

On Sudan Genocide: From El-Fasher to Dubai and Berlin(s)

written by Nima Sabouri | November 10, 2025

The (new) genocide carried out by the RSF in El-Fasher and Darfur has been a consequence of direct support from the UAE and covert backing from Western states and Russia. Condemning RSF and its diverse supporters must be accompanied by a broader analytical and political perspective.

Introduction: After the outbreak of the Rapid Support Forces' (RSF) massacre in El-Fasher and the beginning of a new phase of genocide in Darfur (carried out by the same forces as before), standing against this genocide requires, of course, pressuring the immediate supporters of the RSF, especially the rulers of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, it is also essential to highlight the broader context of the contemporary global order in which the RSF has emerged and has been supported and operating, including the historical origins of its military-political rise. Accordingly, some key questions that need to be emphasized and examined are as follows:

(1) How was the infamous *Janjawid* militia, which carried out the first genocide in Darfur under Hemedti's command, able to become a central actor in Sudan's political and military landscape under the new rebranding as the RSF[1]? This is especially notable given that the militia-organisation was internationally condemned and pursued under criminal-judicial standards and laws. While this is not a new phenomenon, regarding similar examples in modern history, it is crucial to identify and uncover the factors, forces, and mechanisms that facilitated the military and political rise of the former Janjawid under the guise of the RSF, especially because this grim scenario tends to repeat itself.

(2) What conditions and factors in the contemporary global order have enabled the UAE to play such a brutal role in Sudan (and Yemen)? Specifically, what has transformed this small Gulf state into a sub-imperialist power in the region?

This brief note is not intended to provide answers to the questions above. Instead, it aims – mainly by referencing the role of the German state in the emergence of the Sudanese disasters – to shed light on some related aspects.

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Since the start of the “generals’ war[2]” in Sudan, the prominent role of the UAE in supporting RSF and its evident impact on prolonging this disastrous conflict has increasingly (though still insufficiently) been discussed in some marginalized political and media circles, mainly within the leftist spectrum and among human rights activists[3]. However, after the RSF's atrocities in El-Fasher brought Sudan into the spotlight of the public sphere[4], criticisms of the UAE suddenly gained more prominence even within mainstream media and politics. For example, in Germany, the UAE's support for the RSF is now mentioned in mainstream arenas as a trivial fact. Due to the global attention surrounding the El-Fasher tragedy, governments and rulers who, since the beginning of the “generals’ war,” have ignored its inhumane consequences and – pursuing their usual interests – have directly or indirectly fueled this war machine can no longer sustain their silence and indifference.

Therefore, whether to demonstrate their commitment to human rights or to conceal their complicity in facilitating these atrocities, rulers of all major powers line up before media cameras to condemn the new phase of genocide in Sudan/Darfur during their diplomatic performances. However, as usual, when state leaders seek to take the initiative in moral criticisms and condemnations, their primary aim is mostly to reduce, distort, or mask important aspects of the reality. Under such conditions, even though critical attention to the role of the UAE has increased, the UAE can serve as a scapegoat for more powerful states. As a sub-imperialist power pursuing its own interests in Sudan, the UAE's actions have largely aligned with those of larger powers: from aiding in the circulation of smuggled gold and weapons to suppress revolutionary movements[5], the UAE has contributed to the perpetuation of contemporary imperialist relations [see Hossam Mahjoub's article[6]].

In a simultaneously ridiculous and tragic example, making it a notable historical case, the German government, with a firm and clear tone, condemned the ongoing massacre in El-Fasher. For instance, the German Foreign Minister, Johann Wadephul, described the genocide in Sudan as "absolutely an apocalyptic situation" and "the greatest human catastrophe in the world[7]" during a press conference while visiting Bahrain. Friedrich Merz and his *team* in German Government may have hoped that the people of the world would have already forgotten that this is the same government that has firmly denied the occurrence of genocide in Israel and has continually fueled Israel's war machine. However, the issue is not merely that German rulers clumsily attempt to conceal the previous and ongoing genocide (perpetrated by the Israeli state) by highlighting a new crisis. The more pressing issue is that, once again, the hands of the German government - along with those of other major powers - are stained in connection with the genocide in Sudan. Although the reasons and contexts behind this claim are less clear amid the rapid flow of recent events, at least two main factors explain Germany's and other European powers' complicity in the crimes now attributed primarily to the RSF (and, to a much lesser extent, the UAE government):

First, the German state, as the leading power of the EU, has played a prominent role in shaping the EU's (anti)refugee policies; policies that have transformed Europe's borders and surrounding seas into mass graves for refugees, exemplified by measures such as the militarized security project of Frontex. Alongside these policies, bloody missions have been delegated to military regimes and paramilitary groups in Egypt, Algeria, and Libya, targeting African refugees. This policy, in turn, embodies an imperialist mechanism which could be described as "outsourcing repression and crimes." Additionally, deadly barrier measures have been established within Africa to prevent the east-African migrants and refugees from reaching European borders. The RSF has been one of these "border guards", supported by the EU through semi-transparent agreements made in 2014, involving military equipment, technical training, financial aid, and political backing, thus normalizing its criminal conduct. [See Reta Barfuss' report[8]] It is important to note that the EU and EAU have not been the sole providers of training and military support for the RSF: while the Russian government seeks to deftly manage and maintain its relations with the emerging powerholders in Sudan by backing both sides[9] in the "Generals' War," the notorious Wagner paramilitary group - serving as the unofficial extension of Russia's military and imperialist interventions[10] - has had close collaboration with the RSF[11].

