



THE TEARS OF GUITARS AND THE CRIES OF MUSEUMS



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A Report on the Violations against Artists, Musicians and Civilian Archaeological and Artistic Objects



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the onset of the war on 15 April 2023, more than **55** artists have perished through extrajudicial killings, denial of medical attention, and torture in detention facilities. Thousands have been forcibly displaced within and outside Sudan. Some of these violations have been caused by the bombing/shelling and the obstruction of humanitarian aid.

The attack on cultural and historical objects during the current war first occurred when the Rapid Support Forces fighters were sighted inside the National Museum wearing a historical mask. This was followed up by several other incidents. For example, in March 2024, there were attacks targeting the National Radio and Television Corporation building in Omdurman, theaters, and facilities used by artists and creatives.

Even though musicians, dramatists, cultural actors, and other creatives associated with the performing arts are generally regarded as the top losers and have been victims of hate speech, some have aligned themselves with the warring parties, utilizing their artistic and creative works to promote the war.

On the other hand, many voices, works of art, and initiatives emerged from a wide range of creatives including musicians calling for an end to the war.

INTRODUCTION

The African Center for Peace and Justice Studies (ACJPS) in collaboration with the Sudanese Music Research Center carried out research about the human rights violations committed against artists during the current armed conflict. The report focuses on the period between 15 April 2023, and September 2024, highlighting the plight of artists, musicians, and dramatists, some of whom have supported the warring parties establishing a global precedent. However, musicians and singers who are part of the Musical Corps are excluded from this report, as they are military personnel and are **involved in the violations against the population**.

The current armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is part of a long history of armed conflicts in Sudan that started in the Torit military garrison in 1955 before the country gained its independence. Sudan was engulfed in conflict from 1955 to 1972, then from 1983 to 2005, and civil war involving the National Democratic Assembly from 1994 to 2006. The civil war in the Darfur region from 2003 to 2020, during which time some armed movements remained in a state of rebellion to date. Additionally, the war in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile regions started in 2011 to date.

Sudan was mismanaged under three dictatorships (1965 to 1958), (1969 to 1985), (1989 to 2019), and (2021 to 2023). The broken systematic policies led to the formation of parallel auxiliary armed forces and the neglect of the military and military objects enabling the auxiliary forces with



resources such as gold to gain power. These groups got a taste of power in 2019 after the fall of the former regime. The mismanagement coupled with the long brewing tensions between the two generals sparked off armed conflict in the capital, Khartoum, in April 2023.

The RSF is primarily comprised of members of pastoral groups from the Kordofan and Darfur regions. The majority of the RSF leaders hail from said groups and were previously affiliated with the National Congress Party (NCP). Additionally, the RSF leadership includes individuals from areas such as Sennar and Al-Butana. Conversely, the upper and middle ranks of the national army were predominantly drawn from the Sudanese Islamic Movement, which, since the 1989 coup, facilitated the enrollment of its members into the Sudanese Military College. This composition, coupled with the aforementioned factors, has resulted in urban warfare within residential areas, characterized by the extensive use of advanced weaponry, aerial bombardment, and drone strikes. This has led to a scramble for power and, a takeover of government and private facilities, aiming to expand territorial gains. The nature of the conflict and the parties involved have caused severe damage to the economy and social rights, including acts of sabotage, theft, and destruction of public and private objects, including cultural artifacts.

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining field observation, interviews with victims, open-source materials, and satellite imagery. Field researchers conducted on-the-ground investigations. These interviews were conducted with musicians, dramatists, cultural actors, and families of victims. To ensure and reliability of the information, a rigorous verification process was implemented, cross-referencing data from multiple sources and employing satellite imagery to corroborate specific claims.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The report draws from a range of international conventions to demonstrate that the Sudanese conflict constitutes a grave violation of international, regional, and national legal frameworks. This case study provides a valuable reference point for future international discourse and academic research on global conflict dynamics.

International level: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Hague Convention for the Protection of Artistic Objects of 1953, the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention on Civilian Objects of 1977, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention against All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Red Cross Study on the Rules of Customary International Humanitarian Law 2005.

Regional level: African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

National level: Constitutional Document 2019, Sudanese Criminal Code 1991.



RECORD OF VIOLATIONS

Despite Sudan's ratification of the 1949 Geneva Conventions concerning the protection of civilians and the accompanying protocols aimed at safeguarding civilian property, however, from the onset, the conflict posed significant threats to civilians. This can be attributed to the fact that the conflict originated from military headquarters situated in residential areas within Khartoum, amidst a densely populated environment. Consequently, artists, including musicians and dramatists, have faced various forms of violations, such as extrajudicial killings and restricted access to essential medical care due to displacement and asylum both within and outside Sudan. The health sector has been severely impacted, as both warring factions have obstructed access to medical services for many individuals. Additionally, arbitrary arrests and prolonged periods of incommunicado detention and torture have resulted in fatalities.

Extrajudicial Killing

A significant number of civilians, including artists and creatives have perished as a result of direct or indirect consequences of shelling namely;

1. Hamdan Azraq, a member of the Omdurman Youth Center, is a singer and composer. He was killed by shelling in the Hayyal-Arab neighborhood in Omdurman.
2. Abdulbasit, known as Wasta, is a keyboard player at the Omdurman Youth Center. He was killed by a shell in Bahri.
3. Asia Abdelmajid (birth name Asia Muhamad Al-Toum) was the first Sudanese theatrical actress. Bahri was killed during a shooting in Bahri on 04 May 2024.
4. Bilal is a poet, musician, and composer from Omdurman. He died on 01 January 2024.
5. Hamdan Azraq, a figurative artist. A shell fell on his house in the Al-Shuhada neighborhood, Omdurman on 11 March 2023 resultantly killing him.
6. Rif'at Al-Daw also known as Kota, is a conga player. He was killed on 22 February 2024 in Omdurman.
7. Abbas Awad Jebril, a poet, composer, and actor. He was killed by a shell on 12 September 2023 Al-Hara Al-Oula in Omdurman.
8. Abdulwahid Abdultam, a violinist with Abu Arky Al-Bakhit band in Omdurman. He was killed by a shelling on 12 July 2023.
9. Osman Younis also known as Shaqa, was a member of the Red Sea Artists Union and a sergeant in the Navy. He was killed in El Fashir on 21 May 2024.
10. Arki Abdelrahim was killed by a shell at Al-Hamadab Mosque in Al-Shajara on 23 August 2023.
11. On 13 May 2023, at approximately 1:00 AM, Shadin Muhammad Hussein, a 35-year-old poetess locally known as Hakama, was sitting at the rooftop of her residence in Al-Hashmab, Omdurman accompanied by her son, two family members, and two neighbors when she was struck by a bullet seemingly fired by a nearby sniper. She was hit in the right side of the stomach below the ribs. As her companions sought to procure a neighbor's vehicle to transport her to the hospital, three additional bullets were discharged in their vicinity. Their progress was further impeded at a SAF checkpoint,



resulting in a significant delay. Tragically, her family received the news that she had succumbed to the injuries approximately 30 minutes before they arrived at the hospital. Ms. Shadin was very active on Facebook, advocating for an end to the conflict and criticizing the role of Islamists in obstructing humanitarian aid. On 12 May 2023, she shared three notable posts on her Facebook page. The first was a 2-minute and 12-second video reposted from an online newspaper called Al-Rakoba, titled "The Islamists: Sedition in Sudan – The Key to War, and the Army Deceived." The second video, which lasted less than three minutes, bore the title "The Director of Port Sudan Airport Refuses to Accept Planes Loaded with Medicine for the Benefit of the Sudanese People and Must Be Held Accountable." In her third post, she wrote, "To every lover of writing, we will document for the first time a history that is not unknown, with utmost accuracy and credibility. You are a witness." Shadin was a member of the Misseriya group.

12. On 22 July 2023, Muhammad Al-Nour Al-Ghali Ezz El Din, a 27 years old singer was killed when a shell fell on their home in the Texas Al-Hara Al-Oula neighborhood, during artillery shelling by the 16th Division Command in the city of Nyala, South Darfur State. His father, Al-Nour Al-Ghal (also a singer), was injured in the leg.
13. On 23 August 2023, at around 4:00 pm, the Al-Hamadab Mosque in the suburb of Al-Shajara in Khartoum was shelled during a gunfight between RSF and SAF resultantly killing of several worshippers including Mr. Arki, an artist.
14. Muhammad Youssif also known as "Andokai", an actor from El Geneina, West Darfur, was killed inside his house in June 2023.
15. Mujahid Abdullah, a violinist was killed by a shell on 10 November 2023.
16. Majdy Karari, a trumpet player and member of the Musical Corps died during a clash in Omdurman.
17. Muhammad Al-Hassan Al-Sanjak, violinist and music teacher, graduate of the Higher Institute of Music and Theater, was hit by a shell in his home in the Doha neighborhood of Omdurman on 23 March 2024.
18. Muhammad Khatir Daoud, a 32-year-old artist who graduated in 2021 from the Piano Department at the University of Sudan, College of Music and Drama, died on 21 August 2023.

Obstruction of healthcare

The conflict erupted in Sudan's densely populated capital, Khartoum, and rapidly escalated across the country. Key urban areas, including central Khartoum, Khartoum North, and surrounding towns, became primary battlegrounds. Strategic locations such as the General Command headquarters, the international airport, the residence of the RSF Commander, and areas housing the transitional civilian government officials (Riyadh, Kafori, Al-Manshiya) were targeted by both warring factions. The conflict subsequently spread southward, encompassing Khartoum's southern and south-central regions.

Within the first week of the conflict, healthcare facilities were targeted, and subjected to SAF's aerial bombardment and occupation by the RSF. Consequently, numerous medical institutions



were rendered inoperable. Given these dire circumstances, it is unfortunate that many of the creatives and artists including singers, musicians, songwriters, and others, were unable to access necessary medical care. Several individuals suffering from chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and kidney disease, requiring ongoing treatment succumbed to these illnesses.

To escape the escalating violence, many Khartoum residents embarked on perilous journeys northward towards River Nile State and the Northern State. Some sought refuge in Egypt, enduring a 21-hour drive and lengthy border crossing delays. The Egyptian visa process, which initially took about 7 to 15 days, was further complicated by the introduction of security permit requirements, leading to significant delays and exorbitant fees. As a result, many resorted to clandestine/ border crossings, risking their lives to reach safety on a journey that takes two to five days.

Others fled southward to Al-Gezira State, overwhelming local healthcare systems. As the conflict intensified and the RSF gained control over Madani and parts of Al-Gezira, a new wave of displacement ensued, forcing individuals to seek refuge in Sennar State and the eastern states of Sudan. These arduous journeys exacerbated suffering, resulting in numerous fatalities due to displacement, unsafe travel, harsh conditions, disease, and a lack of medical care, particularly among the elderly. The report details the names of those who tragically lost their lives.

1. Ibrahim Miko also known as "Miko Keyboard", is a keyboard player. He died in Wad Madani Hospital on 14 July 2023
2. Ahmad Al-Babli, a singer from Atbara. He died in a traffic accident on Abu Hamad Road on 4 June 2024.
3. Osama Babiker also known as "Baklo", a composer succumbed to a terminal illness on 23 May 2023.
4. Muhammad Mirghani, a singer from Wad Madani succumbed to a long-term illness on 12 December 2023.
5. Osama Bashab, a singer who previously appeared on the *Nujum Al-Ghadd* (Stars of Tomorrow) television show on the Blue Nile Channel died in Atbara, River Nile State on 16 July 2024. Osama traveled to the Emirates but had recently returned and was practicing his art at the Khartoum South Center.
6. Bashir Abdelmajid Bashir, who wrote Kunooz song by Zidan Ibrahim and composed by Bashir Abbas, died on 28 April 2024 in Al-Jereif, Khartoum.
7. Hafez Abdelrahman, a composer and flute player died on 23 July 2023 in Nyala, South Darfur.
8. On 15 September 2024, Hudhayfah Faraj Allah Saad succumbed to angina pectoris in Ad-Damazin.
9. Sabit Osman died on 05 May 2024, in Omdurman.
10. Khalid Abdeen also known as Genghis, fell ill before the war and died in Cairo, Egypt on 16 August 2023.
11. Rif'at Al-Daw Kota, a conga player, lost his life on 21 February 2024 when he was hit by a stray shell in Abu Kadok, Omdurman.
12. Al-Sadiq Elias, writer of Al Jeraif w-al-Lubia song died on 07 November 2023.



13. Tariq Omar alias "Brazili", was a musician and professor at the College of Music and Drama. Mr. Omar also played in a number of bands, the most famous of which is Nancy Ajaj's band. He was also one of the founders of the Sudanese Women project. He died at his home on Block 12 in Al-Thawra, Omdurman, on 04 July 2024.
14. Adel Farag Allah, an actor and member of the Teraab Comedy Group died on 22 January 2024 at the Kosti, Police Hospital.
15. Abdulwahid Abdallah, the writer of the Independence Anthem sang by Mohamed Wardi. He died on 05 May 2023, in Al-Gadarif.
16. Issam Muhammad Ali, alias "Wad El-Foas", a percussionist died on 20 February 2024 in Cairo from an unknown illness.
17. Omar El Sha'er, a musician, composer, and poet, was killed by a shell.
18. Omar Abdallah Muhammad Ibrahim, also known as "Omar El Sha'er" died on 24 August 2023 at Medical Corps.
19. Monologist Sayed El Sheikh Talha, well-known for his Dr. Shol monologue died on 24 September 2024 in Omdurman.
20. Nabil Mutawakil, drama actor and screenwriter, died on 22 July 2024, due to illness in Al-Gadarif State, eastern Sudan. He was born in Bahri Al-Danagla and began his career in 1973 and went on to become popular in Sudan. His most prominent works are Anbar Al-Majnouna and Dharra Wahda La Takfi. He produced approximately 33 plays, in addition to a number of TV and radio series. He got ill which caused his paralysis, and he lost his life after suffering constant displacements from the Al-Kalakla neighborhood in Khartoum, then to the city of Wad Madani until he reached the city of Al-Qadarif, where he passed away.
21. Hani Awad Allah also known as Abu Al-Dabash, a drama artist (actor), died on 11 December 2023 in the city of Atbara in River Nile State, as a result of illness which was escalated by the displacement from Khartoum.
22. Hanaa Muhammad, a guitarist and graduate of the College of Music and Drama, died in Kosti City succumbed to an untreated illness on 15 September 2024.
23. Zainab Muhammad Ahmad, a dramatist, died of a sudden illness in Kassala city in an IDP shelter on 14 August 2024.
24. Yusri Muhammad Abdelaziz Nashid died on 24 May 2023 from an illness. He was displaced from Khartoum to the city of Dongola.
25. Al-Amin Muhammad Ali, an actor, died in Al-Gezira State in the Al-Masid neighborhood in September 2023.
26. Abdulwahab Al-Toum, keyboard player, producer, and member of the late artist Mahmoud Abdel Aziz's band, passed away on 19 February 2024.
27. Mustafa Juha, a musician who played the trumpet and a graduate of Music and Drama, passed away on 30 August 2024.
28. Khalid Sanhouri, a musician and member of several musical groups, tragically perished in the Al-Mulazemin neighborhood in Omdurman. The lack of essential supplies, including food and medicine, coupled with the complete shutdown of nearby healthcare facilities, contributed to his untimely demise.
29. A diabetic and hypertensive patient, Sanhouri succumbed to his condition on 15 July 2023. Due to the intense shelling in the area, a brief funeral was held at his residence, attended only by his brother and a neighbor.



The widespread conflict has resulted in the forced displacement of civilians, the disruption of healthcare services, and mass arrests, which has led to a significant refugee crisis. An estimated 2.3 million individuals have fled Sudan. Tragically, many refugees have succumbed to deteriorating health conditions, including:

1. Al-Mahi Ismail, a Professor of Music at Bakht Al-Rida University in White Nile State, Ad-Duwaim City. He was the first dean of the Higher Institute of Music and Theater in 1969 and the head of the Folk Arts Troupe in 1969. Mr. Ismail died in Bonn, Germany on 18 June 2023.
2. Al-Siddiq Muhammad Ismail, a guitarist, died in a hospital in Egypt, on 12 May 2023.
3. Muhammad El Amin Hamad El Nil, a musician, a graduate of the College of Music and Drama, and a member of the Musicians Council in Sudan died from illness on 13 November 2023 in Egypt.
4. Salah Abdallah Rabeh, a Sudanese percussion musician. He worked with a number of musical bands, the most famous of which was the band of the late singer Sayed Khalifa. He died on 10 January 2024 from an illness in a hospital in Cairo, Egypt.
5. Muhammad Awad SidAhmed, an actor and member of the Friends Theater Troupe died on 24 October 2023 in Egypt.
6. Muhammad Shattir, the former director of the Sudanese National Theatre, died on 25 July 2024 in Egypt.
7. Qasim Othman, a revolutionary figurative artist, died in Rabat, Morocco, on 08 September 2024.
8. Tawfiq Abu Bakr, a singer and composer, founder of the Burhaniya Choir with several other contributions to the creative industry. He also graduated from the Faculty of Music and Drama, Music Department. Mr. Abu Baker died in Cairo, Egypt on 10 October 2024.

Arbitrary Arrests and Torture

On 30 August 2024, Kamil Hassan Kamil, a percussionist, succumbed to torture injuries in Soba Prison, south of Khartoum. Kamil was arrested in May 2023 in Khartoum by the RSF and was detained at the prison since May 2023.

In September 2024, Asim Muhammad Khalaf-Allah was released from custody. He was arrested in January 2024 by the SAF Intelligence, for nine months. Mr. Asim was a film director, photographer, researcher in documentary filmmaking, former professor at the Faculty of Music and Drama, Drama Department, and head of the Public Relations Department at the Youth and Children's Palace.

