UN Expresses Concern Over Militia Attacks on Dilling

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Adil El-Baz
Editor-in-Chief

Idrees Awad
Managing Editor



The United Nations on Monday expressed deep concern over reports of drone attacks on the city of Dilling in South Kordofan State, which resulted in civilian casualties. In a statement posted on the X platform, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Sudan said the strikes carried out between January 1 and 3 had exacerbated the already deteriorating humanitarian situation for civilians trapped inside the city. The statement called for the protection of civilians at all times, noting that the militia has repeatedly carried out drone attacks on Dilling in recent days.



Militia Detains 600 Women in Detention Centers



The Rapid Support Forces militia is detaining 600 women, some accompanied by their children, at Korea Prison in Nyala, South Darfur State, under extremely dire humanitarian conditions caused by prolonged detention and severe shortages of drinking water and food. A guard at Korea Prison told Darfur24 that more than 600 women are being held on charges including espionage, cooperation with the Sudanese Armed Forces and joint forces, and providing coordinates for airstrikes. She said that some detainees were former police and military personnel who had refused to join the RSF. According to the guard, some women were transferred from customary courts over debt-related cases, while others were detained due to criminal offenses committed by their husbands, including four murder cases. She added that more than 50 children are living inside the prison with their mothers, noting that detainees were arrested in cities and areas across Kordofan as well as northern, central, and southern Darfur. In the same context, a former detainee at Kober Prison, released about a month ago, told Darfur24 that the facility holds large numbers of women distributed across five severely overcrowded wards. She described the humanitarian situation as extremely harsh, with drinking water sometimes unavailable and food rations insufficient. She noted that most detainees are between 20 and 50 years old, adding that some male and female officers exploit detainees with minor charges by forcing them to perform domestic labor such as cleaning and laundry. "One officer took me along with another detainee to serve his wife in the Airport neighborhood, where we cleaned the house and washed clothes before being returned to the prison in the evening," she said. Meanwhile, a source close to the family of Islam Mohammed, who is detained by the RSF, told Darfur24 that their daughter has been held at Korea Prison since mid-December following an altercation with RSF elements and has not yet been released. The source said the prison administration had repeatedly promised to release her, but failed to do so, despite her deteriorating health condition, as she is in the final months of pregnancy and requires special medical care. She is also the mother of two children.

Government Official: Militia and Al-Hilu Movement Shelling Leaves 500 Dead in South Kordofan



The government of South Kordofan State has revealed that more than 500 people were killed in the state as a result of artillery shelling and drone strikes carried out by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N, Al-Hilu faction) during 2024–2025. Adam Salem, Director of Information in the state, told Al-Tara Sudan that most of the victims were children, women, and the elderly. He noted that since the outbreak of the war, the militia's strategy has focused on targeting cities in an effort to depopulate them of civilians. Salem confirmed that the continued targeting of densely populated areas by the RSF and the SPLM-N through artillery and drone attacks represents a reaction to ongoing military operations across the Kordofan fronts, aimed at diverting attention from the army's advances and boosting the morale of their fighters on the ground. He further stated that the militia is engaged in widespread looting, theft, harassment, detention, extortion through ransom demands, and extrajudicial killings, citing the recent killing of the Secretary-General of the Zakat Chamber as an example.

Egyptian-Saudi Positions on Sudan Aligned

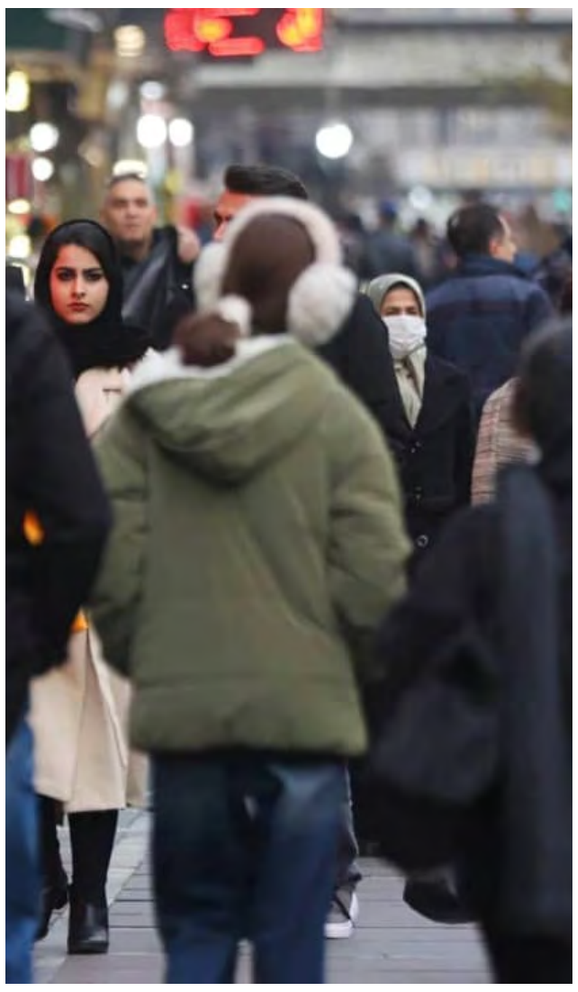


Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi underscored the importance of intensifying Egyptian-Saudi coordination on various issues of mutual concern and ongoing regional crises. This came during his reception on Monday of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, in the presence of Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Badr Abdel Aaty, Prince Musab bin Mohammed Al-Farhan, Adviser to the Saudi Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, and Saudi Ambassador to Cairo Saleh bin Eid Al-Hussaini. According to the Egyptian presidency's spokesperson, the meeting addressed several regional issues of common interest and reaffirmed the alignment of Egyptian and Saudi positions on the need to reach peaceful solutions to regional crises in a manner that preserves the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of states—particularly Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and the Gaza Strip. President El-Sisi also praised Saudi Arabia's efforts to host an inclusive conference bringing together southern Yemeni components to engage in dialogue on the southern issue.

Arrival of Sudanese Army Officers and Soldiers Withdrawn from El-Fasher, Babanusa, and Heglig

Approximately 150 non-commissioned officers and soldiers from the Sudanese Armed Forces and allied forces have arrived inside Sudan following previous withdrawals from the cities of El-Fasher, Babanusa, and Heglig. The troops were transported via air and land bridges extending from Wau to Renk and then to Kosti, under the sponsorship of the Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Commander-in-Chief. Well-informed sources said the Sudanese Embassy in South Sudan, in coordination with South Sudanese Presidential Security Advisor Tut Gatluak, secured and facilitated the transfer of the withdrawn officers and soldiers from Heglig, Babanusa, and El-Fasher into Sudanese territory through tightly coordinated security and logistical arrangements that lasted more than 21 days. The sources also revealed the arrival of another group of officers and soldiers from Heglig, who were transferred via an air bridge following the Bentiu–Faluj–Kosti route as part of measures aimed at ensuring the safe return of the forces to their destinations inside the country.

UN Chief Calls on Iran to Respect Demonstrators' Right to 'Protest Peacefully'



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called on Iran to respect demonstrators' right to "protest peacefully," with the country in the grip of unrest over high prices and economic stagnation. The Secretary-General "underscores the need to prevent any further casualties," his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. "He also calls on the authorities to uphold the right of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly" and that "all individuals must be allowed to protest peacefully and express their grievances."

