

# Sudan Crisis: West Darfur Massacres and the Risk of War

By [Lt Gen. Abakar M. Abdallah](#) and [Jerry Gordon](#) (February 2021)



Victims of the RSF/Janjaweed Massacre Krindang IDP Camp El Geneina, December 29, 2019

Déjà vu in West Darfur: RSF/Janjaweed Massacre

Rapid Support Force/Janjaweed (RSF/Janjaweed) militias attacked Krindang IDP camp in El Geneina the capital of the Western Darfur region on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday January 16, 17 and 18, 2021. On January 18, 2021, attacks were made Southwest and North of El Geneina burning villages and seizing livestock.



Over 129 people have died and more than 198 were wounded. These attacks occurred followed the visit of Deputy Chairman of Sudan's Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC) and RSF/Janjaweed Commander Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo 'Hemeti' to al Geneina on Thursday and Friday, January 14 and 15, 2021. While BBC and TRT news sources stated that fighting erupted between two individuals and escalated into a large-scale armed attack, an RSF/Janjaweed militia member named Abakar Inkirni recorded a video released on Friday January 15, 2021 threatening to eradicate the Massalit ethnic group. As the ongoing killings continuous in the Western Darfur Region, another massacre occurred in al Tuwail locality of Greida South Darfur region. On January 19, 2021, a group of RSF/Janjaweed militias [attacked](#) al Tuwail killed 60 and injured 40 people.

A similar massacre by the RSF/Janjaweed occurred at the Krindang IDP Camp on December 29, 2019, that we reported. These are not only the attacks carried out against the villagers in Western Darfur. On Sunday, July 26, 2020 the RSF/Janjaweed militias organized a large-scale attack on Misteri town; Western Darfur region, that killed 61 people and wounded 48 others. These attacks are carried based on the objectives of the Arab Coalition strategy to eradicate entirely the people of Darfur and occupy their land by 2020.

Note this BBC report on this latest RSF/Janjaweed attack in West Darfur:

*Clashes between different ethnic groups in Sudan's West Darfur state have left 128 people dead, Sudan's news agency says quoting the doctors' union.*

*The fighting in the state capital, El Geneina, allegedly began on Saturday after a row in which a man was stabbed to death.*

*A state-wide curfew has been imposed and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has sent a delegation to investigate.*

*[...]*

*The Darfur conflict began under the presidency of Omar al-Bashir, who was overthrown in 2019 and is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes and genocide in the region.*

*Justice for the people of Darfur was a key rallying cry for civilian groups who backed the ouster of the president after nearly three decades in power.*

*The Sudanese Professionals' Association, which was at the forefront of the anti-Bashir movement, called for the current transitional government to deal with the "unruly armed groups which have been freely moving and terrorizing civilians since the collapse of the former regime", Sudan's news agency reports.*

*The most recent fighting, which also left nearly 198 injured, was centered around a camp for people who had been displaced by the Darfur conflict. A deadly row between two men escalated into a fight involving armed militias, the AFP news agency reports.*

*A peace deal involving most, but not all, groups in Darfur was signed last year.*

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*International Criminal Court ICC for alleged war crimes and genocide in the region.*

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A *Star Tribune* [report](#) on December 27, 2020 drew attention to RSF/ Janjaweed attacks on civilians in Southern and Western Darfur and throughout the Sudan. It noted:

*The RSF/Janjaweed militias have not stopped killing civilians. In this month alone over 15 people have been killed and more than 40 others were injured. Just yesterday, 6 people were killed, and 34 others wounded in Greida, South Darfur. Additionally, 3 people were killed in Al Geneina, Western Darfur region. Such incidents continuous in all parts of Darfur as well as elsewhere in Sudan.*

Mohamed Abdallah Aduma, the governor of Western Darfur reported on January 17, 2021 on *Al Jazeera Live* "[stated](#) that armed groups caused chaos in the state have come from Central, Southern Darfur regions and across the borders of Chad".[\[i\]](#)



As the borders are long and open, these Janjaweed militia intruders infiltrate without the consent of Chadian government. This latest attack comes less than three weeks

after the UNAMID protection force was withdrawn from IDP camps in Darfur vulnerable to RSF/Janjaweed militias' attacks.