Violation of Artistic and Archeological Objects

The armed conflict that erupted in Sudan on 15 April 2023, between the SAF and the RSF (both designated as regular forces under the 2019 Constitutional Document) has been classified by the UN Security Council as an internal conflict. This classification is significant given the suspension of Sudan from the African Union on 27 October 2021, following a military coup led by the same



two warring factions. Against this backdrop, this report explores the critical issue of protecting cultural and artistic objects in Sudan during the ongoing war.

International law establishes a distinction between civilian and military objects. Military objects are defined as those that, by their nature, location, purpose, or use, make an "effective" contribution to military operations. Additionally, they must be objects whose total or partial destruction, capture, or disabling would yield a "definite military advantage." Conversely, civilian objects are those that do not fall under this definition and include entities such as hospitals, water stations, places of worship, emergency rooms, and shelters. This report focuses on the violation of cultural civilian objects, which encompass artistic objects and institutions like museums, theaters, and historic houses.

International humanitarian law provides general and special protection for civilian objects as set out in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, and the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954.

Museum of Natural History

The Museum of Natural History, a key institution for documenting Sudan's wildlife, is situated on University Street in central Khartoum. It operates as a department within the Faculty of Science at the University of Khartoum. The museum has suffered significant damage from three shell strikes that directly impacted the bird and specimen hall. Eyewitness accounts, such as that of Ahmad (not his real name), a local shopkeeper, confirm the severity of the incident. The museum's halls, specimens, and animal exhibits were extensively damaged, resulting in the loss of all the animals therein. A museum official, who wished to remain anonymous, reported that attempts were made to release the caged birds by requesting the army's assistance. While the SAF confirmed that this action was taken, there is no definitive verification. Additionally, the source indicated that most of the museum's data was transferred, though the specific location of its transfer remains undisclosed.

The Sudan National Museum

The National Museum of Sudan, established in 1904, faced significant threats during the recent conflict. With the RSF in control of central Khartoum, disturbing videos and images emerged, depicting RSF members within the museum's premises and artifacts strewn across the floor. Notably, Mr. Omar Jibril, a media personality working with the RSF, appeared to place an artifact mask on his face. The footage also highlighted the compromised state of the research laboratory and mummy collection. In response to these alarming developments, a museum official, who requested anonymity, contacted the RSF to halt the activities depicted in the video. Subsequently, the RSF ceased these actions, and the video was not further disseminated. A group of concerned individuals and antiquities experts initiated an effort to salvage what remained of the museum's collection. This initiative aimed for a ceasefire to secure or remove valuable artifacts. While the RSF reportedly approved this endeavor, the SAF ultimately rejected the proposed course of action.



The National Authority for Museums and Antiquities formed a committee to monitor and document what happened and they received training from UNESCO in Egypt and issued several reports. The Cultural Properties Initiative was formed by specialist Ismail Hamid.

The Al-Sahini Museum in Nyala, South Darfur, sustained damage as a result of shelling by both conflicting parties. According to a statement by the Director of Museums at the Sudanese General Authority for Antiquities and Museums and Head of the Stolen Antiquities Unit, to Al-Hadath TV, the museum was completely looted and was undergoing rehabilitation. The artifacts were packed and stored within the museum. The RSF has since occupied the Nyala Museum and is utilizing it as an office.

In 2021, following the assault incident that affected even IDPs in the city of El-Geneina in West Darfur State, the Sultan Bahar al-Din Museum was also affected, resulting in the looting of all its possessions. During this incident, the investigation focused primarily on the criminal aspects, which were subsequently overlooked. More recently, on 12 May 2023, a group perpetrated an attack on the residence of Sultan Saad Bahar al-Din in the Al-Majlis neighborhood of El-Geneina. This attack resulted in the theft of five gold and silver swords, as well as the Sultan's ceremonial caftan.

Cupola of the Khalifa Mosque

Following the Sudanese Armed Forces' recapture of central Omdurman, visual evidence emerged depicting minor damage to the cupola of the Khalifa Abdullah Al-Ta'aishi Mosque. This damage appears to have resulted from shelling originating from the Khartoum Bahri district. Additionally, in May, an army officer released a video and accompanying images revealing the theft of artifacts from the Al-Khalifa Museum in Omdurman. The officer characterized the incident as an act of organized crime, though the perpetrators remain unidentified. The Al-Khalifa Mosque was established in 1985.

Musawwarat Archaeological Site

On 14 January 2024, a group of RSF fighters briefly entered the archaeological site of Musawwarat in northern Sudan. While the mission headquarters were infiltrated, reports indicate that only non-antiquity items, such as car tyres, were lost. Two warehouses adjacent to the headquarters, containing valuable antiquities, remain vulnerable to attacks. Due to the subsequent arrival of a military force and the presence of landmines in the area, the current status of these antiquities and any potential damage they may have suffered remains uncertain.

Al Nahda Cultural Club in El-Fashir

The Al Nahda Cultural and Social Club, founded in 1976 by the residents of the Kafoot neighborhood in El-Fashir, North Darfur State, served as a significant cultural hub. Established through a grassroots initiative, the club was funded by the proceeds from charity concerts and film screenings organized by renowned artists such as late jazz singer Kamal Keila and renowned singer Salah Mustafa. In 1986, the club, in collaboration with the Community Development Association,



hosted concerts by the celebrated artist Mohamed Wardi, contributing to the promotion of democratic ideals in Darfur. Beyond its cultural role, the club provided a range of social services, including sports facilities, a kindergarten, a library, and literacy classes for elderly women. It served as a community gathering place, fostering social interaction and providing a space for residents to engage in various activities. Additionally, the club's cooperative society offered subsidized food to the local community.

Tragically, in September 2024, the club was destroyed in a bombing attack, having served as a refuge for civilians displaced by the ongoing conflict but refusing to leave the city. This devastating event underscores the impact of the war on cultural institutions and the challenges faced by communities seeking safety and support.

