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Sustaining Momentum: Seizing the opportunity for SSR in Sudan

Mulugeta Gebrehiwot Berhe & Sarah Detzner

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About the Authors

Mulugeta Gebrehiwot Berhe was Program Director of the World Peace Foundation African Security Sector and Peace operations program and led the WPF project on Peace Missions in Africa. He continues his affiliation with WPF as a Senior Fellow. Mulugeta has worked as a member of the standby team of senior mediation advisors to MSU/DPPA (2019-2020) and continues to work for it on a WAE basis. He served as the director of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of Addis Ababa University from 2009-2011. He holds an MA in Public administration from Harvard Kennedy School, an MBA from the Open University of London, a BA degree in International Management from the Amsterdam School of Business and a PhD in public administration from the University of Victoria. Until 2001 Mulugeta was a member of the military and political leadership of the Tigray's People Liberation Front. As a military leader he contributed to the victory over the then Military Junta led by Mengistu Hailemariam and subsequently was in charge of demobilizing over 300 000 combatants of the defeated army. Mulugeta has more than 20 years of experience as a senior manager in the Ethiopian public and private sectors. As

an expert in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution with a focus on East Africa he has consulted with different international organizations including AU, DFID, DANIDA, ECOWAS, GIZ, IGAD, UNMIS, UNAMID, and UNDPA.

Sarah Detzner Sarah Detzner is a consultant based in Washington D.C. and World Peace Foundation Fellow. Her research and consulting work is focused on security sector reform, particularly monitoring and evaluation as well as the role of participation in post-conflict security sector reconstruction efforts. Previously, she served in the Obama Administration as a speechwriter for former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, campaigned as an Obama 2008 staffer, and worked with the National Democratic Institute in Washington, D.C., Lebanon, and Jordan. She received her doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy is originally from the Chicago area.

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Overview

This paper addresses the challenge of security sector reform (SSR) in democratizing Sudan. The former regime developed a sprawling, expensive, corrupt, brutal and ineffective array of military forces, paramilitaries, and security units. The popular uprising that overthrew this regime sought to bring democracy, end the long-running wars in Darfur and the "Two Areas" of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, revitalize the economy, end corruption, and reform and downsize the security sector. All these objectives have faced formidable obstacles. Security sector reform has scarcely made it to the political agenda.

The peace process between the Government of Sudan and the armed groups in Darfur and the Two Areas, convened in Juba last October and proceeding towards possible successful conclusion in the coming weeks, presents an opportunity for moving the SSR agenda forward.

This paper draws upon an analysis of the Sudanese security sector, the peace and democratization processes, and comparative analysis of the preconditions for successful SSR elsewhere in the world. The key findings are that democratic SSR requires a combination of a disruptive political transition and a strong pro-reform coalition that spans civil society, political parties, and members of the security forces themselves. This demand factor is more important than technical blueprints for reform (supply factors). The paper argues that Sudan's ongoing transition meets the first condition, and that there is a nascent pro-reform coalition that should be encouraged and supported.

We argue that the current Juba peace talks should focus on setting over-arching SSR objectives followed by creating inclusive and credible processes and mechanisms that will gather the input and information necessary to craft widely acceptable means to achieve these objectives. Pro-reform actors should prioritize building consultations around issues of security and justice into Sudan's transition process, to ensure that the SSR agenda is sustained in a coherent and well-rooted manner.

Introduction

The peace talks in Sudan are poised to reach a peace agreement in June. The long-awaited settlement between the Government of Sudan and armed rebels in Darfur, the "Two Areas" of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, promises to reinvigorate the transition to democracy that was launched with the non-violent overthrow of the former regime of President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. If the peace agreement brings an end to the fighting—and also sets in motion a reform of the country's security sector—then democracy in Sudan might finally be possible.

The previous regime kept itself afloat through a keen understanding and manipulation of Sudan's status as a political marketplace. In this context, a skilful manager (al-Bashir) could play different security force factions and peripheral armed groups against one another – thus affordably renting, at any given time, sufficient support to keep power.[1] However, this system, particularly the corruption and use of a violence as a bargaining tactic that it encouraged,

inherently became more expensive and less stable over time. Eventually, domestic unrest and economic shocks to a rapidly decaying system were enough to shatter it.

This legacy and changing external factors mean that no successor autocrat can reconstruct the previous ruling coalition along similar lines. Nothing like the vast and centralized financial resources al-Bashir once controlled are now available. Sudan's oil revenue, already reduced and dependent on transit fees, has been further depleted by the sudden dramatic drop in worldwide oil prices - sparked by Covid-19, but likely to persist even after the crisis resolves. Gold is difficult to control and unpredictable in value and much of it disappears into secret accounts. Rents from mercenary activities depend on the existence of buyers both willing and able to purchase such services at any given time.

Given this, the worst case scenario for virtually all Sudanese actors is that Sudan will revert to its modus operandi

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[1] Alex de Waal. "Sudan: A Political Marketplace Framework Analysis," *Occasional Paper No. 19. Conflict Research*

Programme/World Peace Foundation, August 2019.

of the mid- and late-1980s when state finances collapsed to the extent that the political marketplace became a predatory war economy, "based on mortgaging existing assets or selling equity in future power dispensations," and thus dramatically more unstable and violent, with security actors paid by their patrons with licenses to raid and loot certain areas at will.[2] Even the winners in such a system will net rapidly diminishing returns, and at great risk. In this devolution into a "security arena" violence will be fully decentralized among fragmented security actors with contending and at times contradicting interests and aligning those interests to restore peace will likely happen only after painful losses on all sides.

The best alternative for most actors is the construction of a new ruling coalition, wherein various interest groups collaborate to transform Sudan into a much more attractive environment for the domestic private sector, external investment, and development projects that maximize the country's neglected non-mineral resources, particularly agriculture and trade. The success of this transformation in turn depends heavily on

the success of security and justice reform. This is not universally true – states such as Ghana and Senegal have managed to become reasonably democratic with only moderate changes to their security systems. However, as this piece explores, in Sudan, security force disfunction is inextricable linked with the political disfunction, pervasive private and public sector corruption, and the unpredictable legal environment that has fostered conflict and stunted prosperity in Sudan for decades. A new regime that looks to secure the loyalty of citizens by meeting demands for jobs, healthcare, justice, and safety will first face the difficult task of unraveling these ties.

The building blocks for a successful pro-reform coalition exist. Factions within the security services recognize the need for, and potential benefits of, reform. Businesspeople and the educated labor force that make up urban civil society – the main constituencies of the Forces for Freedom and Change Alliance (FFC) - are as united as they have been in

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[2] Alex de Waal. "Framing Paper: The Political Marketplace Framework," 11

decades. Communities and armed groups in Sudan's peripheries are, if understandably wary, at least open to new bargains.

