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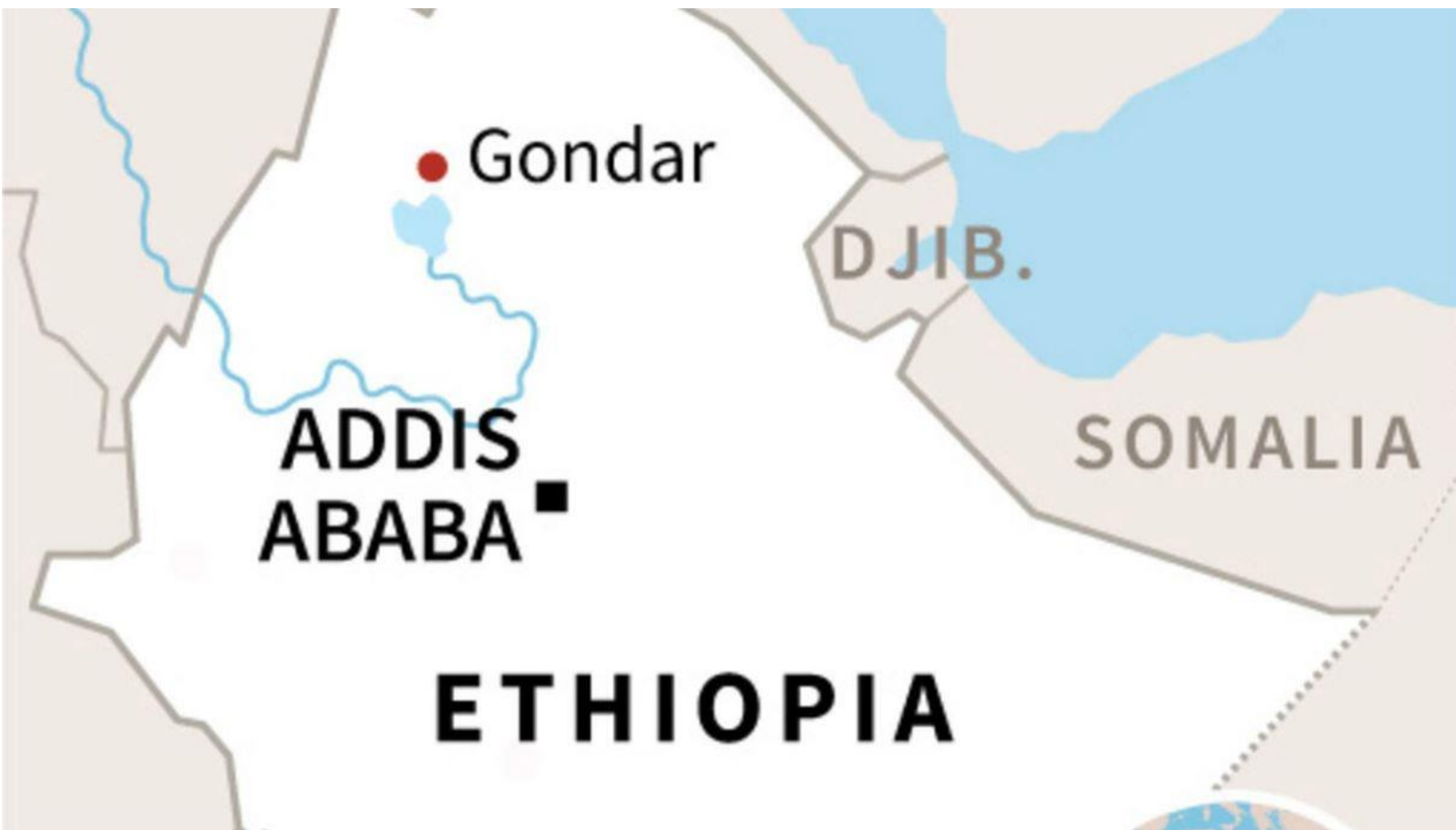
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Ethiopia AFP

COVER STORY

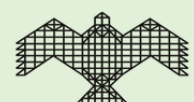
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IN FOCUS

Communal Tensions in Ethiopia: Five drivers

AFRICA IN BRIEF

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COMMENTARY

Communal Tensions in Ethiopia: Five drivers

Adding to the existing humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia, the resurfacing of communal tensions signals deep rooted geopolitical and ethno-religious factors behind the issue.