Violation and restriction of the freedom to information

The Sudan Radio and Television Corporation

On 12 March 2024, the SAF reclaimed control of the Radio and Television Corporation building in Omdurman from the RSF, which had seized it since the onset of hostilities in April 2023. The RSF encountered technical difficulties in operating the national television however, they managed to restore Radio Omdurman broadcasts after seizing control of the broadcasting station in West Omdurman's Al-Saliha area on 15 March 2024.

A Sudanese National Radio engineer, speaking on condition of anonymity, provided insights into the extent of the damage. The engineer revealed that the radio facility is divided into groups, with Group C studios suffering significant damage. Conversely, the Khanji Studios Group and the Al-Falatiah Group, which houses the Al-Bait Al-Sudani Studio, remained intact. Regarding the audio library, the northern section containing older recordings was spared, while the second part, housing Netia servers, was severely damaged. These servers were relocated to Atbara, River Nile State, for safekeeping, but a substantial portion of the data was lost. The station continued broadcasting from Abu Si'id, Al-Fetaihab area, which remains under the control of the RSF, despite being subjected to airstrikes by the SAF.

As for the medium wave station, it is in the suburb of Soba in Khartoum East. Later, a committee was formed to supervise the National Radio, Khartoum State Television, and the Blue Nile Channel.

The National Theater, situated in the Al-Mulazimeen suburb of Omdurman on Nile Street, shares a building with the Radio and TV building, with a common entrance connecting the theater, Khartoum Channel, and the television facility. Since the fall of the NCP regime in 1989, a military unit has been stationed at the radio building, with a tank positioned in front. The RSF further fortified the area with military vehicles both inside and outside the radio building. During the April 2023 war, the RSF maintained control over the building and surrounding area until it was subsequently reclaimed by the SAF.



In Nyala, South Darfur, the RSF has used the Behair Theater as a military base since the war began in April 2023.

Mr. Al-Fateh Hessein, a professor and former dean of the College of Music, informed Al-Hadath channel that the college and its civilian assets sustained damage and that his educational center (Al-Fateh Hessein Center) in Bahri were both damaged and looted.

The Institute of Graduate Studies, affiliated with the University of Khartoum, was established in 1974 and comprises three departments: African and Sudanese Languages, and African and Asian Studies. According to Dr. Ali Ibrahim Al-Daw Ali (the Institute's Director), the institution's physical infrastructure was not damaged during the recent conflict. However, certain equipment, such as laptops, was stolen. Despite this setback, crucial data was preserved. Subsequently, a collaborative platform was established with the support of the University of Khartoum administration and UNESCO to safeguard Sudan's intangible cultural heritage.

The Ahaleena Al-Hawsh Al-Kabeer Center, located in Al-Mulazimeen, Omdurman, is affiliated with the Ahaleena Troupe, founded in 2013 by Muhammad Hassan (Balaha). Mr. Hassan was an active figure in the Sudanese drama and show dance space who brought together many musicians, drama actors, and showmen. The Center's primary objective is the preservation of Sudanese heritage and culture. However, it has suffered significant damage due to theft and looting of its assets, as reported by Adam Abdullah Adam Musa, a multi-talented artist and member of the troupe.

Hate Speech

The prevalence of hate speech within the Sudanese context is multifaceted, often stemming from both political and socio-economic factors. Politically motivated hate speech, characterized by discriminatory and divisive rhetoric, frequently emerges in response to conflicts over resources like land ownership. These forms of hate speech are exacerbated by poor governance, oppressive political regimes, and discriminatory policies that perpetuate social injustice and hinder development. A political economy perspective, among other analytical approaches, can further illuminate the underlying causes of such harmful discourse.

The escalation of hate speech since the outbreak of the April 2023 war can be traced back to pre-existing societal tensions and the influence of media narratives. Both conflicting parties have employed media platforms to disseminate divisive rhetoric, exploiting the unrestricted nature of social media to propagate hate speech during, and leading up to the onset of, the war. The absence of effective legal and law enforcement mechanisms, coupled with the erosion of the state's authority, has further facilitated the spread of such harmful discourse. Moreover, the historical context of discriminatory policies and the politicization of citizenship, as exemplified by the revocation by the dictatorial regime of Nimeiri of Sudanese citizenship from the renowned poet Muhammad Miftah al-Fitouri, and the grating of citizenship to foreigners during the rule of the Islamists, has contributed to a climate of intolerance and division.



Radio and television have historically been the primary mediums for announcing significant political changes in Sudan. The broadcasting of marches may have signaled the forceful seizure of power, deviating from a peaceful transfer of authority. This event marked the onset of a new era of repression, culminating in a 50-year period of military and ideologically driven military rule between 1956 and 2024.

During the December 2018 revolution, numerous bands and artists actively supported the cause of political change by participating in peaceful protests and creating revolutionary art. Some artists expressed solidarity with the martyrs by canceling scheduled performances, including New Year's Eve concerts in 2019. Additionally, concerts were postponed or canceled if coincided with days of significant peaceful demonstrations. Students and faculty of the Institute of Music and Theater organized protest rallies to condemn the violence inflicted upon peaceful protesters.

On 10 January 2019, the Sudanese Musicians Association issued a statement endorsing the role of artists in supporting the popular uprising and encouraging other artists to join the movement. The statement explicitly distanced itself from the stance of the Musicians' Union.

During the April 2023 war, some artists became increasingly involved in the conflict, utilizing hate speech as a tool to advocate for their respective sides. Al-Sir Al-Sayed Athir highlights that hate speech has escalated to a new level following the mobilization efforts of both warring parties. He emphasizes that hate speech has contributed to the perpetration of human rights abuses and hindered the pursuit of justice. This phenomenon is evident on both sides of the conflict. Notably, the RSF has employed derogatory and dehumanizing language, including slurs based on sexual orientation and identity, to incite hatred and violence.

Both sides of the conflict perpetuated human rights abuses, a practice entrenched during the previous Islamist regime. This trend has been further exacerbated by the use of summary trials, often based on perceived affiliations with one of the warring parties. The proliferation of hate speech, fueled by the ongoing conflict, has exacerbated existing societal divisions, particularly along ethnic and geographic lines. This is further compounded by the involvement of parties with links to the former regime, resulting in a continuation of the divisive rhetoric of that era. The positive strides made during the transitional period, such as the strengthening of the concept of citizenship, have been undermined by the resurgence of exclusionary and divisive discourse. This is evident in the targeted attacks against certain political forces, which aim to dismantle the progress achieved during the transitional period.

