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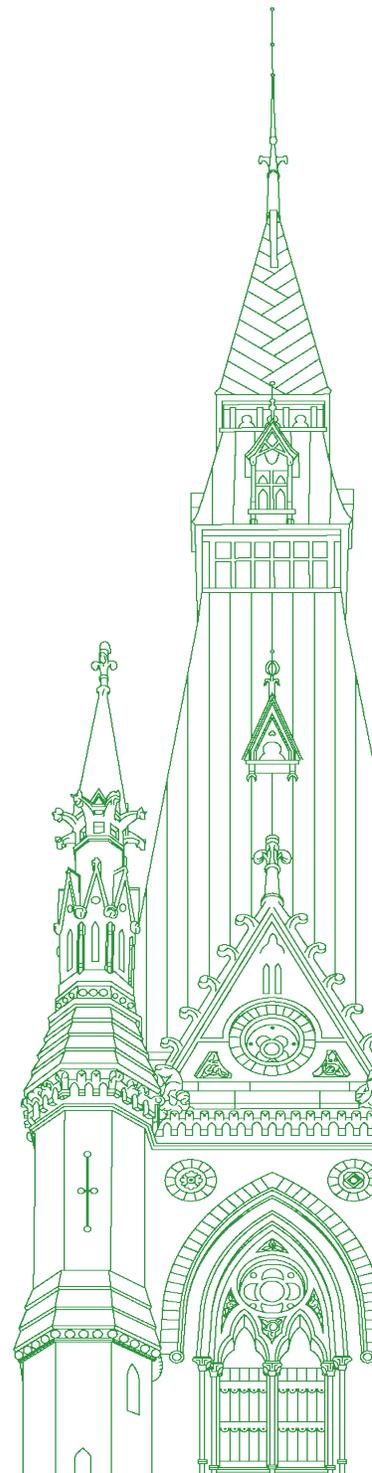
# Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 005**

Monday, November 24, 2025

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Chair: Fayçal El-Khoury



## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Monday, November 24, 2025

• (1535)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number five of the House of Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the subcommittee is meeting to study the human rights situation in Sudan.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. The committee members are participating in person in the room or remotely by using the Zoom application.

[English]

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic. Please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. This is a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

Before we welcome our witnesses, I would like to provide this trigger warning. We will be discussing experiences related to violence. This may be triggering to viewers. If any participants feel distressed or need help, please advise the clerk. For all witnesses and for all members of Parliament, it's important to recognize that these are very difficult discussions. I know that we'll all be compassionate in our conversations.

[Translation]

I would now like to welcome our witnesses.

[English]

Appearing as individuals, we have Madame Sadia Araa, registered pharmacy technician; Mr. Khalid Omer, former minister of cabinet affairs in the civilian transitional government of the Sudan, by video conference; and Amjad Taha, strategist, also by video conference.

From the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, we have Yonah Diamond, senior legal counsel; and Mutasim Ali, legal adviser.

From the Sudanese Canadian Community Association, we have Ranya Elfil, member of the board of directors.

Please allow me to also welcome a special guest, a great guest, Mr. Irwin Cotler, a pioneer in defending human rights.

If you will allow me, Mr. Cotler, you should not be sitting over there. You are welcome to join us at the table, please. Thank you.

For those who don't know Mr. Cotler, he was the chair of this subcommittee for a long period of time. If there is no objection, I will give him two minutes just to say hi and say a few words to the committee.

The floor is yours, Mr. Cotler.

• (1540)

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Founder and International Chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Very quickly, I would just say that this is one of the most compelling issues ever to come before this committee. When I was an MP, in 2003, I established the Save Darfur all-party parliamentary caucus at the time of the first genocide in Darfur. This is now, as we convene, the preventable and yet second genocide in Darfur.

You have had excellent and compelling testimony, and I think this committee, under your leadership, Mr. Chair, can undertake the necessary initiatives so that Canada can become an international leader in implementing an action plan to save the people of Darfur from this ongoing genocide.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cotler.

Now I would like to invite our witnesses to give their presentations.

We would like to start with Mr. Khalid Omer.

Mr. Omer, you have the floor for five minutes, please.

**Khalid Omer (Former Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Civilian Transitional Government of Sudan, As an Individual):** Thank you very much for having me here, and thank you to the committee for holding this special hearing about Sudan.

As all of you followed last week, Sudan made headline news with the horrible atrocities that happened in El Fasher. Actually, the fact is that El Fasher was not the start, but El Fasher was an alarm for what's really happening in Sudan in the biggest humanitarian crisis in the whole world. Hopefully, what's happening in El Fasher will be the last.

To be the last, this needs quick intervention, but it also needs a deep understanding of what is really happening in Sudan. The civil war that is now devastating our country is not the first civil war for a country that has been in wars since 1955. The root cause for all these wars is the denial of the diversity in Sudan. Actually, Sudan has been ruled for more than 50 years by military rule, 30 of them by the Muslim Brotherhood fascist regime. That regime divided the country. That regime actually committed the first genocide, in Darfur, and that regime created the parallel armies and militias that are now fighting with the army, which is well penetrated by the Islamists. They are devastating the country.

This is not a war between good and evil, as some try to easily portray. This is a war between two sides that together aborted the transition and the great revolution by the Sudanese people, which happened in 2019. As a result of the denial of the rights of the Sudanese people to decide their fate, now they are devastating the country.

Sudan's prescription for stability is actually not military rule. Sudan's stability cannot come through Islamist rule. Sudan's stability can be achieved only through a true democratic civilian transition. This is the answer. This is the answer for the difficult question of Sudan.

In the last month, the Human Rights Council issued a report called "A War of Atrocities". This report documented the horrible atrocities that have been committed by the RSF and SAF. Here, I really commend Canada for its consistent stance by punishing the two fighting parties for what they are doing to Sudan.

There is unfinished business, which can happen only by continuing this journey, by supporting the aspirations of the civilian Sudanese who went to the streets in 2019. Any support for or legitimization of any of the fighting parties is a betrayal of Sudan. Some are trying to portray this as a war between a state and rebels or between the legitimate part and the illegitimate part. This is a war between two illegitimate parts aborting the transition of Sudan, and any support for any of them is a betrayal of the Sudanese people.

There is no military solution for this crisis happening now in Sudan. The only way out is through a negotiated solution. Now, there is an opportunity through the Quad initiative and especially the statement of September 12. There are huge pressures on the sides to accept a "humanitarian truce". This humanitarian truce should be accepted without any reluctance. This can happen only by coordinated pressure on the two sides, but the humanitarian truce by itself is not enough. It should be a start to a negotiated solution that leads to civilian transition in Sudan and leads to accountability for all the atrocities that were committed against the people of Sudan.

The only way to prevent another horrible atrocity from happening in Kordofan, in the centre or in the east can be achieved only through stopping the war, not any other option.

Thank you very much.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The interpreters advised us that the sound quality wasn't good enough to do their job. We let the witness give his remarks. However, we should check with the technicians to make sure that everything is working properly.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Now I would like to invite Mr. Amjad Taha to take the floor for five minutes, please.

**Amjad Taha (Strategist, As an Individual):** Greetings. Thank you for having me.

I think the human rights situation in Sudan has been in a state of war since 1955, six months before its independence, in what the locals call the Anya-Nya genocide, in which the Sudanese army, the current army, burned Christians and farmers alive, ending with half a million children and women killed. Since then, the Sudanese army has had four civil wars—this is the fifth one right now—four civil wars against the Sudanese people.

In 1983, the Sudanese army officially became the armed forces of the Muslim Brotherhood, and it applied sharia law, like ISIS and al Qaeda. That ended up, of course, with two million Christians killed and four million displaced. The roots of civil wars have always been there: military coups, corruption and extremist ideology—whether it's Communism or Islamism.

Before this war—which started between the RSF and the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood-led army on April 15, 2023—there were seven million children out of school. We're speaking about seven million. That's a whole population. There were seven million children out of school right before the war. Now there are more than 19 million children out of school, with more than 12,000 schools destroyed and used as places for the army and the RSF. Mass mobilization was done by al-Burhan, the leader of the army, with children out of school who had no chance but to join the army to get food for their families.

The army, with 5,000 under-documented...became one of the reasons that the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood-led army, again, and its joint forces of jihadists rejected what? Again, the army rejected what? It rejected the UN fact-finding mission.

The Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood-led army committed grave violations—which include child soldiers, over 4,000 cases of rape and sexual violence against children, and a denial of humanitarian access for children—for which the UN Secretary-General listed it on the list of shame. Indeed, it is a shameless army.

The RSF, which was created by the Sudanese army, has inherited this kind of violation and evil conduct, which led to major violations in Sudan and its cities—such as Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, with 300 child soldiers and 1,000 cases of rape.

This is a civil war; it's nothing new in Sudan. The fact of an elected dictatorship has prevented humanitarian aid. When allowed, there were cases of stealing the humanitarian aid, like Hamas—the Palestinian terrorists—did in Gaza. The exception, of course, is that Israel, at one point or another, allowed humanitarian aid.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Mr. Taha. Can you lower your mic a little bit, please?

**Amjad Taha:** How about here? Can you hear?

**The Chair:** Continue, please.

**Amjad Taha:** Yes, sir.

However, the Sudanese Islamist army refused and has kicked out all UN staff, especially in El Fasher. That's what happened. When the RSF got into El Fasher, there were no humanitarian staff. There were no UN staff that could document this violation. Why? It's because the army kicked out everybody.

The Port Sudan regime, the regime in Sudan, has now rejected the U.S. and the Quad's proposal, which was calling for a ceasefire and peace. Today, the leader of the army, al-Burhan, attacked President Trump's administrative representative, Massad Boulos. This is immoral, and it's wrong. Ceasefire is what Sudan needs. Ending this war and stopping the arming of all parties is what Sudan needs.

**The Chair:** Can you wrap it up in 10 more seconds, please?

**Amjad Taha:** Sure.

Sudan doesn't need Turkish drones or Iranian chemical weapons, which were used in Khartoum two times in 2024, and were reported on January 16, 2025. Sudan army authorities in Port Sudan have provided diplomatic passports to members of Hamas and Islamic terrorists. That means Africa is in danger. Chemical weapons are there. Iranians send in drones and other.... Port Sudan right now is the danger.

We should do everything to bring ceasefire and bring peace for the Sudanese people.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

From the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, I would like to invite Mr. Yonah Diamond, senior legal counsel, to take the floor for five minutes, please.

**Yonah Diamond (Senior Legal Counsel, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights):** I believe we'll start with my colleague, Mutasim Ali, actually, if that's all right.

**Mutasim Ali (Legal Advisor, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights):** Thank you, honourable Chair, Vice-Chairs and members of the committee.

This is a great opportunity, but I also noticed that this opportunity seems to be manipulated now by some to misrepresent the facts.

I'm a legal adviser at the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights and a doctoral researcher on peace and constitution-making in post-conflict states, and I'm a Sudanese from El Fasher. I come before you not as a scholar or advocate, but as a witness, as someone who has seen my homeland repeatedly subjected to mass atrocities that were neither unpredictable nor unpreventable.

Before the genocide in El Geneina in West Darfur, in June 2023, the warning signs were clear. The Masalit community faced an imminent threat, with perpetrators, the RSF and allied militia, publicly vowing to wipe out the *Nawab*—a slur for slaves—and launching systematic dehumanization campaigns.

These crimes committed in El Geneina were preventable. The world heard the threats and saw the violence escalate, yet did not act. El Geneina was almost emptied of its Masalit majority.

A few months later, the same machinery targeted North Darfur, beginning with the Zaghawa community. In April 2025, Zamzam IDP camp was attacked by the RSF and its allied militia.

Last month, after 18 months of siege, the RSF and allied militia captured El Fasher. Doctors were killed by the RSF. Those were not Muslim Brotherhood. Perpetrators documented their crimes themselves. They were boasting about committing genocide.

Such horrors were not spontaneous. They were financed, equipped and politically insulated. External actors, including Canada's ally, the United Arab Emirates, continue to back the perpetrators. International institutions meant to protect the vulnerable are being manipulated to shield those responsible.

What we have seen is not the end. El Fasher is part of a broader campaign. The next major community at risk is Darfur. We are still in the midst of this campaign, and it remains preventable.

History has placed before us and before you a choice. The world knows and was warned.

The question is whether the world and this committee will act. The victims of Darfur and Sudan are not asking for sympathy, but for the protection that international law promises, and for the accountability that justice demands.

Let us not stand by as another community is marked for destruction.

Thank you.

I yield the rest of my time to my colleague Yonah.

• (1555)

**Yonah Diamond:** The time for action for Sudan is right now, as the situation has reached an international emergency, finally garnering the political will necessary to act. You now have the opportunity. As parliamentarians, you have the power to take a host of practical measures.

One, you can move the House to formally recognize RSF atrocities as genocide, a long-overdue step toward justice, and more timely than ever in the wake of El Fasher. Anyone still calling this only a civil war either is not paying attention or is wilfully covering up, and is an apologist for, atrocities on the ground. It's genocide and it's a war on children, as we've documented in two comprehensive reports that I'd be happy to elaborate on later.

Two, end Canadian complicity in the genocide by stopping Canadian-made weapons from reaching the perpetrators and their enablers. There are Canadian-owned companies, for instance, sourcing RSF weapons without consequence today. This is simply a matter of enforcing our laws on the books.

Three, use our sanctions regime to target the key perpetrators and their enabling entities. We'll follow up again with a list of names.

Four, on the diplomatic front, push for a civilian protection mechanism, enforce the arms embargo and use every opportunity to confront the U.A.E., the United Arab Emirates, for fuelling this genocidal campaign as the main backer of the RSF.

Five, take legal action at the ICJ against implicated states.

Six, tighten legislative and regulatory scrutiny over supply chains linked to the conflict, particularly mineral processing and the gold trade.

Seven, increase emergency immigration measures and raise caps to reunite Sudanese Canadian families and end the discriminatory treatment. Expedite all pending applications.

Eight, scale up humanitarian aid to meet the staggering needs.

Nine, use your platforms to issue urgent statements to bring attention to Darfuri communities facing destruction right now and mobilize colleagues to support these measures.

Finally, we're proud to launch, today and tomorrow, a historic all-party coalition for Sudan, a revival of the Save Darfur coalition mentioned by our founder, the Honourable Irwin Cotler. We invite each of you to join and bring colleagues on board.

We're committed to working with Parliament and civil society to implement this action plan to ensure that Canadians no longer remain bystanders to mass killing, starvation, genocide and the world's largest humanitarian catastrophe, which is shamefully being ignored.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Diamond.

I will now invite Madame Ranya Elfil, a member of the board of directors of the Sudanese Canadian Community Association, to take the floor.

You have five minutes.

• (1600)

**Ranya Elfil (Member of the Board of Directors, Sudanese Canadian Community Association):** Hello.

I have to say, based on the recent people who were invited to the committee and how it's been going, to be honest, I will improvise a little. I just ask for your forgiveness.

My name is Ranya Elfil. I'm an engineering graduate and a technology transformation professional. I'm a member of the board of the Sudanese Canadian Community Association.

Since the start of the war in Sudan, in April 2023, I've been a key member of the Government of Canada relations committee and its IRCC subcommittee, and have been closely involved in the advocacy effort on immigration pathways, humanitarian efforts and Canada's response to the war, starting with improving its evacuation efforts in Sudan. I and my SCCA colleagues are in this space because we are passionate about serving our Sudanese Canadian community coast to coast and ensuring our voice is heard. What I'm hoping for today, to be honest, is that the voice of Sudanese Canadians is heard.

Part of my personal pain around this war is that I lost my father-in-law, who was like a father to me, during the time of his wait, as we were sponsoring him to come to Canada but he never made it here.

I will focus on what we want Canada to do. Based on some conversations that we had in the past with the Canadian government, where we said, "Engage in bringing peace in Sudan. Engage in humanitarian efforts. Engage in creating immigration pathways", they made it very clear that bringing peace in Sudan was not part of Canada playing a strong role, which was a bit disappointing. Humanitarian efforts and immigration pathways could be the way forward where Canada can actually lead, and it has led in the past.

It is still important to focus on what.... People are trying to portray it as an internal conflict—and it is. It is a power grab between two generals, but it's a war on civilians. One thing we have to highlight is that this war would not have been prolonged and taken to this scale if it weren't for the backing by external players. This is something that's very important to take into account: namely, the U.A.E. and its backing of the RSF militia. It's very important that we acknowledge that and that we do something about Canadian arms ending up in the hands of the RSF militia.

