

Recommendations for the U.S. Atrocities Prevention Task Force

May 5, 2023

U.S. Policy Towards Sudan

- **Publicly articulate the U.S. Government policy on Sudan moving forward** and how it will address all facets of the conflict, including evacuation, civilian protection, atrocity prevention and response, accountability, and diplomacy in a conflict- and gender-sensitive manner, and how it will negotiate a comprehensive ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, and peace agreement. The Administration must clearly articulate how it will incorporate the principles of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda (as well as the WPS Act of 2017 and the U.S. Strategy on WPS, as required by law) in its future engagement on peace processes with the parties to conflict. The Administration must also delineate the ways in which it will operationalize the principles of the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act and the U.S. Strategy to Anticipate, Prevent, and Respond to atrocities, particularly how it will coordinate with international partners to promote the prevention of further atrocities. The Administration must identify flexible funding streams through which to provide a holistic, conflict- and gender-sensitive, and multisectoral approach to address the crisis in Sudan.

Civilian Protection

- **Urgently dedicate funding, particularly flexible funding, to provide a robust humanitarian response and civilian protection in Sudan and host countries and communities.** Scale support at the borders and local communities and in host countries and communities supporting refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs). Work with border countries to keep borders open and expedite refugee processing/asylum claims and to provide robust, conflict and gender-sensitive assistance. Support data tracking of refugees and IDPs, particularly through flexible funding to local organizations.
- **Rapidly increase emergency assistance to protect civilians and prevent atrocities.** Such assistance should provide urgently needed items and services to individuals and groups who are most at risk. It should also aim to prioritize Sudanese civil society leaders, human rights defenders, journalists, formal and informal volunteers, and other democratic activists, particularly women, youth, gender minorities, and other vulnerable communities. This assistance must be gender-sensitive and delivered in a conflict-sensitive manner.
- **Prioritize and negotiate the establishment of a ceasefire and humanitarian corridor from El Geneina to the border with Chad.** This urgent protective action will save lives, enabling civilians to move to safer areas and away from ongoing, heavy fighting. Extreme violence has escalated in El Geneina and in other areas.
- **Address increased humanitarian needs in pre-existing vulnerable areas.** Darfur, Kordofan, and other areas were already experiencing unmet humanitarian needs, insecurity, and violence. These areas have large, displaced populations in addition to refugees and other vulnerable communities. These conditions are being exacerbated by ongoing conflict, and assistance needs to reflect these increasing needs.

- **Universally support and implement conflict- and gender-sensitive assistance and programming.** All actors providing international assistance must integrate principles of peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity—that is, ensuring that interventions do not exacerbate or create new conflict dynamics—in their programming, advocacy, and overall engagement with stakeholders on-the-ground. In addition, all aid and programming must take a gender-sensitive approach—i.e., integrate considerations of the needs of women, girls, and gender diverse persons and the ways in which conflict impacts them differently than others.
- **Scale up a proactive protection response.** Monitoring harm to civilians is not enough. A proactive protection response not only observes and documents the harms and risks civilians face, but must be able to respond directly and proactively to prevent threats from escalating as they emerge. There is a need for dedicated protection actors to implement protection-specific monitoring, responses, and advocacy.
- **Invest in services for monitoring, reporting, and responding to sexual and gender-based violence.** In the wake of the escalation, incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (S/GBV) have spiked, including in urban areas where armed conflict has provided a cover to increase the opportunity and lower the threshold for targeted S/GBV. There must be a commensurate investment in the prevention and response to these harms.
- **Rapidly invest in child protection.** The recent escalation occurred at a time when resources for the protection of children were reducing, despite increased child protection risks. There is a need to monitor and actively protect children who are being intentionally targeted for violence (e.g., reports of children being directly shot), recruited to armed forces, and subject to sexual and gender-based violence.
- **Invest in community-led protection infrastructures.** Though the protection of civilians is ultimately the responsibility of duty bearers, these responsibilities are not being met. Communities have mobilized to protect themselves through direct response, de-escalation of potential violence, mediation of disputes, and proactive identification and response to risks through Early Warning Early Response (EWER) mechanisms. A rapid upscaling of resourcing dedicated to community-led unarmed civilian protection, in line with USAID’s stated localization commitments, can act to strengthen these capacities, particularly in the absence of state duty bearers and third-party protection forces.
- **Urge the U.S. to prevent Sudan’s neighbors (particularly Egypt and Ethiopia) and other interested state stakeholders from interfering in the conflict.** The U.S. must work with other partners and multilateral organizations to prevent countries from sending financial support, weapons, forces, and other supplies that could exacerbate or prolong the conflict into Sudan.

Atrocity Prevention

- **Undertake immediate and sustained efforts to promote atrocity prevention.** In line with the U.S. Strategy to Anticipate, Prevent, and Respond to Atrocities, conduct an atrocity prevention risk analysis, publicly issue warnings and calls for prevention of large-scale, systematic, and deliberate killing of civilians, and consult regularly with Sudanese, international, and U.S. civil society. Coordinate atrocity prevention messaging and actions with the International Atrocity Prevention Working Group, the United Nations, and the African Union.

- **Urgently scale up U.S. support for atrocity prevention and documentation efforts.** The Administration should coordinate with international partners and local civil society to scale monitoring and documentation. Utilize flexible funding mechanisms to release additional funding for international and Sudanese civil society to be able to carry out these efforts. Utilize lessons gleaned from Conflict Observatory activities in Ukraine to ensure war crimes and other atrocities are monitored and documented.
- **Work with international partners to support human rights monitoring and documentation efforts.** Call for a special session on Sudan at the UN Human Rights Council, with the objective of establishing an independent international mechanism (such as a Commission of Inquiry) to investigate and report on international human rights and humanitarian law violations and advance accountability in Sudan. Press for additional funding to support monitoring and documentation of human rights violations and abuses and atrocity crimes, including through mechanisms of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the African Union.

Atrocity Response and Accountability

- **Sanction abusive actors.** Leverage existing authorities to impose narrowly targeted sanctions on leaders of the Rapid Support Forces and Sudan Armed Forces and others responsible for serious abuses against civilians. Utilize the authorities outlined in the Presidential Memorandum on Promoting Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) to promote accountability of actors weaponizing gender and sexual violence in the ongoing conflict. The Administration must ensure that any sanctions do not inhibit the delivery of humanitarian, peacebuilding, and atrocities prevention/response assistance, and financial access to support those activities. To the extent sanctions may frustrate the delivery of foreign assistance and activities, the Treasury Department should expediently issue comprehensive licenses and other exemptions to support peacebuilding, humanitarian, democracy and governance, and other international and Sudanese civil society efforts. However, the U.S. should refrain from imposing broad-based sanctions and designating any of the parties to the conflict as a foreign terrorist organization, specially designated global terrorist entity, or other classification that could impede the delivery of aid on large swaths of territory.
- **Seek an arms embargo on the parties to the conflict in all of Sudan at the UN Security Council.** Both parties have a history of widespread and systematic abuses for which an arms embargo is justified. Also hold current suppliers of arms to Darfur, where an arms embargo is already in place, accountable for ongoing violations as [documented](#) by the Panel of Experts.
- **Pursue accountability robustly.** Press for criminal accountability for the most serious crimes committed in Sudan. Work with the UN Security Council to develop a plan to increase cooperation with the International Criminal Court on Darfur, including executing existing arrest warrants, highlighting publicly and privately how impunity for international crimes has fueled further abuses, and consulting with Sudanese justice experts to develop a U.S. plan to address past and present crimes. Work with the UN Security Council and other international partners on how to best monitor, document, preserve evidence, and promote accountability for recent, ongoing, and future atrocities stemming from the current conflict.