The composition of the RSF, largely drawn from pastoralist communities in Kordofan and Darfur, has contributed to a regionalized dynamic within the conflict. The Juba Peace Agreement, intended to foster unity between the SAF and RSF, has paradoxically highlighted a tactical separatist sentiment linked to the geographic north, despite its ostensibly Islamist underpinnings. The predatory nature of the war waged by the RSF has extended into previously peaceful regions, resulting in widespread violations of human rights, dignity, and economic rights. This has rendered the SAF incapable of providing adequate protection, while the RSF, lacking political legitimacy and support, has resorted to Islamist rhetoric to influence the political landscape. In this context, a discourse of hatred has emerged, characterized by divisive and inflammatory language. As



Muhammad Mustafa Saad observes, this discourse has transformed the war into a battleground of animosity, further exacerbating societal divisions and undermining any prospects for reconciliation.

Al-Tayeb Siddiq, a drama director and founder of NOS Media, expressed concern about the challenges in addressing the pervasive hate speech fueled by the ongoing conflict. According to Siddiq, it is evident that the prevalence of hate speech in Sudan has led to a polarization of society and a diversion of attention from the urgent task of ending the war.

ROLE OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVES DURING THE CURRENT WAR

It became apparent from the outset that both the SAF and the RSF had preemptively strategized to leverage media to support their respective positions. This involved mobilizing various actors, including artists, to disseminate propaganda. The swift seizure of the Sudan Radio and Television Corporation buildings in Al-Mulazimeen, Omdurman, and the radio broadcasting station in Al-Saliha, Omdurman, by the RSF, demonstrates this intent. While the RSF initially managed to operate the radio station, their attempts to control television broadcasting were unsuccessful. Subsequently, the SAF launched a concerted military effort to regain control of these media establishments.

The roles of artists in the war were categorized into two primary forms: those who advocated for peace and those who supported a specific warring party.

Artists who advocated against the war;

A significant number of artists have advocated for an end to the war. Prominent figures such as;

- i. Abu Arky Al-Bakheit, who faced pressures from both the SAF and the RSF, expressed his stance musically through songs like "It Must Stop."
- ii. Professor Al-Fateh Hussein, a renowned musician and academic, also condemned the conflict.
- iii. Singer Nancy Ajaj used her platform to call for peace during a concert in the United Arab Emirates.
- iv. Similarly, musician Youssef Al-Mawsili organized several concerts in Saudi Arabia and Germany to raise awareness about the war and advocate for peace.
- v. Youssef Osman Muhammad Bilal Al-Mawsili, a displaced artist who left after an airstrike hit near his house, joined the Civil Forces Initiative for Peace and Development in America to promote peace, humanitarian aid, and democratic governance. He participated in a conference in Munich on 12 August 2024, organized by the Media and Psychological Support Committee of the German-Sudanese Center for Peace and Development.
- vi. Poetess (Hakkama) Shadin Muhammad Al-Hussein continued to utilize Facebook as a platform to advocate for an end to the war until the day preceding her demise.
- vii. Singer Shamat Muhammad Nour participated in various events in Egypt and performed concerts under the banner of "Aqd Al-Jallad" in support of peace.



- viii. Poetess (Hakkama) Halima Muhammad Adam, known as Halima Sasa, performed the song Al-Mirram in support of stopping the war.
- ix. Musician Othman participated in musical arrangements in several events advocating for ending the war.
- x. Mona Majdy Salim held concerts in Juba, South Sudan, Kampala, Uganda, and Cairo, Egypt.
- xi. Muhammad Abdel Jalil worked with the (Ratina) group in events in Egypt.
- xii. Mahdia held events in Ethiopia with the Aswat Al-Madina band, as well as in Kampala.
- xiii. Hamza Adam commonly known as Castro, has been actively involved in various initiatives aimed at promoting peace and combating hate speech. He performed at the Nyege Nyege Festival in Jinja, Uganda. He also launched a Youth Network advocating for an end to the War. This network is supported by the Awareness Organization and other organizations dedicated to peace. As a screenwriter and director of the film *Sadmat Masdum* (Sudden Shock) which addresses the issue of hate speech. Castro has produced numerous artistic works in various Sudanese and Ugandan local languages to promote peace and tolerance. He has conducted workshops on the role of arts in combating hate speech and fostering peaceful coexistence with local and international organizations. Additionally, Castro has collaborated with artists from around the world, including Gamba from Nigeria, Uganda, and Germany, to create works that promote African unity and oppose racial discrimination.
- xiv. Zainab Adam, a physically disabled female artist who was displaced from South Darfur, and currently residing as a refugee in Uganda, participated in various events, including the People's Festival in Kampala, to advocate for peace in Sudan. She actively contributed to the peace movement through her musical talents.
- xv. Muhammad Abdallah also known as Yaba, a musician and keyboard player, participated in several events and is working on a project advocating for peace.
- xvi. Fadwa Farid, a singer who has consistently opposed the war and has performed in numerous refugee camps in South Sudan and Uganda, and Mustafa Bakri, founder of the Peace Choir in Uganda, have both actively participated in various peace initiatives.
- xvii. Howayda Abdellatif, a teacher and singer in Saudi Arabia, worked in a number of events supporting the cessation of war.
- xviii. Mubarak Minallah, a singer held several events opposing war.
- xix. Singer Sarah held a number of events at the People's Festival in Kampala and in the United States of America.
- xx. Muhammad Abbu, a member of the Youth Network to Stop the War, participated in a number of events to stop the war.
- xxi. Samahir Abu Arki Al-Bakheit, a drummer, worked in several events opposing the war.
- xxii. Badr El-Din Nasr Moussa, a music teacher, did musical arrangements for several singers in Egypt.
- xxiii. Ikram Rabih, a Hakkama poetess and film producer, worked in a number of events.
- xxiv. Hussam Abdelsalam, a former teacher at the Sudanese Oud House and a violin player. Speaking from the House of Writers and Artists in Port Sudan, Red Sea State, he stated to Al Jazeera his rejection of war.
- xxv. Muzaffar Saif Al-Din, a keyboard player, and Al-Sayyab Saif Al-Din, an oud player, participated in several anti-war events in Juba, South Sudan, and Kampala.