China, Pakistan Reaffirm Ties as US Outreach to Islamabad Deepens

China and Pakistan pledged on Monday to further deepen ties and expand cooperation, reaffirming to each other their historically "ironclad" friendship as signs of rapprochement between Islamabad and Washington grow. Pakistan is one of China's closest partners, diplomatically supporting Beijing on a wide range of internationally sensitive issues ranging from the status of Taiwan to the South China Sea. In exchange, Beijing has poured billions of dollars into the South Asian country through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - a flagship project under China's Belt and Road trade and infrastructure initiative. But repeated militant attacks on Chinese nationals working on the CPEC and other projects in Pakistan have become a major source of tension in recent years. Adding to the complexity in the Sino-Pakistani relationship, US-Pakistani ties have warmed since President Donald Trump returned to the White House a year ago and landed a diplomatic victory in a region that China regards as within its sphere of influence. Pakistan even said it would recommend Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for helping resolve a conflict it had with India. In a joint statement on Monday, China and Pakistan said they would build an upgraded version of the CPEC, focus on their cooperation on industry, agriculture and mining, and step up collaboration in the financial and banking sector. China then praised Pakistan's "comprehensive measures" to protect the safety of Chinese personnel and projects, the statement read. Both sides also called for more "visible and verifiable actions to dismantle and eliminate all terrorist organizations" entrenched in Afghanistan, which shares borders with both Pakistan and China. No details were given

UN Chief Guterres Raises Concerns About Instability in Venezuela, Legality of US Operation



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres raised concerns on Monday about a possible intensification of instability in Venezuela after the US capture of the Latin American country's president Nicolas Maduro. The 15-member Security Council met at UN headquarters in New York just hours before Maduro was due to appear in a Manhattan federal court on drug charges including narco-terrorism conspiracy. Maduro has denied any criminal involvement. "I am deeply concerned about the possible intensification of instability in the country, the potential impact on the region, and the precedent it may set for how relations between and among states are conducted," Guterres said in a statement delivered to the council by UN political affairs chief Rosemary DiCarlo. Guterres called on all Venezuelan actors to engage in an inclusive and democratic dialogue, adding: "I welcome and am ready to support all efforts aimed at assisting Venezuelans in finding a peaceful way forward." He also expressed concern that the US operation to capture Maduro in Caracas on Saturday did not respect the rules of international law. Colombia, which requested Monday's meeting, condemned the U.S. operation as a clear violation of the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Venezuela. "There is no justification whatsoever, under any circumstances, for the unilateral use of force to commit an act of aggression," Colombian UN Ambassador Leonor Zalabata Torres told the council. "Such actions constitute a serious violation of international law and the United Nations Charter." Legal experts have said the US operation was illegal because it lacked UN Security Council authorization, did not have Venezuelan consent and did not constitute self-defense against an armed attack. But the United States cannot be held accountable for any violation by the UN Security Council, which is charged with maintaining international peace and security. The United States wields a veto - along with Russia, China, Britain and France - so it can block any action. The founding UN Charter states that members "shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." There are currently 193 members of the United Nations. US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz on Sunday cited Article 51 of the UN Charter, which says that nothing "shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations."

Netanyahu Says Israel Won't Let Iran Restore Ballistic Missile Program



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that Israel would not allow arch-foe Iran to restore its ballistic missile program, just days after US President Donald Trump issued a similar threat. "We will not allow Iran to restore its ballistic missile industry, and certainly we will not allow it renew the nuclear program that we significantly damaged," Netanyahu told lawmakers. "If we are attacked, the consequences for Iran will be very severe," he said. Netanyahu's threat comes days after Trump threatened to "eradicate" Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile program, after the two leaders met in Washington last week. Israeli officials and media have expressed concern in recent months that Iran is rebuilding its ballistic missile arsenal after it was damaged during the 12-day war with Israel in June. Trump said Iran "may be behaving badly" and was looking at new nuclear sites to replace those targeted by US strikes during the same conflict, as well as restoring its missile stockpiles. "I hope they're not trying to build up again because if they are, we're going have no choice but very quickly to eradicate that buildup," Trump said, adding that the US response "may be more powerful than the last time." But Trump said he believed Iran was still interested in a deal with Washington on its nuclear and missile programs. Tehran denies that it is seeking nuclear weapons. Netanyahu, meanwhile, said the protests in Iran had "expanded greatly". "It is very possible that we are at a decisive moment -- a moment when the Iranian people will take their destiny into their own hands," he said in parliament. Protests erupted in Iran on December 28 when shopkeepers in the capital Tehran staged a strike over high prices and economic stagnation. They have since spread to other cities and expanded to include political demands. On Sunday, Netanyahu said that Israel stood in solidarity with the Iranian people during the ongoing demonstrations. "We stand in solidarity with the struggle of the Iranian people and with their aspirations for freedom, liberty and justice," Netanyahu said at the weekly cabinet meeting.

President Nicolas Maduro Pleads Not Guilty to Charges of Narco-Terrorism



Toppled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro pleaded not guilty on Monday to charges of narco-terrorism after President Donald Trump's stunning capture of him rattled world leaders and left officials in Caracas scrambling to respond. Maduro, 63, pleaded not guilty in New York federal court to four criminal counts that include narco-terrorism, cocaine importation conspiracy and possession of machine guns and destructive devices. "I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am a decent man. I am still president of my country," Maduro said through an interpreter, before being cut off by US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein. Maduro's wife Cilia Flores also pleaded not guilty. The next court date was set for March 17. Maduro is accused of overseeing a cocaine-trafficking network that partnered with violent groups including Mexico's Sinaloa and Zetas cartels, Colombian FARC rebels and Venezuela's Tren de Aragua gang. Maduro has long denied the allegations, saying they were a mask for imperialist designs on Venezuela's rich oil reserves. While world leaders and US politicians grappled with the extraordinary seizure of a head of state, an emergency order in Venezuela, published in full on Monday, ordered police to search and capture anyone who supported Saturday's US attack. Also on Monday, the UN Security Council debated the implications of the raid, which was condemned by Russia, China and leftist allies of Venezuela. UN Chief Antonio Guterres raised concerns about instability in Venezuela and the legality of Trump's strike, the most dramatic US intervention in Latin America since the 1989 Panama invasion. US Special Forces swooped into Caracas by helicopter on Saturday, shattered his security cordon and dragged him from the threshold of a safe room. On Monday morning, Maduro - his hands zip-tied - and his wife Cilia Flores were escorted by armed guards in tactical gear from a Brooklyn detention center to a helicopter bound for court. The judge began the hearing at 12:02 p.m. (1702 GMT) in Manhattan federal court by summarizing the charges in the indictment. Maduro, in orange and beige prison garb, listened on headphones through an interpreter. Hellerstein asked Maduro to stand and confirm his identity. He replied in Spanish. The judge told the couple of their right to inform the Venezuelan consulate of their arrests. Prosecutors say Maduro has been involved in drug trafficking from the time he began serving in Venezuela's National Assembly in 2000 to his tenure as foreign minister and subsequent 2013 election as the late president Hugo Chavez's successor.

With Ministries Returning, Khartoum Reopens the File of Life Despite Its Wounds



Report – Sudan Events
Official work resumed on Sunday at the Ministries Complex in the Al-Maدن Towers in Khartoum, following the return of several ministries, including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Minerals, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, and the Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism, in addition to the Office of the Prime Minister. As ministries and the machinery of government return to Khartoum—amid accelerating steps at the start of the new year—the city itself is raising pressing questions about the timing and conditions of this return. Large numbers of employees are now expected to report back to their government jobs in a complex reality that neither addresses all their concerns nor meets their basic needs. Many parts of Khartoum remain unprepared in terms of services and security. Where—and how—will thousands of families live when their breadwinners are asked to return to Khartoum and resume work? Have the conditions for return been met, including services, security, transportation, and basic necessities? Even if essential goods are available, can an employee ordered back to work afford to support a family amid soaring prices? And the most pressing question of all: where will employees and their families live? Most families returning to Khartoum have encountered major difficulties compared with the city they left when they were displaced to other states or abroad. Khartoum's features have changed in many ways and the city itself is now grappling with multiple challenges—some related to services, others environmental and health-related. The destruction left by militia presence in Khartoum has affected all aspects of life: hospitals, health centers, drug warehouses and pharmacies have been destroyed, along with universities, factories, offices, companies, government buildings, homes, shops, and markets. Little was spared. This devastation has placed enormous burdens on citizens and authorities alike. Large and vital parts of the capital remain without electricity, while others still lack stable water services. Mosquitoes and disease vectors such as dengue and malaria are widespread. Theft, armed robbery, and looting persist, alongside a high cost of living and rampant inflation. Education has been marked by disruption and rising costs, as have housing rents. The city has also seen increased foreign presence, the spread of organized begging, and the return of tea sellers occupying streets—despite the risks highlighted during the period of Rapid Support Forces militia presence. Property rents have surged dramatically. The monthly rent for a house has reached up to 4 billion Sudanese pounds, while shop rents in Omdurman Market have climbed to 2 billion pounds per month, and in some areas to as much as 4 billion. This is despite the fact that parts of the market that have resumed activity still suffer from a lack of electricity and are forced to close before sunset daily due to security concerns and power outages. Many traders have moved their warehouses from Omdurman Market and surrounding neighborhoods—such as Al-Bosta, Al-Arab, Al-Hijra, and even Wad Nubawi—into residential homes in Omdurman, fearing theft and armed robbery. These areas remain largely depopulated, except for certain neighborhoods whose residents are mostly displaced people from western Omdurman; the original inhabitants have yet to return. While some insist on returning to their homes in areas such as Al-Kalaklat, Ombada, and Shambat, they face acute service shortages as a daily reality. During its presence in Khartoum, the militia stripped these areas of electrical transformers, leaving them without power for years. Although the government has begun importing transformers—some of which have already reached Khartoum—large areas remain without electricity. Even if the city's power infrastructure is restored, electricity generation problems persist, with stations such as Garri and Bahri still out of service. Moreover, many homes were completely looted, with no trace of furniture—or even basic items like spoons—remaining. In some cases, houses were stripped of tiles and electrical wiring altogether. Salah Wad Al-Hussein, a tax office employee, said: "We were asked to return and resume work from Khartoum, but we still don't know how. Conditions in Khartoum are not yet stable. We now have to search for housing for our families—my own house, for example, was shelled and looted and is unfit for habitation." He added that many colleagues are struggling to normalize their lives and return, noting that the government, in deciding to bring ministries back to Khartoum, did not adequately take employees and workers into account—especially given the extremely high rents and the fact that the current center of daily life in Khartoum is largely confined to Karari. Hassan Al-Alam, an employee at the University of Sudan, said he returned months ago and began seeking solutions for his home in the Jabra area, but the house suffered major structural cracks and its contents were looted. "We support the return and the normalization of life," he said, "but the government must work with us and accelerate solutions to the service crisis. We want to return to our homes, but the situation requires better organization, more time, and greater effort."

After the Kabou Market Incident: Russia Expands Along the Sahel Coast



Report – Sudan Events
A brief report about Russian forces penetrating Sudanese territory, killing 12 Sudanese civilians and wounding five others, has opened a wave of questions about Russia's presence in Sudan. Who are these Russians? Are they Wagner forces, the so-called Russian Legion, or simply unnamed mercenaries like those scattered around gold mines in the region? Where did they come from, what drove them to kill civilians, and where exactly did the incident take place? What are its broader implications? While attention has largely focused on the flow of weapons and supplies from southern Libya and South Sudan, foreign forces are now reportedly entering Sudan directly—opening fire, killing civilians, expelling local populations, establishing military positions, transporting equipment deep into the country, and taking control of areas in far western Sudan along the border with the Central African Republic (CAR). Are these official Russian forces under Moscow's command, or merely mercenaries? Answering this question takes us back to the starting point: Russia's long-standing ambition, since 2017, to establish a military base in a strategically central location in Africa—one that would enable access to the continent's resource-rich regions. This was evident when Moscow reached an agreement with former Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir to establish the "Flamingo" naval base on the Red Sea. That plan collapsed following the popular uprising that ousted Bashir. Russia then shifted its focus to the Central African Republic, which had just shed French military influence—an influence that had long angered authorities in Bangui due to France's reluctance to decisively confront armed groups threatening the political system near the French base. Russia, by contrast, engaged these groups militarily upon arrival, defeating them and ending their presence. This was viewed by the CAR government as a political victory, leading it to grant Russia a military base in 2024 that now reportedly hosts around 10,000 fighters, along with armored vehicles and aircraft. Russia was also granted a base along the CAR–Sudan border, an area known for armed opposition activity. Russian forces now officially guard the political system and the state itself—rather than the national army. Even the president's personal guards are reportedly Russian, with the base overseeing their appointment and supervision. Analysts believe Moscow seeks to exploit any space vacated by French forces. Mondafrique previously reported that presidential adviser Fidel Ngouandjika said his country was prepared to grant Russia additional military bases for training CAR soldiers, adding: "We believe Russia should remain with us." African affairs expert Charles Assijebo says Moscow enjoys strong ties with Bangui built on Wagner fighters' role in helping the government eliminate militia control. "Russia has expanded its sphere of influence toward Mali, Burkina Faso, and even Sudan and Libya," he said. He added that securing a base in Bangui offered Russia a new opportunity after failing to establish a base at Port Sudan due to instability in Sudan. "The Bangui base is strategically well-located, close to Russia's expanding influence in central Africa and the Sahel region." This raises a critical question: is the Russian presence now effectively legitimized through a major base in Bangui and another near the Sudanese border, close to the Um Dafuq area? Are these Wagner forces? The answer is both yes and no. They are former Wagner fighters who, after the death of Wagner's leader, were absorbed into Russia's Ministry of Defense and rebranded as the "African Corps." They are currently deployed in the Central African Republic, Niger, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, and Libya. But why did they enter Sudanese territory and seize control of areas there? Local sources say militia forces and their civilian administration struck an agreement with the authorities of Birao Prefecture in the CAR, bordering Sudan, to open a commercial crossing at a border area known as Karkar, where they established offices. Russian forces later arrived, shut down the crossing, expelled all Sudanese elements, and forced them to retreat to Um Dafuq without explanation. Even the authorities in Birao reportedly do not know why the Russians closed the trading point. This came after Russian forces killed Sudanese civilians at a weekly border market known as Kabou. According to eyewitnesses, a group of Sudanese herders entered the market carrying weapons. Russian forces demanded they surrender their arms; when they refused, the Russians opened fire, killing 12 people on the spot and wounding five others. Witnesses say gatherings of Sudanese nomads have since become targets of Russian patrols operating along the Sudan–CAR border. These forces control roads, restrict movement according to their own rules, and prevent passage without authorization. Local authorities, witnesses added, have no power to object to road and market closures, as Russia is now responsible for border security and preventing fighters from Sudan's war from crossing into Central African territory.

Signing of the Government Accounts Report Between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank for Fiscal Year 2025



Sudan Events – Rehab Abdullah
On Monday, the joint government accounts report between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Sudan, related to the execution of the 2025 fiscal budget, was officially signed. The report was signed on behalf of the Ministry of Finance by Dr. Jibril Ibrahim, Minister of Finance, and on behalf of the Central Bank by Amina Mirghani, Governor of the Central Bank of Sudan. The report revealed that the government had fulfilled all obligations related to supporting the war effort, fully paid compensation for employees of federal government units, and settled pension obligations up to December 2025, in addition to covering part of pension arrears for 2024. It also confirmed the disbursement of state transfers for 2025 in accordance with available resources and approved mechanisms, as well as support for health, water, and food services for displaced populations in the states. The government also met its obligations to the health sector, including medicine subsidies and health insurance, and paid allocations for higher education, universities, and media institutions up to December 2025, in addition to financing federal government operations. Furthermore, the government bore the full cost of humanitarian aid and delivered it to beneficiaries at their locations. While chairing the joint meeting between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank at the Ministries Complex in Port Sudan, Dr. Jibril Ibrahim announced the closure of temporary accounts opened during the emergency period, confirming that transactions would henceforth be conducted through the ministry's accounts at the Central Bank's Khartoum branch. He stressed the importance of full coordination and integration between fiscal and monetary policies to achieve national economic objectives and strengthen economic resilience, noting that significant achievements had been made quietly despite expectations of economic collapse due to the war. The minister projected an increase in revenues in 2026 through continued digitalization of financial and banking operations to improve performance and meet rising expenditures. He emphasized efforts to expand revenue bases, rely on real resources to reduce borrowing from the Central Bank, control inflation, and ensure revenues flow through official banking channels. For her part, Central Bank Governor Amina Mirghani stated that the Bank's monetary policies were aligned with the state budget, particularly through banking sector reform via digital transformation and the promotion of financial inclusion. She also emphasized the Bank's commitment to combating money laundering and terrorism financing, praising the sound implementation of the 2025 budget despite wartime conditions and commending the high level of coordination between the Ministry and the Bank.

17 Investment Projects in Livestock and Fisheries in the Red Sea State

The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has reached an agreement with Baza National Holding Company to invest in various livestock and fisheries sectors, particularly in the Livestock Production City owned by Sudanese-German investor Osman Al-Faki. The agreement covers 17 investment projects in Sudan's Red Sea State. This was announced during a meeting attended by the Minister of Livestock and Fisheries, Prof. Ahmed Al-Tijani Al-Mansouri, the Director General of the Ministry of Production and Economic Resources in the Red Sea State, Abdel Azim Abdel Ghaffar, the Director of Sanabik Company Yahya Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Shaigi, and the Director of the Partnerships Unit at the Ministry of Finance Jamal Awad Abdel Wahab, held at the ministry's headquarters in Port Sudan. The minister welcomed the targeted investments in the Red Sea State and pledged to remove all obstacles, stressing the importance of achieving development goals in the coming phase. He further revealed that the ministry had signed an agreement with the Saudi Strategic Advisory Council to conduct a feasibility study for the Livestock Production City, noting the formation of three Gulf business councils aimed at investment. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Production and Economic Resources in the Red Sea State announced the establishment of subsidized markets, while Sanabik Company committed to rehabilitating Al-Radwan Slaughterhouse in line with international standards.

Energy Ministry Offers Oil Investment Opportunities in Safe States

The Ministry of Energy inaugurated the resumption of operations from its main headquarters in Khartoum on Sunday, in the presence of Minister Engineer Consultant Al-Mu'tasim Ibrahim Ahmed, Engineer Al-Sadiq Jaber, a member of the Steering Committee of the Undersecretary's Office, along with several department directors, section heads, and a large number of ministry staff. The minister and the undersecretary toured various departments to review workflow and ensure staff attendance. The minister called on employees to intensify efforts and work with high morale to advance the country, expressing his happiness at meeting staff in their workplace after the war and pledging to resolve challenges related to their return. He noted that his decision to cancel the electricity tariff increase was made in consideration of the hardships citizens are facing due to the war. The minister urged staff to contribute to rehabilitating the ministry so it can return to normal operations. He revealed the ministry's plan for the current year in the oil sector, which includes offering investment opportunities in safe states, describing the oil fields as promising, in addition to efforts to resume operations at the Heglig oil field.



He also highlighted the ministry's efforts in the electricity sector, particularly in Khartoum, where substantial work has been carried out to rehabilitate power stations and provide cables and transformers despite difficult conditions, assuring citizens that solutions to electricity shortages across all sectors are forthcoming. Meanwhile, Dr. Abdel-Raafie Babiker, Secretary-General of the Workers' Union at the Sudanese Petroleum Corporation, affirmed the union's readiness to cooperate with management to boost production and rebuild what was destroyed by the war. He stressed that the current phase requires collective effort and selflessness to restore the oil sector as a leading driver of the national economy, wishing progress for the country and victory for the armed forces.

Daily Interbank Transfer Raised to Three Million Pounds


CENTRAL BANK OF SUDAN
Banking Regulation & Development Department
بنك السودان المركزي
الإدارة العامة لتنظيم وتنمية العمل المصرفي
التاريخ: 16 رجب 1447هـ
الموافق: 05 يناير 2025م
النمرة: ب س م/ إ ع ت ج م/ ش م/2026
السيد/ مدير عام بنك .....
معنون لكافة المصارف العاملة
الموضوع: سقف التحاويل بين البنوك عن رقم الحساب المصرفي الأساسي (BBAN)
في إطار جهود بنك السودان المركزي الرامية إلى التوسع في تقديم الخدمات المصرفية

Sudan Events – Rehab Abdullah
The Central Bank of Sudan has issued a decision to raise the daily for interbank transfers through banking accounts to three million Sudanese pounds, up from one million pounds, in a move aimed at facilitating money flows and enhancing financial liquidity among institutions and individuals. The Bank stated that the decision is part of its efforts to address challenges facing the banking system and meet customer needs amid current economic conditions, thereby improving the business environment and easing commercial and financial transactions. Banker and economic researcher Ayman Jawish welcomed the decision, noting that it theoretically aligns with the objectives of the 2026 monetary policy, which aims to increase money supply and the monetary base, adding that raising transfer limits supports this objective.

Upcoming Donors' Conference for Sudan

Prime Minister Dr. Kamil Idris affirmed the Hope Government's commitment to strengthening cooperation with Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross societies and facilitating their humanitarian operations. This came during his meeting on Monday with Dr. Abdullah bin Sahl, Secretary-General of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization, in the presence of Dr. Abdelrahman Belail, President of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society, Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Secretary-General of the Sudanese Red Crescent, Ambassador Hamed Al-Jazouli, Director of the Organizations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Prime Minister welcomed the solidarity visit, describing it as highly significant given the sensitivity of the current circumstances, and noted that it reflects the organization's concern over the humanitarian situation in Sudan. He expressed the government's appreciation for the efforts of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross societies across the Arab world, particularly their support for Sudan. The meeting addressed the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and the growing need for essential services across all humanitarian sectors. Dr. Abdullah bin Sahl, in turn, thanked the Prime Minister for the opportunity to meet and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to supporting the Sudanese Red Crescent. He announced plans to convene a comprehensive donors' conference for Sudan in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, and the United Nations.

Sudan, on Its 70th Anniversary, Needs a Measure of Fairness—and a Little Self-Criticism



Dr Al-Khidr Haroun

The sharp turns in the history of peoples and states—those that lead to disasters and ordeals—demand pauses in which we feel for the points of danger and the sites of failure, mend breaches, and close gaps, in preparation for resuming the journey with clear sight and for seeking measures that avoid the pitfalls of error and the repetition of crises. In truth, that is among the most pressing obligations and the most sacred tasks. Sudan has endured its most violent shock since independence at the beginning of 1956, as a result of the aggression it faced on 15 April 2023—whose dangers remain manifest and looming, whose wounds still bleed and inflict pain, and whose toll continues to claim precious lives across the length and breadth of the country. And because this is not the first such ordeal in Sudan's long history—stretching back some eight thousand years—yet after each of them Sudan has remained, retaining most of the features of its earliest formation, this is a sign of hope and a good omen that it will endure and overcome this trial, just as it did with earlier calamities and afflictions.

Much of what has befallen us has been the result of a predatory invasion, tainted by a base arrogance that fills its perpetrators with illicit pride and false grandeur—grandeur that is no grandeur at all. True greatness is measured by the scales of right and justice, not by killing on the basis of identity, terrorising the elderly and women, raping free women and underage girls and boys, cutting open the bellies of pregnant women and hanging them from tree branches until death. If such acts were greatness, then Genghis Khan, Hulagu, Hitler, Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin would be counted among the great—far from it.

The incursions that reached our own homeland include some that occurred centuries before Christ, led by the great powers of the time: Cambyses the Great brought a vast Persian army; emperors came from Greece and Rome. Invasions between us and Egypt also continued back and forth without end. And for every invader from beyond our borders, there were, among the sons of the homeland, abject guides—humiliated informants—who aided them against old men and women, aunts and uncles, killing them and multiplying their humiliation before killing them. Zayd ibn Mukhlaf al-Thaqafi, known as Abu Righal, guided the Abyssinian invader Abraha to the Ka'bah to destroy it, and his name became a byword in Arab history: "Abu Righal!"—a label applied to every vile traitor who sold his people and his land for dirhams and dinars. The Arabs used to stone his grave after the pilgrimage, even before Islam.

The ruling queens of Sudan—the Kandakas—confronted invaders before people elsewhere had even known female rule, bringing their commanders in chains and fetters. One of them, Queen Amanirenas, placed the statue of Augustus—venerated by the Romans as the founder of the Roman Empire in 27 BC—beneath her feet on the throne. The Romans attempted to retrieve it through negotiations that ended with a document signed on one of the Mediterranean islands, which the Arabs used to call the Sea of the Romans; yet she did not return it. I recall being tasked with meeting the US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick and handing him a commemorative plate bearing an image of that great queen with those white men shackled in irons before her. He laughed and said to me: "What is this woman doing?" Then he added: "I do not think she was doing anything good!"

The second Kushite capital at Napata—Kareima today—was burned entirely and left as though it had never been, as retribution for taking that statue from a temple in Lower Nubia, south of Egypt. Ezana, King of Aksum, destroyed the great civilisation of Meroë—one that had reached the very heights of achievement, smelting iron to the extent that Europeans later called it "the ancient Birmingham". Its gatherings dispersed; its princes turned westwards, carrying their knowledge with them, so that the languages of West Africa absorbed elements of what came to be known as "Sudanic languages".

In the eras of the ancient Nubian kingdoms, cities rivalled the great centres of Byzantium: urban hubs, temples, and, in the Christian period, cathedrals; universities; and, later, khalwas whose domes lit the night with the recitation of the Wise Reminder. Predatory invasions did not cease. Then came the Albanian adventurer Muhammad Ali, draped in the insignia of the Islamic Caliphate, acting with deception and guile in search of Sudan's formidable fighters and gold to build an army with which to overthrow the Ottomans and replace them as caliph of the believers. Our people fought him at Umm Baqar (Kortie) with whatever horsemen they could muster, and they killed his arrogant son in the heartland of the Ja'aliyyin. He then unleashed his son-in-law upon us, who reaped thousands of lives and caused migrations in every direction. The people rose against him and liberated themselves at a time when most of the world's poor lay under occupation by the Mahdi. But then the flame of dignity that had united us dimmed; differences crept in; we resumed killing—killing one another—until the coloniser, who slipped in through our weakness, said he found the North as though it were empty of people. His pretence of pity did not prevent him from slaughtering eleven thousand heroes at Karari, cold-bloodedly, within a few short hours. Omdurman, the capital of Sudan, was devastated by three calamities. Yet Sudan endured nonetheless—and rose again.

The essence of all this is that defeats, setbacks, and failures to achieve balanced and sustainable development do not necessarily require "re-founding". Sudan was founded eight thousand years ago and has remained, in essence, as it was at the beginning. It bore many names, all meaning peoples of black complexion: Tanehisu, Ethiopia ("people of burnt faces"), Kush, son of Ham, son of Noah the Black, and Bilad al-Sudan. Asian, Arab, Maghrebi, and purely African ethnicities mixed with them across the ages without severing their belonging to the African continent—leading historians and anthropologists such as William Adams, G. Spalding, Richard Lobban, and others to emphasise the continuity of Nubian civilisations, adapting to Christianity and then Islam—an ingenuity that ensured the survival of that distinctive civilisation.

This is a land of civilisation and migration from everywhere: from West Africa, from the greater Maghreb and the lands of Shinqit. That pace increased when the sultans of Darfur and the Islamic kingdoms dug wells along the road heading eastwards towards the White Nile, serving pilgrims and strengthening ties with their brethren in central and eastern Sudan. People blended; bloodlines intertwined; this crucible produced great, creative people.

The "Katib al-Shuna", as documented by Professor Yusuf Fadl Hasan, relates that when the Abyssinian king Iyasu invaded parts of the Funj Sultanate in 1738 with the help of a rebellious Sudanese man named Nayil Wad 'Ajib, the Sultan of Sennar, Badi Abu Shalukh, sent a great army that defeated him. News of that victory spread and delighted the Muslim lands, including Sultan Mahmud I of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, delegations came to the Funj Sultanate "from the Hijaz, India, Sind, Upper Egypt, and the far Maghreb, and settled there…" (footnote 14, p. 93, Dar Madarik, first edition, 2008). See also Dr al-Fatih Hasanein's book on the migration of Maghrebis to the Karkoj area five hundred years ago. Arabic was firmly rooted; it was not brought by the Khedive, as some claim—indeed, he himself did not speak Arabic. It was in Arabic that the Sultan of Sennar addressed him when his son came as an invader: "Do not be deceived by your dominance over the Ja'aliyyin and the Shayqiyya; we are the masters, and they are the subjects." Yet the Condominium administration barred Christian missionary activity north of the 10th parallel—in northern Sudan—fearing the arousal of Sudanese religious fervour, as Lord Cromer judged, and also to avoid the anger of the Egyptian parliament and press, and accusations that the British were Christianising Muslims in Sudan.

This is not an obscure or forgotten land. It has deep roots in glory and has remained a land of influence and رقيّ. The Idrisi path of Shaykh Ibrahim al-Rashid al-Duwayhi still has followers in Somalia—among them the Somali Mahdi, against whom the British used warplanes for the first time in Africa. Do you not notice the prevalence of the name al-Rashid and 'Abd al-Rashid there even today? The Salimiyya path derives from his nephew Salim, who succeeded him; as Ofahi noted in his doctoral dissertation, it has followers in Syria and elsewhere in the Muslim world. The University of Africa draws from the same rich, inexhaustible spring.

Some reduce the reasons for failure to "faulty founding" after independence, when politics and elite rivalries dominated. The founding fathers in Africa sought to avoid this by not opening Pandora's box—by respecting the borders inherited from colonialism. That approach was largely respected, and it was breached only in the case of South Sudan's secession.

I tried to study, with detachment and objectivity, the hypothesis that Sudan is the only state to have failed to build and preserve a democratic order and territorial unity after independence, and I found that Sudan did not fail uniquely. In Africa and Asia, only very few post-colonial states held together firmly, and even fewer partially succeeded in maintaining democratic systems. In Asia, India preserved a parliamentary democracy but lost territorial unity following the partition of India into Pakistan. The second state that preserved democracy was Sri Lanka. Yet, it suffered a fierce separatist war in its Hindu-majority north—whose Tamil population had been brought by the British from Tamil Nadu in southern India. Its persistence in civilian democratic rule may be attributed to its small size, limited population, and the relative cohesion of its Sinhalese Buddhist majority (75%). India's success in preserving democracy stems from the Indian National Congress's long experience in political struggle and from the fact that it was founded in 1885—some 62 years before independence—and served as a broad vessel for India's nationalities against British colonialism, before the strong Communist Party split away in the 1920s and the Muslim League later. Congress made democracy a natural inheritance in its practice, though reliance on a mechanical majority led to the marginalisation of Muslims, a large minority whom Mahatma Gandhi sought to accommodate in order to preserve the unity of the subcontinent. He even tried to install Muhammad Ali Jinnah as prime minister, as recounted by Jaswant Singh, India's former foreign minister.

The African states that preserved democracy are also few—among them Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, and South Africa. Other states suffered coups after independence and later managed to establish democratic systems, such as Ghana, Zambia, and Kenya, though tribalism remained a cover for democracy, and the larger and more cohesive the tribe, the more likely the "democratic" system persisted in some of those countries. Sudan's democracy relied on religious sectarianism—a higher rung of development than that based on tribe. It was possible to endure it until it matured—yet the politics of the region do not know patience, even when Sudanese people adorn themselves with it.

The failure of the Indian National Congress to keep India unified resembles, in certain respects, our failure to convince the South to remain within a unified Sudan, despite colonial policies that administered North and South differently as though they were two separate countries, then hurriedly sought to merge them on the eve of independence, hastening its departure and leaving both to their fate. For five decades, it had sown hatred and stirred antagonisms between them, undermining trust. It then attempted, at the last moment, to keep Sudan united—pressuring southerners to accept unity at the 1947 Juba Conference, with promises of federalism that were unknown across the continent and that frightened the North, which saw them as bait for secession. The North did not fulfil its promise, for which it is blameworthy beyond doubt—even if we make allowances for how strange the idea was in continental terms. Mistrust turned into a permanent conflict that ended in full separation. Some eager elites, quick to condemn the fathers of independence, avoid acknowledging the greater role of colonialism in widening the gap between the two halves of the country through the Closed Districts policy for fifty years—then expecting the independence generation to bridge it simply by agreeing to federalism. We saw how the six-year experiment of the National Unity Government after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement failed, and how the South prepared for secession from the very first day—incited by the same colonial forces from overseas, or by crude arrangements from some separatists who deluded themselves that they would seize all the oil, impoverish the North, then march upon it and absorb it into a coercive unity according to a "New Sudan" vision modified from Marxism-Leninism to Western liberalism in its anti-religious version.

A wise man among them once told me he said to them, "The North has existed for centuries without oil!"

The "Graduates' Generation", despite the contempt of the Administrative Secretary Gillan in 1938—who mocked the colonial government's "graduates" as a grandiose, inflated word lacking real substance, since it included both secondary-school and university graduates and did not exceed three thousand people—nevertheless, in fairness, succeeded in Sudanising the civil service quickly, and managed the transitional elections successfully until independence was achieved. They inherited a vast country—nearly one million square miles—whose economy depended on a single crop: cotton grown in the Gezira, served by old railways, a relic of the nineteenth century, alongside roughly three secondary schools and a solitary university college. Within the limits of what was possible, they strove; they succeeded, and they failed. They developed the railways somewhat, even assisting African states such as Zambia, and extended lines as far as Wau in the South and westward to Nyala. They expanded the Gezira Scheme through the Roseires Dam and extended cultivation to include the Managil area. They established a national airline that was a regional pioneer and founded the University of Khartoum. Those who came after them established sugar factories, grain silos, and a maritime fleet of about 18 large ocean-going vessels, extracted طفلا, built transcontinental roads, and founded a university in every state covering all disciplines of knowledge—under extraordinarily delicate and complex conditions. Despite the colonial administrative secretary's disdain for the educated, Sir William Luce—who served as legal adviser to the Governor-General in Sudan and later advised British Gulf and Yemeni territories—counselled those territories at independence to draw on Sudanese expertise; and Sudanese professionals proved worthy of that trust. The Financial Times magazine devoted its 1978 cover story to Sudan, noting among other things that Britain boasted of having left Sudan with a robust system of education and civil service.

The point is that the early fathers, given the conditions they lived through and the knowledge they acquired under an occupying system, exerted an effort for which they deserve credit. They preserved Sudan with its tolerant, open culture, encompassing ethnicities and beliefs that arrived from every direction. They also committed failures—some rooted in self-interest and miserliness, others in misjudgements whose error devastated the country and its people. What we do not include in this account, of course, are betrayals and setbacks in service of external interests. It is to the credit of most of them that they were not corrupt; most lived modestly among the people.

In sum, the country does not need "founding" anew, but of revisiting how it is governed in a manner that satisfies the majority of its people. Given its vastness, the Funj Sultanate in Sennar ruled for nearly three uninterrupted centuries because it was a decentralised system akin to confederate governance: power was divided between the Abdallab, who controlled the northern region and parts of the Gezira and eastern Nile, and the Funj, who controlled the rest of the country, with overall supervision of the kingdom. Reforming the errors that preceded the war is urgent and necessary; understanding and placing the national interest above all else is obligatory, necessary, and possible.

The anthropologist Ruth Benedict wrote a book in 1946—compiled during the Second World War at the behest of the US War Department—for which she was criticised for using science as a vehicle for war aims. The same criticism was directed at E. E. Evans-Pritchard for writing The Nuer in the service of British intelligence to better control a tribe that had risen against the coloniser in forty incidents. Benedict's book sought to probe the puzzling Japanese culture, where the Japanese personality appears outwardly calm, peaceful, and extremely polite, while harbouring an unimaginable degree of stubbornness, harshness, and resilience. Hence, the title The Chrysanthemum and the Sword. It offered a deep discussion of the contrast between Western "guilt culture", in which behaviour is governed by an internal conscience that leads its bearer to confess wrongdoing, accept consequences, and seek forgiveness, and the "shame culture" that the author saw as characteristic of Japan, governed by social acceptance or rejection; if nobody learns of a wrongdoing, its perpetrator suffers little, but if disgrace becomes public, the perpetrator may commit suicide—or so the author observed, akin to describing someone as "a slave of appearances". Some Japanese intellectuals confirmed to me the gist of her conclusions when I worked in Tokyo: I once played for some of them recordings about wartime horrors—the firebombing that killed one hundred thousand in Tokyo, and how survivors near rivers threw themselves into them—before the nuclear strikes on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Yet they would repeatedly say that Japan had brought it upon itself by entering a war it had no business fighting. Benedict concluded that stubbornness did not prevent Japan from reviewing itself; after it smashed its head against the wall, it awakened and undertook the necessary revisions, benefiting from demilitarisation and rising to become the world's second-largest economy within two decades. Germany did similarly. Both remained what they were before the war—Japan remained Japan, and Germany remained Germany—without being "re-founded", because founding is the fruit of a long history and of generational features that succeed one another.

We conclude that this war has convinced millions of all backgrounds and affiliations to align behind the homeland and preserve it, regardless of the sacrifices, and to agree on how it should be governed thereafter, according to standards of equality, fairness, and transparency.

Will Our Government Lead Us Astray?



Rashid Abdel Rahim

One of the clearest manifestations of the confusion gripping the government is the contradiction in its decisions on fundamental issues, revealing a lack of understanding of its core responsibilities. The Electricity Company announced an increase in tariffs, only for the Minister of Energy to promptly issue a decision canceling the hike. Yet neither the ministry nor the company has the authority to set prices. This mandate lies with the Ministry of Finance. At most, the ministry and the company may propose the framework for increases and how they are distributed across tariff categories. Even greater confusion lies in the government's announcement that it has approved the state's general budget. A budget is a binding law, and laws, according to the Constitutional Document, are issued through a joint session of the Sovereignty Council and the Council of Ministers. In legal terms, therefore, there is currently no binding national budget for the state or for anyone. From a government mired in such chaos, it is unsurprising to see decisions imposing higher fees on a commodity in which Sudan enjoys a global competitive advantage. Fees on gum arabic were suddenly raised from 6,000 pounds to 15,000 pounds in one stroke. Global gold prices have seen a notable increase this year, with expectations that the upward trend will continue into the coming year. This coincides with confusion in the management of gold in Sudan, where artisanal mining dominates a commodity that should, by nature, fall under direct government control as a subsoil resource. Ambiguity still surrounds plans to establish a gold exchange—will it be in Qatar or in Sudan? There is widespread talk that most of Sudan's gold exports are currently directed to the United Arab Emirates, as if hostile actions against Sudan are being financed by the country's own strategic resources. Meanwhile, Sudan's livestock wealth has become hostage to the unilateral visions and decisions of a minister who speaks of projects he alone defines and approves.

The Central Bank of Sudan has issued monetary policies for the coming year, projecting exchange rate stability and declining inflation. However, the reality on the ground makes such goals unattainable, particularly given a government in disarray that relies on raising fees and taxes—measures that burden citizens and stifle trade and commodities. Many institutions and officials remain based in Port Sudan, incurring heavy expenditures on hotel accommodation, allowances, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and staff, all while operating away from their actual workplaces inside and outside the country. This occurs amid widespread talk of major corruption, which the government avoids addressing—neither acknowledging it nor decisively denying or combating it.

A return to Khartoum would mean increased production and services, as it hosts major factories and service sectors. These represent revenues from fees and taxes that are currently being wasted. Our government is lost and far removed from what is required, at a time when the war is entering its third year. Were it not for the army's professionalism on the battlefield—securing weapons, equipment, salaries, and operational requirements—the country would have been lost. Will Sudan be lost under the government of Kamel Idris?

This page opens a window on the most prominent issues and transformations in Africa, where politics intersects with the economy, and security files overlap with development and climate challenges.
From migration and the policies of the major powers, to the energy race, the rise of new economic partnerships, to the humanitarian crises in various regions, the continent›s features and events are monitored.

Afrika focus-a window on Africa
Prepared by / Mohamed Obaid

News of a new coup attempt shakes Burkina Faso



A tense atmosphere prevailed in Burkina Faso on Saturday and Sunday, against the backdrop of news of a new coup attempt targeting interim President Ibrahim Traore, in the latest chapter of political turmoil in the country. There were reports of monitoring military movements and raising the alert level in a number of barracks in the capital Ouagadougou and the city of Bobo-Dioulasso, in conjunction with the deployment of troops in front of the "Baba-C" CAMP, one of the most prominent military sites in the capital, raising fears of a split within the military establishment. The authorities have not issued a comprehensive official statement clarifying the circumstances of what happened, but local and international media have reported varying accounts, including arrests in the ranks of the army, amid accusations of officers involved in a "coup plot". In contrast, media platforms close to power accused former President Paul-Henri sandaugo Damiba, a resident in exile in Togo, of being behind the recent moves. These accusations come in the context of a series of trials and arrests of military personnel since last September, against the background of accusing them of plotting against the regime.

In the wake of these developments, civil associations loyal to the authority, including the popular awakening movement, came out in demonstrations in support of the transitional president, where hundreds of citizens gathered in front of military sites in the capital, chanting slogans denouncing the "repeated coups" that threaten the stability of the country. This move reflects the authority's desire to show that it has a popular support base in the face of any unrest within the army. Since coming to power through a military coup in September 2022, Ibrahim Traore has faced overlapping security and political challenges, in light of the continuing threat of armed groups in the North and east of the country, and repeated attempts to destabilize power from within the military establishment, highlighting the fragility of existing balances. In the same context, neighboring countries and regional organizations are following the developments of the situation closely, amid growing fears of a spillover of the wave of military coups in West Africa, which has witnessed a series of violent political changes in recent years.

Guinea: the Supreme Court confirms the victory of Mamadi Dumbuya in the presidential elections

The Supreme Court of Guinea announced, on Sunday evening, January 5, the confirmation of the victory of general Mamadi Dumbuya in the presidential elections held on December 28, after he received 86.72% of the votes, according to the official final results. With this decision, Dumbuya will be elected president of the country from the first round for a seven-year term, in a ballot boycotted by most opposition parties, and saw the exclusion of a number of prominent opposition political figures. During an official session, the president of the Supreme Court, Fodi Bangura, announced the final results, confirming the victory of independent candidate Mamadi Dumbuya, in an election contested in front of competitors with limited popular presence. "Since the candidate Mamadi Doumbouya received the highest percentage of votes, he was elected president of the Republic of Guinea from the first round and for seven years,"Bangoura said. In his first speech after the results were announced, the president-elect called on Guineans to overcome divisions and work together to "build a sovereign Guinea politically and economically". Domboya added that granting him an absolute majority places a huge responsibility on him, praising what he described as the maturity of the Guinean people, their calm and generous spirit during the electoral entitlement, stressing the importance of the next stage in consolidating stability and advancing development. In terms of reactions, Ibrahima Abi Sela, candidate of the "new generation for the



Republic" Party, congratulated the elected president, calling for strengthening national unity, urging Guineans to rally around the country's socio-economic development program, and to overcome political differences in the service of the public interest. Sidibe Ousmane, a member of the Political Bureau of the rally of Guineans for Prosperity led by Haji bona Quita, considered Guinea to be the biggest winner of this benefit. He said that the elections reflected the "Democratic momentum and republican spirit" shown by the nine candidates, calling it an indicator of commendable political maturity. After officially confirming his victory, Mamadi Doumbouya renewed his pledge to work towards building a "guinea of peace and common prosperity", stressing his commitment to lead the country to a new stage of political stability, economic development and strengthening national cohesion.

An escalating diplomatic crisis between Benin and Niger following the mutual expulsion of embassy staff

Relations between Benin and Niger have entered a new phase of tension, following the exchange of decisions to expel diplomatic staff, in a move that reflects the continuing political and diplomatic stalemate between the two countries since the military junta seized power in Niamey and overthrew President Mohamed Bazoum. The Beninese authorities expelled two officials from the embassy of Niger in Cotonou, Ilia Bockarie, a police officer, and Balkisa Ibrahim, an official in the Nigerian security service, without issuing an official statement explaining the reasons for the decision or its background. According to informed sources, this measure comes within the framework of the principle of reciprocity, pointing out that the Beninese embassy in Niamey includes only civil servants, and does not include security or similar official elements. In a swift response, the Nigerian authorities declared the charge d'affaires at the embassy of Benin persona non grata and demanded that he leave the country. The two expelled Nigerian officials left the city of Cotonou, on Thursday, January 1, 2026, on a commercial flight belonging to one of the African airlines. This escalation comes as an extension of previous diplomatic differences, as Benin had recalled its ambassador from Niamey in early February 2025, in a move that reflected the depth of tension between the two sides at the time.

Prior to his departure, it was reported that the Beninese charge d'affaires informed members of the Beninese community in Niger of the suspension of the embassy's activities as of January 5, 2026, but official sources in Cotonou denied the veracity of this news, stressing that the government has not taken a decision to close its embassy in Niamey, and that what was circulated is nothing but unconfirmed information. This crisis falls within a complex regional context, as relations between the two countries have been experiencing constant tension since the military coup in Niger in July 2023, an event that was followed by the closure of Niamey's border with Benin, and remains closed to this day. This escalation also comes about a month after the Beninese authorities announced the thwarting of a failed coup attempt, after which they accused internal and external parties, without naming them, of seeking to destabilize, referring to what they described as"angry Beninese politicians" and foreign supporters. In this context, the commander of the Military Council in Niger, general Abdelrahman Tiani, accused Beninese president Patrice Talon of harboring a French base used, according to him, to destabilize Niger, accusations that Cotonou has repeatedly denied, stressing its adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring countries.

Equatorial Guinea's president orders a surprise relocation of the country's capital

Equatorial Guinea's President, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, has issued a surprise presidential decree moving the country's capital from the city of Malabo to Ciudad de la Paz, located in the heart of the tropical rainforest on the mainland. By the decision, Malabo, located on the island of Bioko and geographically separated from the mainland, loses its status as a political capital, becoming Ciudad de la Paz the new capital of the only Spanish-speaking state on the African continent. The presidential decree explained that the move to move the capital comes within the framework of seeking to ease administrative concentration and promote decentralization of state functions, in light of the rapid urban expansion witnessed by both Malabo and the coastal city of Bata, which is the most prominent economic center in the country. The decree pointed out that this rapid and uncontrolled growth has created major challenges, including poor urban planning, increasing pressure on basic services, widening regional gaps, as well as bottlenecks in transport and communications networks. Equatorial Guinea, a small oil-rich country in Central Africa, has been ruled by President Obiang for more than 46 years, making him the longest-reigning head of state alive outside of monarchies. His son holds the post of vice president, amid continuous criticism from human rights organizations accusing the regime of entrenching family rule and restricting political freedoms. Despite the large oil revenues, it is estimated that about 70% of the country's nearly two million people live in extreme poverty, amid repeated accusations of the ruling regime and its pillars of appropriating public resources.

Cunha Strikes as Man Utd Snatch Point in 1-1 Draw at Leeds

Manchester United snatched a 1-1 draw at Leeds United on Sunday after Matheus Cunha cancelled out Brenden Aaronson's opener in a frantic three-minute spell that epitomized a chaotic Premier League encounter. The Brazilian forward shouldered the creative burden for United with several key players missing, proving a constant menace before silencing the raucous Elland Road crowd with his second-half equalizer. The draw between the two age-old rivals lifted the visitors provisionally to fifth place with 31 points while Leeds remain 16th on 22 points. "We know how big this game is for everyone. But it's good to have a point here also," Cunha told TNT Sports. "It was so hard. We know what to expect, what to bring to the game. They try to do everything to win." Leeds set an aggressive tone early in a scrappy first half that produced few clear chances despite the intensity. United thought they had drawn first blood when Cunha volleyed home from range, only for the goal to be chalked off for offside in the build-up. The home side nearly broke the deadlock in the 35th minute when in-form striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin's glancing header from a cross struck the far post with United keeper Senne Lammens beaten. At the other end, Leny Yoro's header forced a fine reflex save from Leeds keeper Lucas Perri as the teams went into the break goalless. Leeds finally found their breakthrough just after the hour mark when Pascal Struijk played Aaronson through behind United's defense. The American sprinted past an unsuspecting Ayden Heaven before beating Lammens to send Elland Road into raptures, but their celebrations were short-lived. ZIRKZEE MAKES INSTANT IMPACT United substitute Joshua Zirkzee made an instant impact moments after entering the fray, setting Cunha through on goal and the Brazilian slipped his shot past Perri to level the score, silencing the home crowd in the 65th minute. The drama continued as both sides pressed for a winner. Noah Okafor nearly restored Leeds' lead with an acrobatic overhead kick from a set-piece, but Lammens produced a fine save to deny the Swiss forward. Cunha himself hit the post when he tried to curl home what would have been the winner while Zirkzee nearly set up another goal, only for Benjamin Sesko to fire it wide. "Overall, if you see the game we had more control. We created more chances, we controlled well," United manager Ruben Amorim told BBC. "So, if you look at the game you feel the frustration that we had the chance to win. It is a tough match in tough conditions." Leeds substitute Joel Piroe nearly snatched victory for the home side when put through on goal, but the Dutchman's first-time curling effort sailed over the bar as both teams settled for a point in an entertaining Yorkshire thriller. "If you play Manchester United as a newly-promoted side it's always a good point," Leeds boss Daniel Farke said. "We were a bit tired today, nevertheless we found a way. We forced an opener and would have taken all three points, so for that I'm a bit disappointed. But if I calm down I have to say it's a fair point."



Amorim Sacked by Man Utd after 14-Month Reign

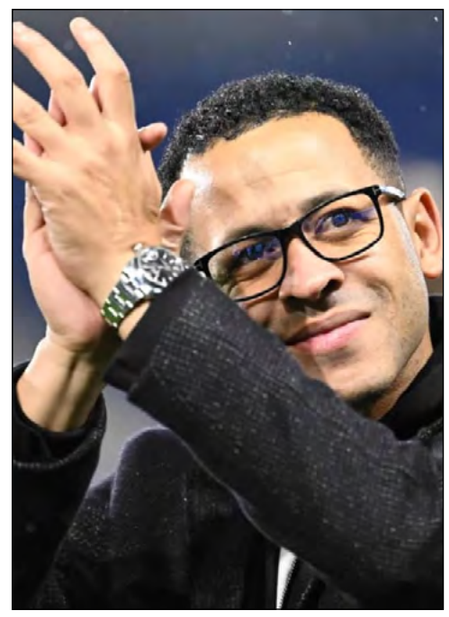
Ruben Amorim has been sacked as Manchester United manager 14 months after arriving at Old Trafford, the club announced on Monday. United said in a statement that the Portuguese had left his role, with the club's leadership having "reluctantly made the decision that it is the right time to make a change". The club added: "This will give the team the best opportunity of the highest possible Premier League finish. "The club would like to thank Ruben for his contribution to the club and wishes him well for the future." Current Under-18s coach Darren Fletcher will take charge of the team against Burnley on Wednesday. United are currently sixth in the Premier League table after a 1-1 draw at Leeds on Sunday. After that game, an irate Amorim stressed he was United's manager rather than just the coach during an eye-catching press conference in which he told the scouting department and director of football, Jason Wilcox, "to do their job". The 40-year-old had alluded to frustration behind the scenes in the build-up to the match as the United boss refused to clarify his recent comments



about the club's transfer plans. He had looked downbeat when he sidestepped those questions but was more forthcoming when asked on Sunday if he still felt he had confidence from the board. "Guys, to start with that -- and I noticed that you receive selective information about everything -- I came here to be the manager of Manchester United, not to be the coach of Manchester United," Amorim said. "And that is clear. "I know that my name is not (Thomas) Tuchel, it's not (Antonio) Conte, it's not (Jose) Mourinho but I'm the manager of Manchester United. "And it's going to be like this for 18 months or when the board decides to change, so that was my point. "I want to finish with that. I'm not going to quit. I will do my job until another guy is coming here to replace me." Amorim was appointed in November 2024 and led the team to the Europa League final in Bilbao in May, losing to Tottenham Hotspur, but they finished 15th in the Premier League last season. His 14-month stint is the shortest reign of a permanent manager at United since David Moyes was sacked just eight months into his tenure in 2014. United, 20-time English champions, have not won the Premier League since 2013, in Alex Ferguson's final season in charge.

Rooney Says Rosenior Has Earned Opportunity to Lead Chelsea

Wayne Rooney has backed Liam Rosenior to take charge at Chelsea and said the Englishman has earned the opportunity after proving himself as a manager. Rosenior, who was Rooney's assistant at Derby County and is currently in charge of Ligue 1 side Strasbourg, is the front-runner to replace Enzo Maresca after the Italian left Stamford Bridge last week. "Liam was so important for me," the former Manchester United striker said on the BBC's The Wayne Rooney Show. "He was incredible in his coaching ability. "I was more of the manager dealing with players and everything, but I learned a lot from him from that point of view. He's done a great job as a whole," added Rooney. Rosenior, 41, previously managed Hull City before joining Strasbourg in July 2024. He led the French club to a seventh-place finish in Ligue 1. "If he goes in there (Chelsea), he won't disappoint," Rooney added.



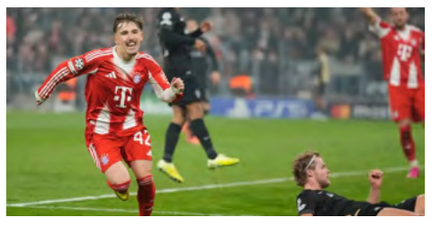
"He's been waiting for an opportunity like this. "If you don't take it now, then you're never going to take it. He's done his apprenticeship, he's done his work to get to that job." Chelsea, who are fifth in the Premier League, will face Fulham on Wednesday.

Quintero Wins Dakar Rally 2nd Stage and Al-Attiyah Takes Overall Lead in Saudi Arabia

Seth Quintero won the second stage of the Dakar Rally and missed out by seconds on taking the overall lead on Monday. Meanwhile, motorbike defending champion Daniel Sanders dominated the 400-kilometer special from Yanbu across the Hedjaz Mountains to AlUla to win the stage and replace KTM teammate Edgar Canet as the overall leader. Quintero, 18th on stage one, found the second more to his liking. The American driver took the lead by the 143-kilometer waypoint and after four hours won by 1 minute, 42 seconds from Toyota Gazoo teammate Henk Lategan, the Dakar runner-up last year. A third teammate, Toby Price, was fourth. "If you're battling your teammates for a win then you're having a good day," Quintero said. "We're in a good way. We've done a lot of strategizing so if I can have an okay day tomorrow and be in mid pack at the start of the marathon (on Wednesday) then I'll be a happy camper." Defending champion Yazeed Al-Rajhi was third after an awful stage one in which he finished nearly 29 minutes off the pace. He's cut that to 24. Eighth place on the day was good enough for Nasser Al-Attiyah to lead overall for the first time since his fifth and last Dakar title in 2023. Overall, Al-Attiyah was seven seconds up on Quintero, with stage one winner Guillaume de Mévius third. The top seven drivers were separated by less than three minutes. "The key of the Dakar will be tomorrow because I think it will be hard navigation," Al-Attiyah said. "This area is not easy." Tuesday's stage is a 422-kilometer loop near AlUla without many landmarks to help navigation. Canet opened the way for the motorbikes for the first 100 kilometers until the novice winner of the first two specials was caught by Sanders. The teammates rode together to the end, picking up bonus times and finishing one-two on the stage and overall. Sanders won the stage by 1 minute, 35 seconds and replaced Canet as leader by 30 seconds. Ricky Brabec was third on the stage and overall. "We didn't push or do anything crazy," Sanders said. "(Edgar) just sat behind and watched, followed and learned. I'm sure he had some fun back there in the dust. He was there to fix a couple of mistakes and it was good fun riding with him." Adrien van Beveren, third in 2024 and 2025, hit a tree after the pitstop but finished the stage and was 14 minutes down.

Bayern's Lennart Karl Calls Real Madrid his 'Dream Club'

Bayern Munich's latest young sensation is already thinking about a future elsewhere. Lennart Karl, the 17-year-old midfielder who became Bayern's youngest Champions League scorer in October, prompted laughs, criticism and confusion Sunday with an admission he dreams of moving to Real Madrid. During a question-and-answer session at a small-town fan gathering Sunday, the sort of visit that's a new year's tradition for the club's players, Karl was asked if he had a "dream club" other than Bayern. "Bayern's a very, very big club in any case, and it's a dream to play there, but some day I'd definitely like to go to Real Madrid. That's my dream club, but that stays between us," Karl said, to laughter from the Bayern fans in the audience, in comments broadcast by Sky Sport in Germany.



"But obviously Bayern is something very, very special and it's lots and lots of fun at the club." While the fans in the audience seemed to take Karl's comments with good humor, the young midfielder faced criticism from Bayern supporters online questioning his loyalty to the club. Karl came through Bayern's youth academy and made his first-team debut in a 10-0 thrashing of Auckland City at the Club World Cup in June before becoming a regular this season, with six goals in 22 games.