

Sudan's Civil War: Global Stakes, Local Costs

April 2025



The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have fought a civil war in Sudan since April 2023. Countries such as Iran, Russia, and the UAE are fueling the war to the detriment of US interests in the Red Sea.

US Interests in the Red Sea Region

- 1 Secure Key Maritime Routes for Global Trade
- 2 Boost Regional Security and Counterterrorism
- 3 Counter Rivals like Iran and Russia
- 4 Strengthen Regional Partnerships

Turkey

Supports: SAF

Objectives:

- Secure mining and port deals
- Counter the UAE

Areas of Cooperation:

- Provides Turkish drones and missiles
- Offers to mediate ceasefire deal

Egypt

Supports: SAF

Objectives:

- Control spillover of conflict and refugees into Egypt
- Counter the UAE and Ethiopia

Areas of Cooperation:

- Provides Turkish drones
- Trained SAF pilots



UAE

Supports: RSF

Objectives:

- Increase port investments and gold trade
- Maintain RSF military partnership

Areas of Cooperation:

- Provides arms and drones
- Hosts RSF financial infrastructure

Iran

Supports: SAF

Objectives:

- Secure a Red Sea naval base to support Yemeni Houthi attacks in the Red Sea
- Increase trade

Areas of Cooperation:

- Provides Iranian drones
- Signed trade agreements

Russia

Supports: SAF

Objectives:

- Secure a Red Sea naval base to bolster logistics in Africa
- Project power in the Red Sea
- Gain mining and port deals

Areas of Cooperation:

- Provides weapons
- Signed new mining and oil deals