

COI QUERY

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Overview of the main political developments during the reference period

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – SUDAN

Overview of the main political developments during the reference period

Sudan's former president Omar Al-Bashir was ousted in a 'military coup in April 2019 following a pro-democracy protest movement that began in late 2018', and a Transitional Military Council (TMC) assumed power after Al-Bashir's removal.¹ In August 2019, negotiations between the TMC and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), an 'opposition alliance', resulted in the Constitutional Declaration², a power-sharing agreement, whereby an 11-member Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC) was formed. The TSC, described as a 'hybrid civilian-military Government' was 'to govern Sudan until elections could be held after a 39-month interim period, with the military and the FFC each naming five members and agreeing on the final member, a civilian'.³ Meanwhile, Abdulla Hamdok was named as Prime Minister of the transitional Government.⁴

On 21 September 2021, the Sudanese government announced that an attempted coup, allegedly organised by military officials and civilians loyal to Al-Bashir had been foiled.⁵ According to a statement by defense minister Lieutenant General Yasin Ibrahim, the leader of the coup was Major General Abdalbagi Alhassan Othman Bakrawi, commander of the Armored Corps, who cooperated with 22 other officers for the attempted coup.⁶ BBC noted that 'correspondents say some elements within the military are likely to be strongly opposed to a transition that will see them lose considerable power'.⁷

On 25 October 2021, General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, head of the transitional joint civilian-military Sovereign Council, seized power by dissolving the governing body, arresting civilian leaders, including then Prime Minister Hamdok⁸, and declaring a state of emergency.⁹ Citing

¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2021, 3 March 2021, [url](#)

² Sudan, Draft Constitutional Charter for the 2019 Transitional Period, 4 August 2019, [url](#)

³ International Crisis Group, The Rebels Come to Khartoum: How to Implement Sudan's New Peace Agreement, 23 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2021, 3 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵ Reuters, Sudan says coup thwarted, accuses Bashir loyalists, 21 September 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudan's PM says coup plotters were military, non-military, 21 September 2021, [url](#)

⁶ Reuters, Sudan says coup thwarted, accuses Bashir loyalists, 21 September 2021, [url](#)

⁷ BBC News, Sudan failed coup: Government blames pro-Bashir elements, 21 September 2021, [url](#)

⁸ BBC News, Sudan coup: Why the army is gambling with the future, 27 October 2021, [url](#); GCR2P, R2P Monitor, 1 December 2021; Issue 59; A quarterly bulletin by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 1 September 2021, [url](#)

⁹ France24, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the general who leads Sudan, 25 October 2021, [url](#); GCR2P, R2P Monitor, 1 December 2021; Issue 59; A quarterly bulletin by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 1 September 2021, [url](#)

the ministry of information, the Guardian reported that Hamdok was held overnight for ‘refusing to issue a statement in support of the coup’¹⁰, but was returned to his home on the 26th of October 2021¹¹, remaining under house arrest until 21 November 2021.¹² According to a United Nations (UN) report, covering the period between 21 August to 21 November 2021, ‘the coup followed months of rising tension between the civilian and military components of the Sudanese transitional authorities’.¹³ Al-Burhan was due to hand over the leadership of the TSC to civilian officials in the coming months¹⁴, and justified the military ‘coup’ as a necessary step to prevent civil war.¹⁵ Several sources reported that Al-Burhan pledged that the military would return the power to a civilian government after elections in 2023.¹⁶

Al-Burhan announced the suspension of articles 12, 15, 16, 24 (3), 71 and 72 of the Constitutional Document, ‘in effect dissolving the Sovereign Council, the Council of Ministers and the yet to be formed Transitional Legislative Council and restoring a Transitional Military Council’, while he further dismissed state governors, paused the ‘work of the Committee to Dismantle the 30 June 1989 Regime and Retrieve Public Funds, also known as the Dismantling Committee’, and ordered the suspension of Internet services.¹⁷

On a national level, some components of the FFC, such as the National Umma Party and the local Resistance Committees dubbed the events of 25th of October as a ‘coup’¹⁸, while ‘two of the non-signatory armed groups to the Juba Peace Agreement, the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction also denounced the coup’.¹⁹

¹⁰ Guardian (The), Sudan’s army seizes power in coup and detains prime minister, 25 October 2021, [url](#)

¹¹ VOA News, Top General Says Takeover in Sudan Was to Avoid Civil War, 26 October 2021, [url](#)

¹² UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 3 December 2021, [url](#), para. 4

¹³ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 3 December 2021, [url](#), para. 11

¹⁴ Guardian (The), Sudan’s army seizes power in coup and detains prime minister, 25 October 2021, [url](#); REDRESS, Sudan: The UN Human Rights Council should act urgently and hold a special session, 28 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵ BBC News, Sudan army seized power to prevent civil war - coup leader, 26 October 2021, [url](#); VOA News, Top General Says Takeover in Sudan Was to Avoid Civil War, 26 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶ BBC News, Sudan army seized power to prevent civil war - coup leader, 26 October 2021, [url](#); VOA News, Top General Says Takeover in Sudan Was to Avoid Civil War, 26 October 2021, [url](#); Guardian (The), Sudan’s army seizes power in coup and detains prime minister, 25 October 2021, [url](#); BBC News, Sudan coup: Why the army is gambling with the future, 27 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 3 December 2021, [url](#), para. 2

¹⁸ UN Security Council, Letter dated 24 January 2022 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council; Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan, 24 January 2022, [url](#), paras. 11

¹⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 3 December 2021, [url](#), para. 7

On an international level the military ‘coup’ was condemned by several actors, including the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the UN.²⁰ Furthermore, the African Union (AU) suspended Sudan's participation ‘in activities until the restoration of a civilian-led authority’, while the World Bank also suspended its funding.²¹

According to a letter to the UN dated 24 January 2022 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan, the signatory to the Juba Agreement, Darfurian armed movements, Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM):

‘initially supported the military component of the Government of the Sudan, but then tried to find a more balanced political position. Other signatory movements, such as the Sudan Liberation Army/Transitional Council (SLA/TC) also stayed in the Government of the Sudan, seeing it as necessary for the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. The Third Front-Tamazuj supported the Government of the Sudan and tried to gain influence at the national level but failed’.²²

Following large-scale demonstrations across Sudan during October²³ and November²⁴ 2021 that resulted in the killing of at least 40 people by security forces²⁵, a political agreement was signed on 21 November 2021, between the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan and Abdalla Hamdok²⁶, reinstating Hamdok as prime minister and enabling ‘the transition to civilian rule and release political prisoners’.²⁷

Under the agreement, the reinstated prime minister Hamdok was supposed to ‘lead a cabinet of technocrats until elections were held’.²⁸ However, the civilian coalition refused to

²⁰ Guardian (The), Sudan’s army seizes power in coup and detains prime minister, 25 October 2021, [url](#); BBC News, How has the world reacted to Sudan's coup?, 25 October 2021, [url](#)

²¹ DW, African Union suspends Sudan after military coup, 27 October 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, African Union suspends Sudan over coup, 27 October 2021, [url](#)

²² UN Security Council, Letter dated 24 January 2022 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council; Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan [S/2022/48], 24 January 2022, [url](#), paras. 13

²³ Reuters, Seven killed, 140 hurt in protests against Sudan military coup, 26 October 2021, [url](#); Guardian (The), Sudan democracy march: three protesters killed as security forces open fire, 30 October 2021, [url](#)

²⁴ Al Jazeera, Several anti-coup protesters killed in Sudan as thousands rally, 17 November 2021, [url](#); Reuters, At least 15 people shot dead in anti-coup protests in Sudan, medics say, 18 November 2021, [url](#)

²⁵ BBC News, Sudan's military reinstates ousted civilian PM Hamdok, 21 November 2021, [url](#)

²⁶ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 2 March 2022, [url](#), para. 2

²⁷ Article 19, Sudan: Military must immediately stop crackdown on Freedom of Expression and Assembly, 24 November 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudan’s Hamdok reinstated as PM after political agreement signed, 21 November 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Sudan military reinstates prime minister, but protests continue, 22 November 2021, [url](#)

²⁸ Al Jazeera, Sudan’s Hamdok resigns as prime minister amid political deadlock, 2 January 2022, [url](#)

acknowledge the new agreement²⁹, and on 22 November 2022 ‘12 government ministers affiliated with the FFC coalition tendered their resignations’.³⁰

On 26 December 2021, Al-Burhan issued an emergency order granting security forces immunity and restored arrest powers to the General Intelligence Service (GIS), which has previously been responsible for serious abuses.³¹ According to Human Rights Watch, ‘the emergency order overturned a decision by the transitional government to deny the agency arrest powers’.³²

On 2 January 2022, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigned amid demonstrations against the military component and the 21st November Agreement.³³ Hamdok failed to appoint a new government, as prescribed by the aforementioned agreement³⁴, leaving thus ‘the army in full control’.³⁵ Following the prime minister’s resignation, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), launched a political process that started with initial consultations with several Sudanese stakeholders to ‘address the political impasse and develop a path towards democracy’.³⁶ Upon the conclusion of UNITAMS-facilitated consultations, the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the UN ‘agreed to work jointly and formed a trilateral cooperation mechanism in support of a Sudanese-led process to end the political crisis and restore a civilian-led transitional government’.³⁷

According to a UN report covering the period between 22 February and 5 May 2022, several local initiatives were taken both by political alliances and academics in order to ‘solve the political crisis’ and to ‘help find common ground on contentious issues’³⁸, while the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) – except for the Justice and Equality Movement – held a meeting

²⁹ BBC News, Sudan's military reinstates ousted civilian PM Hamdok, 21 November 2021, [url](#); DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project), An unfinished revolution: The situation of women human rights defenders in Sudan, December 2021, Note to reader, [url](#), p. 7

³⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 2 March 2022, [url](#), para. 2

³¹ Sudan Tribune, Sudan’s GIS gets temporary power to arrest civilians, 27 December 2021, [url](#); HRW, Sudan: Hundreds of Protesters Detained, Mistreated; End Protester Arrests; Free Detainees; Lift State of Emergency, 28 April 2022, [url](#)

³² HRW, Sudan: Hundreds of Protesters Detained, Mistreated; End Protester Arrests; Free Detainees; Lift State of Emergency, 28 April 2022, [url](#)

³³ BBC News, Sudan coup: Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigns after mass protests, 3 January 2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Sudan’s Hamdok resigns as prime minister amid political deadlock, 2 January 2022, [url](#); New York Times (the), Sudan’s Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, Resigns, 2 January 2022, [url](#)

³⁴ BBC News, Sudan coup: Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigns after mass protests, 3 January 2022, [url](#)

³⁵ Al Jazeera, Sudan’s Hamdok resigns as prime minister amid political deadlock, 2 January 2022, [url](#)

³⁶ UNITAMS, Statement on the release of UNITAMS Summary Report on its consultations for a political process for Sudan, 28 February 2022, [url](#)

³⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 17 May 2022, [url](#), para. 6

³⁸ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 17 May 2022, [url](#), para. 7

between 24 and 26 of March 2022 and proposed ‘the launch of a dialogue initiative in two phases’.³⁹

On 29 May 2022, the TSC announced that Sudan's army chief Al-Burhan issued a decree lifting the state of emergency, imposed after the military ‘coup’. The decision came following consultations with military officials suggesting the release of people detained under the emergency law, as well as the calls by UN special representative, Volker Perthes, for removing the state of emergency, following the killing of two protesters during anti-coup protests.⁴⁰

On 9 June 2022, FFC begun an unofficial meeting with the military component of the government mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia, in order to discuss means of ending the 25th of October coup and handing Power over to civilian coalitions’.⁴¹ Following this meeting, on 21 June 2022, the African Union representative in Sudan suspended his participation in the tripartite mechanism to ‘protest his exclusion from the direct meetings between the FFC and the military component’.⁴²

On 4 July 2022, following a series of prodemocracy rallies, Al-Burhan, announced that the military would withdraw from negotiations with the country’s civilian political forces and allow them to form a government on their own.⁴³ He added that ‘after the formation of the executive government, the Sovereignty Council will be dissolved and a higher council of armed forces, formed from the (Sudan) Armed Forces and Rapid Support (Forces), will take over the high command of the regular forces’.⁴⁴ The FFC characterized Al-Burhan’s move as a ‘tactical retreat and a transparent manoeuvre’ and called for the continuation of public pressure.⁴⁵ Reuters reported that on 6 July 2022, Al- Burhan ‘issued a decree relieving the five civilian members of the sovereign council from their duties’.⁴⁶ According to an August 2022 article by the International Crisis Group, ‘the military and civilian actors remain stuck in an impasse, with civilian groups yet to agree on a path forward’.⁴⁷

During the reporting period, after the seizure of power by Al-Burhan, the military component tried to consolidate its powers by approaching Al-Bashir’s National Congress Party (NCP) and its supporters, while ‘hundreds of sacked employees returned to work at the central bank, the

³⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 17 May 2022, [url](#), para. 8

⁴⁰ DW, Sudan's military leader lifts state of emergency, 29 May 2022, [url](#); VOA News, Sudan Lifts State of Emergency Imposed Since Coup, 29 May 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹ Reuters, Sudan's main opposition coalition is meeting with military -sources, 10 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴² Sudan Tribune, African Union suspends its participation in Sudan's political process, 21 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴³ Sudan Tribune, Sudan’s military would abandon power to civilians: al-Burhan, 4 July 2022, [url](#); France24, Sudan’s Burhan says army will make way for civilian government, 4 July 2022, [url](#); International Crisis Group, A Breakthrough in Sudan’s Impasse?, 12 August 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Sudan Tribune, Sudan’s military would abandon power to civilians: al-Burhan, 4 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Al Jazeera, Sudan activists reject army offer as ‘ruse’, urge more protests, 5 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Reuters, Sudan's Burhan relieves civilian members of the sovereign council from duties -statement, 6 July 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁷ International Crisis Group, A Breakthrough in Sudan’s Impasse?, 12 August 2022, [url](#)



judiciary, prosecution service, state broadcaster and government ministries'.⁴⁸ Several detainees affiliated with the former regime were released and got their bank accounts unfrozen⁴⁹, while others got key position to the government, such as Gen Ahmed Mufdal, a former governor of South Kordofan and once the NCP leader there, who became the head of the GIS⁵⁰, and Abdel-Aziz Fathal-Rahman Abdeen Mohamed who was appointed by the Sovereign Council as Chief Justice, while he had previously served as Deputy Chief Justice under the former President.⁵¹

⁴⁸ BBC, Sudan alarm at return of Bashir loyalists and the NCP, 14 June 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 17 May 2022, [url](#), paras. 9-10

⁵⁰ BBC, Sudan alarm at return of Bashir loyalists and the NCP, 14 June 2022, [url](#)

⁵¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, 2 March 2022, [url](#), para. 5

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