Violent Contestation of Power and Political Turbulence in Sudan: A Reflective Assessment of Generals Burhan and Hemedti Simmering Feud

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Abstract

This study explores the complex power dynamics and political volatility that have defined Sudan's history by examining the simmering feud between Generals Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Hamdan Dagalo Hemedti. Thus, the study also reveals the fundamental structural elements causing political instability in Sudan's landscape that threaten the national democratic transition. The study relied on content analysis and a documentary approach; data were collected through secondary sources, and Marxist conflict theory was employed. The paper argued that the feud is a struggle for power exercise in the state and a quest to control the security architecture. Findings reveal that owing to the violent contest for power and persistent political turbulence in Sudan, the country's transition to democratic governance appears to be a mirage since diverse armed groups have resisted giving up their respective groups' interests for the national interest. The paper recommends that negotiations and dialogue are primarily needed to protect Sudan's territorial integrity and save it from state failure and disintegration. The policy implication of this study is that the study outcome provides a current and informative addition to our knowledge of power struggles and political upheaval in Africa by examining the ramifications of this dispute for achieving positive peace in regional and global affairs.

Keywords: *Conflict, Contest, Political, Power, Turbulence, Violence, Sudan and Africa.*

I. Introduction

Sudan is Africa's largest nation by territorial size which is located in the North Eastern region of the continent. It covers a vast 2,505,813-square-kilometer area. The Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, and Uganda are among the nations with which Sudan shares borders. Remarkably, the longest river in Africa, the Nile, divides the nation from east to west (Levy & Latif, 2007; The World Factbook, 2010). Following its 1956 independence from the British colonial administration, Sudan has faced several challenges as it attempts to put in place a stable democratic structure. Political turmoil and power conflicts have a long and complicated history in Sudan.

The nation has always struggled with the pursuit of power, which frequently leads to violent contestations, from prehistoric civilizations to colonial dominance and post-independence issues. The country's heterogeneous ethnic, religious, and cultural makeup has a big impact on Sudan's political unrest. Sudan is a patchwork of distinct ethnic groupings, with a greater ethnic diversity in the south and a predominance of Arabs in the north. This diversity has frequently led to conflicts and violent altercations as a result of tension and power struggles. Future disputes resulted from the colonial powers' arbitrary borders, which ignored the ethnic and cultural distinctions within the nation.

An armed confrontation between factions within the military and security forces has developed from the political instability and military participation in Sudan, causing a violent power struggle. The commanders of the Army, General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Force (RSF), General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, are engaged in combat. Advocates for these two powerful individuals have transformed Khartoum, the nation's capital, into a battlefield. Regretfully, this conflict has escalated into a scenario characterized by substantial violence and fatalities (This Day, 2023).

With almost 12,000 fatalities and 5.9 million internally displaced people, this is the world's largest internal displacement disaster. Over 7.2 million individuals have left their homes in search of safety both inside and outside the nation; roughly half of those displaced are children. Sudan has the greatest number of internally displaced people and the worst child displacement issue in the world right now. The conflict's spread into Al Jazirah State, Sudan's "breadbasket," has resulted in the

displacement of over 500,000 people and made the nation's food situation worse (International Rescue Committee, 2024).

From the foregoing, this paper examines the violent contestation for power and political turbulence in Sudan from the lenses of Generals Burhan and Hemedti Simmering Feud. In recent years, numerous studies have examined the political turbulence in Sudan, particularly focusing on the broader socio-political dynamics, the impact of external influences, and the historical contexts of military coups and civil unrest. Notably, previous studies have often concentrated on the structural factors underpinning Sudan's persistent instability (Kar, 2023; Holmes & Fluton, 2023) and the role of various political factions and their historical grievances (Ajwain & De Waal, 2002; Collins, 2008). While these studies provide valuable insights into the overarching patterns of conflict and power struggles in Sudan, they have not thoroughly dissected the personal power dynamics and the intricate, often volatile relationships between key military figures. This paper diverges from prior works by offering a focused, reflective assessment of the simmering feud between Generals Burhan and Hemedti, a topic that has been underexplored in existing literature.

By honing in on the interpersonal and strategic contestation for power between these two prominent figures, this study aims to elucidate how their rivalry has uniquely contributed to the current political turbulence in Sudan. Unlike earlier studies that primarily analyze the macro-level implications of military interventions and political crises, this paper provides an in-depth examination of the micro-level power struggles and their direct impact on Sudan's governance and stability. The structure of the paper embodies a brief conceptual discourse, methodology, theoretical framework and application, discussion and results, conclusion, and recommendations.

2. Democracy, Political Instability, Diplomacy, And Violent Contestation: A Brief Conceptual Discourse

i. Democracy

Democracy is a type of government where the people as a whole, rather than any one class or class, legitimately hold the power to rule a state (Appadorai, 2003). According to Okafor, Odigbo, and Okeke (2022), democracy is a kind of government that upholds the needs or interests of the populace, regardless of how involved they are in politics. Every

government has the responsibility to ensure good governance which has embedded in it the environment for successful political and socio-economic progress (Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim, & Imhonopi, 2019). Democracy, as noted by Obiora (2008), permits everyone to have their voice heard while enforcing the will of the majority. It provides mechanisms for the peaceful transfer of power and encourages open debates, pluralism, and transparency in government.

ii.   **Political Instability**

This is the possibility that disagreements or fierce competition between various political parties would lead to the overthrow of a government (Hussain, 2014). Political instability can manifest in various forms, such as protests, riots, political violence, coups, or changes in government, through undemocratic means.

iii.   **Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is a concept that has to do with the method of transactions among states in a peaceful means. Diplomacy means the use of tact by professional diplomats in the relationship of one nation to another (Dappa et al., 2021). In the words of Nwankwo (2008), diplomacy includes strategies and methods involved in state relations with one another, which are characterised by negotiation. It is mostly bilateral and usually operates worldwide through a complex network of overseas offices, legations, consulates, embassies, and special missions.

iv.   **Violent Contestation**

Violent contestation refers to the use of force or aggressive tactics by individuals or groups to challenge or oppose established authorities, institutions, or societal norms. It involves acts of violence such as rioting, vandalism, destruction of property, physical assault, loss of life, or armed conflict as a means to achieve political, social, or ideological objectives.

3. Methodology

To generate relevant data, documentary data collecting was used in the study. The documentary approach is a tool for obtaining comprehensive information (Aniche & Ofodum, 2018). We relied on secondary data

extracted from journal articles, media reports, books, official publications, archival materials, and conference materials relevant to the focus of the study. We utilized qualitative analysis techniques to comprehensively evaluate the collected data.

4. **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted some of the abstractions from Marxist conflict theory. Karl Marx (1818–1883) was the first to propose that social strife in all human societies stems from materialism. Many people consider Karl Marx to be the founder of social conflict theory. According to Marx, society is perpetually at odds due to the struggle for scarce resources. Marxist conflict theory maintains social order through domination and power, not cooperation and compliance. Rich and powerful people will do anything it takes to hold onto their status, primarily by scaring the poor and vulnerable. The basic tenet of conflict theory is that people desire to get more wealth and social power. Conflict theory holds that social and economic structures maintain inequality and the domination of the ruling class by acting as weapons in disputes between social groupings or classes. Additionally, based on economic class, society is divided between the proletariat working class and the bourgeois ruling class.

The utilisation of Marxist conflict theory in this study is validated by the recognition that power dynamics, control over resources, political ambitions, and divergent interests are the fundamental causes of the conflict in Sudan, specifically the contestation for power between General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and General Mohamed Hamden Dagalo Hameti. Marxist conflict theory posits that societal conflicts arise primarily from the economic inequalities inherent in the capitalist system, where the bourgeoisie (ruling class) exploits the proletariat (working class). These conflicts are driven by the material conditions and economic interests that underpin social structures. Applying this theory to the political landscape of Sudan, the ongoing power struggle between Generals Burhan and Hemedti can be viewed through the lens of class struggle and the quest for control over state resources and power.

Historically, Sudan has been characterized by profound economic disparities and social stratification, largely a legacy of colonial exploitation and subsequent neocolonial influences. The military elite, including figures like Burhan and Hemedti, have historically aligned with different factions of the ruling class, leveraging their positions to control state

resources and maintain their power. This struggle is not merely a personal feud but is deeply rooted in the broader conflict between competing elite factions vying for dominance over Sudan's political economy. In the Marxist framework, the feud between Burhan and Hemedti can be seen as a manifestation of intra-class conflict within the ruling elite. Both generals represent different segments of the military and political elite, each with their own economic bases and support networks. Burhan, associated with the traditional military establishment, and Hemedti, with his roots in the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), embody the competing interests within the bourgeoisie. Their contestation is driven by the control of state apparatuses, which in turn control significant economic resources, including land, mineral wealth, and foreign aid.