Second, the UAE, now somewhat (though only somewhat) recognized within the political-media sphere as the primary financial and military supporter of the RSF and thus temporarily and indirectly blamed (only to some extent) for the El-Fasher atrocities, has historically been one of the significant economic and political partners of successive German governments in Southwest Asia. While the UAE does not produce arms itself, as a regional sub-imperialist with specific interests in military interventions and militarization in the region, it has over the past decades purchased and proliferated weapons made by countries like Germany[12]. From a broader perspective, the UAE, as

well as other despotic powers in the Gulf region, has long served as a key economic and geostrategically for Western powers, including the United States[13]. In a broad assessment, the emergence of the UAE as a sub-imperialist power must be analyzed through a political-economic framework that considers the role and function of the Gulf region within contemporary capitalism[14], particularly in the context of imperialist struggles among global powers for dominance over the Middle East[15]. Within this framework, the rise of the UAE, similar to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, has primarily been driven by a combination of the following factors: on one hand, abundant oil and gas resources; regional transit of goods and large-scale consumption; unique capacities for capital investment and accumulation, as well as for the export of capital and the hosting of financial capital; and its geostrategic position at the heart of the Middle East. On the other hand, authoritarian regimes and corrupt ruling classes, which have consistently embraced imperialist partnerships to secure their survival, whether against local discontent, internal rivalries, or in confrontations with neighboring states, have thus acted as regional centers for consolidating and expanding imperialist relations.

Despite all that has been said, although the (new) genocide carried out by the RSF in El-Fasher and Darfur has been a consequence of direct support from the UAE and covert backing from Western states and Russia, condemning the RSF and its diverse supporters must be accompanied by a broader analytical and political perspective to: **a)** avoid fostering the misconception that the opposing force in this war, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) led by General Al-Burhan, is a progressive or popular force. Because General Al-Burhan not only (along with General Hemedti) laid the military foundation for the continuation of Omar al-Bashir's dictatorship but – again with the cooperation of the RSF – played a decisive role in suppressing Sudan's revolution and establishing the subsequent military dictatorship. Furthermore, numerous reports document crimes committed by forces under Al-Burhan's command during the current war. **b)** divert our critical focus from other actors in this tragic war. The development and escalation of conflicts and hostilities between the two sides of the "General's war" are both a consequence of imperialist relations that support political authoritarianism in Sudan and the region, and – simultaneously – have paved the way for the recurrence of devastating interventions by competing regional and global powers, each pursuing their own interests in Sudan. For example, the support of sub-imperialist states such as Iran[16], Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt for the SAF during this war is solely aimed at establishing a firmer foothold in Sudan's future; especially considering Sudan's vast and fertile agricultural lands, rich gold and mineral resources, and most notably its geostrategic location on the Red Sea, which makes it highly attractive for global and regional powers seeking military and geopolitical dominance in the Horn of Africa.

Conclusion:

The UAE government, in its own right, ultimately performs the same kind of "dirty work" for Western great powers that Friedrich Merz recently praised Israel's government for doing. While exposing and condemning the UAE's role in the Sudanese atrocities is necessary within the German and European/Western political spheres, the current moment requires linking these intertwined facts to broader dynamics of global dominance[17]. This entails demonstrating that how the foundations of the UAE's economic and political power in the MENA-region are rooted in (and dependent on) the historical existence and functions of imperialist relations; relations that are, in turn, reinforced and reproduced through the sub-imperialist functions of governments such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel, Turkey, Qatar. Thus, both the RSF's atrocities and the UAE's support and complicity are indeed rooted in the same mechanism of the contemporary global order: the "outsourcing of crimes and repression" to distant actors to sustain the *status quo* of global capitalism; namely, protecting the main interests of the capitalist centers.

However, while critical reflection on the current tragedy in Sudan highlights this imperialist mechanism, considering the revolutionary path of the oppressed in Sudan since 2013, particularly

the achievements of neighborhood-based resistance committees[18], offers insight into how a “power from below” can be built against the increasing brutality of the dominant powers.

If we accept that the “generals’ war” was primarily aimed at suppressing the Sudanese revolution, then strengthening and amplifying these revolutionary achievements is a vital component in developing an alternative internationalist strategy for solidarity with the suffering and struggles of the oppressed in Sudan and other oppressed peoples of the Global South.

Endnotes:

[1] A key factor in the rise of the RSF and the expansion of their ties with the UAE was their active participation in the Yemen war, where they operated as military mercenaries in support of the UAE’s interests.

[2] Since April 2023, all mainstream media have referred to the war in Sudan as a “civil war,” exemplifying how powerholders use framing and language to obscure the true reality. In truth, it is not ordinary Sudanese people fighting each other; rather, foreign-supported generals have been battling to impose their own interests and those of their backers over the will and aspirations of the Sudanese population. The Sudanese people have long engaged in a progressive and peaceful revolutionary movement demanding profound and meaningful change. Therefore, using the term “generals’ war” in this essay serves to avoid – and to critique – this linguistic trap.

[3] For instance: Oscar Rickett: *How the UAE kept the Sudan war raging*. MiddleEastEye, 25 January 2024.

[4] While the expansion of the “generals’ war” was exposing an increasing number of Sudanese people to its catastrophic consequences, the situation in Sudan did not receive proportional coverage in the public media. This tendency was especially amplified after the start of the genocidal war in Gaza in October 2023.

[5] While the ‘generals’ war’ has often been condemned on the grounds of human rights concerns, the ways in which this war functioned as a decisive mechanism to suppress the revolutionary movement of the Sudanese people (which began in December 2018) have been widely neglected; regarding the fact that various suppression efforts (until the war) failed to stop this revolutionary movement. Notably, both generals, who are now fighting against each other, previously worked closely together in implementing these counter-revolutionary measures: from hindering the establishment of a civilian government following the revolutionary overthrow of Omar al-Bashir’s dictatorship in April 2019, to the massacre of revolutionaries in June 2019, and finally to the military coup against the transitional government in October 2021.

[6] Husam Mahjoub: *The UAE’s Subimperialism in Sudan – Counterrevolution, Gold, and Global Impunity*. Spectre, August 15, 2025.

[7] Deutsche Welle: *Sudan: Foreign ministers decry ‘apocalyptic’ atrocities*, Nov. 1, 2025.

[8] Reta Barfuss: *How the European Union finances oppression, Migration Control*, May 26th, 2023.

[9] Rickett O., and Amin M.: *Sudan war: Russia hedges bets by aiding both sides in conflict*. Middle East Eye. 6 May 2024.

[10] Seth Jones *et al.*: *Russia’s Corporate Soldiers: The Global Expansion of Russia’s Private Military Companies*, CSIS, July 2021.

[11] Catrina Doxsee: *How Does the Conflict in Sudan Affect Russia and the Wagner Group?*, SCIS, April 20, 2023.

2024. Mohamedou: *Wagner Group, Russia's Foreign Policy and Sub-Saharan Africa*, Geneva Paper 32/24, GCSP, March 2024.

[12] For instance: "North Rhine-Westphalia is expanding its arms cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, while they are arming the genocidal militia RSF in Sudan." Source: "*Konstruktive Kräfte*", German-Foreign-Policy.

[13] Dan Alexander: *This Gulf Nation Is Powering Trump's Moneymaking Machine*, Forbes, Published Oct 27, 2025, Updated Oct 28, 2025.

[14] For instance, see:

Adam Hanieh: *Money, Markets, and Monarchies: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Political Economy of the Contemporary Middle East*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Kevin B. Anderson: *Marx's anti-colonialism, new sub-imperialisms and consistent internationalism in a bipolar world*, Interview with Federico Fuentes, The international Marxist-Humanist, August 13, 2024.

[15] The notion that the sub-imperialist rise of the UAE is rooted in the signing of the Abraham Accords with Israel (mediated by the U.S.) does not appear to be accurate. One reason is that several other regional sub-imperialist states have not yet joined the Abraham Accords; another is that, long before this agreement was signed in 2020, the UAE was actively engaged in regional developments from a sub-imperialist stance. For instance, through its interventions in the Syrian war, its neo-colonial presence in the economy and politics of Sudan (and some other countries in the east Africa), and notably, its active participation in the Yemen conflict since 2014. While aligning closely with the regional policies of the U.S. and Israel grants the UAE's state greater international immunity, its economic and military rise occurred prior to such protections and independently of them.

[16] During the ongoing war in Sudan, the Iranian regime, similar to the Turkish regime, has primarily supported the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), with a focus on political and military backing. The importance of this military support for the SAF is especially linked to the receipt of military drones from the two aforementioned states, enabling SAF to gain a decisive military advantage in the conflict. See:

Mostafa Ahmed: *Iranian Influence in Sudan: Balancing Drone Diplomacy and Conflict Pressures*, Aug. 4, 2024.

Mustafa E. Esen: *Turkey's Chosen Side in Sudan: Why It Matters?*, Institute, Jan. 17, 2025.

Meanwhile, however, the RSF has also expanded its drone arsenal mediated by the UAE, and other supporting governments operating behind the scenes.

[17] Abu Hureirah: *Sudan at the Crossroads of Empire - Revolution, Counterrevolution, and the UAE's Subimperial Ambitions*. Oct 28, 2025.

[18] To read more about the resistance committees in Sudan, see for instance:

Osman Aballah: *The Neighbourhood Committees and the Revolutionary Charter*, In interview with Marwan Osman and Eberhard Jungfer, Sudan Dossier, Migration Control, August 7, 2024.

Hamad Gamal, Sarah Bachellerie: *Resistance committees, a revolution from below in Sudan*,

International Viewpoint, Feb. 10, 2022.

Uprising in Sudan: Interview with Sudanese Comrades, Historical Materialism, 27 May 2019.