

Atar

Sudan in Perspective

Issue 18, Monday, December 9, 2024

Collectives



Artwork by: Obada Gabir

Marhaba!

This is the 18th issue of “Atar” English magazine, from Sudan Facts Center for Journalism. It will be coming to you on Monday, after every two weeks.

“East As-Sulamaniya”

Located along the national highway connecting Khartoum with the cities of White Nile, near Taiba Camp—a Rapid Support Forces base south of Khartoum—East As-Sulamaniya has witnessed a dramatic transformation. Once a peaceful village, it was thrown into chaos at the sight of warplanes circling overhead on the first day of the conflict, mirroring the turmoil that engulfed the country’s villages and cities. Tarteel Amir captures the story of East As-Sulamaniya’s residents, narrating their lives through their own eyes during this crisis.

The Communal Kitchens of Umm Rawaba

“Al-Quds Communal Kitchen” was established in September 2023 by Um Abdu in the Al-Quds neighborhood of Umm Rawaba. Witnessing the community’s struggle to secure free meals amid near-impossible living conditions, she created the kitchen to provide daily meals, relying entirely on donations. Despite challenges posed by the war and internet outages, the kitchen continues to operate, with aspirations to expand its services. In response to worsening humanitarian conditions, numerous volunteer-run kitchens have emerged in the city, becoming a lifeline for affected families. Al-Fatih Mohammed brings you the story of Umm Rawaba’s communal kitchens.



Towards Socialist Answers for and from Sudan

Muzan Al-Neel argues that revolutionary socialists have never supported the most reactionary tools of oppression. Instead, their role has been to promote critical and progressive socialist analysis and to persuade the oppressed that the arduous journey to liberation ultimately leads to justice.

Sudan Chronicle

Zamzam Camp for displaced persons in North Darfur faces devastating humanitarian conditions as shelling continues from both warring sides, reflecting the plight seen in Umm Rawaba, North Kordofan. Both regions remain on the frontlines. In Al-Jabalein locality, White Nile State, clashes south of the Al-Tuboon area have forced residents to flee. Meanwhile, prices have decreased in Al-Jabalein market following the reopening of the Rabak-Sinnar road and the restoration of telecommunications services across the state. This report was compiled by Atar correspondents.

Finally, the issue concludes with a price bulletin prepared by Abdelrahman Maalla.

Atar Editorial Team 



In this issue:

- ◊ **Editorial 2 - 3**
- ◊ **Siege's Anguish: Scenes from East As-Sulamaniya 5 - 10**
Tartil Amir
- ◊ **Salvation by the Takaaya: Communal Kitchens that keep lives in war ravaged Sudan neighbourhoods 11 - 15**
Alfatih Mohamed
- ◊ **Opinion: Clarifying our path towards socialist answers from & for Sudan 16 - 23**
Muzan Alneel
- ◊ **Sudan's Chronicles: Zamzam Camp, Al-Jabalein, and Umm Rawaba 24 - 28**
Atar Correspondents
- ◊ **Price Bulletin 29**
Abdelrahman Maalla

Editor in Chief:
Arif Elsaui

Co-Managing Editors:
Amar Jamal
Muhammad Alsadiq

Editors:
Mahmoud Dagash
Michael Mugwang'a
Hatim Alkinani

Graphic Designer:
Wafa M. A. Ali

Illustrator:
Obada Gabir

 **Atar**
Sudan in Perspective

From

FACTSD
FACTS CENTER FOR JOURNALISM

To receive a pdf copy of Atar magazine, you can subscribe via Email or WhatsApp:
atar@sudanfacts.org
+254115438212

www.atarnetwork.com

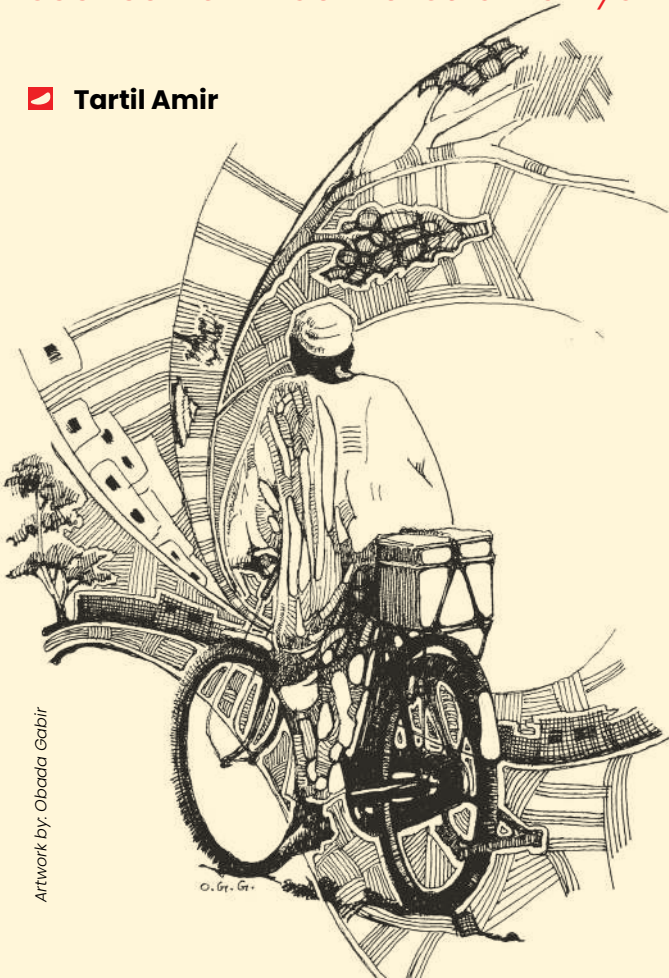
Atar

Sudan in Perspective

Issue 18, Monday, December 9, 2024

Siege's Anguish: *Scenes from East As-Sulamaniya*

 Tartil Amir



Artwork by: Obada Gabir

©. Gr. Gr.

A calming voice in times of distress: Teacher Faisal sole war.

On the morning of Friday, April 14, 2023, a day before the war, the village of East As-Sulamaniya was peaceful, as usual. Vegetable vendors woke up and headed to the Jabal Awlia market, a 15-minute bus ride away, carrying empty burlap sacks and dressed in beige garments.

At noon, Faisal, the teacher, as everyone called him (not Sheikh because he had been managing the primary school for more than two decades), gave his sermon from the mosque's pulpit. Faisal would always address the people of As-Sulamaniya with kindness, as though he was teaching an inspiring lesson to school children. Short in stature, he typically walked silently, his gaze directed downward, never greeting anyone along the way, until he met everyone in the mosque or school. He had a routine. He never changed his path, always taking the same route day and night. He spoke little, laughed rarely, and always maintained a composed expression, even in the face of adversity.

Early on Saturday April 15, three helicopters flew over East As-Sulamaniya for the first time, followed by the sound of anti-aircraft fire that the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began using that day. The villagers then realized the war had reached their doorstep. That moment marked the only time the Sudanese Armed Forces

(SAF) reached the skies over the village. The helicopters disappeared quickly, leaving an oppressive silence and fear in the hearts of the people. This village, which had always been considered a safe haven, was now in shock. The police station, which had once operated there, was now a dumping ground for trash and sheep. Soon, gunfire erupted, intense and unprecedented. People locked themselves in their homes, knowing the RSF camp, Tayba, was just three minutes away by car. The rumbling engines of RSF vehicles echoed in the main street, Jabal Awlia Road, and the side streets that connected to the village.

At first, the people of East As-Sulamaniya thought it was just a fleeting incident, believing SAF would soon regain control.

At first, the people of East As-Sulamaniya thought it was just a fleeting incident, believing SAF would soon regain control. But when the noon prayer time came and there was no call to prayer, Faisal's voice was missing. From that moment on, the village was under siege, and only Faisal's voice remained a source of calm as he recited Quranic verses, focusing on patience to soothe the people.

Counting despair: Uncle Ghanem's troubled soul.

In As-Sulamaniya, there is an elderly man named Ghanem. He is known to everyone as Uncle Ghanem. To cope with his

sorrow, Uncle Ghanem would sit around 10am every day on the main road, counting the RSF vehicles coming from the south. During those days, the RSF convoys were advancing slowly before eventually taking control of the Jabal Awlia army camp. The road, usually bustling with buses and other vehicles, had now become the exclusive route for the RSF convoys. Uncle Ghanem continued his routine as though it were a hobby. He would return home at noon to tell his children how many vehicles he had counted, and then he would go back out in the afternoon to count again, returning in the evening to share the number.

One day, some RSF soldiers noticed his repeated presence and stopped their vehicle to threaten him with imprisonment if he returned to that spot. The elderly man's patience was tested, but he did not abandon his habit. He would still occasionally go out and count the vehicles, hoping, just once, that he would see SAF vehicles and be able to count them for his children to enjoy.

Family built with stones of war: A couple's journey in times of crisis

Amna and Mohammed, a young couple, found an opportunity to leave East As-Sulamaniya and travel to the city of Kosti to obtain their passports. They had married a few months before the war and had a young daughter. When *Atar's*

correspondent met Mohammed in Kosti, he seemed frail, anxious, and repressed, as though he hadn't spoken in a long time. He was relieved to have the chance to express himself, saying, "We are suppressed," then laughed as if he were crying at the same time.

*When **Atar's** correspondent met Mohammed in Kosti, he seemed frail, anxious, and repressed, as though he hadn't spoken in a long time. He was relieved to have the chance to express himself, saying, "We are suppressed," then laughed as if he were crying at the same time.*

In East As-Sulamaniya, days passed with the couple's house devoid of anything to eat. On other days, they could only find balila, a traditional beans dish, to eat three meals a day. The people in the village changed from social citizens to individuals who preferred isolation, fearing excesses and being alert to security necessities. Sometimes, bread would be available early in the morning after Fajr prayer, and it would only be enough for one meal a day, even for those who could afford to buy it. The emphasis on managing budgets became crucial, as most of the villagers had lost their jobs and were now dependent on remittances from their children abroad. Mohammed described the situation as extremely dire.

The RSF soldiers moved throughout the village most of the time, with their numbers reaching nearly a hundred. Citizens had to figure out how to survive near this danger, staying as far away from them as possible and avoiding interactions. Over time, the villagers learned from experience not to let their guard down or be fooled by RSF soldiers trying to “win people over,” as there was no guarantee of safety with them.

Later, the RSF forces infiltrated the village even more and set up a camp inside. One day, Mohammed and his family (his wife, daughter, and mother) were sitting at home when they suddenly heard two objects hit the ground. Two RSF soldiers appeared in their house, fully dressed in military uniform, seemingly having jumped over the wall. When they saw the family, they immediately aimed their weapons and asked:

“Are you living here?”

Mohammed kept his composure, thinking of his young daughter, wife, and mother. After some hesitation and confirming that the house didn’t belong to intelligence or any police officer, the soldiers quickly asked:

“So, this nice house isn’t owned by a Koz (Islamist)?”

It took great effort from Mohammed to convince them that their assumption was wrong, explaining that he had built the house from his years of working abroad. Finally, Mohammed’s mother and wife intervened, and the soldiers left.

The next day, the soldiers jumped into a neighbouring house at around 2:30am. The family, mostly children and women, was asleep. The mother woke up to drink some water, and when she returned, she found one of the RSF soldiers had sneaked inside the mosquito net where her three-year-old daughter was lying. Initially, she thought it was a dog but screamed when she realized it was a soldier, waking the family and causing the intruder to flee. The mother said the soldier intended to take the child.

In the morning, a group of villagers, accompanied by Mohammed, went to the RSF camp to report the incident. But the soldiers dismissed it saying they were undisciplined. This event terrified the villagers, and many, including the mother and her family, fled the village.

Mohammed paused to collect his thoughts as he shares with *Atar* the fear and anxiety that gripped him and the villagers during the siege of East As-Sulamaniya:

“People there are exhausted and mentally drained by the war and siege. It is normal to hear a random bullet fall near you. I suffered immense psychological pressure because of the fear for my family. We saw people who were sane before the war suddenly muttering, panicking, and screaming,” Mohammed told *Atar*.

Caught between the constant worry about what the next day might bring and the overwhelming lack of safety, Mohammed said he would even hide his phone

while at home. Whenever they heard that talks were underway between the SAF and the RSF, they would rush to the Starlink to catch the latest news in social media, whispering to each other:

“Enough. We are exhausted, we just want peace!”

In the village of As-Sulamaniya, there was no market before the war, just a few small grocery shops. During the first month of the war, the RSF would come to the village and throw bags of flour on the road. Most villagers hesitated to take it, and they would argue among themselves about who had taken it. Some who took the flour began repeating that Teacher Faisal had issued a fatwa stating that anyone who cannot afford their daily sustenance is entitled to take flour from the RSF.

To this day, Mohammed is unsure whether Faisal actually issued this fatwa or if it was falsely attributed to him. Eventually, more and more people started taking the free flour, which led to increasing resentment from those who did not.

In the following months, stolen goods began to flood the village. Initially, the RSF soldiers would display stolen items like motorbikes, flour, and foodstuffs on the main road at very low prices. At that time, there was no other flour in the village, so people quickly rushed to take it. Later, the stolen goods markets moved into the middle of the village, becoming permanent and expanding daily to in-

clude vegetables, meat, refrigerators, air conditioners, televisions, water heaters, generators, water pumps, and more, all sold at very low prices.

During the first month of the war, the RSF would come to the village and throw bags of flour on the road. Most villagers hesitated to take it.

While Mohammed was in Kosti, having left his home in As-Sulamaniya, he was worried about the stolen goods flooding his village, as he knew that the RSF and thieves had stolen most of them from homes abandoned by their owners.

“They target houses that are empty, first raiding kitchens and taking stoves, gas cylinders, heaters, and other electrical appliances,” he told *Atar*.

Mohammed shared the story of a young man who had lived in the village for more than ten years and had good relations with the villagers.

“He was one of us,” Mohammed whispered.

One day, before the RSF took control of the Tayba camp and the area, the young man went to the market in Jabal Awliya. The SAF arrested him on the accusation that his father was an RSF soldier. They beat him and tortured him until the RSF took over the camp and released him along with others. Shortly afterward, he joined the RSF, wore their uniform, and carried weapons. When he

returned to the village, he told the others that someone had betrayed him to the army, and he wrote the name of the betrayer on his vehicle, followed by the phrase: Wanted internationally. He later became an intermediary between the RSF and the villagers when tensions or problems arose.

Since taking control of As-Sulamaniya and the surrounding villages, the RSF has recruited some locals to work with them and provide information. Mohammed recounted the story of a woman from the village who joined the RSF and was later stationed at one of their checkpoints. She would search women and report those whose fathers or husbands belonged to the SAF or police.

“The RSF arrested many mothers because of her informant activities,” Mohammed says.

Gradually, due to fear of being betrayed, social relations among the villagers became more cautious. Meanwhile, the RSF members living in the village began marrying women from neighbouring villages. Every Friday, the villagers would hear gunshots fired in celebration, as if their reckless shooting wasn't enough.

Amna spoke about the difficulties the women in the village faced in providing food for their families, how they would rush to buy flour whenever it became available, and how they would give extras to neighbours or those in need when they came to their door.

due to fear of being betrayed, social relations among the villagers became more cautious.

From a mother's perspective, Amna observed that the most severe impact was on the children. She described a scene of a child, no more than two years old, playing with a stick as if it were a weapon, tying his sister's scarf around his head and shouting, “I'm an RSF soldier!”

What frightened her the most was that they were imitating the RSF in their language and behaviour.

“They scream all the time and act aggressively,” she said, sadly.

The men in the village had become weak, angry, and would explode over the slightest things. Blood pressure problems were on the rise among them, and they sometimes refused to eat.

Amna found some comfort in the fact that some classes and kindergartens had resumed in the village in recent months, thanks to individual and voluntary initiatives by some teachers.

Finally, after completing the paperwork for their passports, Mohammed and Amna prepared to return to their village. Mohammed took a deep breath, burdened with all the concerns of the siege he would face again, while Amna nervously dreaded the journey back.



First published in Arabic, **Atar** weekly magazine, issue 56, November 28, 2024.

Salvation by the Takaaya: *Communal Kitchens that keep lives in war ravaged Sudan neighbourhoods*

✉ **Alfatih Mohamed**

Um Abdu and the Takaaya of Umm Rawaba

In September, Um Abdu, a resident of Al-Quds neighbourhood in Umm Rawaba, conceived the idea of establishing a neighbourhood takaaya (charitable communal kitchens). She was moved by the challenges residents faced in obtaining free meals from kitchens located in other areas, such as Arba'in Street and Al-Adib neighbourhood.

“The idea came to me because Al-Quds residents have to travel great distances just to get a meal. I discussed it with active members of the community and received their encouragement, which motivated me to take practical steps toward setting up the kitchen,” Um told *Atar*.

Al-Quds communal kitchen has provided meals to nearly 200 families daily since its inception, with daily expenses reaching 140,000 Sudanese pounds if the meal includes bread and lentils, or around 60,000 pounds without bread.

“We obtain the ingredients from the Umm Rawaba market, which, like other markets, has been affected by the war,” Um says, adding that the kitchen relies heavily on donations channeled through a dedicated bank account.

Previously, Al-Najah Association, a charitable organisation, committed to funding Friday meals. Nevertheless, the kitchen faces significant challenges due to unstable support and disruptions in Internet and communication networks.



Since August 2023, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have controlled Umm Rawaba. In response, groups of local volunteers have established soup kitchens to provide free meals to struggling families, offering crucial support in these difficult times brought about by the ongoing war. These kitchens have become lifelines for displaced and conflict-affected families in the city, particularly given the Internet blackout from early October to late November, compounded by inconsistent electricity supply. ♦

“The communal kitchen’s operations came to a complete halt during the internet blackout. We operated for only two days using the remaining donation funds before we had to cease activities entirely until the network was restored,” Um Abdu said.

Despite these obstacles, the kitchen continues to serve daily meals and aspires to expand its services with adequate support.

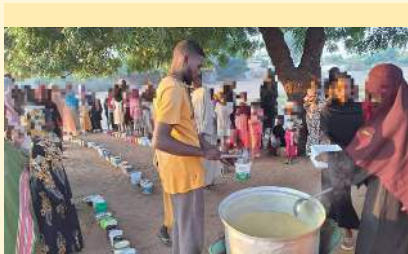
“We have a plan to relocate the kitchen to a more spacious area, like the city’s Mawlid Square, so that more residents can benefit. We are ready to act as soon as we receive the necessary support,” she added.

Um Abdu frequently encounters touching humanitarian stories during meal distributions, experiences that deeply impact her and strengthen her resolve to give more.

“I feel a profound sense of fulfillment and joy from the gratitude expressed by people, even children. Once, a woman came to me, sharing that she had not eaten in days. Receiving a simple lentil meal was her lifesaver for the day,” Um said.

Takaayas in Arba’in Street and Al-Qadisiya: A Struggle for Survival

“Two regular visitors to our kitchen stopped showing up one day. After two days of absence, we learned that they had passed away due to malaria,” a volunteer at the communal kitchens in Arba’in Street and Al-Qadisiya told *Atar*.



Before the war, Umm Rawaba was a bustling commercial hub in North Kordofan State, thriving due to its agricultural and livestock wealth and its renowned fresh water. The Sudanese railway line, stretching from the north to the western city of Nyala, also passed through the town. However, the events of April 15 turned life upside down. Basic necessities deteriorated, and residents now struggle to find a glimmer of hope amid dire and dangerous circumstances.

With the war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF dragging on for over 19 months and leaving behind severe humanitarian crises, Umm Rawaba’s communal kitchens emerged as models of local solidarity. These grassroots initiatives aim to alleviate hunger and suffering for affected families. In Umm Rawaba, among other war-impacted cities, the communal kitchens have become a genuine lifeline, especially in the complete absence of humanitarian organisations, which cannot access the city due to security concerns. ♦

“The news shocked us greatly, but it also strengthened our resolve to work harder, ensuring we lose no more lives to hunger or disease,” he added.

Another volunteer responsible for managing the two communal kitchens intimated that they spend approximately 150,000 Sudanese pounds daily to purchase essentials like oil, onions, lentils, and charcoal. This amount does not include bread, which many families desperately need.

“Our work is entirely volunteer-based, and we do not belong to any association or organisation. We post bank account details for donations on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp and rely solely on contributions to buy daily supplies,” he explained.

Currently, the two kitchens serve around 420 families: 250 at the Arba'in Street kitchen and 170 at the northern Al-Qadisiya kitchen. According to the volunteers, both communal kitchens were established two and a half months ago. One of the volunteers added that they hope to expand their services to other neighbourhoods, provided sufficient support is available.

The challenges they face include limited funding and prolonged Internet and communication outages, forcing them to use costly satellite services like Starlink to maintain their operations.

The volunteer highlighted the wors-

“Our work is entirely volunteer-based, and we do not belong to any association or organisation. We post bank account details for donations on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp and rely solely on contributions to buy daily supplies,”



In November, Sudanese Armed Forces chief of command and transitional council leader instructed relevant state bodies to facilitate the UN's humanitarian aid operations. These included granting access to airports, in Kadugli (South Kordofan), El-Obeid (North Kordofan, near Umm Rawaba), and Ad-Damazin (Blue Nile region), for the storage and distribution of relief supplies. UN staff were also authorised to oversee aid delivery and return to their bases immediately after distribution. According to UN reports, nearly 25 million people, half of Sudan's population, are on the brink of famine. ♦

ening food and health crises in the city, stating:

“People need food, even those who were previously financially stable. After collecting donations, we go to the market to purchase supplies and continue our work in the kitchen.”

In Omar Gabat and Al-Adib Neighbourhoods, The Kitchens Are Crying For Help.

A volunteer from the Omar Gabat and Al-Adib neighbourhoods’ communal kitchen told *Atar* that their operation started on September 9, 2024. Covering two neighbourhoods in Umm Rawaba, the kitchen supports around 165 families.

“We rely entirely on the generosity of donors. However, the growing number of families in need and limited resources have forced us to shut down operations on some days. The increasing burdens threaten our ability to sustain our work,” he said.

Volunteers at these kitchens strive to expand their initiatives to other neighbourhoods, provided sufficient support is available. Communal kitchens represent

Communal kitchens represent a lifeline for many displaced families, filling a void left by the absence of formal humanitarian organisations.

a lifeline for many displaced families, filling a void left by the absence of formal humanitarian organisations.

One volunteer emphasised the importance of sustained efforts, both locally and globally, to ensure the kitchens’ continued operation.

“We still hope to alleviate people’s suffering, but these initiatives need everyone’s support to endure,” he said

Despite material and logistical challenges, these communal kitchens remain a beacon of hope for families who have lost their livelihoods amidst the war. Volunteers continue to strive for expansion, seeking to extend their lifeline to as many in need as possible.



First published in Arabic, **Atar** weekly magazine, issue 57, December 9, 2024.

●
●
● **Atar**

● **Sudan in Perspective**

● Issue 18, Monday, December 9, 2024

Opinion ▶

Clarifying our path

Towards socialist answers from & for Sudan

🚩 **Muzan Alneel**

Artwork by: Obada Gabir



The goal of socialism is to abolish all forms of exploitation and oppression, a goal so noble yet so vague when not grounded in detailed visions of the much sought after post-exploitation reality and the path to reach it.

For the socialists of Sudan and with the dire realities of war, the task of clarifying the socialist path does not only face the challenges of clarifying and detailing the goals of freedom and justice (by abolishing exploitation and oppression) but they face it in a reality of extreme oppression, violence and mass murder of the people.

In this reality of war where socialism is most needed, where the lack of freedom and justice are deeply felt by the people, it remains a fact that along with murder, war has flamed reactionary propaganda and narratives, further increasing the challenges of advancing the progressive socialist vision, of convincing the masses of its validity, and of the socialist answer and path as not only being realistic but the only path out of a reality shaped by murders to a reality shaped for life.

Not long ago was the Sudanese public chanting for freedom, peace, justice, free health care and education, and power to the people. These demands confirm that the Sudanese revolution was indeed a people's revolution, calling for their needs and supporting their interests. However, and although these goals coincide with

socialist goals, that does not make it a socialist revolution, and this must be clear to us for the sake of a sound analysis of our success and failures. The desire to abolish injustices is a logical conclusion of the lived experience of the oppressed and exploited.

What socialism brings to these desires is the strong and scientific argument that they cannot be achieved without the control of the oppressed over the technological and social tools of production and power.

What socialism brings to these desires is the strong and scientific argument that they cannot be achieved without the control of the oppressed over the technological and social tools of production and power, that the chants of freedom and justice can and will only be realized via the power of the people and by removing the current ruling class. Yet these chants of freedom and justice are now a thing of the past in Sudan, if we are to honestly observe and document our present reality.

In the first weeks following the breakout of hostilities between the army and the Janjaweed, a general sense of temporariness prevailed among the public, including political bodies, with the expectation that the war is to end soon, within days, weeks or a couple of months.

And as more and more of the people of Sudan are waking up to the realisation of it being a long war, they are pushed by the human need to find solutions towards further considering the visions presented. This quest is unfortunately taking place in a pool of reactionary visions that either advocate for more murder or for the rule of the murderers, while the socialist vision for a solution shaped for life is missing.

Although the demands of the Sudanese people's revolution had a strong chance of evolving into a socialist project of people power, these chances were significantly diminished. A strong factor leading to this is found in the actions of those who choose to shelve the demands of the people and prioritise support for one of the warring parties. This action was taken by the general public and many politically active bodies and individuals alike. It is an action with no logical justification based on reality. The ruling class, the army and the Janjaweed included, have not shelved their actions to protect their interests, they have not responded to the catastrophe of war experienced by the people of Sudan with prioritising the lives of the people, increasing public spending on health care or feeding the hungry or housing those rendered homeless by the war. The ruling class, including the army and the Janjaweed, did not dispose of their control on wealth, land and assets to provide for the victims of war and famine they claim to fight for.

On the contrary, the same war that increased the suffering of the people of Sudan is being used to justify deprioritising their needs and, sometimes, even their lives if a nearby enemy location is to be attacked and the loss lives is to be accepted as necessary collateral damage. Hence, as the older war of the oppressed and the oppressors remains active despite the war among the factions of the oligarchy, and as the interests of the exploiters remain the priority of the exploiters, there are no logical reasons for the exploited to shelve and deprioritise their interests.

It is the task of revolutionary democratic socialists to guard and scream these interests, but the task has been deserted by many of the comrades who once shared this vision. In a review of opinions presented by the prodigal comrades, we face perversions of several kinds. We find among our comrades of the near past those who imagine a world where the war has no impact on the conditions of the struggle, that we only need to survive the war by any means possible after which we shall return to pre-war conditions and continue the paused struggle. To these comrades, we ask them to utilise their critical thinking in weighing the additional power accumulated by the ruling class directly via their weapons and violence, and indirectly via the prevalence of their narratives in public debate with the absence of alternative progressive narratives. There are others of the comrades of the past who surrendered to the calls of

reactionary brutality and fascistic patriotism or ethnicism, and in them we see, just like we see in many of the general public who choose a similar path, victims of our failure to present the alternative, valid and superior socialist vision and project. And there are, among our comrades of the past, those who still hold to a progressive understanding of the suffering of the exploited and the injustices inflicted on them by the exploitative ruling class in war and in peace. However, they are crippled by a lack of socialist understanding and commitment to people power. Those prodigal comrades of ours who still seem to hold on to the dreams of justice, and who do not see the power of the people, find no outlet for their dreams other than seeking an elitist power to achieve the desired future.

From this central point, their paths differ according to the elitist power of their choice as some seek justice and protection for the oppressed via the armed bodies utilised by the oppressors. Some seek it via the technocratic structures of the ruling class and others seek justice and protection for the people via the imperialist interventions of international systems. Surface level differences with shared contradictions between the desired goal and reactionary methods as well as a shared root perversion in the form of neglecting the power of the people.

With regards to the issue of armed protection of the people, there are indeed

valid socialist arguments, studies and debates to be conducted. It will be foolish to imagine that abolishing exploitation can take place without violent confrontations with those benefiting from the exploitation, and therefore armed resistance is not rejected in principle. However, the armed resistance of the oppressed cannot and shall not be shaped in the form of the armed oppression of the ruling class.

Envisioning the armed resistance of the oppressed must stand on a foundation of envisioning democratic organising of the oppressed, and it must also take into consideration preventing a set up that centralises violence, for this will only recreate the rule of a new armed minority. This study and envisioning can produce many answers worthy of debate in the reality of Sudan and within socialist principles. However, none of them is an answer that advocates for militarism and the contradictory argument of a path to justice that is shared or in collaboration with the armed bodies utilised by the oppressors. And the task of clarifying this answer is indeed a crucial part of clarifying the socialist path and is also a task to which we call upon our prodigal comrades to direct their most needed energy instead of abusing their intellect in the attempt to justify militarism and temporary alliance with the exploiting ruling class.

The calls for *utilising* the tools of the exploiters, be that armed or bureaucratic ones, share a general perversion in un-

derstanding the relationship between the oppressed and the tools of the oppressor, a relationship that must be defined first before engaging in envisioning the army of the people or the state of the people.

As socialists we understand that, in their path towards abolishing exploitation, the exploited will have to take control of the tools of oppression and use it with the aim of enabling revolutionary transit to a world where no exploitation is permitted and no such tools are needed, the state included.

However, we also understand that the state of the people is one that will have to utilise some of the bricks and parts of the state of the oppressors. It, however, shares no resemblance in design, strategy or goals with the latter. This definition leads us to the importance of understanding the bricks, procedures and systems of the existing state only to criticise their pro-oppression design, and to theorise, debate and engage in how they can be utilised under the control of the people and for their interests along with the question of how to realise their control.

In carrying out this task, we must make sure that our words and actions cannot be used as ammunition for the propaganda of the oppressors to advertise for their failed and exploitive state. Our words as socialists with regards to the state must utilise the crises

of the existing system to critically understand it, awaken the people to its oppressive nature and hasten its overthrow by theorising and engaging in the necessary forms of organising for actualising the control of the oppressed over the tools of oppression and the abolishment of exploitation.

Many of the actions of the prodigal comrades will not survive the aforementioned test of whether their words are sufficiently fortified by radical socialist criticism preventing its use for the propaganda of the oppressors and their structures. These actions are pushing the borders of socialist intellectual activism to those of socialist-worded protection of exploitation. However, that is but one of the flaws of our current debates and theorisation among Sudanese socialists as well as Sudanese *progressives* in general.

In their path towards abolishing exploitation, the exploited will have to take control of the tools of oppression and use it with the aim of enabling revolutionary transit to a world where no exploitation is permitted.

Another of our primary flaws and derelictions is apparent in the vagueness of our words, words that are yet to be grounded in detailed visions and understanding for and of the Sudanese realities. Isn't it a shame, dear comrades, that we

still refer to the groups that our political project seeks to advance their interests by the use of ambiguous and fuzzy words of “the people”, “the Sudanese public”, and “the oppressed”? Shameful indeed is our failure to scientifically study our current and historical structures of power and wealth creation and distribution and clarify to ourselves and the *public* its methods of exploitation, those benefiting from it and those suffering under it. The general terms of “the people” either befog the understanding of the division of oppressor and oppressed or can be used by fascists to justify a division based on nationality and a union among the oppressors and the oppressed based on them all being the people of the land, which contradicts the revolutionary unity of the oppressed across borders against all their oppressors. However, it is also a shame that we are still using the general term “oppressed” without a breakdown of what it means in the Sudanese reality, not to deny the rare and valuable studies of, at the top of which is the pamphlet by Yousif Abdelmageed (The rural waged labor – أجراء الريف) where he conducted this study on the waged agricultural labor in terms of value creation and distribution. This is a study we must conduct for all major work and wealth creation activities of the people of Sudan if we are to scientifically understand which groups of the people of Sudan are oppressed? Which

among them are the groups with the revolutionary capability to lead the struggle and overthrow of the system of oppression as revolutionary subject? Which groups are most enabled by material conditions to lead the task of organising and in what forms? Which groups are allies of the struggle and which are inherently opponents of the socialist project? All these are basic questions of a revolutionary socialist project, and again a part of the task of clarification we must seriously work on.

Shameful indeed is our failure to scientifically study our current and historical structures of power and wealth creation and distribution and clarify to ourselves and the public its methods of exploitation

This seriousness also requires that we do not take the easy and tempting path of using established terminologies that do not reflect our reality. An example of this will be to assign the task of leading the mission of organising the oppressed solely upon the “Sudanese working class” without due critical study of the mostly extractive wealth creation patterns in the country, without adequately and scientifically understanding the layered levels of exploitation on different groups of workers -formal and informal- by different groups some of which can also be

defined as waged labourers, and without making use of the organizational forms generated in residential units for the provision of services for the oppressed and by them.

It is frequently repeated that the socialist project towards abolishing exploitation and oppression is a mission that requires the organisation of the oppressed (in unions, communes, or other forms) as well as a revolutionary organisation (the revolutionary party being one example of it), that remains universally true within known history. The revolutionary socialist organisation is necessary for imbuing revolutionary consciousness among the oppressed, and the organisation of the oppressed for this struggle to be truly democratic.

However, looking at the reality of our primitive Sudanese socialist movement -despite of its long history- as evident by all the basic issues it is yet to clarify, the task of building the necessary revolutionary organisation requires, at the moment, answering those basic issues and questions. It seems we are not yet at the point of addressing the issue of “what is to be done” or “where to begin” but of “what is the path”.

We call upon socialist comrades to take on the task of clarifying the path, understanding the forms of exploitation taking place in Sudan, understanding the potentials and exploring the challenges of

communal organising taking place in the country and by its people, the possibilities of increasing the productive forces of the country and achieving justice in the distribution of produced wealth, among other basic questions many of which were mentioned in this text.

This clarification will provide the public with the alternative socialist solutions, and here it is useful to mention that a justification used by some factions of the prodigal comrades in their support of the reactionary and elitist tools of the rul-

The role of the revolutionary socialists was never to support the most reactionary approaches among the oppressed but to advance the critical progressive socialist analysis and seek to convince the oppressed.

ing class -armed or bureaucratic- who repeat that the elitist tool of their choice is the choice of the people and is therefore the actual representation of socialist people-centered path. To this, it must be said that the role of the revolutionary socialists was never to support the most reactionary approaches among the oppressed but to advance the critical progressive socialist analysis and seek to convince the oppressed while maintaining an updated critical thinking towards the reactions of the oppressed and the changes in material

condition. This is a very different way of adopting reactionary approaches, retreating from the fight against the narrative of the ruling class befogging their minds, and laying the burden of this choice upon the oppressed themselves.

The clarification of the basics of the socialist project in Sudan must also be carried as part of the mission of building the socialist revolutionary organisation. It is via this clarification that we will locate and engage with our future comrades in the organisation, some of which will be from the comrades of the past as well.

The task of clarification and revolutionary theorizing is indeed being currently carried out by some rare and appreciated respectable comrades, however it is far from being the primary focus of a good percentage of those capable let alone the primary focus of public debate as it should be.

These clarifications should be done with due seriousness, preferably including both internal discussions of groups

and cells of comrades who aspire to take on these challenges as well as public publishing of socialist positions and texts and mutual reviews and criticism. Such steps will strengthen us with the necessary theoretical seriousness, organisational commitment and accountability towards the public. All of which are characteristics necessary for the desired construction of the revolutionary organization, to support the organisation of the oppressed and to clarify our path towards socialist solutions from and for the oppressed people of Sudan.

Reading List: Foundations of the Article

Rosa Luxemburg: *The Junius Pamphlet* (1915)

V. I. Lenin: *Where to Begin?* (1901)

V. I. Lenin: *What is to be Done?* (1902)

Rosa Luxemburg: *The Militia and Militarism* (1899)

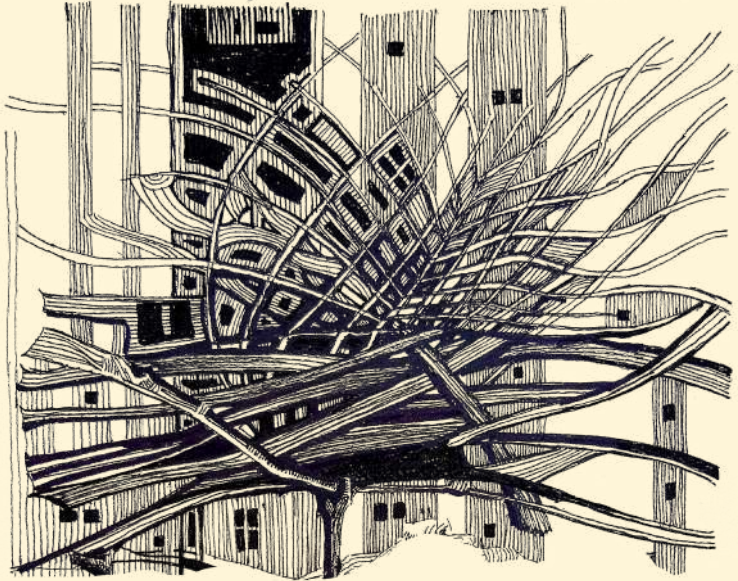
V. I. Lenin: *The State and Revolution* (1917)



أتر Atar

Sudan in Perspective

Issue 18, Monday, December 9, 2024



Artwork by: Obada Gabir

Sudan's Chronicles ▶

Zamzam Camp:

Where The Displaced Are Facing Second Fire As Warring Parties Visit Shelling, And A Humanitarian Crisis

Al-Jabalein:

Insecurity And Disease Team Up To Torment Residents

Umm Rawaba:

Escalating Clashes and A Staggering Humanitarian Crisis

📖 *Diaries recorded by Atar correspondents*

Zamzam Camp: Where The Displaced Are Facing Second Fire As Warring Parties Visit Shelling, And A Humanitarian Crisis

Atar Correspondent

Zamzam Camp for displaced persons, located [15](#) kilometers south of Al-Fashir in North Darfur, is enduring a harrowing ordeal. For four consecutive days from December 1, the camp has been subjected to intense artillery shelling by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), while its surrounding areas have faced relentless attacks.

In a [statement](#), the camp's administration reported that the RSF artillery bombardment had killed eight civilians and injured 13 others, including six critically wounded. Additionally, numerous homes and properties were destroyed or set ablaze.

"We were surprised by a continuous barrage of long-range artillery fired by the RSF on the camp at around 5:30pm on Sunday. The RSF resumed their artillery attacks the following morning at 8am and struck again at 3pm. This created a dire situation, forcing many to flee for their lives, especially the sick who rely on oxygen and medical staff. As a result, the hospital established by Médecins Sans Frontières in the camp was left deserted following the assault," Ahmed Yahya, a pseudonym for a man in his thirties who

has been displaced and living in Zamzam Camp for several years, recounted to *Atar*.

Zamzam Camp has recently become home to the [largest number](#) of displaced persons, driven there by the outbreak of armed conflict in the country since April 15, 2023.

"The shelling instilled severe fear and panic among civilians in the camp, triggering a wave of displacement in various directions. Some were compelled to return to besieged Al-Fashir under duress while many others headed to areas such as Dar al-Salam and Shangil Tobaya. Others fled towards Shagara and Umm Hijeleej," Yahya said.

The bombardment targeted different parts of the camp, including the market area, Jaflo neighbourhood, Magareen neighborhood, and the health centre. Shelling also extended to Al-Zein area west of Al-Fashir where seven shells landed, and to a power station near Shagara where a single shell disrupted the operation of Starlink devices in the camp.

"On Tuesday evening, just before the Maghrib prayer, the RSF resumed artillery attacks on Zamzam Camp, Shagara, and the Golo Reservoir with more than four shells. Earlier that day, there had been cautious movement among residents in markets and public roads, but another wave of displacement ensued toward Al-Fashir and nearby areas," a resident of Zamzam Camp told *Atar*.

He added that, at 11am on the fourth

consecutive day of attacks, the RSF renewed artillery strikes on the camp, leading to further casualties and property damage.

“The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) warplanes targeted RSF positions east of the city. Loud explosions were heard, and there was a noticeable absence of anti-aircraft fire from the RSF, which is usually present,” a resident of Al-Fashir, who requested anonymity for security reasons, told *Atar*, adding:

“In the afternoon, the RSF shelled the southwestern neighbourhoods of the city, aiming at Zamzam Camp with over ten shells. The attack caused significant injuries, including among displaced people in Al-Thawra sheltering house, and widespread destruction to homes and shops in the livestock market. That evening, the SAF’s warplanes resumed strikes on RSF positions east of the city.”

On December 3, at around noon, the RSF attacked the village of Abu Zreiga, south of Zamzam Camp, resulting in at least 20 fatalities and 14 injuries, according to preliminary reports from local residents.

Zamzam Camp, home to nearly [half a million](#) displaced people, has been suf-

fering from severe shortages of basic necessities since the RSF imposed a siege on Al-Fashir more than six months ago.

In a [statement](#) issued on the second day of bombardment, the camp’s administration strongly condemned the RSF’s targeted attacks, appealing to the international community, the United Nations Security Council, and the UN for urgent intervention. The statement called for enforcement of international humanitarian law to halt the RSF’s assaults on camps, protect innocent civilians, and ensure the swift and safe delivery of humanitarian aid to the displaced.

The General Coordination of Displaced Persons and Refugees also [condemned](#) the RSF artillery bombardment of Zamzam Camp, highlighting that since the conflict’s outbreak on April 15, 2023, violations against the displaced have intensified, leaving them as victims once again amid significant neglect of their deteriorating humanitarian conditions. The organisation called on the international community to pressure warring parties to cease violence against displaced persons and civilians in Darfur and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to those at risk of famine.

Al-Jabalein: Insecurity And Disease Team Up To Torment Res- idents

Atar Correspondent

Since December 2, Al-Jabalein locality has experienced mounting security instability following clashes at Al-Tuboon military camp, located 39 kilometres southwards near the South Sudan border.

“That evening, the sound of clashes reverberated through the area, making it impossible to sleep. Many left Al-Jabalein the same night, sparking a mass displacement and an acute transportation crisis due to the sheer number of people fleeing,” a local source told *Atar*.

Despite the unrest, Al-Jabalein, in White Nile State, has seen a drop in the prices of essential goods after the recovery of Jabal Moya and the reopening of the Rabak-Sinnar road. Meanwhile, the candle and handheld battery trade flourished recently, driven by prolonged power outages. Most of these goods are sourced from Rabak, the state capital.

“Electricity is available only three to four times a month during the summer and rainy seasons. Typically, power stabilises in winter, but now it is completely cut off, mirroring the general outage across the state,” Esam, a resident of Al-Jabalein, narrated.

White Nile State plunged into darkness on November [26](#) due to a week-long

blackout. Power returned sporadically, stabilising only on December 5.

The near-total absence of electricity in Al-Jabalein has severely affected access to potable water, with barrel prices ranging from 3,000 to 4,000 Sudanese pounds. Residents are compelled to purchase a barrel daily to meet their basic water needs. Mobile phone charging costs 500 pounds, and an hour of internet access via Starlink costs 4,000 pounds.

“The health situation is dire. Cholera is rampant, claiming numerous lives in Al-Jabalein and nearby villages. The outbreak prompted health authorities to shut down the market for several days to curb the disease’s spread. It later reopened partially, operating only until noon, and is closed entirely on Fridays, with directives to sanitise public spaces and avoid handshakes or gatherings,” Esam added.

Al-Jabalein is home to several health facilities, including a military hospital, Al-Jabalein Teaching Hospital, a health insurance centre, and about ten private clinics.

“Doctors Without Borders assisted us in preventing and treating cholera by providing intravenous solutions and mobile clinics, as the number of cases was overwhelming,” said Esam.

In addition to cholera, malaria and other fevers are widespread, compounded by malnutrition stemming from the country’s dire economic crisis. Most medicines are imported from South Sudan.

Umm Rawaba: Escalating Clashes and A Staggering Humanitarian Crisis

Atar Correspondent

Since seizing control of Umm Rawaba in [August](#) 2023, the RSF have maintained their grip on the city, acting with impunity. For over 16 months, the city and its surrounding villages have endured mounting violations.

The SAF recently launched a military campaign to retake the city after the failure of its [May](#) offensive, codenamed Al-Sayyad, which fell into an RSF ambush.

On [December 1](#), the SAF advanced westward from their base in Wad Ashana, east of Umm Rawaba. For three consecutive days, the SAF and RSF clashed near the town of Al-Gabsha, east of Umm Rawaba.

The first two days saw back-and-forth skirmishes, with heavy artillery echoing across the city. Residents described streets devoid of pedestrians and shuttered markets. On the third day, the battle intensified, with videos [circulating](#) on social media showing SAF soldiers celebrating the capture of the vehicle belonging to RSF commander “Barsham,” who fled the battlefield with reports of injury.

Local sources reported mass RSF burials on Tuesday night, with wounded personnel filling hospitals and homes. A

health centre in the city was reportedly evacuated to accommodate the growing number of RSF casualties.

The fourth day brought cautious calm in the morning, punctuated by sporadic artillery exchanges. Umm Rawaba’s market remained entirely closed, and civilian movement was minimal due to rising tensions and continued insecurity.

“The city is in chaos, with numerous stores looted and citizens assaulted by RSF elements who stole their mobile phones,” a resident shared with *Atar*.

Residential areas in Umm Rawaba also suffered aerial bombardment by the SAF, killing four civilians and injuring several others. Prolonged power outages have disrupted water supplies, exacerbating the city’s humanitarian crisis, residents said.

The situation in Umm Rawaba remains precarious, with SAF forces stationed on the city’s outskirts and the RSF continuing to mobilise reinforcements, local sources told *Atar*. The standoff signals an extended period of heightened tension and potential escalation.

“People here are simple and poor. We go to the market at the end of the day to buy food, but it’s been four or five days now, and the market is shut down. The people don’t deserve this,” one resident lamented.



First published in Arabic, **Atar** weekly magazine, issue 57, December 5, 2024.

Price Bulletin

Abdelrahman Maalla
Facts Center Fellowship



Photo: Al-tayib Musa

Understanding price differences and analyzing their economic and social impacts is of paramount importance, if not essential, for gaining a deeper comprehension of Sudan's economic dynamics. This understanding illuminates the path towards formulating genuine developmental policies based on precise and comprehensive foundations, and identifying the challenges facing the country, particularly during periods of conflict, in terms of production and distribution activities in local markets.

A selection of essential products, which play a significant role in people's lives, was chosen. Through our examination of their prices, we aim to gather data that can provide us with useful insights focused on improving the daily lives of citizens and enhancing their economic stability.

		Port-Sudan	Ad-Damaz-in	Kasala	El Daein	Al-Jazeera	Al-Fashir	Shendi	Kosti	Dongola	El-Obeid	Sennar	Halfa	Al-Qadarif	Lowest price of the product	Highest price of the product	Average price of the product
1	Millet (12Kg)	8000.00	8000.00	2800.00	2500.00	5500.00	10600.00	2332.00	8480.00	16960.00	12,720.00	1696.00	1590.00	3392.00	1590.00	16960.00	5987.50
2	Wheat (12Kg)	4000.00	9000.00	1500.00	1500.00	6000.00	12,720.00	3392.00	12720.00	12,720.00	16960.00	2332.00	2438.00	5,300.00	1500.00	16960.00	5984.20
3	Corn (12Kg)	4000.00	6000.00	2000.00	3000.00	4000.00	10,600.00	3180.00	8480.00	21,200.00	12,720.00	3200.00	3200.00	2,756.00	2000.00	8480.00	4117.78
4	Peanut Oil (450 Gram)	3816.00	3400.00	3000.00	2500.00	2800.00	3,392.00	3,180.00	4,240.00	3400.00	2,650.00	5300.00	2212.00	2120.00	2120.00	5300.00	3172.00
5	Onion Shawwal	42400.00	689,000.00	-	-	190,800.00	137800.00	26,500.00	121,900.00	371000.00	10600.00	10600.00	53,000.00	10600.00	10600.00	371000.00	97166.67
6	Veal Beef Kg	12,720.00	19,080.00	16000.00	5500.00	10000.00	7420.00	10,600.00	10600.00	9300.00	6700.00	1060.00	11600.00	1696.00	1060.00	16000.00	7987.60
7	Lamb Kg	15,900.00	23320.00	20000.00	6,360.00	16000.00	9540.00	14,840.00	15900.00	10600.00	10600.00	12720.00	14840.00	1802.00	1802.00	23320.00	13532.20
8	Soap (brick)	1200	1000	1000.00	1,272.00	1060.00	848.00	689.00	1272.00	848.00	1060.00	530.00	530.00	700.00	530.00	1272.00	889.67
9	Powdered Soap	3,445.00	3,180.00	2500.00	636.00	3000.00	1590.00	3180.00	3180.00	2650.00	1060.00	3180.00	1060.00	3700.00	1060.00	3700.00	2510.00
10	Insulin	6,360.00	8,480.00	9000.00	6000.00	10000.00	6,890.00	5830.00	6360.00	5300.00	6360.00	5300.00	5300.00	6360.00	5300.00	10000.00	6581.00
11	Sanitary Pad	1,802.00	1,908.00	2800.00	3000.00	3000.00	1,908.00	1802.00	3180.00	1,060.00	1,696.00	1272.00	1,060.00	1700.00	1272.00	3180.00	2393.43
12	Milk (450 Gram)	1,060.00	1400.00	1400.00	700.00	900.00	1300.00	1060.00	1060.00	1060.00	1,272.00	742.00	900.00	1500.00	700.00	1500.00	1090.17
13	Eggs (piece)	530.00	530.00	550.00	400.00	550.00	636.00	424.00	636.00	424.00	424.00	424.00	530.00	450.00	400.00	636.00	522.00
14	Sugar Kg	2,120.00	12,720.00	2400.00	4,452.00	2300.00	7420.00	7,420.00	6,360.00	6360.00	8,480.00	5300.00	5,300.00	5,300.00	2300.00	7420.00	4756.00



Sudan in Perspective

From

FACTSD

FACTS CENTER FOR JOURNALISM

Journalists Working on Sudan,
anywhere.



To receive a pdf copy of Atar magazine,
you can subscribe via Email or WhatsApp:

atar@sudanfacts.org

+254115438212

     @atarnetwork

www.atarnetwork.com