

Violation of Females by RSF Forces and the Occupation in Sudan

Executive Summary

The armed conflict in Sudan, which escalated in April 2023, has resulted in one of the world's most severe humanitarian and human rights crises. Women and girls have been disproportionately affected, facing increased risks of violence, forced displacement, exploitation, and systematic violations of their rights, particularly in areas under the control or influence of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

These violations are not isolated incidents. They stem from broader patterns of armed conflict, militarization, weak accountability, political instability, and the deliberate use of fear and coercion to control civilian populations. As law enforcement and protection systems collapse during wartime, women become especially vulnerable to harm, abuse, and long-term rights violations.

*This issue lies at the intersection of **armed conflict, gender-based violence, occupation of civilian spaces, international humanitarian law, and women's rights**, making it highly relevant to the mandate of **UN Women**.*

Historical & Political Background

Sudan's political instability has deep historical roots, shaped by decades of authoritarian governance, economic struggles, and recurring armed conflict. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) trace their origins to militias involved in earlier conflicts, particularly in Darfur, where civilian populations experienced mass displacement and serious human rights violations. In 2013, the RSF was formally institutionalized as a paramilitary force under Sudan's security structure, significantly expanding its political and military influence.

Following Sudan's 2019 revolution and the subsequent political transition, tensions between military factions intensified amid struggles for power and control. Rivalry between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF ultimately erupted into open warfare in April 2023, leading to widespread urban combat, territorial fragmentation, and the near-collapse of governance in multiple regions. As state institutions weakened, law enforcement and civilian protection mechanisms — particularly those safeguarding women — deteriorated sharply, allowing patterns of abuse, insecurity, and impunity to proliferate with limited accountability.

Gender-Based Violations in Conflict Contexts

In conflict settings, women and girls often face heightened risks due to displacement, economic dependency, disrupted family structures, and limited access to protection services. Gender-based violations in Sudan have reportedly occurred within a broader pattern of insecurity, lawlessness, and militarization. These acts not only harm individuals but also destabilize communities by spreading fear, reinforcing gender inequality, and eroding trust in institutions.

The long-term consequences extend beyond immediate harm. Survivors frequently encounter stigma, limited access to justice, economic hardship, interrupted education, and psychological trauma. Additionally, the targeting of women can be used strategically in conflict to displace populations, weaken social cohesion, and exert control over communities.

Humanitarian and Social Impact on Women and Girls

The humanitarian crisis in Sudan has forced millions to flee their homes, with women comprising a large proportion of internally displaced persons and refugees. Many women now lead households in conditions of poverty, limited access to healthcare, food insecurity, and disrupted education for their children.

Healthcare systems have been severely damaged, reducing access to maternal health services, reproductive care, and trauma support. Meanwhile, education disruptions have disproportionately affected girls, increasing the risk of early marriage, exploitation, and long-term economic exclusion. The cumulative effect is the deepening of gender inequality and the loss of progress in women's empowerment.

At a societal level, widespread trauma and displacement threaten social stability. The marginalization of women in recovery processes risks weakening Sudan's future governance and reconciliation efforts, highlighting the urgent need to integrate women into peacebuilding and humanitarian leadership.

Legal and International Frameworks

The violations faced by Sudanese women fall under multiple international legal frameworks designed to protect civilians and uphold gender equality. Sudan is subject to obligations under

international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

International humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions, mandates the protection of civilians during armed conflict. Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council's Women, Peace and Security agenda — notably Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions — emphasizes the protection of women in conflict zones and their inclusion in peace processes.

Despite these frameworks, enforcement remains limited due to political deadlock, restricted access to conflict zones, and challenges in documenting violations.

Role of the United Nations and UN Women

UN Women plays a critical role in responding to gender-specific consequences of the Sudan crisis by supporting emergency relief, legal assistance, economic empowerment programs, and survivor-centered initiatives. The agency collaborates with humanitarian partners to establish safe spaces, expand psychosocial support, and strengthen women's leadership in crisis response.

Other UN entities, including UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, and the World Food Programme, contribute to refugee protection, child welfare, human rights monitoring, and humanitarian relief. However, operational challenges such as security risks, funding gaps, and political constraints limit the scale and reach of international intervention.

Timeline of Key Developments

Understanding how this crisis developed over time is essential to evaluating accountability, escalation, and opportunities for international intervention.

2003–2010: *Conflict in Darfur escalates, involving militia groups later associated with RSF origins.*

2013: *RSF is formally established as a paramilitary force.*

2019: *Sudan undergoes political transition following mass protests.*

April 2023: *Armed conflict erupts between SAF and RSF.*

Mid-2023: *International organizations report rising gender-based violations amid displacement.*

Late-2023: *UN agencies classify Sudan as one of the world's largest humanitarian crises.*

2024: *Expanded international investigations into conflict-related abuses.*

2024–2025: *Increased UN Women emergency programming and advocacy for survivor protection.*

Present: *Ongoing humanitarian response, diplomatic negotiations, and accountability efforts.*

Key Challenges in Addressing the Crisis

Efforts to address violations against women in Sudan face major obstacles. These include limited access to affected regions, fear among survivors to report abuses, cultural stigma, weak legal institutions, funding shortages, and international political divisions. Additionally, accountability mechanisms struggle to operate effectively in active conflict zones, leaving many violations unresolved.

The absence of sustainable ceasefire agreements further complicates humanitarian operations and prolongs civilian suffering.

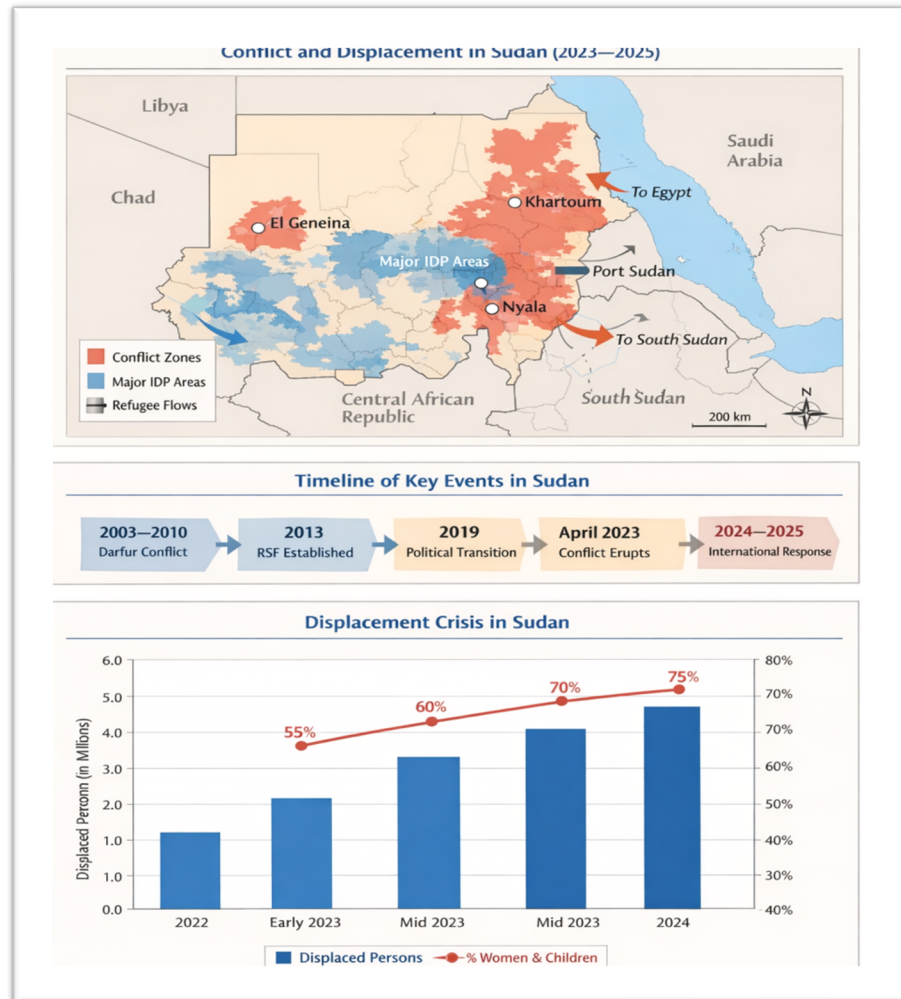
Policy Directions and Strategic Focus for Delegates

Delegates are encouraged to explore policies that strengthen protection mechanisms, expand survivor support services, improve humanitarian access, and reinforce accountability. Emphasis should be placed on women-led peacebuilding, gender-responsive aid distribution, legal reform, and international cooperation.

Solutions should balance immediate humanitarian relief with long-term structural reforms, ensuring that Sudanese women are not only protected but empowered in post-conflict recovery.

Conclusion

The ongoing violations against women and girls in Sudan represent a critical humanitarian, legal, and moral crisis that demands sustained international action. These abuses expose systemic failures in civilian protection, accountability, and gender equality in conflict settings, threatening Sudan's long-term stability and social recovery. Effective responses must prioritize survivor dignity, expand access to justice, strengthen humanitarian protection, and prevent future violations through coordinated global efforts. Most importantly, Sudanese women must be recognized not only as survivors, but as essential leaders in peacebuilding, recovery, and national reconstruction. Through informed debate and decisive policy-making, UN Women delegates have the opportunity to transform global concern into meaningful protection, accountability, and lasting change.



Relevant sources

Articles:

1. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/the-impact-of-sudans-war-on-women-two-years-on>
2. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/04/sudan-rapid-support-forces-horrific-and-widespread-use-of-sexual-violence-leaves-lives-in-tatters/>
3. <https://www.annd.org/en/publications/details/sudan-war-women-are-caught-between-hunger-and-sexual-violence-neimat-kuku>
4. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166327>

Videos:

1. <https://www.google.com/url?esrc=s&q=&rct=j&sa=U&url=https://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv%3D0Zrv1eQ1NjU&ved=2ahUKEwj2tf-0q2SAxWrdaQEHZAVPPYQFnoECAsQAq&usg=AOvVaw2ufvlws56apjFpO5hF6tIE>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDfhxMwoyWo>