

Protecting Civilians In Sudan

Five concrete actions for the Coalition
for Atrocity Prevention and Justice in
Sudan



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FIVE ACTIONS

To protect civilians in Sudan

Backed by Sudanese and international civil society, the Coalition should take these five concrete, actionable steps to rapidly deliver effective protection for civilians in Sudan:

03



Follow the money

The devastation in Sudan is fueled by external state actors prioritising their own interests over civilian lives. Breaking this cycle requires calling out external backers, punishing complicity in atrocity crimes, heeding civil society warnings over diplomatic interests, and expanding and enforcing sanctions and embargoes that target the belligerents' supply networks. The Coalition has a moral obligation to lead this charge.

01



No more lip service

Civilians aren't protected by condemnation alone. The coalition must take concrete, enforced, and sustained action.

02



Boots on the ground

Deploying a civilian protection force remains the most direct means of protecting civilians and preventing atrocities. The Coalition must dismantle obstacles and overcome excuses for inaction, such as the UN Security Council veto deadlock, a lack of state consent, funding restraints, and there being "no peace to keep".

04



Go local

Guarantee access to telecommunications and unlock funding to support local civilian protection interventions. Frontline mutual aid or civic groups are already mediating temporary truces, delivering aid in cut off areas, rolling out early warning systems, and evacuating whole neighbourhoods – they need the resources and connectivity to scale.

05



Supercharge the Coalition

International fragmentation has crippled the response to Sudan's crisis. The Coalition must evolve into a cohesive, fully resourced coordinating body to close this gap, by enabling greater lateral and vertical coordination, upskilling its members, creating a baseline framework for its operations, and boldly sustaining focus on and pressure around Sudan.

The current conflict in Sudan has exacted a devastating toll on the civilian population. The scale of injuries and fatalities amongst civilians appears from on-the-ground sources, media accounts, and civil society and survivor testimonies to show a deliberate targeting of civilians. This is little surprise when recalling that this war, though often characterised in its military form as a war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), is also a war against civilians and civiness. In their war of succession the SAF and the RSF battle for power and control of resources (land, gold, coastlines etc.),² but also against the civilian forces that fight Sudan's rampant militarism, such as resistance committees, unions, mutual aid groups, political parties and their members, professional associations and others.

In that respect the civilian casualties ought not to be looked at as collateral but as the intended target of campaigns by the SAF and RSF to destroy the structures and notions of civiness that aim to dismantle the militarised state, upon which they rely to maintain power. These civic aims are rooted in a practical politics that recognises that as long as Sudanese politics' organising principle is the bullet, the ballot will be relegated to a never-to-be-realised future. And as long

as the bullet remains the means through which politics is practised, a continuity of war is to be expected, such that even peace agreements ironically end up strengthening the hand of military actors and providing incentives for new armed actors to join the political scene, as has occurred with peacemaking in Sudan since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The metastasis of armed groups and militias since the start of the war (the Africa Centre estimated the number of armed groups currently fighting in Sudan to be around 150,³ a number that will likely rise alongside war time economic incentives) means that civilians in Sudan face myriad threats from armed forces. Civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals have been targeted by a variety of combatants.⁴ In their respective areas of control, SAF and RSF have persecuted journalists, doctors, teachers, farmers, market traders and mutual aid volunteers, all of whom constitute the backbone of civic life across Sudan. As such, protection of civilians (PoC) is necessarily a recurring priority thematic area in analysis and advocacy on Sudan, and a subject of many recommendations since the outbreak of the conflict. Yet, there has been little to no perceivable progress on PoC in Sudan: The May 2023 Jeddah Declaration,⁵ the ALPS Geneva Talks of August 2024⁶ and UN

Security Council Resolutions 2724⁷ and 2736⁸ all intended to protect civilians by codifying ceasefires and humanitarian access, and all were ignored or undermined by the belligerent parties without meaningful consequences.

In the wake of the takeover of El Fasher, during which numerous war crimes, atrocities, and acts of genocide occurred,⁹ the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Norway formed the Coalition for Atrocity Prevention and Justice in Sudan (the "Coalition").¹⁰ The Coalition

"brings together international partners to support justice, accountability, and local peacebuilding and protection efforts in Sudan, including calling for the protection of civilians where risks are clear."¹¹

The creation of a body with a specific mandate to protect civilians is a welcome development, but to date its contribution has been primarily limited to diplomatic pressure, such as issuing joint statements,¹² as well as contributing to aid funding pledges¹³ and issuing uncoordinated sanctions against the belligerents.

The objective of this paper is to take the opportunity presented by this relatively new body to equip it with a set of concrete recommendations that can

provide effective protection of civilians in Sudan, and incorporate the experiences of the international and Sudanese civil society organisations that have been engaged in the conflict since its instigation. To that end, this paper was produced by reviewing English-language policy recommendations for protection of civilians to understand the existing landscape. In parallel, a series of key informant interviews were conducted with key actors in the atrocity prevention space, international and Sudanese civil society organisations, as well as policy-makers from key countries. Their perspectives helped to inform the identification of both obstacles to progress as well as possible means to overcome those obstacles.

From this primary and secondary research, eight policy recommendations emerged:

- (1) movement from statements to action
- (2) deployment of a protection force
- (3) naming and penalising the external actors that are supporting the belligerent parties
- (4) supporting local Sudanese actors
- (5) growing the Coalition's competency into a coordinating body
- (6) prioritising humanitarian aid
- (7) brokering a ceasefire
- (8) seeking accountability.

Of those eight recommendations, the first five have been put forward in this paper, and the latter three (humanitarian aid, a ceasefire, and accountability) have been excluded for the following reasons:

Defining protection of civilians:

Having a shared understanding of the meaning of civilian protection is essential as the Coalition gets underway, especially as the belligerents continue to deploy novel weaponry and other threats against civilians. Protection of civilians is rooted in international humanitarian law: civilians have protected status and cannot be targeted during armed conflict.¹⁴

The definition has continuously evolved through UN peacekeeping theory and practice, arriving at the following mandate:

“integrated and coordinated activities ... to prevent, deter, or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians, through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force.”¹⁵

The recommendations set out in this paper hew to these definitions, and fall within the three tiers of UN civilian protection doctrine – dialogue and

engagement, physical protection, and the creation of a protective environment.¹⁶ Humanitarian aid, a ceasefire, and accountability fall outside the remit.

Humanitarian aid:

Sudan is often called the ‘world’s worst humanitarian crisis’,¹⁷ and Sudanese civilians are in extreme need of humanitarian support. Nevertheless, the international community’s impulse has been to seek humanitarian pledges in a bid to be seen to be doing something.¹⁹ The pledges fail to translate to human impact, because distribution is blocked by the same conflict conditions harming civilians; conversely, protecting civilians from the belligerents will provide the humanitarian access needed to deliver aid. There are also pressing reasons to de-link humanitarian aid from the PoC agenda, as doing so may disincentivise the belligerents from bartering aid promises for political legitimacy or tactical advantages.²⁰

Ceasefire:

Civilians harmed by an active conflict would be benefited by a ceasefire, but the need to protect civilians exists especially where a ceasefire is elusive; conversely, achieving a ceasefire does not necessarily put an end to harms or atrocities against civilians and may in

fact accelerate them in areas not under a ceasefire.²¹ Linking protection of civilians to achieving a ceasefire can also lead to a perverse outcome: that protection of civilians is not treated as a moral and legal duty held by the belligerents, but as a bargaining chip.

Accountability:

While the reviewed literature primarily advocates for accountability efforts to move ahead swiftly,²² there was stark disagreement amongst the experts consulted about whether accountability can really achieve relief for civilians on the ground. Some believed in its deterrent effect, and that it is essential to pursue justice even during active conflict. Others argued that accountability measures would do little to protect civilians, and instead (like humanitarian aid pledges) gives the international community cover for their inaction by pointing to future action (that may be delayed or denied).

The five recommendations put forward in this paper

(1) reflect the definition of protection of civilians as set forth above.

(2) reflect a foundation in previous recommendations.

(3) are generally supported by the international and Sudanese civil society organisations with whom we spoke.

(4) offer what may constitute an imminent impact on civilian protection. Where possible, suggestions are offered to overcome key obstacles that may have prevented their implementation thus far.

The recommendations are not hierarchical, nor are they exhaustive of all the needs or pathways for supporting and protecting civilians in Sudan.

Sudanese civilians deserve better than what the international community has so far offered them. The establishment of the Coalition may be lauded for its initiative, however its success will not be measured in intention, but in impact.



RECOMMENDATION 01

MOVE BEYOND CONDEMNATION

01

The international community is frequently urged to condemn civilian attacks in Sudan²⁴ — especially genocide²⁵ and grave violations against children.²⁶ In reality, although receiving less attention than conflicts in Ukraine or Gaza, Sudan has already seen regular public condemnation,²⁷ ceasefire calls,²⁸ international discussions,²⁹ and aid pledges.³⁰

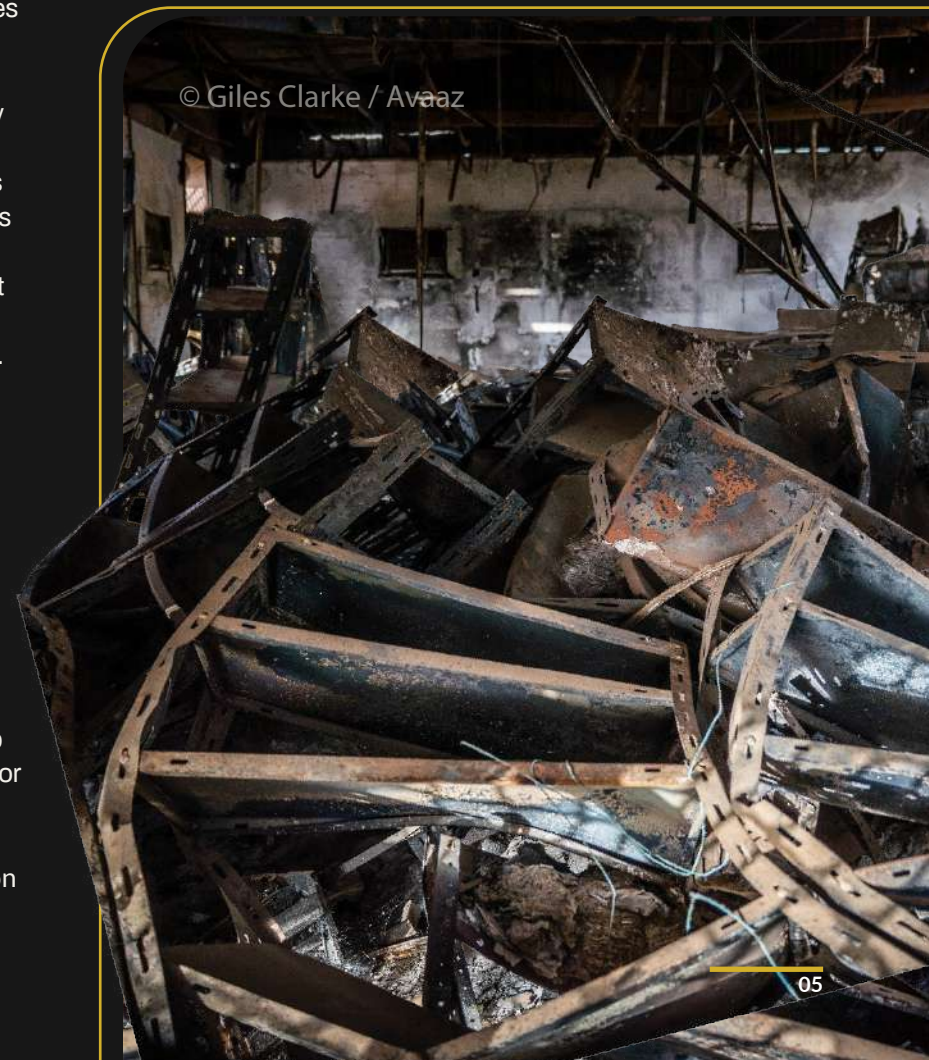
This diplomatic attention primarily surges around imminent or recent mass atrocities, as seen with El Fasher and El Obeid, and has not had the consistency or the follow through to achieve meaningful impact for civilians in Sudan. This is attributable to several factors, such as international fatigue from conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, and Iran; a broader shift away from protective interventions; and UNSC polarisation and disengagement. States lack the political will to protect civilians, eschewing any political risk in confronting powerful allies backing the belligerents. The public, particularly in the West, is also more difficult to mobilise than in the mid-2000s, when the “Save Darfur” movement garnered worldwide momentum.³¹

While PoC must, of course, be continuously centered in policy debates to help create the political conditions required for more concerted protection, public condemnation on its own is insufficient. States must commit to taking real action

to fulfil their duty to protect civilians in Sudan.

