

**CONFLICT IN SUDAN: OPTIONS FOR AN
EFFECTIVE POLICY RESPONSE**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

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CONFLICT IN SUDAN: OPTIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE POLICY RESPONSE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2023

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:51 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Kaine, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Romney, Young, Hagerty, Ricketts, and Scott.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Since fighting erupted in Sudan almost a month ago, ceasefires have come and gone with no appreciable reduction in fighting. Violence has left the air in the capital thick with dust and smoke. Food and water shortages have resulted in looting and attacks on civilians by armed groups in search of provisions.

The former strongman head of state who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity has escaped from prison. The borders are overwhelmed with people trying to escape.

Hundreds have been killed, thousands injured, and hundreds of thousands displaced. One American doctor staying to help treat the wounded was surrounded by a group of men and stabbed to death in front of his family.

Sudan is not only descending into violent chaos, it is on the brink of a full-scale, zero-sum civil war, and the last civil war went on for more than two decades.

I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today to discuss how we respond to the conflict in Sudan. I welcome the long overdue Executive Order issued last week with respect to Sudan and we are all grateful to those who planned and carried out the nighttime rescue operation to evacuate more than 70 people working at our embassy including Ambassador Godfrey. Thankfully, all U.S. Government personnel escaped unharmed.

However, thousands of private American citizens were left to fend for themselves when the violence broke out, to say nothing of millions of Sudanese who now understandably feel abandoned by the international community.

I will not sit here and put the blame on the State Department or the Administration for a foreign policy failure that has been many years in the making. The failed negotiations on the transition to democracy were supported not only by us, but by the African Union, Gulf states, and the United Nations.

Numerous attempts to broker a ceasefire have failed and the international community has yet to mount a robust humanitarian response. Let us be clear. U.S. policy fell short of the challenge. We refused to call a coup a coup after the Sudanese military takeover in 2021.

Instead of imposing sanctions, we put the democratic aspirations of millions of Sudanese in the hands of generals despite evidence of their complicity in and responsibility for gross violations of human rights and significant public corruption.

The Sudanese Armed Forces have a long record of human rights abuses and the Rapid Support Forces, best known to the world as the Janjaweed, committed genocide in Darfur and their leader has been implicated in rapes and massacres and has allied himself with the Wagner Group.

By convincing ourselves that these figures were going to help Sudan transition to a democracy, we neglected the need for accountability. We failed to push hard enough for inclusive civilian participation and we ended up legitimizing and entrenching those with guns at the expense of the Sudanese people's democratic aspirations.

I would like to hear from our witnesses about U.S. policy options to end the conflict, our efforts to rally the international community to jumpstart the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and what steps the Administration is taking to garner international support for collective action to ensure that military leaders stand down and step aside.

I realize sometimes there are no good options, but hope is not a foreign policy strategy. We need to understand how our analysis was so flawed that the State Department failed to draw down its embassy staff or assist American citizens to depart before the violence began.

The United States cannot be blindsided like this. I want to understand what is being done to prevent this in the future.

Now, I realize that if the views of some ends up being the reality, our ability to predict and prepare for situations like we are seeing in Sudan will be dramatically affected because of the potential cuts that are being talked about in discretionary domestic spending.

Well, everything we do at the State Department is domestic discretionary spending. I do not know how we are going to get it better with less.

Under Secretary Nuland, I would like to hear a clear articulation of our short-, medium-, and long-term goals in Sudan and the Horn of Africa as well as the Administration's strategy for achieving them now that we have no diplomatic presence on the ground in Sudan.

Ms. Charles, given the emerging humanitarian catastrophe we need a plan to deliver assistance as quickly as possible to the people of Sudan, to empower civil society voices advocating against all odds and at great personal cost for democracy.

Millions of lives in Sudan and the Horn of Africa are at stake as are our strategic interests in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea corridor. We need to put the democratic transition back on track in Sudan.

With that, let me turn to the ranking member, Senator Risch, for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would certainly concur in your remarks. I think you were a little kinder than I am going to be, but, nonetheless, we have the situation before us.

This is not a happy occasion. It is disappointing we are here today having this hearing. The humanitarian and security catastrophe playing out in Sudan was predictable. This committee has tried to ensure Sudan had the highest levels of attention from the State Department. Sadly, that has not happened.

I concur with the chairman that this is not an easy situation. It is no question that things are difficult there, but we do not have the luxury of just dealing with the easy ones.

More should have been done to protect the Sudanese people from the military junta. We should have done more to warn American citizens and position our diplomatic and humanitarian footprint to respond to the predictable scenario that we all saw unfolding.

We have seen this movie before. As Sudan faces a potentially catastrophic civil war and state collapse like those we have seen in Syria and Libya, urgent leadership by the United States and its allies is required.

Certainly, the State Department is on the front line of this. No one should be surprised that those involved in the Bashir regime's genocide in Darfur 20 years ago refused to relinquish power.

I am concerned the United States continues to partner with the same authoritarian actors in the region that have bargained away Sudan's democratic future in order to secure their own interests.

Even now, we hope current efforts in Saudi Arabia yield a real humanitarian ceasefire, but we must also be very honest with ourselves about the motivations of some of the regional actors.

In the 4 years since Sudan's generals removed dictator Omar Al-Bashir from power, a naive hope toward corrupt military leaders and their foreign backers has driven U.S. policy in Sudan.

This approach has empowered Sudan's strongman while victimizing the Sudanese people and undermining the country's democratic future.

The Biden administration has sanctioned only one Sudanese entity under Global Magnitsky. While President Biden issued an Executive order last week, there were no designations with the announcement. Very disappointing.

The U.S. has also not put its best diplomatic foot forward to deal with the problem. We did not name an ambassador to Sudan for more than 2 years after normalizing relations during a critical time in Sudan's transition. The U.S. embassy in Khartoum has also faced persistent understaffing and leadership challenges.

Congress has spoken in a bipartisan manner with an unmistakable voice on Sudan throughout the post-Bashir transition. Put the Sudanese people first and end the stranglehold of Sudan's security forces on the country.

This Administration, however, does not seem to be listening. During our last Sudan hearing 15 months ago, I called for the Administration to articulate a clear vision for what it wants in Sudan. I am still waiting.

The Administration must change not only the architecture, but also the architects of this policy. We need a policy that empowers the Sudanese people, weakens these generals, shuts off the foreign meddling and finance that empowers them, and leads a coalition of partners committed to putting Sudan's democratic future first.

We must end this cycle of doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, just as the chairman indicated, about how the Administration plans to meet immediate needs in Sudan and make an urgent course correction in its Sudan policy.

Before I close, I would be remiss and I want to express my deep disappointment for your failure to respond to mine and many of my colleagues' questions for the record in a timely manner.

You last testified before this committee on January 26. Then, after that hearing, as is usual, questions for the record were submitted because we have limited times at the hearings.

That was over 100 days ago. I received answers to those questions for the record. Do you know when?

The delay in responding to these questions underscores serious doubts in my mind that the State Department puts any value on communication with Congress and holds no respect for this committee's oversight role.

Some of the questions I submitted to you were about Sudan and now we get an answer over 100 days later and the day before the next hearing on this subject.

I really feel that this demonstrates that the Department is just going through the motions to mollify this committee and continue on its happy way keeping us in the dark.

I expect to receive meaningful explanation of why these questions for the record took over 100 days to complete.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Risch.

Our witnesses today are Ambassador Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and Ms. Sarah Charles, Assistant to the Administrator of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

Under Secretary Nuland has a distinguished 33-year career as a diplomat, rejoining the Department as Under Secretary for Political Affairs in April of 2021. I will not go through all of that history, but suffice it to say that is an incredible career.

Sarah Charles is assistant to the administrator of USAID in charge of the Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs, the U.S. Government's lead for international disaster response.

Before joining the bureau, she was senior director for policy and advocacy for the International Rescue Committee and has worked

at the National Security Council as director of humanitarian affairs.

We thank you both for your participation and your service to our country. I would ask you to summarize your statements in about 5 minutes. Your full statements will be included in the record without objection.

Ambassador Nuland, we will start with you.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE VICTORIA NULAND, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of this committee. We appreciate the opportunity to be with you and exchange views at such a difficult and consequential moment for Sudan.

The third largest nation on the African continent, Sudan holds enormous promise and opportunity. It should be a thriving breadbasket for its people, the region, and the world, but instead it has been plagued, as you both noted, by decades of authoritarianism, economic turmoil, and civil war.

In 2019, the Sudanese people, longing for a different future, led a peaceful protest movement that ended the 30-year reign of a dictator, only to endure a military takeover 2 years later.

Our engagement since has focused on restoring the promise of that 2019 revolution and supporting a civilian-led transition to democracy and civilian rule.

We have worked over the past 18 months with civilian partners in Sudan to build a coalition to lead this effort while simultaneously putting pressure on Sudan's generals to engage seriously in a political process.

Despite the courageous effort by Sudanese civilian leaders and intensive engagement by international actors, which did yield considerable progress since last fall on elements of their own framework for a political agreement, those negotiations, as you know, broke down over the unwillingness of the two military leaders to resolve the last issue which stood in the way of a return to democracy, namely, how the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces would integrate under a unified command structure.

On April 15, we saw months of progress erased overnight. You have seen the images: hundreds of killed in pillaging, looting, armed conflict across the city; food, water, medicine, electricity, telecoms cut off; hundreds of thousands of families displaced or hiding in their homes.

Our first priority, as you noted, was the safety of our people. Over 7 days we consolidated all U.S. personnel at the embassy compound where our military then bravely extracted them by helicopter on April 23 to Ethiopia and onward to Djibouti.

Then, with the help of partners—British, French, Germans, and Saudis—we organized three overland convoys from Khartoum to Port Sudan, transporting more than 700 more people and hundreds of our own people also boarded allied and partner flights.

In total, we facilitated the departure of 2,000 people including 1,300 U.S. citizens and family members, along with U.S. LPRs, lo-

cally employed staff, and nationals from other allied and partner countries.

From the outset we have also worked to silence the guns. Secretary Blinken, Assistant Secretary Molly Phee, our ambassador to Sudan, Anthony Godfrey, and teams across the Department have been tirelessly engaged.

First, with Secretary Blinken's intense personal effort we have secured six sequential short-term ceasefires, which have lessened the fighting and allowed these evacuations and some initial movement of humanitarian aid, and then working intensively with Saudi Arabia and other partners we began on Sunday these pre-negotiations with the warring parties.

To date, the Secretary has made seven separate calls to Generals Burhan and Hemedti to try to silence the guns, jump start this emergency diplomacy, and get talks going. He has also been in touch with African Union Chairperson Faki and leaders across the region and in Europe.

As you know, for the last 3 days starting on Sunday evening, Assistant Secretary Phee and Ambassador Godfrey have led the U.S. delegation to these emergency pre-negotiations that began in Jeddah.

Our goal for these talks has been very narrowly focused, first securing agreement on a declaration of humanitarian principles and then getting a ceasefire that is long enough to facilitate the steady delivery of badly needed services.

If this stage is successful—and I talked to our negotiators this morning, who are cautiously optimistic—it would then enable expanded talks with additional local, regional, and international stakeholders towards a permanent cessation of hostilities and then a return to civilian-led rule as the Sudanese people have demanded for years.

We and our partners continue to make clear to the warring parties led by these two generals that there can be no military solution to this crisis and negotiations are the only way forward.

We have also made clear, as you said, Chairman, through—and Ranking Member—through President Biden's May 4 Executive order to authorize future sanctions that we will hold those responsible for stealing Sudan's future to account.

These new authorities reinforce a consistent message from the U.S. that the world is watching, the fighting has to stop, and will hold those responsible to account.

Meanwhile, we appreciate Saudi Arabia's role hosting these talks and we will continue to work closely with all regional partners including the African Union, IGAD, the Sudan Quad that includes the U.K., to bring this conflict to an end.

Mr. Chairman, if I could, and Mr. Ranking Member, in this context thank you for passing our ambassador to the African—Ambassador designate Stephanie Sullivan for the African Union through this committee and urge your support and help getting her confirmed on the floor.

Despite the many setbacks, we will continue to stand with the Sudanese people in their demands for a peaceful and democratic future. They deserve better.

I thank you, look forward to listening to your questions and, Ranking Member Risch, you are absolutely right. Those questions should not have taken 100 days. It is on me. It will not happen again. I apologize.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nuland follows:]

Prepared Statement of Ms. Victoria Nuland

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to exchange views with you at such a difficult and consequential moment for Sudan.

The third largest nation on the African continent, Sudan holds enormous promise and opportunity.

Rich with natural resources and a home to the Nile River Basin, Sudan should be a thriving breadbasket for its people, the region, and the world.

Instead, it has been plagued by decades of authoritarianism, economic turmoil, and civil war.

In 2019, the Sudanese people, longing for a different future, led a peaceful protest movement that ended the 30-year reign of a dictator . . . only to endure a military takeover just 2 years later.

Our engagement since has focused on restoring the promise of the 2019 revolution and supporting a transition to democracy and civilian rule.

We have worked over the past 18 months with civilian partners in Sudan to build a coalition to lead this effort, while simultaneously putting pressure on Sudan's generals to engage seriously in the political process.

Despite courageous efforts by Sudanese civilian leaders and intensive engagement by international actors that yielded considerable progress since last fall on the elements of the framework political agreement—negotiations ultimately broke down over the unwillingness of the two military leaders to resolve the last issue which stood in the way of a return to democracy: how the Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Armed Forces would be integrated under a unified command structure.

And on April 15, we saw months of progress erased overnight.

The images out of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, are stark:

- hundreds killed in pillaging, looting, and armed conflict across the city;
- food, water, medicine, electricity, and telecoms cut off; and
- hundreds of thousands of families either displaced from their homes, or hiding inside them.

A first priority was the safety of our people.

Over 7 days, we consolidated all U.S. personnel at our Embassy, where our military then bravely extracted them by helicopter on April 23 to Ethiopia and onward to Djibouti—they are now back home with their loved ones.

With the help of partners including the British, French, Germans, Saudis, and others, we facilitated three overland convoys from Khartoum to Port Sudan to evacuate 700 more people; and we evacuated hundreds more on allied and partner flights.

So whether U.S. citizens left aboard a Saudi, Canadian, French, British or any other flagged carrier, we helped coordinate every transport that included known U.S. citizens.

In total we evacuated 2,000 people—the majority of whom are our citizens and their family members, along with U.S. lawful permanent residents, locally employed staff, and nationals from allied and partner countries.

From the outset, we have also worked urgently to silence the guns.

Secretary Blinken, Assistant Secretary Molly Phee, Ambassador Godfrey, and teams across the Department have all been tirelessly engaged:

- First to secure six sequential short-term ceasefires to lessen the fighting and allow the movement of civilians and humanitarian aid;
- Then—working intensively with Saudi Arabia other partners—to initiate pre-negotiations with the warring parties.

To date, the Secretary has made seven separate calls to Generals Burhan and Hemedti to jumpstart this emergency diplomacy and get talks started.

He also called African Union Chairperson Faki and other regional leaders to discuss next steps.

As we sit here today, A/S Phee and Amb. Godfrey are leading the U.S. delegation to these talks that began last Sunday in Jeddah.

We have narrowly scoped the talks to focus on: 1) securing an agreement on a Declaration of Humanitarian Principles; and 2) implementing a long-enough ceasefire to facilitate steady delivery of badly needed services.

If this stage is successful, it would then enable expanded talks with additional local, regional, and international stakeholders toward a permanent cessation of hostilities and civilian-led rule, as the Sudanese people have demanded for years.

We and our partners have made clear to the warring parties that there can be no military solution to this crisis.

Negotiations are the only viable way forward. Compromise will be required.

We have also made clear that the U.S. is prepared to use more coercive measures to hold accountable those responsible for stealing Sudan's future.

On May 4, President Biden issued an Executive Order to authorize future sanctions when and if needed.

These new authorities reinforce a consistent message from the U.S.: the world is watching, the fighting must stop, and we will hold those responsible to account.

Meanwhile, we appreciate Saudi Arabia's role in hosting the current talks, and will continue to work closely with our regional partners—in coordination with the Trilateral Mechanism made up of the UN, African Union, and IGAD (Horn of Africa's multilateral forum) and the Quad (U.S.-UK-Saudi Arabia-UAE)—to bring the conflict to an end.

Despite the many setbacks, we will continue to stand with the Sudanese people in their demands for a peaceful, democratic future. They deserve better.

Thank you and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Charles.

STATEMENT OF SARAH CHARLES, ASSISTANT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. CHARLES. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Sudan and the U.S. Government's response.

It has been less than 1 month since the hostilities between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces erupted, but the impact on the people of Sudan has already been devastating.

Ongoing violence has led to the death of hundreds, injuries to thousands, and destruction of critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services.

Attacks against humanitarian staff and the looting of humanitarian assets forced many of our partners to temporarily suspend hundreds of lifesaving programs and relocate their staff, impacting millions of people who relied on these programs to meet basic needs.

Before the conflict, almost 16 million people in Sudan, more than one-third of the population, required humanitarian assistance. We do not yet know the full extent to which humanitarian conditions have worsened since April 15, but their early reports are grim. An estimated 70 percent of hospitals across conflict-affected areas are not operational. More than 3 million women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence.

More than 19 million people could be food insecure in the next 3–6 months if fighting continues.

More than 700,000 people have been internally displaced and more than 170,000 people have crossed into neighboring countries, meaning that the ramifications of this conflict do not end at Sudan's borders.

They stretch into the region, compounding existing humanitarian needs across several countries. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Sudan, and while the operating context has changed, our commitment to providing assistance to the people of Sudan has not.

On April 23, USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced the deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team, or DART, to the region to lead and coordinate the U.S. Government's humanitarian response.

While some of our humanitarian programs are temporarily suspended, as of yesterday 19 of our longstanding partners with strong national networks continue to operate, albeit with limited capacity and dwindling prepositioned supplies.

Since the beginning of the conflict, national staff, neighborhood committees, and other civil society organizations have shown tremendous bravery, responding to the needs in their communities amid incredible risk and uncertainty.

One of our partners has been dispatching a network of midwives across Khartoum to manage obstetric emergencies and support home births amid airstrikes, gunfire, and rubble when it has been too dangerous for pregnant women to travel to any of the few operational hospitals.

Their bravery and commitment to the Sudanese people has helped save lives and bring new life into the world in otherwise grim circumstances.

Despite incremental progress, the insecure operating environment, lack of access, limited supply levels, inaccessibility of cash, unreliable electricity and telecoms will impair their ability to sustain this limited delivery of assistance in the coming weeks.

Looking forward, we are working closely with our partners to respond now even as we assess additional humanitarian needs. While rapid assessments are ongoing, we are working with partners now to use existing programs and prepositioned stocks to scale up and pivot emergency programming where conditions allow.

We are also working closely with our colleagues at the Department of State and the United Nations to advocate in Jeddah and elsewhere for the conditions that will allow for the scaling up of humanitarian operations, including overland routes and air bridges from neighboring countries.

We are also asking government entities in Sudan and in the neighboring countries to decrease bureaucratic barriers that limit relief organizations' ability to respond to the crisis at scale, for example, by expediting customs procedures, issuing visa waivers for aid workers, and waiving requirements issued by the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission, or HAC, to fast track humanitarian activities.

For many years the HAC has chronically hampered humanitarian action and delayed lifesaving assistance in Sudan. These restrictions were egregious before, all the more so now.

Amid ongoing attacks on aid workers and assets, including the one that Chairman Menendez just mentioned, we remain focused on the safety and security of our humanitarian partners. To date, fighting has resulted in the tragic death of at least six USAID partner staff and injuries to others.

In conclusion, this conflict is the culmination of decades of impunity for crimes committed across Sudan, impunity that has affected our own staff when the murderer of USAID employees John Granville and Abdelrahman Abbas Rahama, who were killed in Khartoum in 2008, was released from prison in January.

The Sudanese people have been demanding an end to injustice and impunity for decades and we stand with them. The humanitarian crisis in Sudan will continue to deteriorate if humanitarian access and the delivery of assistance to millions of vulnerable people continue to be limited by the ongoing conflict and the actions of the parties.

By seeking a resolution to the conflict and commitments from the parties involved to uphold humanitarian principles, we can scale up lifesaving programs across Sudan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Charles follows:]

Prepared Statement of Ms. Sarah Charles

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Sudan and the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) response.

It has been less than 1 month since hostilities between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted, but the impact on the people of Sudan has already been devastating—exacerbating an already severe national food security crisis. Ongoing violence has led to the death of hundreds of people, injury to thousands, destruction of critical infrastructure, and disruption of service delivery of any kind. As people took shelter from bombardment and bullets, they depleted their food stocks, medicine supplies, money reserves, and other resources, leading to rising hunger levels and deteriorating health for many. Attacks against humanitarian staff and the looting of humanitarian assets forced many of our partners to temporarily suspend hundreds of life-saving humanitarian programs and evacuate their staff—impacting the millions of people who relied on these programs to meet their basic needs.

Until the violence comes to an end and the humanitarian community is able to safely resume operations, the crisis in Sudan will continue to rapidly deteriorate. This is why we urge the SAF and RSF to commit to a permanent ceasefire, unfettered humanitarian access, and the principled delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations across the country.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Before the conflict, almost 16 million people in Sudan—more than one-third of the population—required humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs; of those, 10 million required food assistance. Because humanitarian staff have not been able to safely move around Sudan to conduct needs assessments, we do not know the full extent to which humanitarian conditions have worsened since April 15. However, we predict that ongoing shortages of food, safe drinking water, medicine, and fuel, coupled with limited access to basic services and care have significantly increased vulnerability for many people, particularly in Khartoum and the surrounding areas.

The data we have been able to obtain from inside Sudan are grim: an estimated 70 percent of hospitals across conflict-affected areas of Sudan are not operational, cutting off critical care for people caught in the conflict. In addition to dwindling medical supplies, infrastructure damage, and unreliable access to power, medical facilities and personnel have also been devastated by at least 25 unconscionable attacks since the conflict began.

Further, the World Food Program (WFP) estimates that the number of acutely food insecure people across Sudan is expected to increase to a total of more than 19 million in the next 3–6 months if the current conflict continues; the highest increases are expected in West Darfur, West Kordofan, Blue Nile, Red Sea, and North Darfur. WFP also estimates that nearly 1.3 million people did not receive food as-

sistance in April because of the conflict. While WFP resumed operations in Sudan on May 1, millions of people are in danger of not receiving assistance if fighting continues.

The conflict has also led to widespread displacement: since April 15, more than 700,000 people have been internally displaced across Sudan, and more than 170,000 people have crossed into neighboring countries according to the International Organization for Migration. The UN estimates that as many as 860,000 refugees and returnees could flee into neighboring countries as the conflict progresses, meaning that the ramifications of this conflict do not end at Sudan's borders—they stretch out into the region, compounding existing humanitarian needs across several countries.

USAID is also concerned by reports of protection violations, including gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls, particularly among those displaced by violence who are seeking shelter and safety. The UN reports more than 3 million women and girls are at risk of GBV in Sudan, including due to the conflict-related disruption of health and protection services.

USAID'S RESPONSE

The UN's Humanitarian Response Plan for Sudan requested \$1.7 billion to support 12.5 million of the most vulnerable people in 2023, but as of May 9, it was less than 16 percent funded. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Sudan, providing more than \$162.5 million in humanitarian assistance from USAID to date in fiscal year 2023. And while the operating context has changed, USAID's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Sudan has not, and we stand by them through this difficult time and will work to address rising humanitarian needs caused by the conflict, in partnership with humanitarian actors and other donors.

On April 23, USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced the deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to the region to lead and coordinate the U.S. Government's humanitarian response in Sudan. Composed of disaster experts from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, the DART is currently based in Nairobi, Kenya, and is working with the international community and our partners to identify priority needs and scale up urgently needed assistance to communities affected by conflict in Sudan, as the security situation allows. USAID also activated a Washington, DC-based Response Management Team to support the DART in leading and coordinating USAID programs and the broader U.S. Government humanitarian response.

While many of USAID's humanitarian programs in Sudan are temporarily suspended, USAID's long-standing humanitarian partners with strong national networks in health, nutrition, protection, agriculture, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) are operating with extremely limited capacity and using dwindling prepositioned supplies in pockets of Gedaref, Blue Nile, White Nile, South and West Kordofans, Khartoum, and the Greater Darfur region. Since April 15, they have relied on national staff to continue life-saving activities, many of whom have also been forced to shelter in place or evacuate their homes due to violence. Since the beginning of the conflict, national staff, neighborhood committees, and other civil society organizations have shown tremendous bravery responding to needs in their communities amid incredible risk and uncertainty.

In just one example, one USAID partner has been dispatching a network of midwives across Khartoum to manage obstetric emergencies and support home births in the midst of airstrikes, gunfire, and rubble. Their staff have also provided critical health care services and distributed supplies to support safe births for women and girls affected by the conflict. Their bravery and commitment to the humanitarian mandate has helped save lives and bring new life into the world in otherwise grim circumstances.

Despite incremental progress, the insecure operating environment, lack of access to safely deliver assistance, dwindling supply levels, inaccessibility of cash, and unreliable electricity and telecommunications services will impair their ability to sustain this limited delivery of assistance in the coming weeks. These factors will also continue to hinder the broader humanitarian community's ability to resume normal operations in the short term.

LOOKING FORWARD

The United States continues to urge both the SAF and RSF to take in consideration the interests of the Sudanese nation and its people and actively engage in the talks towards a ceasefire and end to the conflict in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Ending

the conflict will help reduce suffering among the people of Sudan and allow for life-saving humanitarian assistance to reach those in affected areas.

Amid ongoing attacks on aid workers and assets, USAID is also keenly focused on ensuring the safety and security of our humanitarian staff and partners in country and continues to prioritize this issue in conversations with all key stakeholders. To date, fighting has resulted in the tragic deaths of at least six USAID partner staff and injuries to others. Armed actors have raided humanitarian housing compounds, offices, and warehouses around the country, and looted food and humanitarian supplies, including relief items, equipment, and vehicles, raising international humanitarian law concerns.

USAID is working closely with our colleagues at the Department of State and the UN to advocate for increased humanitarian access and the scaling up of humanitarian operations in Sudan, including by exploring overland routes and air bridges from neighboring countries and within Sudan to facilitate the safe passage of goods and personnel. However, these plans will only succeed if the SAF and RSF commit to upholding international humanitarian law and respect humanitarian personnel and assets. To fully take advantage of any opening of humanitarian access, we are also asking the UN to support a robust scale up for the response, and in particular to support local responders.

In order to further facilitate humanitarian operations, USAID is asking the government entities in Sudan and its neighboring countries to decrease administrative and bureaucratic barriers that limit relief organizations' ability to respond to this crisis at scale—for example, by expediting border and customs procedures for quick clearances for all humanitarian goods, issuing visa waivers for humanitarian workers deploying to support the response, and waiving the bureaucratic requirements issued by the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in order to fast-track humanitarian activities. For many years, the HAC imposed strict terms of engagement with populations in need, which has chronically hampered humanitarian action and delayed life-saving assistance in Sudan. These restrictions were egregious before, and are all the more so now.

USAID is working closely with its partners to respond now, even as we assess additional humanitarian needs arising from the conflict and resulting widespread displacement. While assessments are ongoing to determine these needs, we are working with partners to use existing programs and resources to scale up and pivot emergency programming where conditions allow. For example, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has—in collaboration with WFP—been providing fuel to maintain the central medical cold chain in Sudan, which preserves millions of vaccines and insulin doses. Similarly, BHA staff in Sudan's neighboring countries are working with existing partners to pivot humanitarian programs in response to the influx of returnees and refugees. For example, humanitarian organizations are moving in-kind food, health commodities, shelter support, and WASH supplies in areas of South Sudan with heightened displacement.

CONCLUSION

This conflict is a culmination of decades of impunity for crimes committed across Sudan—impunity that has affected our own staff, when the murderer of USAID employees John Granville and Abdelrahman Abbas Rahama, who were killed in Khartoum in 2008, was released from prison in January. The Sudanese people have been demanding an end to injustice and impunity for decades, and we stand with them.

The humanitarian crisis in Sudan will continue to worsen if humanitarian access and the provision of assistance to millions of vulnerable people continue to be limited by the ongoing conflict. USAID is committed to the resumption of humanitarian operations when it is safe for our partners to do so and will continue to work with all stakeholders in support of this goal. We owe it to children such as Saleema, who receives treatment for acute malnutrition from one of our partners so that she can grow to be healthy and strong, and we owe it to the more than 50,000 children in Sudan who have lost access to this life-saving treatment due to violence. By seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict and commitments from those involved to uphold humanitarian principles, the humanitarian community can restart life-saving nutrition, food assistance, health, protection, and other programs across Sudan. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify; I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both for your testimony. We will start a series of 5-minute rounds.

Madam Secretary, let me preface what I am about to say. I understand you got a big portfolio umbrella. Some of the issues that we are going to be discussing here are more specific to your col-

league, who is the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and I get it, but since you are the representative of the State Department here, take my questions in that spirit.

There have been published reports that are highly critical of the Administration's Sudan policy. Among the things that it says is that there was memos written and circulated within the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs warning of U.S.—risk of current U.S. policy in Sudan and listing potential scenarios that could emerge in the rivalry between Burhan and Hemedti including full-scale conflict. They were heavily redacted and never got to the Secretary's desk.

It has been noted that Burhan and Hemedti were amassing forces around Khartoum and that at lower levels statements were being made about that as a reality of a real challenge to the possibility of conflict breaking out.

There is talks about from several dozen, both officials and advocates—Sudanese activists—who describe a deeply flawed U.S. policy process on brokering talks in Sudan in the run-up to the conflict monopolized by a select few officials who shut the rest of the interagency team out of deliberations and quieted a chorus dissent over the direction of U.S.-Sudan policy.

It goes on to say from the outset there was a consistent and willful dismissal of views that questioned whether U.N. talks would be a recipe for success or for failure. Those warnings were ignored and instead the U.S. built “a dream palace of a political process that has now crashed down on the people of Sudan.”

I have noted on several occasions that Assistant Secretary of State Phee seems to be—have aversions to sanctions as any tool at any time for any purpose.

That is a problem because I do not know how else you induce, especially to entities—to individuals like this to act when you have—I do not know what you have to offer, at the end of the day, what consequence they face.

Lastly, civil society seems to be cut out and disillusioned activists have lost faith in the United States. That is all bad news, none of which is responded to in any of the testimony that we have heard here today.

Can you take a minute or so to talk to me about all of that?

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start by saying that when the leader Hamdok was thrown out in October of 2021, we did institute harsh penalties against Sudan, which were controversial internally, given how strong they were.

If you recall, after that move we designated the Central Reserve Police. We also suspended all bilateral aid and debt relief and support. There were questions internally whether that was the right thing to do because, of course, some of that has implications for the Sudanese people.

The goal of those moves, which were made on the Secretary's watch and this Administration's watch, were to shock the parties into getting serious about a broad framework for transition. Thereafter, we supported the Sudanese's own framework that emerged, which was led, largely, by the civilians.

Now, you could ask the question whether there was a broad enough community of civilians involved, but this was a process designed by the Sudanese themselves and steadily used pressure on the generals and the parties to try to work through all of the issues getting back to a transition.

As I said to you, yes, we saw the generals keeping their own options open. They did not put all of their forces into garrison.

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Ms. NULAND. However, that structure did work through many of the issues preparatory to a return to civilian rule. We were left with one issue, which was whether these two generals would integrate their forces because you cannot have one more—more than one army in a country at a time.

There was incredible effort made, including by the Secretary himself, to offer options for the two of them for how these forces could be integrated various different ways not just by us, but by the African Union, by our partners and then—but, as I said, unfortunately, they chose the path of war, not the path of integration. At various points during these talks since October and onward, we have seen tensions spike between these two generals.

At every previous point with our partners, with the Sudanese civilians, we were able to tamp things down and get them back to the table. That was not successful on April 15.

That said, throughout this period we had been warning American citizens not to travel to Sudan. We had been strengthening our own internal procedures should things get violent again.

Look, it is a tragedy yet again. Can we get them—this process restarted? We will see. Will it be the same process? No, it will have to be broader, but that is where we are.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Well, look, I am going to close by simply saying it seems to me that we need to have a process that, number one, uses our intelligence—and the bureau at the State Department is pretty good.

They have been on the mark sometimes better than some of our other intelligence agencies and we need to red tag or red team, however you might refer it, some of our presumptions because you cannot work on everything that is going to be the rosier thing and then hope that it will turn out that way buttressed by some hard work, but, nonetheless, you have to have other availabilities to think through what is the process of consequences that it does not work out as you aspire for it to.

I am deeply concerned that we do that on more than one occasion and we find ourselves with the consequences of not doing so.

I think that is incredibly important for the Department to internalize and to think about because I am deeply concerned about the information that exists.

I know that I used to deal with Senator Coons as he was trying to find a pathway forward and I was insisting on taking care of the victims of terrorism.

Sanctions ended up proving the ability to get us there in the right way, but for it I do not think that we would have taken care of those victims.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I know you think the Chairman's statement—some of them were kind of harsh—but I can assure you that there is worse stuff out there than that. You have probably read it yourself.

Let me say I do understand. I think everybody understands. This is a very, very difficult situation, but I think it needs more attention than what it is getting.

This morning *Foreign Policy* published an article called "How the U.S. Fumbled Sudan's Hopes for Democracy," written by Robbie Gramer. Have you had a chance to review that?

Ms. NULAND. I have, Ranking Member.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit that for the record, please.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The information referred to above can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of this hearing.]

Senator RISCH. I think it is a good discussion of the issues and the problems and how we got here. To be honest with you, I do not see how we move forward with the current situation the way it is in Sudan with two warring generals.

Now, most people agree that it is not a full blown civil war at this point, but history tells us what is going to happen and that is it is going to move towards a full blown civil war and, of course, that country's in difficult enough straits.

Let me ask and, first of all—the Africa portfolio is a tough portfolio. There is no question about that and there is all kinds of stuff that has got to be done.

As you know, I have got staff that is focused on that and they try to work with you as much as you will permit, but this is an area that we have been focused on for some time and it is just not working.

I guess the question I would have for you is have you got—give me some hope here. I think sitting down with the two generals, again, as we have done a number of times—we all look back to the time when our envoys sat down with them and they promised nothing was going to happen. On the airplane on the way back they found out that they were conducting a coup.

This just—it seems to me that we have got to do things different than what we are doing. Give me some hope here. What are your thoughts about a bigger movement outside the box than what we are talking about, sitting down again and saying, will you guys be good guys? Oh, yeah, we will be good guys and then—and then away we go. Give me some hope.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Ranking Member.

First of all, we cannot get anything done in Sudan. We cannot even restore a process in which civilians are participating until the violence stops and we get some aid and so that is why these Jeddah talks are narrowly scoped and you have to work with the guys with the guns.

The fact that both of them sent delegations, that was not easy to get done either and we are, as I said, cautiously optimistic that this first installment on getting humanitarian support in will allow

us to get going in coming days. Then the ceasefire has to be more durable.

We have the sanctions tool now that can allow us to continue to pressure them. Frankly, we agree that we are going to have to have a broader process. It is going to have to include more Sudanese voices.

When you have a population that is either largely displaced or hiding in their houses, we are going to have to get to enough peace to do that.

The Sudanese people are the bravest and strongest voices in this. They do not want to live this way any further, and I would say that under Ambassador Godfrey and with the support of Assistant Secretary Phee we have far broader connectivity and connection with voices throughout society who need to be part of this.

Even from the talks in Jeddah, Ambassador Godfrey is staying in contact with Sudanese civilians about how we would move forward, make this tent bigger, support them with international assistance as well as carrots and sticks if we can get there.

I want to just go back, if I may, Chairman, to something you said about the Africa Bureau. I oversee the African Bureau. I take responsibility for this as well for Secretary Blinken.

This Sudan policy has been very difficult. I would say that the debate within the bureau, the debate within the building, the debate within the interagency, which I have participated in many times, has been robust and difficult.

We have never taken any options off the table, but we were, as I said, believing that this framework that the Sudanese themselves put forward was making progress and we had the sanctions at the ready if it was not, and then we had this choice by the generals.

I just want you to know that this is a secretary who supports rigorous debate inside the building and I support that as well and, frankly, we have had it all the way through this crisis.

Let me just underscore that and we will continue to. As you know, he cares deeply about this one and is regularly bringing people up to hear different views, including through the dissent channel.

Senator RISC. Secretary, you, yourself, and the chairman underscored and I did, too, about all the problems in Africa and the difficulty there.

Has any consideration been given to getting an envoy or somebody who is specifically focused on Sudan? We had that before. We all know that the ambassador was out of the country when the last blow up happened.

It just seems to me it needs more attention, more individual attention, because as you have noted, you got a whole lot on your plate and so do the other people that are working in the—at the Africa desk. What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. NULAND. We are obviously looking at all the options as things move forward, but Ambassador Godfrey is central to all of this.

Until we can get him back into Sudan, he will continue to work both on the Sudan internal conversations and, as I said, he is in contact with a broad cross section of folks on the ground.

He is also likely to play a stronger role in some of the regional diplomacy and global diplomacy that we need on Sudan. That is how we are thinking about it at the moment.

As you know, our envoy for the Horn, Ambassador Hammer, has been focused primarily on Ethiopia and the GERD, but he will also play a reinforcing role as necessary on this, which is within his mandate.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. My time is up. I am going to have some more questions for the record. I hope that I do not have to wait till the leaves turn to get an answer on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Just a comment.

You mentioned civil society. Civil society does not feel like they are in this. As a matter of fact they feel that the two generals have dictated that they have to be out in order for them to talk. That is fundamentally wrong.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. First, let me thank you for your service. I want to follow up first on Senator Risch's point about our capacity here.

The Khartoum mission has always been characterized as historically difficult to staff so one of the challenges that we have had is do we have adequate—did we have adequate personnel in our missions in order to deal with these challenges.

That is an issue I want to talk about generally, not necessarily today, but we really do need to figure out how we can staff these challenging missions with adequate resources to have the attention we need to avoid conflicts.

I want to talk about the Americans that still are in Sudan. We are—we understand that we were able to get those who serve in our mission safely out of Sudan. There are many other Americans that are in Sudan today.

Do we have an estimate of the numbers, particularly those that are interested in leaving Sudan? The circumstances there are certainly anything but certain as to what is going to happen as far as safety. What is our game plan on helping Americans?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Cardin, when the conflict began on April 15, we had connectivity with about 5,000 Americans who had registered with us in one form or another.

That enabled us to push out messages, I think, 12 times so far about various options for leaving the country, traveling on flights with allies, or this overland convoy. That is what resulted in our being able to get about 1,300 of them out.

We are in contact with a number of them who are continuing to weigh their options, but as we have Americans who are more ready now than they were at the time that we were doing these overland convoys to get out, we are giving them advice on various ways that they can do that, routes that are considered more safe.

Were we to have a critical mass, a larger number that wanted to come out, we would look again at other options, but at the moment our sense is that the majority of the Americans who have stayed in Sudan have stayed for either reasons of family or work or history. We are in contact with a large number of them still.

Senator CARDIN. Do we have an estimate as to how many Americans are interested in leaving Sudan that are there today?

Ms. NULAND. When I asked this question of our consular folk yesterday, they felt quite comfortable that as we are getting, frankly, in small handfuls, people making a decision now to come out who did not want to come out when a week or two ago we are able to accommodate them on transit.

That situation changes every day as people evaluate their personal situation and we will stay in touch.

Senator CARDIN. The notifications that you are talking about, could you just explain what notifications were given to Americans, I guess, after April 15?

Ms. NULAND. As I said, first of all, just to lay the predicate that the travel guidance to Americans has been since October 21, that they should not travel to Sudan—if they do travel to Sudan that they should register with the embassy.

We had about 5,000 Americans registered with the embassy, as I said. That enabled us in a much more modern and efficient way to send over 12 messages to them in the last 2 weeks offering them various options. We use text. We use WhatsApp. We use email. We use the contact information that they give us.

The registration form that we are now using asks for multiple ways to contact including family at home, which has allowed us to be more complete this time than we might have been in the past.

Senator CARDIN. It sounds like you are—have some confidence that we can get information to those who want to leave Sudan as to the opportunities that are available on different options that you are in contact. Is that fair to say?

Ms. NULAND. That is absolutely right and, frankly, we invite any of you who are hearing from constituents, et cetera, about people who we have not captured by our system please send them our way.

Senator CARDIN. How confident—let me ask this, if I might, to Ms. Charles. How confident are you about us being able to get humanitarian assistance into Sudan? You mentioned about the midwives, but do we have a network that is reliable to try to get help in?

Ms. CHARLES. Currently, 19 of our 33 preexisting humanitarian partners are operational in some capacity, although at a much more limited capacity than they were.

We have a lot of supplies that are flowing into Port Sudan right now, including more than 30,000 metric tons of U.S.-sourced in-kind commodities that are in the—anchored in the Suez right now and one of the key elements of those talks in Jeddah right now is the kind of security arrangements that would allow those supplies to come in and come in at scale and be distributed in a way that is more reliable.

Even right now we have worked with our partners, authorized our partners to use preexisting stocks in-country to respond where they can.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Ricketts.

Senator RICKETTS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ambassador, for being here.

I want to talk about the Americans that were in Sudan, as well. Help me understand, because it seems to me that once again the

Biden administration was caught flat-footed by the events that were developing, similar to Afghanistan, that this changed in a way that you did not anticipate, and what were the steps you were taking—what plans you had in place to be able to help Americans.

If I understand correctly, the fighting started on April 15. You evacuated our embassy on the 22nd, but the overland route did not start until April 28 or 29th in that area.

Tell me—help me, because Britain evacuated 1,573 people by air, France and Germany over 1,700 people by air, yet initially we were told that the security situation made it so that it was too dangerous to be able to evacuate Americans while other nations were evacuating their people and then days later you are organizing a ground convoy instead of an air convoy.

Did you not do contingency planning with regard to this? Why did it take so long to be able to start evacuating Americans out?

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator Ricketts, and good to see you on this committee.

Let me break it down in time and space. As I said, first of all, we had in place a broad warden system that captured about 5,000 Americans so we were able to push messages to them.

We initially, for those Americans who could get to the airport, because one of the reasons that we did our first embassy—our embassy evacuation at the embassy grounds was in those days between the U.S. evacuation by helicopter and our allies beginning to fly into the airport, the airport was too dangerous.

By the time the airport was more safe—and I can talk to you in another setting about how that was enabled with U.S. support and help—we were able to put Americans who could get to the airport on allied flights.

U.K., Germans, others began taking Americans who could get to the airport, but a number of them still could not do that, which is why we determined that arranging an alternate route over land would provide another option not only for our citizens, but for other countries.

As our allies began flying, enabled by us, I will say, we also provided the second route for those who could not get to the airport. Seven hundred over land by the land convoy, but in total 1,300 Americans, some of them who took the allied flights, some of them who took our land route.

Senator RICKETTS. What I hear you saying, and correct me if I am wrong, is that the news reports saying that while other nations like France, Britain, Germany were able to evacuate their citizens by air, the United States had coordinated with them to evacuate people by air and we were going to take the overland route and would take their citizens.

The media was really misstating what was going on, that we had a plan here where they were going to do the air, we were going to do the overland. Because the reports I read made it seem like the United States had no plan to evacuate people by air and that we did this overland route that happened on April 28 or 29th, much—almost 2 weeks after the fighting started.

Is that accurate that you were actually—the media got it all wrong and what is going on here is America did—took the overland

route and the other allies took Americans out through the air route? Is that what you are saying is what happened?

Ms. NULAND. Yes. It was a division of labor, if I may say, after—when the airport first opened where allies were doing the flying, Americans were going on those flights if they could get to the airport—

Senator RICKETTS. About how many were—

Ms. NULAND. —and we were doing the land route and both we and allies were getting—

Senator RICKETTS. How about—about how many Americans went out on the flights?

Ms. NULAND. If you do the math, we got 1,300 Americans out and 700 whereby—I do not know how many. More Americans got out on allied flights, I think, than got out on the land route because the math would lead to that. Probably 700 Americans got out on allied flights and we are grateful to them for that.

Senator RICKETTS. Now, was this a plan in place that you had prior to April 15 working with the allied nations? Had you done contingency planning that if the generals started fighting here is what we were going to do to evacuate Americans?

Ms. NULAND. We do continual planning with our allies and partners, largely, based at our military commands—and we can do a classified briefing for you if that would be helpful—for all high-threat posts and various contingencies.

With regard to this decision on the division of labor, it had to do with various concerns about who was best positioned to do what at the time and it was negotiated and arranged in real time at AFRICOM in Djibouti as well as in AFRICOM and Stuttgart with our allies.

Senator RICKETTS. Okay. Thank you, Ambassador.

Mr. Chairman, thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chair Menendez and Ranking Member Risch, and thank you for the full committee's attention to this difficult, urgent challenge.

Under Secretary Nuland, Assistant to the Administrator Charles, thank you for your testimony and your focus on this, a vast country the size of Alaska with 45 million people that is teetering on the brink of an all-out civil war.

We could be on the verge of a dramatic large-scale humanitarian crisis or we could, depending on the outcome of these tense preliminary negotiations in Jeddah, see a turning back towards some hope for stability.

As you know, I worked hard with other members of this committee. Senator Van Hollen and I went to Khartoum to meet with the then civilian-led government and Prime Minister Hamdok and to urge General Burhan and others to continue supporting a transition of a civilian government.

A subsequent coup and then a very difficult period of negotiations has left us in a place of real, I think, difficulty and desperation.

We cannot allow the civilian leadership of the groups that led the brave uprising that overthrew Omar Al-Bashir to be shoved aside and I appreciate, Under Secretary, your early comment that we

need a broader process and we need to implement the President's Executive order.

Help me understand how we will do both of these. How do we engage the civilian leadership and empower them in the next step of this process and would you welcome legislative action here to give you more tools to target individual sanctions?

I respect that the Administration took tough actions in terms of suspending bilateral aid, suspending debt relief, and I think that had real impact on leaders.

There are critics who say that in the absence of targeted individual sanctions there is the continuation of a sense of impunity that in some ways came from Omar Al-Bashir never being successfully prosecuted by the ICC and decades of widespread corruption and oppression.

I introduced the *Sudan Democracy Act* last year to reflect the urgent need to hold these military leaders accountable. Would you support legislation at this point or welcome additional support for sanctions and how do we broaden this process?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Coons, let me first start by thanking you for your indefatigable personal diplomacy on our hardest challenges in Africa, including your willingness with Senator Van Hollen to roll up your sleeves and get to Sudan and talk to the generals. It makes a difference and we appreciate the partnership that we have on that.

Let me say that we have got to get to a situation where we can engage the civilians again. Can we do that? Do we have to wait till we can do that from Khartoum?

Can we begin assuming we can do the most urgent, which is get the humanitarian aid in and silence or lessen the guns? Can we start to do that in a more 21st century way with video meetings, et cetera? I think that remains to be seen.

I do know, as I said at the beginning, that Ambassador Godfrey is trying to cast even as he works the talks in Jeddah as wide a net to see what people are wanting.

This has to be a process that is broadly representative of the desires of the people of Sudan and the 2019 revolution, but we welcome thoughts you have there.

We are beginning—we are doing the work. We had done it already, but now that we have the Executive order we are doing the work to look at appropriate targets in various categories, particularly if we cannot get these generals to allow the humanitarian aid in and put their guns down.

With regard to legislation, let me get a little bit more information from our negotiators after this round is over and come back to you, if we may.

Senator COONS. We will look forward to prompt input.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you.

Senator COONS. I do think—I understand in this moment focusing on the commanders of these two armed forces that are battling it out literally in the streets of Khartoum, but we have to be able to find a way to include in this conversation not just regional actors, but the Sudanese people themselves and their legitimate leaders.

If I might, because I have just a few moments, Assistant to the Administrator Charles, do you have the resources you need?

I am concerned about the looting of humanitarian storehouses, about the deaths of humanitarian workers. Many of your partners, our partners, are still willing to take on this very difficult and dangerous duty.

What additional resources and support do you need and are we doing enough to ask our regional and global partners to also be engaged, given the scale of the humanitarian need in other crises around the region and the world?

Ms. CHARLES. Many competing needs right now around the globe and our ability to sustain a robust response in Sudan is going to be very challenged.

Even before this crisis, last year we knew that Sudan was one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to Russia's war in Ukraine because of how dependent it was on wheat imports and so we had already tried to scale up our assistance in Sudan and it was already going to be hard to sustain that this year, given competing demands.

We are definitely pressing other donors. We were pleased to see the Saudis announce \$100 million last week, but we want to see that delivered to partners that can actually deliver on the ground.

Senator COONS. Thank you both. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to touch on something that has been quite disturbing to me.

On January 20, 2021, this Administration was presented with a great opportunity. Sudan had just become party to the Abraham Accords.

The Abraham Accords presented an opportunity to develop the economy of Sudan in a new way. There was an opportunity there to expand the economic opportunities for the people of Sudan and to stabilize the region.

For months, the Biden administration would not even refer to the term or use the term Abraham Accords. On May of 2021—May 18, 2021, then White House press secretary Jen Psaki demonstrated the contempt that the White House had for the Abraham Accords when she told reporters the following, and I want to quote this: “Aside from putting together a peace proposal that was dead on arrival, we do not think they,” meaning the prior administration, “did anything constructive to really bring an end to the long-standing conflict in the Middle East.”

That is why I sent President Biden a letter on May 19, 2021, and I asked him to confirm whether he even supported the Abraham Accords.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to present this letter for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The information referred to above can be found in the “Additional Material Submitted for the Record” section at the end of this hearing.]

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What is worse, though, is that we recently saw China advance what I would call an anti-Abraham Accords deal when you had the chief diplomat of China negotiate a deal in the Middle East between Saudi Arabia and its adversary, Iran.

What I would have much preferred to have seen happen would have been to see our own Secretary of State negotiating a deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel furthering the Abraham Accords. I think we have missed a huge opportunity.

Let us turn to the American citizens in Sudan right now. So far, Ambassador Nuland, at least two American citizens have already been killed. The intelligence community assesses that the conflict is likely to be protracted, and they are saying little prospect for negotiation.

Senator Cardin and I just sent a private letter to Secretary Blinken urging the Department to take all necessary steps to protect the lives of U.S. persons that remain in Sudan, particularly as the security situation deteriorates.

I would like to go back to the conversation you had with Senator Ricketts just a minute ago. When I served as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, I understood very clearly the State Department's foremost responsibility is the safety and security of the American citizens in the nation.

Where I was serving and as ambassador there, I worked very closely with both civilian and military leaders to revise and update the plan that I needed to be in a position to evacuate over 60,000 American citizens should that need arise.

Secretary Nuland, under what conditions would the Biden administration implement the civilian evacuation plan—the non-combatant evacuation operational plan in Sudan to bring the remaining American citizens that are home in Sudan?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Hagerty, just to—we did talk about this a little bit before you were able to join us. We had in total 5,000 Americans registered with the embassy. We were able throughout this conflict to push repeated messages to them requesting information about who wanted to leave.

About half of them left on allied aircraft. The other half left on—who wanted to go—some 1,300 total left on ground transport that we organized.

We are in touch on a weekly basis, daily basis, with those who remained for a variety of reasons that you know well, mixed families—

Senator HAGERTY. Yes.

Ms. NULAND. —lives built in Sudan.

Senator HAGERTY. I heard that conversation with Senator Ricketts, but what I am asking specifically is that communication—is this process part of the NEO plan that has been designed?

Ms. NULAND. Yes. Yes.

Senator HAGERTY. Do you have a NEO plan in place?

Ms. NULAND. Of course.

Senator HAGERTY. Are you prepared to exercise that plan further and are you—do have the resources and the necessary capabilities to do that if it is necessary to go in and get the remaining American citizens out who want—again, who, as you say, desire to leave?

Ms. NULAND. As we evaluate the options for Americans and we are continuing to get out Americans who want to go, if there is a critical mass, we will evaluate whether we need to do more.

Senator HAGERTY. I think it is just absolutely critical that we be prepared to execute this. After seeing what happened in Afghanistan I think the American public was shocked.

We do not want to see another failure like this and I think we are hearing—my office is hearing a great deal of concern about the American citizens that are left behind.

Thank you.

Ms. NULAND. I would also, Senator, invite you if you have particular Americans you are concerned about, please send them our way and we will work with them.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, Madam Under Secretary, great to see you and it is great to have you and our key representatives from USAID here today, and thank you for your efforts both to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance as well as try to make the ceasefire hold so we can build on that.

I do want to start by thanking you and your colleagues at the State Department, Assistant Secretary Molly Phee as well as the folks at the Consular Affairs divisions for helping get Americans out who wanted to get out, including every Marylander who has contacted our office who wanted to exit Sudan or have their relatives get out of Sudan, including an 89-year-old who escaped through the Egyptian border crossing.

I want to thank you because everyone we have heard from has been listened to and had their needs met.

Let me just turn to the current state of the peace—well, the ceasefire negotiations. If you could talk a little bit more about the role of the UAE and Saudi Arabia here.

I understand that Senator Coons referenced a trip that we took to Sudan in 2021 where we met with many of these players. I know there will be more time to evaluate this as we go forward, but my takeaway from that trip, which we shared from—shared with folks at the State Department is that we probably should have made a choice then to isolate Hemedti.

That is my view. He is a war criminal. We know about his history in Darfur, and the fact that he was able to continue to assemble his power base in Sudan, which was already considerable I think has contributed to the situation we are here now.

Not that that would have been easy. It would have been hard, but I think we have seen what happened when he continued to play the role he has.

Can you talk about the way forward? Then, if you could also address the potential challenges in neighboring Ethiopia. We have a very fragile peace in Ethiopia.

Obviously, there are some territorial disputes between Sudan and Ethiopia and we need to be doing everything we can to make sure that the conflict in Sudan does not make the situation even worse in Ethiopia. If you could address those questions.

Ms. NULAND. First, Senator Van Hollen, it is great to hear that the consular system worked for your constituents and Marylanders.

Very good to hear. We welcome any improvements, comments, that you have about that system, going forward, or any of the other members of this committee.

Second, you missed our shout-out to your diplomacy along with Senator Coons, which really made a big difference, your willingness to roll up your sleeves and talk to these difficult, difficult actors.

In this particular round in Jeddah, first of all, the Saudis are acting as hosts and have been instrumental to getting conversation at least going between these warring parties.

Without that it might not have happened at all. I will say that although as you know better than many the regional players, including the UAE, have their own economic interests and long-term ties to various parts of this, the UAE has been very constructive in this effort to get parties to Jeddah, to get the guns stopped, and to get these humanitarian routes going and they have actually been pressuring both sides and sending strong messages.

We look forward to that continuing, going forward, and to staying and—because it is going to take everybody to press on everybody.

With regard to Ethiopia, I think you talked to Secretary Blinken after he came back from his trip and we have had progress, as you know, implementing key elements of the November cessation of hostilities agreement, the COHA, including formation of the Tigray interim regional administration, withdrawal of Eritrean forces, and concurrent DPLF disarmament, the positive role that the African Union's monitoring mission is playing.

I will say, back on Sudan, we are working with the African Union on what we hope will be a large support and convening function that they will play if we can get to these larger talks that we talked about.

These initial elements are beginning to show—to bear fruit. Obviously, we have got continuing difficulties with some parts of Sudan—with Ethiopia.

We have got to ensure that the Government of Ethiopia continues to fulfill its commitment for unhindered access to humanitarian actors for accountability, that it continues to meet its commitment for real justice, that journalists have safe access, that we continue to see good conversations with other constituent parts of Ethiopia and that is what we are working on and we appreciate your support for all of that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I hope we can—look, I think we are all incredibly disappointed that the hopes for democracy in Sudan have been hijacked here and I know we all share the goal of trying to get it back on track, but we should look at some of the lessons learned for why it did not happen the way we wanted the first time.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Scott.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to both of the witnesses for being here today and, Ms. Charles, good see you from South Carolina. I wish it was under different circumstances, but certainly always happy to see a South Carolinian representing our nation.

It has been nearly a month since the outbreak of the hostilities in Sudan. Since then, we have seen ceasefire after ceasefire fail. Hundreds of thousands have fled their homes. Nearly 600 have been killed, 5,000 injured, figures that are likely underrepresented.

Hospitals have been attacked. Medical care is scarce. Access to food and water is quickly running out. In a country plagued with sectarian strife and humanitarian crises, the situation seems to be only getting worse.

All of this is the direct result of two selfish men and their desire to keep power, really, at all costs it seems to me, at the expense of their own people, propped up by in part the inadequacy of the U.S. policy.

Apart from the loss of civilian lives, I am greatly concerned about the risk that further instability in Sudan can cause to regions beyond it. I will start with the easy question.

Ms. Nuland, how did we get where we are and how do we bring the conflict to an end, particularly not with one strongman, two strongmen who overthrew the powers that were?

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator Scott.

Without going back through decades of tragic history in Sudan, I will start with where we were after Hamdok was ousted and our efforts with our international partners to support the Sudanese people in creating a larger process that included more Sudanese civil society, more of their civilian voices in this framework arrangement for a transition which was painfully negotiated among them, and then months and months of effort which was, we felt, bearing real fruit to get to that democratic transition, particularly in the fall and throughout the winter.

We were, as I said earlier in this hearing, down to literally one issue, the one that you identified, whether these two generals would agree to unify their forces and we were in the process of offering various options for how that could happen, along with our international partners.

We were concerned because tensions between them would flare on and off, and then we had the very disappointing choice on April 15 for them to pick up their guns rather than continue with the talks and that is how we got where we are.

What are we doing now? We are, first and foremost, focused on trying to get them to put those guns down long enough and well enough so that Assistant Secretary Charles and colleagues can get serious humanitarian aid in.

We are now on our sixth, seventh short-term ceasefire, which is a direct result of the international pressure that everybody is putting on them, including more than 12 phone calls to the parties by Secretary Blinken himself.

What we are trying to get done in Jeddah now is to negotiate a declaration of commitment to protect the civilians of Sudan that would be agreed by both of the warring parties to open corridors and follow humanitarian principles on the ground in Sudan. That is stage one.

Stage two would then be to try to make the ceasefire enduring and stage three would be to get back to a civilian-led process probably with a broader contingent of civilians involved than we had the last time.

It is extremely difficult, as you noted.

Senator SCOTT. Yes, ma'am.

Quick thought on evacuation plans for Americans and the challenges that we seem to face. I would say if you look at the fact that France was able to evacuate 500 people in the first 48 hours, Germany about 700 people, China about 2,000, all before the U.S. even started to support the evacuation efforts of American citizens, my thought is why and the second is, as I think about the South Carolinians in Khartoum who have been calling my office asking for assistance, there seems to be no actual plan that they have received from the State Department.

I would love to hear what happens next and how do we do a better job of helping our American citizens who want to leave.

Ms. NULAND. After the initial evacuation of the embassy—

Senator SCOTT. Yes.

Ms. NULAND. —we were able to support our allies in establishing a beachhead at the airport. More than half of the Americans who got out—as we have determined through the math at this hearing, we got 1,300 Americans out altogether. More than half of them went on those allied flights in the first few days.

While we were working in a division of labor, if you will, on the land routes, which were—we were able to get another 700 people out through the land routes, including some of our allies in exchange, we are continuing to give advice to the—any remaining Americans.

Sometimes at the beginning of an evacuation people are not ready or they are not sure about their family circumstances. We have continuing advice to other—to Americans who want to come out now.

If you have constituents, please send them to us and we will work on it.

Senator SCOTT. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thanks to both the witnesses and thanks to the chairman for holding a full committee on this.

I have obviously gathered a lot from listening to my colleagues. I just want to—obviously, there is multiple fronts to this effort in terms of America. One is we have heard a lot about getting American citizens out. I have talked to Jake Sullivan and others and been working with offices.

Another front is obviously trying to cease hostilities and these prenegotiations in Jeddah are so critical and then, finally, helping civil society, which was talked about extensively, and finding a way not only to deal with the current crises that are going on threatening civilians, displacing internal persons, people fleeing to other unstable countries like Chad and Ethiopia are a crisis, and this is a day-to-day changing, the reports I am trying to stay up with from the Congressional Research Service and more.

I want to drill down on a couple themes within those three areas I talked about. The first is the still challenging bureaucracy of getting aid into the country, which is really frustrating when you think about things being held up at the Port of Sudan, critical sup-

plies, who are the controlling government entities on the ground right now, the Humanitarian Aid Commission and more.

Then is there an opportunity to more center civilians in this larger negotiations that are going on? Because clearly in Jeddah, the two parties are the warring generals, but the desire here is for civilian society to begin to be elevated and the democratic governance to be empowered for the future, as well.

Ms. CHARLES. On a personal note, early in my career I helped start up the Darfur response for one of our humanitarian partners nearly 20 years ago.

I have been dealing with the HAC—the Humanitarian Affairs Commission—in Sudan off and on for almost two decades now and their behavior is egregious even under the best of circumstances and particularly now.

We have been pressing both in the discussions in Jeddah, but also in bilateral conversations, including with the embassy here and others, on the need to lift those bureaucratic restrictions.

It is egregious to have goods held up in customs and clearance processes in Port Sudan or have our partners feel like they have to go to the HAC for permission to draw on prepositioned supplies.

We are actively working those issues and they continue to be a top priority. We have seen some of the food that we were bringing into port Sudan just cleared in the last couple of days. We have some small progress there, but it is something that we are certainly staying very much on top of.

Ms. NULAND. Just to say that the humanitarian declaration of commitment to protect civilians in Sudan that we are working on in Jeddah embeds in it some of these basic humanitarian principles that have undergirded the work Assistant Secretary Charles has done her whole life, but that the Sudanese actors need to enforce. We will see how that concludes.

With regard to where we go on broadening that initial framework, I think we agree completely that it is going to have to be broader. I will say, and I think you have been involved in this some as well, that we have not limited our own engagement in terms of how to move the transition forward just to those who are participants in the framework.

Ambassador Godfrey has really broadened our outreach to the NGO community, to different aspects of civil society. The Secretary has had some of those folks into his office. I had a group of civil society folks in my office.

I think the question is going to be when we—if we have that good news that we get beyond put down the guns, get a ceasefire, get the food in, to get back to framework I think the question is going to be how to structure it so it is sufficiently broad to capture the various views and ideas, but not so broad that it becomes unwieldy.

Senator BOOKER. Obviously, this is a colossal breakdown here, a failure, in a sense, of democracy to take root and it means that we have to reevaluate all of our actions and roles that we have played and try things differently.

I know those conversations are going on. I know that we see vulnerable citizens—armed militias once again targeted refugees in Darfur. There are so many crises and fronts to this.

I want to just get in the last seconds I have a little bit more input from you because I know that you are—my understanding, at least, is that you are the chair of a working group on Wagner and overall and so, clearly, there are operations going on there.

A large percentage, around 70 percent, of the gold that is being exported is going to Russia. We know what is going on the ground. I wonder if in the final seconds can you give me some insights into the Wagner Group and how are we countering what is going on. They are really destabilizing efforts in the region.

Ms. NULAND. As you know, Senator Booker, and as you said, Wagner plays a malign role no matter where it shows up and in Africa, whether it is in Sudan, whether it is in Central African Republic, whether it is across the Sahel, it has brought nothing, but more violence, a looting of the sovereignty and the wealth of these countries, and we are working with multiple countries across Africa to help them, many of whom have buyer's remorse now that they invited Wagner in at all.

We can talk to in a more secure setting on some of our efforts there, everything from countering disinformation to offering better options in terms of security, et cetera, to disrupting the supply chain of Wagner weapons in and gold and other things out.

We are working intensively also with other partners in the gold supply chain including UAE on these problems, but you are absolutely right. Prigozhin has brought nothing good to Sudan and he is strip mining the country of its gold and its future.

Senator BOOKER. My time is expired. I just want to say—first of all, I want to take either you and knowing how many demands on their time someone on—sitting in a classified setting having this conversation because the scope of the Wagner's operations, I just saw Facebook shutting down 100+ accounts.

They are working on so many different fronts in the African venue context that is so disturbing, and I would like to better understand our efforts to counter their malign activities.

Ms. NULAND. Good. We will look forward to that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Let me ask you some final questions. I know that the May 4 Executive order on Sudan issued by the President, but there was also an Executive order issued related to the conflict in Ethiopia that was never fully utilized.

Not a single Ethiopian was designated under the Executive order even though 800,000 people are estimated to have died as a result of the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

Sanctions are only effective if used as part of a well thought out strategy to obtain specific policy goals and aims. Does the Administration have a strategy to use targeted sanctions to obtain the outcomes we are seeking? Will we use targeted sanctions to pressure the parties in Jeddah to come to an agreement?

Ms. NULAND. Chairman, I think you have seen around the world the Administration's commitment to using sanctions including on a subject that we work on a lot together, the—Russia's war in Ukraine.

I would argue that the fact of the Executive order on May 4 that we gave ourselves this tool was—had an effect on the parties being willing to come to Jeddah. As I said, we are working on how that

Executive order could be populated with names, depending upon how the talks go.

We have done the same in Ethiopia and I would argue that just having the Executive order played a good role in getting us to the better place we are in Ethiopia.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there packages that deploy—or packages that are ready to be deployed if you make that decision?

Ms. NULAND. There are. There are.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, do we have any diplomatic outreach to allies and partners to join us in imposing sanctions if we, in fact, decide to do so?

Ms. NULAND. Yes. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary Phee and I have all been involved in ensuring that if we go in that direction we do not go there alone.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, I want to refer back to Senator Risch's remarks about a special envoy for Sudan and that call has a growing chorus of voices.

Our current special envoy for the Horn of Africa, unlike his predecessors, does not cover Sudan nor does he directly report to the President or the Secretary of State. What is the Administration's position on the special envoy that reports directly to the President or Secretary of State?

Ms. NULAND. Chairman, at the current moment, particularly since he is now outside Sudan and not running a massive embassy, we are deploying Ambassador Godfrey not just to maintain broad contacts with Sudanese and participate in these talks in Jeddah and any onward talks, we also anticipate using him to maintain tight links to regional partners to the global coalition we will need on this, including working intensively now with the African Union, although having Steph Sullivan confirmed would be even augmenting of that.

There are pieces of this Sudan work that Mike Hammer, our Ethiopia envoy, has been helpful in and he will continue to be helpful and we will call on him if we need—

The CHAIRMAN. In other words, you do not support—the Department does not support a special envoy, as I hear all your answers there around the edges, but not onto my question.

Ms. NULAND. At the moment we see Ambassador Godfrey as that envoy.

The CHAIRMAN. Is he really going to do all this shuttle diplomacy that you are talking about?

Ms. NULAND. He will if we need to. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Of course, he reports to Molly Phee?

Ms. NULAND. He does.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. It just seems to many of us that given the stakes in the region that we urgently need a high-level representative to deal with interlocutors in Africa, the Gulf, in Europe, and one who reports directly to the President or the Secretary of State, and while you are here please take that back to the Department.

I intend to press it at various different levels, but I think it is incredibly important.

Senator RISCH. I want to concur in that.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Risch is joining me in that regard. He raised it originally.

Finally, Ms. Charles, I have heard some of your answers. Secretary General Guterres of the U.N. said in mid-April that the humanitarian situation in Sudan was already precarious, now a catastrophe.

I hear that you have set up a DART team in Nairobi, but if a 5-day humanitarian ceasefire is agreed, are organizations ready to move into assistance to Sudan and deliver it to the conflict-affected areas?

Ms. CHARLES. Our partners are already gearing up and, in fact, many are trying to send more staff into Sudan right now, which is part of the reason why we are pressing on things like waivers of visas.

They are also bringing supplies into Port Sudan. The key is really to have sufficient security to move those supplies from Port Sudan and then to distribute them where they are most needed, both inside of Khartoum and Darfur and Northern Kordofan where we are seeing the fighting.

The CHAIRMAN. What does that security entail? Who would provide it?

Ms. CHARLES. It is really having the assurances from the parties that they will respect that access.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, given the urgency of the situation, what happens if we do not get this humanitarian ceasefire? Is there any way to deliver humanitarian assistance in Sudan if talks in Jeddah fail?

Ms. CHARLES. Even right now we are working with our partners to very quickly use what is already in Sudan and also pursue all available routes including from neighboring countries to bring supplies in to try and diversify where supplies would be coming in from, not be so reliant on just a Port Sudan to Khartoum route.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you, but the Sudan humanitarian response is already severely underfunded. It just received about 14 percent of the required funding before the current crisis.

What actions are we undertaking to galvanize financial contributions from international partners in order to be able to meet the challenge, assuming that we have the wherewithal to do so?

Ms. CHARLES. Yes. It was already underfunded. We were funding the majority of that humanitarian response plan. We have been pleased to see the Saudis make an announcement of \$100 million pledge.

We want to see that actually delivered to actors on the ground who can responsibly deliver that assistance. We are certainly pressing others. We have seen indications from the Canadians, from the European Union as well, that they will put support behind this, but we have really seen particularly from the Gulf, I will say, a stepping away from humanitarian assistance and particularly in their neighborhood we would love to see them step up in a more—

The CHAIRMAN. Now, many of the international staff of aid organizations evacuated Khartoum so we may not be able to, even if the opportunity or the window gets open, to rely upon our traditional partners to reach beneficiaries.

Are we supporting Sudanese organizations that may be able to—have, in fact, given the opportunity, be able to do that?

Ms. CHARLES. Yes. Among our partners are 30 Sudanese local NGOs that are either direct or more often indirect partners of ours.

We have been in close contact with them, not just our international partners. Even our international partners, most of their Sudanese staff are still in-country albeit many of them have relocated to other areas and they are reconstituting, and we are working with them again to kind of reconstitute as quickly as possible and get them the resources they need.

The CHAIRMAN. One of the consequences—this is always true. This is true in the Western Hemisphere as it is in Sudan. That if we cannot come to a successful conclusion here, up to a million Sudanese may very well be on the move and seek refuge. That already has a growing reality on the borders of Egypt.

What is your assessment of Egypt's willingness and capacity to process a large number of refugees over its border with Sudan?

Ms. CHARLES. I can let Under Secretary Nuland speak more generally about Egypt.

The CHAIRMAN. I really thought it was her bailiwick, so to speak, but if you have insights I am happy to hear that, too.

Ms. NULAND. Do you want to start and I will do the broader—yes.

Ms. CHARLES. We certainly have been pressing with colleagues at the State Department for the Egyptians to allow international organizations, particularly UNHCR and IOM, to the border.

Those missions moved for the first time just 4 or 5 days ago so we have seen some progress on that front. We would also like to see the opening of kind of a land route from Egypt into Sudan so that we can address conditions on the Sudanese side of that border as well.

Ms. NULAND. Just to complement that, we have about 70,000 Sudanese who have already—and third country nationals who have already arrived in Egypt. Egypt, as you know, is not the richest country on the planet, so looking at how to encourage support there and international support for Egypt.

We are also talking to Chad, who is beginning to see its own stream of refugees and to ensure that the Egyptian Red Crescent on the border is doing as much as it can, that the crossing points are open and easy to maneuver.

As Assistant Secretary Charles just said, the first problem was getting U.N. and IO humanitarian access to the border. That has now happened. It is something that we are watching and working on.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, this is a challenge of conflict. We see it in the Western Hemisphere. We have 20 million people who are displaced in the Southern Hemisphere or they are seeking refugee status or they are seeking asylum or they are just simply displaced, and if they cannot be assimilated in the countries that they have moved to then they will march north. In this case, they will march elsewhere.

Thinking about that in advance as a reality, a real possibility—hopefully, not a reality—is going to be critical. Otherwise, we will then again deal with the aftermath and not be prepared for the aftermath instead of thinking about it proactively. I urge you both to look at that.

Let me thank both of our witnesses for appearing before the committee to discuss the crisis in Sudan. It is obviously an extremely volatile situation.

We urgently need to use all available tools to put an end to the fighting, chart a new path forward towards a civilian-led democracy. Given how rapidly events are changing on the ground, I urge both of your departments and agencies to continue to keep the committee apprised of your actions.

The record of the hearing will remain open until the close of business on Friday, May 12. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than that date and let us hope that we can get an expeditious response to them.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:22 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In the days leading up to the outbreak of hostilities, media was reporting on troop movements in and around Khartoum and of rising tensions between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces. The security situation was clearly becoming more and more precarious, yet the embassy took no action in response. Why was it that the embassy did not authorize or order departure of staff, or bring in additional marines, security personnel, and emergency consular teams to assist American citizens to depart before the violence began, and what is being done to ensure this type of analytic failure doesn't put lives at risk in the future?

Answer. Embassy Khartoum's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) thoroughly considered adjustments to its security posture in regular EAC meetings, including on April 13, 2023, 2 days before fighting began. The EAC advised against travel to Karima, Northern State, and prohibited travel outside of Khartoum for U.S. Government staff and family members. The Embassy shared this guidance with private U.S. citizens in an April 13 security alert. The embassy was also in touch with the U.S. military in Djibouti and Diplomatic Security on assistance that could be required.

Question. Can you explain why it took so long for the United States to organize evacuations for American citizens trapped in Khartoum after hostilities commenced, when other countries—including Germany, France, the Netherlands, the UK, China, and Saudi Arabia, to name a few—were able to organize evacuations for their nationals earlier?

Answer. In the initial days of the conflict, the airport in Khartoum and Wadi Seidna airfield were not viable options for safe evacuation. Any attempt to have U.S. citizens depart Khartoum then from the airport could have resulted in casualties. Following those initial days, a ceasefire extension enabled the United States, our allies, and partners to undertake departure operations. Our allies did make space available on their flights for U.S. passport holders out of Sudan as early as April 23. We encouraged U.S. citizens to avail themselves of those flights if they felt it was safe to do so, and a number did.

Question. Sudanese stakeholders have sharply criticized the structure of the negotiations that were meant to lead to a civilian transition. In their view, placing a military junta with an established record of human rights abuses at the center of efforts to restore civilian rule, failing to call the October 2021 coup a coup, and not pressing for accountability through sanctions—for either the coup or the use of deadly force on those protesting the coup—contributed to the marginalization of civilian groups that were on the front lines of the Sudanese struggle for democracy. Are we using the same failed methodology—privileging engagement with those with guns over those without them—and expecting a different result?

Answer. Our strategy focused on supporting a Sudanese-led process to establish a civilian-led transitional government that would lead Sudan through a transition culminating in democratic elections. Our approach emphasized the need for the military to relinquish political control and operate under the direction of a civilian-led

government with a focus on protecting the people of Sudan and the country's borders. Sudan's civilian leaders sought to achieve this via negotiations, which require us to engage both civilians and Sudanese military leaders.

Question. What is our plan to engage Sudanese civil society more broadly, moving forward and what about our allies and partners in the international community—when and how do we expect them to participate in efforts to reach a political agreement?

Answer. We are engaging Sudanese civilian leaders, Resistance Committees (RCs), and civil society to work toward the shared goal of establishing civilian democratic governance in Sudan as soon as possible, and to harmonize civilian and international assistance efforts. We will support efforts to advance a political process that is led by an inclusive coalition of Sudanese civilians—involving women, the representatives from outlying regions of Sudan, civil society, RCs, and political parties. We are also engaging our allies and partners to coordinate civilian engagement efforts, including through the African Union Expanded Mechanism.

Question. How do we ensure that Saudi Arabia, and other partners, continue to play a constructive role in what will inevitably be a long and complicated road toward resumption of a political process?

Answer. We are closely consulting with regional and other partners on the situation in Sudan. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been crucial partners in our diplomatic efforts and with evacuation logistical support. We are also supporting international diplomatic efforts by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, League of Arab States, United Nations, and other partners from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East to immediately end the violence.

Question. You noted that sanctions packages are ready, and that the Administration had reached out to allied and partners to join us in imposing sanctions. You also said that the threat of sanctions had been instrumental with regards to Ethiopia; however that agreement took an additional year to achieve during which thousands suffered and died. What will be the trigger or triggers for imposing sanctions under the E.O.?

Answer. Secretary Blinken stated that “If the cease-fire is violated, we’ll know,” and that we will promote accountability for the violators through sanctions and other means. On June 1, the Department of Treasury added four companies, two affiliated with the SAF and two with the RSF, to the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List. We also amended the Sudan Business Advisory that determine that Sudanese gold is conflict affected, and imposed visa restrictions on officials from the SAF, RSF, and leaders from the former Omar al-Bashir regime, responsible for, or complicit in, undermining Sudan’s democratic transition.

Question. What is the specific strategy? Please discuss the outcomes that have been identified and how the imposition of specific sanctions will be tied to achieving those outcomes.

Answer. Our immediate objective in issuing sanctions designations is to change behavior and undermine the ability of the warring parties to sustain this conflict. Our first tranche of designations on June 1 of four major companies owned by the SAF and RSF advanced that objective. We stand ready to pursue additional measures to further undermine their financial networks to compel the two sides to cease hostilities, allow unhindered humanitarian access, and accept a civilian government and a resumption of Sudan’s democratic transition. We adjourned the Jeddah Talks on June 21 because of frequent ceasefire violations; we stand ready to resume talks only but only once the parties demonstrate their commitment to uphold their obligations.

Question. Which partners have agreed to join us in imposing sanctions?

Answer. We will continue to engage our G7, regional, and Gulf partners to sanction the four companies designated by the U.S. on June 1 and assist in sanctions enforcement, and to take other complementary steps to put pressure on the parties to stop fighting. They have not yet made any designations.

Question. What types of sanctions will they impose, and do we have agreement on the triggers for sanctions?

Answer. We cannot speculate on specific measures other countries may deploy. We continue to coordinate with our G7 partners on sanctions.

RESPONSES OF MS. SARAH CHARLES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question. When do we expect to convene international partners to begin to obtain resources to respond to the growing humanitarian need in Sudan and surrounding countries?

Answer. We have met with core donor counterparts to discuss their plans to respond to the growing humanitarian needs in Sudan and the surrounding countries. We understand that a larger donor pledging conference might convene in June, though details are yet undetermined. As of May 8, the 2023 Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan is 15.4 percent funded; it has received \$268.3 million of the \$1.48 billion requested.

Question. What are we doing to support those engaged in the democratic transition process and peace building activities throughout the country in the wake of the conflict?

Answer. The outbreak of violence in April forced many partners to make the difficult decision to temporarily halt programming and evacuate staff from Sudan. In response to the severely deteriorated operating environment, USAID is assessing how best to adjust and continue programs in Sudan that promote peace and democracy, mitigate conflict, protect human rights, increase access to information, and empower civil society. The goal of these resulting adjustments is to protect civilians and mitigate the impact of the conflict on people while also bolstering efforts to build bridges between divided communities and revitalize civic engagement to pave the way for greater citizen engagement, leadership, and inclusion in coordination about Sudan's political future. As these plans are finalized, USAID will continue to share updates with the Committee about its continued efforts to support Sudanese aspirations for freedom, peace, and justice.

Question. As you know, the United Nations is anticipating that close to 1 million people will flee Sudan if the conflict persists.

What are some of the most serious logistical and security challenges that humanitarian actors are facing right now in Sudan?

Answer. First and foremost, the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces is the primary issue driving humanitarian needs and limiting access to people in need in Sudan. The only solution to the growing crisis is a durable end to the fighting.

Humanitarian organizations in Sudan are facing excessive bureaucratic impediments to the delivery of assistance, including the delay or denial of travel permits and entry visas from the Sudanese authorities. Port Sudan remains the primary entry point for humanitarian supplies into Sudan; this is neither sustainable nor sufficient to address the scale of humanitarian response needed. Only locations in the eastern part of Sudan are accessible by road convoy from Port Sudan.

The establishment of new entry points into Sudan via cross-border humanitarian movements and additional humanitarian hubs within Sudan will be critical to creating a sustainable humanitarian response. The humanitarian community continues to explore overland, cross-border routes from neighboring countries. To do this, the U.S. Government is advocating for neighboring countries to keep their borders open to Sudanese displaced by conflict so that they may access urgently needed assistance. Additionally, we are advocating for neighboring countries to also allow humanitarian goods to freely flow into Sudan to support the scale-up of the humanitarian response.

Additionally, the looting of humanitarian commodities and facilities has become widespread in Sudan, especially in conflict areas where governance has decreased. Looting has affected both public international organizations and nongovernmental organizations and has resulted in significant losses and damages to humanitarian operations.

Finally, USAID is concerned that the rainy season upcoming from June through October could further hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance by posing additional logistical challenges to operations.

Question. As you know, the United Nations is anticipating that close to 1 million people will flee Sudan if the conflict persists.

How could the United States aid the safe movement of refugees and displaced persons?

Answer. As access and security permit, USAID-funded humanitarian partners are present at the borders and are working with local authorities to provide services to those in need as they await to cross over into neighboring countries. USAID is asking government entities in Sudan and its neighboring countries to eliminate the bu-

reaucratic barriers that prevent relief organizations' ability to respond to this crisis, including the approval of visas and the facilitation of cross-border movement. We are collaborating with donor government counterparts to advocate for cross-border movements to get humanitarian commodities to people in need.

We refer you to the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the Department of State for additional information about the safe movement of refugees.

Question. As you know, the United Nations is anticipating that close to 1 million people will flee Sudan if the conflict persists.

Do our activities place emphasis on protection from sexual and gender-based violence? How are those activities being resourced?

Answer. Reports received by the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sub-sector in Sudan and service providers indicate that GBV in Sudan is widespread and growing in prevalence since April 15. Women and girls and those who are on the move, displaced in temporary shelters, and deprived of basic needs are particularly at risk.

U.S. Government partners, including non-governmental organizations and public international organizations, are providing GBV assistance in Sudan. The GBV response in Sudan prioritizes the most vulnerable populations, including persons living with disabilities, survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse, and displaced women and girls. For example, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is working to train service providers to reach affected women and girls with remote psychosocial support services in hard-to-reach areas. USAID's partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has mobilized community volunteers to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to children in Khartoum. In Gedaref, one NGO partner continues to provide psychosocial support and case service management to people in need and is evaluating ways to expand programming to other areas as security permits. With support from USAID, the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) airlifted one metric ton of medical supplies and medicines to South Sudan's Renk county. IOM teams in Renk are providing health screening at the points of entry and reception centers and psychological first aid and counseling services to assess immediate concerns and needs of people fleeing Sudan.

To ensure that protection remains at the center of humanitarian programming, all partners receiving funding from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance must address how they will protect vulnerable beneficiaries from risks of sexual and GBV as part of the application process and award management. Additionally, all applicants must submit a Code of Conduct providing for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian relief operations.

RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Embassy Khartoum Evacuation & Security: While those directing Sudan policy within the Administration were preparing for an imminent declaration of a civilian government, they seem to have missed obvious signs of the impending collapse of the negotiation process and ensuing civil war that forced American diplomats to dodge roving gun battles and airstrikes. How did the State Department fail to see the apparent signs of an impending crisis in Sudan?

Answer. Our strategy focused on supporting a Sudanese-led process to establish a civilian-led transitional government and democratic elections, fulfilling the Sudanese people's aspirations for freedom, justice, and peace. The Sudanese-led process was successful in addressing many complex and divisive issues, including transitional justice and security sector reform. Working with the Tripartite Mechanism and other international partners, we helped provide Sudanese military and civilian parties a path to an agreement. In the end, the Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Armed Forces chose to elevate their interests above those of the Sudanese people, refused to negotiate on the remaining issues, and chose war over peace. They are to blame for the current crisis.

Question. While I appreciate fully that Sudan's Generals Burhan and Hemetti "are to blame for the current crisis," my question was asking about the Administration's preparedness for the outbreak of violence. How did the State Department fail to see the apparent signs of an impending crisis in Sudan?

Answer. The State Department assessed heightened tensions in the days leading up to April 15 and took steps to protect our employees, warn U.S. citizens and urge military leaders to deescalate. We tracked closely the heightened rhetoric and troop movements throughout the days and weeks before the outbreak of fighting. We constantly engaged with the parties in coordination with our diplomatic partners to

prevent conflict. We transmitted 15 security messages to the Embassy community between April 13 to May 22 and sent 19 messages to individuals registered with the Embassy to keep American citizens as informed and safe as possible. In addition to engaging in diplomacy to encourage the parties to deescalate tensions, we issued a joint statement with likeminded partners on April 13 to express concern, urge steps to reduce tensions, and to urge the partners to fulfill their previous commitments on establishing a civilian-led transitional government.

Question. Why were we caught flat-footed in our crisis response, which needlessly endangered U.S. Embassy personnel and did not sufficiently forewarn American citizens?

Answer. Our Mission in Sudan was aware of complex security threats throughout Sudan before the conflict began. This was reflected in our consular and public messaging prior to the outbreak of hostilities, in which we consistently advised U.S. citizens to not travel to Sudan or to depart the country immediately. When it became safe to do so, we assisted approximately 1,300 U.S. citizens and their immediate family members via U.S. Government-organized convoys, flights with our international partners, and messaging about options to depart Sudan.

Question. Does Embassy Khartoum have an emergency evacuation plan?

Answer. Like all U.S. embassies worldwide, Embassy Khartoum has an Emergency Action Plan that includes evacuation plans and regularly performs drills and exercises on crisis scenarios. Embassy Khartoum and the Department of Defense coordinated regularly on a range of contingencies and crisis scenarios in advance of the crisis. As the situation unfolded, the Department of State and Department of Defense coordinated in real time and update and refine those plans, based on the dynamic situation on the ground.

Question. How often does the Department revisit or update the plan?

Answer. Worldwide, all diplomatic missions have Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), which include a section for evacuation plans. EAPs are updated and revalidated annually.

Question. Was the Embassy Khartoum evacuation plan executed during the recent evacuation? Why or why not?

Answer. Yes. Embassy Khartoum staff utilized their evacuation plans, including survey data from the Integrated Survey Program, to successfully consolidate and evacuate 72 personnel and family members under Chief of Mission security responsibility.

Question. Did Embassy Khartoum have contingency plans in place in case post could not execute the emergency evacuation plan?

Answer. Embassy Khartoum maintained an Emergency Action Plan that included multiple plans for getting personnel out and contingencies in case personnel were cut off from the embassy. These plans were implemented, and helped successfully consolidate U.S. personnel, before moving all U.S. personnel and their family members to the embassy compound for the evacuation.

Question. Were these contingency plans implemented? Why or why not?

Answer. Yes. For staff unable to reach the embassy, Embassy Khartoum activated its cutoff plan to rally staff to the Alternate Command Center. This consolidation helped verify accountability and the subsequent relocation of all staff to the embassy compound.

Question. With evidence of a deteriorating security situation in Sudan, did the Department consider moving to authorized or ordered departure before fighting broke out? Please describe the Department's deliberations on this matter.

Answer. Embassy Khartoum's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) thoroughly considered adjustments to its security posture in regular EAC meetings, including on April 13, 2023, 2 days before fighting began. The Embassy did not recommend Authorized or Ordered Departure. However, the EAC advised against travel to Karima, Northern State, and prohibited travel outside of Khartoum for U.S. Government staff and family members. The Embassy shared this guidance with U.S. Government staff and with private U.S. citizens in an April 13 security alert. The embassy was also in touch with the U.S. military in Djibouti and Diplomatic Security on assistance that could be required.

Question. Do all posts in Africa maintain emergency evacuation plans?

Answer. Yes, all U.S. missions maintain emergency evacuation plans that are updated and revalidated regularly.

Question. How often are emergency evacuation plans updated for posts in Africa?

Answer. Emergency Action Plans at all posts in the Bureau of African Affairs, which include evacuation plans, must be updated and revalidated annually. Many are updated more frequently when circumstances warrant.

Question. Do emergency evacuation at posts in Africa plans include contingencies in case the primary plan is not executable?

Answer. Yes, all emergency evacuation plans include contingencies.

Question. How are you drawing upon the lessons of this crisis to adapt to other high-risk posts where we could potentially see a similar scenario play out—say in Chad, Central African Republic, or South Sudan?

Answer. Following an evacuation, the Office of Crisis Management and Strategy (CMS) will coordinate a lessons learned exercise to capture what worked and identify opportunities for improvement. These lessons learned are shared within the Department and with posts abroad to inform future planning. Additionally, the Bureau of African Affairs hosts periodic virtual workshops on crisis preparation with posts abroad, with the help of CMS, to discuss recent evacuations and lessons learned from other crises.

Question. Do you commit to brief the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Embassy evacuations for all high-risk posts in Africa?

Answer. I support briefing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee following the evacuation of any high-risk post in Africa.

Question. What is the current posture of the Department in Sudan?

Answer. The Department temporarily suspended operations at Embassy Khartoum effective April 22, 2023, and evacuated all U.S. personnel and their family members from Sudan.

Question. Under what conditions would the Department decide to move Embassy personnel back to Khartoum?

Answer. As conditions in Sudan improve, Embassy Sudan's Emergency Action Committee will meet to discuss changes to the security environment. The committee will then make a recommendation to the ambassador, who may then request permission from Department leadership resume embassy operations. Any decision to resume operations will be based on verified changes to the security environment in Sudan and subject to Congressional notification procedures.

Question. What is the timeline for returning to Embassy Khartoum once the Department decides to do so?

Answer. Prior to temporarily suspending operations, the embassy disabled and destroyed sensitive computer networks and communications equipment and sealed the building. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security, in conjunction with the Bureau of Information Resource Management and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, would need to determine the timeline for resuming operations based on any damages sustained to the physical plant, security systems, and in controlled access areas and assess the availability of locally employed staff to assist. Resuming operations at Embassy Khartoum would also be subject to completion of Congressional notification procedures.

Question. How long will it take to restore OpenNet once personnel access Embassy Khartoum?

Answer. The Bureau of Information Resource Management, in conjunction with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, must recertify the building for information processing prior to restarting full operations. This may require importing new hardware and replacing damaged equipment. Limited operations using satellite connectivity may be possible within weeks. Returning to full operations could take significantly longer.

Question. How long for ClassNet?

Answer. The Bureau of Information Resource Management, in conjunction with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, must recertify the building for processing sensitive information prior to restarting classified operations. This will require importing new hardware and replacing equipment. Once functional, Diplomatic Security will need to validate that the building meets required information security standards to protect classified material. This process will take months in order to ensure the integrity of sensitive systems.

Question. Did Embassy personnel have to abandon their personal belongings to be evacuated? If yes, is the Department compensating them for their losses?

Answer. Yes. Employees will be able to file claims through private insurance, once it is determined that there has been a loss. Claims denied by private insurance may then be resubmitted to the Department for adjudication.

Question. Has there been any damage to Embassy Khartoum or personnel housing, including the chief of mission residence?

Answer. Yes. The embassy and some personnel housing units have sustained damage, including the residential housing compound containing the Deputy Chief of Mission's residence.

Question. Is it the Department's policy to allow mission chiefs to take annual leave regardless of conditions in the host country? If no, under what conditions would a chief of mission have annual leave denied or canceled if previously approved?

Answer. Like all employees, chiefs of mission are entitled to annual leave, which is vital to an employee's wellbeing and resiliency. An assistant secretary, as the supervisor for a chief of mission, may cancel previously approved annual leave or deny annual leave at their discretion.

Question. When responding to Senator Cardin during the hearing, you noted that the Embassy "had connectivity with about 5,000 Americans." You estimated that 12 messages were pushed out to them "about various options for leaving the country." Please share the text of each message with the timestamp when the Embassy sent them.

Answer. The U.S. Department of State publicly transmitted 15 security messages (Security Alerts) to U.S. citizens from April 13 to May 12, 2023. The Department also sent 19 direct messages to individuals registered in our case management system, in addition to several hundred unique emails and text messages. Please see the attached for a complete timeline.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS MESSAGING ON THE SUDAN CRISIS

All times ET.

Friday, May 12, 2023

4:45 PM: Message (CACMS/Security Alert) sent to the full universe of registrants informing them that consular services are available in neighboring countries for those who choose to depart on their own and information on possible commercial options to depart Sudan.

Thursday, May 4, 2023

1:00 AM: Message (CACMS/Security Alert) sent to the full universe of registrants informing them of commercial options to depart Sudan via ferry.

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

12:40 PM: Message (CACMS) sent to all active cases advising not go to the Hotel Coral in Port Sudan and not to go to Fenti Golf in Khartoum.

10:30 AM: Message (CACMS) sent to all active cases advising not to go to the Hotel Coral, as no further assistance will be provided.

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

2:30 PM: Message (CACMS/Security Alert) sent to the full universe of registrants informing them that consular services are available in neighboring countries for those who choose to depart and that the U.S. Government has completed all currently planned convoys to Port Sudan.

Monday, May 1, 2023

8:00 AM: Message (CACMS) sent to the full universe of registrants advising them we are unaware of additional flights from Wadi Seidna airport and, sharing information on border crossings (approximately 4500 active cases).

Sunday, April 30, 2023

10:00 PM: Message (CACMS) sent to the full universe of registrants advising that they should seek to leave by commercially available means.

10:00 PM (approx.): Update on Information for U.S. Citizens (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/situation-in-sudan-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-sudan-2/>) posted on Embassy Khartoum website (posted on TravelGov May 1).

Saturday, April 29, 2023

8:00 PM: Message (CACMS) and SMS sent to the full universe of registrants advising them of convoy C times and rally point (approximately 4500 active cases). WhatsApp messages sent to all cases reported “ready to depart.” Calls made to all high-profile, USG-adjacent, and Congressional cases with this message.

2:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to verified U.S. citizens who were ready to depart asking them to notify CA if they have departed Sudan, and if not, verify they are still requesting assistance.

1:30 AM: Security Alert on avoiding Wadi Seidna airfield (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-2/>).

Friday, April 28, 2023

3:36 PM: Message (CACMS and USEvacSudan@state.gov) sent to individuals opting into the convoy B with times and rally point.

3:30 PM: Message (CACMS) sent to the full universe of registrants advising them to make contact if they wanted assistance departing on convoy B.

3:15 PM: Topper at Department Press Briefing on advice and assistance to U.S. citizens.

02:00 AM: Repeat Message (USEvacSudan@state.gov) sent to U.S. citizens who indicated they would take convoy A. Email includes timing and rally point information.

Thursday, April 27, 2023

9:30 PM: Message (USEvacSudan@state.gov) sent to 147 U.S. citizens who indicated they would take convoy A. Email includes timing and rally point information.

1:30 PM: Message (CACMS) transmitted to the full universe of registrants who expressed interest in departure regarding convoy A. TravelGov post (<https://twitter.com/TravelGov/status/1651641198191190025>) urging U.S. citizens to fill out CACMS form posted across all of CA’s social media platforms. U.S. Embassy Khartoum’s website updated to have CACMS form link appear in banner on all pages; large image with form link added to home page.

11:30 AM: Secretary Blinken holds press briefing (<https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-secretary-of-homeland-security-alejandro-mayorkas-at-a-joint-press-availability/>) with DHS and mentions convoy.

10:30 AM: Message (CACMS) transmitted to active cases notifying of flights opportunities at Wadi Seidna Airfield.

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

10:30 PM: Message (WhatsApp and SMS) sent to all verified U.S. citizens, ready to depart notifying them to go to Wadi Seidna Airfield.

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

7:30 PM: Message (SMS) sent to all verified U.S. citizens, ready to depart in Khartoum notifying them to go to Wadi Seidna Airfield.

5:00 PM: Security Alert on Port Sudan and land border options (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert/>). Red banner linking to Embassy Alerts page added to state.gov.

10:00 AM: Message (WhatsApp, SMS, and calls) sent to all verified U.S. citizens, ready to depart in Khartoum notifying them to go to Wadi Seidna Airfield.

Monday, April 24, 2023

11:06 PM: Security alert on border crossing info for neighboring countries also sent to all active cases in CACMS (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/situation-in-sudan-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-sudan/>).

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Red banner (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/situation-in-sudan-2023.html>) added to travel.state.gov containing CACMS link and STEP info (additional info continues to be added and removed as situations unfolds)

10:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to all active cases regarding Suspension of Operations Security Alert.

6:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to all active cases regarding Saudi vessel (Amama) in Port Sudan.

Saturday, April 22, 2023

11:00 PM: Security alert on suspension of Embassy operations and sharing link to CACMS form (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-suspension-of-embassy-operations/>)

11:00 PM: Travel Advisory updated to reflect ordered departure of U.S. direct hire employees and family members. Pushed out via media note (<https://www.state.gov/sudan-travel-advisory-remains-level-4-do-not-travel/>) and amplified on TravelGov social media/websites, per normal SOP.

10:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to all active cases regarding a UAE convoy.

3:16 AM: Security Alert on security challenges in country (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/sudan-security-alert/>)

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

6:50 PM: Security Alert on ongoing violence and reports of assaults, home invasions, and looting (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-5/>).

3:29 PM: Travelgov social media post with contact info (<https://twitter.com/TravelGov/status/1648770894003683328>) advising U.S. citizens to contact the Embassy via email or phone and sign up for STEP.

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

9:45 AM: Security Alert noting ongoing fighting, gunfire, and security force activity, advising shelter in place (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-18-april-2023/>)

Sunday April 16, 2023

10:00 AM: Security Alert on situation and advising to remain indoors and shelter in place until further notice (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-4/>)

Saturday April 15, 2023

Security Alert on continuing to shelter in place (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-3/>)

Security Alert urging shelter in place and stating no plans for U.S. Government-coordinated evacuation of U.S. citizens (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-3/>).

Security Alert recommending shelter in place (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-2/>)

Travel.Gov published a consolidated post (<https://twitter.com/TravelGov/status/1647338067823304704?s=20>) at 4:36 p.m. for Saturday alerts.

Thursday, April 13, 2023

9:40 AM: Security Alert advising U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Karima, Northern Sudan, and surrounding areas (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-april-13-2023/>)

Background

Except where noted, every Sudan alert is:

- pushed out to STEP enrollees
- posted on Embassy Khartoum’s website
- posted on the TSG country page for Sudan (using a script that pulls from the embassy’s page)
- amplified by CA on social media

Question. U.S. Policy Approach: During a State Department briefing on May 11, a senior official [“Senior State Department Official Two”] noted how the Department “used U.S. power and influence to press the generals to respond to the aspirations of the Sudanese people.” [Link: <https://www.state.gov/briefing-with-senior-state-department-officials-on-the-situation-in-sudan/>] After the initial steps to suspend international lending and debt relief and some bilateral assistance, how has the Department “used U.S. power and influence to press the generals to respond to the aspirations of the Sudanese people” under this Administration?

Answer. We put intense diplomatic pressure on the military government and led, with our partners, international efforts to support a Sudanese-led process to form a civilian-led government. We took additional measures, including sanctioning the Central Reserve Police, coordinating with our partners to suspend all lending from

international institutions to the government, and organizing the suspension of bilateral development assistance from the United States and all of our partners.

Question. What is your understanding of the bipartisan, bicameral Congressional concerns regarding U.S. policy on Sudan?

Answer. I understand that Congress, like the Department of State, wants to see a democratic government led by civilians in Sudan. We agree that only a truly civilian government can be successful in delivering to the people of Sudan. The United States supports the Sudanese people in restoring Sudan's democratic transition and forming a civilian government. The military forces should withdraw from governance and focus on defending the nation from external threats.

Question. How do you plan to respond to the specific Congressional concern expressed through hearings, letters, staff and member consultations, and concurrent resolutions in the House and Senate that the same engagement approach with the Sudanese generals has not yielded substantive progress beyond empty promises, unimplemented frameworks, broken transition agreements, and ultimately war?

Answer. The U.S. strategic approach focuses on pressing for a ceasefire, humanitarian access and, in parallel, supporting civilian stakeholders in developing a broad-based political process to end the conflict and resume a democratic transition. We are working closely with the AU, IGAD and regional and international partners toward these ends. Our efforts have not, and will not, be limited to only engaging the Sudanese generals.

Question. What changes will you make to the Department's approach to policy architecture and architects to gain Congressional buy-in to fund and support your continued approach?

Answer. The Department team, led by AF, with support from NEA and others, and overseen by Secretary Blinken and me, is working with the AU, IGAD and other partners to help the Sudanese establish a broader political process as soon as possible to end the conflict and get Sudan on course for a democratic transition. We anticipate this process will be more broad-based both in terms of Sudanese stakeholders and international supporters.

Question. Given the role of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) acting as a paramilitary force for hire by governments and forces to fight in Yemen, Libya and elsewhere, and its historical role in carrying out genocide in Darfur, do you agree the RSF should be sanctioned as an entity?

Answer. The United States is considering the full range of tools at our disposal to address the conflict in Sudan, and to promote accountability for the RSF. Our view has long been that the RSF should integrate into the Sudanese Armed Forces as part of a security sector reform process. On June 1, the Department of Treasury added two major companies affiliated with the RSF to the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List.

Question. Diplomatic Footprint & Tools: Also, during that Department briefing on May 11 [see previous question], this same senior official ["Senior State Department Official Two"] said, "I find it confusing when we're told that we haven't been pressing the generals." It seems this senior official did not watch our recent hearing or, if he/she did, did not take the message that Congress wants to see changes in approach to include how the Department pressures the Generals "to respond to the aspirations of the people." Many Sudanese people, including civil society, political party officials, and vital eminent persons, have strongly criticized the U.S. approach and support for their aspirations. Do you acknowledge this criticism and agree the Department's approach to "pressing the generals" is not only not working, but the Sudanese people feel it is not reinforcing their aspirations?

Answer. We acknowledge that some Sudanese wanted the civilian-led process we supported to be more broad-based, backed by additional pressure on the military. Our strategy focused on supporting a Sudanese-led process to establish, via negotiations, a civilian-led transitional government that would lead Sudan through a transition culminating in democratic elections. Working with the Tripartite Mechanism and other international partners, we helped provide Sudanese military and civilian parties a path to an agreement that could have addressed complex and divisive issues related to transitional justice and security sector reform, among others. We pressed the generals to resolve their disputes within that process—an effort that ultimately failed when they took up arms again. They are to blame for the current crisis.

Question. Will you commit to this Committee to make changes in the personnel group driving Sudan policy in the Department, what I referred to as the "architects"

of the current policy approach in my hearing opening statement, and expand this to have a more diverse and consultative group of policy professionals handling these issues?

Answer. Since the crisis, our Africa and Sudan teams, and Department leaders have taken broad soundings across Washington and with our international partners on next steps to try to end the fighting, get in more humanitarian aid and build a new civilian-led process.

Question. Is it appropriate for senior Bureau of African Affairs officials, in a woefully understaffed and under-resourced bureau which I have raised concerns about and communicated to the Department many times, to continue to dedicate most of their time to Sudan and Ethiopia issues, essentially owning these issues, when other U.S. national security interests in Africa are not receiving equal intensity and focus?

Answer. We appreciate your concern about the Department's staffing and resource challenges. I can assure you the Bureau of African Affairs remains focused on advancing U.S. national security interests across the African continent. I work with AF Bureau leaders and Ambassadors on a daily basis to ensure broad coverage and policy attention to all the major challenges across the continent.

Question. If it is appropriate to have senior Bureau of African Affairs officials dedicate this much time to these matters, then please explain how the Department is backfilling this gap in senior leadership and management on other complex issues, such as countering the malign influence of China and Russia and managing intense humanitarian and security crises in the Sahel region and Eastern Congo?

Answer. The Bureau of African Affairs has a wealth of talent at the senior level, and I work intensively with the Assistant Secretary and her top lieutenants to ensure clear, effective policymaking and execution across the continent. To that end, I work with the Assistant Secretary to ensure that our senior Bureau of African Affairs officials coordinate with colleagues in other agencies and other State Department offices and bureaus, including the Office of China Coordination, Bureau of European Affairs, Bureau of Counterterrorism, and Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and the Global Engagement Center, among others, to provide continued attention to all issues concerning U.S. national security interests in Africa, including strategic competition. Our regional offices help senior officials address the Sahel region and Eastern Congo along with all pressing issues in Africa in combination with State Department offices and colleagues in the interagency.

Question. While senior Bureau of African Affairs officials are dedicating a large amount of their time and resources to managing Sudan and Ethiopia policy, which senior officials in the Bureau or the Department are working the solutions to the woeful understaffing and resourcing of the Bureau?

Answer. Senior officials throughout the Department and in the Bureau of African Affairs are cognizant of staffing and resource deficiencies and continue to identify additional resources to advance U.S. policies in Africa and during crisis situations. The Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources, and I, and the Undersecretary for Management and the bureaus that report to him, as well as the Assistant Secretary, each Deputy Assistant Secretary, and all office directors and their deputies, actively and regularly engage in staffing and resource planning.

Question. During the hearing, I asked you about a special envoy for Sudan to address the need for "more individual attention." You replied, "Ambassador Godfrey is central to all of this," noting "he is also likely to play a stronger role in some of the regional diplomacy and global diplomacy on Sudan." While Ambassador Godfrey is working hard to manage an embassy staff dislocated by an evacuation, American citizen evacuation and welfare concerns, and other matters strictly related to Sudan and our diplomatic and security priorities in the country, how do you expect this first-time ambassador to carry out the complex role of international and regional diplomacy effectively?

Answer. Ambassador Godfrey played a leading role in the talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and has conducted frequent diplomacy with Sudanese and regional stakeholders. He is more than up to the challenge of carrying out this complex task.

Question. If Ambassador Godfrey led discussions to achieve a short-term ceasefire for the United States in Jeddah, as you stated in your response above, what role did Assistant Secretary Phee—his superior—play in Jeddah?

Answer. Resolving the conflict in Sudan and resuming Sudan's democratic transition remain top Administration priorities. Assistant Secretary Phee has and maintains relationships of influence with leaders in Sudan, throughout Africa and the

Middle East. She took immediate action in the first week of the conflict, while Ambassador Godfrey was still in Khartoum leading the embassy team on evacuation related efforts, to initiate dialogue between the SAF and RSF that led to the announcement of temporary ceasefires and the beginning of talks in Jeddah. These efforts helped reduce violence, allowing U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, and Sudanese civilians to move out of harm's way. When those talks transitioned from phone calls to in person negotiations in Jeddah on May 6, Assistant Secretary Phee led our delegation's efforts to facilitate negotiations, working closely with Saudi partners and Ambassador Godfrey, before ultimately handing over the leadership of that delegation to Ambassador Godfrey.

Question. Regarding my question on a Sudan envoy, you also replied that Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa (SEHOA) Ambassador Hammer will “play a reinforcing role as necessary on this, which is within his mandate.” Please describe Ambassador Hammer’s official mandate and priorities assigned to him by Department leadership.

Answer. At the Secretary’s request, Ambassador Hammer’s most immediate focus has been to bring peace to Northern Ethiopia as well as to forge a diplomatic resolution to issues related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that would achieve the interests of all parties and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous region. Furthermore, he works to advance diplomatic efforts to reduce conflict and in support of an inclusive political process towards lasting peace, security, and prosperity for all people in Ethiopia. Ambassador Hammer supports other policy goals in the East Africa region, as needed.

Question. While Ambassador Hammer’s title says the “Horn of Africa,” he and the Department have communicated to Congress on several occasions that Secretary Blinken wants his focus to be on diplomacy related to Northern Ethiopia and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Given the regional crisis in Sudan created, have official Department priorities changed for Ambassador Hammer? If yes, has this been formally communicated to him, and when?

Answer. At the Secretary’s request, Ambassador Hammer’s most immediate focus has been to bring peace to Northern Ethiopia as well as to forge a diplomatic resolution to issues related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that would achieve the interests of all parties and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous region. Furthermore, he works to advance diplomatic efforts to reduce conflict and in support of an inclusive political process towards lasting peace, security, and prosperity for all people in Ethiopia. Ambassador Hammer supports other policy goals in the East Africa region, as needed.

Question. If Ambassador Hammer expands his official focus areas “as necessary,” will he receive additional staffing and other support to supplement his expanded workload?

Answer. Ambassador Hammer is fully integrated into the Bureau of African Affairs, receiving seamless support from the desk officers and the offices working on issues in the Horn of Africa. He has a small staff to take advantage of these available resources and avoid duplication of effort. He also coordinates closely with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. If he needs more support, he’ll get it.

Question. Given the current crisis in Sudan, the peace process in Ethiopia, ongoing regional drought, and famine-like conditions throughout the Horn of Africa, do you view GERD negotiations as among the top two priorities of diplomatic focus for our regional envoy in the region?

Answer. Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) remains a potential source of conflict and tension, and we continue to support an enduring arrangement that contributes to a more peaceful and prosperous region. We are committed to helping the parties find a durable solution that meets Egypt’s water security needs, addresses Sudan’s dam safety concerns, and supports Ethiopia’s economic development. Ambassador Hammer remains actively engaged in support of efforts to reach a GERD agreement under the auspices of the African Union that will advance the interests of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

Question. On May 10, the day of the hearing, the State Department spokesperson issued a media note announcing a May 10–19 trip by Special Envoy Hammer to Los Angeles, California, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, to engage with the Ethiopian diaspora and to speak with Global Santa Fe and the Santa Fe World Affairs Forum. Is Ethiopian diaspora engagement in the U.S. a greater priority for the Department, given the need for an expanded set of diplomacy tools and an all-hands-on-deck ap-

proach to securing and maintaining a ceasefire in Sudan and coordinating the regional and international response?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration emphasizes diaspora engagement as an integral part of advancing U.S. policy in Ethiopia. Ambassador Hammer's engagement with diaspora on this trip is the latest in a series of concerted outreach events with the Ethiopian-American diaspora to foster greater connectivity between diaspora groups, inform them of U.S. policy, and advance U.S. foreign policy goals. Assistant Secretary Phee and Ambassador Godfrey continue to conduct and lead our engagement on Sudan.

Question. What has Special Envoy Hammer done to date to support efforts in Sudan?

Answer. Ambassador Hammer remains focused on implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front reached in Pretoria on November 2, 2022, and forging a diplomatic resolution to issues related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that would achieve the interests of all parties and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous region. When in discussions about the wider region with likeminded and African interlocutors, he has provided updates and explained U.S. policy related to Sudan as part of our effort to support a coordinated international and regional response to the conflict.

Question. Ceasefire & Mediation Efforts: In your testimony, you referred to the Department's diplomatic attempts to "silence the guns" as efforts to achieve a ceasefire. "Silencing the guns" is a term often used by the African Union regarding its goal to end conflict on the continent. Another phrase regularly used by Department officials is "African solutions to African problems." Why didn't the African Union (AU) or Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) directly participate in the Jeddah ceasefire talks? Did the U.S. insist in their participation?

Answer. The Department has been in consultation with both the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development since the conflict began. The Jeddah talks enjoyed broad support. The African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Tripartite Mechanism (United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, AU, IGAD), countries in the region, and many Sudanese civilian groups all issued statements in support of the process. The Jeddah Talks were emergency diplomacy and the parties insisted on limiting participation to the United States, Saudi Arabia, RSF and SAF. In parallel with our efforts to secure a durable ceasefire, we have been supporting the AU and IGAD in standing up a broader political process.

Question. UN humanitarian aid chief Martin Griffiths was in Jeddah during the ceasefire talks to engage on humanitarian issues. Still, he did not engage directly with either of the warring parties, reportedly due to their insistence he be kept out of the talks. What is the impact of sidelining the UN's humanitarian aid chief in ceasefire talks that directly focused on delivering humanitarian assistance in Sudan and affected surrounding countries where UN agencies will have a significant role?

Answer. Securing humanitarian access was a central focus of efforts in Jeddah. The U.S. delegation included staff from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs. We were in close coordination with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which sent a technical expert to Jeddah to support aspects of the talks related to humanitarian access.

Question. Regarding your testimony's reference to "silence the guns," you referred to Secretary Blinken's "intense personal effort" to secure six "sequential short-term ceasefires," allowing for "some initial movement of humanitarian aid." Given the widespread open source reporting that demonstrated fighting continued throughout successive ceasefires, what is your assessment of the success of those ceasefires and the degree to which they successfully helped "silence the guns"?

Answer. While the mutually announced ceasefires in late April and early May were not completely adhered to, fighting decreased in those periods, providing some relief for civilians, and allowing more humanitarian relief to get to those in need.

Question. Can you provide the scope and scale of the "initial movement" of some humanitarian aid you refer to in your testimony, including what assistance moved and where?

Answer. Humanitarian partners have continued to provide assistance throughout the conflict as the situation allows. In late April, partners began tapping into regional stockpiles of medical supplies, food, and core relief items (e.g. tents, kitchen sets, plastic sheets) and bringing these supplies in through Port Sudan. When pos-

sible, partners also worked to move existing supplies in country to more secure points where assistance could be distributed to conflict affected populations. Our response has also included assistance for refugees in neighboring Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. We will continue to prioritize the creation of safe and durable humanitarian access to those in need, working closely with regional and international partners, including the United Nations, African Union stakeholders, and others.

Question. On May 11, 2023, the parties to the conflict—the SAF and RSF—signed the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan with the facilitation of Saudi Arabia and the United States. While the Jeddah Declaration does secure commitments from the parties to protect civilians and the movement of humanitarian aid, it only achieved a commitment “to prioritizing discussions to achieve a short-term ceasefire”, and to “scheduling subsequent expanded discussions to achieve a permanent cessation of hostilities.” What parties does the State Department envision will be essential to successful and legitimate “expanded discussions to achieve a permanent cessation of hostilities”?

Answer. Moving to a successful permanent cessation of hostilities would require commitment from both parties to stop fighting and establish necessary security arrangements. While the parties agreed in Jeddah to temporary ceasefires that enabled delivery of humanitarian assistance impacting approximately 2.5 million Sudanese people, their frequent ceasefire violations and the continuation of fighting demonstrated a lack of will to adhere to their commitments and move toward a more durable cessation of hostilities. As a result, the United States and Saudi Arabia adjourned the talks effective June 21. We stand ready to reconvene technical ceasefire talks in Jeddah, but only once the parties demonstrate their commitment to uphold their obligations under the Jeddah Declaration. In the meantime, we are working with our African Union and IGAD partners, to support Sudan’s civilian leaders to develop a broad-based political process to end the conflict and resume a democratic transition.

Question. Who will facilitate discussions to achieve a short-term ceasefire for the United States?

Answer. Ambassador John Godfrey led this effort in Jeddah.

Question. If subsequent negotiations to achieve a short-term ceasefire are not successful, how will the State Department adjust its approach?

Answer. We continue to press both sides to cease hostilities and permit the delivery of humanitarian aid and restoration of essential services to the Sudanese people. We are also engaging with Sudanese civilian leaders, Resistance Committees, and civil society, as well as our international partners, to work toward the shared goal of establishing civilian democratic governance in Sudan as soon as possible. We adjourned the Jeddah talks on June 21 because of frequent cease-fire violations; we stand ready to resume talks once both parties demonstrate their commitment to uphold their obligations.

Question. Will accountability tools be used in the event a short-term ceasefire is not agreed to or respected?

Answer. President Biden stated on May 5 that the United States stands with the people of Sudan—and we are acting to support their commitment to a future of peace and opportunity. As a result, the Administration issued a new Executive Order that expands U.S. authorities to respond to the violence that began on April 15 with sanctions that hold individuals responsible for threatening the peace, security, and stability of Sudan; undermining Sudan’s democratic transition; using violence against civilians; or committing serious human rights abuses. On June 1 our designations of four major companies owned by the SAF and RSF advanced that objective of accountability.

Question. During the aforementioned May 11 State Department briefing, a senior official [“Senior State Department Official One”] stated that a key difference from prior ceasefires the United States tried to negotiate is “that we have developed a ceasefire monitoring mechanism, which is being supported by the UN, the Saudis, and other members of the international community . . . [that] will help hold the parties accountable to what they’ve agreed to do.” Why did the State Department announce the development of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism when a ceasefire has not yet been agreed to by the parties?

Answer. The ceasefire monitoring mechanism was supported by both sides of the conflict in Sudan. Given the significant distrust, this was selected as a way for neu-

tral actors to help monitor whether the parties were complying with the terms of a prospective ceasefire.

Question. How was a ceasefire monitoring mechanism, that will be supported by the UN, developed when the UN was not directly present in the Jeddah talks led by Saudi Arabia and the United States?

Answer. The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, our partners in the Troika, and the African Union were consulted on the ceasefire monitoring mechanism and how they can receive and utilize reporting.

Question. Will the ceasefire monitoring mechanism report on violations of “International Humanitarian Law and for international human rights law,” which the parties agreed to respect in the Jeddah Declaration? If yes, will this reporting be public?

Answer. Yes, we intend to make public reporting, as appropriate, on violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Question. How will public reporting be conducted?

Answer. We remain committed to supporting the release of publicly accessible reporting on conflict developments in Sudan to support efforts to improve civilian safety and facilitate humanitarian assistance.

Question. Who does the State Department envision will implement the ceasefire monitoring mechanism?

Answer. The Department of State will implement the ceasefire monitoring mechanism through a consortium of expert organizations in close coordination with United Nations, Troika, and African Union partners.

Question. Will the United States contribute resources (financial, human or otherwise) to the implementation of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Accountability: The two warring generals, Burhan and Hemetti, have direct links to the genocide in Darfur, oversaw the death of many Sudanese civilians and the abuse of countless more during their reign, and continue to steal Sudan’s resources. They also removed a sitting civilian-led transitional government in October 2021. The United States has not held these generals accountable but instead fed their lust for legitimacy by repeatedly making them central to the Administration’s policy for a “democratic transition” in Sudan. As a result, the U.S. has less leverage today in Sudan since the removal of Omar al-Bashir in 2019. It seems to me we helped elevate these two monsters. Why has the United States not taken any action against the warring generals, Burhan and Hemetti, their vast financial interests, or their foreign backers to contain and weaken their stranglehold on the Sudanese people?

Answer. Supporting Sudanese-led processes and civilian stakeholders have been central to our efforts. At the same time, we put intense diplomatic pressure on the military government along with our partners, and took additional measures, including sanctioning the Central Reserve Police, coordinating with our partners to suspend all lending from international institutions to the government, and organizing the suspension of bilateral development assistance from the United States and our partners. On June 1 we sanctioned four major companies owned by the SAF and RSF.

Question. Despite repeated threats of sanctions and other accountability measures against Generals Burhan and Hemetti and Bashir-era Islamists, why hasn’t the Administration acted against any Sudanese individual or entity except one—the Central Reserve Police?

Answer. As directed by the President in his May 4 Executive Order, we are prepared to take actions against members of, and entities related to, the parties threatening the peace, security, and stability of Sudan. On June 1 we sanctioned four major companies owned by the SAF and RSF under this executive order.

Question. On May 4, President Biden issued an executive order (EO) imposing sanctions on certain persons destabilizing Sudan and undermining the goal of a democratic transition. However, as we have seen in Ethiopia, the Administration has not designated any individuals or entities for sanctions since the announcement of the EO. What is the Department of State’s perspective on designating Sudanese individuals and entities under the executive order issued by President Biden on May 4 related to Sudan?

Answer. As directed by the President in his May 4 Executive Order, we are prepared to take actions against members of, and entities related to, the parties threatening the peace, security, and stability of Sudan. This will remain the case as long as the forces do not uphold a ceasefire and allow unhindered humanitarian assistance. On June 1 we sanctioned four major companies owned by the SAF and RSF; this is our first tranche of designations.

Question. What accountability measures can this Committee expect will be used in the case of Sudan?

Answer. We will continue to consider a range of tools, including sanctions, to promote accountability.

Question. Ahmed Haroun, the former Minister of State for the Interior wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, is now at-large since his escape from prison following the outbreak of fighting in Sudan. Impunity for past atrocities has driven this and previous conflicts in Sudan. Biden administration officials have not announced any new rewards since stating it would be “reinvigorating” the War Crimes Rewards Program last year. Will the Department of State offer a reward for information leading to Ahmed Haroun’s arrest consistent with its commitments under the War Crimes Rewards Program?

Answer. We are aware that Ahmed Haroun was reported to be at-large. We are considering all available tools, including the War Crimes Rewards Program, to promote accountability for the people of Sudan.

Question. Accountability has long been a central component to calls by Sudanese citizens, including for atrocities committed during the genocide in Darfur, the Khartoum massacre committed by RSF forces in June 2019, and for state capture and corruption by the RSF and SAF. How will the Administration work with regional allies to promote accountability?

Answer. We remain committed to working with partners to call for and advance accountability efforts, and to encourage partners to establish authorities for measures that mirror U.S. authorities established under the May 4 Executive Order. In order to address concerns about state capture and corruption, we continue to urge partners, including regional actors, to avoid Sudanese gold and other industries that contribute to the conflict.

Question. What programming can the State Department and USAID support to strengthen civil society to promote accountability?

Answer. The Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) supports civil society-led human rights documentation in Sudan to pursue justice and accountability and prevent recurring cycles of violence. Despite the current inability to get funding into the country, documenters are continuing their work. DRL also supports documentation of illicit money flows, in order to hold corrupt officials accountable. DRL is exploring other options to support accountability in the context of the current conflict, including conflict related sexual violence.

Question. Civilian Engagement: The de facto exclusion of some significant facets of Sudanese civil society from formal processes, including internationally brokered peace agreements, has contributed to many of Sudan’s current problems. With civil society, politicians and members of the international community can aid Sudan’s transition to genuine civilian-led and pro-democratic governance. They can assist the many individuals in the SAF, RSF, and other militias to start participating in a demilitarized future. What steps will the Administration take to ensure civil society is invited and enabled to play a meaningful role in shaping what happens in Sudan next?

Answer. We are engaging with Sudanese civilian leaders, Resistance Committees, and civil society to work toward the shared goal of establishing civilian democratic governance in Sudan as soon as possible.

Question. In response to questions during the hearing, you repeatedly emphasized that Ambassador Godfrey is conducting outreach to Sudanese civilians in anticipation of them playing a role in future negotiations to restore the civilian-led transition in Sudan. We have heard from civilian partners of USAID implementers that they have yet to receive outreach from Ambassador Godfrey. Please provide more information on the civilian groups that Ambassador Godfrey has been in contact with since the outbreak of fighting.

Answer. Ambassador Godfrey and other interagency officials are engaging a broad range of Sudanese civilian leaders. This includes members of political parties, civil society organizations, labor and professional groups, Resistance Committees, univer-

sity professors, women and youth groups, and human rights advocates. As an example, Ambassador Godfrey recently joined A/S Phee and colleagues from USAID in convening a group of over 20 civilian leaders to discuss Sudanese initiatives to respond to the crisis.

Question. What is Ambassador Godfrey’s message to civilians when he engages them?

Answer. The United States stands with the people of Sudan. We want to see a democratic government led by civilians in Sudan—only a truly civilian government can be successful in delivering to the people of Sudan. We support the Sudanese people in restoring Sudan’s democratic transition and forming a civilian government.

Question. How will the Department ensure the inclusion and supremacy of civilian voices in future negotiation processes?

Answer. We are engaging now with civilian stakeholders on their initiatives to resolve the crisis and are committed to supporting their leadership when a political negotiation process begins.

Question. *The United Nations Integrated Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS):* The mandate of UNITAMS expires on June 3. Given the events of the last few weeks and the general inability of the Mission to fulfill its mandate since its establishment, what are the U.S. priorities for the mandate renewal in terms of substantive issues and the timeline for an extension?

Answer. We are preparing for negotiations to renew the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) mandate. Our goal is to secure a mandate renewal to enable UNITAMS to continue to use its good offices to work towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict, as well as demand the parties adhere to a ceasefire agreement, provide unhindered humanitarian access, and resume working towards a civilian-led political transition.

Question. What is the U.S. doing to communicate concerns and push for changes to improve the leadership and management of UNITAMS in Sudan?

Answer. We are deeply engaged with United Nations leadership and United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General Volker Perthes to coordinate our response to the crisis and support the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan mandate.

Question. What are the accomplishments of UNITAMS in Darfur and what continues to be the Mission’s deficiencies in this region?

Answer. To implement its mandate, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) has provided support for the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and reinforced peacebuilding in Darfur. UNITAMS also provided technical assistance to strengthen the National Mechanism for the Protection of Civilians and state-level protection of civilian committees. The outbreak of fighting in April in Darfur highlights the need for further United Nations efforts in mitigating conflict.

Question. *SOUTH AFRICA:* Last week, a delegation of senior South African officials travelled to the United States to meet with State Department officials, ostensibly about the U.S.-South Africa relationship. Then, on May 11, U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Brigety, in a press conference in Johannesburg, “bet [his] life” on the claim that South African weapons and ammunition were loaded onto Russian vessel the “Lady R” from December 6–8, 2022. South Africa’s foreign ministry has denied the claim. Was Ambassador Brigety authorized to accuse the South African Government of supplying arms to Russia publicly? If no, why not?

Answer. Ambassador Brigety was authorized to speak with local South African press about the visit in early May of a delegation of South African officials to Washington, DC. Those meetings in early May included discussion of the “Lady R” and South Africa’s assurance that an investigation was underway, as President Ramaphosa subsequently confirmed in a statement. As Ambassador Brigety subsequently clarified, as did the Department of State spokesperson, we intend to keep conversations with the South Africans regarding our serious concerns in diplomatic channels moving forward.

Question. What shifts will be made in the Biden administration’s policy toward South Africa given this clear violation of South Africa’s own policy of non-alignment and neutrality?

Answer. As is the case with many countries, we work with South Africa on our many important shared priorities—including trade, health, and climate change—

while being frank and clear when we disagree, such as South Africa's policy toward Russia. Where we see evidence of South Africa taking actions that bely its stated policy of nonalignment, we will continue to convey those concerns to South African officials.

Question. Will South Africa's eligibility for preferential trade benefits under the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* be revoked given the statutory requirement that beneficiary countries "not engage in activities that undermine United States national security or foreign policy interests"?

Answer. The annual *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) review process, in which the Department of the State and the interagency review each country's eligibility, has just begun. We are unable to predetermine the Department of State's position on AGOA eligibility.

Question. How is the State Department engaged with the United States Trade Representative on South Africa's AGOA eligibility?

Answer. The Department of State and the United States Trade Representative are in regular contact regarding *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) matters. AGOA eligibility is determined by the Trade Policy Staff Committee, which consists of multiple agencies across the U.S. Government.

Question. If there is evidence that elements within South Africa's Government or ruling ANC party took part in facilitating a reported arms transfer to Russia, will the Administration use its existing authorities to hold those individuals and entities accountable?

Answer. We do not publicly preview sanctions decisions. The Biden-Harris administration has shown that it does not hesitate to use existing authorities as appropriate to promote accountability and curtail Putin's ability to fund and supply his war machine.

Question. MOZAMBIQUE: Please provide an update on the State Department's efforts on the case of U.S. citizen Ryan Koher? While Koher is no longer detained, he has yet to be formally charged with a crime, he remains under investigation and unable to depart Mozambique due to the confiscation of his passport.

Answer. Mr. Koher was granted provisional release from prison on March 14. As the investigation is ongoing, Mr. Koher is unable to work or leave the country and is not in possession of his passport. The embassy requested a meeting with the Office of the Attorney General to discuss the ongoing investigation and remains in contact with Mr. Koher, his legal team, and relevant Government of Mozambique officials regarding this case.

Question. COUP RESTRICTIONS: In Africa, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea are subject to coup-related restrictions on foreign aid under Section 7008 (P.L. 117-328, Division K) of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act* of 2023. What is the current State Department guidance on the application of Section 7008 in cases where coups have occurred?

Answer. The Department of State restricts obligations and expenditures of funds appropriated by the Department of State, Foreign Operations, or *Related Programs Appropriations Act* for the government of any country whose duly elected head of government has been deposed by military coup d'état or decree or a coup d'état or decree in which the military plays a decisive role. Assistance subject to this restriction may be resumed to such government if the Secretary of State certifies and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that after the termination of assistance a democratically elected government has taken office. For fiscal year 2023 funds, the Secretary of State, following consultation with the heads of relevant federal agencies, may also waive the restriction on a program-by-program basis if the Secretary certifies and reports to the Committees on Appropriations that such a waiver is in the national security interest of the United States, subject to consultation with and notification to the Committees. In addition, certain assistance subject to the restriction may be provided under other available authorities.

Question. In your view, is the Department of State making full use of its waiver and notwithstanding authorities provided under the Section 7008 of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act* of 2023 on coup-related restrictions to U.S. foreign aid appropriations? If no, why not?

Answer. The Secretary has not yet exercised the waiver authority under section 7008(b) of the fiscal year 2023 *Appropriations Act*. The waiver is available only with respect to fiscal year 2023 funds, which are still in the process of being allocated

consistent with section 653(a) of the *Foreign Assistance Act*, and therefore are not available for obligation or the application of Section 7008.

Question. ELECTIONS: Elections are expected to be called for late July in Zimbabwe. In addition to the persistent restrictions on political and civic space in Zimbabwe and the regular use of the institutions and resources of the state to the benefit of the ruling ZANU–PF party, the pre-election period in Zimbabwe has been marred by: the jailing (without bail) and convictions of opposition leaders and critical voices on politically-motivated charges; the threat of draconian legislation regulating NGOs; and significant flaws in the voter registration process. What is the State Department’s view on the prospects for democratic elections in Zimbabwe later this year?

Answer. The Government of Zimbabwe has tilted the playing field in the ruling ZANU–PF’s favor using intimidation, coercion, patronage, lawfare tactics, and at times, violence. Absent significant change in the immediate term, it is difficult to see how this can lead to free and fair elections in 2023.

Question. At what point do the pre-election conditions make it impossible for Zimbabwe to hold legitimate democratic elections?

Answer. The United States will use all tools at its disposal to determine whether the 2023 elections in Zimbabwe are free and fair. We remain concerned about the worrying trends in the lead-up to the elections, including the Government of Zimbabwe’s use of intimidation, coercion, patronage, lawfare tactics, and at times, violence.

Question. Elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are expected for December of this year. In addition to the logistical challenges posed by holding nation-wide elections in DRC, the ongoing State of Seige and conflict in Eastern Congo, exacerbated by the presence of Rwanda-backed M23 rebels and the delays in conducting a legitimate voter registration exercise (among other issues) make it near certain that elections will be delayed and/or impossible to hold across the country. What lessons did the State Department learn from its handling of the 2019 electoral process in DRC, including the controversial “victory” of President Tshisekedi?

Answer. Successful elections in 2023 should be free and fair, with inclusive, transparent, and impartial electoral processes and held in accordance with constitutional deadlines. President Tshisekedi has firmly expressed his commitment to free, fair, and on time elections, but we will remain engaged at the highest levels throughout the elections planning process to press the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to take the necessary legal, financial, and technical actions to ensure a better election in 2023.

Question. Has the United States been satisfied with the Presidency of Felix Tshisekedi, which it was quick to support as the winner of the 2019 elections despite serious questions about the legitimacy of the outcome?

Answer. Since he assumed power in 2019, President Tshisekedi and his administration have shown a commitment to working closely with the United States on areas of bilateral interest, including peace in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), environmental conservation, public health, and strategic minerals. Although governance in the DRC has been far from perfect, with ongoing corruption and human rights concerns, concrete gains have been made. Our bilateral relationship has allowed us to engage critically with the DRC Government on combatting trafficking-in-persons, anticorruption efforts, and professionalization of the Congolese security sector.

Question. How is the State Department engaging with Congolese officials, including President Tshisekedi, on the challenges to the electoral process?

Answer. The Department of State continues to call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to ensure that political and civic space remains open in the lead up to the elections so that the Congolese people can express their views peacefully. This message was delivered by both the President and the Secretary at the U.S.-Africa Leaders’ Summit and has been consistently reiterated in our subsequent bilateral engagements. The United States is the largest donor of funding for activities in support of free and fair 2023 elections, providing \$24.75 million to strengthen electoral process transparency and electoral administration, improve civic education, and empower communities to participate in elections.

Question. What accountability measures are being discussed for spoilers to elections in DRC?

Answer. The U.S. Government is willing to consider the full range of diplomatic and legal tools, including sanctions, in order to promote accountability and help ensure the DRC can hold free and fair elections in accordance with constitutional deadlines.

Question. Will the United States support the legitimate winner of elections in DRC, even if that is not President Tshisekedi?

Answer. Yes.

Question. SOMALIA: Is the violent extremist organization al-Shabaab present and/or operating in and/or around the city of Laascaanood or more broadly in the regions of Sool and Sanaag in eastern Somaliland?

Answer. There are reports that al-Shabaab members are present and operating in Laascaanood and Eastern Somaliland.

RESPONSES OF MS. SARAH CHARLES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Sudan: When Administrator Power appeared before this Committee 2 weeks ago, I expressed serious concern about humanitarian aid diversion in Ethiopia. We have since learned of another region where vital U.S. food aid has shown up for sale. I remain deeply concerned by the dire humanitarian situation in Sudan but am unclear what steps USAID will take to mitigate a repeat performance of massive food aid diversion.

Ms. Charles, how will USAID ensure food and other humanitarian aid reach the intended recipients in Sudan?

Answer. Assistance saves lives and reflects the goodwill of the American people. It is egregious that parties in Sudan are deliberately targeting aid and aid workers. Even under very difficult environments like Sudan we are redoubling our efforts on risk mitigation. In Sudan, USAID assigned an expert on risk management to the Sudan response. In light of the evolving context in Sudan, including the closure of the banking system posing significant challenges to implementing partners' ability to operate, USAID developed and shared with partners additional guidance on the use of hawalas and mobile money should partners need to utilize these alternatives. USAID also requires non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to submit a Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) as part of their applications for funding in Sudan. As part of these RAMPs, all NGO applicants must demonstrate that they have assessed the risks of fraud, waste, abuse, and other misuses of U.S. Government resources.

Question. What lessons are you learning from and adapting to in real-time from the discovery of the deeply disturbing theft of food aid in Ethiopia so this does not happen in Sudan?

Answer. USAID is currently assessing developments and lessons from both the Ethiopia and Sudan contexts to apply to global humanitarian risk mitigation measures. While the developments in Ethiopia and Sudan have both been disheartening, the circumstances and context in those two crises are significantly different. Nonetheless, USAID looks to mitigate risks in any context we operate in, and we are taking steps to ensure our assistance going forward accounts for the different risks present in both countries.

USAID closely monitors attempts to influence or divert our assistance across all contexts, and we continue to call for the respect of humanitarian personnel, facilities, and equipment, so life-saving assistance may continue to reach those who are in need. In Ethiopia, the organized diversion that we uncovered was occurring in a systematic and organized fashion, facilitated by the Government of Ethiopia's unique role in beneficiary targeting and storage of food assistance. Ultimately, it is our assessment that that type of diversion is highly unlikely to occur in Sudan because neither the Government of Sudan nor the parties to the unfolding conflict have such roles with respect to our assistance and the chaotic and kinetic environment prohibits them from doing so.

The diversion that has occurred in Sudan, to date, has been much more opportunistic and rooted in the theft or destruction of commodities by armed actors prior to distribution, rather than the coordinated and organized diversion of commodities seen in the Ethiopia context. The mechanisms to mitigate this risk in Sudan include ensuring partners are minimizing the storage of commodities near contact areas whenever possible, expediting the speed with which commodities move from warehouse to communities, and actively messaging that the theft of commodities will not be tolerated and that the USG is watching and will hold looters accountable.

USAID's trusted humanitarian partners working in Sudan are familiar with operating in active conflict contexts like the current situation, and they work to mitigate these risks accordingly.

Our colleagues in the region continue to coordinate with partners to gather information regarding humanitarian needs, engage with key stakeholders, and determine best ways to quickly, effectively, and safely deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need within and outside Sudan where conditions allow.

Question. Sudan: Assistance to Support Implementation of Framework Agreement: The U.S. was preparing to commit significant resources to support the transitional process and government under a much-anticipated framework deal that ultimately collapsed into civil war. I understand USAID previewed this assistance package to my staff.

Ms. Charles, what assistance had USAID planned for the transition process and the government had the framework agreement been successful and the fighting did not occur?

Answer. Following the revolution and the imperative to support the civilian-led government, USAID ramped up programming after years of maintaining a modest program focused on support to civil society and peacebuilding. The opening democratic space, coupled with significant resources provided by Congress, enabled both USAID and the Department of State to expand programs, including support to the nascent governance structures under the new government. USAID was supporting Sudan's democratic transition by strengthening civilian political leadership; promoting respect for human rights, including freedom of expression and the right of peaceful assembly; and supporting the Sudanese people's demand for an end to their military's long-standing domination of politics and the economy. This included efforts to explore anti-corruption and transparency mechanisms, support for transitional justice and human rights, and opportunities to support security sector reform.

Following the military takeover in October 2021 USAID pivoted programming away from supporting Government of Sudan institutions.

Had the framework agreement held and a government genuinely led by civilians been formed, USAID programs would have pivoted back to a posture of support for a transitional government including for elections preparations, helping marginalized communities throughout Sudan to participate in the transition, engaging with private sector actors to bolster Sudan's economy, and supporting the Sudanese people's demand for democracy, justice, and accountability.

Question. How does USAID intend to use these funds to support the framework agreement now that it is dead, and what long-term plans is the Agency developing to adapt our massive assistance portfolio in Sudan to the current context?

Answer. USAID's assistance will work on many levels, including support for local initiatives that help meet basic emergency needs and reinforcement of civilian initiatives aimed at shaping a path to civilian rule. USAID will work closely with Sudanese civilian leaders and our implementing partners, in consultation with Congress, to determine the most effective ways to use our funding to support the Sudanese people's democratic aspirations. USAID is working closely with our partners to determine what adjustments we need to make with current funding, and we will continue to assess the needs to adjust future programming. USAID has made these types of adjustments before in Sudan and are confident not only that programming can continue in this context, but that it can have positive effects. The current context demonstrates the importance of broad, flexible, and adaptable programming that provides consistent, long-term support in critical sectors such as democracy and governance, agriculture (to address increasing food insecurity) and health.

Question. Risk Management: USAID has many personnel within its ranks who are well-versed in Sudan, related conflict dynamics, and the country's politics. I understand one of your colleagues is even a part of the negotiating team currently in Jeddah and regularly advises the Assistant Secretary on Sudan issues. Despite this expertise, USAID seemed ill-prepared for the very predictable scenario that played out in Khartoum.

Many implementing partners tell my staff USAID did little to warn them of the mounting risk. USAID-funded partners continued to have consultants and staff stream into the country in the tense days leading up to the outbreak of fighting. Why didn't your team's experts recognize the threat and take better steps to warn implementing partners, especially as RSF and SAF forces flowed into Khartoum?

Answer. USAID prioritizes safety for our staff and our partners above all. When USAID receives credible, actionable information that could jeopardize the safety of staff or staff partners, we share it with them. There was no recent history of rapid-onset, large-scale violence in Khartoum as most violence had been in other parts of

the country. As people evacuated, USAID hosted partner calls to communicate the information it had.

Question. Localization: Low capacity to effectively manage U.S. foreign assistance resources and protect against waste, fraud, and abuse can act as an impediment to efforts to “localize” aid. Still, with the appropriate safeguards in place, the evacuation of international aid organizations from conflict areas of Sudan may give USAID an opportunity to further operationalize Administrator Power’s localization agenda, to support locally-led responses, and to push back against a state-centric model of aid.

Is USAID appropriately positioned to expand its work with local implementers to respond to the expanding conflict and increasing levels of need in Sudan?

Answer. Yes, USAID is appropriately positioned to expand our support for local implementing partners to meet current needs. Through our longstanding support to civil society in Sudan, we have established networks with local organizations that focus on peacebuilding, democracy building, human rights, and social cohesion. Some of our activities are flexible grants-under-contract models that support local initiatives and organizations, and are particularly well suited to respond to changing scenarios and needs through targeted, small-scale activities that pilot new models or approaches and can build confidence for subsequent efforts to scale-up. Our assistance will work on many levels, including support for local initiatives that help meet basic emergency needs and reinforcing civilian initiatives aimed at shaping a path to civilian rule. To this end, USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) supports 65 local civil society and community organizations in support of increasing civilian participation in the democratic transition process, and increasing access to reliable information.

For the crisis response, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) plans to fund multiple local organizations as sub-awardees under awards to public international organization and international non-governmental organization (NGO) partners. With fiscal year 2022 funding, BHA is supporting 37 local organizations to provide humanitarian assistance as sub-awardees through the Rapid Response Fund implemented by the International Organization for Migration, through existing USAID awards with international NGOs, and through the United Nations Development Program-administered Sudan Humanitarian Fund, which can disburse emergency allocations to support multi-sectoral interventions across Sudan through national non-governmental organizations. These programs are focused on health; nutrition; agriculture; protection; economic recovery and market systems; shelter and settlements; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

As USAID is continuing the review of applications for humanitarian assistance funding and fine-tuning the response strategy, we expect an increase in local partner involvement. USAID anticipates that humanitarian funding will continue to be channeled to more local NGO or community-based organization partners through sub-grants. Our local partners have a key role in the delivery of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, agriculture, and multipurpose cash services.

Question. What safeguards have already been put in place, or will soon be put in place, to accelerate this shift?

Answer. Each mechanism that USAID utilizes to work with local partners to implement humanitarian assistance has risk mitigation processes built in to safeguard American taxpayer resources. For example, USAID’s prime partners that provide sub-awards to local NGOs have several measures to reduce risk of fraud, waste, and abuse, including BHA-approved oversight strategies, required compliance monitoring, and provisions requiring prevention of support to sanctioned groups or individuals which flow down to each sub-awardee. Additionally, mechanisms that USAID supports, like the Sudan Humanitarian Fund and International Organization for Migration’s Rapid Response Fund, which are designed to provide streamlined and flexible grant application and disbursement processes, also include several due diligence measures, such as screening prospective partners against the Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) specially designated nationals list and UN Sanctions lists. USAID regularly cross checks all proposed sub-awardees against the OFAC and UN sanctions lists for updated information and keeps filing records.

Question. Localization: Citizen groups are coming together to lead community responses that already have helped reduce mortality and suffering. By building upon these grassroots responses, USAID can help bolster community mobilization at a time when spoilers are exploiting the political vacuum.

How will USAID work to support and fund these local actors?

Answer. Many of the grassroots civil society organizations instrumental to the 2019 uprising and preserving the civil and democratic gain after it have pivoted to emergency response to support their communities. Many of these organizations were USAID partners prior to the conflict and USAID continues to assist grassroots civil society actors, supporting them to shift their efforts and address their communities' emergency needs. This includes partners spearheading community coordination response efforts in Port Sudan. This pivot will help the communities receiving this urgently needed assistance to withstand the immediate shocks of the conflict. Many of these grassroots members wear many hats in their communities—they are first responders, caretakers, and community mobilizers, and they rightly desire a say in the political future of Sudan. While these grassroots members provide urgent relief to their communities, their efforts will also help nurture the space necessary for greater citizen engagement, leadership, and inclusion in coordination about peace and governance in Sudan. USAID stands poised to ramp up support as opportunities arise.

Question. Humanitarian Assistance: As conflict expands and humanitarian needs rise, it is critical that providers move swiftly and efficiently to respond. At the same time, it is necessary for aid to be conflict sensitive and avoid deepening social, economic, and/or political fault lines or tensions.

What steps is USAID taking to ensure its responses are locally appropriate and conflict sensitive?

Answer. USAID takes many measures to ensure that its programs fit the local context in any country it operates. For example, USAID ensures humanitarian assistance is conflict sensitive by using humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity, and independence as guidelines for implementation. This means that implementing partners provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable—regardless of demographic characteristics or affiliation—based on needs assessments that are carried out by humanitarian experts. USAID's humanitarian assistance is also implemented by independent public international organizations and non-governmental organizations, not through government agencies or other affiliated groups.

The majority of humanitarian delivery in Sudan is done in partnership with local organizations, and they will continue to be the bedrock of the humanitarian response based on their unique capacities, local knowledge, important networks, and trust and acceptance among communities. USAID has flexible mechanisms in place, like the International Organization for Migration's Rapid Response Fund, and supports the Sudan Humanitarian Fund, to provide immediate funding to local partners. Providing support through these organizations and mechanisms allows for flexibility to respond to the most appropriate needs within the context while incorporating the expertise of local partners.

Question. Humanitarian Assistance: Historically, warring factions (including governments) have sought to exercise significant control over humanitarian operations, including by determining which organizations will be granted permission to work in an area of conflict, whether and which international staff will be granted entry to join the response, who those organizations can hire locally, where they can travel, and to whom, where, and how assistance will be targeted. Many also seek to materially benefit from aid operations, including by directing or manipulating procurements for security, commodities, and transport and storage. Moreover, warring factions often seek to relieve international pressure for accountability by leveraging humanitarian access.

How will international donors avoid re-empowering and legitimizing NISS/HAC, along with SAF and NCP, through their manipulation and control over international aid efforts?

Answer. USAID has engaged the Department of State as well as international donors to coordinate joint advocacy on humanitarian access in both bilateral and multilateral fora and will continue to do so. USAID also remains in close contact with our implementing partners and have asked them to raise humanitarian access issues they encounter to ensure that our advocacy is specific and targeted at the appropriate authorities. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) continually assesses risks affecting its assistance, including in Sudan. We—and our implementing partners—are closely monitoring attempts by the SAF and RSF to control, divert, or otherwise influence the delivery of our assistance. This includes actions the Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) may take.

Question. What specifically is the U.S. Government doing to ensure the international humanitarian response does not empower or materially benefit these parties and, instead, hold them personally accountable for this violence?

Answer. USAID places the highest priority on ensuring the agency and its partners use taxpayer funds wisely, effectively, and for their intended purpose. USAID has robust risk analysis processes that examine the risk of our assistance being used for malign purposes in Sudan. We are continuously working with partners to safely and effectively deliver humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected people based on humanitarian principles, and we take seriously any allegation of USAID assistance being diverted from the intended beneficiaries. For example, USAID/BHA requires non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to submit a Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) as part of their applications for funding in Sudan. As part of these RAMPs, all NGO applicants must demonstrate that they have assessed the risks of fraud, waste, abuse, and other misuses of U.S. Government resources.

BHA also has a Risk Management Advisor assigned to support BHA's Sudan Complex Emergency Response Management Team and Disaster Assistance Response Team, which leads the USG response to the crisis, on risk mitigation matters. USAID continues to work closely with its existing humanitarian partners to ensure they have proper risk mitigation systems in place to ensure that ongoing U.S. taxpayer-funded humanitarian assistance is reaching and being utilized by those for whom it is intended.

Finally, all USAID applicants and recipients are required, pursuant to their award, to disclose in writing to the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG), with a copy to the cognizant Agreement Officer, all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award.

We also refer you to the Departments of Treasury and State for additional information about their efforts to pursue accountability, including under Executive Order 13067 and 13400 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/05/04/executive-order-on-imposing-sanctions-on-certain-persons-destabilizing-sudan-and-undermining-the-goal-of-a-democratic-transition/>).

Question. Humanitarian Assistance: Humanitarian needs created by this conflict are significant not only for Sudan but also neighboring countries, who are struggling to cope with an influx of refugees seeking safety.

How is the U.S. Government responding to the crisis in neighboring countries, including the refugee response?

Answer. As access and security permit, U.S.-funded humanitarian partners are present at the borders and are working with local authorities to provide services to those in need. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) programs are helping to support the needs of displaced people who have crossed into neighboring countries from Sudan. USAID partner, the UN World Food Program, continues to support Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. We continue to call on all parties to allow safe access for humanitarian agencies and their workers to those in need, including those in border areas. For additional information on refugee programming in neighboring countries, we refer you to the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR PETE RICKETTS

Question. Evacuation of American Citizens: When responding to my question on why our allies conducted evacuations sooner than the United States, you replied that there was a coordinated division of labor between the United States and our partners in which our allies would be responsible for air evacuations from the Wadi Seidna airfield near Khartoum. At the same time, the U.S. would be responsible for the land evacuation. On April 23, French President Emmanuel Macron confirmed that a plane had arrived in Djibouti carrying French citizens. Another French evacuation took place on Monday, taking the total number of people evacuated to 388. On April 24, reports indicated that four German Air Force planes had evacuated more than 400 people from Sudan as of Monday. And on Tuesday, April 25, the U.K. announced it was starting air evacuations for British nationals. In an April 23 Security Alert from the U.S. Embassy in Sudan, the alert said, "Due to the uncertain security situation in Khartoum and closure of the airport, it is not currently safe to undertake a U.S. Government-coordinated evacuation of private U.S. citizens. It does not mention coordination with allies on air evacuations nor advise U.S. citizens of the option. In an April 24 update from the U.S. Embassy in Sudan titled "Situation in Sudan: Information for U.S. Citizens in Sudan," the embassy repeated that it could not undertake a U.S. Government-coordinated evacuation of private

U.S. citizens while also saying that “for those who are able to depart Port Sudan via ferry, U.S. Government officials are also receiving citizens in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.” Again, it does not mention coordination with allies on air evacuations nor advise U.S. citizens of the option. On this same date (April 24), National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, John Kirby, said “it is not safe right now for another evacuation attempt” and that all Americans who haven’t already heeded warnings to leave Sudan should shelter-in-place due to violence in Khartoum. An April 25 Security Alert from the U.S. Embassy in Sudan said, “There are options to depart Sudan, but you must decide the safest and best method of departure for yourself and your family.” Yet again, it does not mention coordination with allies on air evacuations nor advise U.S. citizens of the option. Regarding the “division of labor” mentioned during your testimony, when was that division of labor decided upon within the U.S. Government and on what date did we begin that coordination with those partner nations?

Answer. We respectfully defer to Department of Defense on their communications regarding flight landing permissions at Wadi Seidna Military Air Base. In addition to our widely-disseminated Security Alerts, the Department of State communicated directly with U.S. citizens who expressed an interest in departing Sudan via messages sent through email, WhatsApp, SMS, direct phone calls, and other means. We communicated with our international partners from the onset of the crisis to exchange information on departure options as they developed; we shared these options with U.S. citizens who held the appropriate U.S. travel documents. As a result of this communication, a number of U.S. citizens who could safely get to the airport did depart on Allied flights.

Question. If the U.S. had a coordinated division of labor whereby our allies would evacuate U.S. citizens by air, why did the U.S. Embassy in Sudan not put that specific information out in an alert or an update when allies began air evacuations on April 23, 24, and 25?

Answer. The Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs communicated directly via email, text, and social media to convey these options to U.S. citizens who expressed an interest in departing Sudan and who held the appropriate U.S. travel documents. We communicated directly with U.S. citizens who expressed an interest in departing Sudan that international partners offered various options, and that communication was updated daily as departure options changed quickly and often.

Question. How did the State Department expect American citizens in Sudan to know they could evacuate via air via our allies when they began their air evacuations?

Answer. The Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs communicated directly via email, text, and WhatsApp to convey to U.S. citizens who expressed an interest in departing Sudan and who held the appropriate U.S. travel documents that international partners offered various options, and that communication was updated daily as departure options changed quickly and often. A number of U.S. citizens did depart on Allied flights as a result of our messages.

Question. Why did the National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, John Kirby, advise that all Americans who haven’t already heeded warnings to leave Sudan to shelter-in-place due to violence in Khartoum on April 24 when allied countries had already begun air evacuations and there was an understanding that they would take U.S. citizens?

Answer. We respectfully defer to the National Security Council on questions regarding information they conveyed to U.S. citizens in Sudan.

Question. Precisely how many U.S. citizens were evacuated and on what dates as part of the U.S. military-facilitated embassy evacuation?

Answer. Between April 22 and May 3, 2023, the Department of State, in coordination with Department of Defense, assisted more than 700 individuals to depart Khartoum to Port Sudan via three separate land convoys; approximately 280 of those were U.S. citizens. In total, the Department of State directly or indirectly assisted the departure of more than 2,000 individuals from Sudan, 1,300 of whom were U.S. citizens many of whom were provided guidance on how to depart via commercial ferry from Port Sudan, via overland borders or on Allied flights.

Question. Precisely how many U.S. citizens were evacuated and on what dates as part of the partner nation flights?

Answer. Our records indicate that at least 340 U.S. citizens departed Sudan on flights chartered by foreign governments from April 23 to May 12, 2023. This number likely underestimates the total number of U.S. citizens that departed on flights

chartered by our partners. There were additional flights where foreign government (allies and partners) manifests were not provided to the State Department. In addition, there were likely dual nationals on some of the flights who were not counted as U.S. citizens. Finally, a small number of U.S. citizens who arrived in Saudi Arabia by airplane, instead of by ship, may not have been included in this estimate.

Question. Precisely how many U.S. citizens were evacuated and on what dates as part of the three U.S.-facilitated convoys (28 April to 2 May)?

Answer. Approximately 280 U.S. citizens were evacuated as part of the U.S. facilitated convoys. The first convoy arrived in Port Sudan on April 29; the second convoy arrived in Port Sudan on April 30; and the third convoy arrived in Port Sudan on May 1.

Question. Precisely how many U.S. citizens were evacuated and on what dates as part of the UN convoy on April 23?

Answer. The Department of State assisted the successful United Nations-led relocation of 1,300 United Nations, NGO, and diplomatic personnel, including 78 U.S. citizens, to Port Sudan on April 25.

Question. In response to my question, you noted that the U.S. “had in place a broad warden system that captured about 5,000 Americans.” Also, in your response to Senator Cardin’s related evacuation questions, you noted the U.S. pushed out warden messages “I think 12 times so far about various options for leaving the country traveling on flights with allies or this overland convoy.” Please share with the Committee the warden messages sent to U.S. citizens registered with the Department in Sudan, by date.

Answer. The Department of State transmitted 15 security messages (Security Alerts) to U.S. citizens from April 13 to May 12, 2023. In addition, the Department also sent 19 messages directly to those individuals registered in our case management system. Please see the complete timeline below.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS MESSAGING ON THE SUDAN CRISIS

All times ET.

Friday, May 12, 2023

4:45 PM: Message (CACMS/Security Alert) sent to the full universe of registrants informing them that Consular services are available in neighboring countries for those who choose to depart on their own and information on possible commercial options to depart Sudan (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-update-on-sudan-may-12-2023/>).

Thursday, May 4, 2023

1:00 AM: Message (CACMS/Security Alert) sent to the full universe of registrants informing them of commercial options to depart Sudan via ferry (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-update-on-sudan-departure-information-may-4-2023/>).

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

12:40 PM: Message (CACMS) sent to all active cases advising not to go to the Hotel Coral in Port Sudan and not to go to Fenti Golf in Khartoum.

10:30 AM: Message (CACMS) sent to all active cases advising not to go to the Hotel Coral, as no further assistance will be provided.

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

2:30 PM: Message (CACMS/Security Alert) sent to the full universe of registrants informing them that consular services are available in neighboring countries (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-updated-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-sudan-may-2-2023-at-830-p-m/>) for those who choose to depart and that the U.S. Government has completed all currently planned convoys to Port Sudan.

Monday, May 1, 2023

8:00 AM: Message (CACMS) sent to the full universe of registrants advising them we are unaware of additional flights from Wadi Seidna airport and sharing information on border crossings.

Sunday, April 30, 2023

10:00 PM: Message (CACMS) sent to the full universe of registrants advising that they should seek to leave by commercially available means.

10:00 PM (approx.): Update on Information for U.S. Citizens (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/situation-in-sudan-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-sudan-2/>) posted on Embassy Khartoum website (posted on TravelGov May 1).

Saturday, April 29, 2023

8:00 PM: Message (CACMS) and SMS sent to the full universe of registrants advising them of convoy C times and rally point. WhatsApp messages sent to all cases reported “ready to depart.” Calls made to all high-profile, USG-adjacent, and Congressional cases with this message.

2:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to verified U.S. citizens who were ready to depart asking them to notify CA if they have departed Sudan, and if not, verify they are still requesting assistance.

1:30 AM: Security Alert on avoiding Wadi Seidna airfield.

Friday, April 28, 2023

3:36 PM: Message (CACMS and USEvacSudan@state.gov) sent to individuals opting into the convoy B with times and rally point.

3:30 PM: Message (CACMS) sent to the full universe of registrants advising them to make contact if they wanted assistance departing on convoy B.

3:15 PM: Topper at Department Press Briefing on advice and assistance to U.S. citizens.

02:00 AM: Repeat Message (USEvacSudan@state.gov) sent to U.S. citizens who indicated they would take convoy A. Email includes timing and rally point information.

Thursday, April 27, 2023

9:30 PM: Message (USEvacSudan@state.gov) sent to 147 U.S. citizens who indicated they would take convoy A. Email includes timing and rally point information.

1:30 PM: Message (CACMS) transmitted to the full universe of registrants who expressed interest in departure regarding convoy A.

TravelGov post (<https://twitter.com/TravelGov/status/1651641198191190025>) urging U.S. citizens to fill out CACMS form posted across all of CA’s social media platforms.

U.S. Embassy Khartoum’s website updated to have CACMS form link appear in banner on all pages; large image with form link added to home page.

11:30 AM: Secretary Blinken holds press briefing (<https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-secretary-of-homeland-security-alejandro-mayorkas-at-a-joint-press-availability/>) with DHS and mentions convoy.

10:30 AM: Message (CACMS) transmitted to active cases notifying of flights opportunities at Wadi Seidna Airfield.

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

10:30 PM: Message (WhatsApp and SMS) sent to all verified U.S. citizens, ready to depart notifying them to go to Wadi Seidna Airfield.

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

7:30 PM: Message (SMS) sent to all verified U.S. citizens, ready to depart in Khartoum notifying them to go to Wadi Seidna Airfield.

5:00 PM: Security Alert on Port Sudan and land border options (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert/>). Red banner linking to Embassy Alerts page added to state.gov.

10:00 AM: Message (WhatsApp, SMS, and calls) sent to all verified U.S. citizens, ready to depart in Khartoum notifying them to go to Wadi Seidna Airfield.

Monday, April 24, 2023

11:06 PM: Security alert on border crossing info for neighboring countries also sent to all active cases in CACMS (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/situation-in-sudan-information-for-u-s-citizens-in-sudan/>).

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Red banner (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/situation-in-sudan-2023.html>) added to travel.state.gov containing CACMS link and STEP info (additional info continues to be added and removed as situations unfolds)

10:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to all active cases regarding Suspension of Operations Security Alert.

6:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to all active cases regarding Saudi vessel (Amama) in Port Sudan.

Saturday, April 22, 2023

11:00 PM: Security alert on suspension of Embassy operations and sharing link to CACMS form (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-suspension-of-embassy-operations/>)

11:00 PM: Travel Advisory updated to reflect ordered departure of U.S. direct hire employees and family members. Pushed out via media note (<https://www.state.gov/sudan-travel-advisory-remains-level-4-do-not-travel/>) and amplified on TravelGov social media/websites, per normal SOP.

10:00 PM: Message (CACMS) to all active cases regarding a UAE convoy.

3:16 AM: Security Alert on security challenges in country (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/sudan-security-alert/>)

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

6:50 PM: Security Alert on ongoing violence and reports of assaults, home invasions, and looting (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-5/>).

3:29 PM: Travelgov social media post with contact info (<https://twitter.com/TravelGov/status/1648770894003683328>) advising U.S. citizens to contact the Embassy via email or phone and sign up for STEP.

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

9:45 AM: Security Alert noting ongoing fighting, gunfire, and security force activity, advising shelter in place (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-18-april-2023/>)

Sunday April 16, 2023

10:00 AM: Security Alert on situation and advising to remain indoors and shelter in place until further notice (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-4/>)

Saturday April 15, 2023

Security Alert on continuing to shelter in place (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-3/>)

Security Alert urging shelter in place and stating no plans for U.S. Government-coordinated evacuation of U.S. citizens (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-3/>).

Security Alert recommending shelter in place (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-2/>)

Travel.Gov published a consolidated post (<https://twitter.com/TravelGov/status/1647338067823304704?s=20>) at 4:36 p.m. for Saturday alerts.

Thursday, April 13, 2023

9:40 AM: Security Alert advising U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Karima, Northern Sudan, and surrounding areas (<https://sd.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-khartoum-april-13-2023/>)

Background

Except where noted, every Sudan alert is:

- pushed out to STEP enrollees
- posted on Embassy Khartoum’s website
- posted on the TSG country page for Sudan (using a script that pulls from the embassy’s page)
- amplified by CA on social media

Question. In response to my question on whether there were contingency plans in place to work with allied nations prior to April 15 in the event of significant conflict breaking out, you said “We do continual planning with our allies and partners largely based at our military commands . . . for all high-threat posts and various contingencies.” However, you continue, “With regard to this decision on the division of labor, it had to do with various concerns about who was best positioned to do what at the time and it was negotiated and arranged in real-time at AFRICOM in Djibouti as well as in AFRICOM in Stuttgart with our allies.” If the Department conducts continual planning with all high-threat posts and various contingencies, why was it necessary to negotiate and arrange in real-time this division of labor to rely on allies for air evacuations of American citizens?

Answer. Embassy Khartoum, like all posts worldwide, regularly updates its Emergency Action Plans, which include contingency plans for evacuations. All plans need

refinement based on real-time information, such as the availability of military assets, conditions on the ground, and risks associated with evacuation routes. The Department's advanced contingency planning took into consideration U.S. military base locations and general assets available at these locations, but still needed to be updated in real-time to reflect availability of assets and adjust route options based on the threat picture at specific locations, including the airports, and on major roads, which changed hourly.

RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. Many view the chaotic and disorganized evacuation of Sudan as the latest example of the Biden administration's long list of foreign policy failures. Why did this Administration fail to see the warning signs early enough to prevent another emergency evacuation?

Answer. The Department was aware of and took action over many weeks to address tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF). We engaged in near constant diplomacy, often working closely with civilians, to defuse tensions between the SAF and RSF. The Secretaries of State and Defense as well as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Phee, repeatedly engaged Sudanese actors to try to bring about a negotiated settlement.

Question. Why did the U.S. strategy to guide Sudan to democracy end in war?

Answer. Our strategy focused on supporting a Sudanese-led process to establish a civilian-led transitional government that would bring Sudan through a political transition culminating in democratic elections and fulfill the aspirations of the Sudanese people for freedom, justice, and peace. The Sudanese-led process was successful in addressing many complex and divisive issues related to transitional justice and security sector reform, among others. Working with the Tripartite Mechanism and other international partners, we supported all the Sudanese parties involved as they worked toward an agreement toward the end of the process. The Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese Armed Forces elevated their interests above those of the Sudanese people and chose to fight instead of negotiating through the issues dividing them.

Question. The situation in Sudan did not develop over the course of the past month. It is estimated that there were roughly 16,000 Americans in Sudan but the Administration was telling them to find their own way out of Sudan. Knowing the situation in Sudan could implode at any time, why did we not have non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) plans in place to get American citizens out of Sudan?

Answer. Every post, including Embassy Khartoum has evacuation plans and regularly performs drills and exercises on crisis scenarios. Embassy Khartoum and the Department of Defense coordinated regularly on a range of contingencies and crisis scenarios in advance of this crisis. As the situation unfolded, the Department of State and Department of Defense coordinated in real time based on the dynamic situation on the ground.

Question. With the absence of any commercial air, charter aircraft capabilities, and overland road routes out of Sudan, what is the Biden administration advising Americans in Sudan to do?

Answer. We are advising U.S. citizens who remained in Sudan and now wish to depart to use commercial means, such as ferry service from Port Sudan. U.S. citizens remain able to cross overland into other countries, such as Egypt. Information on possible options to depart Sudan may be found in our most recent Security Alert issued May 12, 2023, which is on the website for the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum. The U.S. Government will continue to provide information for U.S. citizens in Sudan, including exit options.

Question. With no U.S. presence on the ground, what efforts is the Biden administration currently taking to ensure the safe evacuation of Americans stranded in Sudan?

Answer. The U.S. Government continues to provide information for U.S. citizens in Sudan, including exit options. U.S. citizens remaining in Sudan who need assistance are advised to contact the closest U.S. embassy or consulate and refer to the most recent Security Alert issued May 12, 2023, which can be found on the website for the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum.

Question. Media reports indicate that the Wagner Group expanded its involvement in Sudan since 2019. They have mined for gold, explored for uranium and supplied mercenaries to the region of Darfur. In 2021, Wagner began to strengthen its partnership with General Hamdan, (who visited Moscow in the early days of the Ukraine war and has reportedly received military equipment from the group) following the coup that led to the two generals seizing power. What role did Russia play leading up to and immediately after the outbreak of conflict?

Answer. Currently, we are only aware of minimal involvement by Russia in the conflict. The Secretary spoke about our concerns regarding the Kremlin-backed—Transnational Criminal Organization Wagner group—at the African Leaders Summit. He told African leaders that Wagner undermines good governance, exploits insecurity and robs countries of their mineral wealth. Engagement with Wagner simply brings more death, destruction, and instability. That said, it is the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces that bear responsibility for this conflict.

Question. To what extent has Russia been involved?

Answer. Currently, we are only aware of minimal involvement by Russia in the conflict. The Secretary has spoken to our concerns about the Kremlin-backed—Transnational Criminal Organization Wagner group—that its engagement simply brings more death, destruction, and instability. That said, it is the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces that bear responsibility for this conflict.

RESPONSES OF MS. SARAH CHARLES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. Humanitarian assistance is being targeted in Sudan. Reports indicate humanitarian aid workers are being violently attacked and sexually assaulted. In addition, warehouses with critical aid are also reportedly being looted and destroyed.

Since the beginning of the current conflict, how many humanitarian aid workers have been killed in Sudan?

Answer. At least six of USAID’s humanitarian partner staff have been killed since the conflict began, four of which were UN staff. The total number of humanitarian workers who have died from the conflict is likely higher.

Question. What impact has the violence and destruction had on the ability of the United States and the international community to deliver humanitarian assistance?

Answer. Ongoing fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces, and other parties to the conflict is the primary factor driving humanitarian needs in Sudan. Nearly one-third of the population already required humanitarian assistance before the latest outbreak of fighting—approximately 16 million people; the conflict has impeded access to life-saving assistance and basic services for millions of people, further exacerbating humanitarian needs. People, particularly in Khartoum and the surrounding areas, are suffering from shortages of food, fuel, medications, and safe drinking water, while access to fuel, electricity, and telecommunications infrastructure remain limited in many parts of the country.

Attacks against humanitarian staff and the looting of humanitarian assets forced many of our partners to temporarily suspend hundreds of life-saving humanitarian programs and evacuate their staff—impacting the millions of people who relied on these programs to meet their basic needs. Nearly 1.3 million people did not receive food assistance in April because of the conflict according to the World Food Program. Most importantly, the insecure operating environment is limiting partners’ ability to access populations in need with life-saving assistance. Furthermore, the banking system in Sudan shuttered due to the violence, which has made cash inaccessible for partners. The widespread looting of warehouses, humanitarian offices, and medical centers have decreased the amount of commodities, supplies, and equipment available for life-saving humanitarian assistance. At the same time, insecurity coupled with shortages of fuel have made the replenishment of these critical items very difficult.

USAID maintains that a durable end to the conflict is the only solution to the humanitarian crisis and continues to call on all parties to allow safe, sustained, and unhindered access for humanitarian agencies and their workers to reach people in need.

Question. Two-thirds of hospitals in Khartoum have closed. Hospitals have been shelled or used as defensive positions. Health care workers have been killed. Hundreds of doctors have fled.

Is the health care system in Sudan on the verge of collapse?

Answer. The ongoing fighting is deteriorating humanitarian conditions country-wide but has particularly crippled the healthcare system. Healthcare infrastructure and personnel have come under attack, people with chronic diseases lack access to care, and the rainy season—which will begin in June and continue through October—threatens to compound the situation. Additionally, military occupation of facilities, as well as a lack of consistent access to electricity, fuel, medicines, water, and other essential supplies are driving the collapse of the healthcare system. Approximately two-thirds of hospitals across Sudan are no longer functioning, and at least 25 have been attacked since the start of the crisis.

Question. What steps has USAID taken to get emergency medical aid into Sudan?

Answer. USAID's partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is distributing critical health supplies in Khartoum, including emergency health kits and essential medicines for hospitals. On May 5, USAID partner the World Health Organization (WHO), in coordination with the United Arab Emirates, delivered 30 metric tons of urgent medical supplies to Port Sudan. The supplies, which will be delivered to hospitals and health facilities facing dire shortages, include enough trauma, emergency surgical supplies, and essential medicines to treat 165,000 people. WHO has also distributed trauma kits from Port Sudan to functioning health facilities in Al Jazirah State and Khartoum. WHO has distributed fuel to one of the main hospitals in Khartoum to power generators needed for continued operations.

Question. Last week, the World Food Program said that roughly \$13–14 million worth of food products allocated for the people in Sudan was looted within the last month. Before the conflict, about one-third of Sudan already relied on humanitarian assistance.

How is food assistance currently being distributed?

Answer. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's (BHA) primary food assistance partner is the UN World Food Program (WFP). BHA-supported food assistance in Sudan—whether through WFP or a non-governmental organization partner—is provided via in-kind food distributions or cash-based transfers for food. Given the ongoing security situation, partners are primarily relying upon national staff and available prepositioned stocks to implement programs in pockets of safety.

Question. What, if anything, can be done to help offset the food that has been looted?

Answer. WFP's insurance covers commodities from the point where WFP takes possession of the commodity to the point where they transfer it to either a government, a partner, or a beneficiary. WFP has processes in motion for reimbursements on insurances for food, as appropriate. In some cases, WFP can also work with local authorities to try to recover stolen commodities.

Question. What steps are being taken to ensure aid workers are safe and the supplies are secure?

Answer. USAID continually reviews the risks associated with its humanitarian programming to ensure that partners are able to effectively carry out USAID-funded activities in line with humanitarian principles and in compliance with the terms and conditions of their awards. USAID has robust risk analysis processes that examine multiple risks, including the risk of our assistance being diverted in Sudan. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance requires partners to submit a Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) as part of their applications for funding in Sudan. As part of the RAMPs, all non-governmental organization applicants must demonstrate that they have assessed the risks of fraud, waste, abuse, and other misuses of U.S. Government resources. USAID is also examining potential augmentation of additional risk mitigation requirements applicable to new applications for humanitarian funding or activities in Sudan and is working closely with its existing humanitarian partners to ensure they have proper risk mitigation systems in place to ensure that ongoing U.S. taxpayer-funded humanitarian assistance is reaching and being utilized by those for whom it is intended. Our colleagues in the region are working with partners to determine the best ways to quickly and safely deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need within and outside Sudan where conditions allow.

USAID supports innovative safety and security programs specifically for the humanitarian community; collecting and sharing aid worker security incident data to identify threats impacting relief efforts; funding training that enhances aid workers' ability to keep themselves safe; and supporting activities that raise professional standards and capacity across the humanitarian security sector. USAID's humanitarian implementing partners determine their own risk tolerance and develop their own mitigation strategies to address their workers' vulnerabilities in high-threat

high-risk environments such as Sudan. All implementing partners are required to maintain an operational security management system based on a comprehensive risk assessment and planning process that meets their organization's duty of care for their staff. This includes requiring the submission of location-specific Safety and Security Plans specific to each proposed operational area as part of their applications for funding in Sudan. All applicant Safety and Security Plans must include and clearly address the following: contextual analysis, threat analysis, vulnerability analysis, contingency planning for relevant emergency situations (abduction, evacuation, emergency medical care, psychosocial support, sexual assault, armed attack), and risk mitigation measures in relation to the above topics.

RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM SCOTT

Question. Sanctions: While I was pleased to see the executive order that was issued last week, without actual designations, it means nothing. Ms. Nuland—When does the Administration plan to designate individuals under the executive order?

Answer. The United States is considering the full range of tools at our disposal to address the conflict in Sudan, and this includes designating individuals under the executive order. On June 1, the Department of Treasury added four companies, two affiliated with the SAF and two with the RSF, to the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List. We also amended the Sudan Business Advisory that determine that Sudanese gold is conflict affected, and imposed visa restrictions on officials from the SAF, RSF, and leaders from the former Omar al-Bashir regime, responsible for, or complicit in, undermining Sudan's democratic transition.

Question. Do you believe that Hemedti and Burhan meet the qualifications for sanctions under the executive order?

Answer. We cannot comment on potential sanctions targets. We have frequently condemned the actions of their forces in perpetuating this conflict.

RESPONSES OF MS. SARAH CHARLES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM SCOTT

Question. As the crisis intensifies, humanitarian relief will be paramount. Unfortunately, we've seen raids against humanitarian caravans and attacks on personnel. The World Food Programme (WFP)—which until recently was headed by my friend and fellow South Carolinian, David Beasley—has lost at least three of its employees and an estimated \$400 million worth of critical supplies since the violence started. I've also heard that implementing partners on the ground are facing significant bureaucratic delays from Sudanese officials, including the Humanitarian Aid Commission.

As the greatest contributor to the WFP and several other implementers in the region, what steps can we take to provide taxpayer accountability and ensure humanitarian relief reaches those who are most in need?

Answer. USAID is working very closely with its partners to identify which bureaucratic impediments are constraining humanitarian operations, in which areas, and by which authorities. Having a comprehensive understanding of these impediments allows USAID to be a better advocate for changes that will improve our partners' ability to operate. USAID is coordinating with the Department of State to elevate these bureaucratic impediments to the appropriate authorities at all levels, whether inside Sudan, in neighboring countries, or through diplomatic channels in Washington. USAID will regularly update these diplomatic points based on partner feedback and the evolving context on the ground.

From an award management perspective, USAID places the highest priority on ensuring we and our partners use taxpayer funds wisely, effectively, and for their intended purpose. We continually review the risks associated with our programming to ensure that partners are able to effectively carry out USAID-funded activities in line with humanitarian principles and in compliance with the terms and conditions of their awards. USAID has robust risk analysis processes that examine multiple risks, including the risk of our assistance being diverted in Sudan. BHA requires non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to submit a Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) as part of their applications for funding in Sudan. As part of these RAMPs, NGO applicants must demonstrate that they have assessed the risks of fraud, waste, abuse, and other misuses of U.S. Government resources.

