



# GMUNC X

## AFRICAN UNION

### CONFLICT IN SUDAN



## Letter from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GMUNC X! In this specialized committee, you will be representing member states of the African Union, a regional body overseeing the unity and cooperation of the African continent, during a special session called to attempt to restore stability to Sudan after political turmoil that has escalated tensions to the brink of civil war. Since this is an ongoing conflict, we're going to simplify timeline-wise and approach committee acting like it is currently **July 2023**. This committee's "specialization" is in the form of mini news updates that will happen a few times throughout the conference, which will add to the context of the problem you are trying to solve. Because GMUNC is intended to be a beginner-friendly conference, we will review parliamentary procedure at the beginning of the day.

In terms of logistics, GMUNC will be held at Gunn High School on **October 21st**. For more information about the conference, please visit the GMUNC website at [gmunc.weebly.com](http://gmunc.weebly.com). You will be able to find guidelines for position papers, as well as an example position paper, on the website. Position papers submitted by October 14th will be eligible for research awards. Delegates must submit position papers by October 20th to be eligible for any committee awards. Please send position papers in .pdf format, with the title formatted like "[nation] - Position Paper", to our committee email at [gmunc.au@gmail.com](mailto:gmunc.au@gmail.com). Of course, we are also always happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. We look forward to meeting all of you in committee!

Kiyon Zebarjadi

African Union Committee Head Chair

## **About The Dais**

### **Head Chair: Kiyon Zebarjadi**

Kiyon Zebarjadi is a junior at Gunn High School. He's been participating in Model UN since middle school, and this is his 5th year involved. This year, he is serving as Gunn MUN's Undersecretary-General of Training. He is excited to be chairing the African Union committee, and is looking forward to both thoughtful debate and the creative solutions delegates will come up with. Outside of MUN, he produces dance music, loves everything about travel, and spends way too much time playing Legend of Zelda games.

### **Co-Chair: Gene Lee**

Gene Lee is a junior at Gunn High School, and is currently in his 2nd year doing Model UN. He is excited to co-chair this committee of the African Union discussing the recent conflict in Sudan, and is thrilled to meet with delegates from other schools as well as what they will contribute to GMUNC X. Outside of MUN, he enjoys studying topics such as history, current world affairs, and economics, along with playing RTSs and City Builders on his PC.

## **About This Committee**

The African Union (AU) is a continental organization and union that consists of 55 member nations, all located in the continent of Africa. Founded on July 9, 2002, in Durban, South Africa, the African Union's main priorities and goals are the promotion of African unity through culture and heritage, international cooperation, defense of state sovereignty, eradication of the remnants of colonialism, and the cooperation and peace between all member states' policies. Through its numerous committees and branches, the AU has been responsible for the coordinated development and economic growth between African nations, as well as the handling of judicial, legal, and human rights matters in numerous African countries. The African Union has achieved many things throughout its time, preventing catastrophes and protecting people from violence in nations such as Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Darfur, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Mali. Through its efforts, in 2016 it founded the African Centre of Disease and Control (African CDC), which has helped in improving the health conditions for the citizens and institutions of member nations in dealing with disease threats on the continent. Through other organizations such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) it has helped in the development of all member states alongside promoting integral cooperation between the nations of Africa.

## Introduction to Topic

Civil wars are issues that plague countries worldwide, both past and present. Such conflicts have led to the deaths of millions, as well as the destabilization of entire states. This is especially true in the continent of Africa, in which the withdrawal of European imperial powers caused the new nations formed to descend into civil conflicts, because of disagreements caused by ethnic, religious and resource-related differences. One such nation that has suffered a huge deal from this is the Republic of Sudan, which has experienced severe poverty, economic collapse, and numerous civil wars. Such internal strife has occurred once again in 2023; two opposing militarist factions are currently struggling over leadership over the country. The African Union, a political and economic bloc composed of all of the nations of Africa, has now called an emergency session to attempt to find a solution, and create other preventative measures to ensure a return of peace and bring economic relief to the scarred nation.



## Historical Context

From the beginning of Sudan's independence in 1956, it immediately faced challenges similar to other newly formed African nations. These new nations, which followed similar borders to the colonies they succeeded, were broken up in ways that did not reflect cultural and ethnic boundaries, leading to tensions and violence, which ultimately became the cause of almost every conflict seen in the continent today. A pertinent example of this is the secession of South Sudan from the rest of the nation over religious differences and oppression from the north, following a long and brutal war for independence. Upon independence in 2011, South Sudan not only took a large chunk of land from Sudan, but also all of the oil fields that had long held up the Sudanese economy. The sudden removal of rich natural resources and a key part of the Sudanese economy eventually led to the collapse of the economy itself. This, amongst other factors, would lead to the bloodless coup in April of 2019 that overthrew Sudan's long ruling military dictator and President, Omar al-Bashir, conducted in coordination between both the Sudanese military and the RSF (Rapid Support Forces), a paramilitary organization made by al-Bashir. Soon afterwards, pro-democratic protests from the populus led to the creation of a joint civilian and military government, with the promise of a civilian head of state and democratic elections in the future. However, this never happened, as the military conducted another coup, overthrowing the joint government, and placing their military general Abdul-Fattah al-Burhan as the new President. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) then proceeded to crack down on all opposition movements, leading to hundreds being killed, all while isolating Sudan from the international community. During all of this violence, tensions between the SAF and the RSF continued to rise, caused in part by disagreements over the integration of the RSF into the rest of the military, and

also by the power struggle between SAF President al-Burhan and RSF general Muhammad Hamdan Daqlu, also known as Hemedti.

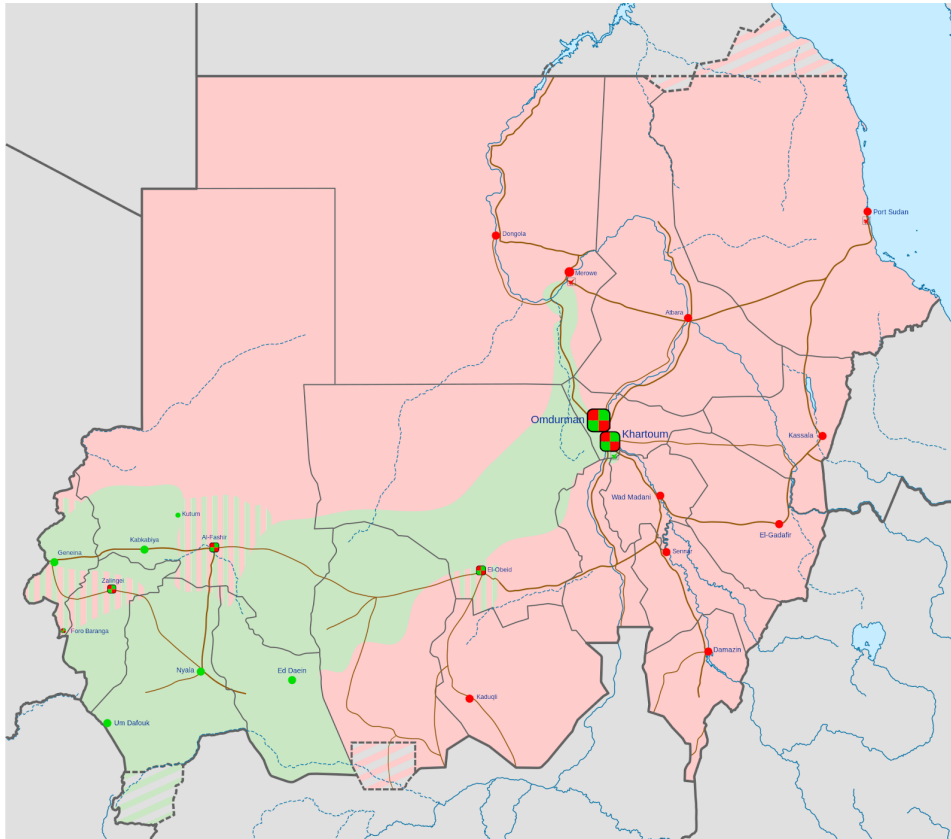
## **Current Situation**

All of these tensions between the two factions would eventually implode on April 15, 2023, when fighting broke out. Currently, the two rivaling factions have been engaged in extensive fighting all over the country; however, most of the fighting is concentrated either in the nation's capital of Khartoum, or in Darfur, the southwestern region of the country. Both sides have employed destructive and inhumane tactics on the local civilian population, resulting in deaths and injuries of several thousands of people. The fighting has led to millions of people facing displacement, starvation and dehydration. Water especially has been difficult for the people to acquire, and has led to millions on the brink of dehydration. Damage to internet infrastructure has led to it becoming unavailable in some areas. Without a resolution soon, the conflict could cause long term damage to the people of Sudan and its nearby nations. This is all while there is constant fighting, looting, and targeted violence by both of the warring sides. In addition, the conflict has begun to spill over into Sudan's neighboring countries, both with armed fighting and millions of civilians fleeing the country and into these neighbors. This has caused some of these nations to begin providing military aid to either side. For example, Egypt has been providing aerial support for the Sudanese army, while Ethiopia has shown support for the RSF internationally. In addition, the internal conflict has led to occasional border skirmishes on the Sudan-Ethiopian border. The Russian private military contracting group, Wagner, has provided ammunition and weapons to the RSF using aircraft drops in Libya.

At the very beginning of the conflict, attacks on the nation's power grid led to widespread internet outages. During this time, the daily lives of almost everybody in Sudan were impacted, and as a whole, the country began to be considered a war zone. Concerns over the state of the Sudanese people led Moussa Faki, the Chadian chairman of the African Union Commission, to travel to Sudan to create a ceasefire. Along with this, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Faki about US-AU collaboration to end the fighting in Sudan. It was at this time that a temporary ceasefire was instilled with the cooperation of the African Union and the United States. However, this agreement was not maintained for any reasonable amount of time. Both sides broke the agreement as conflict continued to spread across the nation. UN humanitarian head Martin Griffiths visited the nation in early May, and expressed his disappointment that both sides were unwilling to work to resolve the conflict in any way except continue to fight. The situation was exacerbated when the Turkish embassy in Khartoum was damaged during fighting. This led to an agreement signed by both sides in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to not use civilians as shields. The agreement, however, did not contain a ceasefire, leading both sides to go right back to the conflict, and soon afterwards the agreement was broken with the destruction of an agricultural factory. This led to more attention on the conflict from the international stage, such as the UN Human Rights Council. In June, Khamis Abakar, the governor of West Darfur, appeared on live television, asking the international community for help and denouncing the RSF for genocide. Hours later, he was abducted and killed. During this time, ceasefires continued to be announced, each one ignored by both sides. In addition, the al-Hilu faction of military organization SPLM-N joined the conflict, attacking the SAF in conjunction with the RSF. On June 27, the first day of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, a two day truce was announced, which was observed for the most part. However, after the truce, fighting resumed. In July, the



RSF began to move deeper into West Darfur, and began what can only really be called an ethnic cleansing, which has included looting, brutal fighting, and countless cases of rape.



*(SAF in red, RSF in green)*

## Past Action

This section will explore several case studies to provide context and examples for potential solutions to the current conflict in Sudan. It will first look at the history of Sudan itself, and then civil conflicts in the Comoros and Mozambique and how they were resolved.

### Sudan

Civil conflicts both within and outside of Sudan similar to the current one have usually resulted in a temporary settlement and compromise between the two sides on the status of power

in the country. Specifically looking at the nation of Sudan, such peace resolutions in the past have come when one side of the conflict no longer had the capacity to continue fighting. For example, in 1971, the first military government of Sudan was faced with rebellion in the south of the country. They believed they could crush the rebellion, known as the Anyanya, with brute force. However, the conflict instead dragged on much longer than they had anticipated, which led to mass protest and an eventual coup of the military regime. The new government proposed regional autonomy for the rebelling peoples and an end to hostilities. After July 1971, in the wake of the failed communist coup, the atmosphere became favorable for peace initiatives. This was led by the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches. This led eventually to the Addis Ababa Agreement of March 1972, ending the 17-year conflict between the Anyanya and the Sudanese army. Unfortunately, such a peace has never lasted long, as the might of the Sudanese military continues to control the political reality of the nation, including the rise of multiple warlords that have led to the problems the nation and its people have been facing for years.

### **The Comoros**

One example of successful involvement by the African Union was the 2008 invasion of Anjouan. The Union of the Comoros consists of 3 islands, each with their own autonomous government. In 2007, Mohamed Bacar, the President of the island of Anjouan, refused to step down from his position after the Comorian government declared his term to be over. Instead, Bacar ran a staged election and announced that he had the support of 90% of the island. Needless to say, neither the federal government nor the African Union were impressed by his makeshift victory. Instead, the African Union gathered 1,400 troops with the help of Senegal, Sudan, and Tanzania, and quickly took control of most of the island. The following day, Bacar fled the island

dressed in women's clothes and was eventually granted asylum in Benin. After this, the government of the Comoros appointed an interim president, who was quickly succeeded by the winner of a special presidential election. One key takeaway from this case study is that by quickly mobilizing troops from several different African nations, an ad hoc military force was put together fairly quickly. However, while this strategy worked for a small island with a population of under 300,000, scaling the same idea for an entire nation would require a much more thought out process.

### **Mozambique**

Another example of a resolution between two sides of a national conflict was that of Mozambique's conflict between the one-party government of Mozambique, said political party called FRELIMO, and the Mozambique National Resistance, often abbreviated as RENAMO. To recap the situation, the two sides began fighting on-and-off in 2013, due to tensions caused in part by the nation's political climate at the time. The African Union provided a resolution to this conflict six years later, thanks to its oversight of the Maputo Accord for Peace and National Reconciliation, signed by both sides on August 6, 2019. The accord combined demilitarization and reintegration with decentralization and devolution. This policy aimed to fight exclusion and promote reconciliation, and was also an effective way to promote income distribution, from a macroeconomic perspective. Mirko Manzoni, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Mozambique, stated that its signing and implementation had generated hope for the country and its people. Outlining reasons for the Accord's success, those reasons being that it established national ownership from the outset, built trust, remained flexible, and ensured a human-centered process throughout, he said that while other attempts at peace had failed, what worked for Mozambique this time was championing national solutions to national problems — through

listening and creating a culture of dialogue between the government and RENAMO. Mirko Manzoni stated that “Putting people first pays off in peace dividends.”

## **Possible Solutions**

There are several things to consider when thinking about how to resolve the ongoing conflict. As mentioned previously, one approach is looking back on similar civil conflicts from other African nations that were suffering this sort of ordeal. Alongside this, the history of Sudan and other African nations can guide the way both to solving the ongoing conflict and to mitigating future conflict. Secondly, it is important to note the actions that are being taken by the regional powers in the area, and how their involvement in the conflict can affect what is happening. Third, it is important to see the political, cultural, and economic root causes that have led to this. By breaking up such conflicts into all of the factors leading up to it, and finding solutions to those problems, a resolution can be found for the conflict as a whole. Finally, the usage of local governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could help in providing aid to the civilian population during and/or after the conflict is resolved. Local organizations, such as Sudan Red Crescent, the Sudan Humanitarian Aid Development, and Project of Water and Environmental Sanitation, are UNICEF-backed NGOs aiding civilians during the current civil war in Sudan. Meanwhile, the use of foreign intervention is potentially dangerous. Yes, it has the possibility of ending fighting through political or military pressure, such as the intervention in Sierra Leone in 1999, which ended the near decades-long civil war. However, other interventions by the international community, in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and the Central African Republic, had led to even more chaos, and failed to protect civilians from violence. The effectiveness of the UN in interventions comes

from being able to negotiate the commitment of all parties in a conflict, and following the UN mission goals, leading to a peaceful process.

## **Questions to Consider**

- How do the interests of religious and ethnic groups in Sudan connect to the political nature of this conflict?
- How does the outcome of this conflict affect other member states of the AU?
- Is it possible to achieve any long term solution for a nation such as Sudan?
- What lessons can we learn from conflicts like this, and how can similar conflicts be avoided in the future?
- What modern-day resources and tools that weren't factors in Sudan's previous conflicts, if any, could make an impact on the outcome of this conflict? (in a positive way)

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