Poulomi Mondal

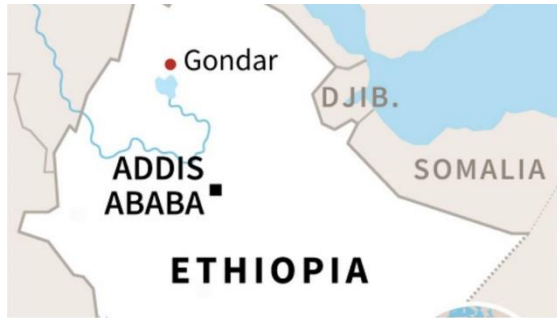


Image Source: Ethiopia AFP/France24

On 26 April, Ethiopia's northwestern Amhara region witnessed deadly attacks at the funeral of an Islamic scholar in Gondar leaving 150 people injured within a week; the death toll remains unclear. The incident sparked inter-faith tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities in Ethiopia and led to a spillover effect in other regions and capital Addis Ababa.

Gondar's Mayor, in response, suggested forming an investigation team to address the situation, reportedly sparked by a land dispute. He added: "In my evidence, both Muslims and Christians lost their lives in the attacks".

On 7 May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet voiced her concerns regarding the recent clashes and called on authorities to investigate and bring perpetrators to justice. She said that she was "deeply distressed" by the violence that erupted in Ethiopia killing at least 30 people and injuring more than 100.

Following are the five drivers of Ethiopia's ethno-religious conflicts

1. Extension of political leverage

Since the victory of prime minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018 and dethroning 27 years of Tigray People's Liberation Front stronghold in national politics, there has been prolonging conflict between Tigrayan leadership and the federal government. Apart from competing for political interest, the contrast in the religious aspects widens the polarization. While President Abiy is Pentecostal and a propagator of religious plurality, rebel groups from Ethiopia and Amhara are mostly followers of Christianity and are therefore carrying out attacks on the minority Muslims alleging rising Islamic extremism, to gain political leverage.

2. Exploitation of religious space

The infiltration of different actors dominant in Christianity and Islam from Ethiopia's Amhara region, Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) along with TPLF, against the national army and Eritrean military adds an important religious dimension to the conflict. Reports say Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers looted and destroyed Christian and Muslim cultural heritage sites. The most recent example is the November 2020 massacre at Aksum killing an estimated 800 civilians at the church of St Mary of Zion. Likewise, the historic Al-Nejashi Mosque was gunned down during an Ethiopian-Eritrean offensive followed by repeated lootings of religious artefacts from the mosque as well as several manuscripts and Bible from Christian churches and monasteries in Tigray.

3. *The ethnic factor*

The already diversified identities get complicated with the juxtaposition of separate ethnic identities like (Amhara, or Gondor) to existing religious connotations pushing back collectivism. This can be seen manifested in the recent clash after decades of land dispute between Amharans and Tigrayans. Amhara officials says the disputed lands equalling to about a quarter of Tigray, were taken by the TPLF, three decades ago. This maps a resource-based conflict circling ethnic loyalties.

4. *Islamic extremism in Ethiopia*

Islamic extremism is a growing reality in Sub-Saharan Africa and has a major impact on Ethiopia. One of the biggest threats to Ethiopia is the rise of extremist tendencies centering on Wahhabism, funded by Saudi Arabia and its neighbours over the years. All Muslim states view Ethiopia as a strategic state in the Horn of Africa. The battle between Riyadh and Tehran's primacy also played a role in the region. Eritrea's previous support for Houthis in Yemen and siding with Iran against Saudi Arabia made the country vulnerable to infiltration of radical Islam. Simultaneously, groups like ISIS and Al-Shabab have been active in Ethiopia's eastern borders over the last couple of years adding to the internal tensions in Ethiopia.

5. *The geopolitical influencers*

Several external forces in Ethiopia's neighbourhood seek to cement the claim of Ethiopia as Dar al Islam (Land of Islam) for their own interest and influence the religious landscape of the country. Turkey's covert support of the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood harbours deep antagonism; other instances include president Erdogan's decision to turn Hagia Sofia from a cathedral to a museum and finally, a mosque. On the other hand, Egypt's hostility against Ethiopia dates

back to the 4th century AD after the introduction of Christianity and is reflected in the ongoing conflict on the GERD project. Sudan which was the Sharia law till recently, and Egypt having strong radical Islamic movements like Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad, are often blamed for backing the Islamic faction of rebels in Ethiopia as well as promoting extremist religious vision. Despite the 2000 Algiers Agreement and the 2018 Agreement that bestowed a Nobel Peace Prize on Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia remains a bloody wound due to ramping militarization and the increasing number of refugees causing ethnogenesis between the countries.

