

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

May 26, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

Since fighting began between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15, 2023, Sudan has been on a path to large-scale civil war. Over 700,000 Sudanese have been displaced internally since April 15. Over 160,000 people have fled to neighboring countries. Insecurity and the looting of humanitarian supplies, including food aid, continues to constrain the international humanitarian response.

While Embassy Khartoum was safely evacuated, thousands of American citizens and legal permanent residents (LPRs) remain. Meanwhile, ongoing negotiations to reach a short-term humanitarian ceasefire have exposed the hostile intentions of both belligerents. Continued fighting risks external interference that can prolong and widen the scope of the conflict.

As the U.S. Congress considers policy options to respond to the crisis, it is imperative to examine the goals and decisions that have led to this point. To that end, we respectfully request written unclassified responses, with classified annex, if necessary, to the following questions as soon as possible.

1. Please characterize any internal dissent raised within the Department about the trajectory of U.S.-Sudan policy since the fall of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019? How was such dissent handled within the Department?
2. Since the fall of Bashir in April 2019, the Administration made a single targeted economic sanction designation of the Sudanese Central Reserve Police for human rights abuses against pro-democracy protestors. Please describe and justify the State Department's position opposing the imposition of targeted economic sanctions on actors undermining a transition to democracy in Sudan following the October 2021 coup?
3. At the time of the missed April 1, 2023 deadline for a political agreement, what did the Department assess to be the key reason(s) for the delay? What were the key points of disagreement between the SAF and RSF? How did the Department plan to overcome these remaining differences?
4. Please detail the Department's efforts to facilitate progress on negotiations regarding the integration of the RSF into the SAF. Who from the U.S. was involved in these negotiations and how would you characterize the role of the United States, other members of the Quad, members of the Trilateral Mechanism, and other interested parties, including Egypt? What were the initial negotiating positions for the RSF and SAF, respectively, on this matter upon the outset of these discussions? What role, if any, did the Department of Defense play? What did the Department assess General Hemeti's ambitions and motivations to be with respect to the integration negotiations, and with respect to the political process?
5. Please confirm if any of the following issues were raised to facilitate progress on security sector reform negotiations: (1) command structure within an integrated military, (2) level of autonomy

for the RSF within an integrated military, and (3) salary and rank for newly integrated RSF soldiers. If these subjects were raised: when and to whom? If not, why not?

6. When was the last National Security Council-organized interagency meeting on Sudan prior to April 15? Who from the Department of State attended that meeting?
7. Prior to April 15, when was the last time Post's emergency action committee met, and what criteria were reviewed? When was EMB Khartoum's emergency action plan last updated? Why was there no public message posted via the embassy website or STEP in the days immediately preceding April 15, other than the one of April 13 warning American citizens against travel to Karima in northern Sudan?
8. What contingency plans had been established by the State Department in the event of a potential conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces given the Department's stated understanding that this was a high probability scenario?
9. We understand that senior officials in the State Department were warned by actors both internal and external to the administration that conflict was imminent in the days leading up to April 15. How did the State Department act upon those warnings, and at what level?
10. When did the State Department ask the Department of Defense for support to evacuate Chief of Mission personnel and subsequently to authorize the U.S. military to support the evacuations beyond providing ISR capabilities? How many U.S. citizens in Khartoum had contacted the Department requesting assistance to evacuate between April 15 and April 22, when the Department of Defense launched its evacuation operation?
11. What guidance was given to U.S. citizens who contacted the embassy or the Department after the fighting broke out, and how did that guidance change over time? On what date did the Department begin suggesting to U.S. citizens that they could go to Wadi Seidna airfield for evacuation by partner nations? Was that guidance shared with all U.S. citizens who were in contact with the embassy or the Department at that time?
12. What guidance was given to the embassy's Sudanese locally employed staff after the conflict began on April 15, and since the decision to evacuate American citizen embassy personnel? What efforts have been taken to ensure their safety, given their affiliation with the United States government? How many are currently employed and how many have had their employment terminated since April 15?

We look forward to your prompt responses.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL T. McCAUL  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



JAMES E. RISCH  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee