

STATE FRAGILITY, ARMED MILITIAS, AND THE COLLAPSE OF CIVIL GOVERNANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SUDAN CRISIS AND PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE-BUILDING

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between state fragility, armed militias, and the collapse of civil governance in Sudan, with particular focus on the rivalry between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The study aimed to analyze how militarized political structures contributed to governance breakdown and to assess the prospects for sustainable peacebuilding in Sudan. A qualitative research design was adopted, employing a case study approach based on secondary data sources, including academic literature, policy reports, and institutional analyses. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns related to state fragility, militia dynamics, and governance collapse. The findings revealed that the persistence of parallel security structures and the failure to implement effective security sector reform significantly contributed to state fragility and institutional collapse. The study further found that the competition between the SAF and RSF fragmented state authority, weakened public institutions, and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. Additionally, external interference and the absence of coordinated international mediation efforts were found to have prolonged the conflict and undermined peacebuilding initiatives. Based on these findings, the study recommended comprehensive security sector reform, the establishment of inclusive civilian-led governance, institutional strengthening, and coordinated international engagement to address external influences. The study concluded that sustainable peace in Sudan depended on addressing both the structural causes of state fragility and the immediate drivers of conflict. Without such integrated efforts, peacebuilding initiatives were likely to remain fragile and ineffective.

Keywords: State fragility; Armed Militias; Civil Governance; Sustainable peace; Sudan conflict

Introduction

State fragility has emerged as a central concern in contemporary peace and conflict studies, particularly in societies where weak institutional frameworks intersect with entrenched militarization of political authority. Fragile states are typically characterized by limited capacity to provide security, weak legitimacy, and an inability to deliver basic public services (Rotberg, 2004). Sudan represents a compelling case of such fragility, where decades of authoritarian rule, civil conflict, and institutional erosion have produced a highly unstable political order. The 2019 popular uprising that led to the removal of President Omar al-Bashir raised significant expectations for democratic transformation and civilian-led governance. A transitional arrangement was subsequently established, involving a power-sharing agreement between civilian actors and the military. However, this fragile arrangement was undermined by deep-seated mistrust and competing interests within the security sector. The October 2021 military coup, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and supported by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), effectively dismantled the transitional government and reasserted military dominance over the state (International Crisis Group, 2023).

Tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF escalated into full-scale armed conflict in April 2023, marking a critical turning point in Sudan's political trajectory. The conflict reflects not only a power struggle between rival military elites but also the structural consequences of prolonged militarization and the failure to reform the security sector. As scholars have noted, the persistence of parallel armed structures within fragile states often leads to violent competition for power and resources (de Waal, 2022). The ongoing war has resulted in the near-total collapse of civil governance, widespread human rights violations, and one of the most severe humanitarian crises globally. Millions have been displaced, and essential state institutions have ceased to function effectively. This study therefore examines the Sudan crisis through the analytical lenses of state fragility, militia politics, and peacebuilding theory, with the aim of identifying pathways toward sustainable peace.

Statement of the Problem

The persistence of violent conflict in Sudan underscores a deeper structural problem rooted in state fragility and the entrenchment of militarized political authority. Despite the 2019 revolution, which created an opportunity for democratic transition, Sudan has failed to establish stable civilian governance. Instead, political power has remained concentrated in the hands of military actors, particularly the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), whose rivalry has precipitated state collapse. According to Rotberg (2004), fragile states are prone to conflict when they are unable to monopolize the legitimate use of force, a condition that is clearly evident in Sudan where multiple armed actors operate with competing claims to authority. Similarly, de Waal (2022) argues that Sudan's political economy is shaped by a system of "military commercialism," in which armed elites control economic resources, thereby incentivizing conflict rather than cooperation.

The April 2023 conflict has exposed the failure of previous peacebuilding and transitional governance efforts, particularly the inability to integrate or reform parallel security structures. As a result, Sudan is experiencing widespread institutional collapse, humanitarian catastrophe, and the erosion of state legitimacy. While existing studies have examined aspects of Sudan's conflict, there remains a gap in understanding how the interaction between state fragility and militia politics directly undermines sustainable peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, the problem of this study is to

examine how state fragility and the proliferation of armed militias contribute to the collapse of civil governance in Sudan and hinder prospects for sustainable peacebuilding.