The road ahead

Ethiopia currently faces grave humanitarian crisis with acute food shortages in addition to extremism by religious and political rebels raising serious concerns about the country. With both Orthodox Christians and Muslims having an equal role in polarizing the communities and playing the "us vs them" game against each other, and against the government, it can be seen as a compilation of various ethno-religious and security offshoots further aggravating the dire condition of Ethiopia. While Abiy Ahmed's positive diplomacy and religious tolerance can be seen as commendable, there is larger role to be played by dominant religious groups. There is a domestic need to take corrective measures to prevent Ethiopia from sliding into hate-filled chaos, by inter-religious peace efforts and practice of peaceful cohabitation. At the same time, it is essential for the federal administration to have open lines of communication and dialogue with the rebel and dominant religious groups to have an inclusive peace-building mechanism in the country.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

11 May-17 May

By Anu Maria Joseph and Apoorva Sudhakar

TUNISIA

Tunisians protest against president's political measures

On 15 May, capital Tunis witnessed protests as Tunisians denounced rising food prices and President Kais Saied's political steps. BBC quoted a coordinator of the Citizens against the Coup group who said the people were protesting against Saied's new constitution and termed it "unilaterally drawn up." Similarly, an official from the Ennahda Movement said the protests are likely to transform into hunger strikes and sit-ins. ("[Thousands hold protests against Tunisia president](#)," *BBC*, 16 May 2022)

SOMALIA

Former leader Hassan Sheikh Mohammed wins the presidential elections

On 15 May, Hassan Sheikh Mohammed, who served as the country's president between 2012 and 2017, was elected as the new president after long-overdue elections. The 54-member Upper House and 274-member Lower House of the Parliament cast votes for the 36 candidates. By securing 165 votes, Mohammed, the leader of the Union for Peace and Development Party acquired a majority in both legislative chambers. The newly elected president is popular for his work as a civic leader and education promoter and his position as one of the founders of Mogadishu's SIMAD University. The elections were held amid a 33-hours security lockdown imposed by the authorities to prevent rebel attacks. In the capital city, Somalis defied curfews and held celebrations welcoming the election results. ("[Somalia elects Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as new president](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 15 May 2022; Mohamud Ali, "[Celebrations in Mogadishu as Somalia gets new leader](#)," *BBC*, 16 May 2022)

TOGO

Eight soldiers killed in a terrorist attack, says government

On 11 May, the government said eight soldiers were killed and 13 wounded in a terrorist attack at Kpinkankand in the northern Savanes region. A senior security personnel told AFP that a group of 60 gunmen attacked the soldiers on motorbikes. It is the first reported deadly attack by Islamist militants in the country. Togolese troops are deployed in the northern borders to contain the jihadist groups linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State spreading south from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. (Will Ross, "[Motorbike jihadists' launch attack in northern Togo](#)," *BBC*, 11 May 2022)

Nigerian college shut after mob kills student over alleged blasphemy

On 12 May, a college in the northwestern state of Sokoto was shut after a female student was killed over alleged blasphemy. According to local media reports, the body was burned afterwards within the school premises. On 14 May, the Sokoto state governor declared a 24-hour curfew following the protest demanding the release of suspects of the killing. The governor also directed the Ministry of Higher Education and security agencies to investigate on the incident. Following the outrage on social media over the incident, the state commissioner of information said: "The governor has called on the people of the state to remain calm and maintain peace as the government would take appropriate actions on the investigation findings." The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom says that the cases of mob attacks against blasphemy happens intermittently in Nigeria as "many Shariah laws in northern Nigeria continue to criminalise blasphemy and result in harsh punishments

for blasphemers." ("[Mob kills student over 'blasphemy' in northern Nigerian college](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 12 May 2022)

10 ministers resign office to run in 2023 elections

On 12 May, all the ministers, ambassadors, agency heads and other political officials were asked by president Muhammadu Buhari to resign by May 16 to contest the upcoming presidential elections. On 13 May, the information minister Lai Mohammed said 10 cabinet ministers, including the petroleum minister has resigned. He added that the ministers of justice, transport, labour, Niger Delta region, and women's affairs and junior ministers for mines and education has resigned as of 13 May. Buhari will be stepping down after his two four-year terms in office following the February 2023 elections. ("[Ten Nigerian cabinet ministers resign to run in 2023 polls](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 13 May 2022)

