

Presentations of the Sudanese Women “Peace for Sudan Platform”
High level Meeting of Leaders in Solidarity with Women of Sudan
May 12, 2023
Virtual Meeting

- H.E Madame Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission
- Amb. Alex Tordeya, Deputy Chief of Staff, Cabinet of the Chairperson
- Civil Society Organizations Representatives represented by Marema Toure
- Amb. Raychelle Omamo, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kenya
- Ms. Amina Farah, Head of Gender Affairs Department IGAD Secretariat
- Ms. Chido Mpemba, African Union Youth Envoy
- Ms. Zebib Kavuma, Deputy Regional Director, East & Southern Africa, UN Women
- H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of Liberia and Patron of AWLN

On behalf of the Sudanese women **“Peace for Sudan Platform”**, We would like to extend our compliment for arranging for this virtual meeting, which demonstrates solidarity and sisterhood that we as Sudanese women need today more than any other time. We would like to appreciate the efforts on UN Women Sudan office under the leadership Adjaratou NDIAYE, UN Women Country Director, and Fatma Mohamed, Officer-in-Charge. Both have been accompanying the **“Peace for Sudan Platform”** since the start of the tragic war in Sudan, conveying the platform’s Statements at the highest level of regional and international actors, making our demands for **“No War”**, and **“Stop the War in Sudan”** heard. Today’s meeting is an example for their support to our request to meet with influential regional actors.

Today, the **“Peace for Sudan Platform”** would like to share with you, as leaders, promoting Women, Peace and Security framework -UN SCR 1325, the impact of the war that started on 15th April on Sudanese people in general and women, girls and children specifically, and the efforts of women during the crisis, challenges and opportunities. Platform will close the presentations by immediate and medium recommendations and ways forward to enforce the linkages with the leaders in this meeting.

The presentations prepared based on collective consultations, reflections, narratives and testimonies of the members of the **“Peace for Sudan Platform”** from inside Sudan. The **“Peace for Sudan Platform”** w includes more than 49 women led peace initiatives, women led humanitarian initiatives, women led civil society organizations, women representatives of emergency rooms(established as a response to the war), collations, networks, from across the different Regions in Sudan.

First Presentation: Security and humanitarian situation in Sudan.

By: Magda Elsanousi, gender activist and Former Senior Gender Advisor for the SRSG of the UN Mission in Libya.

In April 15th 2023, Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, entered a war where Sudanese people of the capital, Khartoum, woke up by a heavy bombing in South Khartoum. It was the start of the armed conflict between the Sudan National Army and the Rapid Support Forces. The human cost was huge. The armed conflict took place in the three towns of the capital, Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman that are highly populated of nearly 12 million residents. During the first days of the war that spread to the other two cities of the capital, people were terrified, scared, stayed indoors, and under the beds assuming that would be few days' fights which would end soon. That turned not to be the case. Nearly a month elapsed the war continued and turned to be one of the main catastrophic wars in Sudan. Militarization featured the streets with huge weapons and armed forces moving in neighborhood. The armed conflict spread to West Darfur and Kordofan regions.

According to UNHCR, at least 550 people have been killed and over 4,900 injured since the fighting began according to the Federal Ministry of Health as of 1st May. This includes at least 190 children killed according to UNICEF¹. The war was spread to Al Geneina, West Darfur, since 24th April and resulted in the loss of at least 191 lives.

The humanitarian situation deteriorated drastically due to the destruction of the infrastructure of the electricity and water, and the interruption of the supply chain of food. Vegetables, meat and food markets closed and small shops in neighborhood had no items to sell. Bakeries stopped because there is no fuel, electricity and flour. The banking system was interrupted, and wire transfer turned to be nearly impossible with internet regular disconnection, People had no cash to pay for food or to exchange any services. Banks, schools and all educational institutions were closed. Scarcity in commodities and services influenced in high inflation rate such as increased prices of fuel, food and transport cost. Economic recession featured the situation now.

The economic cycle stopped, and causal labors are left with no jobs or income. In Khartoum, the government announced holidays for all civil servants until another notice, with the exception of employees in vital institutions such as health facilities. The situation will be cartographic in the future for thousands of employees and labors in the job market. Factories and main public markets have been being bombed and destructed,

In Khartoum, 61 per cent of health facilities are closed and only 16 per cent are operating, leaving millions of people without access to health care. Medical and health staff lives have been threatened as a result of the deteriorated security situation, reducing the number of health workers in particular female health workers who have to stay with the family and children. People with chronic diseases and people injured as a result of the war continue to suffer. The supply chain of pharmacies stopped, while people were appealing for medicine.

Efforts for cease-fire to deliver humanitarian aid were not effective and breeched. The security situation deteriorated drastically, with Police Forces failing to operate in a highly volatile context. Looting and robbery of banks, factories, market places, shops, houses, and cars have become a norm. "Looting of humanitarian assets and offices has compromised humanitarian action in key locations" as stated by UNHCR. Houses of citizens were occupied and owners exposed to harassed and women of the households had to serve the occupiers by preparing food, coffee and tea. Empty houses were occupied and some families asked to leave their homes.

¹ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/>

As a result of the deteriorated security and humanitarian situation, people in conflict areas moved to other safer states and crossed the borders to neighboring countries. An estimated 334,000 individuals have been displaced within Sudan since the conflict began, and it is estimated that more than 100,000 people including Sudanese as well as (returning) refugees and migrants from other countries have been recorded leaving the country since the conflict began on 15 April to Egypt, Central Africa, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Chad. Most of the displaced persons from Khartoum stayed with their relatives in the different states, increasing the burden on women receiving displaced guests. Women have to serve the displaced relatives, cooking, and securing food and other needed items, leaving no space for their own needs.

The diplomatic missions evacuated their staff and left the country including their citizens. Sudan witnessed the largest evacuation operations for foreigners ever during the history of Sudan.

Second Presentation: The impact of the conflict on women and girls (social, economic, safety and security)

By: Ameena Shein, Founder of the Gender Center for Research, gender activist and a member of the “Peace for Sudan Platform”.

The war which has been going on for nearly a month, had impacted women of Sudan. Despite of their productive role in the society, women remain as the main caretakers of the household and family members, being elderly, sick or children. The security situation impacted on extreme restrictions of women’s mobility due to the fear to be attacked, raped or kidnapped. Access to and sharing of information among women continue to be severely hampered in certain locations. Lack of electricity, fuel shortages and poor connectivity is limiting everyone’s ability in particular women who are kept indoors to communicate effectively to be aware of highly risk areas and to warn others

Testimonies of some women who wanted to escape the war to other safe locations, stated that they were prohibited by fathers, brothers or husbands to leave the house which put their lives at risk. Even when women escape the war, the journey exposed them to security checkpoints where they are harassed. Rape of women has been reported by some activists. Women have been exposed to extreme psychological stress, where the children of some divorced women were taken away by fathers. Young boys in the streets have been caught up by uniformed groups for forced military recruitment which has put mothers under severe stress. Destruction of family unity, such as disappeared family members are evident. The absence of the rule of law affects women in Family Laws cases such as alimony for children.

At the start of the conflict, it was estimated that there were 219,000 pregnant women in Khartoum alone, with 24,000 due to give birth². The destruction of the health facilities has put pregnant women at high risks for receiving safe care and delivery. Women with cancer and kidney failures are left without medicine and medical care. Old-age women have no access to their regular medicines.

Millions of children including young girls and boys in Khartoum and conflict areas are outside the schools. Thousands of displaced and refugee children, are left with uncertainty of the continuation of their education. Displaced and refugee women who flee the war, escaped without properties, cash or enough clothes, with many who left without official documents such as identity cards or passports which restricted their move to neighboring countries.

Poverty has increased among poor families in particular women who used to receive subsistence allowances from Zakat fund as well as disabled women and children. Poor women who are petty traders, food and tea sellers and daily casual labors lost their means of income with no savings to secure their

²<https://msf.org.uk/issues/crisissudan#:~:text=At%20the%20start%20of%20the,verge%20of%20collapse%20for%20decades.>

livings including buying food. Women and men equally who are civil servants did not receive their salaries. Thousands of women cleaners working with private sector and factories have now lost their jobs and income. To recall:

“I’m a single mother with four children, please help us we are thirsty and hungry”

To conclude, this is just little as compared to the reality.

Third Presentation: Current women initiatives for peace building, gaps and opportunities

By: Lina Marwan, Feminist and Human Rights lawyer- Member of the “Peace for Sudan Platform”.

The history of Sudanese women informs that women are the first to step in to support persons affected by the conflict and to advocate for peace and ending wars. Below are just few examples of newly created women’s initiatives during the current conflict.

Women Against the War: Immediately following the startup of the war, a prominent advocates and human rights activists formed a whatsapp group composed of women from all states of Sudan and invited Sudanese women from abroad, after she noticed the killing of civilians as a result of the war, with one objective to stop the war. More than 200 women joined as individuals to say no to war, Statements released with a media group supporting posters that are disseminated widely using social media. The group also documents the cases of violations of women’s human rights.

Women’s call to Resist War and Demand its End Initiative (Kordofan): The objective of the initiative is to urge the conflicting parties to end the war for the benefit and the welfare of Sudan and Sudanese people. It extends support the integration of displaced women and men in the community, and promotes the culture of peace to end the hate speech.

Mothers of Sudan is a network of 50 women’s groups and organizations from all regions and is established in the Blue Nile. Mothers of Sudan advocates for ending the war w

The Cease Fire Initiative of Darfur, is a community based initiatives led by the Native Administration to stop the war between the Sudanese Army Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in West Darfur. Civil society organizations including women’s groups joined the advocacy efforts to stop the war.

South Red Sea Organizations’ Initiative: Established in Port Sudan that hosts a large number of displaced persons. Women’s organizations take the lead and provide the displaced with food, housing, and medical services. The initiative also provides services to persons waiting for evacuation.

Gadaref Emergency room (East Sudan): Established to support displaced families from Khartoum and provides housing, food, medical treatment, and transport. 89 women provide their support and cook for the guests. It organizes entertainment for children affected by the war.

Northern state Emergency room: Established by the local community from women and men to provide assistance to displaced women and men. To date, the room received 3000families that are provided with housing, food, water, psychological and medical support. The room generates fund from the local community.

Similar emergency rooms have been established in Omdurman and Greater Omdurman.

Mothers of Al Gazira Solidarity for Shelters (Middle States): Established by young women and men in Wad Madani who are hosted in the schools (11 schools). The initiative provides the displaced with food, water, hygiene kits, support to pregnant mothers. All support is provided by the local community.

Bit Al Mal Women's Cooperative Association (Omdurman): Established in October 2019 to empower women in the neighborhood of Bit Al Mal through awareness raising and skills development. After the war, the association started recovery activities for the destructed houses and the health clinics.

Women and Children Organization for Development and Peace (Eastern region): is based in Port Sudan and is led by women and young women active in humanitarian assistance. The organization provides food, hygiene kits, and psychological support to displaced women in Port Sudan at the shelters. Donation from the local community including the merchants who also provided clothes for children and women. The organization also monitored the number of students who are due to sit for final exams.

Many support came from the different states in Sudan that hosted displaced which at large reflects the spirit of Sudanese people based on the spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.

The main challenges facing the initiatives are the security situation in Khartoum and Darfur that restricts the mobility of the teams, and lack of resources to fulfil the huge needs of the population affected by the war. While local initiatives help, on the long run large humanitarian operations are needed to reach all people in need.

The main opportunities are the establishment of community-based groups that are aware of the needs of the displaced population and other vulnerable groups which would serve as a base for needs identification and assessment once large humanitarian assistance begins. The groups are from the community and are well placed as well to contribute as volunteers in the distribution of the humanitarian assistance.

To conclude women remain central in their management role to support the community at times of crisis.

Fourth Presentation: Immediate and midterm proposals for supporting Sudan's women initiatives and next actions

By: Samar Khalid, Young peacebuilder and gender equality advocate- Member of the platform "Peace for Sudan".

Historically, and throughout the long years of conflicts in Sudan, to recall the war with South Sudan and the war in Darfur, beside the current war, women demanded peace and civil government to rule with military taking its recognized role as in other democratic countries. Since the start of the war on 15th April, ordinary women and men and civil society organizations and other actors demanded for immediate end to the war. For many women, the intensified and the horrible war is not justified, and the International Humanitarian Law was not respected. Sudanese women recall the slogan of the revolution: Freedom, Peace and Justice. Sudanese women and men continue to hold the slogans of the revolution and demand paving the way from conflict to a civil government and state that leads to democratic rule.

Accordingly;

- War should stop immediately to rebuild the state, and to hold all those engaged in the destruction of the infrastructure of the social service, private properties and the killing of innocent women, men and children accountable to the International Humanitarian Laws.
- Documentation of human rights violations including crimes against women such as rape.
- Ensure the monitoring of Sudan borders to stop smuggling of weapons to Sudan and that external fighters and interventions should be prohibited and sanctioned by the international community.
- Ensure fast track procedures, without complications to allow prompt humanitarian delivery to people in need in particular women and children.

Proposals for supporting Sudanese women include:

Principles to be ensured:

- Open safe passages to ensure humanitarian needs reach displaced women, men, boys and girls and for families that are still in the war zones.
- Strong mechanism to ensure the safety and security of women, and girls along the safe corridors.
- Authorities should facilitate the work of aid agencies to register all displaced persons women, men and children in all states.
- Authorities should facilitate the work of national and local NGOs in particular women's organizations to identify the needs of women and to deliver humanitarian assistance in collaboration with the international organizations.
- Aid and humanitarian assistance should prioritize and target areas affected by the conflict and states that host displaced persons.
- Aid should be delivered directly by aid organizations and should not be through any authority.
- All humanitarian assistance should ensure equal distribution of aid between women and men and other disadvantaged groups taking into account intersectionality dimension.
- Aid should not be used to exploit women in need either sexually or politically.

Immediate humanitarian needs:

- Provision of food, water, clothes, shelters hygiene kits, and rape kits among other needs for displaced women and poor women and girls affected by the conflict.
- Immediate health services for women, girls and children including pregnant women and women with chronic diseases.
- Mother and Child healthcare services.
- Free of charge medicine for all women, girls and children with chronic diseases.
- Counselling and psychological support to women victims of violence, girls and children.
- Protection of women from all forms of violence inside the displaced camps and at the community are large.
- Rehabilitation of the water, electricity infrastructure, banking system and internet.
- Immediate humanitarian assistance to refugee women, girls and children in hosting countries, in particular in camps in neighboring countries including food, water, health services, immunization of children, shelters, kitchen utilities and hygiene kits among other items.
- Restoring the communication infrastructure.

Community based women's initiatives

- Channel humanitarian assistance to women through the established women's groups and organizations that provide humanitarian assistance, capitalize on their knowledge in conducting humanitarian needs' assessments and engage them in data collection.
- Train women's groups and associations at community level in issues related to distribution, monitoring and evaluation of aid delivery.

Peace building and advocacy

- Advocacy work should continue and that IGAD, AU and UN and other actors should continuously engage with Sudanese women, in particular this platform with UN Women to raise their voices to the regional actors and any decision making bodies supporting peaceful solutions to Sudan crisis.

Medium term:

- Support women’s humanitarian assistance initiatives and provide capacity and skills development in areas related to aid delivery, counselling for women victims of violence and other emerging capacity needs.
- Rehabilitation of schools and educational institutions. down
- Rehabilitation of hospitals and health clinics affected by the war.
- Rehabilitation and cash support to women tea and food sellers to reestablish their small businesses.
- Support peace building initiatives of women’s organizations and groups and deliver capacity building programs.
- Support women’s participation in decision making regarding the future of Sudan.
- Support women’s collations and networks for peace and enhance linkages with women’s groups in the African and Arab continents.
- Immediate return of girls to schools and provide meals to ensure the sustainability of attendance.
- Facilitate the return of displaced and refugees to their original homes.

Finally, we would like to thank you all for this opportunity and the solid platform of solidary and sisterhood with Sudanese women and to ensure that the dialogue and the discussion continue with the African Union, IGAD, and UN Women we urge you to set up a Task Force for coordination and continued engagement between the regional leaders and the “Peace for Sudan Platform” to accompany the journey of Sudanese towards peace.

Contributors of the document, members of the “Peace for Sudan Platform” as of 12th May 2023

Initiative	State
Women led initiatives established as a response to the war	
Women Against War	Includes women from across Sudan
Mothers of Sudan	Blue Nile Region
Eastern Sudan Women's Initiative to Stop the War	Eastern Sudan Region
Women's Call Initiative for Rejection and Cessation of War (Nahda Women's Organization for Change, Peace, and Sustainable Development)	Kordofan Region
Women in the Field	North Darfur State
Ceasefire Initiative - Darfur Sector	Darfur Region
Solidarity of Mothers in Gezira for Shelter	Al-Jazira State
Initiative of Organizations	Red Sea State
Eastern Sudan Women's Alliance	Eastern Region
Darfur Women's Platform	Darfur Region
Networks, Coalitions and alliances	
Women for Peace and Security Network	Darfur States (West, Central, South, North, and East), Kordofan Region, Blue Nile Region, Kassala, and Red Sea States
Blue Nile Women's Network for Peace & Development (BNWDP)	Blue Nile Region
Political and Civil Women's Groups (MANSAM)	From Across Sudan
No To Women's Oppression	From Across Sudan
Emergency Rooms	
El Gedaref Emergency Room	Al-Gadarif State
Northern State Emergency Room	Northern State
Greater Omdurman Emergency Room	Khartoum State
Omdurman Emergency Room	Khartoum State
Kassala Emergency Room	Kassala State
Port Sudan Emergency Room	Red Sea State
Women led civil Society Organizations	
Sudanese Organization for Research and Development	Khartoum State, Eastern Region, Blue Nile Region and South Darfur State.
Al Harisat Organization	Khartoum State
Women's Development Organization	Red Sea State
Women and Youth Victims of Wars	Blue Nile Region
Women's House of Finance Association	Khartoum State
Women and Child Development and Peace Organization	Eastern Sudan, Red Sea, Port Sudan, and its rural areas
SAS Legal Center	Khartoum State
AMNA Organization	Khartoum State
Association of Disabled Women in Kassala	Kassala State
Bait Al-Balad Association	Blue Nile Region

No to the Oppression of Women	Khartoum State
Nora Organization for Combating Violence Against Women and Girls	Khartoum State
Bitagdri- You can	Northern Region
Al-Khairia Charitable Organization for Women and Child Development	Blue Nile Region
National Planning Organization	Kordofan Region
Nuqtat Daw' Association for Development	Kassala State
Sudanese Women's Union	
Women's Awareness Initiative (WAI)	Blue Nile Region
Women's Development and Protection Association	North Darfur State
Cultural Steps Association	Khartoum State
DARTIC Community Initiative for Researchers and Data Analysts	White Nile and West Darfur States
Gadrat for Support and Development	Al-Jazira State
Gender Center for Research and Studies	Khartoum State
Women Lawyers for Change Center	Khartoum State
March 8 Women's Group	Red Sea State
Women's Alliance and Platform for Sudanese Women's Renaissance	