These new developments in Western Darfur are the latest indication that the Juba Peace Treaty ratified by the Sudan Transitional Government on October 3, 2020 with regional resistance groups in Darfur and other conflict regions has not ended the RSF/Janjaweed militias' ethnic cleansing war against indigenous people in Sudan. Since 2003, more than 600,000 have been killed in Darfur, 5 million displaced to indefensible IDP camps and several hundred fled to UN Refugee Camps in neighboring Chad. Deposed former Sudan strongman, Bashir remains imprisoned in Khartoum, while he and his colleagues in the Sudan's Transitional Military Council are the subject of 2009 and 2010 International Criminal Court (ICC) indictments for war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Darfur. We note that neither the US nor Israel are signatories of the Treaty of Rome that created the ICC.

The RSF/Janjaweed strategy in fomenting Darfur massacres.

The attacks in both Western and Southern Darfur are illustrative of the continuing ethnic cleansing strategy of Islamist allies of the RSF/Janjaweed. In places where they have no presence, they look for tribes that have historical conflicts between each other. Then, they arm one of tribes to kill members of the other tribe. After the incidents takes place, they deploy the RSF/Janjaweed militias to provide security to gain sway. So, that is what happened in the attack in Greida in Southern Darfur. One Janjaweed militia tribal chief named Abu Noba played this role between Massalit and Fallata tribes. He armed Massalit to kill Fallata. Abu Noba is the uncle of TSC Deputy Chairman, General Dagalo, 'Hemeti'.

US and Israeli "Normalization" with Sudan amid Economic Crises

This latest attack in Darfur comes less than a month after the outgoing Trump Administration ended 32 years of economic sanctions against Sudan and [lifted](#) the US State Department designation of Sudan as a State Supporter of Terrorism on December 14, 2020. That was followed on December 15, 2020 by a \$1 Billion [loan](#) by the US to clear Sudan World Bank debt arrears. On January 5, 2021 the Sudan TSC “quietly” [signed](#) the



Abraham Accords, ‘normalizing’ relations with Israel. Meanwhile, rampant inflation in Sudan [surged](#) to over 254% annually in 2020 over basic food and necessities has worsened living conditions for the country’s citizens. The bread shortage [threatens](#) the fragile TSC government in Khartoum. Sudan [raised](#) electricity rates by more than 500% on January 3, 2021.

### Sudan Border and Nile River Dispute with Ethiopia Risks a Possible New War.

Overarching these internal conflicts in the Darfur and other conflict regions in Sudan is the rapidly emerging possible conflict between Sudan and neighboring Ethiopia. Since the end of the 1998 war between Sudan and Ethiopia there has been the longstanding unresolved border [dispute](#) over the Al-Fashaga region in Eastern Sudan that has been settled by Ethiopian farmers. On the other hand, Ethiopia itself is fighting an internal war in its Tigray Region; that caused the political situation between the two countries more complex and fragile. As the tension and conflict rapidly escalated, several hundred thousands of Ethiopian refugees have [fled](#) to the eastern Sudan region from the civil war between the Tigray

People's Liberation Front and the central government of President Abiy Ahmed, ironically a 2019 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Add to that was the [reported](#) breakdown in tripartite discussions over the controversial Chinese-financed \$5 billion massive Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) with Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia each attempting to control the vital Nile River. GERD is the "seventh largest hydro-electric dam in the world, and the largest in Africa." It is the pride of Ethiopia, as GERD was built to electrify the African nation of 112 million. An *Asia Times* [report](#) cited Sudan's Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, Yasir Abbas saying on January 10, 2021 that GERD "constitutes a serious threat to the Sudanese water installations and half of the population of Sudan."