SOUTH AFRICA

48 people still missing after the deadly flood

On 12 May, the government authorities confirmed that 48 people are still missing following the severe floods last month in KwaZulu-Natal. The death toll has now risen to 445. The flood is considered to be the worst natural disaster in South Africa in years that caused damage at an estimated cost of USD 1.5 billion. On 13 May, the World Weather Attribution (WWA), an international group of climate scientists, released a report which says climate change led to the increased rainfall causing the deadly flood in South Africa in April. Meanwhile, president Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster allowing the authorities to accelerate the relief and recovery efforts. (Lebo Diseko, "[Forty-eight still missing after South Africa floods](#)," *BBC*, 12 May 2022; Pumza Fihlani, "[Climate change](#)

[behind South Africa's devastating floods](#)," *BBC*, 13 May 2022)

INTERNATIONAL

Germany to increase its UN peacekeeping troops in Mali

On 11 May, Germany's government announced its decision to increase the number of German troops serving in the UN peacekeeping mission by 300 soldiers to 1,400. AFP news agency quoted the government spokesperson Christiane Hoffmann: "This is intended to compensate for capacities previously undertaken by French forces." The decision came a week after Germany announced it would not take part in an EU military training mission in Mali citing concerns over fighting alongside the Russian mercenaries, suspected of human rights violations. Associated Press reported that Germany's support and training further will be offered to Niger, in its fight against Islamist militancy. ("[Germany to boost its UN peacekeepers in Mali](#)," *BBC*, 11 May 2022)

Boris Johnson says 50 migrants listed to be sent to Rwanda

On 14 May, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the Daily Mail that 50 people had been listed to be sent to Rwanda and said despite the legal opposition the government would "dig in for the fight." Johnson said: "There's going to be a lot of legal opposition from the types of firms that for a long time have been taking taxpayers' money to mount these sort of cases, and to thwart the will of the people, the will of Parliament. We're ready for that." In April, the UK government announced the EUR 12 million scheme for the resettlement of people who have entered the UK illegally to Rwanda. (Marie Jackson, "[Boris Johnson: Fifty migrants told they will be sent to Rwanda](#)," *BBC*, 11 May 2022)

COVER STORY

Sudan, three years after Omar al Bashir

After the regime change in April 2019, which overthrew the Omar al-Bashir government, there was a hope that the country will slowly march into democracy and economic prosperity. However, the developments in Sudan since October 2021 have placed them in a situation that existed in 2019, with the rolling back of civilian rule within the transitional setups, military in political command, rampant economic crisis and widespread violence.

S Shaji



Image Source: The Independent/Twitter

Sudan, a North African State, has witnessed unprecedented political upheaval since October 2021. This is in continuation to April 2019 developments when Omar al-Bashir, the ruler of a long-standing dictatorial regime, stepped down from Presidency. The regime change brought hope, both at the international and national levels, that the transitional government[i] under Abdella Hamdok and a future government in power through elections would change Sudan's destiny. As part of the Agreement, a transitional government took office on 17 August 2019. However, despite the promises, the transition government reverted to the lame-duck situations due to immense power rivalry and opportunistic military interventions. The recent overthrow of Prime Minister Hamdok, his reinstatement and subsequent resignation, and the parallel wave of protests brought Sudan back where it was before April 2019. These developments impel one to have a fleeting glance at Sudan's political history, beginning with its independence from Britain and Egypt.

The current crisis in Sudan is part of a larger trend; since the 1950s, the country has been witnessing civil wars, violence and suppression of rights, and the stifling of democracy. Sudan has had a history of military coups. Out of the total 16 coups since its independence in 1956, around five military coups were successful. The country was under military rule for 52 years out of 65 years of its independent existence. The most notable feature about Sudan is the consistent grip of civil war except during 1972-1983.

In 1983, Northern Arabs in Sudan imposed the Islamic Sharia law across the country (even in areas where the majority of the inhabitants were non-Muslims), leading to friction and tension between the Arabs in the North and Animists and Black Christians (practicing traditional religions) in the South. The Southern population, led by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the mainstream rebel group, resisted and took up the cause of people of South Sudan, that ultimately led to the bifurcation of the country into two - Sudan and South Sudan in 2011. The referendum held under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) in 2010 paved the way for the partition of the country. During the decades-long civil war, around two million people died, four million were uprooted, and 6,00,000 people fled the country (UNIMS, 2022).[ii] In addition, over 1.5 million people perished due to the famine.

