sudanese officials, civil society groups, grassroots organizations, likeminded partners, and international organizations to advance our goals: improving access to humanitarian assistance and protecting civilians, brokering an enduring cessation of hostilities to overcome the legacy of decades of autocratic rule, and supporting a transition to a truly representative democracy.

These priorities support several U.S. strategic goals, including the U.S. National Security Strategy's commitment to supporting African-led efforts to work toward political solutions to conflicts and humanitarian crises, while pressing for progress on civilian transitions.

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## **2. Mission Strategic Framework**

### **Mission Goal 1: Facilitate Humanitarian Assistance and Civilian Protections**

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Support humanitarian actors and the provision of humanitarian assistance to those who need it.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Protect civilians from conflict, especially marginalized and underrepresented groups.

### **Mission Goal 2: End the War**

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Reduce external actors' support for the SAF and the RSF.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Establish a durable cessation of hostilities and achieve a negotiated end to the conflict.

### **Mission Goal 3: Support Sudanese Civilians in Preparation for Transitional Governance**

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Support a wide range of civilian actors as they prepare for a return to civilian governance.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Push for the inclusion of diverse populations (on the basis of ethnicity, gender, religion, political affiliation, etc.) in civilian processes.
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Support grassroots and civil society organizations.

### **Management Objective 1: Fully Establish and Stabilize the OSA**

### **Management Objective 2: Maintain Positive Control of the Embassy Compound**

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

#### **Mission Goal 1: Facilitate Humanitarian Assistance and Civilian**

**ProtectionsDescription:** The war in Sudan has resulted in massive human rights violations and inflicted death, destruction, and displacement on the Sudanese people, creating a dire humanitarian situation in need of more regional and international attention. The conflict has created widespread shortages of essential items and limited access to services across the country, exacerbating food, health, and other humanitarian needs for nearly 25 million of the most vulnerable people – more than half the population. Sudan is the largest displacement crisis in the world, and millions of Sudanese are at risk of famine in 2024. The United States is the largest donor to the humanitarian response, providing more than \$920 million in humanitarian assistance in FY 2023, including approximately \$600 million from USAID. However, humanitarian assistance delivery to communities most in need is hindered by complex access impediments at Sudan’s border and interference from the SAF, Government of Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commissions (HACs), and the RSF. Further, U.S. contributions, while the largest among donors, pale in comparison to the total amount needed.

**Objective 1.1:** Support humanitarian actors and the provision of humanitarian assistance to those who need it.

- **Justification:** In February 2024, the UN and its partners appealed for a combined \$4.1 billion to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs of civilians inside and outside Sudan. Despite the provision of more than \$920 million in U.S. humanitarian assistance, as of March 31, 2024, only five percent of the UN’s humanitarian appeal had been met. Increased investment from other actors is vital, as is the expansion of our scope from other governments to the private sector and the philanthropic community.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.3: Reinvigorate U.S. humanitarian leadership and provide life-saving protection and assistance in response to international disasters and humanitarian crises overseas.
  - Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Objective 4.3: Reduce hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa by transforming Africa’s food systems for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and strengthening equitable and accessible resilience capacities, climate adaptation and natural resource management, and

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the enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth.

**Objective 1.2:** Protect civilians from conflict, especially marginalized and underrepresented groups.

- **Justification:** Fighting in Sudan has created the largest displacement crisis in the world, with millions of people displaced inside and outside the country. At least 12,000 have been killed, although the death toll is suspected to be higher. On December 6, 2023, Secretary Blinken determined that SAF and RSF members had committed war crimes in Sudan and that members of the RSF and allied militias had committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Members of certain ethnic groups (such as the Masalit) and women and girls are at particular risk, given targeted ethnic violence and pervasive gender-based violence (GBV) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) primarily attributed to the RSF and allied militias. Thus, an immediate, sustainable ceasefire coupled with longer-term civilian protections is critical.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.3: Reinvigorate U.S. humanitarian leadership and provide life-saving protection and assistance in response to international disasters and humanitarian crises overseas.
  - Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.
  - U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability Goal 2: Stabilization – achieve locally driven political solutions to violent conflicts and large-scale violence.

**Mission Goal 2: End the War Description:** Ending the conflict and establishing a durable cessation of hostilities and the foundation for long-term peace are necessary to prevent further deterioration in Sudan's already dire situation and enable progress toward civilian governance and rebuilding Sudan's infrastructure and economy. Our bilateral relationship and our ability to support the Sudanese people beyond humanitarian assistance will be stymied until the conflict ends.