Michael Rubin, American Enterprise Institute scholar in a *National Interest* [article](#), "Ethiopia's hydro-hegemony has arrived" underscored the dangerous regional threat posed by Ethiopia's Abiy Ahmed:

*The dam dispute between Ethiopia and Egypt most often garners international press, but the cases impacting [Sudan], Kenya and Somalia show that the pattern of Ethiopian defiance of international norms cuts deeper.*

*Ethiopia's government has acted with both unilateralism in its actions and obstructionism in its diplomacy to create a fait accompli. Ethiopia's dispute with Egypt gets the greatest press, but the damming of the Blue Nile absent any meaningful coordination has become the rule rather than the exception for Addis Ababa. Ethiopian actions are systematically threatening livelihood and stability not only in Egypt and Sudan, but also in Somalia and Kenya.*

Russia's Growing Military and Naval Presence in Sudan and Central African Republic

Then there is the growing Russian presence in Sudan

that began in 2017 with former Sudan strongman Bashir invited to the Sochi resort for a conference with Russian President Putin. In his consultation with Putin, *Deutsche Welle* [reported](#) that President Bashir “asks Russia for protection from US aggression”. That eventuated in a seven-year military training program and weapons sales. During the crisis triggered by Khartoum Protest in December 2018, a contingent of Wagner Group Russian “green men’ were sent to assist in providing security arrangements and training of RSF/Janjaweed militias. A similar security Wagner Group security arrangement exists with the troubled Central African Republic (CAR). On December 9, 2020, Sudan and Russian [signed](#) a 25 year of the Red Sea Port Flamingo, with multiple ten-year extensions. Under the agreement, Russia may base four naval vessels including nuclear powered vessels. This provides Russia with a second naval warm water port in the Middle East and strategic Red Sea; the first being the Syrian port of Tartus in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Sudan port allows Russia to monitor geopolitical developments in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, as well as US naval and commercial marine traffic in choke points in the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean. Additionally, Wagner Group established a military base in Amdafok, a border town between CAR and Darfur, to facilitate support for its military contingents in the region through Port Sudan. The CAR is a landlocked country with no access to the sea. Russia also has an interest in exploiting uranium, gold, and diamond deposits in both Sudan and CAR.

What needs to be done in Sudan?

Co-author of *Genocide in Sudan: Caliphate Threatening Africa and the World*, US-trained former Chadian Military Officer and Darfur native, General Abakar M. Abdallah, Chairman of the Sudan United Movement (SUM), has laid out in detail what should be done to “normalize’ Sudan, elements of which were shared with the Trump White House in 2017 and since have been refined. Perhaps, both the Netanyahu Israeli



government and US government under President Biden should invite Gen. Abdallah of SUM, Gen. Abdel-Aaziz al-Hilu of the SPLM-N, Abdul Wahid al Nur of SLM and other resistance holdouts to meet with interim Prime Minister Hamdok. The objective of such a meeting would be to address the root causes of Sudan's crisis, develop a lasting solution plan to put an end to the ongoing genocidal and ethnic cleansing wars continuously perpetrating against the Sudan's indigenous people by the Islamist system of governance and prevent a likely Islamist National Congress Party comeback. The goal would be to establish a democratic and accountable system of government that respects rule of law and human dignity. To achieve that requires a strategy to place Sudan on a path to realistic development of fair and transparent democratic elections. Those elections might potentially result in a representative government that could realistically establish genuine diplomatic relations with the US, Israel, and the world community. US regional diplomatic involvement might also seek to avoid a rising risk of a border war between Sudan and Ethiopia. That effort might also lead to a realistic tripartite solution to put an end to the dispute over the GERD control over the Nile River between the three countries: Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

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General Abakar M. Abdallah and Jerome B. Gordon are co-authors with Deborah Martin of [Genocide in Sudan: Caliphate Threatens Africa and the World](#), JAD Press, 2017. Mr. Gordon is a Senior Editor at the *New English Review*.

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