Meanwhile, the discovery of oil strengthened the Sudanese economy, at certain levels and at another level, intensified the civil war. The involvement of multinational oil corporations, especially from the West, at the beginning of the millennium and their entanglements within the Sudanese political system vitiated the domestic situation. They had to withdraw following the clamour from civil society organizations, and human rights organizations. To a large extent, the vacuum created by the western companies was filled by Asian corporations from China, India and Malaysia. Even these countries were dragged into the crossfire of civil war.[iii] However, the oil economy of Sudan declined after the partition of the State since a large portion of the oil resources went to the newly created South Sudan, though Sudan continued to generate and receive a certain amount of revenue emanated from the transportation of the oil to the major port - Port Sudan on the Red Sea on the Sudanese coast.[iv] Notwithstanding the partition, Sudan still experiences conflicts in the Darfur[v] region, the western part of the country. Having outlined the background to the current crisis in Sudan, one needs to understand the strategic significance from the standpoints of global and regional contexts.

I

Sudan: A State with extreme strategic significance

Sudan is a prominent state in North Africa, otherwise known as Maghrib Africa and attained its independence on 1 January 1956, from Britain and Egypt. Sudan represents an Afro-Arab society and shares borders with nine states with an area of 2,505,810 sq. km, making it the largest state in Africa and the Arab world. The White Nile, whose course is through the

middle of the country, merges with the Blue Nile at Khartoum-Sudan's capital, one of the most prominent rivers in Africa. Sudan is surrounded by Libya, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Eritrea, Uganda, Central African Republic, Congo and Kenya. Geographically, Sudan is closer to West Asia, which deepens the country's importance to both West Asia and North Africa (West Asia and North Africa-WANA region). Sudan's proximity to the Suez Canal makes it a critical geographical site of commerce, trade and geostrategic issues; also, the major port - Port Sudan, is positioned on the Red Sea (90 per cent of Sudan's external trade operates through Port Sudan). In addition, Sudan has a long coastline of 700 km on the Red Sea, thereby making it an opening point to the north, east and central Africa. Sudan assumes a strategic role in the Horn of Africa and on the Red Sea, which witnesses 30 per cent of global container ship traffic and around 12 per cent of the global trade.

II

Sudan's political churning Since 2019

In April 2019, when Omar al Bashir was removed from power after three decades (1989-2019), through massive protests, there was hope that the country would finally adopt democracy as one could witness its flashes during the Arab Spring days in North Africa. The 'African Renaissance', which was transcending on the African horizon for some time with the promise of democratisation and economic progress, hit the roadblock in Sudan, at least for the time being. The key developments since October 2021 show that the democracy initiative of the interim transitional government was merely superficial, and promises made were utterly hollow.

After the overthrow of the Bashir regime, a transitional arrangement was installed, involving Forces for Freedom and Chance (FFC) and the military, by forming a coalition government in August 2019. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Bashir regime, the military leaders who were leading the Supreme Council and the government, led by Abdella Hamdok, managed the transition arrangements reasonably well for quite some time; later, they turned hostile to each other on different issues, including economic issues which confront the nation in a significant fashion. On the one hand, the transition government also promised elections in July 2021 (which was not realized). On the other hand, the military wanted to postpone the elections by a year. On 25 October 2021, Prime Minister Hamdok was overthrown through a military coup, led by Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the military chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces. Interestingly, the military cited the economic crisis as its intervention.

Once in power, the military Chief dissolved the government and the Supreme Council. However, after the coup in October 2021, widespread protests, spearheaded by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), which included doctors, nurses, teachers and so on, erupted across the country; the government of Abdella Hamdok was reinstated in November 2021 through an interim agreement. Notwithstanding the reinstatement, there was criticism that Hamdok compromised on certain provisions of the deal, which gave enormous power to the military, to control the supreme council. It was a fragile compromise agreement between Hamdok and the military. Finally, Hamdok resigned on 2 January 2022, citing the deadlock and inability to run the government. Though the protesting groups lost more

than seventy people in the first three months (after 25 October till 2 January 2022) to the violence and military actions, their resolve to oust the military from the country's political processes is strengthening day by day. The international community led by the United Nations (UN) and the Western States are intervening in Sudan, first by the United States blocking the financial assistance to the tune of USD 700 million, which was promised after the fall of the Bashir regime for the re-building of the nation, and then by European Union and the other Western States. The African Union (AU), Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) are at the forefront of striking negotiations and reconciliations, but the progress is slow.

Meanwhile, following the ouster of the Hamdok government, the military regime has been under tremendous pressure from the international community. Though certain powers like China continue to be engaged in Sudan with the policy of 'non-intervention', with an approach of 'ready to negotiate for peace-building', Western States are not willing to recognize the political change in Sudan; this could have serious economic implications for the country. Emerging powers like India had already withdrawn from the Sudanese oil sector, a major area of economy, much before the military coup in October 2021, citing a lack of cooperation in Sudan (though India had long successful cooperation in the Sudanese oil economy through ONGC-VL since 2003).

However, the western blockades and collapse or slowing down of negotiations could have serious repercussions on Sudan. The people in Sudan have mobilized all sections of the society and

are tagitating to overthrow the military, irrespective of the violence unleashed by the military. The military might employ different strategies, including aligning with other non-western powers like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and so on, to offset the restrictions put forth by the Western powers, led by the US. The UN and African multilateral interventions in long as the State assumes a strategic role in Horn of Africa and the the Sudanese crisis is a welcome step in the right direction The world cannot afford to throw Sudan into an absolute political instability for on the Red Sea as mentioned earlier. In the political sphere, pulling back Sudan on the promised democracy course is a long haul, especially amid the backsliding of democracy in Africa in contemporary times. In general, authoritarianism and anti-democratic trends were quite visible across the African continent in 2021, with at least four states showing a return to non-democratic regimes such as Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan.

III

Sudan after the resignation of Hamdok: Key Developments

The developments in Sudan in the last six months have attracted global attention, first for the overthrow of the government of Hamdok on 25 October 2021 and his reinstatement on 21 November 2021; later, his resignation on 2 January 2022 and then the willingness of Forces of Freedom and Change (CFF), the civil society leadership, to negotiate with the military government, led by General Abdel Fattah Al Burhan, under the auspices of the UN from 8 January 2022. Hamdok's resignation and dissolution of the coalition government hampered the possibility of democratization, as promised in the deal between the military and civil society after the fall of the Bashir regime in 2019. Of

late, UN-facilitated Consultations on Political Process for Sudan (CPSS), a new process, was set in motion to negotiate among various stakeholders to find a solution to the current wave of crisis in Sudan. Developments in Sudan that started with the 25 October military coup after the promise (transitional government made) to the country to show in democracy have disappointed people and Africa observers alike.

Hamdok's resignation has led to a spate of violence and protest across the country, with CFF leading the agitation for the restoration of democracy and the holding of the promised elections. The Doctors Union and several other professionals' groups have joined CFF in their protest against the military takeover. Around 1000 people have been detained since the current crisis unfolded since October 2021.[vi] Simultaneously, the high-profile members of Bashir's party, the National Congress Party (NCP), were released from the jail to take up significant positions in the government to quell the violence. One such member is Ibrahim Grandour, the former Foreign Minister of al Bashir regime. However, the protest against the military government continues unabatedly, led mainly by neighbourhood resistance committees. The new demands also include a transitional government headed by a prime minister elected by the resistance committees, and restructuring the country's military and security structure and leadership.

Apart from the political crisis and protests in Khartoum, clashes have erupted in El Geneina, the capital of Darfur, between non-Arab Massalit community and Arab fighters which left around 200 people dead. [vii] This incident surfaced when Internal Criminal Court began the trial of a

key accused – Al Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman, for the crimes committed by the militia Janjaweed, against the common people in the Darfur region twenty years ago. Massive sexual crimes, committed by Janjaweed are one of the serious allegations against Abd-al-Rahman, apart from mass killings and torture. This is the first major trial, being taken up by ICC on the genocide accusation in Sudan. Former leader Omar-al Bashir is under house arrest after he was removed from power (whom ICC had indicted earlier) and is to face trial at ICC for the crimes like genocide.

In the social front, around 20 million people are likely to go hungry in Sudan due to violence and Russia-Ukraine crisis, according World Food Programme. [viii] It is to be noted that Sudan imports more than 80 per cent of wheat from Ukraine and Russia. The price rise is at an all-time high. Apart from this, there is serious economic crisis that is currently ongoing with inflation at 260 per cent and depreciation of 26 per cent of the national currency (since October 2021).[ix] The Western aid and lending agencies have paused the flow of aid to Sudan to the tune of \$ 1.4 Bn.[x] All these developments have made the United Nations (UN) Envoy to warn recently that ‘Sudan is heading for an ‘economic and security collapse’ unless it addresses the political paralysis following the coup’.[xi]

IV

Concluding remarks

In fact, Sudan, a State which witnessed enormous degree of political churning process in the last decade has been aspiring for durable peace. A generation old civil war in the country ended with the division of country into two States in 2011 - Sudan and South Sudan, though violence in Darfur in Western Sudan, continue to be

active in the country. After the regime change in April 2019 which overthrew the Omar al-Bashir government, there was a hope that country will slowly march into democracy and economic prosperity. The transitional governance arrangements were made through negotiations and compromises, strengthening a strong belief among the people of the country who suffered decades long crisis and pain that elections and new constitutional mechanism would usher them into a new era, like the promises embedded in Arab Spring. However, the developments in Sudan since October 2021 have placed them in a situation that existed in 2019, with the rolling back of civilian rule within the transitional setups, with military in political command, rampant economic crisis and widespread violence. The rebuilding of Sudan which unravelled after the entry of transitional government has come to a halt with the withdrawal of aid from the West which in a way can deepen the problems of people significantly. The continued violence on the part of regime, resurfacing of Darfur civil war, along with economic crisis (caused due to internal and external factors), unless dealt with comprehensively, can lead to a security, political and economic collapse which bodes ill for the peace in the region and the world at large.

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[i] The proposed Agreement stands for a Joint Military –Civilian Council of Sudan with a Head of State, a new Chief Justice leading the Judiciary and a Prime Minister. Transitional Agreement envisages a national election which has to be conducted by 2023. Please see: the Meeting Coverage, “Sudan’s New Transitional Government Presents Chance to Restore Long-Term Stability”. Media Coverage, UN Security Council, 28 August 2019,

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[ii] Please see: “UNMIS Background”, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS),

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unmis/background.shtml>, 25 April, 2022. Accessed 25 April 2022.

[iii] Sometime before the partition of Sudan into two States, there was a complaint that 60 per cent income emerged out of oil trade went into arms purchase which intensified the civil war. Please refer to: “Sudan: Oil Companies Complicit in Rights Abuses”,

<http://www.hrw.org/africa/sudan.php>, Accessed on 20th May 2007

[iv] The partition of Sudan in 2011 into two nation-states posed new challenges as oil fields are largely concentrated in South Sudan (upstream activities) while oil infrastructure and other business/development projects are heavily concentrated in the North Sudan.

[v] As the conflict between North and South began to decline in the first decade of the century, a new one began in the Western State of Darfur between Non-Arab Communities and Janjaweed, a militia supported by al-bashir Government. The militia was accused of ethnic cleansing which al-Bashir Government (at

that pointed in time denied). Several thousand of people have died and several others fled the region for the fear of violence.

[vi] News Report (2022) “Sudan: Hundreds of Protesters Detained, Mistreated”, Human Rights Watch, 28 April, Accessed on 28 April 2022

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[viii] Please see Simon Marks (2022) “Ukraine War combines with Coup to leave Half of Sudan Hungry”, Bloomberg, March

15, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-15/ukraine-war-combines-with-coup-to-leave-half-of-sudan-hungry>. Accessed 20 April 2022.

[ix] “Sudan’s Crisis: After the Tyrant”(2022), The Economist, 9 April.2022

[x] Ibid.

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About NIAS Africa Studies

As a part of the area studies initiatives, the Institute started a focussed study on Pakistan in 2020. In 2021, it expanded the area studies to include Europe Studies, China Reader, and Maritime Studies. In 2022, the Science, Technology and International Relations (STIR) programme at the Institute is further expanding its area studies, to include Africa.

The primary focus of NIAS Africa studies would be on the following five verticals: contemporary political issues, colonial legacies, problems of governance, civil-military equations, and the rise of radical Islamic groups. The primary objective is to study Africa from an internal prism. ,

NIAS Africa Studies would include a series of expert lectures, workshops, publications and a weekly exclusively focussed on Africa. The initiative also aims to create a network of young scholars studying Africa and also African scholars studying in various Indian institutions.

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