However, this coalition will not form, survive, or maintain the political momentum to achieve difficult but essential reform goals automatically. Right now, it shows signs of disintegrating before it can truly cohere, due to pervasive (though understandable) distrust between different interest groups and disunity within them. The FFC is not strong or internally united enough to govern alone. The armed groups with which it might naturally ally cannot commit to such an alliance without time-consuming internal negotiations and extensive guarantees.

The security forces with whom the FFC has allied to form the current transitional government are also divided. Some understand security reform as critical to a stable future for the country, but many act to marginalize civilians in the hope that, if they stall long enough to make real reform seem an empty promise, they can hold onto past power and privileges. This later group is making an extremely risky bet that new sources of political finance –

the basis for a new kleptocracy - will emerge before real reform can take root. Whether or not such sources emerge, the damage caused by delayed reform is the same. The strong pro-reform coalition needed to push through extensive reforms has yet to cohere, and delay decreases the chances that it ever will. As time passes without progress, pro-reform constituencies that once supported FFC leadership are apt to become increasingly frustrated and suspicious that their alliance partners have been co-opted, and peripheral groups will become increasingly skeptical of the motives and credibility of all Khartoum-based actors. If these trends continue, the ultimate outcome is either renewed kleptocracy or, more likely, a duplication of the first scenario described – rapid decay and absolute losses for all factions.

This paper seeks to chart a way out of this trap by merging the authors' respective practical experience of Sudan and of similar transitions in other states with comparative theoretical work examining the conditions and processes that have produced security sector reform or

failure in other transitional states. We find that the most promising avenue involves, first, all pro-reform forces investing or reinvesting time and effort into the consultative political work needed to keep their respective constituencies focused on and optimistic about prospects for reform. Further, these groups must act strategically to forge bonds between pro-reform factions – sympathetic security forces and the FFC, the FFC and peripheral groups, etc. – that will prove durable if based on clearly-articulated shared goals and thickened ties below the level of senior leadership. Finally, these actors must ensure that the current transitional process maintains and reinforces these dynamics as it progresses. This process, if correctly structured to encourage joint problem-solving rather than hasty fixes to complex challenges, to include mechanisms for popular input around everyday security and justice issues, and to avoid the entrenchment of unaccountable security and justice structures during the long transition to come, can do the work of maintaining popular pressure for reform and thus, momentum for change.

To make this case, we first present the evidence that Sudan in the present moment (but not indefinitely) is a strong candidate for reform progress. We then summarize the recent histories, constituent parts, and interests of the primary factions currently engaged in transitional negotiations, simultaneously exploring moments of danger and opportunity as well as successful strategies for navigating both gleaned from the patterns of past cases.

To conclude, we explore Sudan's likely immediate, intermediate, and long term security and justice reform tasks. By examining the structure and agenda of the current Juba talks, we map out how pro-reform groups can in the near term joint force behind an SSR process agreement – including consensus as to primary reform objectives, the structure and responsibilities of a joint mechanism to direct SSR planning and implementation, and key timelines and benchmarks - that simultaneously allows for a broadly consultative and inclusive process, ensures that immediate tasks undergird rather than undermine prospects for more sweeping reform, and maintains the momentum and popular support necessary for reform progress to move

forward and expand throughout the transitional period.

Sudan's Moment of Opportunity in Context

As a rule, states that go on to achieve major security sector reform must, like Sudan, first suffer societal disruption significant enough to destroy the political status quo – the ruling coalition, whatever its component parts, breaks apart and losses the ability to act collectively. Before this point, no amount of external pressure for reform is likely to override an autocrat's incentives to avoid it. To make the security forces accountable to the public they serve and significantly reduce corruption in acquisitions and promotions would alienate critical allies among security force leaders, to give up useful tools such as personally-controlled militias and intelligence services, and, especially dangerous in Sudan's political marketplace context, to lose access to sources of the political finance (arms deals, mercenary rents, etc.) they rely on to rent political support.[3]

However, after the breakup of a ruling coalition, aspiring leaders must look for allies to form new coalitions. If there are sufficient constituencies – ordinary citizens, disaffected members of the security services, civil society, business interests, regional leaders in search of greater autonomy, etc. – that understand security and justice reform as in their interest, and, critically, *if* these constituencies are able to unite and collectively push for change before anti-reform forces can re-cohere, new leaders will be strongly incentivized to deliver on promises of reform, and security sector transformation becomes possible.[4]

Pre-transition Sudan was a strong example of a political marketplace, and thus infertile ground for reform. A skilled political manager (al-Bashir) controlled most of the revenue from natural resource exports (at that point largely oil) and dolled them out to rent the loyalty of various other power players, mostly security force leaders.[5]

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[3] S Detzner, "Nothing For Us Without US?: The Impact of Popular Participation on Security Sector Reform Progress In Transitional States," PhD diss., (Tufts University, 2019) 20-21

[4] Ibid.

[5] Alex de Waal, "Sudan: A political marketplace analysis," WPF Occasional Paper 19, August 2019.

As the last few decades of Sudanese history demonstrates, this system was always somewhat unstable, as one of the best ways for an ambitious regional leader to gain more power was to rebel, wait to be paid off and promoted as part of a peace deal, and replicate this pattern with his own followers. Further, it was very much in al-Bashir's interest to divide Sudan's military into rival institutions as a coup-proofing mechanism. Over time, as generalized corruption and inefficient military-owned businesses proliferated, the revenue to be had from other sources, such as agriculture, general trade, or business taxes, dwindled. Dependent on commodity-based pay-outs, this system could not survive the dramatic decrease in Sudan's oil revenue after South Sudan's independence. The alternative source of rent—gold—was neither sufficient in quantity nor under central control in a way that allowed the previous political marketplace arrangements to persist.

Al-Bashir was ousted, largely through non-violent civil resistance, by what would come to be known as the Forces for Freedom and Change Alliance (FFC), a loose pro-democracy coalition drawn from Sudan's professional class, state employees, and non-military business people pursuing their own interests in building a more stable and less corrupt Sudan that could nurture non-extractive industries and curb security force abuse and appropriation.

Unsurprisingly, the immediate response of the security agencies to the fall of the former regime was to replace it with another military government in the name of transition. They formed a Transitional Military Council composed of the generals of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), and senior commanders of the Rapid Support Force (RSF). Leaders of the RSF, apparently the most resourced in terms of political finance, have attempted to approximate al-Bashir's system of payoffs using revenue from gold sales and providing mercenary services to Gulf states. However, reconstructing the old alliance has proved difficult, as spoils to be dispensed are much reduced and many SAF generals both resent and mistrust the leaders of the RSF. Further, the weakened and divided

https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/new-occasional-paper-sudan-a-political-marketplace-framework-analysis/

security forces' violent yet unsuccessful attempts to suppress the FFC damaged their internal and external credibility considerably.

