

Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland  
**Statement for**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing on**  
***“Conflict in Sudan: Options for an Effective Policy Response”***  
*Senate Dirksen Building*  
*Wednesday, May 10, 2023, 9:45AM*

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 thirty-year reign of a dictator... only to endure a military takeover just two 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<sup>th</sup>, 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 seven days, we consolidated all U.S. personnel at our Embassy, where our military then bravely extracted them by helicopter on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.