**Objective 2.1:** Reduce external support for the SAF and the RSF.

- **Justification:** External actors are suspected to be actively supporting the belligerents to advance their own aims at the expense of the Sudanese people. Such support prolongs the conflict and reduces our ability to persuade SAF and RSF leadership that a negotiated end to the war is the best solution.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Goal 1: Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and new and revitalized alliances and partnerships to build resilience to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy.
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Objective 1.1: Strengthen the capability of multilateral and regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to prevent worsening state fragility and the emergence of armed conflict.
  - Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

**Objective 2.2:** Establish a durable cessation of hostilities and achieve a negotiated end to the conflict.

- **Justification:** Ultimately, SAF and RSF leadership must agree to stop fighting. Until they do so, the Sudanese people will continue to suffer, and Sudan will be unable to rebuild.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Goal 1: Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and new and revitalized alliances and partnerships to build resilience to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy.
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Objective 1.1: Strengthen the capability of multilateral and regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to prevent worsening state fragility and the emergence of armed conflict.

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- Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.

### **Mission Goal 3: Support Sudanese Civilians in Preparation for Transitional Governance**

**Description:** After the conflict ends, there must be a mechanism in place to establish a civilian-led transitional government to prevent the military from reclaiming power and reduce the potential for renewed conflict. It is essential to support the organic emergence of pro-democracy civilian fronts to address transitional and governance issues and ensure long-term peace.

**Objective 3.1:** Support a wide range of civilian actors as they prepare for a return to civilian governance.

- **Justification:** If there is no civilian organization ready to lay the groundwork for a transitional government, the military could use that as an excuse to dominate the governance space and once more take power. The belligerents have successfully manipulated cleavages in the civilian movement to remain involved in political processes, which could be repeated in this context.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Strategic Plan Strategic Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security.
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Goal 3: Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity to build strong, accountable, and democratic institutions sustained by a deep commitment to human rights and to generate greater peace and prosperity.
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Objective 3.1: Promote accountable, transparent, and democratic governance by empowering key reformers and actors to promote access to justice, strengthen checks on executive power, and incorporate citizen-responsive governance to reduce corruption and improve the delivery of public services.
  - U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability Goal 2: Stabilization – achieve locally driven political solutions to violent conflicts and large-scale violence.

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**Objective 3.2:** Push for the inclusion of diverse populations (on the basis of ethnicity, gender, religion, political affiliation, etc.) in civilian processes.

- **Justification:** One persistent issue that frequently undermines civilian coalitions' credibility with the Sudanese people is the claim that they are not sufficiently representative of Sudan. Further, groups composed of many of the same actors (such as predominantly FFC party elements) who participated in the FPA are frequently distrusted. It is therefore critical to widen the scope of participation, with an emphasis on including women, youth, and other marginalized voices.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Objective 3.3: Protect and promote democratic values and leadership, competitive political processes, and freedom of speech and assembly. Increase participation of women, youth, LGBTQI+ persons, and other marginalized groups in democratic processes. Promote open dialogue among civil society actors, governments, and the communities they serve.

**Objective 3.3:** Support grassroots and civil society organizations.

- **Justification:** Any civilian coalition's legitimacy will come from grassroots participants, not former politicians. Sudan's social fabric is in tatters, and social trust and cohesion are low. Grassroots actors and civil society organizations can play a role in generating trust in civilian processes from the bottom up. There are significant civic action opportunities in Sudan, and our support to grassroots and civil society actors can help lay the foundation for social and political change.

- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Objective 3.3: Protect and promote democratic values and leadership, competitive political processes, and freedom of speech and assembly. Increase participation of women, youth, LGBTQI+ persons, and other marginalized groups in democratic processes. Promote open dialogue among civil society actors, governments, and the communities they serve.

## **4. Management Objectives**

### **Management Objective 1: Fully Establish and Stabilize the OSA**

- **Justification:** The OSA's budget is challenged by the need to support a significant number of LE staff on extended TDYs, fund travel to conduct mission-critical work, and engage with interlocutors spread across the region. Staff attrition and a reduction in the number of USDH positions have substantially taxed some sections. Our LE staff are in an especially vulnerable position, as many are unable to receive their salaries due to persistent problems with the banking system, most are displaced, and many will be made redundant, as the U.S. government cannot afford to keep them on the payroll indefinitely. While much has been accomplished in the creation of the OSA, there is more to be done to ensure an operational working environment.
- **Linkages:**
  - Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.
  - Joint Regional Strategy Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1: Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure in a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible manner.

### **Management Objective 2: Maintain Positive Control of the U.S. Embassy Compound**

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- **Justification:** The embassy compound in Khartoum was opened in 2015 and represents an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars. Given the long-term goal of resuming operations in Sudan when conditions allow, preserving the compound so that it can be renovated and used in the future would represent a huge cost savings. Additionally, maintaining control of the compound could lessen the time needed to return to Khartoum by up to two years, as it could provide a launch pad for a return to operations. The EAC regularly assesses whether the 12 caretaker LE staff on the compound are at heightened risk and weighs this against the priority of retaining control of the compound.
  
- **Linkages:**
  - Functional Bureau Strategy – Bureau of Diplomatic Security Bureau Goal 1: Safeguard diplomatic activities in all operating environments worldwide to advance U.S. foreign policy.
  - Functional Bureau Strategy – Bureau of Diplomatic Security Bureau Objective 1.1: Enhance, enact, and enforce security standards to protect personnel and property worldwide.