We were concerned when we saw Prime Minister Carney in the U.A.E. with the last trade deal. We want to make sure that when we put forward a trade deal, we are still grounded in our principles, and our principles are based on human rights, especially with the very credible allegations on how the U.A.E. is meddling and arming the RSF. Canada should also hold Canadian weapons manufacturers accountable for their role in enabling the conflict, and adopt Bill C-233, which would close the loophole that allows those Canadian-made arms to end up in the hands of the genocidal RSF militia. It has been heartbreaking for us to see our loved ones getting killed by Canadian-made weapons.

• (1605)

It was also heartbreaking for us to see how Canada led the humanitarian response and created immigration pathways for many impacted communities, but when it came to the immigration pathway for those impacted by the war in Sudan, it always fell short. We've been working, since May 2023, on the creation of an immigration pathway for those impacted by the war in Sudan. It took 10 months for the policy to come out, and then just face continuous delays, from bringing everyone, from the beginning of 2025 to mid-summer 2025, to what we see right now—expected timelines of 99 months. That's eight years. There will be no one to bring at that point, because I don't think anyone will survive, whether in displacement or in Sudan, given what's happening in Sudan right now.

**The Chair:** Can you wrap up? Your time is up. I'll give you a few seconds to finish.

**Ranya Elfil:** Thank you.

I would like to wrap up with our asks to make sure we restore the prioritization of the immigration pathways for Sudan by making it a separate initiative that is urgent and taking it out of the slow-moving bucket that it is in. Something has to be done about the arms embargo that has to happen in the U.A.E. so that our arms do not end up in the hands of the militia, as well as ramping up our humanitarian response to what's happening in Sudan. We have to make sure that the largest humanitarian crisis—the famine, the starvation, and the hunger—gets attention from Canada and that we do more about it.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Elfil.

I would now like to invite Madame Sadia Araa to take the floor for five minutes, please.

The floor is yours.

**Sadia Araa (Registered Pharmacy Technician, As an Individual):** Thank you so much. Thank you for bringing us here to tell our story to the world.

My name is Sadia Araa. I'm a registered pharmacy technician. I was born and raised in El Fasher. El Fasher used to be a city full of life where children could run, and you could hear kids' voices before you saw them. The El Fasher we always knew, anyone from El Fasher would say El Fasher in the nighttime is Paris, and in the daytime it's rough ridges. Families in El Fasher greet each other by name. This community is so close to each other. Women were the roots holding every community together.

This is not a start...El Fasher on the 25th, when the RSF went to the city and erased it from the earth. I feel it. There are so many people who lost their lives there. The number is not a problem for me. One person is a lot for me, one person. When you see a child or women holding their own kids and crying, that's enough.

Inside the Saudi Teaching Maternal Hospital, which is one of the few remaining hospitals and it's already broken and there are barely doctors and nurses there trying to save lives, more than 460 people were massacred in that hospital. Patients went there thinking it was a safe place and they could get care for their wounds, but instead the wounded were targeted. Patients were executed. Blood filled the hallways. The hospital that once brought life became a place of death. You can see bodies from the satellite image. You can see blood from the satellite image.

Families have been tied to trees, and entire homes burned down with people still inside.

This is not something that happened overnight. This is something that everyone—every international community, humanitarian aid group, UN body—was talking about. They were saying, please do not let RSF get into El Fasher, because it's going to be a massacre.

They let them in, in the Zamzam camp, which holds 1.5 million people, and the government and the international community haven't done anything. That means it's a green light for RSF and for the people who support them, like the U.A.E., who were providing everything so they could come just to kill, a killing machine, and everything those people did is documented by their own phones.

I witnessed the genocide back in 2005. I was there in El Fasher and I saw how many tears there were, how many people were crying. Those people who lost their lives in El Fasher...it's all I see with my family. I lost my own brother. I lost my cousin. You can see if you google it, the youngest parliamentarian in Sudan's history. They killed her. She never left El Fasher. She stayed there. She helped in a community kitchen. They call it a *takaaya*. That is something like a community kitchen to help the people who are stranded there. They killed her, that woman, and they told her dead body, get up if you can.

So those people, the U.A.E. or whoever, were not talking about it and let the massacre of Sudanese people happen. We are in 2025 and we're talking about something that happened back in 2023.

• (1610)

If only those people had told them, “You cannot do this massacre just by killing the people,” and had held everyone accountable—a government, a militia, whoever—for killing innocent people.... Those warlords are not going to the top, because no one at the top lost their cousins, sisters, brothers, mothers or fathers. It's only civilians who lost those people. Everyone in Darfur right now has teary eyes. Everyone has cried. It's not one or two.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, but your time is over. You got almost one extra minute, but keep going. I cannot stop you, so go.

**Sadia Araa:** It's not once that they shed a tear or twice that they shed a tear. It's every single day.

You see mothers who see their children's limbs being amputated. The wives see their husbands being killed in front of them. The young kids.... Everything has happened in front of them. I don't know how those kids are going to survive. Even if they survive the war, I don't know how they're going to go forward. The massacre that these young kids have seen.... If I'm an adult and a mother, I cannot make myself watch those videos; it's so horrific, but the young kids saw it with their naked eyes.

What do we need from Canada? We need Canada to stand with its allies. Canada has done this before.

On one day that they killed people in El Fasher, The Guardian said that it was more horrific than what happened in Rwanda back in 1996. It was just one day of killing in El Fasher.

If we say, enough genocide, we should keep our word, and we should do whatever we can just to bring whoever is responsible to justice. There's nothing we need more than justice. You guys saw the videos. We need to bring the people who did that to justice. There is no closure in El Fasher unless we see all these people behind bars.

Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Thank you. It's very touching.

Now we go to a round of questions and answers.

I would like to invite Mr. Majumdar to take the floor, for six minutes.

**Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

To the witnesses here, and to all of the Sudanese communities in the diaspora and in Sudan who are watching live, know that this committee takes the testimony provided today to heart. Obviously, it has affected families in such visceral ways. We thank you for your testimony. We thank you for bearing witness, for telling us your perspectives and for providing us with your solutions.

This is obviously one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of the last decade. It's why this subcommittee has unanimously elected to spend the time to understand it better and to see what we can do to raise your voices in searching for solutions—solutions towards an immediate ceasefire, solutions towards bringing perpetrators of mass violence and these atrocities to justice, solutions to restore the dignity of Sudanese families, children and the country and the people at large.

Maybe I could begin by looking to Mr. Khalid Omer Yousif for a bit of context.

Sir, from your perspective, to what extent does the legacy of the Bashir regime contribute to sustaining this war that we have seen unfurl, particularly viscerally in the last little while?

• (1615)

**Khalid Omer:** Thank you very much for this question.

At the start, I would like to make one quick comment. What all the witnesses have documented here about what was committed by the RSF is true. The RSF committed horrible atrocities against Sudanese people, and they should be accountable for that, but this is actually telling half the truth. What has been kept very silent is what the other side is doing, which has been well documented by the fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Council. The use of chemical weapons, artillery shells and air bombs and the slaughtering of people have been documented through video. To save the people of Sudan, you have to tell all of the truth. There are two sides killing the Sudanese people. Financing and arming them should be stopped. Both of them should be accountable. Both of them should not define the future of Sudan. The future of Sudan should be defined by the Sudanese.

This leads me to the very good question about the legacy of the Bashir regime. Actually, we have two sides. When SAF was penetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood, it was affected and controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood. You also have the RSF, which is actually a product of the same regime. The crimes now have been committed in El Fasher in refugee camps like Zamzam and Abu Shouk.

Actually, there are people who have been in refugee camps, in IDP camps, for more than 20 years, driven there by the Bashir regime. For all these 20 years, they couldn't go back to their village. The Bashir regime burned their village. The Bashir regime killed them twice—first at the first genocide of Darfur, and now by a war between two products of the Bashir regime. That is the source of the destruction of the country. The two products of the Bashir regime killed the aspirations of the Sudanese people when they did the coup in 2021 against the public uprising of the Sudanese people.

We should not shy away here, or tear our eyes away, from the elephant in the room. The elephant in the room is the brutal fascist dictatorship that took the country to be divided, committed the first genocide, ignited this war and actively worked for this war to continue. To stop the war, you need to name all the perpetrators of the crimes. Don't speak about just one criminal and be silent about the others.

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** Thank you very much for that.

Mr. Amjad Taha, I have a minute and a half left now, but we'll continue in the duration of this testimony to ask further about this. You didn't quite finish the thought in your testimony, and I wanted you to have the opportunity to explain further how you see foreign states, such as Turkey, Iran, Russia and Egypt, contributing to the exacerbation of this crisis.