- xxvi. Amal Nour El Hoda, a vocal coach based in the United States and former member of prominent musical groups such as Aqd El Galad and Mohamed Wardi's ensemble, expressed her strong opposition to the ongoing conflict in Sudan. She emphasized the importance of peaceful coexistence and actively supported initiatives aimed at ending the war. Her statement commenced with a traditional Sudanese song, "'Ajabuni El Leila Ju." Highlighting the root cause of the conflict, Nour El Hoda attributed it to a lack of unity among the Sudanese people. She extended her solidarity to the residents of Tuti Island in Khartoum, citing their exemplary unity during times of crisis, such as the Nile floods, when they collectively work to protect their community, regardless of their social background. Nour El Hoda condemned the violence, displacement, and loss of life suffered by the Sudanese people, emphasizing the tragic consequences of the war. She advocated for peace, love, and harmony among the Sudanese people and called for the establishment of a democratic civil rule. Furthermore, she has initiated various projects to support artists, both male and female and has a repertoire of songs that reflect the spirit of the Sudanese revolution.
- xxvii. Muhammad Ali Al-Zein, known as "Wad Al-Zein", a reggae singer, sang at a number of events in Egypt opposing the war and participated in the Humanitarian Issues Conference with a speech.
- xxviii. Hadia Talasam.
- xxix. Mo Ali, a singer who participated in several festivals in the Netherlands and Sudan opposing the war.
- xxx. Insaf Madani.
- xxxi. Dr. Asim Al-Tayeb Akamiqiu, a heritage researcher and singer, held a number of events and participated in a conference in Nairobi.
- xxxii. Zahraa Al-Daw Hammad, known as Al-Hazmiya, appeared in episodes with a platform about the role of peace and appeared in a video singing calling for peace.
- xxxiii. Taha Suleiman worked in communal voluntary kitchens for more than 7 months in Shambat.
- xxxiv. Gandhi Adam, a flute player, worked in a number of events in Egypt, which he came to from France, and has an initiative that was signed by a number of musicians and drama actors on 28 September 2023.

Examples of musical groups that have opposed the war

Among the musical groups are;

- i. The Aqd El Galad Band,
- ii. Aqd El Galad in Egypt,
- iii. The Kampala Peace Choir,
- iv. The Peace Egypt Band, and
- v. Sudan Culture.

Sudanese dramatists advocating for the cessation of war



We tracked and documented the activities of dramatists who advocated for the cessation of hostilities. Figures included:

- a) Muzdalifah Al-Hajj, who engaged in awareness campaigns on platforms such as Facebook and TikTok to counter hate speech and advocate for peace;
- b) Sayed Abdallah Sawasal, a poet and actor, utilized media outlets, particularly emerging platforms like TikTok, to disseminate peace messages;
- c) Jamal Hassan Saeed, a vocal supporter of peace; and Abdel Salam Jalloud, an actor and oud player, shared with Al Jazeera the devastating impact of the war on his family and called for an immediate end to the conflict. Currently residing in a shelter in Kassala,
- d) Al-Sir Al-Sayed, an actor and television director at Sudan TV, participated in various events in Kampala, emphasizing the role of the arts in mitigating hate speech.

The Wajaa Wash troupe, a drama troupe working in Khartoum State, held several digital shows on the troupe's Facebook page on 08 May 2024. The following messages were also published on their social media platform "*Put down your weapons, let's save what's left of our lives. War is useless. Our people and your people are the losers, in Al-Jazeera, Al-Fashir, Sennar, and Al-Ubayyid, all the places affected by the war, the citizens are the sole disadvantaged. We Sudanese are hot-blooded and emotional but let's try rationality for once.*"

Falling in the trap of polarization

There are also a number of creatives who have chosen to pick sides and support the conflict.

Those in support of the army (SAF)

- i. Nada Muhammad Othman also known as Nada Al Qal'a, last performed "Akhbar Sinja" on 30 July 2024. She has produced additional works in support of the SAF.
- ii. Kamal Ibrahim Suleiman also known as "Tarbas," appeared alongside the Engineering Corps on 30 April 2024, performing the song "Malna Wa Damna (Protector of our Blood and Property)"
- iii. Aziza Rabak joined the Moral Guidance efforts post-war and released the song "La Tafawud (No Negotiations)" on 28 July 2024.
- iv. Amjad Baqira, a supporter of the SAF, performed "Nahna Jayasha (We Are Militarymen)" on 05 June 2024. He has publicly affirmed his allegiance to the military.
- v. Atef Al Samani has appeared in several videos brandishing a Kalashnikov. Following the cancellation of numerous concerts, he released the song "Our theaters are the backs of our combat vehicles" on 26 July 2024.
- vi. Street rappers in various locations, including Cairo, have expressed support for the armed forces.
- vii. Singer Ahmad Al-Sadig, in an interview with Daqaiq newspaper on 30 July 2024, commended the Sudanese people for their support of the armed forces, asserting that defending one's land and honor is a noble endeavor.
- viii. On 10 July 2024, a concert titled "Atab Cultural Evening" was held at the premises of Musical Professionals in Kassala, Eastern Sudan. Organized by the Union of Musical



Professions, the event was held in support of the armed forces, with the slogan "To quell the night, the soldiers fight."

- ix. Mashaer Badri, head of the House of Musical Professionals, stated that the institution's vision is to support the armed forces, organize cultural events, and emphasize the role of art in the ongoing struggle for dignity.
- x. Muhammad Abdel Aziz, known as "Bambo," head of the Union of Musical Professions, expressed gratitude to the Governor of Kassala, Major General (Ret.) Al-Sadiq Muhammad Al-Azraq, for his support.

