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Atar

Issue **Sudan in Perspective**

20 Monday, January 27, 2025

From Madani To Juba



Artwork by: Obada Gabir

Marhaba!

This is the twentieth issue of Atar English magazine, from Sudan Facts Center for Journalism. It comes to you on Monday after every two weeks.

From the heart of Sudan to South Sudan, it is becoming increasingly evident that the colonial-national state of Sudan has reached its inevitable demise. Perhaps it is time to envision the legitimacy of a non-national state, a state whose role transcends mere liberation to focus on human flourishing.

From the Sudanese city of Wad Madani to South Sudan's Juba, lines of violence and despair stretch out, mapping a stark reality of the post-colonial state in greater Sudan. The question burns: How did we overlook the truths of geography, instead seeking solace in the myth of racialised history, a history that manifests as a perpetual state of exception across Sudan's geography, from the Blue Nile to Bahr al Jabal (White Nile)?

The Sudanese elite wasted no time declaring the ideological slogan of state apparatuses: Liberation, not Reconstruction. Without any grounding in social realism, this ideology created a vast rupture, not just between economics and politics but between state and society. What was truly remarkable was the elite's unwavering confidence in the validity of their decision, a conviction that continues to shape society

today. This legitimacy persists, seamlessly guiding people through the dual narratives of dignity and anti 56, both of which remain projects of liberation, whether one agrees with them or not.

This issue reflects on endings with a steadfast belief that new beginnings require a reimagined framework. This necessity was underscored by the outbreak of the Darfur wars, even as the South's secession seemed certain. Perhaps the class struggle over the settlement of kanabi (localised plural of camp) during the liberation of Central Sudan serves as a poignant example.

We are acutely aware that the poor are always the first victims of war. Therefore, there can be no liberation project without rebuilding human productivity, not refineries, but hands and minds.

In this issue, we delve into three reports documenting how the events in Wad Madani shaped the experiences of Sudanese in Juba. We also explore the feasibility of reconstruction in Wad Al-Bakheet and its environmental impact. Furthermore, we examine how efforts at reconstruction, or rather, the revolution and Resistance Committees in Sudan, persist despite the hardship of cracking the nut. This is the unyielding light.

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Sudan in Perspective

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Atar

Sudan in Perspective

Issue 20, Monday, January 27, 2025

Happened in Juba: *The Sudan full map of violence*

 **Atar Team**



Atar by Orada Gabal

On Thursday, January 16, Juba, the capital of South Sudan, witnessed violent incidents targeting Sudanese residents and refugees. The unrest resulted in fatalities, injuries, and extensive damage to property.

Protests **began** in Juba following the circulation of social media posts, supported by **videos**, on Wednesday, January 15. These posts documented violence and violations against South Sudanese citizens in Al-Jazirah State after the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and their allied forces **entered** the state and its capital Wad Madani, reclaiming control.

By Thursday afternoon, the protests escalated into acts of violence targeting Sudanese in Juba. Shops and businesses owned by Sudanese nationals in South Sudan were attacked, looted, and vandalized. The violence soon spread to individuals, in their homes and on the streets.

At a press conference, John Samuel Bugo, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of South Sudan, **said** that they had received a report from the South Sudanese embassy in Port Sudan detailing atrocities that led to the deaths of South Sudanese nationals in Wad Madani and surrounding areas. He added that they had requested consular services in Wad Madani to visit their citizens in Al-Jazirah State and gather accurate information.



Since the pre-independence era (before 1956), the relationship with the southern region, when it was part of Sudan, has been fraught with tension and conflict. These strained relations were largely the result of systematic policies implemented by successive governments in post-colonial Sudan, which exacerbated social unrest and ethnic violence in both northern and southern Sudanese cities.

In 1955, a war broke out between the Sudanese army and the Anya-Nya movement, which sought greater autonomy for the region. This conflict lasted 17 years until the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed in 1972 during the rule of former President Jaafar Nimeiri. The agreement ended the war and its provisions were incorporated into Sudan's constitution.

However, in 1983, Nimeiri declared Sudan an Islamic state governed by Sharia law, including the predominantly non-Muslim southern region. The autonomous status of South Sudan was revoked on June 5, 1983, leading to the collapse of the Addis Ababa Agreement and reigniting the conflict. The war continued until 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Naivasha Agreement), was signed between the Sudanese government, led by the National Congress Party, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), led by John Garang. This agreement paved the way for a referendum in January 2011, where South Sudanese citizens voted overwhelmingly for independence.

Amid growing anger, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in South Sudan summoned the [Sudanese ambassador](#) to South Sudan, Isam Mohammed Hassan Karrar, on 15th April. The ministry expressed the country's protest against the killing of South Sudanese citizens and called for the immediate cessation of actions that endanger lives. The ministry also demanded unrestricted access to their citizens and urged a comprehensive investigation into the reported incidents, requesting updates on the findings.

According to media reports, a [diplomat](#) at the Sudan embassy in Juba was attacked by angry South Sudanese citizens at a local hotel before security forces intervened to disperse the crowd.

Public figures and groups on social media had called for a protest in front of the Sudanese embassy in Juba on January 17. Prior to that, a group of students from the University of Juba staged a [demonstration](#) in front of the embassy. However, what began as peaceful protests and denunciations quickly spiraled into violent attacks against Sudanese nationals on the afternoon of January 16. The violence then spread to other states and cities, such as Aweil, the capital of Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, and Wau, the capital of Western Bahr el Ghazal State. The unrest continued to escalate throughout Friday and Saturday before gradually subsiding by Sunday, January 19.

Following its independence on July 9, 2011, thousands of South Sudanese citizens continued to reside in various cities and states across Sudan, especially in central, western, southern, and eastern regions. Many worked as seasonal agricultural labourers in areas such as the Al-Jazirah Project, while most lived on the outskirts of cities in neighbourhoods like Mayo, Dar al-Salam in Jebel Awlia, East Nile, and Dar al-Salam in Omdurman.

Since the outbreak of the civil war in South Sudan in 2013 between government forces and opposition groups, Sudan has hosted at least 417,000 South Sudanese refugees, according to previous UN reports. In turn, South Sudan has provided refuge to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing conflicts in Sudan's Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile regions.

After the eruption of war in Sudan in April 2023, South Sudan received hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons from Sudan and South Sudan. ♦

Results of the events

South Sudan police announced that 16 Sudanese people had died as of last Monday, January 20, and dozens of others were injured due to violence across various cities and states in South Sudan. The administration of Juba Teaching Hospital stated in a [press release](#) issued last Friday that the hospital had received 12 cases of injured Sudanese citizens, two of which were critical. Reports [indicate](#) that Sudanese citizen Ahmed Abdel Karim succumbed to his injuries on Friday morning in Juba, while Dr Abdel Rahman Omar was [killed](#) in Wau, and seven of his family members were injured.

The police, in a report issued on Saturday, stated that nine people [died](#) in Aweil on Friday, two of whom were South Sudanese and seven Sudanese. The report also indicated that 13 South Sudanese people were injured by gunfire in different locations in Juba.

The acts of violence and assault targeted neighbourhoods inhabited by Sudanese people in the capital Juba, such as Gudele, Al-Thawra, Munuki, Jebel Amyanin, Gumba Sharikat, and New Site, as well as other cities in the Greater Bahr el Ghazal Region, Malakal, and Bor, the capital of Jonglei State. In Bor, attacks against Sudanese included throwing stones and empty glass bottles, which injured several people, burned their shops, and forced dozens to seek refuge at the

United Nations compound. The targeting included Sudanese-owned shops such as Al-Jaw Market in Wau, markets in Malakal, Aweil, Renk, and Konyo Konyo Market in Juba.

Following the outbreak of violence, the [media](#) covered the situation in Juba, alongside official efforts from the government to calm tensions and reduce escalation. Mixed reports confirmed fatalities and injuries among Sudanese people, amidst scarce official information from authorities in Juba.

South Sudan police announced that 16 Sudanese had died as of last Monday, January 20, and dozens of others were injured due to violence across various cities and states in South Sudan.

Sudanese residents in Juba and Wau, who have lived there for several years, described the violence against Sudanese people as a tragic misfortune amid the harsh conditions of asylum and residency they face in cities in the southern neighbour. During the events, hundreds of Sudanese sought shelter in police, military, and United Nations facilities to protect themselves and their families.

Wartime context

The South Sudanese social media has been active in discussing events in Sudan

since the outbreak of the April war, given the social, political, and economic ties between the two countries. The influx of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees into South Sudan has been a prominent topic of discussion among South Sudanese citizens on social media, alongside consecutive events such as the [halt](#) of cross-border trade between the two countries, the [presence](#) of Sudanese military forces in South Sudanese territory, Sudanese army [airstrikes](#) on border areas, the [suspension](#) of oil transport through Sudan, the Abyei issue, and most recently, Al-Kanabi [incident](#) (agricultural areas in Al-Jazirah), which resulted in the deaths of South Sudanese citizens after the Sudanese army regained control of Wad Madani from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

South Sudanese activists were divided over the deaths of their citizens in Al-Jazirah, with all directions blaming the SAF and its allies. Some also accused the South Sudanese government of enabling foreign traders, particularly Sudanese ones, to dominate the local market, which negatively affects the daily livelihood of South Sudanese citizens.

Campaigns advocating incitement against foreigners and Sudanese residents in South Sudan emerged, especially following the influx of Sudanese refugees into the country, and allegations that humanitarian aid organisations tend to focus more on providing services to Sudanese refugees than their South Sudanese counterparts returning home.



The South Sudanese economy has been severely impacted over the past two years by the repercussions of the April 15 war in Sudan, leading to tighter living conditions and the suspension of state employees' salaries. The war also caused the suspension of the flow and export of South Sudanese oil through pipelines running through Sudanese territory to Port Sudan on the Red Sea. The oil infrastructure sustained significant damage. The oil industry constitutes the lifeline of South Sudan's economy, contributing 90% of the state's revenues. ♦

Tensions also arose in Juba over claims that Sudanese citizens have taken many opportunities and professional jobs amidst a severe unemployment crisis in the country. A group of South Sudanese activists, human rights advocates, politicians, and parliamentarians within and outside South Sudan are working to gather and provide all necessary documentation regarding the Al-Jazirah incident. They aim to pressure the South Sudanese government to form a regional and international investigative committee and submit the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute the SAF for crimes and violations against South Sudanese civilians during the war.

A [statement](#) by Sudanese Sovereignty Council Member General Yasir Al-Atta about the Al-Jazirah events sparked widespread controversy in the South Sudanese political arena, especially his remarks that 65 per cent of the RSF hail from South Sudan, which seemingly justified the events in Al-Jazirah State.

Prominent voices in South Sudan called for reevaluating the relationship with Sudan on all levels, emphasizing that the current relationship, based on shared history and emotions, is no longer effective and should be built on mutual interests and parity, moving forward.

Writer Dr Rick Gub [called on](#) the South Sudanese government to sever bi-

lateral relations with Sudan.

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker of South Sudan's Transitional Parliament Oyet Nathaniel [held](#) the SAF responsible for the violations suffered by South Sudanese citizens in Al-Jazirah State, stating that the legislative council would prepare a detailed report on addressing the crisis to ensure it is not repeated.

Following the events, professional groups, advocacy organizations, politicians, intellectuals, artists, and journalists in both countries [called for](#) self-restraint and efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between the two peoples.

Deputy Speaker of South Sudan's Transitional Parliament Oyet Nathaniel held the SAF responsible for the violations suffered by South Sudanese citizens in Al-Jazirah State.

Official efforts

Since Wednesday, January 15, police in Juba deployed their personnel widely across main streets near the presidential palace, the Sudanese embassy, and around the University of Juba, anticipating the repercussions of demonstrations called by activists on social media to denounce the events in Wad Madani.

After evacuating the Sudanese embassy staff, the police ordered the closure of streets leading to the embassy due to the protest. Police arrested several dem-

onstrators in front of the embassy as University of Juba students held banners condemning the events in Al-Jazirah.

On Friday, the police deployed additional army forces to maintain security in Juba following Thursday's unrest, which quickly spread to other areas.

In his [address](#) to the people of South Sudan, President Salva Kiir Mayardit stated that anyone caught looting property must be held accountable. He directed security forces to ensure the protection of all Sudanese citizens within South Sudan, emphasizing: "South Sudan still considers Sudan as its homeland, and similarly, many Sudanese citizens regard South Sudan as their home. This is due to our shared history."

He urged all South Sudanese citizens to remain calm and refrain from acts of retaliation. "It is crucial that we do not let anger and emotions turn against our Sudanese brothers and sisters," the President said.

Lily Adhieu Martin, Press Secretary for the Office of the President of South Sudan, [issued a statement](#) indicating that the authorities of both countries "will take swift and decisive measures in response to these tragic events."

"It is crucial not to allow anger to cloud our judgment and turn against Sudanese traders, refugees, and residents currently in our country. These individuals are seeking safety, and it is our duty to offer protection and support to those in need," she said.

In this context, Army Spokesperson Major General Lul Ruai Koang issued a [press release](#) reassuring the public that the army, under the leadership of General Thoi Ngut Banguot, is closely monitoring the security situation in Juba to prevent any lawless acts by unruly citizens.

The Inspector General of the South Sudan Police announced the imposition of a nationwide [curfew](#) from 6pm to 6am for more than two days, explaining that these measures aim to prevent any attacks on public and private property. He affirmed that the police were closely monitoring the situation and called on citizens to report any criminal acts.

Authorities deployed security forces in Juba and other states to protect the Sudanese community from being targeted. The government also intervened by deploying police and other security personnel to disperse vandals and criminals and to safeguard Sudanese residents in Juba neighbourhoods and other cities. Additionally, the police established a security cordon around the Sudanese embassy.

The South Sudan Media Authority, in a statement received by *Atar*, announced a ban on social media platforms, including Facebook and TikTok, for 90 days. It also directed all internet service providers to block access to social media accounts starting at midnight on January 22, 2025.

The authority stated that its decision "comes in the wake of recent unrest in Sudan, which has exposed South Sudanese residents to unprecedented levels of

severe violence through posts on social media.”

However, the National Communications Authority of South Sudan **announced** on Thursday, January 23, its intention to lift the ban on social media platforms, Facebook and TikTok within 72 hours, provided that all videos promoting hate speech and incitement to violence are deleted. It affirmed that the concerned authorities are currently reviewing and removing offending content as part of the government’s efforts to protect cyberspace and ensure its stability.

Official actions and investigations

The Chairman of the Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, **formed a committee** to investigate the events in Al-Jazirah State, which was sworn in before the Deputy Chairman of the Sovereign Council, Malik Agar. Agar emphasized that no one should take the law into their own hands and stated in a statement that “the perpetrators of the killings and violence in Al-Jazirah State will be questioned and brought to justice and accountability.”

He urged the two peoples to avoid being “drawn into further retaliatory criminal acts.”

In an effort to contain the escalation of violence on the ground, Sudan’s Transitional Sovereignty Council member, Lt Gen Shams Al-Din Kabashi, arrived in Juba. During his **visit**, he held discussions

with the South Sudanese government to address the violence against Sudanese citizens and to tackle the immediate and long-term implications of the recent events for both nations.

The spokesperson for South Sudan’s police issued a **statement** addressed to both South Sudanese and Sudanese people, urging them to “disregard the false information being spread by some individuals” and assuring that there is no cause for fear regarding Sudanese residents in Juba. Meanwhile, the Minister of Interior Angelina Teny **expressed** grave concern over the escalating anger and condemnation, remarking:

“We have created a new humanitarian disaster.”

"We have created a new humanitarian disaster."

The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement, noted its **deep concern** over the escalating situation in Juba and other cities due to the attacks targeting Sudanese individuals, their property, and businesses. The statement highlighted that “these events were accompanied by widespread incitement campaigns against Sudanese citizens.” The ministry called on “all political, social, media, and religious leaders in South Sudan to fulfill their duties, as dictated by the bonds of neighbourliness, kinship, and shared culture, by making efforts to restore the situation to normal.”

Calm amid tense atmosphere

After days of panic, chaos, and security breakdowns in Juba, the situation began to gradually return to normal. On Monday, the start of the official workweek, activity resumed in major markets, accompanied by heightened and widespread security presence across the city's streets and main commercial centres. A significant number of Sudanese citizens who had sought refuge in police stations during the events returned to their homes and workplaces as early as Sunday morning.

At the start of the week, *Atar* correspondent observed a greater percentage of Sudanese-owned shops in Juba reopening for business, alongside the resumption of normal movement in streets and markets, both for individuals and groups.

In Konyo Konyo Market, the largest market hosting Sudanese traders in Juba,

bustling activity returned to its pre-crisis levels. Joint security forces intensified their efforts to maintain security and filed criminal complaints against anyone targeting Sudanese residents, with penalties of up to six months in prison. Widespread arrests were being conducted against youth groups advocating violence throughout Juba, while the curfew, running from 6pm to 6am, **remained in effect** nationwide.

In a brief **press statement**, the Minister Teny reassured Sudanese residents, urging them to have no fear and resume their normal lives. She also announced plans to inventory the losses of affected traders and work toward compensating them for their damages.



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Atar

Sudan in Perspective

Issue 20, Monday, January 27, 2025

What after SAF took control of
Wad Madani?

 **Hassan Alnaser and Yousif Abu Sin**

On January 8, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and allied factions launched what was described as their largest offensive yet to reclaim Wad Madani, the capital of Al-Jazirah State, from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The SAF advanced and captured the town of Al-Hajj Abdullah, south of the city.

Simultaneously, Sudan Shield Forces, led by Abu Aqila Kekal, initiated their first assault on the town of Umm Al-Qura, east of Wad Madani. A [video](#) surfaced showing Kekal in front of the local administration building. However, his forces faced a surprise counterattack by the RSF and were forced to withdraw.

The following day, Sudan Shield Forces, under Kekal's command, renewed their [offensive](#), securing Umm Al-Qura before pressing toward Wad Madani. They advanced swiftly to the village of Wad Al-Mehidi, where brief skirmishes ensued, prompting RSF forces to retreat. The Sudan Shield Forces then continued their march, reaching Al-Areebab, just a few kilometers from Wad Madani.

By January 11, the SAF, supported by allied factions from the Juba Peace Agreement, launched an offensive from the Al-Faw axis. The two forces united in Al-Areebab and crossed the Hantoub Bridge from the eastern side into the city centre without engaging RSF fighters, who had withdrawn. SAF subsequently [declared](#) full control over Wad Madani.

RSF seized control of Wad Madani on December 18, 2023. The state's residents endured over a year of relentless bloodshed and massacres, during which more than 450 villages were destroyed and abandoned. Civilian casualties exceeded 17,000, and over 5 million people were displaced, according to a ministerial source from the Al-Jazirah State Government Secretariat who spoke to *Atar*.

The progression of the battle

The battle unfolded as the SAF military command shifted over the irrigated Al-Jazirah basin area, spanning from Giad in the north to Wad Al-Haddad in the south, and from the Al-Faw Mountains in the east to Al-Managil rain-fed area in the south.

A SAF source told *Atar* that the First Infantry Division in Wad Madani and the 17th Division in Sennar were disbanded following the RSF's capture of the two cities. The Fourth Infantry Division from Al-Damazin assumed their responsibilities.

Three critical military manoeuvres provided the SAF with a strategic advantage.

Three critical military manoeuvres provided the SAF with a strategic advantage. The first was extensive intelligence operations that led to the [killing](#) of Commander Al-Bishi in July. This was followed

by the recapture of Mount Moya on **October 5**, which granted the military greater defensive mobility and enabled a transition to offensive operations. Additionally, the SAF regained control of the Sennar Sugar Factory and earlier reclaimed the cities of Al-Dinder and Al-Suki. These developments bolstered the SAF's capacity to rotate its forces and reestablish its momentum on the battlefield.

The SAF's final push toward Wad Madani centred on three primary axes. The first axis stretched from Al-Faw to Wad Madani. Military operations along this route had stalled until October 20 when Abu Aqila Kekal pledged **allegiance** to the SAF, invigorating its operations. Kekal's forces were reinforced by a substantial number of mobilised recruits, and their efforts were conducted under the oversight of the Eastern Military Command. A military source told *Atar* that the primary objective of this axis was to sever the eastern supply line feeding the RSF from Khartoum.

A source also informed *Atar* that the SAF's collaboration with Sudan Shield Forces, the Operations Authority (a military unit under the General Intelligence Service), and the Eastern Military Command's mobilised units allowed the SAF to seize Umm Al-Qura, approximately **40** kilometres from Wad Madani. This placed the SAF within striking distance of the city, suggesting that the decisive clashes for Wad Madani occurred not within the city itself but in its surrounding areas.



Atar
The most important cities surrounding Al-Jazirah State.



Atar
Localities of Al-Jazirah State.

In the southern axis, the SAF and allied forces' capture of the Sennar Sugar Factory marked a pivotal moment in the advance toward Wad Madani. The army's swift military manoeuvres secured a vast area in southern Al-Jazirah State, bolstering the momentum of forward defenses along the national highway. This included villages surrounding Wad Al-Haddad and Al-Hajj Abdullah, which the RSF had used as launching points for operations targeting Sennar State.

The SAF successfully dismantled several RSF military outposts in Abbas, Al-Sureiba, and Umm Sunut, and broke the RSF's stronghold at the Al-Sureiba Al-Falata Bridge. Following these operations, the army entered Wad Madani, establishing control over Wad Madani National University.

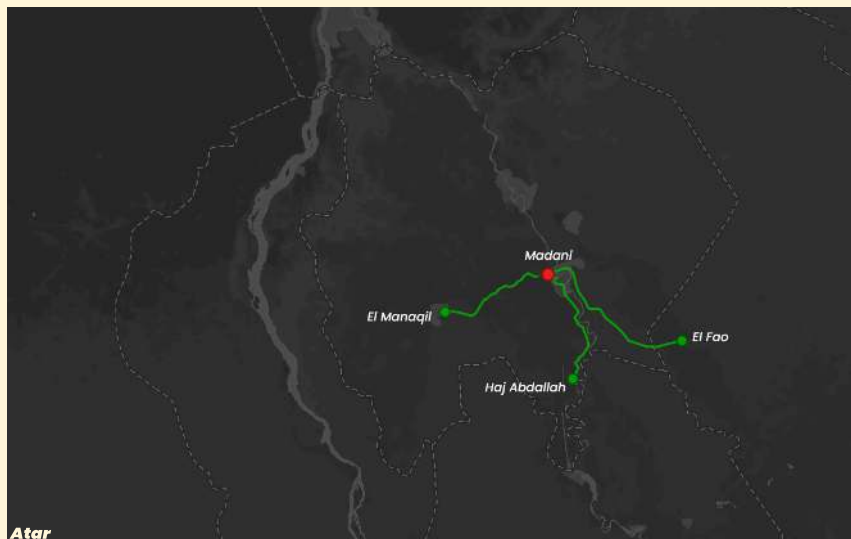
In the western axis, which extended from Al-Managil westward to Al-Madina Arab, the SAF moved to encircle Wad Madani and conducted extensive clearing operations in the region. According to a field source who spoke to *Atar*, the intensive military campaigns led by the Special Operations Forces of the strategic battalions enabled the army to push toward Wad Madani. These battalions' ability to execute rapid interventions and

neutralise numerous RSF outposts played a decisive role in the advance.

From the east, the SAF entered Wad Madani around noon via the Hantoub Bridge after capturing RSF-held positions along the route connecting Umm Al-Qura locality with Wad Madani near the Al-Araybab area.

According to information obtained by *Atar*, some RSF forces retreating from Wad Madani reached Al-Gitaina in White Nile State under the command of General "Qujja," while others fortified RSF positions in eastern Al-Jazirah State. The RSF still holds control over the city of Rufaa and maintains a significant presence in the region, stretching as far as Khartoum State.

Sources speaking to *Atar* ruled out



The three axes of SAF advance towards Madani.

the possibility of RSF forces moving into areas still under their control in southern Sennar State. They confirmed that the road connecting southern Sennar to Al-Jazirah State is now entirely under the SAF's control.

Conditions before the SAF takes Wad Madani

On December 18, 2023, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Abu Aqla Kekel, stormed Wad Madani. During their year-long control of the city, they inflicted horrific abuses on defenseless civilians, committing crimes such as rape, murder, and looting of businesses. These brutal violations triggered a mass exodus, displacing hundreds of thousands, including those who had sought refuge in shelters.

Following Kekel's surrender to the Sudanese Army and his defection from the RSF on October 20, 2024, residents of Wad Madani endured retaliatory violence by RSF forces. This exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, disrupted trade, and restricted the transport of goods from towns in eastern Al-Jazirah State to the city. Prices of essential items skyrocketed: a five kilogramme bag of sugar retailed at 40,000 SDG, a pound of cooking oil was 7,000 SDG, and a kilogramme of rice or lentils cost 8,000 SDG. Meanwhile, a sack of onions sold for 200,000 SDG. RSF forces attacked nearby areas, looting goods and transporting them to local

markets, known as Sun Markets, where they were sold at exorbitant prices.

The city suffered a severe shortage of life-saving medicines and treatments, with soaring costs further straining the healthcare sector. Speaking to *Atar*, Abdullah, a resident who remained in the city during RSF control, identified the available healthcare facilities as Madani Dialysis Centre, Al-Jazirah Al-Feel Health Centre, Hantoub Health Centre, and three smaller clinics providing lim-

A worker at Wad Madani's communal kitchens (takaya) estimated the city's population at over 70,000 civilians as of January 11, 2025.

ited services. These operated through self-efforts and support from Wad Madani expatriates.

A worker at Wad Madani's communal kitchens (takaya) estimated the city's population at over 70,000 civilians as of January 11, 2025. These residents endured severe rights violations, including rape, enforced disappearances, torture, murder, arbitrary detention, and ransom demands for release.

During the RSF's control, between 25 and 30 communal kitchens were established, supported by residents and expatriates. These initiatives struggled to provide meals, such as lentils and rice, to alleviate the dire living conditions.

Frequent power outages, caused by

the failure of several electricity stations, further strained the city. Water stations ceased functioning, compounding residents' suffering.

After the Ministry of Education **announced** the Sudanese Certificate Examinations for December 28, RSF forces barred students from leaving Wad Madani to safer states, depriving them of their right to education.

Eyewitnesses reported that RSF soldiers looted Al-Jazirah Project, stealing inputs such as seeds and pesticides, and blocked irrigation canals. These acts led to the collapse of the agricultural season across areas under RSF control, including Fadul Wad Al-Haddad in eastern Al-Jazirah and six other sections stretching south to Abu Quta.

"Due to the lack of basic necessities, the communal kitchens emerged to feed families. Donations from Wad Madani expatriates fund the purchase of food supplies. Each kitchen is divided into two teams. One manages funds, converts them, and buys supplies, while the

Eyewitnesses reported that RSF soldiers looted Al-Jazirah Project, stealing inputs such as seeds and pesticides, and blocked irrigation canals. These acts led to the collapse of the agricultural season across areas under RSF control.

other prepares and distributes meals to residents in designated areas," a volunteer from Wad Madani's emergency committees told *Atar* in an interview.

The volunteer explained that funding varies. At times, sufficient donations cover operations for a month, enabling the kitchens to serve meals four days a week. When funding is limited, they reduce services to two days a week.

"Throughout this difficult period, the kitchens have tirelessly worked to provide meals, using every available means to meet the needs of the city's residents," she added.



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Issue 20, Monday, January 27, 2025

Al-Kanabi:

*what is victory when you lose the
social contract?*

■ Rahma Jaber and Nasri Hilal



Artwork by: Obada Gabir

In recent days, events in Al-Jazirah State have intensified following the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)'s advance into Wad Madani, the state's capital, on January 11. The development was celebrated with fervor both within Sudan and among its diaspora, reflecting the deep-seated significance of the city and state. However, social media was soon inundated with images and videos depicting egregious violations by the SAF personnel or allied forces against civilians. These included extrajudicial killings, with South Sudanese nationals among the victims, particularly in several *kanabi* (localised plural of camp) across the state.

One of the most affected areas was Kombo Tayyiba, in Umm Al-Qura locality, which, according to statements by “[Emergency Lawyers](#)” and the Kanabi Central Committee (KCC), suffered “continuous assaults by the SAF and allied forces.” Since the SAF's redeployments in Al-Jazirah began in early January 2025, these attacks have resulted in the deaths of 13 individuals, including two children, and the arrest of several civilians, among them women.

The SAF [condemned](#) what it described as individual transgressions in parts of Al-Jazirah following the capture of Wad Madani. The SAF reaffirmed its strict adherence to international law and pledged accountability for anyone involved in violations against residents of *kanabi* or the state's villages. SAF Commander Abdel Fattah al-Burhan issued a decree establishing a committee to investigate the incidents in Kombo Tayyiba.



The residents of Al-Kanabi, migrant communities originally from western Sudan, arrived in Al-Jazirah State in central Sudan through three distinct waves of migration. The first wave followed the fall of the Mahdist State in the Battle of Shuk-kaba in 1899, where Mahdist forces were defeated by the British army. The second migration occurred in 1925 with the establishment of the Al-Jazirah and Al-Managil agricultural projects, as the British colonial administration sought labour from western Sudan. The third wave came during the 1984 famine that devastated western Sudan (part of the Sahel region) under former President Jaafar Nimeiri.

As a result of these migrations, approximately 2,250 kanabi settlements have formed across Al-Jazirah, scattered across eight localities, with the highest concentrations in Al-Hasahisa, Al-Managil, 24 Al-Qurashi, and Al-Kamleen. The residents of these settlements live in cramped and underserved areas on the peripheries of farms, often lacking basic services such as electricity, clean water, and education. Politically marginalized, Al-Kanabi residents have never had representation in Sudan's elections.

Meanwhile, Darfur Governor and leader of the Sudan Liberation Army Minni Arko Minnawi, who is allied with the SAF, expressed alarm over what he called the massacre of Kanabi residents. He emphasized that they would not tolerate “another massacre in the country.”

In a statement widely circulated on Wednesday last week, Al-Tayyib Imam Jouda, the emir of the Kawahla Nafeediya clan, appeared to respond to Minnawi by accusing *kanabi* residents of siding with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). He warned that they would no longer tolerate such actions, adding: “If we were unarmed before, we now possess all types of weaponry.”

Twice victimized

Speaking to Atar, Nadia, a resident of some Kambo, described the harrowing ordeal of villagers from Mahla and Kombo Gumbo, who were forcibly displaced to the town of the Madina Arab by SAF. Women and children were sheltered in schools, while several men were arrested.

“My husband’s brothers and cousins remain detained by SAF’s Military Intelligence in Madina Arab. A doctor accused of treating Rapid Support Forces (RSF) casualties is also among the detainees,” Nadia said.

The KCC issued two statements, on January 2 and January 14, condemning grave violations committed against civilians in various *kanabi* settlements, including Kombo Al-Ajab in Al-Hasahisa, Kombo Dar Al-Salam in Umm Al-Qura, and Kombo Shukkaba in southern Al-Jazirah.

The formal establishment of kanabi began in 1984 as villages for agricultural labourers. The name is derived from the English word “camp,” referring to workers’ camps.

According to Abdul Malik Al-Ni’mah, a member of the Al-Jazirah and Al-Managil Farmers’ Alliance and Research Office, these agricultural workers laid the foundation for these villages and became an integral part of Al-Jazirah’s social fabric. Known for their peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation, kanabi residents have historically shared farms with other local farmers and participated in communal life, despite the lack of government support. They integrated into the region’s social framework by attending shared schools, accessing health facilities, and joining in both celebrations and mourning rituals.

The plight of Al-Kanabi communities gained attention during Sudan’s December Revolution, where it became part of the political discourse. Their concerns were addressed in the Juba Peace Agreement, which recognized their issues and allocated space for them in negotiations and agreements. ♦

The first statement attributed the attacks to the tribal militia known as Al-Butana Shield, reportedly led by a figure named Al-Tayeb Al-Imam. The attacks left dozens dead or injured, burned Kombo Shukka-ba, and resulted in 13 fatalities in Kombo Dar Al-Salam and five more in Kombo 16, both east of Umm Al-Qura. The committee squarely blamed the SAF leadership for the alarming escalation.

Speaking to *Atar*, Jaafar Mohammedain, the secretary-general of the KCC, accused Al-Butana Shield and Sudan Shield forces of operating with the tacit approval of the Sudanese army.

“On January 10, these forces attacked Kombo 5, killing six people, abducting two others, and looting property and livestock,” Mohammedain said.

He called on both army leader Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and Sudan Liberation Movement leader Minni Arko Minnawi to denounce the perpetrators, as he holds them accountable for the violence. He noted that poor communication has hindered efforts to ascertain the true scale of the casualties and the number of settlements attacked.

Mohammedain characterised the violence as a form of ethnic cleansing targeting specific tribes.

“Most of the attacked *kanabi* in Umm Al-Qura are inhabited by the Tama people, along with Barqu, Misseriya, and Rezeigat communities in Kombo 5,” he said.

He also highlighted the indiscriminate

arming of tribes in eastern Al-Jazirah, such as the Shukriya and Magarba, while tribes from western and eastern Sudan, as well as the Nuba Mountains, were deliberately left unarmed.

Engineer Abdul Malik Al-Ni'mah, a member of the Al-Jazirah and Al-Managil Farmers' Alliance, told *Atar* that Al-Kanabi residents have been doubly victimized.

“Like other components of Al-Jazirah's society, they suffered RSF violations, looting, murder, displacement, and sexual violence,” he explained.

Multiple sources confirmed that what

Multiple sources confirmed that what the RSF inflicted on villages, they also inflicted on kanabi settlements.

the RSF inflicted on villages, they also inflicted on *kanabi* settlements.

“The RSF targeted them specifically. The people of Al-Kanabi were first victimized in Darfur and now again in Al-Jazirah. They endured genocides and forced displacement, making them the least likely to collaborate with or support the militia. To them, the RSF is a bitter enemy,” Al-Ni'mah said.

He expressed regret over the proliferation of hate speech fueled by malicious individuals seeking to sow discord within Al-Jazirah's society.

“This war propaganda gained traction, and many people believed it. The Farmers' Alliance had warned against hate speech

from the outset, hosting public forums to clarify the plight of Al-Kanabi residents as victims, not collaborators. If an individual among them cooperates with the RSF, they deserve punishment, but generalisations and hate speech ignite divisions that Al-Jazirah cannot endure amidst the war's devastation," Al-Ni'mah concluded.

Unraveling the turmoil

Several local, government, and regional organisations have condemned the incidents in the Kanabi areas. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, [Clementine Nkweta-Salami](#), expressed deep concern over

reports of attacks on civilians in Al-Jazirah state. The [Darfur Bar Association](#), [Wad Madani Resistance Committees](#), and the [Al-Jazirah Human Rights Observatory](#) have also issued statements of condemnation.

Politically, *Atar* has learned that the forces entering Wad Madani included multiple military factions, such as the Sudanese Armed Forces, Central Reserve Police, Operations Authority, Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigades, Sudan Shield Forces, and others whose identities remain unclear. The violence, documented by *Atar*, has been swift and terrifying, often leaving victims without the chance to defend themselves or refute accusations. One recurring narrative involves so-called collaborators, individuals alleged to have cooperated with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) during their control of Al-Jazirah. Many soldiers claim

that residents of Kanabi's served as an RSF base and accuse its residents of aiding the militia. In a public address, Tayeb Imam Jouada, the emir of the Kawahla Nafidiya tribe, echoed such accusations.

The issue of collaboration with the RSF is not limited to the Kanabi in Wad Madani. Similar allegations have surfaced in cities reclaimed by the army, including Sennar, Omdurman, and Bahri. Conversely, when the RSF took control of towns and villages, they targeted those labeled as "army collaborators," showing them no mercy.

Militarily, Al-Jazirah State now hosts

The Kanabi issue reveals conflicting military agendas.

a wide array of armed factions. Evidence of coordination between these groups has surfaced in the nature of the military operations that culminated in their entry into Wad Madani, the state capital. However, the Kanabi issue reveals conflicting military agendas. This prompted Malik Agar, the deputy head of the Sovereign Council, to emphasize the importance of addressing disarmament post-liberation. He instructed resistance committee leaders to distribute arms under conditions that would facilitate their eventual collection. The concerns Agar raised about weapon proliferation were echoed by local leaders, including the Kawahla emir, who stated that the source of the people of Al-Jazirah's strength now lies in the weapons they possess.

Speaking to *Atar*, attorney Noon Kas-

hkoush, a member of the Al-Jazirah Human Rights Observatory, stressed the urgent need for Sufi sheikhs from regions like Tayba, Abu Haraz, and Shikaniba to intervene.

“Their moral authority and respected status among the people make them uniquely positioned to mediate and calm tensions,” she said.

Meanwhile, human rights lawyer and activist Samir Ali Makin described the violence in Al-Jazirah as a war crime and a blatant violation of human rights.

“Sudan is a signatory to international conventions safeguarding human dignity and rights. War mongers aim to destabilise the social fabric, and the longer this conflict endures, the more violations will occur, threatening Sudan’s existence as a state and a society,” Makin said.

He also referenced disturbing scenes of victims being tied to stones and thrown into rivers, evoking memories of the violent dispersal of the sit-in protests.

Hussein Saad, a historian and research-

er on agricultural history in Al-Jazirah, told *Atar* that the political exploitation of Kanabi residents by successive national governments has exacerbated their plight.

“They are used as electoral pawns to secure power, yet basic services like water, electricity, healthcare, and education are denied to them,” Saad said.

Since the Darfur conflict erupted in 2003, ethnic targeting has further marginalised the residents. After the fall of President Bashir’s regime in 2019, Kanabi residents were politically manipulated again during the 2020 Juba Peace Agreement negotiations, sparking regional and ethnic tensions between village and Kanabi communities.

“It is imperative to recognise the humanity of the Kanabi people and ensure their rights to life, education, healthcare, and water in line with the Sustainable Development Goals,” Saad emphasised.



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Wad Al-Bakheet:
*Measured optimism as
reconstruction begins*

■ **Hassan Abdel-Mutalib**



After over a year of displacement from his home in Wad Al-Bakheet, Abdelaziz Mubarak returned with a mix of hope and fear. His return was fraught with risks, as the area was still within range of artillery shelling when he left. The eastern bank of the Nile was under the control of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), who had seized northern Bahri.

“Our destiny, being located between North Bahri and the Karari military zone, turned our village into a relentless battlefield from the second day of the war until the army crossed into northern Bahri,” Abdelaziz told *Atar*.

Upon his return, Abdelaziz found the scars of war etched onto the exhausted buildings abandoned by their residents. It was not surprising to see life gradually resuming alongside the return of the people. What truly astonished him, however, was a building that had been in its basement phase a year ago. Now, it stood complete with four stories and was nearing its final touches.

In this way, the area was resisting the destruction of war with reconstruction. A handful of locals worked under harsh conditions to complete the building, driven by good intentions and a noble purpose. The structure turned out to be a religious institute, containing a Quranic school, a mosque, a library, and housing for clerics.

For Abdelaziz, the most remarkable thing about this institute was its completion against all odds.



Wad Al-Bakheet is located on solid ground along the western bank of the Nile, about eight kilometres north of Omdurman and near Mount Surkab, which witnessed the Battle of Karari in 1898. The village is believed to have been established around 1840. Due to its location between the Nile and the Wadi Sayidna military zone, its residents became targets of shelling during the months when the RSF controlled the eastern bank, including northern Bahri areas like Al-Halfaya and Al-Ezergab.

The village has been home to the Musallamiyah tribe, who migrated from Al-Jazirah State over 100 years ago, intermarrying with the original inhabitants, Al-Jam'mouya, known for their farming, herding, and Sufi practices. Over the past century, the village retained its character, with its stone and mudbrick homes, thorn fences, traditional marriages, and cooperative work ethics. Over time, it transformed into one of Karari's urban neighbourhoods. ♦

“People used its basement as a shelter from shelling. No one believed it would be completed before the war ended,” Abdelaziz said.

Directly across from the institute stood another four-storey building. Its exterior bore signs of both war and peace. The eastern facade was marked by shelling, while the western side symbolised normalcy, housing a hypermarket, a bakery, a mill, and a vegetable shop.

The scene of brick kilns operating at full capacity aligned with the reconstruction efforts taking hold of the area. Despite the scarcity of silt due to Ethiopia’s Grand Renaissance Dam, locals had devised a method of storing silt by digging deep pits and refilling them after each rainy season. The stored silt was then used to restore farms in western Omdurman, from which brickmakers sourced cow manure to make bricks.

The kilns in Wad Al-Bakheet provided jobs to many workers, stimulating local businesses through increased purchasing power.

Speaking to *Atar*, Abdul-Rafea Hassan Fadl, a kiln owner, recalled how the authorities had halted their operations under the pretext of environmental health violations during Omar Al-Bashir’s regime. He, however, argued the real reason was to clear the market for cement-brick factories. Authorities failed to provide alternative sites meeting the necessary criteria and instead arrested kiln owners and stationed a police tent to enforce the ban

along the Nile. The December Revolution, however, enabled the kilns to resume operations amid security turmoil.

During the war, demand for bricks surged, particularly from the Nile River State, including Shandi and Atbara, as these cities saw a construction boom due to heavy displacement from Khartoum and Al-Jazirah.

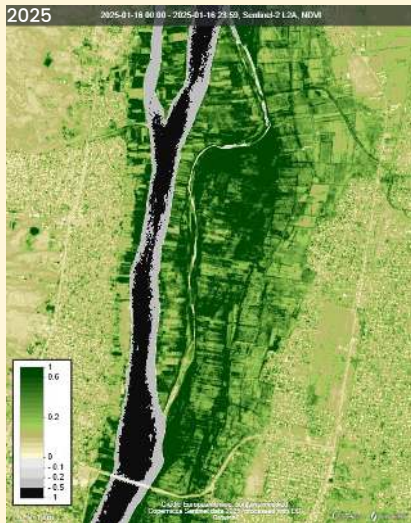
“Currently, the markets in Shandi and Atbara are saturated, and demand in Karari has dwindled,” Abdul-Rafea said.

At peak demand, a truckload of 4,000 bricks fetched 700,000 Sudanese pounds, but prices halved during low demand, highlighting the volatile nature of the market.

Musab Mohamed Al-Jaili, a kiln owner in neighbouring Hillat Bilal, lamented labour shortages due to worker displacement and road closures. He noted that production inputs were primarily sourced from western Omdurman farms and a few active farms along the Nile in Karari.

After a year of war, *Atar* correspondent observed a significant decline in vegetation, likely linked to the expansion of kiln activities. With cooking gas scarce and expensive, residents resorted to electric stoves and firewood as alternatives.

Brickmaking and agriculture remain the area’s primary sources of income, although brick production has encroached on arable land due to its higher profitability. Farming requires pesticides, advanced techniques, and carries the risk of capital loss.




The images above show the difference in vegetation density in Wad Al-Bakheet between January 2023 and January 2025. The green shades reflect vegetation density according to the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), an indicator used to analyze vegetation from satellite imagery. It measures the health and density of vegetation by comparing the light reflected by plants in the red and near-infrared spectra. High positive values (shown in strong shades of green) indicate healthy and dense vegetation, while values close to zero or negative (shown in pale shades of green) indicate areas devoid of vegetation.

On the opposite bank from Wad Al-Bakheet lies an island stretching two kilometres from Al-Halfaya Bridge. Its land is divided between Wad Al-Bakheet's farmers on the western side and Al-Ezergab residents on the eastern side. Before the war, the island was used for mixed farming; vegetables and livestock. When RSF forces stationed themselves along the eastern bank, exchanging artillery fire with the SAF, the island was evacuated, and agricultural activity ceased.

Following the SAF's takeover of the Nile both banks, farmers began resuming operations under challenging conditions, including limited financing and fuel

shortages. Fears remain, however, that the island might be converted into brick kilns due to its rich silt deposits accumulated over decades.

Brick kilns were not the only businesses regaining momentum. Old grocery stores reopened, and new shops sprang up, offering food, perfumes, craftsmanship, and repair services for electronics. Food stalls selling beans and *ta'amia* multiplied, as did tea, coffee, and shisha vendors, catering to the resurgence of human activity in the area.


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Betrayals and Missteps:

*The tale of
Sudan's Resistance Committees and
other revolutionary forces (1-2)*

 **Razaz Basheir**



“We are like sailors who on the open sea must reconstruct their ship but are never able to start afresh from the bottom. Where a beam is taken away, a new one must at once be put, and for this the rest of the ship is used as support. In this way, by using the old beams and driftwood, the ship can be shaped entirely anew, but only by gradual reconstruction,”  Otto Neurath.

Just like Neurath’s sailors, the Sudanese revolutionaries have been trying to reconstruct the ship of a habitable country for everyone amid the vast ocean of political turmoil. As the current bleak moment quickly erodes the memories of the generational breakthrough in Sudanese politics that the Resistance Committees (RCs) have offered, a critical and nuanced reflection on this experience remains our sharpest weapon against its erasure.

The RCs, with their local, horizontal, decentralized, organic, flexible, and heroic nature, were effective in achieving two monumental tasks: First, the ousting of the thirty-year-reign dictator Al Bashir; and second, rendering the old tricks of military, civilian, and imperial elites obsolete and ineffective. This is what can partially explain the junta’s resort to the current generalized state of exception, under which they can keep their plundering machine operating.

Although we may be losing this round of the struggle for democratic transition due to sheer levels of violence and bare necessity, it might serve us well down the road to salvage the organizational legacy of the RCs, including their lessons, skills,

networks, and confidence in the power of collective will.

In this two-part article, I critically reflect on the experience of Resistance Committees during the nearly five years of pre-war mobilisation. The focus is on Khartoum state’s RCs, primarily due to concerns of not doing justice to experiences beyond this personally familiar and relatively better-documented context. The first part examines how other revolutionary forces from historical civil society abandoned the RCs and delegated their revolutionary tasks to these nascent and ideologically polarized organizations. The second part explores the major issues that hindered the effective materialization of the political change expected from the RCs. This includes a focus on the following questions: RCs’ legitimacy and representation, issues of intersectionality, ethics of engaging in the public sphere, and the nature of the revolutionary task.

The RCs, with their local, horizontal, decentralized, organic, flexible, and heroic nature, were effective in achieving two monumental tasks.

Betrayals

Other than RCs, political parties and professional organisations were the other influential actors in the Sudanese revolution. When it comes to professional bodies, both military and civilian parties of the transitional government have systematically obstructed the rebuilding of trade unions and the syndicalist movement at large. This was evident in the delays in approving the trade union law by the Sovereignty Council and the attempts by the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) to keep emerging trade unions under their sphere of **control**.

Following the military coup of October 25, 2021, the fissure between the grassroots-led RCs and the older forms of civil society organizations only widened. With the junta's crackdown on the transitional government and FFC leaders, the RCs found themselves at the forefront of the battle for democracy. The spontaneous and massive mobilization that followed the coup, along with the disproportionate response from the security forces, brought the bureaucratic machine to a halt, sparing the professional class from the organizational task of disobeying the coup leaders. However, only about a week **later**, the generals' attempts to bring life back to normal meant that professionals had to confront the reality of their weak or non-existent unions.

Except for a few defiant actions from the Bank of Khartoum, the Assembly of Petroleum

Sector Employees, and the Information and Communication Technology Union, the daily operations of public and private institutions resumed normally once the coup authorities officially declared so.

The limited scope of change sought by civil society was clear in professional bodies' unclear stance on post-coup events. Demonstrations and barricades prevented the coup from targeting professional organizations, allowing unions and syndicates to demand better wages through massive **strikes**. However, their demands were strictly sectoral, and their response to unrelated events was lukewarm. For example, when electricity sector workers announced a strike in September 2022, cutting off power to large parts of the capital, barricades by resistance committees brought the city to a standstill, forcing authorities to address the strikers' **demands**. In contrast, workers in various sectors ignored calls by the RCs to take part in anti-coup mobilisations, even when demonstrations faced severe violations, such as the use of live ammunition that resulted in numerous deaths, like in the Omdurman massacre on December 30, 2021, and the Al Qasr St massacre on January 17, 2022.

Another significant revolutionary void

The limited scope of change sought by civil society was clear in professional bodies' unclear stance on post-coup events.

was that of political parties. With party membership becoming synonymous with the old political elite club, all progressive forces withdrew from proactively engaging in the creation of new parties that could echo the spirit of the transitional moment. The streets, the sit-ins, the RC meetings, the charter drafting; all these were opportune moments for individuals across the political spectrum to meet and recognise political affinities from which to build something new. Instead, the RCs were seen as the end of the inherently antagonistic nature of politics, heralding the oxymoron of an age of depoliticized politics where everyone could agree on everything. In reality, RCs became the Trojan horse through which different and competing political visions were advanced. This led to a situation where existing political parties competed for control of the RCs, resulting in their eventual fragmentation in various ways. While what was really needed were new progressive organisations with clearly defined ideological visions to effect consistent and cumulative change, and this has no other name at this point other than political parties.

The following points outline some of the key ways in which the RCs' ability to carry their gains to the desired end was undermined.

Legitimacy and representation

While the RCs, with a few exceptions, lacked democratically elected governing structures, they nonetheless enjoyed wide

support, as evidenced by consistent turnout to their announced protest actions throughout the pre-war period. This performed legitimisation, infused with the lasting romanticisation of the RCs, kept pushing the representation question under the rug. However, the disregard for this foundational task for any democratic transformation is haunting us at this critical moment, with recent debates around the role of RCs in the management of emergency [response](#), the [Kampala conference](#) and the legitimacy of the representing members.

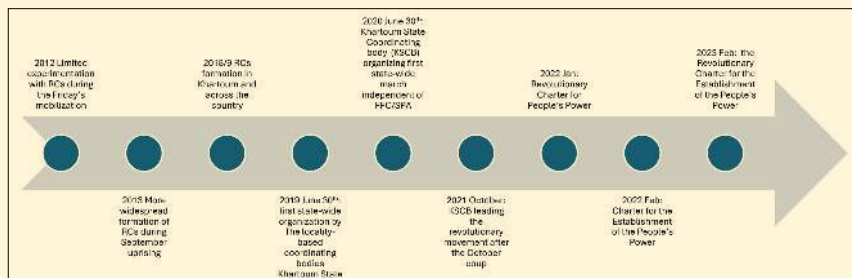
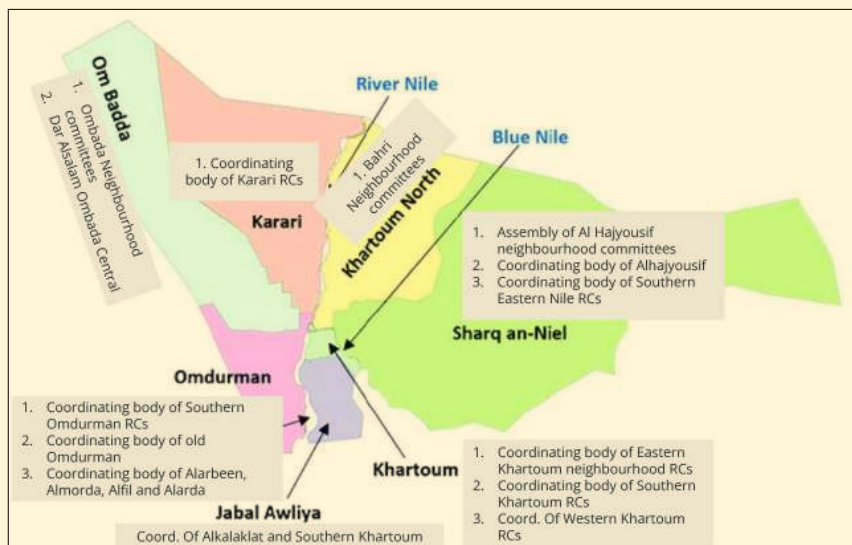
To better understand the question of representation within the RCs, it might be useful to share the most common structures that were followed within Khartoum State. The Coordinating Body for Khartoum State is the largest umbrella under which there was around 15 locality-based coordinating bodies; three in Eastern Nile, three in Omdurman, two in Omdurman, one in Karari, three in Khartoum, two in Jebel Awlia and one in Bahri Locality. Under each of these bodies, a number of independent resistance committees fall, whose active membership can range anywhere between ten and twenty.

The envisioned process for structuring RCs, which dominated debates at that time, focused on what was referred to as grassroots organizing (Al Binaa Algaadi) through "foundational programs." This meant, with slight variations, that there would be open calls for all residents to register in their neighbourhood commit-

tees. The next stage involved drafting a code of conduct and a general structure. These codes would then be approved through democratic mechanisms, and members would be elected for different offices and for representation at higher coordinating levels.

Structurally, RCs, coordinating bodies, and the state umbrella had governance structures comprising various offices, in-

cluding protest and mobilization (Almaktab almidani), media, external communication, finance, social and medical, legal, training and events, and organizational affairs. Different phases of the mobilization led to varying levels of competition and controversy among these offices. For instance, in the bloody days following the October coup, the protest and mobilization office was critical, as it decided



on protest routes and assembly points. During the drafting of the political charters, the “external communication” office representatives’ control over the top-down-top process had a significant impact on the outcome of the final charters, Communication representatives will share drafts of the charters from the

Drafting committee to the Coordinating body to RC that will review and send their feedback in the same order, as its representatives will share drafts of the charters from the Drafting committee to the Coordinating body to RC that will review and send their feedback in the same order.

Within such a three-level structure, issues of representation could arise at any of these levels, and their impact could easily undermine efforts at the other levels. This was not difficult to occur given the extensive and fluid nature of these organisations. Several cases illustrate how this loophole was deliberately abused to block efforts to democratise the RCs and coordinating bodies.

Many of these structuring steps were only followed by very few RCs, perhaps only a handful launched these open calls for registration. While many had codes of conduct, organizational structures, and representatives at higher levels, the democratic nature of these processes is questionable. Initially, the security situation was the justification, but during the transitional and post-coup periods, we saw

The revolutionary charter was pushed by the “radical change” position spearheaded by the Communist party, while the charter for the establishment of people power was preferred by the “soft landing” allies associated with the FFC.

RCs enjoying a decent level of freedom in gathering and organising. Despite this, the evasion of democratic processes occurred for various reasons, such as co-opting by a few members, such as the early founders, the more politically experienced, or those affiliated with political parties. This was particularly evident in areas associated with specific political parties, such as old Omdurman RCs sympathising with the Umma or Communist party, and Bahry and the Assembly of Alhajosuif RCs leaning towards the FFC agenda.

These issues were transposed into the charter drafting process. For instance, the revolutionary charter was pushed by the “radical change” position spearheaded by the Communist party, while the charter for the establishment of people power was preferred by the “soft landing” allies associated with the FFC. This made the RCs and the charter drafting platforms for settling ideological ridges and historical animosities.





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