The Coalition must move beyond statements and into action, including the steps recommended herein.

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RECOMMENDATION 02

DEPLOY A PROTECTIVE FORCE

02

The most direct means of protecting civilians from harm is to interpose a physical wedge between them and the armed conflict. The efficacy of protection missions is supported not only empirically (peacekeeping missions with protective mandates are consistently successful in reducing harm to civilians),³² but also in Sudan's own history:

The joint UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) was deployed in 2007, headquartered in Darfur, with a Chapter VII mandate to protect civilians and facilitate the peace process. While its overall success may be qualified, UNAMID

*“succeeded in deterring the worst abuses of the civilian population in Darfur, protecting thousands of people and facilitating the distribution of humanitarian assistance,”*³³

*“contributed to a 40% reduction in security incidents in urban centers, facilitated the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to 60% of targeted areas, and supported the repatriation of over 50% of displaced persons.”*³⁴

More importantly, civilians on the ground report feeling safer with the presence of Blue Helmets.³⁵

In a move that Amnesty International

called “premature and reckless”,³⁶ the UNSC closed the mission in 2020.³⁷ UNAMID's successor UNITAMS (a Chapter VI mission, based in Khartoum) was understaffed and underfinanced in comparison, and had no mandate to physically protect civilians.³⁸ Immediately after UNAMID was drawn down in 2021, conflict in Darfur spiked.³⁹

UNAMID's removal arguably paved the way for the resurgence of violence in 2023; first, because UNAMID failed in its objective to achieve a lasting peace framework,⁴⁰ and second, because UNAMID left a security vacuum in Darfur – at its departure, 30% of the militias were refusing to disarm,⁴¹ and UNAMID's bases and equipment were looted by security forces⁴² and militias,⁴³ including the RSF.⁴⁴

The geopolitical landscape has changed since the early 2000s when UNAMID was negotiated and deployed:

The UNSC is hamstrung by increasing use of vetoes. States are retracting their financial commitment to global initiatives, and are unwilling to spend political capital by sending troops into an active war zone. There is a sense of overwhelm due to the number of live conflicts across the globe. At present neither the RSF nor the SAF will consent to a mission and the military investments

such as troops, logistics, evacuations protocols are not in place for any immediate deployment, even if the international political will were available.

If the Coalition is serious about protecting civilians and preventing atrocities, its primary objective should be to attempt to overcome these obstacles to deploying protective forces in the following ways:

Overcoming or circumventing the UN Security Council deadlock:

While the UNSC can authorise a protection mechanism⁴⁵ through its powers under Chapter VII (e.g. peacekeeping or civilian protection missions)⁴⁶ or under Chapter VI (e.g. Special Political Missions), Russia's veto⁴⁷ in November 2024, has largely deadlocked action on Sudan.⁴⁸ In fact, only six resolutions have been adopted in reaction to this conflict.⁴⁹

The Coalition should exert public and private diplomatic pressure to attempt to break the UNSC's deadlock by:

- **Encouraging UNSG Guterres to reverse his 2024 statement** that "conditions do not exist" for the successful deployment of a UN force to protect civilians in Sudan,⁵⁰ and publicly call for the deployment of UN peacekeepers – at

the least, the UNSG should articulate what 'conditions' need to be met;

- **Galvanising action under the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency Group's Code of Conduct**⁵¹ – signed by over 120 countries – which calls on the UNSC to take decisive action in situations involving atrocity crimes and to refrain from voting against credible measures intended to prevent or halt such crimes;

- **Revitalising the 2015 Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocity** – signed by over 100 countries;⁵²

- **Encouraging the AU to conduct field visits to areas under SAF and RSF control**, as such visits have in the past aided in keeping the UNSC's focus on certain contexts and in building consensus;⁵³

- **Encouraging the AU to leverage Sudan's suspension against practical and tangible moves by the SAF** towards agreeing to an African-led PoC force⁵⁴ in the short term (and an AU- and Quintet-led peace process in the longer term);

- **Calling on the UNSC to, even temporarily, expand the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for**

Abyei (UNISFA), currently deployed only in the contested region of Abyei, to create PoC sites for those fleeing violence in Kordofan, where atrocity risks are currently highest.

These protected areas could be used as a hub for needs assessments and the provision of humanitarian aid.