Those in support of RSF

- i. Adam Hamouda, who fled Zalingei in central Darfur to his hometown of Al-Daien in East Darfur at the onset of the war, has changed sides and voiced his support for the RSF through the song "Daama Dail Jaghimko Haar (RSF fighting is fierce)".
- ii. Ibrahim Idris, a singer has appeared in a number of videos with the RSF, singing "Al Rajjal fawq Al Da'ama (Fortitude is in the RSF)" and "Shendi ma Ba'eeda (Shandi is not far away)".
- iii. Poetesses (Hakkama) in various areas in the Darfur and Kordofan regions.
- iv. Adam Al-Tayeb, a singer who sang the song "Mohamed Hamdan Daglo".

The song "Al-Asad Maraq (The lion is out)" after Hemeti appeared, and "Usud Al Sharqi Ju (The lions of the East came)".

The majority of artistic works supporting the RSF have drawn upon the cultural heritage of their home regions in Darfur and Kordofan. These works primarily serve two purposes: to bolster morale within the RSF and to garner public support. Songs such as "Umm Qurun," "Zayli Zamili Al-Yawm Al-Helw Ma Bidayum Kul Yum," and "Nihna Dayl Al-Da'm Al-Saree', Jahizia, Sur'a, Hasm," produced by the Moral Guidance Unit, exemplify this trend. Notably, many of the civilian artists involved, including Mustafa Abu Shama, Asaad, Osman Musa, and Taha Drums, are graduates of the College of Music and are currently residing outside of Sudan.

Abu Arki Al-Bakheit: A musician who preferred to stay in Omdurman despite the conflict

The protection of civilians in Sudan has been severely compromised by both warring factions, as evidenced by the reality of shifting territorial control. A poignant example of this is the case of artist Abu Arki Al-Bakheit. Despite the escalating conflict, he chose to remain in his home in the Al-Hatana suburb of northern Omdurman, a decision rooted in his identity as a revolutionary artist.

On 18 April 2019, just six days after the fall of the National Congress Party (NCP) regime, Abu Arki Al-Bakheit performed the censored song "Come on, let's sing" at the sit-in stage at the General Command. Since 25 May 2023, his neighborhood, Al-Arda in Omdurman, has become increasingly insecure. Representatives of Both the RSF and the SAF (as well as the commander of the Al-Bara bin Malik Battalion, Al-Misbah, which is aligned with the Sudanese Islamic Movement), visited his home. While ostensibly offering protection, their true intent was to exploit



his fame to push their propaganda. By publicizing these visits, both parties sought to garner support from Abu Arki's fanbase, underscoring the cynical manipulation of cultural figures in the ongoing war.

Al-Sayed

Al-Sayed, a critic and director, has expressed his stance on the ongoing conflict. His position is rooted in his dual identity as a Sudanese citizen and an educated intellectual. He unequivocally opposes the war, asserting that this stance is not merely a neutral or indifferent position but a deliberate political expression. He argues that the war will not achieve the desired outcome of dismantling the pre-revolutionary Ingaz regime. Instead, it has perpetuated a power struggle between factions, many of which are remnants of the former regime or groups with varying stances on the December Revolution, regardless of the validity of those positions.

He had this to say during an interview “... *The primary objectives of the war do not align with the interests of the nation or its citizens. This is evident in the core slogans of both parties: "Restoring democracy and destroying the state of 1956" and "War of dignity." An analysis of the historical trajectories of both parties with the current reality reveals a stark contrast. It becomes apparent that the most significant loss in Sudan is dignity, while the most absent element is "democracy," which, by most definitions, implies a peaceful transition of power. This situation compels any rational individual to oppose the war. The phrase "against the war" should be interpreted as opposition to the warring parties, who do not represent the interests of Sudan*”

“*It is regrettable that regional and international actors are implicated in the current conflict, which is not a war chosen by the Sudanese people. The Sudanese people lack the resources and energy to sustain such a destructive conflict. The loss of young lives on both sides is a significant loss of potential for the nation's development and stability. The destruction of military equipment and civilian infrastructure further exacerbates the damage inflicted upon the country. The cessation of the war will ultimately be determined by regional and international powers, and those who instigated the conflict will do as told. This does not imply a desire for the war to continue but rather highlights the absence of Sudanese agency in this conflict. Any objective and impartial observer should oppose the war for the reasons outlined above. These factors have shaped my personal stance on the issue*” Al-Sayed added.

“Upon arriving in Kampala in early January 2024, my initial intention was to assess the general situation and pursue English language studies. However, as the war intensified and civil liberties were increasingly curtailed, I made the decision to settle in Kampala. Drawing on my experience as a member of the Writers' Union, a media professional, and a theater and drama activist, I continued to engage in activities aligned with my values. While I do not actively participate in day-to-day politics, I hold strong opinions about the state of my country. The first initiatives I undertook included:

Al-Dhara Forum in Afrokush, is a unique cultural gathering that brought together Sudanese people in Kampala. Additionally, I organized the same forum and hosted the renowned Sudanese novelist Mansour Al-Suwaim for a discussion on his literary experiences as part of World Book



Day. Furthermore, I collaborated with Dr. Abbas Al-Tijani to present a symposium on Sudanese diversity and its management”

CONCLUSION

The current Sudan war has had very devastating effects on artists and creatives in Sudan as many have lost their lives in Sudan and abroad in Exile. The war has further posed a threat to Sudan's heritage and cultural institutions as they have been destroyed through looting or damaged by shelling. The report has also highlighted the positive roles of artists in advocating against the war as they have utilized their wide audiences to spread the message of peace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We call upon the;

- ✓ Conflicting parties to comply with the international humanitarian laws that provide for the protection of civilians and their property. We further urge them to refrain from looting, damaging, and using cultural property for military purposes.
- ✓ Public and art market involved in the trade of cultural property to refrain from acquiring or involving themselves in the import or export of cultural pieces from Sudan.
- ✓ Organizations such as UNESCO to support displaced Sudanese artists and creatives to continue pursuing their crafts in a safe space.