Their solution was to negotiate for and ultimately form a new transitional government with the civilians of the FFC. The FFC found itself in a newly powerful but precarious position. Given the security forces' entrenched position, joining them in a power-sharing alliance was one of the most straightforward (and possibly the only) ways to avoid further conflict in Khartoum. However, the agreement alienated the FFC's other potential alliance partner, the loosely organized communities and armed groups on Sudan's peripheries. This constituency had and has more in common with the FFC in terms of an intrinsic motivation to pursue reform generally and security/justice reforms in particular but lacked the internal cohesion necessary to commit to an agreement with the FFC in the near term.

The FFC has tried to ameliorate this resentment and address these groups' concerns that they will be shut out of the transitional process through the structure of current negotiations, but, given Sudan's

history of civilians and security forces from the center dominating and exploiting the peripheries, there is lingering distrust and deep suspicion that the FFC/security force alliance is a prelude to more of the same. At the same time, the FFC/security force partnership of necessity has never been a comfortable one, and further, divisions within all three major constituencies – the FFC, the security forces, and peripheral groups – threaten the ability of each to act decisively.

In order to understand how these tensions are manifesting and could potentially be addressed in current negotiations, it is helpful to first examine the histories, interests, strengths, and weaknesses of each of these groups as well as to compare them to their rough equivalents in similar past cases of transition.

1. The FFC and "Urban" Civil Society

Civil society actors in major city centers, many of whom are members of the FFC or allied organizations, are the obvious linchpin of any pro-SSR coalition. While their recent victories

are impressive, their continued political power will depend on their on-going ability to act together.

As Naimark-Rowse, Berridge and others have explored, in Sudan's long history of civil resistance, pro-reform groups have been most successful when they have managed to stay united around a common reform agenda and build on existing social, familial, and other ties that bridge civilian protesters and the security forces.[6] This strongly echoes Detzner's findings from a variety of other cases, and the contrasts between successes and failures are illuminating.[7]

In cases of SSR success, notably Indonesia and Peru, urban middle and upper-class pro-reform groups reminiscent of the FFC first entered into dialogues, and were eventually able to craft a shared reform agenda with, interest groups from peripheral areas representing much larger populations.[8] Further, these groups fostered similar lines of communication with members of the security forces, many of whom had an interest in maintaining or restoring the prestige and popularity of their institutions and were willing to agree to a retreat from politics in exchange for formalized protection from constant political interference, cronyism, etc.[9]

In cases where SSR progress stalled, notably Kenya and Nepal, anti-reform political leaders were able to keep civil society groups divided, and thus ineffectual, by amplifying ethnic, religious, and regional divisions, usual through co-option.[10] For example, in Kenya, the civil society coalition that helped bring down President Moi split post-transition as the new regime rewarded and recruited co-ethnics into government.[11] In Burundi, armed groups negotiating various peace treaties assented to civil society involvement in these talks, but insisted that these actors could only take part as affiliates of ethnically-based political parties, once again keeping pro-reform forces effectively divided and politically

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[6] Benjamin R. Naimark-Rowse. "Surviving Success: Nonviolent Rebellion in Sudan." Journal of Peacebuilding & Development 12, no. 3 (2017), 118
Willow J. Berridge. Civil Uprisings in Modern Sudan: The 'Khartoum Springs' of 1964 and 1985. Bloomsbury Publishing (2015)
Alex de Waal. "Don't Shoot Us, Dad: Sudan's Uprisings in Context." Times Literary Supplement. (May 7, 2019)
[7] Detzner, "Nothing For Us Without US?" 164, 349-396
[8] Ibid, 230
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid, 370, 386
[11] Ibid, 374

negligible.[12]

Unfortunately, this anti-reform tactic is more effective in states, like Sudan, where prolonged violence has left the population politically activated but highly polarized, often along ethnic/regional lines, and underdeveloped communication and transportation infrastructure, varied terrain, and limited literacy make forming strong intercommunal ties difficult.[13] Further, in such cases, pro-reform civil society actors are often understandably concerned that they will be left unprotected if they go against the wishes of the armed group most closely associated with their community.

The FFC in its early days was fairly well-constructed to stay responsive to the interests and concerns of its primary supporters, an important prerequisite to both broader outreach work and the ability to credibly commit to joint positions, alliances, etc. The formal structure of a Central Council for higher level political decisions, a coordination council for day-to-day coordination, and an advisory council responsible for input to all on keeping actions focused on core

goals, with all three institutions including representatives from throughout the FFC's various factions, was a well-designed architecture. However, the value of such a structure lies entirely in its continuous operation, which decreased significantly after the FFC alliance with security forces and the formation of the transitional government. This neglect was a major strategic mistake, especially for a relatively new organization like the FFC, which lacks a foundation of intra-coalition trust and long-established working relationships between key members. Further, Sudan's history as a political marketplace deepens the potential for distrust – all actors involved are very used to seeing political loyalty as a commodity that can be purchased on a short-term basis.

However, the mistake is not irrecoverable. The example of South Africa's African National Congress horizontal and vertical continuous consultations before, during, and after the negotiations for SSR, suggest that active consultation with FFC members at every level, both during negotiations

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[12] Ibid, 281

[13] Ibid, 111-114

and throughout the transitional period, will help the organization retain cohesion and legitimacy and thus, politically potency. The FFC should both revive its previous consultative mechanisms and orient these mechanisms specifically toward achieving strong internal consensus on key transitional issues such as the future role and limits of the military, the appropriate balance of local, provincial, and national government responsibilities, which justice reform goals should be prioritized, etc. Ideally, these consultations should produce clear and public position statements, which can then be the starting point for broader consultations with other interest groups. By having these consensus positions clearly articulated, the FFC would also be a stronger position to implement a communications strategy that allows it to articulate its identity and goals separate from its role in the transitional government, and thus to protect itself to an extent from being seen as co-opted by its security force governing partners.