**Amjad Taha:** I think a lot of countries are contributing to this civil war. Let's be very honest. These weapons are made in Russia, for example, but they are delivered by Turkey. A Turkish company, Al-Bayarg for Firearms, is right now registered as one of the Sudanese; they get shipped by Erdiñç Doğa Av Malzemeleri, a Turkish company that delivers these weapons to the Sudan army to kill innocent people, regardless of their fight with the RSF. This is another weapon. These are the security protectors of al-Burhan directly. They have Russian weapons.

In regard to one of the points that were made by one of the witnesses about the U.A.E., if I may correct this, the U.A.E. made an agreement on July 29, 2020, with the transitional government—the transitional government of the civil government, the civil people. The prime minister was Hamdok. At that point, the transitional government, which was accepted by the international community, made an agreement with the U.A.E. where they were sending weapons to defend the transitional government from any harm, especially from terrorists like Boko Haram and others. They were being very active in other places.

Now, when the war happened—

• (1620)

**The Chair:** Can you wrap it up, please? You have exceeded your time.

**Amjad Taha:** Yes.

When the RSF and SAF had a war... This is logic, by the way, simple logic, but some of the activists do not want to understand. It is very simple. The RSF and SAF had a war with each other, and they started stealing weapons from each other. Now, SAF, of course, did all the propaganda about the U.A.E. The U.A.E. only sends humanitarian aid. A lot of activists, leftists, are not happy with this especially.

These are the children. If we care about children—you speak about children—these are children in the Sudan army. These are children, here, children in the Sudan army. This is a shame on humanity that—

**The Chair:** Please, Mr. Taha, according to the rules of this subcommittee, we are not allowed to show pictures.

I believe the time is over. Thank you.

I would like to invite Mr. Sameer Zuberi to take the floor for six minutes, please.

**Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to note that the last round was almost eight minutes, but I appreciate the six minutes I have. I'm just going to start my clock right now at six minutes. Thank you.

I really want to thank the witnesses for their courage in being here today, especially those of you who've lost loved ones or family members, like Sadia and Ranya, and others who are testifying and watching today. I want to thank you for your courage to be here and having to endure some of what you're hearing at the same time and for helping us understand what is going on within Sudan. I want to thank others in allyship, like Mr. Diamond, for being here too.

I'm going to start off with Ranya.

You were speaking about an important immigration pathway of the Government of Canada. Can you share with us how many people are here today through that immigration pathway for Sudanese loved ones?

**Ranya Elfil:** The program in general has around 5,000 applications. We know that the first phase was supposed to bring in around 7,200 people. In total, it's a little bit over 10,000 people who should come under this program. We know that, in Canada at this point, there are around 2,200 who have arrived. The rest remain stranded.

Recently, with the escalations in El Fasher, we worked with community members who were frantically trying to locate their family members in El Fasher, in Bara and in other areas that were hit recently, and were not able to do so.

I want to take a moment to say that this is a whole-of-Sudan problem. It started recently. It started in 2003, and we allowed it to continue to become what it is right now. In 2023, it started in Khartoum state and escalated to Gezira state. When we talk about displacement, we're talking about the largest displacement: around 11 million internally displaced and more than four million displaced in other countries.

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you.

You mentioned that there are long queues right now to resettle loved ones who already have their dossiers with Immigration, and in some cases it takes 99 months. Is that correct?

**Ranya Elfil:** Yes.

**Sameer Zuberi:** I assume that you'd ask that those whose dossiers are already within the immigration pipeline be expedited and not wait 99 months to get here.

**Ranya Elfil:** Absolutely.

**Sameer Zuberi:** I'm assuming that you'd ask that it be expedited without delay.

**Ranya Elfil:** It should be expedited without delay. The way it's being done now, with the recent levels plan, it was put in a bucket. It is a slow-processing bucket that includes other communities that are here already in Canada on a TR with the objective to move that TR to a PR. That would be the issue.

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you.

I would like to move to Mr. Diamond and Mr. Ali.

You mentioned a number of actions that could be taken by the Government of Canada, including sanctions, targeted sanctions on individuals. Will you be providing suggestions to the government around that into the future?

• (1625)

**Mutasim Ali:** We know that the reason the war continues is external funding. We've been in contact with Global Affairs Canada submitting sanctions recommendations. We will supplement additional lists with a particular focus on corporate entities that we believe are enabling these atrocities and the war and, for sure, individuals.

**Yonah Diamond:** As an additional possibility, I just want to flag that there's a bill in the States, Van Hollen's bill S.935, to ban transfers to the U.A.E. until the President can certify to the foreign affairs committee that they're no longer providing material support to the RSF.

This is something that Canada can do as well, and I just want to add that it's clearly one of the major initiatives to support accountability in the U.S. right now, if not the biggest.

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you.

It is really important to note the flow of weapons and who's behind those weapons, and for Canada to stop that.

Ms. Elfil, you mentioned the importance of Canada closing loopholes when it comes to the manufacture of parts that are being sent overseas. Do you want to elaborate a bit on that?

**Ranya Elfil:** I think what I mentioned in my testimony was around the bill that was recently put forward by MP Jenny Kwan, Bill C-233. We believe that endorsing and approving that bill will address those loopholes.

**Sameer Zuberi:** I'll leave Mr. Ali with the rest of my time, which is less than than one minute.

**Mutasim Ali:** Thank you again.

At the Raoul Wallenberg Centre, we've been documenting these atrocities since 2023. We definitely concluded that genocide has been committed in West Darfur in Geneina. We identified that external actors, states, particularly the U.A.E., Chad, Kenya and Libya—some of the neighbouring countries—were facilitating the transfer of arms.

We also documented the ongoing atrocities through our report "A War on Children: A World Complicit", in which we accused both the RSF and the SAF of committing atrocities against Sudanese people. We identified external actors, states, and corporate interests as fuelling these atrocities.

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

[*Translation*]

I would like to invite Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe to take the floor for six minutes.

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for their remarks, especially Ms. Araa.

Ms. Elfil, thank you for joining us today. The committee needs to hear from you.

I'm not here to play politics. We're here to analyze a real situation objectively. We're talking about Iran, which backs the Sudanese Armed Forces, and the United Arab Emirates, which backs the Rapid Support Forces.

Recently, Mr. Carney visited the United Arab Emirates to sign contracts worth tens of billions of dollars. What message does this send about the crisis in Sudan?

My question is for Mr. Ali and Mr. Diamond.

[*English*]

**Yonah Diamond:** It was regarding an agreement to...? Did you say it was regarding immigration?

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I'll repeat my question. What message does Mr. Carney's recent mission, the contracts with the United Arab Emirates worth tens of billions of dollars, send about the crisis in Sudan?

• (1630)

[*English*]

**Yonah Diamond:** We've been trying to publicly speak out about these deals at least being conditioned on the U.A.E. demonstrating that it's ending its support for the RSF. To our understanding, that hasn't yet been brought up in these deals or in the readout from Prime Minister Carney's meeting with the Emirati leaders.

He knows exactly what they are doing. This is very public. Trade should not be separated from the defence of human rights and the protection of a population facing destruction, especially when you're forming policy based on values.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I understand.

You spoke about genocide in your remarks. I imagine that you're basing this claim on evidence or trends. Logically, isn't there a clear issue when we see a Canadian Prime Minister shaking hands with a leader who backs a form of genocide financing?

[*English*]

**Yonah Diamond:** Absolutely. I completely agree with you.

This is a regime that controls over \$2.5 trillion, they estimate, in sovereign wealth, so when the Prime Minister came back with a \$1-billion deal and failed to mention Sudan, despite knowing of the U.A.E.'s campaign to support the RSF... Regarding the U.A.E.'s role, it's not us saying this. It's corroborated by a UN panel of experts, investigative reporting, the intelligence community and satellite imagery analyses. The RSF officers themselves admit that the U.A.E. is serving as the main backer.

This is a matter of one of the major power brokers, too, who has prevented any efforts at humanitarian relief and efforts to end the siege within their role in the so-called Quad, which is the power broking....

The U.A.E.'s role is that they are simply accomplices to this genocide, so if someone shakes hands with accomplices to genocide, let the public decide whether or not that's based on principles.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Explain why you recommend that Canada formally condemn or recognize the ongoing genocide in Sudan.

[*English*]

**Mutasim Ali:** Since the release of our report in 2024, we've been reaching out to states to make a genocide determination, but also to act. Even before the release of our report, we spearheaded about 100 international experts concluding that there was an imminent risk or serious risk of genocide. The idea was to say that the international community has a legal duty to prevent.... That's the whole idea of the genocide convention, basically.

I think a genocide determination is critical. Number one is the acknowledgement of the victims' grievances—this is setting the records—but number two is to prevent destruction of additional communities.

I think Canada needs to follow suit, as the U.S. did. We will continue to engage with the Canadian government and other governments to make the same determination, because the facts are really clear and the law is clear, so I think a genocide determination is imperative.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** The facts are quite clear. Today, you're asking the committee to recognize that a genocide is under way, that a genocide already took place in Darfur in 2003 and that the same movie is playing out. Some say that it's even more terrible. This is what I want to emphasize. I have the feeling that I'll likely be the only one to say this today.

It's Monday. Just last week, Mr. Carney went to the United Arab Emirates to shake hands with its leader and to sign \$90 billion worth of contracts with that country. This is happening as we hold these committee meetings. How do you expect me to convince my colleagues on either side of the House to recognize a genocide if our Prime Minister goes around that country shaking hands and signing contracts worth astronomical amounts?

I welcome recommendations from our analysts. However, how can I convince my colleagues that it makes absolutely no sense for the Prime Minister to go and shake hands with a person who, as we know, is funding a genocide in Sudan?

• (1635)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Excuse me, but the time is up. We're over by almost 50 seconds. I'm sorry. Perhaps we can hear an answer later on.

Now I would like to invite Madame Kronis to take the floor for five minutes, please.

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to address my first question to Mr. Omer.

The civil war in Sudan has obviously been a complete catastrophe for the Sudanese people. I just want to pause to acknowledge the immense pain of a number of our witnesses here today.

Ms. Elfil, Mr. Ali and Ms. Araa, I want to give you my very sincere condolences for the personal losses you've experienced and the losses you've experienced in your communities.

Mr. Omer, a number of witnesses have alluded to there being foreign interests with a stake in this tragedy. Could you elaborate a little bit on whose interests are served by keeping Sudan at war with itself?

**Khalid Omer:** I think the only victims of all this are the Sudanese. On the start of this war, as I said, it is a power struggle between two factions that both aborted the transition and then tore the country apart by this war. As happens in any civil war anywhere in the world, this of course will open the door for the external intervention.

Also, if the aim is to end the suffering of the Sudanese people, all kinds of external support to the fighting sides should be stopped. That's why we keep calling for the arms embargo to be extended to all of Sudan and for coordinated international pressure on all sides to stop financing or supporting any of the two fighting sides.

This is the road to stop the war, but as I said, we keep speaking about one side of the warring parties and neglecting completely what the other side is doing. This actually is a recipe for the continuation of the war and the continuation of the suffering of the Sudanese people.

**Tamara Kronis:** Can you explain and elaborate a bit on how the interests of regional powers on all sides have shaped this conflict?

**Khalid Omer:** Of course. The division in the region and in the world around Sudan is not only in neglecting what's happening in Sudan, but also the division in the regions around Sudan.... Some sides are supporting SAF, and some sides are supporting the RSF. It is a very difficult mission for the regional actors to agree on a path forward. That, as well, contributes to the continuation of the war.

Now there is a unique opportunity that has emerged, which is the Quad statement of September 12. Number one, it has unified the region and the world around a very clear plan forward, starting with a humanitarian truce to accelerate the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Sudanese people and then leading to a negotiated solution. It has all been supported by the UN, the AU, the IGAD, the Arab League, etc. This opportunity should not be missed. This is the way to stop the bleeding in Sudan.

**Tamara Kronis:** As we have that opportunity in front of us, I'm wondering again, just to continue with you, Mr. Omer, what's getting in the way of that. Are there economic motivations, such as control over mining, trade routes or land, that are driving external involvement? I suppose what I'm trying to get at is what's really at stake in Sudan.

**Khalid Omer:** I think this is a very long story, but the corrupted regimes of Sudan actually opened the door for international and regional actors to exploit the resources of Sudan. We are speaking about the Bashir regime, which had the revenue from the oil, which was \$1 billion. That could build a different Sudan. The deal that has been done by the Bashir regime and the Chinese actually takes Sudan to poverty, not to prosperity.

To make the Sudanese make use of their resources, to close the road on any kind of exploitation, this needs to start with Sudan first: how to have good governance, how to end the long decades of military rule and how to have a civilian model. This civilian model actually happened in those two years between 2019 and 2021. At that time, there were no civil wars. There was no corruption. There was no talk about regional exploitation. There was co-operation and coordination between Sudan and its regional neighbours. This is the model Sudan needs in order to end any kind of ill practices from inside or outside Sudan.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Madame Kronis.

Now I invite Madame Vandenbeld to take the floor for five minutes, please.

**Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all our witnesses for the testimony, particularly those of you who have had personal tragedies in your own lives and with your families.

I'd like to start my questions with Ms. Sadia Araa.

You said something in your testimony that I think is really important. You said that especially in El Fasher, where you were born and grew up, women hold the communities together. We look at women as victims, quite often, but I just wonder what the role of women is in trying to build the peace. How can the international community help women to make sure they are part of that?

We know that any peace agreement or any governance structure is more sustainable when women in local communities have a say in what those agreements are. I wonder if you could talk about that and also about civil society. I know that there's a very strong civil society. How can we support that and the women's groups that are there?

**Sadia Araa:** Thank you, Ms. Vandenbeld, for giving me the opportunity to talk.

We know that everywhere—not just in Sudan and not just in El Fasher, but in any community around the world—women are the pillars of the community. If you go into a home where a wife is sick, the husband will be sick. Women are everything, especially in

Darfur. They're holding the community. They're raising the kids. During rainy season, they go and do their crops. That's no longer. After 2023, whenever women go outside to do any activity, it's to bring food security.

We have the best planet to put anything.... They call Sudan the basket of the world. You can grow anything. We have the water. We have the Nile River. We have rich soil. We have the rainy season.

Personally, when my mom goes to do farming, we can bring in almost 100 bags of food. It would fill a truck. We don't even have space to put it in. With that, you make food security for yourself and for your family. If you don't have something, you go to the market and you buy it. You take your kids.

Personally, from my mom's farming, I went to school. The first time I boarded a plane, I went to Khartoum university to study archaeology. I was the first woman in West Darfur to study that subject.

Women give their kids their way of life. If you break a woman, the whole community is broken because a broken woman cannot raise a good child. If you cannot support yourself, you cannot support a person near you, including your own child.

How are we going to go forward to empower the women?

The Sudanese government let this happen. Let's make all those people in the RSF accountable for what they did. They terrorized the women and they raped the kids. They're even raping one-year-old children.

If you're not secure enough, you cannot do anything. How we empower them is to give them the opportunity. Open their shops. Let them do things so that they're comfortable and so they can raise a good community.

This is what I think you can do to empower women.

**Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you. I appreciate that very much.

I only have one minute left, and I do want to ask Mr. Diamond a question about what he said about the predictability.

It's highly disturbing, because we hear about this over and over again. We heard this in Rwanda and we've heard this in other places. It starts with, as you put it, “dehumanization campaigns”. There are plenty of warnings, and those kinds of dehumanization campaigns precede the violence.

You were warning that there are circumstances right now where you're seeing those alarm bells. Could you perhaps elaborate on that?

• (1645)

**Yonah Diamond:** Thank you, Anita.

In some ways, to us it feels too late, because two years ago we issued a statement from over 100 experts around the world about the imminence of genocidal massacres in El Fasher. That basically has materialized. It's happening right now and it's still being documented by satellite imagery analyses.

Anyone who survives and tries to make the harrowing journey outside of El Fasher will tell similar stories about how men and boys are being separated to be mass executed and women are being subjected to systematic rape and sexual violence of the worst, most extreme form.

When we talk about genocide as being kind of a low-hanging step for parliamentarians to ask.... This goes back over two decades. It's actually the only situation in which the International Criminal Court has issued a charge for genocide. It's the Darfur context. UN experts are referring to this as genocide.

This is extremely not a controversial ask. It's not even about naming external actors, when you give recognition to these communities that have gone so long without that recognition.

I don't know if Mutasim wants to add anything.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Elfil, you spoke earlier about how Canada should handle immigration and other issues. Since you know this better than anyone, I would like to hear how the Sudanese-Canadian diaspora reacted to Mr. Carney's trip to the United Arab Emirates and the contracts that he signed there.