5. Results And Discussions

5.1. Remote and Immediate Causes of Violent Contestation for Power in Sudan

The contestation between Generals Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) in Sudan has been marked by a struggle for dominance between the traditional military establishment and a powerful paramilitary force. Burhan, head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and leader of the Sovereignty Council, represents the conventional military hierarchy. In contrast, Hemedti commands the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group that evolved from the Janjaweed militias, controlling lucrative gold mines and enjoying substantial autonomy. Their rivalry has manifested through multiple fronts. Militarily, skirmishes and clashes between SAF and RSF units over strategic territories have highlighted the tension. Economically, Hemedti's control of gold resources and his international financial networks have challenged Burhan's traditional military funding. Politically, both have maneuvered within the transitional government, often clashing over the balance of power between civilian and military leadership. The nature of leadership in a country greatly determines how it will progress in all sectors (Abasilim, Gberevbie, Osibanjo, 2019). Key incidents like the October 2021 coup, led by Burhan with Hemedti's uneasy support, have intensified their competition. Public protests demanding civilian rule have been violently repressed by both factions, exacerbating instability. This power struggle has significantly impacted

Sudan's political landscape, stalled democratic progress, and deepened national divisions.

On April 15, 2023, in Sudan, gunfire broke out after several tense days due to RSF members being redeployed across the nation in a move that the army perceived as dangerous. There was a glimmer of optimism that negotiations may bring the matter to an end, but they never took place. The first shooter is under dispute, but the battle quickly spread to several sections of the nation, killing around 400 civilians, according to the World Health Organisation (BBC, 2023). Sudan has faced numerous challenges since attaining independence in 1956, including political instability, regional imbalances, and ethnic conflicts. The country has had difficulties with representation, power sharing, and resource distribution, which have widened already-existing racial and religious divides (Kar, 2023). The political terrain of the nation has been marked by ephemeral coalitions, factionalism, and disputes mostly over the distribution of resources, especially oil. With about 600 subgroups and roughly 19 distinct ethnic groupings, Sudan is home to a diverse population.

Black people make up the majority of the population; Nilotic ethnic groups make up 24.4% of the population and are primarily found in the Southern region; Sudanic groups make up 12.9%; Nuba Mountain people make up 6.5%; Cushitic groups make up 6%; and the remaining 6% are distributed throughout the Central, Eastern, and Western regions (Operation World, 2010). The Arab community, which is mostly concentrated in the northern area of Sudan, makes up 45.2% of the country's overall population. Strong religious convictions are characteristic of the Sudanese people, who follow either Islam or Christianity, while there are still some indigenous faiths practiced by some. In the North, Islam was not just a religion; it was an identity specific to Arabism and a way of life. In the North, the intellectual notion is that, following the prophetic mission of Mohamed, human history is a history of salvation that has culminated (Ajwain & De Waal, 2002, p. 275). As a result, they have always desired to construct a bridge that would link them to the Arab world, to unite around the divine truth—Islam (Insoll, 2003).

However, the main factor shaping the identity of Southern Sudan has been its long-standing opposition to the North's imposition of Arab and Islamic culture (Deng, 2001). This resistance has served to forge their unity as Black Africans and has guided them toward Christianity as a means of opposing Islam and Arabism. In addition to being a religion, Islam is seen by Southerners as an ethnic and cultural reality (connected

to Arabism) that has historically subjugated them as enslaved people and continues to alienate them as Black Africans who follow a different religion (Yoh, 1999). Civil unrest has persisted for years because Southerners have long opposed having their religious and ethnic identities rebuilt in any other way (Fahmi, 2012).

Sudan's population is heavily dependent on its large landmass for survival and means of subsistence, putting it among the nations with the highest levels of socioeconomic inequality globally. Nevertheless, the country's economy is growing quickly because of the rise in oil production, ranking it as one of the 17th most-developing economies in the globe (Pantuliano, 2007). Eighty percent of Sudanese workers are employed in the agriculture sector, which is the major accelerator of the country's national economy. While Khartoum acts as the financial center and hub for economic development, the country's south is rich in land that supports the economy (Levy & Latif, 2007).

