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By John Catalinotto
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Sudan/Popular movement responds to generals' war

April 30 – Reports from Sudan's largest seaport, Port Sudan, located on the Red Sea, describe a chaotic scene of thousands of migrant workers and their families attempting to leave the country in order to escape a conflict between two military factions fighting for control of the government.



Sudan borders seven other African countries and the Red Sea. The Blue Nile and White Nile rivers meet in its capital, Khartoum.

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The corporate media in Europe and the United States confine their coverage to describing the suffering of civilians and the numbers killed. Their analysis is limited to dissecting the personalities of the two generals commanding the two opposing military forces: Gen. Abdelfattah al-Burhan, who commands the army, and his one-time ally and deputy, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), who commands the Rapid Forces Militia.

These analyses omit the role of the major imperialist powers in the region and their local client states. Involved up to their necks are U.S. imperialism and its junior partner Britain, which was once the colonial power in Sudan, plus Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. While these states, known as “the quad,” claim to be promoting negotiations to end the fighting, they all have economic and geopolitical interests in who runs Sudan.

The capitalist media also make sure to omit the very active role played in the last five years by popular civilian organizations, which represent the majority of the people of Sudan. It was this popular movement, in which Sudan’s Communist Party played a leading role, that in 2018 deposed the military government which had run Sudan for decades. At the time, Washington maneuvered to keep the civilians out of power.

Economic and strategic interests

Even after its 2011 split into two countries – Sudan and South Sudan – Sudan alone is still the third-largest country in Africa by area and has a population of 48 million. Washington promoted the split, which left South Sudan occupying most of what had been Sudan’s oil reserves. The U.S. aimed to control the south, especially to keep its oil from being traded with China.

Sudan has ample arable land and access to water and is the world’s third-greatest producer of gold. Sudan borders on seven other African countries and its long coast on the Red Sea faces Saudi Arabia.

Washington, along with others in the quad, has staked out a position of promoting negotiations, taking advantage of the chaos and misery caused by the fighting. This position hides U.S. imperialism’s interest in controlling the resources of Sudan and keeping any potential rivals out – especially Russia and China.

Washington has been extending its intervention, first using its military to extract its diplomatic personnel from the embassy in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital, and then arranging bus transport for some of the 18,000 U.S. citizens who were in Sudan on April 15 when the fighting broke out. While this has the appearance of rescuing civilians from a nasty war, it allows Washington to put its most powerful face forward: the military might of the Pentagon.

Popular movement issues joint statement

A united popular movement, which overthrew the military regime in 2018 and has opposed the new military coup that took over in October 2021, is continuing to mobilize, while faced with the bloodshed caused by the two warring armed forces. Here are excerpts from its April 19 statement, signed by 42 organizations:

“We, in the resistance committees and democratic political, civil, and professional forces, hereby declare that our country has slid into the abyss of total war, in which generals use their weapons to eliminate everything in their path, and excessive violence has been used by the regime forces as a tool to settle the disputes and conflicts over power. This is contrary to the rules of democratic transition and peaceful power-sharing.

“Despite our differences in political views, we are completely united in our stance against the war and its continuation, and in our opposition to the return of the remnants of the previous regime to the political scene.

“We call for an immediate cessation of the war and the silencing of the clamor of guns, and we reject any results of the war, no matter what they may be. We emphasize the necessity of unity among the forces of the revolution in the face of the schemes of the remnants, those who are striving to regain control of the country, even if it means tearing it apart. We assure them that their efforts will fail, and they will never return to power, as the glorious December revolution is still alive and burning.

“In this regard, we intend to agree on a joint mechanism to monitor developments, coordinate positions, and confront anything that threatens the security and safety of our country and its citizens. We hold the warring parties fully responsible for any violation of human rights.

“We should mobilize to declare a comprehensive political strike and civil disobedience, which is the duty of the moment that we must all rally around, and not allow speeches of sedition, fragmentation, and hateful rhetoric to tear this country apart, and to undermine its unity, sovereignty, safety, and the dignity of its people.” (menasolidaritynetwork.com)

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