



Deutsche Afrika Stiftung e.V.  
Fondation Allemande pour l'Afrique  
German Africa Foundation



## Summary

### **Parliamentary breakfast: "No peace in sight? - Assessments of the current humanitarian situation in Sudan and South Sudan"**

21 March 2024, 7:45 - 8:45hrs  
German Bundestag, Berlin

#### **Background**

Despite international mediation efforts, there is no end in sight to the conflict in Sudan. Almost 25 million people, a good half of the population, are in need of humanitarian aid, including around 5 million people on the brink of famine and almost 7 million children who are severely malnourished. Since the start of the war in April 2023, almost 8 million people have also been displaced from their homes. Many of them have fled to Egypt, Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Central African Republic - countries that are already struggling with immense difficulties. In South Sudan there are still 2.6 million internally displaced people and the political transition, which is due to end in free and fair elections at the end of this year, is on shaky ground. As a result, not only is the humanitarian situation in Sudan continuing to deteriorate, but the potential for destabilisation of the entire region is also steadily increasing. Nevertheless, the Sudan crisis and its impact on neighbouring countries remain almost invisible to the global community.

Against this backdrop, Mrs Kordula Schulz-Asche, Member of the German Bundestag and Chair of the Parliamentary Group on Eastern Africa, and the German Africa Foundation, in cooperation with Plan International Germany, hosted a Parliamentary Breakfast.

#### **Highlights**

- The humanitarian situation in Sudan is critical. Not only is the world's largest famine looming, but the war is also threatening to spread to other countries in the region.
- The political situation is very difficult and complex due to the large number of actors involved in the conflict, the fragmentation of peace initiatives and the lack of mutual trust.
- In addition to the lack of humanitarian aid, there is also a lack of structures to distribute existing funds fairly; currently, relief supplies are mainly distributed to troops. One opportunity lies in cooperation with regional *emergency committees* in addition to traditional aid organisations.
- Together with France, Germany is pursuing the goal of uniting existing peace initiatives under a central mediator - but this mediator has not yet been identified. On 15 April, a donor conference will take place in Paris to raise funds for Sudan and its neighbouring countries.

Welcome & Moderation

**Kordula Schulz-Asche  
MP (The Greens), Chair  
of the Parliamentary  
Friendship Group for  
Relations with the  
States of East Africa**

Discussion

**Regine Hess**

Head of Division East Africa,  
Federal Foreign Office

**Mohammed Kamal**

Country Director South Sudan,  
Plan International



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aufgrund eines Beschlusses  
des Deutschen Bundestages



## Humanitarian situation on the ground

All participants agreed that the humanitarian situation in Sudan is critical and continues to worsen. Since the beginning of the war, 8 million people have been displaced from their homes and more than 7 million, including many children and pregnant women, are threatened by acute hunger. In addition to the inadequate humanitarian aid, the danger of the conflict spreading to neighbouring countries and the entire region was also emphasised. Countries such as South Sudan are already affected by multiple crises and are unable to provide for the many refugees. One example is the current partial prevention of the transfer of oil between Sudan and South Sudan, on which South Sudan is economically very dependent. Overall, there was an urgent warning that the situation in Sudan harbours the potential for a regional war spreading beyond Sudan.

## Complex and difficult political situation

There was also agreement on the assessment that a political détente, let alone an end to the war, is not in sight due to the multi-layered nature of the conflicts and the complex balance of power in the country. As the discussants pointed out, there are 14 different peace initiatives in the country, but they are not working together and none of them can unite the necessary breadth of actors behind them. Even the bigger and more prominent initiatives continue to face the criticism of not being inclusive enough. The talks initiated by the US and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah were cited as an example in which the conflict parties have not adhered to the results. One participant pointed out that Qatar was a more promising candidate for mediation than Saudi Arabia due to its relations with Islamist groups and the therefore existing dialogue channels. The involvement of other states and players such as Iran in the war (for example through the supply of weapons), which makes political progress in the region even more difficult, was also discussed. At the same time, the activities of these very actors, who are also involved in Ukraine and the Red Sea region, show the geopolitical importance of Sudan for Germany.

## Germany's role: Humanitarian aid

With regard to Germany's engagement in the region, reference was made to the large amount of humanitarian aid, which is nevertheless far from being sufficient. In this context, representatives from Sudan also noted that it was not just the amount of humanitarian aid that was the problem, but at least as much the unfair and corrupt distribution of goods. One participant pointed out that it was not primarily the fighting that was responsible for the famine, but also the corrupt political authorities. It was further stated, that there are more and more raids on harvest houses, hardly any safe distribution routes and food is mainly distributed to the troops. An immediate ceasefire and safe aid corridors are therefore urgently needed. There could also be an opportunity to work more closely with regional *emergency committees* and not just with established humanitarian aid organisations. Those present at the discussion also emphasised that Germany was reaching its limits with the large number of international crises and that other countries such as China were increasingly being called upon – which is what the United Nations were founded for.

## Germany's role: Political outlook

Apart from humanitarian aid, the fact that Germany is not forgetting Sudan and its neighbouring countries was underlined by Foreign Minister Baerbock's trip to the region in January. Together with France,



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Germany is currently not focussing on launching another new peace initiative, but rather on bringing existing initiatives together where possible, a participant said. However, a main mediator who would be able to unite enough actors behind him/her has not yet been identified. For some participants, the recently appointed Special Representative of the African Union, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, is a candidate for this role. Others disagreed, pointing out that the *Sudanese Armed Forces* (SAF) would presumably not accept him. There was a consensus that only people and organisations from the region should be considered as mediators. One participant also argued in favour of greater cooperation with China, as the latter had strong interests in the region and would certainly be prepared to cooperate pragmatically.

Despite the difficult situation, reference was also made to the existence of democratic movements and endeavours in Sudan, which should not be abandoned. At the same time, these democratic forces, especially the youth, are under massive pressure and are confronted with hostility and agitation on social media. Towards the end, a distinction was made between the state level and the civil society level of political action. Accordingly, Germany and other countries have a responsibility to exert more pressure on the warring parties and support civil society actors - but ultimately it should be the latter who determine the future of Sudan. Finally, reference was made to an international humanitarian conference on 15 April in Paris, at which France, Germany and the EU want to jointly mobilise funds for Sudan and its neighbouring countries.



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 Auswärtiges Amt  
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