[*English*]

**Ranya Elfil:** It is with concern, I would say.

We understand that Canada is making lot of effort to expand who we trade with. We appreciate that, but it does not have to be at the expense of our values and our international human rights principles. We want transparency that this trade deal does not include arms trade and that there was a discussion around these concerns, because we have concerns about how the U.A.E. has been supporting RSF. We hope that has been shared at the discussion table.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you.

Mr. Ali from the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, in your opinion, what international political or legal tools should be used in the current crisis in Sudan, but aren't being used?

[*English*]

**Mutasim Ali:** Thank you for the question.

In our work, we outlined numerous legal actions to be taken. Number one is to cut off the perpetrators from the funding sources that allow them to continue the atrocities. Their funding sources begin with external actors. This is number one.

Number two, we also believe in initiating legal proceedings against states that are complicit, whether it's in genocide, in ethnic

cleansing or in violating international conventions. I think Canada can play a role. There are numerous states that we identified, and I think there is a strong legal case to be made.

Third, there is universal jurisdiction. We know that perpetrators continue to travel with impunity. Some of them travel, for the most part, to the regions in Africa, and others travel to other places. I do think there is a way to hold them accountable. The whole idea of accountability is to make sure that the perpetrators do not continue the commission of atrocities with impunity. I think there is a way to disrupt that.

One final point is to expand the ICC's jurisdiction to allow the investigation of atrocities committed in other parts of Sudan, not only in Darfur. As of now, the ICC is only mandated to investigate atrocities in Darfur, but we know that there are numerous atrocities committed in Khartoum, in Gezira and in other places by the warring parties, the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias, so the expansion of ICC's mandate is critical.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** You spoke about this. I think that Mr. Diamond also brought this up a bit earlier.

How much is the historical impunity in Darfur and Sudan affecting the current crisis in Sudan?

[*English*]

**Yonah Diamond:** I would first say that part of it is failing to name it what it is, to name the genocide.

Mutasim, I think you might want to add more.

**Mutasim Ali:** Yes. The culture of impunity is one main reason that we see these atrocities across the entire country. Unfortunately, even during the transition period, accountability was sidelined. The actors during the transition period, the military at the time, the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces, and the civilian leaders, sidelined the accountability. Not even a single perpetrator was held to account. Not even a single person was extradited to the ICC.

There are five perpetrators wanted by the ICC, including Bashir, Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein and Ahmad Harun. They were in Sudan during the transition period, but they were not extradited. There is a prevalence of the culture of impunity that allowed these atrocities to continue.

At this time, Sudan's judiciary institutions are incapable of holding the perpetrators accountable; therefore, it is important that the international community and Canada take critical steps to end, to break, the cycle of impunity.

**Yonah Diamond:** We would be remiss not to mention the Streit Group, one of the world's largest armoured combat vehicle manufacturers, which is Canadian-owned by Guerman Goutorov. It should be investigated under the Export and Import Permits Act, as well as our obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty, to ensure that the end use does not end up in Sudan, even though their vehicles have been found in the hands of the RSF. They've also been found to have repeatedly violated arms embargoes, and they've already been charged by the U.S. government for illegal exports in arms.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Now I would like to invite Madame Anju Dhillon to take the floor for five minutes, please.

**Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Thank you so much.

My first question will be for Mr. Omer, but before that, I would like to thank all the witnesses for sharing their painful stories and testimonies today about what they and their families have experienced. I think this whole committee sympathizes, empathizes and is with you on this.

Mr. Omer, you spoke about the root causes of these wars. Can you talk more to us about this? You spoke about how they started just before independence. Can you help us understand these root causes?

Thank you.

**Khalid Omer:** Quickly, I can say that Sudan used to be one of the most diverse countries in Africa, with more than 120 languages, 500 tribes and different religions, and this diversity has not been managed in an inclusive way. Actually, there have been extended decades of military rule and fascist ideologies that have tried to shape Sudan in one way.

When the people in South Sudan, in Darfur and in the Nuba Mountains revolted against this, the same army, instead of going for a negotiated solution to reach for an inclusive framework, created militias actually to fight on behalf of the army. That's what they practised in South Sudan, in the Nuba Mountains and in Darfur, and by the end, the whole country had been turned to war between parallel armies.

The main root cause of the problem of Sudan is how to manage the diversity. The diversity of Sudan cannot be managed by the Islamists, and it cannot be managed by the military. It can only be managed through civilian democratic transition. The source of instability in Sudan is suffocating the civilian voices and ending the opportunity for a true civilian democratic transition in Sudan.

• (1655)

**Anju Dhillon:** That was actually going to be my next question. Thank you for that segue.

I wanted to ask you about democratic civilian transition. Why do you think that hasn't happened, and how can it happen, hopefully, in the future?

**Khalid Omer:** In 2019, millions of Sudanese went into the streets to demand their freedom from 30 years of the rule of the

Muslim Brotherhood, and the start of a promising transition toward civilian rule had already happened. During these two years, tremendous achievements happened. All the war in Sudan had been stopped, the freedoms had been assured and the economic, social and legal reforms happened. Actually, because of the success of this experience, the two fighting sides decided, with the Islamists, to get to the end of this experience.

Unfortunately, the world let the civilians of Sudan down during the transition with the lack of support and the very weak position against the coup. Now, in this war, siding with either of the two fighting sides is a betrayal of the Sudanese people. Speaking about one side as evil and being explicit about the other side or trying to portray that side as a legitimate side that represents the Sudanese is actually a betrayal of the Sudanese people. Prejudice against the two fighting sides should increase. Neither of them, nor the Islamists, should define the future of Sudan. They have to be sidelined, and the Sudanese should define their fate.

**Anju Dhillon:** Before, when you started your opening statement, you spoke about punishing both sides. What would you see as punishment for both sides?

**Khalid Omer:** I agree with Mutasim.

I believe the ICC's mandate should be extended to cover all of Sudan. The judicial system of Sudan is not capable of holding those who committed the crimes accountable. Second, the independent fact-finding mission should be supported, and the recommendation that came in its report should be adopted. The third thing is to extend the arms embargo to cover all of Sudan.

Also, especially in the gold sector, I think the smuggling and the use of the gold of Sudan to finance the war should be targeted. I'm not speaking about one side but speaking about the two sides. Cutting any kind of financing for the two sides, whether from the internal resources of Sudan or from the external supporters, is the way to shorten the war.

My final point is this: To stop all these atrocities from happening in Sudan, you have to stop the war itself. The urgent need is to stop the war. I think all of this attention should be diverted to the efforts to put pressure for a ceasefire and to stop the war in Sudan.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Omer.

Thank you, Ms. Dhillon.

Now I would like to invite Mr. Majumdar to take the floor for five minutes, please.

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** Thank you, Chair.

Let me continue the line of inquiry that my colleague started with you, Mr. Omer.

We know that the SAF has been refusing to participate in that ceasefire you just called for. The other party, the RSF, has announced that it would comply with the ceasefire. What does that mean? What's happening now, and what does it say about the SAF—rejecting the effort for a ceasefire?

**Khalid Omer:** Let me be frank about that: The SAF is really influenced by the presence of the Islamists within all the ranks of the SAF. The Islamists ignited this war, and they have interest in the continuation of the war because the Islamists have been toppled through popular uprising, so the only way for them to come back to power is through chaos. They have no interest in stopping the war. That's why they keep being against every single initiative: the Jeddah initiative, the Geneva initiative, the AU, the IGAD, the ALPS and the Quad.

To open the road for peace, look for who is benefiting from the continuation of the war, and target those who are benefiting from the continuation of the war.

The second reason is that the SAF ruled Sudan for more than 50 years. The generals within the ranks of the SAF think that they should be the rulers of Sudan for eternity. The only peace they want is the peace that keeps them in power. The Sudanese people rejected any kind of military rule. They want this war to be the end of the military rule and the start of a civilian transition. This is another reason the SAF is not engaging in peace initiatives.

• (1700)

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** We've had a lot of reporting recently from various organizations. In 2025, a UN panel of experts looked into how foreign states were supplying or not supplying arms to various actors here. I know they did not mention the U.A.E. as principally arming the RSF in 2025, but we know that Turkey, Iran, Russia, Egypt and others have been providing the SAF with weapons, with chemical weapons, with drones, and with diplomatic cover for Hamas terrorists and others.

In your mind, why is it that so much of the international debate is focused on one party but not both parties for the kinds of atrocities—indeed, genocide—that have been conducted against the Sudanese people?