3. Objectives of the Study

General Objective: To examine the relationship between state fragility, armed militias, and the collapse of civil governance in Sudan, and to assess their implications for sustainable peacebuilding.

Specific Objectives

- i. To analyze how the rivalry between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has contributed to state fragility and governance breakdown in Sudan.
- ii. To evaluate the prospects for sustainable peacebuilding in Sudan in light of ongoing militarization and institutional collapse.

Literature Review

State Fragility

State fragility has become a central analytical category in peace and conflict studies, reflecting the inability of states to effectively perform core sovereign functions, including the provision of security, political legitimacy, and basic public services. Rotberg (2004) defines fragile states as those that fail to deliver essential political goods such as security, rule of law, and economic opportunity, thereby creating conditions conducive to instability and conflict. This conceptualization aligns with broader institutional perspectives that emphasize governance capacity and legitimacy as key pillars of state stability. However, the concept of fragility has been critiqued for its conceptual ambiguity and normative bias. Call (2011) argues that the “failed state” discourse often oversimplifies complex political realities by aggregating diverse forms of institutional weakness under a single label. Instead, he proposes a more disaggregated approach that distinguishes between security failures, governance deficits, and legitimacy crises. This perspective is particularly useful in analyzing Sudan, where fragility is not merely the result of weak institutions but also the product of deliberate political strategies by ruling elites.

From a classical sociological standpoint, Weber (1946) defines the state as the entity that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. The erosion of this monopoly is therefore a critical indicator of state fragility. In Sudan, this principle has been fundamentally undermined by the coexistence of multiple armed actors, notably the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), each exercising coercive authority independently. As Rotberg (2004) further notes, when states lose control over violence, they often descend into internal conflict and governance breakdown. Moreover, contemporary scholarship highlights the political economy dimensions of fragility. De Waal (2022) argues that Sudan’s fragility is deeply embedded in a system of “political marketplace,” where loyalty is bought and sold through patronage networks financed by state and non-state resources. This system incentivizes competition among elites and undermines institutional development. Consequently, Sudan’s fragility should be understood not only as a failure of capacity but also as a manifestation of structurally embedded power struggles and historical marginalization of peripheral regions such as Darfur and South Kordofan.

Militarization and Militia Politics

The militarization of political authority and the proliferation of armed militias are defining characteristics of fragile states, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Reno (1998) introduces the concept of “warlord politics,” wherein state leaders rely on informal military networks and patronage systems to maintain control. These networks often operate outside formal institutional frameworks, thereby weakening state authority and fostering conditions of persistent instability. In Sudan, militia politics has deep historical roots, particularly in the state’s reliance on irregular forces to suppress rebellion and maintain territorial control. The Janjaweed militias, which emerged during the Darfur conflict in the early 2000s, were later institutionalized into the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary organization with significant autonomy and resources (de Waal, 2022). This transformation illustrates how militias can evolve from auxiliary forces into powerful actors capable of challenging the state itself.

Militias are not merely instruments of violence but also economic and political actors with vested interests in maintaining conflict. Ahram (2011) argues that state-sponsored militias often develop independent revenue streams and political agendas, making them resistant to disarmament and integration into formal security structures. In the Sudanese context, the RSF’s involvement in gold mining and cross-border trade has provided it with financial independence, thereby enhancing its capacity to operate autonomously and contest state authority. Furthermore, the coexistence of multiple armed actors creates a fragmented security landscape characterized by overlapping jurisdictions and competing chains of command. Such fragmentation undermines efforts at state-building and increases the likelihood of violent conflict. As Staniland (2014) notes, the structure and cohesion of armed groups play a critical role in determining conflict dynamics, with fragmented groups more likely to engage in opportunistic violence and predation.

Thus, militia politics in Sudan not only reflects state fragility but actively reinforces it by perpetuating cycles of violence, undermining institutional authority, and complicating peacebuilding efforts.

Collapse of Civil Governance

The collapse of civil governance represents both a symptom and a driver of state fragility. Effective governance requires the presence of functional institutions capable of enforcing laws, delivering services, and maintaining political order. Fukuyama (2014) emphasizes that state strength is fundamentally linked to institutional capacity and the rule of law, arguing that weak institutions create opportunities for conflict and disorder. In Sudan, the collapse of civil governance can be traced to repeated disruptions of civilian-led political processes, most notably the October 2021 military coup. This event not only dismantled the transitional government but also eroded public trust in political institutions and reinforced the dominance of military actors. The absence of legitimate governance structures has created a power vacuum in which armed groups operate with impunity.

Menkhaus (2007), in his analysis of governance in collapsed states, argues that the absence of formal institutions often leads to the emergence of alternative governance systems dominated by non-state actors. These systems are typically characterized by coercion, informal taxation, and limited accountability. In Sudan, similar patterns are evident in areas controlled by militias, where governance is based on force rather than legitimacy. Additionally, the collapse of governance has severe humanitarian and socio-economic consequences. Without functioning institutions, the state

is unable to provide basic services such as healthcare, education, and security, leading to widespread suffering and displacement. This, in turn, exacerbates grievances and fuels further conflict, creating a vicious cycle of instability.

Scholars such as Migdal (2001) further argue that weak states often coexist with strong societies, where local actors compete with the state for authority and control. In Sudan, tribal groups, militias, and local elites have increasingly assumed governance roles in the absence of a functioning central authority, further fragmenting the political landscape. More so, the collapse of civil governance in Sudan reflects the interplay between institutional weakness, militarization, and elite competition, all of which undermine prospects for sustainable peace.

Peacebuilding in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

Peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected states has evolved into a central concern within peace and conflict studies, particularly in contexts where violent conflict is intertwined with weak institutions, contested legitimacy, and entrenched militarization. The literature broadly emphasizes that sustainable peace requires more than the cessation of violence; it necessitates the transformation of underlying structural conditions that generate and sustain conflict (Galtung, 1996). This includes addressing political exclusion, economic inequality, and weak governance systems. A foundational contribution to peacebuilding theory is Lederach's (1997) concept of conflict transformation, which prioritizes long-term social change through inclusive and participatory processes. Lederach advocates for a bottom-up approach that engages local actors community leaders, civil society, and grassroots organizations in peace processes. This approach is particularly relevant in fragile states where formal institutions lack legitimacy, and local actors often possess greater trust and influence within communities. In the Sudanese context, where central authority has been severely weakened, local peace initiatives and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms may play a critical role in rebuilding social cohesion.

However, the applicability of bottom-up peacebuilding is often constrained in highly militarized environments. In Sudan, the dominance of armed actors such as the SAF and RSF limits the operational space for civil society and grassroots initiatives. As Richmond (2014) argues, peacebuilding efforts are frequently shaped by the interaction between local agency and elite power structures, with the latter often resisting reforms that threaten their control. This dynamic underscores the tension between inclusive peacebuilding ideals and the realities of power politics in fragile states.

The critique of liberal peacebuilding further complicates the discourse. Paris (2004) argues that international peacebuilding efforts often prioritize rapid democratization, market liberalization, and institution-building without adequately considering local contexts or the sequencing of reforms. He introduces the concept of "institutionalization before liberalization," suggesting that stable institutions must be established before democratic processes can be effectively implemented. In fragile states like Sudan, where institutions are weak and fragmented, premature democratization can exacerbate political competition and trigger renewed conflict.

This critique is particularly relevant to Sudan's post-2019 transition. While efforts were made to establish a civilian-led government and initiate democratic reforms, these processes were not accompanied by comprehensive security sector reform (SSR). As a result, powerful military actors retained control over coercive instruments of the state, ultimately undermining the transition and contributing to the outbreak of conflict in 2023. As Hameiri (2014) notes, without restructuring

the power relations embedded within the state, peacebuilding interventions are unlikely to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Moreover, contemporary peacebuilding scholarship emphasizes the importance of hybrid peace approaches, which integrate international frameworks with local practices (Mac Ginty, 2011). Hybrid peace recognizes that externally imposed models of governance often fail when they do not align with local norms and realities. In Sudan, where diverse ethnic, tribal, and regional identities shape political dynamics, peacebuilding strategies must be context-sensitive and inclusive of local governance structures.

Another critical dimension is the role of justice and reconciliation in post-conflict settings. Transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions, reparations, and accountability processes are essential for addressing past grievances and preventing the recurrence of violence (Teitel, 2000). In Sudan, widespread human rights violations, particularly in Darfur and during the current conflict, highlight the need for accountability as part of any sustainable peace process. Despite these theoretical advancements, peacebuilding in fragile states continues to face significant challenges. These include ongoing violence, lack of political will among elites, fragmented international interventions, and limited resources. In Sudan, the interplay between internal power struggles and external influences further complicates peace efforts, often leading to fragmented and ineffective mediation initiatives.

In sum, the literature suggests that sustainable peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected states requires a multidimensional approach that combines institutional reform, inclusive governance, local participation, and security sector transformation. In the case of Sudan, the failure to address these interconnected dimensions has contributed to the persistence of conflict and the collapse of governance, underscoring the need for a more integrated and context-specific peacebuilding strategy.

Empirical Gaps in the Literature

Despite the growing body of recent scholarship on Sudan's conflict, significant empirical gaps remain in understanding the interaction between state fragility, militia politics, and governance collapse. Recent studies have extensively documented the humanitarian and institutional consequences of the April 2023 war, including mass displacement, economic disruption, and the breakdown of public services (International Rescue Committee [IRC], 2024; ScienceDirect, 2024). However, much of this literature remains fragmented, often addressing humanitarian, political, or economic dimensions in isolation rather than integrating them into a comprehensive analytical framework of state fragility.

One major empirical gap lies in the lack of integrated, multi-dimensional analyses of Sudan's crisis. For instance, Milton (2025) emphasizes the need for a "holistic, multi-level assessment" of the Sudan conflict, noting that existing research tends to focus on discrete impacts rather than the interconnected processes that drive state collapse. Similarly, reports by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC, 2025) highlight the complex interplay between governance breakdown, armed violence, and economic collapse but stop short of systematically theorizing how these elements reinforce each other within a fragile state framework. This indicates a gap in linking empirical observations to broader theoretical explanations of fragility.

A second gap concerns the limited integration of militia politics into state fragility analysis. While recent reports acknowledge the central role of armed actors such as the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in sustaining the conflict, they often treat these actors descriptively rather than analytically (Policy Center for the New South, 2024; AFSC, 2025). Yet, evidence suggests that Sudan's war is driven by militarized governance structures and war economies that empower militias and undermine state authority (AFSC, 2025). The absence of systematic empirical analysis linking militia autonomy, economic control, and political competition to governance collapse represents a critical gap in the literature.

Another important gap relates to the governance implications of territorial fragmentation. Emerging studies indicate that the Sudan conflict has produced fragmented systems of authority in which armed groups exercise control over territories and populations (Conflict Sensitivity Facility Sudan, 2023). These de facto governance arrangements often rely on coercion, informal taxation, and resource extraction, thereby replacing formal state institutions (AFSC, 2025). However, there is limited empirical research that systematically examines how these localized governance systems function across different regions or how they affect long-term prospects for state reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Furthermore, the literature reveals a gap in explaining the failure of peacebuilding and mediation efforts. Although studies have documented the breakdown of international initiatives such as the Jeddah peace talks, there is insufficient empirical analysis of why these efforts have failed to produce sustainable outcomes (Policy Center for the New South, 2024). In particular, the role of elite militarization, competing external interests, and the absence of comprehensive security sector reform remain underexplored in empirical terms.

Finally, there is a notable gap in context-specific peacebuilding research that integrates both structural and proximate drivers of conflict. While recent analyses highlight the risks of prolonged conflict and state collapse, they also acknowledge that existing research has not fully captured the complexity of Sudan's crisis or developed sufficiently grounded peacebuilding strategies (Sudan Democracy Action, 2024). This underscores the need for research that connects long-term structural factors such as historical marginalization and weak institutions with immediate drivers, including militia competition, war economies, and ongoing violence. However, although recent literature provides valuable insights into Sudan's conflict, it remains insufficiently integrated and empirically grounded. There is a clear need for studies that systematically examine how state fragility and militia politics interact to produce governance collapse, and how this interaction shapes the prospects for sustainable peacebuilding in Sudan.