However, given the dangers of losing momentum, the proposed internal coalition strengthening must be done in parallel with attempts to expand the coalition. It is obvious that FFC leadership must continue their current conversations, both during formal negotiations and elsewhere, with those security force and peripheral group leaders who share some of their reform priorities and with whom they may be able to find acceptable compromises on other issues. However, it is less obvious but also important that the FFC prioritize reaching out at the sub-leadership level. As previously described, many rank-and-file security force members have much to gain from reform, and, importantly, they have business, social, and familial ties with many of the FFC's core constituencies, especially students. As de Waal describes in "Don't shoot us, Dad," activating these ties has encouraged reform and limited violence several times in recent Sudanese history.[14] The key may be to move beyond asking security force members merely to disobey repressive orders and onto actively encouraging them to organize and articulate their own specific interests. Notably, in several cases of lasting security sector

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[14] De Waal. "Don't Shoot Us, Dad"

reform (Peru and South Africa) the formation of police and/or military unions has seemingly helped anchor reform.[15]

Interests & Priorities

In order to understand both the interests of FFC affiliates, the current relative power of this block, and the areas in which it most likely to find common ground with other factions, it is necessary to understand the changing economic role of its members. As revenues from oil and gold dwindle, the power of businesspeople and professionals – the FFC's core constituency - who make more sustainable contributions to the Sudanese economy grows. De Waal notes "not all Sudanese capitalism is of the crony variety" and business people and professionals from Khartoum and surrounding areas that fueled the FFC are strongly incentivized to see Sudan become more attractive to international investment and less economically dependent on commodities (most recently gold) that can be monopolized by the state.[16] In numerous other cases of

SSR progress (notably Indonesia, Peru, and South Africa) the business and professional classes have driven justice reform and promoted strong anti-corruption institutions.[17]

There is evidence from recent decades that legislative reform addressing dispute resolution mechanisms related to foreign investments has the potential to jump-start the Sudanese economy and thus help break the state's dependence on oil, gold, and mercenary wages. Strey notes that in 1999 and 2005, Bashir's introduction of laws that partially protected international investors from being extorted within the executive-controlled judicial system by ensuring disputes would be handled by independent arbitration corresponded with a significant increase in foreign direct investment and economic growth.[18] There is potential for the Sudanese agricultural sector, for example, to be significantly more profitable if corruption can be curtailed.[19] In the past, Gulf investors in agriculture have

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[15] Detzner, "Nothing For Us Without US?" 408
[16] De Waal. "Sudan: A Political Marketplace Framework Analysis," Occasional Paper No. 19. Conflict Research Programme/World Peace Foundation, (August 2019) 2
[17] Detzner, "Nothing for Us Without Us?" 230
[18] Paul Strey. "Rule of Law in Law's Absence: Examining the

Legal Politics of Sudan." Social Science Journal (2017): 1.
[19] De Waal. "Sudan: A Political Marketplace Framework Analysis," Occasional Paper No. 19. Conflict Research Programme/World Peace Foundation, (August 2019) 16

either withdrawn or have failed to follow through on land leases because of the costs of corrupt payments and the social unrest associated with corrupt land development.[20] A reform program aimed at fostering a more appealing investment environment would be hugely facilitated by the U.S. lifting sanctions (by removing Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terror), or, at the least, establishing clear and predictable conditions for these sanctions to be lifted.

Further, judicial reform backed by this class might offer those political/military elites currently using bargaining via violence within the political marketplace a way to safely accept the proverbial smaller piece of a larger (and more sustainable) pie that economic growth potentially creates. Precedents for this shift include Mexico and Senegal, where ruling oligarchies, facing the loss of power, chose to back the creation of an independent judiciary before their withdrawal so as to prevent rivals from using state power to target them and their assets.[21]

Notably, across many cases of SSR progress, judicial reform of this kind came before or concurrently with DDR, police, and military reform, and served to anchor other reforms by making them more difficult for the executive to reverse.[22] In instances where the new executive was left unconstrained, such as Burundi and (to a lesser extent) Kenya, SSR gains were transitory.[23]

2. The Security Services

Sudan has never, since independence, had properly professionalized security institutions. The political independence of the Sudanese Defence Forces was undermined first by a series of coups and then in the 1980s by the establishment of military economic corporations, which drew officers into business dealings. When civil war broke out in 1983, the government relied on militia for much of the fighting but used army officers for coordination, drawing them into the militia economy of pillage.

In 1989, the National Islamic Front

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[20] Daniel Stoll, "Qatar's Food and Water Security: An evolving strategy," in Rogaia Abusharaf and Dale Eickelman (eds.), Africa and the Gulf Region: Blurred boundaries and shifting ties, Berlin, Gerlach, 2015.

[21] Detzner, "Nothing for Us Without Us?" 409
[22] Ibid, 14
[23] Ibid, 279, 349

(NIF) seized power in a coup and embarked on sweeping and unprecedented changes to the organization and military doctrine of the Sudanese army. To prevent future security service coups, the regime first acted to divide them much as possible. Firstly, it consolidated and strengthened the powers of NISS (National Intelligence Security Services) as a rival and check on the SAF. At the same time, it established Islamist paramilitaries and created the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), exclusively run by Islamists. In the process hundreds of top-and middle-rank officers were laid off, seriously downgrading military professionalization. The mission of the army was redefined as defending the Islamic regime rather than the nation. Counter-insurgency was redefined as fighting anti-Islamic forces and jihad became the rallying cry for jihadists to join the PDF seeking victory or martyrdom.

At the same time the regime acted to mollify the remaining SAF and the other security institutions by allowing them to engage in economic activities on privileged terms. Security force involvement now pervades and corrupts both the forces themselves and the broader Sudanese economy – the military is involved in manufacturing, services, the automotive industry, pharmaceuticals, running airports, and even such marketing and selling furniture.[24]

Highlighting the unpredictability of this system, one of the militias the regime developed in order to circumvent the existing security forces has since become an important player in its own right. In the 2000s, following the split in the Islamist ranks, the regime fought the Darfur counterinsurgency by mobilizing Arab militia. Popularly known as Janjaweed, these militias were later formalized as Border Intelligence Forces ("Border Guards"). One brigade of the Border Guards was subsequently renamed the Rapid Support Forces and massively expanded. The RSF took over control gold production and trading, which in turn enabled its leaders' access much needed political capital, especially as rents from oil declined. Its control over disarmament campaigns in Darfur also

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[24] Atta El-Battahani, "The Sudan Armed Forces and Prospects of Change," CMI Insight. April, 2016

helped it accumulate more weapons and vehicles and take control over key checkpoints and smuggling routes. This left the RSF a formidable and parallel force to the SAF, with its own parallel command.

This overall trajectory also describes the degeneration of the Sudanese Police Service as a professional force. At the ascent of the NIF to power, professional police officers were continuously purged and replaced by cadres of the regime. Furthermore, the institution was increasingly pushed into a militarized form of policing, mostly deployed to enforce local administrative orders rather than protect citizens. In the position of having to serve many political masters simultaneously, the Sudanese Police Force has long sought to protect itself as an institution by resisting decentralization and building "a stronger and central police institution capable of encountering and absorbing the significant and frequent political changes at the center of the state."[25] The result of this was "an implicit agreement between the military officers in power and the police headquarters…in which the police would

act as reserve in the military operations in Southern Sudan, in exchange for the regime's preserving the unity of the police force and strengthening the central mode of administration.[26]" In the wake of South Sudan's independence, followed by the regime's decline and fall, the police find themselves in a precarious position in the urban centers where they normally operate, with their institutional reputation further damaged by the transitional military government's use of their forces to attack protestors. Even before the transition, police presence outside these centers, in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Sudan's peripheries in general, has long been weak to non-existent.

Interests & Priorities

This brief narrative helps demonstrate the ways in which, over time, Sudan's previous system of government delivered fewer benefits and greater risk even to those who, charged with protecting it, might reasonably have expected to be best rewarded. Despite the privileges and compensation, life as

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[25] Ammar Mohamed Elbaghir Ibrahim "The Police of the Sudan: Challenges of Centralization and Militarization,"

The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles. (V1:3, 2017) 277
[26] Ibid.

a soldier or policeman in Sudan, especially for officers, is precarious. Even before the recent upheaval, past experience suggests that a government purge could come at any time, advancement to key roles is often based on political connection and bribes, and rival units may find themselves fighting one another.

This raises the strong possibility that ordinary members of the security services might well be persuaded to back a reform agenda, even one that significantly curtails their privilege, in exchange for the opportunity to regain a place of general respect within Sudanese society (as happened post-transition in Sierra Leone, Burundi, and South Africa) and break out of system in which political influence/corruption is the only path to career advancement.[27] Perhaps the greatest challenge, especially amidst a general economic crunch, will be persuading the military to give up its economic privileges. Unfortunately, establishing a level playing field for business in Sudan is also critical to renewed prosperity, and thus for the survival of any new regime.

However, there is some room for compromise as well as for effective international intervention. Intensive and prolonged international support for military reform (as opposed to one-time DDR packages), as were offered in Burundi and Sierra Leone, could serve two key purposes:

1) Offering access to high-quality training and education with the goal of eventually qualification for involvement in AU/UN peacekeeping operations can address the desire both for renewed respectability/prestige and to replace lost revenue, as such posting are usually comparatively lucrative,

2) Subsidizing the new regime to offer to appropriate and reliable salaries, benefits, and basic equipment to security force members, increasing in stages as military involvement in the economy is phased out. Previously, compensation was kept artificially low on the grounds that troops could self-fund through business enterprise. Such subsidizes are a temporary measure, but buy time for market reform and anti-corruption measures to yield economic dividends allowing security forces to shrink (due to increased availability of other attractive jobs) and government revenue (including from reduced

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[27] Detzner, "Nothing for Us Without Us?"

corruption in defense procurement) to grow sufficiently to support the remainder.

Security service elites have more to lose, but also are also more likely to have first-hand knowledge that the old status quo, if it can be reconstructed at all, will only be pieced back together after extensive and costly infighting. As elites, senior leaders of the security institutions are in greater danger from their rivals should the Sudanese transition devolve into a direct struggle between security force factions. Experience from Indonesia and Peru's successful transitions (in which large factions of military elites backed reformers over autocrats) suggests that these elites can be persuaded not to block, and may actively back, security reform if they can thereby protect some of their core interests.[28]

Some of these are financial – the recent decision by the transitional government to confiscate property and plots of land amounting to 92,000 square meters from ousted leader al-Bashir's extended family (and his close ally and former Minister of Defense) as well as the dissolution of

board of directors of the Khartoum International Airport Company and the Sudan Airports Holding Company underlines that the current unsettled political situation carries real risks to military elites.[29]

Further, the transitional government's decision to turn al-Bashir over the International Criminal Court incentivizes these elites to bargain for an amnesty for past human rights abuses while they still have the leverage to do so. Allowing military elites to keep some ill-gotten gains and escape prosecution for extensive past crimes is far from an attractive proposition. However, compromises such as truth and reconciliation mechanisms and limited asset reclamation arrangements have allowed other states in transition to strike and uneasy but workable balance between demanding accountability and avoiding incentivizing outgoing regime elites to keep resisting change at all costs.

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[28] De Waal. "Sudan: A Political Marketplace Framework Analysis," Occasional Paper No. 19. Conflict Research Programme/World Peace Foundation, August 2019, 2 Detzner, "Nothing for Us Without Us?" 270

[29] "Sudanese corruption committee confiscates Bashir family properties" KFGO, May 7, 2020. https://kfgo.com/2020/05/07/sudanese-corruption-committee-confiscates-bashir-family-properties/

3. Peripheral Communities & Armed Groups

Sudan's peripheries are united in distrust of the center, but not necessarily on many other points, including the need for comprehensive security sector reform. The armed groups located in various parts of Sudan's periphery have long been thoroughly embedded within the political marketplace and are used to operating within its rules.[30] De Waal observes of the negotiations around the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Darfur peace talks of 2003-2011, and the post-referendum arrangements of 2011, that rather than any genuine interest in DDR or SSR, "For the rebels, the concern was finding the material means for them to consolidate their respective movements so as to operate more effectively on the battlefield and in political processes."[31] However, he follows this by noting that:

> "**The demand for SSR came from elsewhere; from the people...** Only on one occasion was this demand articulated cogently in a forum that enjoyed political influence. This was the series of public consultations held by the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD)... It travelled to Darfur and over a period of approximately 40 days held a series of public hearings in the major towns, in the camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and in rebel-held areas. Participants in these meetings demanded their own representation in any political process that determined the future of Darfur. They recognized the existence of the diverse armed groups – whose members were their own sons and brothers – and sought a mechanism for making these groups accountable and subject to community control. Their starting point was not security in the sense of the security sector, but in the sense of the security to which ordinary people should be entitled."[32]

This observation points to the potential for change at the community level. The loss of centrally-controlled oil revenue has forced leaders in Khartoum to either respond to the demands of constituents who control the resources they will have to rely on going forward (taxes from business, agriculture, etc.) or be removed. Similarly, armed group leaders have lost access to the rents they received from Khartoum either as

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[30] De Waal. "Sudan: A Political Marketplace Framework Analysis," Occasional Paper No. 19. Conflict Research Programme/World Peace Foundation, August 2019

[31] Alex de Waal. "Peace and the security sector in Sudan, 2002–11." African Security Review 26, no. 2 (2017), 192
[32] Ibid.

militias for the regime or in exchange (though fleeting peace processes) for temporary ceasefires. To survive and maintain their authority, they must receive support from the communities they claim to represent or find another way to replace lost revenue. Few of these groups are completely untethered from their communities of origin. Whether deepen these ties by acting as (or in some cases continuing to be) a protective force or turn instead to raiding, looting and mercenary work will depend in large part on civilian community leaders' 1) ability to paint a plausible picture of a more a prosperous future enabled by decreased violence, and 2) ability to pool their leverage, coordinate, and set a collective agenda and standards of conduct within each region. Such shared agendas would also facilitate negotiations between the FFC and the regions (and between regions) by reducing the complexity of negotiations and clarifying each interest group's key priorities.