The south of Sudan has better access to water and, hence, far richer soil because of the many tributaries of the Nile that flow through it, whereas the north of the country sits on the brink of the Sahara desert (Pantuliano, 2007). Moreover, the economy has greatly benefited from the oil's explosive growth in production since its inception in the Southern region in the 1970s. The General Government of Sudan (GGOS) depends heavily on oil income, which accounts for 50% of the country's GDP and almost 70% of its export earnings (De Waal, 2007; Switzer, 2002). Accordingly, Sudan's ongoing civil conflict has also been exacerbated by the Southern resistance and the GGOS's attempt to control these resources to maintain the existence of Northern rule (Fahmi, 2012).

According to Mohamed Omer Beshir's (1984) book "*In Sudan: Ethnicity and National Cohesion,* the first Turko/Egyptian (1821–1885) colonial regime began to establish Sudan's current civil boundaries, political, religious, and ethnic divisions, as well as a highly militarized and centralized system of governance, in the 1820s. The Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899–1956), the second colonial government, strengthened the earlier Khartoum colonial framework upon which the GGOS was built. Collins (2008) offers a thorough analysis of the colonial government in Sudan in *A History of Modern Sudan.* Collins (2008) explains that when the colonial administration governed the North and South as distinct areas, Christianity was promoted and practices related to Arabs or Muslims were forbidden in the South. This marked the beginning of the politicisation of the ideological divide between the north and south

of Sudan (Deng, 2001). In addition to serving as a barrier against the widespread of Islam to prevent the comeback of national agitations akin to the Mahdi, this strategy was implemented in a *"land whose conquest (or reconquest on behalf of Egypt in official parlance, to legitimise their actions)* had taken them three years (1896–99)"* (O'Fahey, 1996, p. 260). The colonial regime saw the South as similar to the East African colonies, while the North was similar to the Middle East.

Thus, the Southern Sudanese troops turned to guerilla warfare and were the first rebellion to enlist child soldiers since they lacked the infrastructure for a significant offensive against the north(Ahmed &Abel, 2024). The rebels from southern Sudan separated into two groups as the fighting went on. The Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 was numerous violated. In 1978, President Gaafar Nimeiry attempted to take over the recently discovered oil deposits in the region dividing North and South Sudan. President Nimeiry then further violated the agreement in 1983 by enforcing Sharia Law throughout the entire nation and dissolving the predominantly Christian Southern Sudan Autonomous Region. As a result, penalties under Sharia Law were applied to numerous South Sudanese nationals and non-Muslims living in the north. (Momodu, 2018). A coup in April 1985 led to Nimeri's overthrow and the establishment of a new administration that annulled his decree from 1983.

Under John Garang's leadership, rebels from South Sudan formed the Southern Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) in reaction to the difficulties facing an independent Sudan. Their goal was to overthrow the Khartoum-based central government. Through a variety of actions, this new government attempted to bring the North and South together. The SPLA, under the command of Col. John Garang, and the new Khartoum administration, headed by Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, engaged in discussions in May 1986. Convening in Ethiopia concurrently, the Koka Dam proclamation was drafted by the SPLA and other Sudanese political organizations, endorsing the repeal of Islamic law and calling for a national constitutional conference. A peace plan was agreed upon in 1988 by the Sudanese political parties, the SPLA and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). This proposal called for an end to hostilities and the dissolution of military ties with Libya and Egypt, countries that had been supplying the Khartoum administration with arms.

Nonetheless, crimes and human rights breaches were committed by both sides during the bloodshed that persisted until the 1990s. The Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement

(SPLM) signed the Machakos Protocol in July 2002, which was called after the Kenyan town where peace talks were held. On January 9, 2005, the SPLA and the Sudanese government signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, ending the civil war. The negotiations carried on into the next year. Additionally, this deal made it possible for South Sudan to be established in 2011, six years after the end of the conflict.

Widespread demonstrations calling for democratic governance, political changes, and an end to the violation of human rights and corruption took place in Sudan in 2019. Thirty years of President Omar al-Bashir's rule ended because of these demonstrations, known as the Sudanese Revolution. After that, leaders from the military and the civilian world came together to form a transitional administration whose goal was to steer Sudan in the direction of a democratic and inclusive society (Kar, 2023). The state's use of power and the power dynamics in the security sector are at the heart of the dispute. The Republic of Sudan's armed forces are known as the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) (while RSF refers to the Rapid Support Forces is a paramilitary force formerly operated by the Government of Sudan), have been at odds about when and how to integrate them. Before his forces can be integrated, Hemetti has pushed for changes that will make the military more professional and inclusive. It also appears that he has advocated for the retention of his paramilitary as a safety net throughout the election procedure. The embrace of technology in the conduct of elections is very vital to improve transparency (Duruji, Olanrewaju, Olu-Owolabi. Duruji-Moses, & Chukwudi, 2021).

Certain groups within the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have voiced worries that the reforms would make the military less effective and give the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) more power. The command structure and the dynamic between Hemetti and al-Burhan inside it are a source of further disagreement. There have been other conflicts in Sudan's past, but this one is unique. The intricacy of the problem is increased by the fact that, in contrast to a typical "rebel" group, the RSF is legally recognized and was established, allowed, and maintained as an instrument of state authority (Holmes & Fluton, 2023).

5.2 Implications of the Violent Contestation for Power in Sudan

The latest eruption of violence in Sudan is a step backward from the democratization process. Hamzawy (2023) observed that the power struggle between Sudan's southern and western peripheries and its

political center in Khartoum is at the heart of this war. The implications of violent contestation for power in Sudan include:

i. **Humanitarian Crisis, Suffering, and Loss of Life:**

The ongoing violence and conflict have resulted in a humanitarian crisis, it has noteworthy ramifications for the general welfare of the populace. The health care system and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services are under more stress due to the civilian displacement. In Sudan, almost 1,000 children have died as a result of a measles outbreak. A severe cholera pandemic is also plaguing the nation; as of December 2023, there were more than 8,500 suspected cases, a 94% increase from a month ago (International Rescue Committee, 2024). According to UNICEF (2023) report on June 15th, 2023:

> "Due to the two-month conflict in Sudan, over a million children have been forced to flee their homes; as of June 6, UNICEF has been informed by reliable sources that over 330 children had been killed, over 1,900 had been injured, and many more were in grave danger; additionally, due to restricted access to essential lifesaving services, over 13 million children needed humanitarian aid, including water, health, feed, and protection."

Mandeep O'Brien, the UNICEF representative in Sudan asserts that in the light of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, the future of the country seems to be in jeopardy. Children are injured, mistreated, uprooted, and at risk of illness and starvation as a result of being caught in the crossfire. They endure the brunt of this horrific disaster, which they had no role in generating. Children are locked in an endless nightmare. See the image below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: *Shows the women and children trapped in the war.*

Source: *Sahar (2023, p.1).*

Particularly in West and Central Darfur, the intensification of active fighting has worsened insecurity and the looting of humanitarian supplies and facilities. The situation has worsened, leaving many people, especially children, at risk of dehydration, diarrhea, and malnutrition due to the lack of clean water. Currently, approximately 14,836 children are injured, mistreated, uprooted, and at risk of illness and starvation as a result of being caught in the crossfire. It is thought that in the West Darfur State, children under five years suffer from chronic malnutrition. These numbers are expected to increase due to public health risks, which will lead to a sharp rise in malnutrition among children and lactating mothers (UNICEF, 2023). The image in Figure 2 shows Sudanese refugees fleeing violence in their country; expecting food aid close to the Sudan-Chad border in Koufroun, Chad on May 9, 2023.

Figure 2: *Showing the displaced Sudanese who fled the country for safety as the war drags*

Source: *Lisa (2023, p.1).*

The longer the crisis persists, the higher the risk of a humanitarian crisis, loss of lives, and unintended suffering for women and children. According to UNICEF (2023) in Central Darfur, looting has continued. Health facilities like vaccines, and hospitals, and the destruction and looting of other goods put children in danger of illness. There are inadequate healthcare resources, including a shortage of electricity, oxygen, and working incubators. The figure below displays the fire outbreak close to a hospital in Khartoum, Sudan as reported on Sunday 16th April, 2023.

Figure 3: *Showing fires burning hospital in Khartoum*

Source: Aljazeera News Report (2023, p.1).

ii.   **Political Instability and Governance Crisis:**

Violent contestation often leads to political instability as rival factions and armed groups vie for power. This instability undermines the functioning of government institutions, disrupts governance, and hampers the ability to implement effective policies for development and progress. Fulton and Holmes (2023) argued that General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the de facto ruler of Sudan, is primarily supported by the country's armed forces. Still, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitaries, a group of militias, are loyal to the former warlord General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti. Elbagir, Qiblawi, and Orie (2023) described the clashes between the two warlords as an existential fight for dominance.

Equally, the violent power struggle between forces loyal to two rival generals has plunged Sudan into a spiraling conflict, with fighting raging across the country and its capital, Khartoum, paralyzed by intense battles. Tens of thousands of soldiers from each side are already dispersed along the western parts of the Nile River, in the districts of Khartoum and the metropolis of Omdurman. Figure 4 below shows the smoke rising over Khartoum city during clashes between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces on April 24, 2023.

Figure 4: *Showing smoke rising over Khartoum during clashes*

Source: Sadiq et al. (2023)

Sudan has been undergoing a delicate transition towards democracy since the removal of former President Omar al-Bashir in 2019. Frequent changes in leadership, power struggles, and the erosion of state authority can weaken government institutions, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. This weakens the ability of the state to provide essential services, enforce the rule of law, and maintain social order. Thus, the human rights situation in the country is plagued with abuses, including extrajudicial killings, forced displacements, sexual violence, and violations of civil liberties.

iii.   **Regional Security Concerns:**

Sudan's internal conflicts and violence have the potential to spill over into neighbouring countries, exacerbating regional security concerns. Four hundred eighty-four thousand of the over 1.4 million refugees who left Sudan for neighbouring countries mainly Chad were women and children. In addition to dealing with an increasing refugee crisis, Sudan's neighbours now run the possibility of having active conflict spill over their borders (International Rescue Committee, 2024). Regional powers and external actors like Russia, China, Israel, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and UAE are divided over support for the simmering feud between the warring generals. These countries may exploit the power vacuum and instability caused by violent contestation in Sudan to advance their interests.

Al-Anani (2023) further supported this point of view by stating that after the ousting of the former Sudanese Prest Omar al-Bashir in 2019, several actors in the region, each with their agenda and interests have been extensively involved in the country, including Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. They have contributed to the current state of

instability by fueling the conflict and exacerbating the situation by supporting the warring factions. The present crisis and the suffering of the Sudanese people will only worsen as a result of these parties' lack of cooperation and consensus.

Several regional and international powers have economic and political interests in the sub-Saharan country, which could be threatened by the transition to democracy. Egypt joined Al-Burhan, until recently an ally against the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Damon the Nile and is probably aiming to prevent a risky example of a military dictatorship that successfully transitioned to a civil democracy according to a security expert (Pichon & De Martini, 2023).

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are in supported of the removal of Al-Bashir in 2019 and helped Hemedt, who provided them with soldiers to fight in Yemen. Given their significant financial investments in the extraction of Sudan's natural resources, it is reasonable to assume that China and Russia will seek to protect their economic, security, and geopolitical interests. According to experts, the battle may continue for the foreseeable future (Pichon & De Martini, 2023). However, Sudan's international standing may be negatively affected, leading to reduced diplomatic support, economic sanctions, or limited engagement in trade and investment. Sanctions should be applied to individuals, groups, and countries when necessary to protect and build peace in society (Aluko, Apeloko, Chukwudi, Paimo, 2023).

iv.   **Socio-Economic Implications:**

Violent contestation has exacerbated social divisions and ethnic tensions within Sudanese society. This can lead to further fragmentation and conflicts, hindering efforts to build a unified and inclusive nation. Ekanem, Nebeife, and Okafor (2022) noted that violent confrontation can disrupt the activities of donor agencies, thereby leading to increased suffering and hardship in Sudan. Normally, donor agencies provide some essential services like primary health care, water, educational facilities, and other aid; however, with the war ongoing in Sudan, services of this kind will drastically come to a halt. Education is a key area in the lives of young ones that should not be toiled to ensure the perfect shaping of the mind to add value to society (Ezebuilo, 2023).

According to Islamic Relief (2023, p. 1), in addition to weakening the already fragile social services and education systems, violence has left the healthcare system in dire straits and caused the closure of 58% of

schools. In addition to the destruction and looting of medical institutions, a shortage of funding may soon result in a reduction of the already limited government resources allotted to healthcare. Numerous health personnel also left the capital city.

Basher, Sharif, and Cafiero (2023) pointed out that the persistent conflict will cause millions of urban residents to lose employment, increasing the number of individuals needing assistance. Noteworthy is the fact that tens of thousands have escaped to secure cities, and as long as combat continues, there will be an addition to the number of internally displaced people. Secretary-General António Guterres explained that:

> "The stories coming out of Khartoum depict a horrifying picture: people are scared and stuck inside, with little food, water, medicine, or fuel left; health systems are on the verge of collapsing; and armed groups are using numerous hospitals. There have been rumors of armed conflicts all over the nation; residents of Darfur, the North Kordofan, and the Blue Nile States have left, and refugees and returnees have made their way to Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and South Sudan. This power conflict is igniting a spark that might derail development in the Sahel by decades and worsen an already dire humanitarian situation."

The resources that could have been allocated to economic development and social programs are diverted to address immediate humanitarian needs such as providing emergency aid, healthcare, and shelter for displaced populations. These costs strain already limited resources and hinder long-term economic progress. Basher, Sharif, and Cafiero (2023) argued that since industry accounts for 21% of GDP, Sudan is likely to experience a protracted recession following the war. However, because agriculture accounts for 32.7 percent of the GDP and is a significant industry for many Sudanese, it would be most affected by the shortage of fuel and fertilizer. Sudan's economy was experiencing poor development and stagnation even before the current crisis. Millions will be at risk of starving as a result of this, which will also account for rising inflation and the cost of products. Although the value of the Sudanese pound has dropped by at least half, nearly half of the country's workforce is unemployed. Additionally, 17.7 million people, or 37% of the population, live in acute levels of food insecurity in Sudan (IPC 3) (International Rescue Committee, 2024).

5.3 An Insight into Some International Responses to Violent Contestation for Power in   Sudan

Countries in the Sudan region and globally have swiftly and strongly mobilized to address the violent power struggle between al-Burhan and Hemetti. The "Quad for Sudan," consisting of the United States, the U.K., the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, issued a joint statement echoing the individual appeals for peace. Additionally, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres made a statement and spoke with Hemetti and al-Burhan directly. Concern over this rapidly worsening situation worldwide has even eclipsed national rivalries and conflicts, such as in Ukraine or between the U.S. and China. The U.N. Security Council has called for a quick cessation of hostilities, a return to dialogue, and a calmer situation. The African Union Peace and Security Council also summoned an impromptu meeting in which they called for a halt to the hostilities.

On Sunday, April 16th, 2023, the eight African nations that make up the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which includes Sudan, hosted an extraordinary meeting with the Heads of state from member nations. During this meeting, the heads of state expressed their concerns regarding the potential impact the crises have on regional peace and security. The fact that the leadership of the IGAD secretariat organized this meeting is significant, particularly because Sudan currently holds the chairmanship. Prominent leaders, such as former South African President Thabo Mbeki, also joined in urging for a prompt resolution to the violence. Former Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok echoed these sentiments and cautioned against the risk of a regional conflict (Stigant, 2023).

UN Women started actively working with Sudanese women and civil organizations, as the ongoing conflict in Sudan disproportionately affects the lives of Sudanese women and girls, which in turn seriously complicates humanitarian operations, UN Women continuously assesses the needs of women and girls and ensures that they receive the necessary support promptly. Its workers conduct rapid gender assessments to gather up-to-date information and analysis on the gender dynamics of the crisis and its impacts, accessible to all participants in relief work. Working with women and organizations, partners, and other UN agencies, UN Women strives to provide immediate life-saving assistance, including PEP kits, dignity kits, psychosocial support, trauma care, and emergency relief, among other resources (UN Women, 2023).

Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is collaborating with its partners to address the escalating situation in and around Sudan, where there is an unprecedented level of humanitarian need. International organisations must assist the poor and developing countries in solving some of their numerous problems (Chukwudi, Osimen, Dele-Dada, Ahmed, 2024) To assist those in the most affected areas of Sudan, as well as those seeking refuge in neighboring countries, IOM is providing essential aid to save lives. Additionally, offering updates on population movements, including displacement and cross-border mobility, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is operational in Chad, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Coordination and supervision of humanitarian activities in the nation are under the purview of IOM, which is growing its response efforts as the crisis develops as a member of the core humanitarian team stationed in Port Sudan. The IOM's preparedness and response priorities, along with the resources needed for the prompt delivery of help, are outlined in the crisis response plan for Sudan (2023) (IOM, 2023).

Moreover, the International Medical Corps has been actively engaged in Sudan since 2004 by providing WASH, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection services, and other necessities. Recognising the rapidly changing security situation, the organization launched a regional response to help address the increasing needs of refugees in the CAR and South Sudan and internally displaced people in Sudan. In Sudan, the International Medical Corps continues to support 65 health facilities in five states, including personnel, medical supplies, consumables, and medicines. Emergency response teams were deployed to Central Africa and South Sudan, and supplies were strategically placed to expand services related to health, nutrition, MHPSS, gender-based violence (GBV), and WASH (Reliefweb, 2023).

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) also assists internally displaced people via initiatives for nutrition, health, economic development, water, sanitation, and hygiene. IRC further offers safety and empowerment to women and children in Blue Nile, Gederaf, Khartoum, and South Kordofan states, especially victims of gender-based violence. They launched a response in Aj Jazirah State, Port Sudan office, and are starting an immediate response in White Nile State, providing financial aid, good water, sanitation, and hygiene to affected communities. The IRC is working to extend its services in other areas like the Red Sea and Darfur, to solve humanitarian aid lacuna, and extend

its program concerning the ongoing humanitarian emergency in Sudan. The IRC supplies mobile health clinics and drinkable water to address the massive healthcare demands of the influx of people into Chad. The IRC wants to expand its help in health and protection, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene, including providing urgent aid. This involves ensuring the right to clean water and a clean environment and promoting good hygiene practices to eliminate the spread of disease (The International Rescue Committee, 2024). Indeed, the ongoing conflict in Sudan is drastically affecting the lives of Sudanese and humanitarian workers. It is crucial to provide timely assistance to support any mission or vision that would enthrone humanitarian safety and long-lasting peace.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the ongoing power struggle in Sudan, focusing on the relationship and violent feud between Generals Burhan and Hemedt. If Sudan is to overcome the challenges emanating from this violent contestation, a thorough grasp of the intricate dynamics of power will be critical to fostering lasting peace and political resilience. Resolving the ongoing flash conflict in Sudan and building an inclusive political system are critical to Sudan's long-term stability and development.

7. Recommendations

It is against these backdrops that this study therefore recommends the following:

i. An urgent need for diplomatic intervention and regional cooperation to reduce the risks of increased violence and instability. It is necessary to diplomatically appease the opposing interests and convince the combatants that the only solution is a ceasefire followed by a peaceful dialogue. Therefore, both sides must find a way back to an inclusive ADR mechanism like negotiations and dialogue, as this is primarily a necessary means to protect Sudan's territorial integrity and save it from state failure and disintegration i.e. Encourage dialogue and mediation between Generals Burhan and Hemedti to resolve their differences peacefully.

ii. There is a need to adopt economic policies targeted at resolving wealth gaps, distributing resources fairly, and giving underprivileged

populations access to the economy. This covers initiatives to lessen corruption as well as the open administration of natural resources. Thus, this implies using sustainable development initiatives to address Sudan's economic problems, with an emphasis on infrastructure, agriculture, and the advancement of human capital.

iii. The reorganisation of the security sector can help prevent abuse of power, as to ensure professionalism, responsibility, and respect for human rights standards i.e. the security sector must undergo reform to guarantee responsibility, expertise, and observance of human rights.

iv. Encouraging foreign assistance for Sudan's democratic transition, humanitarian relief, and economic growth is critically important. Regional organisations such as the African Union and IGAD should be involved in assisting Sudan's political transition and stability. Thus, there is a need to encourage a comprehensive political process involving all parties, civil society, and youth organisations, and Urge international players to show sustained support for Sudan's growth and stability.

v. Sudan's institutions, especially the court, legislature, and security services, must be strengthened to guarantee accountability and the rule of law. Encourage programs aimed at restitution and justice to rectify historical violations of human rights and foster national healing.

vi. However, to lessen their susceptibility to exploitation, Sudanese youths should be equipped with the necessary tools and materials they need to realise their strengths and potential through education, skill development, training, and employment possibilities.

8. Policy Implication

The study's policy implications suggest that international actors, like the UN and AU, must mediate the conflict and prevent further escalation; the international community must continue to support Sudan's democratic transition while addressing the underlying issues fuelling the power struggle; regional organizations, like the IGAD, must find a peaceful resolution to the conflict to prevent regional instability;

humanitarian aid must be increased; and international organisations, like the UNHCR, must be supported in their efforts to address the crisis.

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Statement of Declaration Of Interest

There are no competing interests of any kind for the authors.

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