

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Supporting the inclusion of the women of Sudan in United States efforts
to end the conflict in Sudan.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following
resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Supporting the inclusion of the women of Sudan in United
States efforts to end the conflict in Sudan.

Whereas the women of Sudan have long led the fight for democracy in Sudan, including by establishing the Sudanese Women's Union after Sudan won its independence;

Whereas, following the end of the regime of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, many Sudanese women mobilized and advocated for a civilian transitional government and secured progress such as the criminalization of female genital mutilation, the repeal of strict public order laws that governed the presence and attire of women in public spaces, and the codification of women's rights in the transitional constitution;

Whereas, despite making progress toward the meaningful inclusion of women in the political process, women in

Sudan were largely left out of peace efforts and talks to transition to a civilian government;

Whereas many Sudanese women led and participated in protests to hold their government accountable during the transitional period and against the overthrow of Sudan's civilian transitional government by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, chair of the transitional Sovereign Council and head of the Sudanese Armed Forces, and other members of the Transitional Military Council, including Rapid Support Forces commander Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti);

Whereas, in response to the protests, military officials conducted a crackdown on peaceful protestors that included extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture, and the use of sexual- and gender-based violence to silence and oppress women;

Whereas, despite calls for accountability by the women of Sudan and the international community, numerous perpetrators of human rights abuses in Sudan have never been brought to justice, including those who perpetrated violence under the Omar al-Bashir regime, during the protests to end the regime, and as part of the military junta that took power from the transitional government;

Whereas the systemic oppression of protestors has facilitated democratic backsliding and perpetuated a culture of impunity in Sudan;

Whereas, on April 15, 2023, war broke out in Sudan between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties and a crisis for the future of democratic governance in Sudan;

Whereas Sudan is facing the world's largest internal displacement crisis with more than 11,000,000 people internally displaced;

Whereas Sudan is facing the world's worst education crisis as more than 19,000,000 children, more than half of whom are girls, are out of school due to violence or displacement;

Whereas Sudan is facing the world's worst hunger crisis as more than 25,000,000 people, the majority of whom are women and children, are facing acute food insecurity due to the war;

Whereas, as of March 2024 in Sudan, more than 1,000,000 women who are pregnant or breastfeeding were facing acute malnutrition and more than 3,000,000 children were facing acute malnutrition, and the nutrition situation has since deteriorated sharply;

Whereas the Famine Review Committee has determined that famine is taking place in Zamzam camp in North Darfur, which is home to more than 500,000 displaced people, and the Famine Early Warning Network warns that nearby areas, as well as other parts of the Darfur and Kordofan regions and the capital, Khartoum, also face a risk of famine;

Whereas, globally, women are more likely to suffer during famines and go hungry in the face of food insecurity;

Whereas the United Nations estimates that more than 6,700,000 people in Sudan face risks of gender-based violence;

Whereas, in October 2023, the Human Rights Council established an independent fact-finding mission for Sudan that found that instances of sexual exploitation, sexual slav-

ery, and sexual abuse are occurring in Sudan, particularly in areas controlled by the Rapid Support Forces, in addition to torture, rape, and other forms of sexual violence;

Whereas instances of sexual violence in Sudan are primarily perpetrated by the Rapid Support Forces as a tool to commit genocide;

Whereas, since the war began, rates of domestic violence in Sudan have increased;

Whereas hundreds of cases of rape have been reported during the war, resulting in one of the highest rates of rape during conflict ever reported;

Whereas rape and other forms of gender-based violence are underreported, especially during armed conflict;

Whereas Article 27 of the Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, done at Geneva August 12, 1949 (commonly referred to as the “Fourth Geneva Convention”), recognizes rape as a war crime in conflict settings;

Whereas sexual violence is used in many conflict settings as a tool to humiliate, control, oppress, and defeat women and the communities to which they belong;

Whereas approximately 80 percent of hospitals and medical centers are not operating in Sudan, resulting in unmet sexual and reproductive health needs in addition to a lack of essential medicine and other health services;

Whereas more than half of internally displaced persons in Sudan are women and girls, and 88 percent of registered refugees fleeing the war are women and children;

Whereas ethnic minorities in Sudan are at increased risk of gender-based violence;

Whereas women and girls fleeing the war have experienced gender-based violence in refugee camps and host communities;

Whereas countries neighboring Sudan and elsewhere have hosted Sudanese refugees and worked to provide them with life-saving resources;

Whereas, on February 26, 2024, the United States appointed a Special Envoy for Sudan to coordinate United States efforts to end the conflict in Sudan, secure unhindered humanitarian access, and support the Sudanese people as they seek to fulfill their aspirations for freedom, peace, and justice;

Whereas there has been a more than 60 percent increase in the number of women and girls requiring gender-based violence recovery services since the start of the war;

Whereas humanitarian assistance, including gender-responsive assistance, has been consistently blocked by warring factions from regions of Sudan impacted by the conflict;

Whereas the Peace for Sudan Platform, which includes more than 49 women-led peace, humanitarian, and civil society organizations, has advocated for an end to the conflict and the protection of women and girls;

Whereas hundreds of women peace activists from Sudan have called for an end to the conflict and for justice for victims of the conflict, including for survivors of gender-based violence, including through forums such as the United Nations Security Council, the Jeddah talks, and other internationally brokered ceasefire talks;

Whereas, in August 2024, the United States hosted peace talks in Switzerland and underscored the importance of the participation of women in conflict resolution, but the talks concluded without direct contact between the warring factions or a path forward to end the war;

Whereas, during the talks in Switzerland, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, the United Nations, the African Union, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, calling themselves the “Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan Group”, were able to secure commitments from the warring parties to expand humanitarian routes, but restrictions remain and ongoing hostilities continue to hinder access, including to famine-affected people in North Darfur;

Whereas the United States and its partners and allies should continue to advocate for an urgent end to the war that restores Sudan’s path to democracy, holds perpetrators of the conflict to account, and prioritizes the leadership of Sudanese women;

Whereas it is the policy of the United States to promote the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and to integrate gender considerations into the formation of United States foreign policy; and

Whereas the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–68) requires training on the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and when women participate in conflict resolution and peace negotiations, peace plans are 35 percent more likely to endure: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) recognizes that the women of Sudan are in-
2 strumental in ensuring a democratic and peaceful
3 Sudan and must be included in negotiating and
4 forming the future of their country;

5 (2) commends the women of Sudan for their
6 commitment to a civilian-led, democratic government
7 and their efforts to end the war in Sudan;

8 (3) reaffirms support for the inclusion and par-
9 ticipation of Sudanese women in all security-related
10 discussions and peace negotiations to ensure a gen-
11 der-inclusive resolution to the war in Sudan;

12 (4) notes with concern the ongoing lack of edu-
13 cation available for girls in Sudan and the long-term
14 impact lack of education could have on the future of
15 Sudan;

16 (5) supports the empowerment of women's or-
17 ganizations advocating for peace in Sudan and ef-
18 forts by the United States Special Envoy for Sudan,
19 foreign governments, and multilateral institutions to
20 document human rights abuses, including gender-
21 based violence;

22 (6) urges additional resources for civil society
23 organizations in Sudan working to document human
24 rights abuses, including gender-based violence;

1 (7) urges additional humanitarian assistance,
2 including for comprehensive gender-based violence
3 prevention and response;

4 (8) condemns the use of gender-based violence
5 and rape as weapons of war;

6 (9) calls on all countries to support the prosecu-
7 tion of actors involved in human rights abuses and
8 violations, including gender-based violence, and to
9 support an end to the culture of impunity in Sudan;

10 (10) urges all parties involved in the conflict to
11 allow for increased levels of humanitarian assistance
12 to reach communities across Sudan through all pos-
13 sible modalities, particularly in Darfur, and for all
14 countries to support increased levels of humanitarian
15 assistance to Sudan, including through local Suda-
16 nese nongovernmental organizations; and

17 (11) urges the implementation of an immediate
18 ceasefire in Sudan by all parties and a commitment
19 to include women from Sudan's civil society in inter-
20 nationally brokered peace talks.