

Why did Sudan's RSF/Janjaweed Commander travel to Moscow during Russia's war with Ukraine?



Sudan's Sovereign Council deputy leader, Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo, known as Hemeti and Russian Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin in Moscow, February 25, 2022

by Lt. Gen. Abakar M. Abdallah and Jerry Gordon[\[1\]](#)

Sudan's Deputy Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, Commander of Rapid Support Force/Janjaweed (RSF/Janjaweed) militia, General Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo aka Hemeti headed a Sudanese delegation to Russia for [discussions](#) on "military cooperation". The delegation included Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, Minister of Financial Affairs, Mr. Abubakar Omar al Bishiri, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr. Mohamed Abderhaman Mahmud, Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Mr. Mohamed Bashir Abdallah (Abu Numu), Minister of Minerals,

Ambassador Nadir Yusuf Ateib, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Nadir al Hilali, President of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce.

Sending such a high-power delegation to Moscow at a time of the escalating Russian invasion of Ukraine raises questions about Sudan's transitional government's blundering politics and reckless behavior. Prior to his departure, Hemeti said in his Twitter Account: "With God's help and success, I will go today to the Russian capital, Moscow, on an official visit to this important country, with which we have historical friendship relations. Through this visit, we hope to advance relations between Sudan and Russia to broader horizons, and to strengthen the existing cooperation between us in the different fields." Arriving in Moscow, Hemeti stated that Russia has the right to defend its people.

Sudan's move at such a sensitive time aroused EU Ambassadors in Khartoum to hold a meeting with Sudan's Charge d'Affairs of the Foreign Ministry, Ali Sidiq, on Sunday, February 26, 2022, The EU ambassadorial delegation requested Sidiq explain Sudan's position regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, they requested Sudan to join the international community and openly condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine. Despite the EU Ambassadors' protest, Sudan Foreign Ministry official Sidiq denied that the RSF/Janjaweed leader's statement supported Putin's declaration of the independence of the two regions of Ukraine: Donetsk and Luhansk. Upon returning from Moscow, Hemeti declared at a press conference that he was "surprised" to see many questioning about leasing a port. He stated that he has no problem leasing a port to Russia or any other country.

Hemeti's delegation was composed of resistance movement leaders, signatories of the October 2020 Juba Peace Agreement. The Juba signatories are opportunistic individuals who have no ambitions other than obtaining political positions in the government. They formed a strategic alliance with the

genocidal Hemeti during the Peace negotiations in Juba that Mini Minawi, the Chairman of the Sudan Liberation Movement faction in a video clip termed as a “gentlemen’s agreement.” What he called a “gentlemen’s agreement” was nothing other than the signatories should not claim justice about Darfur atrocities or request to send President Bashir and his collaborators to the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the Hague for prosecution to answer for their crimes. This action by the resistance leaders at the Juba Peace Conference gave cover to the RSF/Janjaweed militias to continue genocidal atrocities in Darfur. None of the Juba signatories dared to say a word against the militias.

By signing such an agreement, they misled the international community, and they betrayed the aspirations of internally displaced persons and refugees of Darfur in regional UNHCR camps who were patiently waiting for them to bring peace. The Darfur people are continuing to suffer because of RSF/Janjaweed militia attacks. On March 5, 2022, RSF/Janjaweed militias attacked and killed 7 people including Yusuf Yagoub Ahmed who was working as a relief agent in Sileya, Western Darfur. The resistance signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement effectively became puppets of Hemeti.

They supported the military junta of Generals al-Burhan and Dogolo aka Hemeti staged coup of October 25, 2021, that ended the presumed democratic process in Sudan. They split the Forces of Freedom and Change and staged a protest sit-in in front of the Presidency that enabled the military junta to launch its coup. Instead of siding with the majority of Sudanese calling for democratic civilian authority, they supported the regime and remained silent while the RSF/Janjaweed and security forces kill peaceful protesters.

When former President Omar al-Bashir approached Putin in 2017 he promised him that Sudan would become Russia’s gateway to Africa. That was realized when Putin’s proxy, the Russian mercenaries of the Wagner Group were deployed in the Sahel.

Putin adopted a strategy to extend its influence in the African continent with the objective of destabilizing fragile democratic states creating an unstable political environment that allowed them to exploit the region's natural resources. To execute this strategy, the Wagner Group began training RSF/Janjaweed militias in Khartoum and established a military base in Amdafock, South Darfur close to the Central African Republic (CAR) borders. Recently, they established military training bases in the Northeast border region of CAR, Sudan, and Chad to train and arm rebels to topple the Chadian government. Hemeti's visit to Moscow was organized by Russian companies working in Sudan under the guise of political, economic, and security sectors.



RSF/Janjaweed Militia trained by Russia's Wagner Group in Darfur as Free Arab Army

Hemeti stated in his Twitter message that in Moscow, he met with the Deputy Assistant Russian Foreign Minister and senior officials representing different Russian companies to discuss bilateral cooperation on political and economic sectors. However, his true and hidden agenda was to finalize an agreement to train and arm Arab tribal groups from different countries of the Africa Sahel region and organize a rebel force known as the "Free Arab Army" to overthrow Chad's transitional government. In return, Hemeti would provide Russia with gold and possibly uranium. According to a recent

UK Telegraph report, Hemeti controlled companies would [deliver](#) 30 tons of gold to Russia every year. Hemeti has personally benefited from the lawlessness and fear created by his command of the RSF/Janjaweed militias by mining gold in Darfur, Kordofan, and North Sudan.

Russia under Putin's control is reluctant to use Wagner mercenaries to fight proxy wars in Africa fearing international criticism. Since Arab tribal groups have the same ambition to create a Caliphate in the Sahel, they decided to train a large Janjaweed force to fight on their behalf. Last January, Hemeti ordered a brief closing of the borders between Sudan and CAR. That allowed him to transport a large force across the borders and [establish](#) training camps close to Hajar Fana and Trefel village about 30 km west of Amdafock. They recruited Arabs and Chadian rebels who were serving in RSF/Janjaweed and sent them to these bases. People reported seeing hundreds of armed men mounted on vehicles from different parts of Sudan traveling toward the borders of CAR. They also produced video and audio reports that were released to the public depicting these units shouting "Free Arab Army! Free Arab Army! The Russian Wagner Group provides training, armament, and international protection, while the Arab Janjaweed militias will do the fighting. Sudan's military junta under the control of Hemeti and General Abdelfattah al Burhan will provide the means of instability in Sudan and the African Sahel region.

This is a strategy that the authors of this article predicted in their 2017 book [Genocide in Sudan: Caliphate threatens Africa and the World.](#)

[\[i\]](#) Lt. General (ret.) Abakar M. Abdallah is a native of Darfur and was a US trained Senior Intelligence officer in the Republic of Chad Army and commander of a multi-nation Pan-Sahel Counterterrorism Unit. He is currently Chairman of Sudan

United Movement.

Jerry Gordon is a Senior editor at *The New English Review*.