**Khalid Omer:** It's because, unfortunately, the aim of this campaign is not to stop the war. If you want to stop the war, you have to talk about all the actors that are financing and arming the parties, and you have to stop this kind of support. Unfortunately, there are different reasons for speaking about some actors and being explicit about the other actors, speaking about one fighting party and being silent about the other fighting party.

Unfortunately, I'm afraid that saying this—being silent about one side of the fighting parties and speaking about the other party—is like a promotion for a military solution for the problem of Sudan. By putting pressure on one side and neglecting the other side, you won't decide to win the war.

Let me tell you one thing. We have a long history of war in Sudan. No single war in Sudan has been decided militarily, and they have been extended for decades. Supporting one side is not a strategy. It's a strategy for the devastation of the country. You have to put bridges on the two sides, support not one of them, cut the supply for all of them, and push them for peace. This is the only way out.

**Shuvaloy Majumdar:** Mr. Taha, in terms of this region, Sudan, being proximate to the Red Sea region at large.... Too often, people think of the Middle East in a narrow conception, but the Red Sea

region itself is a really volatile one, in which there have been actors promoting instability and actors promoting stability.

You reside in a country that has been looking to normalize relations and provide progress for the region in the face of ferocious adversity, whether it's deeply ideological or otherwise. In the debate and the negotiation among the Quad—America, the U.A.E. and others today—how do you define that these forces for modernity will be able to continue to move forward toward an end to the war and the beginning of some sort of civilian-led process for justice for the Sudanese and for the rebuilding of their country?

In your mind, what do you think the west can be doing?

**Amjad Taha:** I think the west can do a lot in counterterrorism right in Sudan. Sudan right now is becoming the hub of terrorists, especially in Port Sudan, where Iran was weakened in the Middle East. Right now, it's moving captagon, and all the drugs are there. Even RSF has that and even SAF had those companies. Even the weapons—Iranian weapons, Turkish weapons, Russian weapons and Chinese weapons—are all being moved through Port Sudan. It's becoming the hub of terrorists.

More than 6,000 Hamas members are living in Port Sudan. Some of them have diplomatic passports, which means that they can be your neighbour in Canada, at your home, and you would not know that there's an ex-terrorist right next door.

The weapons are various and have been through Turkey.... If you look at the radar of the airplanes, on a daily basis arms have been supplied, be it from Egypt, Turkey, Qatar, Russia, Iran—

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Can you wrap it up, please? The time is up.

**Amjad Taha:** Sure.

My question would be for some of the witnesses. I would please ask them to try, for once in their life, to speak about the atrocities that the Muslim Brotherhood army in Sudan has committed—just one genocide. At least speak about El Koma, which is in North Darfur and which has had 60 air strikes. The army did air strikes 60 times. They killed children and women—thousands of them—and displaced more than 10,000—

**The Chair:** Thank you—

**Amjad Taha:** —but the witnesses would not speak about it, because they speak for SAF. They do not speak for their Sudanese.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Next is Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't think that anyone is expressing support for one side more than another.

Mr. Diamond and Mr. Ali, are you here to side with one of the forces in Sudan, or are you here to explain the situation in Sudan to the committee?

[English]

**Yonah Diamond:** Yes. I'll start us off just to say that we've issued two reports: legal inquiries with international jurists around the world, legal scholars, genocide experts, the president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and founding prosecutors of international tribunals. We found the SAF and the RSF responsible. In our genocide report, the SAF was complicit, and the RSF is directly responsible for genocide.

In our second report, we found both sides to have committed crimes against humanity, against children. We found differences, because, yes, there are two sides; however, the degree of atrocities differs and the degree of external support actually differs. The levels of evidence available to support which outside states support the RSF versus the SAF are different, because we've examined these questions of external support.

If you like, I can list some of the reasons why we focus on the U.A.E. as one of the world's major powers, if not the most powerful, and also because of the links, which we found not to have met as high an evidentiary standard as for other states.

I'll pass it along to Mutasim.

**Mutasim Ali:** Thanks so much.

In terms of our view of the atrocities, we believe that the warring parties are actually now a lot more complex. Additional parties are also involved in the conflict. Of all the external actors mentioned by a witness, from the U.A.E.... As I mentioned, the U.A.E. is one of the external actors. We agree that Turkey is complicit. We agree that all of the countries that were mentioned were responsible, but what about the U.A.E. and all the evidence and the reports, including by the UN panel of experts in 2024?

By the way, the U.A.E. was responsible for fuelling the conflicts in Libya, in South Sudan, and of course in Ethiopia and in Yemen as well. They're very well documented reports.

[Translation]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** I have a question for Mr. Omer, but I don't know whether he's still on the line. I can't see him on the screen.

[English]

**Khalid Omer:** I'm on the line.

[Translation]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Okay.

Mr. Omer, you explained the situation quite well, along with everyone's objective. Two sides are committing atrocities, either indirectly or directly, as other witnesses just said. This is currently the crux of the problem.

Are there any civil society organizations left in Sudan, particularly democratic organizations, that Canada or other western countries could support? Or, on the contrary, is there hardly any civil society or democratic structure left in place?

[English]

**Khalid Omer:** Sudan has a very long history of strong democratic movements. It is so diverse. There are political parties. There are resistance committees. Youth, women and humanitarian actors are working on the ground. This horrible war has failed to kill this movement. This movement is still alive. It is so diverse. It is working in different arenas.

I'm part of one of these organizations, which is a political alliance called Sumoud, bringing together political parties, resistance committees, civil society and trade unions. We are not the only actors. There are other actors as well. As I said, there are the humanitarian actors who are now the first responders on the ground, and women and youth groups. The aim of this war is to kill this movement, the very diverse democratic movement in Sudan that worked together to topple the Bashir regime and end the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan.

This war has been used to punish them. The atrocities that have been committed by the two sides are partly how they are targeting the civilian actors. Actually, from my political party, my colleague, the head of our party in one of the localities of Gezira state, was abducted by the SAF. He was tortured and killed. They hid his body, even from his family, for weeks until they discovered it. This is just one case of many of how they are targeting political actors and how they are targeting youth and women actors. A number of them are in prison now.

SAF is now denying us our basic rights. We can't get passports. I can't even get passports for my family, let alone for myself. The only crime we commit is that we stand against the war. The only crime we commit is that we work tirelessly to resist the Bashir regime. This is now the war of the Bashir regime to take revenge on the civilian movement that resisted them and refused to surrender to them.

● (1710)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'd like to invite Mr. Sameer Zuberi to take the floor.

You have five minutes.

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you again to the witnesses for being here.

I'll start off with you, Ms. Elfil. What are your thoughts on a civilian-led transition for Sudan?

**Ranya Elfil:** I'm going to start by saying that I think for someone to sit and call the witnesses complicit for trying to frame that there is one part that is responsible, other than the other, is shameless, to be honest.

**Sameer Zuberi:** I have to agree with you. It's deeply objectionable. That needs to be acknowledged, as you have.

**Ranya Elfil:** I will continue. I'm so sorry. This is very impactful.

I just want to bring some facts to the table.

One of the things is that the transitional government, when it came.... The revolution on the ground called for "*Al-jaysh lilthakanat w-al Janjaweed yinhi!*", which means "Army to the barracks and Janjaweed dismantled"; Janjaweed is the RSF. That was the call of the revolution. What happened was that the transitional government itself—Khalid Omer Yousif was a key part of it—decided that this is a model partnership between the army, RSF and civilians to lead a peaceful transition in Sudan. That is what got us to where we are right now. I think just omitting that part distorts the reality of the situation.

When we talk about civil organizations that can actually help with the civil transition, I want to acknowledge that the emergency response rooms and the resistance committees, as he rightfully said, do amazing work still in Sudan. Women's organizations—and I think this is where our part comes in as Sudanese Canadians—are to be consulted around who the Canadian government should think of as trusted to empower and to work with to bring real civil rule in Sudan.

I just want to say that the Muslim Brotherhood put a gun to my head when I was 14 years old in high school because of the history of my family in terms of opposition. To sit here today and to be called pro-Muslim Brotherhood is.... I don't know what to call it, to be honest. I just want us to focus on the facts. SAF is complicit. RSF is complicit. The war is complex, and we really need to focus on bringing peace to Sudan. We have to tidy our own house, as Canadians, and part of tidying our own house as Canadians is to make sure that we're not part of it, that we're not part of weapons getting into the hands of RSF, but holding all parties accountable and, again, making sure that when we are working with civil society, we know and we're informed in terms of whom we work with and whom we empower so we're actually bringing true civil rule to Sudan, which so many have died fighting for.

Thank you.

• (1715)

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you.

I'll continue with you.

I want to ask about the children, going back to the immigration pathway you and your colleagues have worked on. Can you talk a bit about the children who are stuck in Sudan right now as it relates to the program?

**Ranya Elfil:** Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

This is a very important file that we wanted to bring attention to, which is part of our advocacy effort. We highlighted the case of Canadian children with non-Canadian parents. In most of the cases, the father is Canadian and passed away. They are with a non-Canadian mother trying to come to Canada since the beginning of the war, trapped either in Sudan or in displacement, and there was no pathway created for them. We've been working on this file with the IRCC since April 2024. One of the Canadian kids actually

drowned, died in one of the internal refugee camps, while his mom and two other Canadian kids still wait for the mother to be granted a visa so the family can come to Canada. There are many examples of those cases that we personally documented and raised to the IRCC in hopes of creating a solution for this group. Unfortunately, until now, none have arrived in Canada.

**Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you so much.

I just want to again salute your courage. Sadia, Mutasim and Ranya, thank you for being strong. We're wishing all who are watching strength. Thank you for sharing everything with us.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

Now I would like to invite Madame Kronis for five minutes, please.

**Tamara Kronis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also want to just pause to thank all the witnesses. I know it's been very emotional to be here today. Again, I want to acknowledge your pain.

I'd like to go back to Mr. Omer.

One of the features of this terrible conflict is that it is the latest in a sequence of conflicts in Sudan. I'm wondering if you could comment a little bit on the role that previous atrocities in the area have played in shaping both the current leadership and the strategic objectives of both sides to the conflict.

**Khalid Omer:** This is a very good question. If we take Darfur as an example, the story of Darfur didn't start on April 15, 2023. The story of Darfur started long decades ago. When Sudanese people from Darfur were demanding their rights to end any kind of discrimination in 2003, the Bashir regime responded to this with violence and genocide, by creating the militias that burned villages. They empowered these militias and, actually, they legitimized them after that, by forming the RSF in 2013 and making the law in their parliament. They expanded and became bigger, and they shared the power and wealth together.

When this war started.... Actually, when the 2003 war started, the RSF mainly came from certain communities in Darfur—namely the Arabs of Darfur. They recruited them to fight the other communities, and that was actually the incubator for the rebels at that time—namely the Zaghawa, the Masalit, and the Fur. When this war happened and the fight happened between SAF and RSF, the SAF actually adopted the opposite strategy, which is, now, to align with certain communities and turn them against the other communities. This was the repeated strategy that has been implemented in every part of Sudan.

Look, for South Sudan now, the instability there, the real source of that was Khartoum before the separation, because Khartoum fought its wars there by turning communities against each other to stay in power in Khartoum. I mean, all these atrocities and wars are linked to each other. The source is one source, that central authority that wants to manipulate and to exploit the differences among the communities in Sudan to stay in power. The cure for this is not to look at part of the picture; it's to look at the whole picture. It's to end the central rule and go for an inclusive way of governance in Sudan.

• (1720)

**Tamara Kronis:** What you're describing, effectively, is that what we appear to have in Sudan are two parallel military institutions, both of which claim to have the authority of the state and to be in the centre of things. Each of them is backed by regional powers, with people who benefit from the conflict and seek to maintain those benefits.

In that context, you've tried to be very neutral in your remarks. You've tried to focus, I suppose, on civil society and elevating elements of civil society that are there on both sides of this. I suppose this is the most complicated question I could ask you today, which I think you have about 45 seconds to answer: What should Canada do?

**Khalid Omer:** I think the moral focus is on stopping the war—this should be the priority. Stopping the war is the entry to stopping the atrocities. There is a very promising initiative now, a proposal on the table for a humanitarian truce. The two parties should be pushed to sign this truce, so as to stop the bleeding in Sudan. Second, support a process for civilian democratic transition. This is the only strategic way to achieve stability in Sudan.

**Tamara Kronis:** Now let me ask you an impossible question. As we sit here on Monday, November 24, there is one side that has accepted that truce and another side that has not. Again, I push it back to you: If a humanitarian truce is the thing we need, how do we get there?

**Khalid Omer:** Through pressure, I think. The sides are responding only to pressure, not to niceties, so you need to push them to accept the truce and to commit to the implementation of the truce. Now that the RSF has accepted the truce, they have to be pushed to commit to the implementation of the truce. SAF has rejected the truce. They have to be pushed to sign the truce and to commit to the truce. I think the strategy of being silent about those who want to continue the war is fuelling the war. It is not ending the war.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Araa, you haven't had the chance to say much after your opening remarks. I'll give you the chance to speak.

How do you view not only the current situation, but also the future of Sudan? Do you have any suggestions for the committee on how to achieve lasting peace?

[English]

**Sadia Araa:** Thank you for asking that question.

As a Sudanese and Darfurian, I have seen enough killing. Whenever I see killing and the world doesn't do anything, I think of the old ways, and I'm going back to 1948, when the world came and said that was enough killing of innocent civilians. The world right now needs to stop the killing. Bring both sides to the table. Don't let these innocent people die every single day. Then, push for transition.

In 2019, young people in their twenties went out for a month, during Ramadan. They sat down there asking for a civilian government.

Everyone thinks that Sudanese people are Islamist, that they're in the brotherhood. The Sudanese people are the most educated people, and they're really peaceful people. They go everywhere, they work, and they know. If you ever work with Sudanese people, you will find that they're very supportive, very innocent and very hard-working people.

The way to get out from here is a civilian government. We need Canada and its allies to stop the killing and help us to get there.

We are not like a country that does not have resources. We do have resources. We have land resources. We have gold that the U.A.E. is milking from us, and it's number one. The gold they see inside Dubai, which is being refined and sent everywhere, comes from Darfur. Of the gold that Sudan exports, 99% goes to the U.A.E. That money should be with the civilian government.

We shouldn't have to come and sit to talk all the time about the poverty in Sudan and malnourished kids. The most displaced people on planet earth right now are the Sudanese people. We shouldn't have to talk about it. We should have more of our resources go to the Sudanese people, with a fair government and fair trade with everyone who wants to help us. We welcome them and are extending our hands.

• (1725)

[Translation]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Mr. Diamond and Mr. Ali, Ms. Araa just spoke about Sudan's gold. Some people say that Sudan's gold has become like Sierra Leone's blood diamonds.

Do you have anything to say to the committee about this?

People also say that the famine is now affecting the adult population. This shows that the humanitarian crisis has reached catastrophic proportions.

I'll give you my last few minutes to answer these questions.

[English]

**Yonah Diamond:** I want to add to what Sadia was saying. In the first half of 2025, 90% of Sudan's official gold exports went to the U.A.E. Last year, it was 97% that went to the U.A.E. We're talking about an annual gold market of \$15 billion. When we talk about the U.A.E.'s eye on Sudan at whatever cost, including the mass violence we see in Darfur, that's what we're talking about.

**Mutasim Ali:** This is not related to gold, but part of understanding the complexity of the conflict, as somebody who has been researching this for quite some time, is that we know that the Sudanese state, since independence, has been dividing the communities by establishing militia groups and the like.

I also think that the political elite played a critical role in getting us to where we are today. For example, every time they sign a bilateral peace citing the Sudanese people, the bilateral agreement always focuses on the two parties. That's part of the reason the transitional period failed. It was because of its bilateral nature, sidelining the entire Sudanese community. Not even an interim legislature was established, even though it was established in the constitutional document.

I therefore think that the army is always the problem and will continue to be the problem, but I think the political class has to take responsibility as well for failing to respond to Sudanese needs.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

That will conclude our study for today.

On behalf of the committee, all members, staff and interpreters, I would like to thank all the witnesses for your presence, for your interventions, for answering questions and for your introductions. It really enlightens the committee and gives a good idea about what's going on in Sudan. Hopefully, we will see peace prevail soon.

Thank you, especially, to our distinguished guest, Mr. Irwin Cotler, for being with us. Your presence enriches this committee. You're always welcome, Mr. Cotler.

[*Translation*]

Next week, we'll be holding two meetings. One meeting will focus on the recognition of international human rights champions. The other meeting will focus on the situation of 2SLGBTQ+ people from Uganda.

[*English*]

Is it the will of the committee to end the meeting?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you. The meeting has ended.

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