USAID/BHA has a Risk Management Advisor assigned on the humanitarian Response Management Team to provide compliance and risk mitigation expertise. USAID/BHA is also examining potential augmentation of additional risk mitigation requirements applicable to new applications for funding or activities in Sudan and is working closely with its existing humanitarian partners to ensure they have proper risk mitigation systems in place to ensure that ongoing U.S. taxpayer-funded humanitarian assistance is reaching and being utilized by those for whom it is intended.

Finally, USAID takes seriously any allegation of USAID assistance being diverted from the intended beneficiaries. All USAID funding recipients are required, pursuant to their award, to disclose in writing to the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG), with a copy to the cognizant Agreement Officer, loss, damage, or theft as well as all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award.

Foreign Policy Article, Dated May 10, 2023, titled, “How the U.S. Fumbled Sudan’s Hopes for Democracy,” by Robbie Gramer

Submitted by Senator James E. Risch

FEATURE

How the U.S. Fumbled Sudan’s Hopes for Democracy

The East African country, once a beacon for change, now faces civil war.

MAY 10, 2023, 8:00 AM

By **Robbie Gramer**, a diplomacy and national security reporter at Foreign Policy.

In late October 2021, a top U.S. envoy met with Sudanese military commanders and Sudan’s top civilian leader to shore up the country’s precarious transition toward democracy. The generals assured Jeffrey Feltman, then the U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa region, that they were committed to the transition and would not seize power. Feltman departed the Sudanese capital of Khartoum for Washington early on the morning of Oct. 25. En route, he received news from Sudan: Hours after he left, those military leaders had arrested the country’s top civilian leaders and carried out a coup.

For the next 18 months, Washington adopted a series of controversial policy measures to both maintain ties with the new military junta and try to push the East African nation back toward a democratic transition. Months of work led to a new political deal that offered, on paper at least, new hope, and some Biden administration officials felt they were tantalizingly close.

But the deal blew up in the eleventh hour as violence erupted across Khartoum last month between forces controlled by the rival generals, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who leads the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagalo, the head of the powerful Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group.

The collapse of Sudan’s democratic transition has led to anger and backlash in Washington among diplomats and aid officials, some of whom feel that the Biden administration’s policies empowered the two generals at the center of the crisis, exacerbated tensions between them as they pushed for a political deal, and shunted aside pro-democracy activists in the process.

“Maybe we couldn’t have prevented a conflict,” said one U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity. “But it’s like we didn’t even try and beyond that just emboldened Hemeti and Burhan by making repeated empty threats and never following through.”

“And all the while,” the official added, “we let the real pro-democracy players just be cast to the side.”

The conflict between Burhan's and Hemeti's forces turned Khartoum overnight into a battle zone that put millions of citizens, as well as U.S. and foreign government personnel, in the crossfire of firefights, airstrikes, and mortar attacks. The fighting has pushed Sudan toward the brink of collapse and undermined, perhaps permanently, a Western-funded project to bring democracy to a country beset by autocracy and conflict for half a century.

People run and walk through the streets in front of an armored personnel carrier as fighting in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum continues between Sudan's army and paramilitary forces on April 27. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

As successive rounds of cease-fires fail, Western officials and analysts increasingly fear that the fighting could lead to a full-scale civil war, bringing a new vacuum of instability and chaos to a region already suffering humanitarian crises and along the strategic Red Sea, through which 10 percent of global trade flows.

"The way things are going, Sudan begins to resemble a massive Somalia of the early 1990s on the Red Sea, a total state breakdown, if the fighting doesn't stop," said Alexander Rondos, a former European Union envoy for the Horn of Africa.

Interviews with about two dozen current and former Western officials and Sudanese activists close to the negotiations describe a deeply flawed U.S. policy process on brokering talks in Sudan in the run-up to the conflict, monopolized by a select few officials who shut the rest of the interagency team out of key deliberations and stamped out a growing chorus of dissent over the direction of U.S. Sudan policy.

“From the outset, there was a consistent and willful dismissal of views that questioned whether the U.N. talks would be a recipe for success or for failure,” said one former official familiar with the matter. “Those warnings were ignored, and instead the U.S. built a dream palace of a political process that has now crashed down on the people of Sudan.”

Current and former U.S. officials, many of whom spoke on condition of anonymity, said internal warnings of roiling tensions in Khartoum and a possible conflict were dismissed or ignored in Washington, setting the stage for U.S. government personnel to be trapped amid the fighting in various parts of Khartoum with no advance preparations to move them to safety. In Khartoum, these officials and Sudanese analysts said, the policy was further hampered by an embassy that was for years understaffed and out of its depth, without even an ambassador for much of the crucial period.

A woman inside her house protects her face from tear gas in the Abbasiya neighborhood of Omdurman, Sudan, on Nov. 13, 2021. Organizations called for civil disobedience and a general strike during demonstrations against the military coup. ABDELMOHAMMED EASSA/GETTY IMAGES

"We seemed to have lost all institutional memory on Sudan," said Cameron Hudson, a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and former State Department official. "These generals have been lying to us for decades. Anybody who has worked on Sudan has seen this stuff play out time and time and time again."

The U.S. State Department has sharply disputed these characterizations. "U.S. engagement after the October 2021 military takeover was centered on supporting Sudanese civilian actors in a Sudanese-led process to re-establish a civilian-led transitional government," a State Department spokesperson said in response.

"The United States did not press for any specific deal but tried to build consensus and put pressure on the key actors to reach agreement on a civilian government to restore a democratic transition," the spokesperson said and added that those efforts included "near constant diplomacy, often working closely with civilians, to defuse tensions between the SAF and RSF that arose multiple times and again emerged in the days before April 15, 2023," when the fighting began.

Still, for an administration that has made promoting global democracy a centerpiece of its foreign policy, many government officials who spoke to *Foreign Policy* contended that Sudan could stand as one of the starkest foreign-policy failures, even in the wake of the successful evacuation of all U.S. government personnel and campaign to help U.S. citizens escape the country.

These officials also fear that the crisis could reverberate well beyond Sudan's borders if the warring sides don't agree to a viable cease-fire soon, with the risk of rival foreign powers exacerbating the conflict and transforming it into a proxy war.

Interviews with multiple Sudanese activists and civil society leaders, meanwhile, paint the picture of a pro-democracy movement that has completely lost faith in the United States as a beacon for democracy and supporter of Sudan's own democratic aspirations. Many spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of their safety as fighting continued in Khartoum.

"Either the U.S. and West properly step up or they just need to fuck off because halfhearted steps and empty threats of sanctions, again and again and again, are doing more harm than good," said one Sudanese person deeply familiar with the internal negotiations. "Our trust in the U.S. is entirely gone."

Sudanese protesters cheer on arriving to the town of Albara from Khartoum on Dec. 19, 2019, to celebrate the first anniversary of the uprising that toppled Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir. ASHRAF SHAZLY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

After a popular pro-democracy uprising ousted longtime dictator Omar al-

Bashir in 2019 and set the stage for Sudan to rejoin the international community after decades as an international pariah, the United States invested countless diplomatic resources and hundreds of millions of dollars in Sudan's democratic transition.

Sudan seemed poised to be a success story. A popular uprising, led in many ways by Sudanese women, had ousted one of the world's most notorious dictators. U.S. President Joe Biden in a major U.N. speech in September 2021 denounced the global rise of autocracy and touted Sudan as one of the most compelling contrasts to that trend worldwide after the 2019 revolution. In Sudan, he said, there was proof that "the democratic world is everywhere."

Just a month later, Burhan and Hemeti orchestrated their coup. Afterward, the Biden administration froze some \$700 million in U.S. funds to aid in the democratic transition and, over a year later, issued visa restrictions on "any current or former Sudanese officials or other individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic transition in Sudan." The World Bank and International Monetary Fund also froze \$6 billion in financial assistance.

But some U.S. diplomats felt that didn't go far enough and none of those reprisals would directly affect Burhan or Hemeti. A fierce internal debate unfolded. Some officials argued that Washington needed to roll out punishing sanctions against Burhan and Hemeti to bring them to heel and show support for pro-democracy activists. Other officials, including Assistant Secretary of State Molly Phee—Biden's top envoy for Africa—argued that sanctions wouldn't be effective and might undermine U.S. influence with Burhan and Hemeti as they sought to bring them back to the negotiating table.

"There was the right thing to do, to show the Sudanese people we were all-in on democracy, to punish Hemeti and Burhan for this blatant coup, and then there was the wrong and slightly more expedient thing to do, [to] just keep working with them after some stern finger-wagging," said one U.S. official involved in the process. "We chose door number two."

Jeffrey Feltman, the U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa, leaves after meeting with Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok in Khartoum on Sept. 29, 2021. ASHRAF SHAZLY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Feltman, the former U.S. envoy, said he advocated for sanctioning Burhan and Hemedi during his time in government but in hindsight wasn't sure if it could have prevented the conflict. "Do I think sanctions ultimately would have prevented them from eventually taking 46 million people of Sudan hostage because of their personal lusts for power? No."

There were other complicating issues as well. Senior Biden administration officials working on Africa policy were consumed by the war in neighboring Ethiopia, where an estimated 200,000 to 600,000 people died during a bloody conflict in the country's northern Tigray region. And the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum was understaffed and unable to come to grips with the situation; a full-time U.S. ambassador wouldn't arrive until three years after Bashir's ouster. During this time, officials say, Phee took direct charge over U.S. policy on Sudan.

Phee worked closely with a U.S. Agency for International Development official detailed to the State Department, Danny Fullerton, in Khartoum to negotiate directly with Burhan and Hemedi and bring them to the table for a new political deal.

"The embassy was just very beleaguered, with a real shortage of skilled or enough political officers, and both the chargés d'affaires and later the ambassador when he got there were very frustrated with a lack of support from Washington," said one American familiar with internal embassy dynamics. "It was a group that was out of its depth, overly busy, and, frankly, not as well connected as it should've been with the right people in Sudan's pro-democracy communities."

This official said severe embassy staffing shortages, detailed in a State Department [watchdog report](#) on the embassy published in March, and leadership issues contributed to difficulties in hashing out negotiations with Burhan and Hemedi. But other current and former officials dispute that, insisting that the State Department can still make deals with high-level involvement from officials in Washington, even with an understaffed embassy.

Five current and former U.S. officials and two Sudanese activists familiar with the negotiations said that before the U.S. ambassador came to Khartoum in late 2022, U.S. officials involved in the negotiations with Hemedi and Burhan didn't do enough to incorporate Sudan's pro-democracy resistance committees into deliberations on a new political deal with the two generals, nor did they heed warnings about the inherent risks and flaws in a new deal.

A Sudanese woman chants slogans and waves a national flag during a demonstration demanding a civilian body to lead the transition to democracy outside the army headquarters in Khartoum on April 12, 2019. ASHRAF SHAZLY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

These officials said there was mounting dissent in Washington over the trajectory of U.S. policy but that Phee dismissed other policy options, including threatening Hemeti or Burhan with sanctions or other forms of pressure or incorporating Sudan's pro-democracy groups into the political negotiations. The State Department watchdog report also noted that the deputy chief of mission in Khartoum "at times remained focused on her predetermined course of action and did not consider alternatives offered by staff"—though the report did not address whether this had any affect on U.S. policy.

The State Department spokesperson, however, sharply disputed these characterizations: "While we cannot comment on internal policy deliberations, State Department leaders carefully considered policy proposals and different opinions on our policy on Sudan and did not dismiss or stamp out any dissent."

All the while, Burhan and Hemeti sought to expand their own power and influence across Sudan, currying favor with foreign powers and setting the stage for a growing rivalry that would later ignite a deadly conflict. Burhan found backers in neighboring Egypt. Hemeti courted the United Arab Emirates and Russia and began deepening ties between the RSF and the Wagner Group, a shadowy Russian mercenary outfit widely reported to be responsible for war crimes in other parts of Africa and in Ukraine. Hemeti, implicated in widespread atrocities in Sudan's Darfur conflict that broke out in 2003, launched a coordinated public relations campaign to try to transform himself into a statesman on the world stage in what was seen as a political charm offensive and challenge to Burhan's rule.

Hemeti visited Moscow on Feb. 23, 2022, on the eve of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, to discuss the possible opening of a Russian port on Sudan's coast along the strategic trade routes in the Red Sea. Some U.S. officials who had been pushing for sanctioning Hemeti believed his brazen visit to Moscow would finally convince top decision-makers to finally pull the trigger on a major new tranche of sanctions. The sanctions never came.

Around that time, at least one memo was written and circulated within the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs warning of the risks of current U.S. policy on Sudan and listing potential scenarios that could emerge from the rivalry between Burhan and Hemeti, including those tensions erupting into a full-scale conflict. The memo, described in broad terms by several congressional aides and former officials familiar with it, was meant to go to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's desk, but the draft was heavily edited, watered down, and never passed out of the bureau, those people said. "Still, the State Department leaders can't say they weren't warned," one former official said.

Human rights advocates have also criticized the Biden administration's approach to Sudan in the months leading up to the eruption of violence in April. "By repeatedly failing to hold abusive leaders accountable or making clear, through concrete measures, that abusive behavior would not be condoned, Sudan's Western partners sent these generals the signal that they can continue holding the country at a gunpoint with almost no consequences," said Mohamed Osman, an expert on the region at Human Rights Watch.

During this time, Sudanese activists became increasingly disenchanted with the U.S. approach to Sudan. "There was no meaningful commitment that we'd ever seen from either [Burhan or Hemeti], and that was all put aside and sacrificed effectively at the altar of a political process and a political agreement that was never going to hold and that had very little popular support," said Kholood Khair, a Sudanese political analyst who followed the negotiations closely.

John Godfrey, the U.S. ambassador to Sudan, delivers a speech in Port Sudan amid the delivery of tons of corn as part of U.S. humanitarian support for the country on Nov. 20, 2022. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

In September 2022, John Godfrey, a career U.S. diplomat with experience in the Middle East and North Africa and a background in counterterrorism, landed in Khartoum as the first U.S. ambassador to Sudan in a quarter century. Godfrey, officials said, immediately began trying to make inroads with so-called resistance committees and other civil society organizations that had been the driving force in Sudan's push for democracy.

"He was beset with the cards that were dealt to him," the American familiar with the embassy's internal dynamics said. "He was burning the candle at both ends trying to make this deal happen, even if people back in Washington, outside of Phee and the [Bureau of African Affairs], weren't giving Sudan much attention or thought."

Even as Russia's war in Ukraine and the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia distracted most in Washington, Phee and Godfrey—alongside counterparts including senior diplomats from the United Kingdom, United Nations, African Union, and a regional bloc called the Intergovernmental Authority on Development—pushed to restart Sudan's transition to civilian rule. An apparent breakthrough came last December, when Sudan's military leaders and some factions of the country's pro-democracy forces agreed to a new civilian-led transitional government in a matter of months.

But the Western negotiators acceded to demands by Hemedi and Burhan to cut civil society and pro-democracy activists out of the negotiations, giving the military junta an early win over the weaker civilian groups, officials said. The December agreement also left unresolved one major issue that would soon become an explosive one: plans to incorporate the RSF into the SAF to create one unified military force for the country.

That question fueled more tensions between Burhan and Hemeti in the coming months. Analysts in Khartoum began sounding alarm bells about the roiling tensions that would set the stage for an eruption of violence. The push for the agreement may have exacerbated it.

“There was this absolute desperation to push the final deal over the line to the point of succumbing false hope,” said another person involved in the negotiations.

In Washington, however, plans were underway to celebrate the new transitional government the second the agreement was signed. The embassy continued arranging meetings with Hemeti and Burhan and conducting routine embassy business; an American rock band played a festival in March as part of a State Department public diplomacy tour.

The business-as-usual approach belied the tensions in Khartoum. A signing ceremony for the deal was delayed and then delayed again. Burhan and Hemeti were amassing forces around Khartoum. Some low-level U.S. diplomats and Sudanese civilian negotiators began more explicitly warning their friends and colleagues back in Washington through informal back channels that a conflict seemed imminent.

“People were calling around, saying, ‘You’ve got to pass up these messages to everyone you know in D.C. that there could really be a war, it doesn’t feel like the international community is taking us seriously’” said the American familiar with internal embassy dynamics.

Activists demonstrate in front of the White House in Washington on April 29, calling on the United States to intervene to stop the fighting in Sudan. DANIEL SLOV/APP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Top officials in Washington either downplayed or misinterpreted these warning signs, according to six officials and congressional aides familiar with the matter. It wasn't the first time that Burhan and Hemeti had amassed forces around Khartoum, nor the first time that U.S. interlocutors had to step in to help calm the tensions.

Godfrey and his counterpart from London, Giles Lever, who played key roles in shepherding the December deal to the finish line, left the country on separate vacations by early April, a sign that Washington felt the deal was all but done. Back in Washington, after Burhan and Hemeti signed the agreement, the State Department sent word to Congress that it wanted to ready \$330 million in funds to aid Sudan's democratic transition, according to three congressional aides and officials familiar with the matter. Those officials said the department was drafting a carrot-and-stick plan for Sudan, with the millions of dollars of funding the carrot and new sanctions authorizations a hefty stick.

The State Department had a long-standing Level 4 travel advisory for Sudan, recommending that U.S. citizens "do not travel" there, and sent out one additional [security alert](#), on April 13, advising citizens to avoid Karima in northern Sudan, and barring U.S. government personnel from leaving Khartoum, in light of the "increased presence of security forces." The United States didn't issue a broad travel warning urging citizens to leave via commercial air travel, consolidate U.S. government personnel inside Khartoum in the event of a crisis, or order a departure of nonessential personnel as tensions between Burhan and Hemeti reached a boiling point.

"We're all really questioning why we didn't do more to prepare for the worst-case scenario," a third U.S. official said.

Drone footage shows clouds of black smoke over Bahri, also known as Khartoum North, outside Sudan's capital, in a May 1 video obtained by Reuters. THIRD-PARTY VIDEO VIA REUTERS

On April 15, the tensions between Hemeti and Burhan finally boiled over. The RSF launched what appeared to be a coordinated series of attacks on SAF bases and hammered Khartoum International Airport with gunfire and missiles—effectively cutting off the only viable means of escape in a densely populated city that is hundreds of miles from the coast or nearest border.

At once, the city of some 5 million people became a battle zone. The U.S. Embassy began working frantically to consolidate all its personnel and their families in several key locations. Godfrey, the U.S. ambassador, had rushed back to Khartoum, cutting his vacation short, just before the fighting erupted. RSF fighters carried out wholesale looting and assaults, and SAF troops began bombing sites around Khartoum. RSF fighters assaulted the EU's ambassador in Khartoum, Aidan O'Hara, and in various other instances reportedly fired on, briefly kidnapped, or sexually assaulted U.N. and international organization workers, according to internal U.N. security reports obtained by *Foreign Policy*.

The White House, State Department, and Defense Department leaped into crisis mode, working around the clock to draft up embassy evacuation plans. On April 22, a contingent of U.S. troops took off from a U.S. base in Djibouti on three Chinook helicopters and, after refueling in Ethiopia, landed in Khartoum to safely evacuate all U.S. government staff and their families. All the while, top U.S. diplomats worked to arrange temporary cease-fires between Burhan and Hemeti to aid civilians and assist those trying to escape.

"None of the foreign diplomatic missions in Khartoum changed their security posture or staffing levels before the outbreak in fighting, and the U.S. embassy was very focused and effective in consolidating its personnel immediately after the war started," the State Department spokesperson said.

An estimated 16,000 U.S. citizens remained trapped in the city, including many dual U.S.-Sudanese citizens and a smaller number of NGO and aid workers who worked on U.S.-funded humanitarian and development programs. U.S. lawmakers became infuriated that the Biden administration wasn't doing more to aid in the evacuation of U.S. citizens after the initial outbreak of the conflict, comparing the fiasco to the ignominious withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The Saudi-flagged ferry passenger ship *Amanah* carrying evacuated civilians fleeing violence in Sudan arrives at King Faisal Naval Base in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on April 26. AP/ER HILABI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

One resident who stayed in Khartoum was Rushra Ibnauf, a dual U.S.-Sudanese citizen and doctor who had moved back to Khartoum from Iowa. "He had a passion for doing good. I remember him saying, 'I can be replaced in Iowa, but I can't be replaced in Sudan,'" said Yasir Elamin, the president of the Sudanese American Physicians Association and a close friend and colleague of Ibnauf. Ibnauf and other doctors ventured out amid gunfights and explosions to provide aid to wounded civilians as the conflict dragged on.

Other Sudanese citizens began trying to make their way out of Khartoum, either by fleeing north to the Egyptian border or on a precarious overland journey to the coast at Port Sudan. "It was hell on earth," recalled one Sudanese activist who escaped Khartoum. "We only left through the city and all the firefights because we were running out of water. Our choice was either definitely die of thirst or maybe get hit by bullets. It was no choice at all."

U.S. officials have made brokering a sustainable cease-fire their top priority, but so far no cease-fire has held. Both Burhan and Hemeti have sent negotiators to peace talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, coordinated with Washington and Riyadh, but many officials and analysts doubt the talks will lead anywhere after multiple ceasefire attempts failed. On May 4, Biden announced a new executive order granting new legal authorities to impose sanctions on those involved in the violence in Sudan. Some Sudanese analysts doubt sanctions will work.

"The point of sanctions is that it is used as a threat during normal times to prevent bad actors from doing bad things," said Amgad Fareid Eltayeb, a former assistant chief of staff to Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok before he was ousted from power. "I think right now it's too little, too late—it's already a war situation."

The situation in Khartoum remains dire. "I don't think so-called safe areas right now are going to be safe for much longer because the aim of the game from both sides seems to be total control of the country," said Khair, the Sudanese political analyst.

A Sudanese person paints graffiti on a wall during a demonstration in Khartoum on April 14, 2019. OMER ERDEM/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. lawmakers are pressing for new envoys to enter the fray. Rep. Michael McCaul, the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and his Democratic counterpart, Rep. Gregory Meeks, issued a [joint appeal](#) to Biden and the U.N. to appoint new U.S. and U.N. special envoys to Sudan, saying that “[d]irect, sustained, high-level leadership from the United States and United Nations is necessary to stop the fighting from dragging the country into a full-blown civil war and state collapse.”

Many Western officials fear that Sudan could plunge into civil war if the fighting isn't stopped soon, but it's also unclear what a viable cease-fire would mean for any hopes of reviving the moribund democratic transition in Sudan. “This is not yet a full-scale civil war, à la Syria, à la Libya,” said Feltman, the former U.S. envoy. “It's still a fight between two rival forces. Now is the time to arrest it, to stop it before it spirals.”

All the while, the fighting in Khartoum continues. Some U.S. citizens have found additional ways to evacuate, either with the direct assistance of the U.S. government or of other countries.

Others weren't so lucky. Ibnauf, the Sudanese American doctor who stayed in Khartoum to provide succor to civilians amid the fighting, was stabbed to death by suspected looters in front of his family on April 25.

Robbie Gramer is a diplomacy and national security reporter at *Foreign Policy*.
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Letter to President Biden, Dated May 19, 2021, Regarding Support for the Abraham Accords

Submitted by Senator Bill Hagerty

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May 19, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write with alarm after White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki on May 18, 2021, in response to a reporter's question about whether your Administration still supports the Abraham Accords, said: "We are not following the tactics of the prior administration," adding: "Aside from putting together a peace proposal that was dead on arrival, we don't think [the previous administration] did anything constructive to really to bring an end to the longstanding conflict in the Middle East."

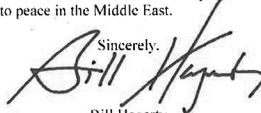
I urgently ask you to confirm whether or not the White House Press Secretary's shocking statement actually reflects a fundamental change in your Administration's policy on the Abraham Accords. The previous administration facilitated the historic Abraham Accords, a series of agreements under which the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco each agreed to normalize relations with Israel.

Prior to the White House Press Secretary's recent comments, senior officials in your Administration had expressed strong support for the Abraham Accords. On January 29, 2021, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that the Abraham Accords are "positive for security in the region, positive for economic development in the region and positive for America's national interests." In remarks to the Embassy of Israel to the United States' virtual celebration of the Jewish state's Independence Day on April 14, 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said: "The United States welcomes and supports the recent normalization agreements," adding: "We will continue to urge more countries to normalize relations with Israel—and will look for other opportunities to expand cooperation among countries in the region. As a result, I expect Israel's group of friends to grow even wider in the year ahead."

The Abraham Accords have enjoyed strong support on both sides of the aisle in the United States, in many capitals in the Middle East and around the world. That is precisely why the White House Press Secretary's caustic and partisan remarks about the Abraham Accords are so jarring. At a time when Israel is under attack from Palestinian terrorist elements, the White House Press Secretary's comments, if not corrected, will embolden those who seek violence over peace.

I therefore ask you to urgently confirm whether your Administration continues to support the historic Abraham Accords, which broke with the conventional wisdom by demonstrating the viability of cascading and sustainable paths to peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely,



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator

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