While a Chapter VII protection mission is the gold standard, the Coalition should simultaneously explore other options at achieving physical protection, such as:

- **Sponsoring a resolution under the Uniting For Peace Resolution**,⁵⁵ which permits collective action where the UNSC fails in its "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." The Resolution has been invoked by (non-vetoing) UNSC members and UNGA thirteen times since its inception in 1950.

- **Encouraging the AU to authorise its own civilian protection missions** through its Peace and Security Council⁵⁶ or through the regional Eastern African Standby Force (from carefully selected troop contributing countries), until a joint mission with the UN can be negotiated under UNSCR 2719.

Achieving State consent – if needed:

Generally speaking, the doctrine of state sovereignty bars UN troop deployment without host consent, but this principle is not absolute. While rare, protective missions have deployed without consent where there is no legitimate centralised government⁵⁷ or following a military coup.⁵⁸ In Sudan today, SAF and the RSF are withholding consent on the basis that each is the sovereign, yet their claims to legitimacy and protective capacity are tenuous:

Sudan has lacked a constitutional basis for government since the 2021 SAF-RSF⁵⁹ coup. SAF, which styles itself as the legitimate governing authority with some international recognition, has historically almost uniquely fought its own people,⁶⁰ a factor prompting UNAMID's deployment under Bashir.⁶¹

Meanwhile the RSF, which has struggled to gain international recognition for its parallel government, has carried out atrocity after atrocity, the last of which in El Fasher the UN's Fact Finding Mission stated bore "the hallmarks of genocide."⁶² Furthermore, since the beginning of the war in 2023, neither SAF nor the RSF has had full control of the country, and is therefore unable and unwilling to protect civilians throughout Sudan. Where there is no centralised government that is either willing or able to protect civilians, it is an abrogation of

duty on the part of the international community to simply stand down.⁶³

If either or both party could be said to have legitimate authority, or the international community is otherwise unwilling to move forward on the basis of a nonfunctional government, there are still tactics the Coalition and other stakeholders can deploy to achieve consent:

- **Find innovative points of leverage:**

In the mid-2000s, the government of al-Bashir similarly refused to admit peacekeeping troops into Sudan. At the time they were bolstered by China's support in the UNSC. The international community responded by threatening to make the 2008 Beijing Olympics the "Genocide Olympics."⁶⁴ By 2007, China was pressing Al-Bashir to accept the UN Mission,⁶⁵ which he did in February 2008.⁶⁶

- **Use sanctions strategically as leverage:**

Through the use, threat, or lifting of sanctions by its constituent states, the Coalition can exert leverage on both warring factions - and their external backers - to accept a mission.

- **Determine when there is no longer a functioning centralised government to**

protect civilians:

Again, given a determination at present that sufficient sovereignty exists to necessitate consent, the international community should monitor for a point in future where there may be a further deterioration.

- **Send troops to surrounding countries:**

In the absence of host state consent, direct assistance to cooperative surrounding countries hosting Sudanese refugees,⁶⁷ ideally with a plan for PoC.⁶⁸

Utilise existing sources of funding: Only an adequately resourced civilian protection mission will be effective. In the face of a global funding crisis, the Coalition should explore the existing funds and pledges below or a combination thereof to fund a mission, alongside pushing for additional contributions from States and regional bodies.

- **Operationalise UNSC Res. 2719 (2023):** UNSC Res. 2719 created a framework for funding AU-led peacekeeping missions by splitting the expenses, with up to 75% coming from UN assessed contributions and 25% jointly mobilised by the UN and AU.

- Draw from the AU's Peace Fund: Last

year, the AU's Peace Fund reached its initial target endowment of \$400 million, some of which should be deployed in Sudan.⁶⁹

- Use interest generated by assets frozen by sanctions: While likely a proverbial drop in the bucket, sanctioning states could pledge to turn over any interest generated on sanctioned individual or entities' frozen assets to a fund for a protection mission.

"There is no peace to keep":

One argument, repeated by for instance the UN Secretary-General and UK officials, is that "conditions do not exist" for the successful deployment of forces as there is currently "no peace to keep".⁷⁰ The logic of withholding protection forces until there is "peace" is deeply flawed. First, the UN has historically deployed protective missions during times of armed conflict.⁷¹

Second, UN peacekeeping missions have had the effect of protecting civilians essentially since their inception.⁷² And third, civilians are most in need of protection during armed conflict.