The Juba peace talks (between the transitional government and the peripheries and their armed groups (including the SPLM/A-North, the SLA, and the Justice and Equality Movement)

are encouraging in that armed groups have, seemingly in response to community demand, shown a greater level of interest in how security and justice services will be structured post-transition. While some groups are following past pattern by primarily seeking resources for in-group consolidation and local dominance, many of them are increasingly showing concern and interest in the restructuring and reforming of the security sector at the national level. To maintain this interest, any transitional SSR process will have to answer the question of what security force accountability and access to justice looks like at the regional as well as national level. In Sudan, given that policing by a centralized force is, in the peripheries, logistically and financially impossible, many citizens already rely on chiefs, customary authorities, or armed groups for these services informally. However, a reformed and formalized system will need to ensure that chiefs (or other selected leaders) are accountable to (and removable by) their own constituents, rather than the central government.

Negotiations: Structure and SSR Agenda

If the components to create a successful pro-security reform coalition exist in Sudan, the forum for such a coalition to come together and exert common pressure at a key point already exists. This section will discuss how current negotiations have progressed, the key immediate and long term security and justice issues they will have to resolve, and how the on-going transitional negotiation process might be structured to encourage durable solutions to these issues based on the real needs of the population at large.

After the fall of the previous regime and the successful popular protests against a purely military transitional government, Sudan's key players agreed, in August 2019, to a Constitutional Declaration which contained a formula for civilian-military cohabitation for a three-and-a-half year transition period. This Declaration serves as the constitution for a transitional period during which a permanent settlement is to be negotiated, and outlines the key activities of the transitional period, modalities for their implementation, and a basic timeline.

As previously mentioned, the alliance between the FFC and the security forces to form a transitional government was perceived by the peripheral armed groups that the FFC was simultaneously negotiating with as something of a betrayal. The new transitional government, aware these groups would understandably refuse to recognize any new constitution they had no role in shaping, agreed in October to the Juba Declaration of Peace, which outlined a negotiation and transition process that would allow for the input of all major actors. Ideally, this model, which stipulates that the final agreement will supersede all previous agreements, allows for the gradual inclusion of and increasing number of factions and peripheral groups as negotiations progress, reducing the chances that such groups will reject the final outcome as having been formed without their input and failing to address their interests. It is an important break from the "back room deal" structure of previous (and short-lived) agreements in past Sudanese

conflicts.

While the Juba Declaration originally set a six month deadline for conclusion of the next round of talks and a further agreement, this deadline has been extended into May of 2020 and has now reverted to indirect talks with an open ended time due to the global impact of COVID-19 crisis, among other factors. The larger transitional timeline calls for the drafting and ratification of a constitution in three years (which will likely mean for four to five in practice), followed by democratic elections.

As mentioned, the current talks break from past practice (both in Sudan and other unsuccessful SSR efforts) in that they are intended to produce an agreement over the process through which further, specific agreements will be negotiated, rather than attempting to resolve all outstanding issues in the short term. Nine months in, talks are progressing with varying levels of progress in varying regions.

Promisingly, the talks are being hosted in Juba by the South Sudanese government.

This development indicates a consensus among elites in both Sudans that the two states will have to collaborate more closely if either is to have a chance at lasting stability and, as importantly, that peace on both sides of the shared border could bring desperately needed mutual opportunities for trade and economic development.[33] It is certainly an encouraging break with past practice, in which leaders on both sides of the border regularly worked to destabilize one another by supporting rebel groups in one another's territory. Further, the relationship appears reciprocal – South Sudan's current assistance to Sudan's transitional talks echoes the facilitator role that Sudan's Transitional Government has recently played in talks between South Sudan's major political players (Salva Kiir and Riek Machar) aimed at reactivating their own peace and transition process.

Agreeing on a Transitional SSR Agenda & Path Forward

So far, the talks have covered a range of region-specific interests. Regarding security sector reform, they have

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[33] Yasir Arman, "Peace in Sudan and its effects on the Stability of South Sudan," Seminar Paper. February 15, 2020

produced a framework agreement with the two-areas with provisions aimed at increasing the democratic accountability of the Sudan's security institutions, provisions that could potentially serve as the basis for a new national security strategy and related military doctrine. [34]

However, these early results are nowhere near a consensus as to the scope of security and justice reform to be considered, let alone the process though which it will be agreed. Negotiators face both immediate and long term tasks. This piece will attempt to articulate these tasks and further propose options for further negotiations whereby efforts to resolve the most pressing security issues, such as DDR, can be structured so as to prepare the ground and produce important information for the resolution of longer term questions, such as which security forces (at what level of government) will be responsible (and to whom) for providing different types and levels of security services.

Based on Sudan's particular challenges

and the experience of other similarly situated states, the ultimate objectives of the transitional process regarding security and justice will need to include, at a minimum:

- Reestablishing all Sudanese security forces with doctrines enshrining secularism, professionalism, and the supremacy of civilian authority;

- Removing all security forces from direct roles in the economy while establishing an alternate and sustainable means of funding these forces at an agreed-upon size and capability level;

- Ensuring that security forces have clearly defined, complementary, and non-overlapping responsibilities;

- Reestablishing an independent judiciary and, more specifically, mechanisms through which the security forces can be accountable to civilian authority; and

- Agreeing and codifying clear lines of authority and responsibility for service provision between highly local security and justice

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[34] Some of the provisions in the framework agreement include: A call to SAF for its loyalty to be to the country and its interests; the need for SAF's composition to reflect Sudanese diversity; A call for NISS to be professional and composed of members reflecting Sudanese diversity. The framework also stipulates that NISS must be answerable to the national interests of the country and not to particular political parties, individuals, specific geographical areas, or other groups.

providers, the national police, the military, and other applicable institutions.

To maintain a relatively peaceful and conducive security environment in Sudan as the parties negotiate the path toward and boundaries of these objectives, the parties must more immediately achieve:

- Consensus as the to the nature of the key security reform tasks (which will likely include issues beyond those listed above) that must be completed during the transition;

- A complete agreement for a ceasefire as well as the disengagement, and redeployment of forces;

- Official agreement over who, in which areas, will have transitional responsibility for providing security and justice services as well as who (external or internal) will be responsible for monitoring and verifying interim disarmament and other security arrangements; and

- Agreement, with accompanying timeline and milestones, for the process by which these issues will be negotiated – who will be included, how will input be incorporated, how will the parties work together to resolve inevitable emergent issues and crises (lack of such a responsive mechanism having derailed many past efforts).