Historical Roots of the Sudan Crisis

The contemporary crisis in Sudan is deeply rooted in a long history of authoritarian governance, civil war, and the systematic militarization of political power. Since independence in 1956, Sudan has experienced recurrent military coups and prolonged periods of authoritarian rule, which have hindered the development of stable democratic institutions (Johnson, 2016). The regime of President Omar al-Bashir (1989–2019) entrenched a system of governance characterized by repression, patronage, and reliance on irregular armed groups to maintain control. A key feature of Bashir's rule was the use of militias, particularly during the Darfur conflict in the early 2000s. The Janjaweed militias were mobilized by the state to suppress insurgencies, leading to widespread atrocities and accusations of genocide (Flint & de Waal, 2008). Over time, these militias were institutionalized into the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), formalizing their role within Sudan's

security architecture while maintaining a high degree of autonomy (de Waal, 2022). This institutionalization of militias created parallel security structures that undermined the coherence of the state.

The 2019 revolution, which led to Bashir's removal, created an opportunity for democratic transition. However, the transitional arrangement that followed failed to dismantle these entrenched military networks. Instead, a power-sharing agreement between civilian actors and the military allowed key security institutions to remain under the control of military elites (International Crisis Group, 2023). This fragile arrangement reflected what de Waal (2022) describes as Sudan's "political marketplace," where power is negotiated through patronage and coercion rather than institutional legitimacy. The October 2021 military coup, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (SAF) and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (RSF), marked a decisive setback for civilian governance. The coup not only dissolved the transitional government but also intensified tensions between the SAF and RSF, whose competing ambitions for political and economic dominance ultimately culminated in the outbreak of full-scale conflict in April 2023 (International Crisis Group, 2023). Thus, Sudan's current crisis is best understood as the outcome of historical patterns of militarization, elite competition, and institutional weakness.

Armed Militias and the Fragmentation of State Authority

The proliferation and empowerment of armed militias are central to understanding Sudan's state collapse. In fragile states, militias often emerge as alternative centers of power, challenging the state's monopoly over violence (Ahram, 2011). In Sudan, the RSF represents a particularly significant example of this phenomenon, having evolved from a counterinsurgency force into a powerful and economic actor with its own command structures and resource base (de Waal, 2022).

The rivalry between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF has transformed Sudan into a fragmented battlefield characterized by competing centers of authority. Rather than a unified national army, Sudan now exhibits a dual military structure in which both forces operate independently and compete for territorial control and political influence (International Crisis Group, 2023). This fragmentation has been further exacerbated by the mobilization of allied militias, tribal forces, and foreign-backed actors, contributing to the decentralization of violence and governance. In addition to military fragmentation, the conflict has led to the emergence of localized systems of rule. Armed groups have established control over territories where they exercise authority through coercion, taxation, and resource extraction. Such arrangements reflect what Reno (1998) describes as "warlord politics," in which armed actors govern through informal and often predatory mechanisms. In Sudan, the RSF's involvement in gold mining and other economic activities has enabled it to sustain its operations independently of the state, reinforcing a war economy that perpetuates conflict (de Waal, 2022).

These dynamics have profound implications for state authority. The existence of multiple armed actors with competing interests undermines efforts to establish centralized governance and complicates peacebuilding initiatives. As Staniland (2014) argues, fragmented armed groups are more likely to engage in opportunistic violence and resist integration into formal state structures, thereby prolonging conflict.

Collapse of Civil Governance and Humanitarian Consequences

The ongoing conflict between the SAF and RSF has resulted in the near-total collapse of civil governance in Sudan. Public institutions, including healthcare systems, educational institutions, and administrative structures, have been severely disrupted or destroyed. This institutional breakdown reflects a broader pattern of state failure in which the government is unable to perform its core functions or maintain legitimacy (Rotberg, 2004). Humanitarian indicators underscore the scale of the crisis. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2024), more than 10 million people have been displaced, making Sudan one of the largest displacement crises globally. Additionally, over 30 million people require humanitarian assistance, with widespread food insecurity and famine conditions reported in several regions (OCHA, 2024). The collapse of basic services has further exacerbated the suffering of civilians, particularly vulnerable populations such as women and children.

The conflict has also been characterized by widespread human rights violations. Reports from international organizations document incidents of ethnically targeted violence, sexual violence, and deliberate attacks on civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Both the SAF and RSF have been accused of violating international humanitarian law, demonstrating what analysts describe as a disregard for civilian protection (Human Rights Watch, 2024). These developments highlight the erosion of state legitimacy, as the government is either unwilling or unable to protect its population. As Fukuyama (2014) notes, legitimacy is a critical component of state stability, and its absence can lead to prolonged conflict and governance collapse. In Sudan, the humanitarian crisis is both a consequence and a driver of state fragility, reinforcing cycles of violence and instability.

External Actors and the Internationalization of the Conflict

Sudan's conflict has increasingly taken on a regional and international dimension, with external actors playing a significant role in shaping its trajectory. Neighboring states, regional powers, and global actors have provided varying degrees of political, financial, and military support to different factions, effectively transforming the conflict into a proxy war (International Crisis Group, 2023). External involvement has contributed to the prolongation of the conflict by supplying resources and legitimizing armed actors. For instance, reports indicate that foreign support has enabled both the SAF and RSF to sustain military operations despite internal constraints (de Waal, 2022). This external backing not only intensifies the conflict but also undermines efforts to reach negotiated settlements.

Moreover, the fragmentation of international responses has weakened mediation initiatives. Competing geopolitical interests have led to inconsistent and uncoordinated approaches to conflict resolution, reducing the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts such as ceasefire negotiations and peace talks (International Crisis Group, 2023). As a result, peacebuilding efforts have struggled to gain traction in the absence of a unified international strategy. The internationalization of Sudan's conflict underscores the complexity of contemporary civil wars, where internal dynamics are closely intertwined with external influences. As observed in other conflict settings, the involvement of external actors can both exacerbate violence and complicate peace processes, making sustainable resolution more difficult to achieve (Paris, 2004).

Challenges to Peacebuilding in Sudan

Efforts toward peacebuilding in Sudan face several structural challenges:

Militarization of Politics: The dominance of armed actors in political life makes it difficult to transition toward civilian governance.

Fragmented Authority: Multiple armed groups and localized power centers complicate negotiation processes.

Weak Institutions: The collapse of administrative and judicial systems undermines post-conflict reconstruction.

Lack of Trust: Years of conflict and failed agreements have eroded trust among stakeholders.

External Interference: Competing geopolitical interests hinder coordinated international mediation.

Prospects for Sustainable Peacebuilding

Despite these challenges, several pathways for sustainable peacebuilding can be identified:

Inclusive Political Dialogue: Peacebuilding must prioritize a **civilian-led political process** that includes women, youth, and marginalized groups .

Security Sector Reform (SSR): The integration or demobilization of militias, particularly the RSF, is essential for restoring state authority.

Strengthening Institutions: Rebuilding governance structures especially judicial and administrative systems is critical for long-term stability.

Addressing War Economy: Disrupting illicit economic networks that sustain armed groups can reduce incentives for continued conflict.

Coordinated International Support: A unified international approach is necessary to support mediation, enforce ceasefires, and provide humanitarian assistance.

Conclusion

The Sudan crisis vividly demonstrates the destructive interplay between state fragility, militarized governance, and the proliferation of armed militias. The analysis shows that the rivalry between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has not only accelerated the breakdown of state authority but also entrenched a system of fragmented governance that undermines prospects for stability. The inability of the state to monopolize the use of force, coupled with the persistence of parallel security structures, has resulted in institutional collapse and widespread humanitarian suffering.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the absence of effective security sector reform and inclusive political arrangements has perpetuated cycles of violence and weakened peacebuilding efforts. The dominance of military elites in political processes continues to obstruct the transition to civilian governance, while external interference and economic interests further complicate conflict resolution. These dynamics highlight that Sudan's crisis is not merely a political dispute but a structural problem rooted in decades of militarization and governance failure.

Therefore, achieving sustainable peace in Sudan requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both the immediate drivers of conflict and the underlying structural causes of state fragility. Without such an integrated strategy, peace initiatives are likely to remain fragile, temporary, and ultimately ineffective.

Recommendations

1. Implement comprehensive security sector reform integrating SAF and RSF.
2. Establish inclusive civilian-led transitional governance structures.
3. Strengthen judicial and administrative institutions for state legitimacy.
4. Coordinate international mediation to limit external interference.

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