An effective ground mission could protect civilians, deter attacks, prevent atrocities, and enable humanitarian delivery by protecting aid workers and

convoys, lifting blockages, and stopping SAF and RSF attacks on medical facilities and IDP camps. It could also provide leverage to negotiate access to humanitarian corridors, borders, or airports; safeguard targeted human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists; facilitate the safe return of displaced people, and monitor and report on civilian attacks. It could protect telecommunications periodically disabled by the warring parties. Any new protection mission should meaningfully engage from lessons learned from UNAMID's deployment and drawdown. Sudanese civil society should be consulted at every stage of protection.

Several years and countless atrocities after the commencement of this war, the Sudanese people deserve better from the international community than continued inaction and empty promises. If the conditions on the ground are (still) not ideal for a successful peacekeeping mission, the Coalition, the broader international community and civil society must work together to actively create conducive conditions rather than closing the door on meaningful action entirely.

RECOMMENDATION 03

TAKE ON EXTERNAL BACKERS⁷³

The political and economic interests of external backers in Sudan are considered a driving force behind the scale of the devastation, the prolongation of the conflict, as well as the hesitation from major states and multilateral bodies (the UN, Coalition, Quad and Quintet) to adequately act to protect civilians.⁷⁴ The UAE is a main focal point for criticism for its apparent support of the RSF through its provision of drones, military support and diplomatic cover,⁷⁵ although it denies involvement,⁷⁶ and has positioned itself as a constructive actor on Sudan.

Withdrawing its support would negatively affect the RSF's ability to inflict harm on civilians. This criticism has extended to a lesser extent to other alleged RSF backers such as Libya, Ethiopia and Russia's paramilitary Africa Corps (formerly known as the Wagner Group), as well as to alleged SAF backers such as Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Russia and Qatar.⁷⁷

The Coalition should publicly as well as privately push for the following actions:

- **Call out the external backers:**

The UN Panel of Experts has publicly reported on the role of external backers,⁷⁸ yet few countries or international organisations have publicly named them.



External backers are discomfited by being publicly condemned; the UAE in particular has tried to repel such allegations by pledging humanitarian aid and taking on a role to settle the conflict. Even without explicitly mentioning the backers, the Coalition and the ministers of its constituent members can publicly discuss the atrocities going on in Sudan as a complement to the work many NGOs have done to expose and highlight the UAE and others' support of the belligerent parties.

- **Heed the warnings from civil society, even over diplomatic interests:**

The Coalition and its member states should not bury evidence in favor of good political or economic relations with the external backers.⁷⁷ The Coalition secretariat should hold regular (even monthly) meetings/consultations with international and Sudanese civil society to ensure they are hearing the latest analysis on atrocity dynamics and publish the evidence and testimony they receive where appropriate.

- **Understand and incorporate the backers' geopolitical motivations:**

Rhetoric around States supporting the warring factions can be two-dimensional and fail to take into account the realpolitik behind their decisions. Proximate backers of each side in turn have roles in other

conflicts, such as Gaza or Iran, that make them critical to allies like the US. The Coalition, and its constitutive members, should identify the core interests of neighbouring and supporting States and use those interests as leverage in support of progress on PoC. Extensive network mapping and tracking should also be undertaken to subsequently be leveraged into action, such as atrocity prevention.⁷⁹

- **Expand scope of sanctions and embargoes:**

The Coalition should coordinate and lead multilateral bodies such as the UN, Quartet, and Quintet to (i) issue coordinated multilateral sanctions that target the procurement networks that supply the belligerents, (ii) expand the 1591 arms embargo countrywide, (iii) add explicit reference to mercenaries to the arms embargo, (iv) include banks, businesses, and lower-level individuals, and (v) ramp up monitoring and enforcement through e.g., border patrols, investment in weapons tracking, better satellite imagery, and investigations on weapons flows. The Coalition should encourage all States to overcome UNSC deadlock by implementing sanctions at the regional or national level, and create real penalties for violations by e.g. pausing weapons sales where end user agreements are breached by sending those arms to Sudan.⁸⁰

RECOMMENDATION 04

GO LOCAL

As well as recommendations on new or upcoming initiatives around the PoC, there is a clear need to support what is already working. When it comes to PoC, what has arguably been most effective thus far are local interventions. The success of these is related to the larger stake that local actors have in i) ensuring people are safe and fed, ii) how that stake results in a greater negotiating position vis-a-vis the belligerents and, often, iii) the legitimacy of local actors that the belligerents wish to borrow by acceding to their demands. In lieu of functioning state structures in either SAF- or RSF-controlled areas, local, mutual aid, or other civic groups have provided means of protection through communities, for instance through mediating temporary truces (e.g. the El Fasher truce in 2023), negotiating the safe delivery of aid in cut-off areas, and evacuations for whole neighbourhoods.⁸¹

As such, there is an opportunity to support these local structures and the NGOs that provide this protection work until protection operations of a larger scale could be deployed. Such structures would work alongside, not in lieu of, an international PoC force. If such a force were to be deployed to provide services for vulnerable populations under their care or enforce other protection mechanisms, then these local civic structures would continue to provide the necessary

foundation for sustainable and replicable local protection.

Lacking a national force to protect civilians, common local diaspora-supported mechanisms for early warning, evacuation, and funding need an internationally-backed framework to scale up.⁸² This means ensuring access to telecommunications (still cut off from many parts of the country) to enable communities to track developments and troop movements to make suitable decisions around, for example, evacuations or summoning local leadership to play a de-escalating role.

International funding of PoC mechanisms that center local engagement and decision-making should be prioritised. Such mechanisms have a faster response time to the demands of civilians on the ground and have been able to provide immediate, small-scale, protection for civilians such as through the provision of street lighting at night to curb incidences of gender-based violence.⁸³

Local documentation and human rights groups within broader Sudanese civil society have been adversely affected by global aid cuts. The Coalition's commitment to justice as well as atrocity prevention should see local documenters funded for their on the ground work with

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victims and to document violations. These human rights defenders also need to be protected as reports show that they are targeted by belligerents across Sudan⁸⁴ and require protection measures such as cyber security for their mobile devices and servers, and physical security and legal fees, in case of legal prosecution.



RECOMMENDATION 05

IMPROVE AND EXPAND COALITION OPERATIONS

The proliferation of multilateral bodies addressing the conflict underscores the international community's fragmentation and lack of collective action, enabling conflict actors to "forum shop" for sympathetic interests. Nevertheless, greater lateral collaboration among these entities, alongside vertical coordination down to constituent states and civil society, could enhance civilian protection and atrocity prevention. No body currently fills the coordinating role, worsening the fragmentation and inaction on Sudan. The Coalition should step in and:

- **Enable greater lateral coordination** between and amongst the various multilateral bodies and States by e.g. increasing engagement by African States; drawing in powerful but more disinterested countries in Asia; and facilitating intelligence sharing and evidence gathering for atrocities in regularly-scheduled meetings.
- **Enable greater vertical coordination** from local international and local CSOs up to States and multilateral bodies, and vice versa, e.g. creating a civil society liaison position with Sudanese and international civil society; feeding UN FFM and HRC findings directly into policy recommendations to capitals, the UNSC and the UNSG; and ferrying lived experiences from grassroots groups in Sudan to multilateral bodies and States. The Coalition secretariat should hold regularly-scheduled meetings with international and Sudanese civil society.
- **Upskill its members:** Across the Coalition membership, ensure that those engaged on Sudan have the experience and expertise to make a meaningful impact; rely on intelligence services across Coalition members, in addition to human rights organisations for information on Sudan; replace any expertise lost in financial cuts or reorganisations and ensure protection of civilians and atrocity prevention expertise is both mainstreamed as well as housed within numerous specialised roles; and appropriately reflect on and learn from past mass atrocities such as El Fasher.⁸⁵
- **Create a framework for the Coalition's work**, including terms of reference, a strategy with proper benchmarks, a secretariat, as well as regular touchpoints with CSOs that are currently meeting with States one by one.
- **Sustain focus on Sudan** by exerting consistent and loud pressure on States and multilateral bodies like the UN, UNSC and UNSG, the AU and others. The Coalition can also help to frame the agenda on PoC by pushing for more ambitious approaches, generating civil society consensus and buy-in, and providing common language, analysis and assessment on the status of PoC.
- **Be bold** in its outreach and engagement on Sudan, using the resources at its disposal to engage on topics that are politically sensitive, and seek innovation on PoC, employing more ambitious tactics to prevent atrocities and protect civilians.

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