A major point of concern is the criteria for inclusion in the talks. Planning a meaningful and lasting SSR process in Sudan will require massive consultation of a wide variety of stakeholders to break the past cycle of a rapid and exclusive peace agreement being followed by rebellion of excluded stakeholders, followed by yet another hasty peace agreement excluding other stakeholders, etc., in a pattern conditioning all involved to rely on violence as a bargaining tactic. Encouragingly, representation in the current process has not been limited to armed groups. However, neither has participation been systematically structured to ensure that: 1) groups at the table truly represent the constituencies they claim to speak for, and 2) categories that are frequently marginalized, notably women, have a path to meaningfully participate. Without such participation, there is the danger that talks will degenerate into a division of spoils between the already powerful.

In tension with this requirement is the need to move forward and maintain momentum in the transitional process

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– other transitions with as-or-more promising begins (Kenya, Nepal, Guatemala) have floundered in the past when anti-reform forces have success stalled stalling on key issues, such as DDR, and/or pushed for overly baroque and extended implementation plans that facilitate yet further delays. Such stalling tends to erode popular faith in the process (and allows time to implement ethnic/regional polarization strategies) and complex implementation processes not well understood by the public allow recalcitrant actors to avoid accountability for failing to follow through on their commitments. Critically, SSR progress seems to take place either in the first five years post-transition, or not at all.[35]

We propose that the best solution for Sudan to resolve this tension and address both short and long term security reform tasks is the creation of a joint institutional mechanism specifically empowered, throughout the transitional process, to examine in-depth, receive input regarding, and propose detailed solutions to, the security and justice issues previously detailed and oversee the implementation of designed programs during the

transition and even after where the need arises. One successful model for this is El Salvador's post-civil war National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ). COPAZ, which was made up representatives from key rebel groups, the security forces of the deposed regime, and (importantly) other important societal constituencies, was tasked with:

- Settling security related disputes (over DDR, ceasefire breaches, etc.) between the parties in El Salvador's (complex and prolonged) transitional process;

- Developing, with targeted assistance from the UN and other externals, the technical capacity to draft the implemented legislation for agreements reached (with the power to enact remaining with the parties);

- Jointly inspecting and supervising the implementation of security-related agreement provisions; and

- Releasing periodic public reports, including recommendations, regarding reform progress.[36]

Sudan could develop a similar

[35] Detzner, "Nothing for Us Without Us?" 16
[36] "El Salvador: Acuerdo de Nueva York," *Envio*. (Oct. 1991)

https://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/689

mechanism with context-appropriate variations. Such a mechanism (answerable to the Supreme council and composed of representatives of the political parties, civil society, the security institutions, the rebel forces) might tackle the following key transitional tasks:

- Conducting a complete security needs assessment throughout the country, followed by an assessment of the current state of Sudan's security institutions, with the aim of the pairing the two analyses to identify gaps and institution reform priorities;
- Drafting a detailed plan to gradually remove the security forces from their role in Sudan's economy and transfer military-run enterprises back to private or state ownership;
- Developing the plan and process for integrating former combatants into existing security institutions equitably and then right-sizing these institutions without either creating conflict or losing key expertise;
- Developing, based on the probable structure and boundaries of the reformed security forces post-ratification, a national security strategy and a new military doctrine for the army in line with said strategy; and
- Agreeing upon and implementing an inclusive and public process that will

produce the provisions related to security institutions to be ratified in post-transition constitution.

Notably, the proposed tasks build upon on one another, thus maintaining momentum and allowing for growing trust and familiarity between parties.

Throughout, popular consultation, inclusion, and transparency must be treated as key elements of proposed mechanism's tasks, not optional extras to be cut if time or resources are strained. Popular consultation is most effective, as South Africa's experience highlights, if it occurs continuously throughout a reform process. Sudan has a very promising domestic precedent and model for such consultations – the recent Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultations process. Especially with support from external donors, members of the proposed joint mechanism can oversee and implement this basic model across Sudan's regions, taking advantage of the fact that such consultations (if their results are publicized) tend to build and maintain popular support for reform as well as uncovering the key needs of

each locality.[37]

Everyday Security

A more limited but rapid form of local consultations may further help to resolve more immediate transitional security issues. First, there is the critical but oft-overlooked question of who will provide local, everyday security and justice services in Sudan during the prolonged transitional period.

Sudan's combination of poor infrastructure, low literacy, challenging terrain, and widely dispersed populations make it extremely difficult to police by conventional means, even before factoring in impact of years of violence and neglect on peripheral regions. Whatever the desires of Sudan's official police, they simply do not have the resources (both during the transitional period and into the foreseeable future) to provide services throughout the country. At the same time, leaving such services to whichever local armed group chooses to provide them, without requiring such groups to demonstrate that the communities in question welcome their presence, entrenches both the armed groups themselves and destructive concept that security forces gain the right to operate through strength of arms rather than local legitimacy and accountability.

A promising possible solution that lays the groundwork for future arrangements is for each locality in Sudan to, after a brief consultation process, present their preferred plan (ideally for approval by the parties through the joint mechanism) for the structure of local security and justice provision in their area during the transitional period. Local preferences in Sudan are likely to vary from region to region, villages to towns, nomads to farmers, etc. Many urban areas will likely continue to depend on established police. However, the vast majority of what policing and justice services exist in peripheral regions are already provided by non-state actors – encouraging various communities to articulate what particular arrangements are best suited to their areas and thus improve on what already exists is far more realistic and achievable than other alternatives.

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[37] Madeline England and Alex Boucher. "Security Sector Reform: Thematic Literature Review on Best Practices and Lessons Learned." *Security Sector Reform in Stabilization Environments: A Note on Current Practice* (2009): 1-33.

The argument for such an approach is bolstered by previous cases of post-conflict SSR in similarly-situated states, where those that were sensitive the need for local accountability and variation (Sierra Leone) saw greater and more durable policing gains than states that attempt to reproduce a standard police reform template (Liberia).[38] In a number of cases, most notably Sierra Leone, the solution has been for community leaders such as chiefs to formally assume responsibility for certain aspects of policing and justice – mediating and ruling on disputes below a certain value, organizing volunteers (or locals recruited and paid by the chief) to conduct patrols, imposing limited punishments for minor offenses, and sometimes monitoring border incursions and/or keeping track of arms within a community.[39] Such arrangements are more successful when:

1) The designated chief or local leader is locally chosen and thus removable if the community is unsatisfied with their performance. While this may or may not be feasible in Sudan, there must be some mechanism ensuring that leaders with this authority are incentivized to maintain a broad base of local support. In the several cases where they have been centrally appointed agents of the state, armed rebellion has frequently resulted, and in other cases the construction of dubiously "traditional" structures has been used to further exploit marginalize groups.[40]

2) The division of labor between the official police and the agents of the designated local authority is clear, generally understood by the population, and preferably negotiated and formally codified.[41]

3) The designated local authority has a local source of funds (usually tax revenue) that can be used to provide these services. In a number of cases, the balance of power between the local authority and police is maintained because said authority can choose to share or withhold

[38] Ibid, 204, 279
Bruce Baker. "A policing partnership for post-war Africa? Lessons from Liberia and southern Sudan." Policing & Society 19, no. 4 (2009): 372-389.
[39] Mulugeta Gebrehiwot Berhe . "The Ethiopian post-transition security sector reform experience: building a national army from a revolutionary democratic army," African Security Review, (26:2 2017), 161-179
James Vincent. "A Village-Up View of Sierra Leone's Civil War and Reconstruction: Multilayered and Networked Governance." IDS Research Reports 2012, no. 75 (2012). 10
[40] Paul Jackson. "Decentralised power and traditional authorities: How power determines access to justice in Sierra Leone." The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law 43, no. 63 (2011): 211
Detzner, "Nothing for Us Without Us?" 366
[41] Ibid, 145

some of these funds from locally-stationed police.[42]

Such a rapid consultation also provides the opportunity to gather local input and preferences regarding the tricky problem of transitional DDR in Sudan. Given the distrust between the parties and the dangers of disbanding one's forces, armed groups in Sudan may disagree to cantonment, especially given the current risk of Covid-19 in any such arrangement. However, armed group leaders (especially those struggling to materially provide for their troops) might well agree to an arrangement where each groups' forces are counted and recorded, given basic screening screenings to discover their distributions of aptitudes, interests, qualifications, and post-war preferences for integration into the (possibly profoundly restructured) security agencies and/or reintegration into civilian life. After this basic screening, some of these troops might be directed to return to their communities of origin (an arrangement that may reassure armed group leaders that they are close enough to be remobilized if necessary) and slowly reintegrate into community life. Such a process is vastly more likely to succeed if

ex-combatants are returned to the communities of their origin and the communities are consulted on re-integration programs and reintegration packages for returning combatants. Such a participatory approach will not only address the question of equity by the communities but also motivate them participate in assisting the returnees for a faster reintegration and increase the likelihood of success for the program.

External Support

Clearly, both the proposed DDR process and other suggested approaches will be much more feasible with external support. While this piece is not primarily aimed at external actors, it is worth briefly articulating the forms of external support that are likely to be most helpful in Sudan's transition:

In the immediate future, donors can best assist by:

- Providing any targeted security guarantees necessary to maintain a ceasefire,
- Providing resources and technical assistance to conduct the

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[42] Ibid, 271

proposed DDR census and partial reintegration processes;

- Providing advice and technical assistance as negotiating parties establish an independent joint mechanism to oversee further steps in the SSR process;

- Provide logistical support for forums within the various regions to help local leaders discuss and develop feasible plans for transitional local policing, justice, and security arrangements.

During the transitional period, once a mechanism for longer term reform is established, donors should:

- Help ensure transparency and build support for the on-going reform process and interim agreements by providing resources to publicize them.

- Providing logistical support for pro-reform forces, especially from disparate interest groups and different regions, to meet with one another to discuss reform priorities, develop common positions, etc. In particular, security force members should be included wherever possible to incorporate their perspectives and increase their confidence in the potential value of reform.

- Provide extensive technical support to the members of whatever

mechanism is established to explore reform alternatives, conduct outreach, and solicit feedback.

Beginning immediately, but with the understanding that results will take consistent investment over a period of years, donors should:

- Encourage and logistically support the quick implementation of those reforms that seem most likely to bring about lasting, difficult to reverse changes to the incentives of political and security actors – justice and anti-corruption efforts, tax reform, meaningful local control over security provision, oversight, and resources, etc.

- Invest in developing the technical expertise and capacity of civil society groups around issues of security and justice (prioritizing those that are at least somewhat internally democratic, as well as those that continuously engage in public outreach, coalition-building activities, and dialogues with other groups) to empower these groups to play a meaningful on-going role in both the reform process and future security force oversight. Preparing platforms of security and justice reform policies for the 2023 elections are likely to be a useful focal point for such groups.

- Give substance to pro-reform arguments about what a post-reform political and economic landscape could look like – for example, by promising assistance to future economic development projects contingent on the implementation of the specific judicial reforms and anti-corruption measures prioritized by domestic activists. The key here is to coordinate domestic with international pressure and so diffuse the argument that reforms are being externally imposed.

Conclusion

Sudan is currently in a uniquely promising moment to achieve a real security sector transformation, both as outcome of and an anchor for the nation's transition to democracy. In this piece, we have described the window of opportunity created by the destruction of the previous status quo and the early successes of pro-reform forces in exploiting that opportunity. These successes were clearly tied to the FFC's ability, bolstered by its consultative structure, to stay united in the face of disunity among those looking to reconstruct Sudan's shattered kleptocracy. Further, we have described how progress toward reform has stalled as the FFC has neglected

internal consensus building efforts and struggled to balance its pragmatic governing alliance with the security forces with its clear need to make common security-reform cause with Sudan's peripheral communities and armed groups.

We have explored both the histories and interests of Sudan's major interests groups with the goal of illuminating what might motivate these groups to work together for reform, and shed light on how exactly such collaboration might work in practice by drawing from the experiences of similarly-situated transitional states that were successful in their coalition-building efforts.

Finally, we have applied these dynamics to the present moment by arguing that the current Juba peace talks must focus not on the direct resolution of key SSR issues, but first, on setting over-arching reform objectives and then on creating inclusive and credible processes and mechanisms that will gather the input and information necessary to craft widely acceptable means to achieve these objectives. In short, if pro-reform

actors build both intra-and-inter group consultation around issues of security and justice into Sudan's transition process, they can ensure both that the pro-SSR coalition cannot easily be divided and weakened, and that popular demand for reform (and thus the political prize of popular support for those who deliver reform) remains potent.

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UKaid
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World Peace Foundation
at The Fletcher School, Tufts University
169 Holland Street, Suite 209
Somerville, MA 02144
Tel: +1 617 627-2255
Worldpeacefoundation.org

WORLD PEACE
FOUNDATION

Find out more about the Conflict
Research Programme

Connaught House
The London School of Economics and
Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE

Contact:
Anna Mkhitaryan, Programme Manager

Tel: **+44 (0)20 7849 4631**
Email: **Intdev.Crp@lse.ac.uk**

lse.ac.uk/conflict

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in alternative formats, on request.