



Another Deadly Attack on Wad Madani and Tragedy of Civilians

The Darfur Women Action Group, DWAG expresses grave concern about the RSF attack on Wad Madani and calls on the international community to take measures that will end the war in Sudan and protect civilians before it is too late. They need to turn their attention to the serious situation of Wad Madani, the capital city of El Gezira state, Sudan. Since the Rapid Support Force (RSF) and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) turned the city into a battlefield around mid-December, hundreds of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) have fled Khartoum to shelter in Wad Madani, which has created a dire humanitarian situation. This attack has put both the residents of the city and the vulnerable IDP through a situation that has been described by many as hell on earth.

The city of Wad Madani is around 200 km from the nation's capital Khartoum with crucial strategic value. The city is considered Sudan's breadbasket as it is located at the heart of grain-producing region. At the same time, it is also the gateway to some big cities located in the east part of Sudan. Since the beginning of the war in Apr. 15th, the city was heavily guarded by the SAF and also a top target for the RSF.

On Dec 19th, the city of Wad Madani was raided by the RSF and it was estimated that at least dozens of civilians were either wounded or killed. The fall of the city also forced civilians who fled before to flee again on foot, while there was not enough transportation or other survival means like food and water for those running for their lives.

The residents of the city are always haunted by both RSF and SAF. As for SAF, while it failed to protect the citizens from RSF aggression, it deliberately targeted people with indigenous ethnicity under the excuse of searching RSF spies. Several video footages circulating on X showed that several young residents of Wad Madani were captured and executed by the military security force. During the first two days of the offensive, rumors circulated that the RSF had sleeper cells in Wad Madani, prompting the army to unlawfully arrest dozens of young men suspected of cooperating with the paramilitary group. Residents said that most of the detained were young men who were non-combatants working low-wage jobs. They were targeted based on their accent or ethnicity, which hints that they're from traditionally neglected regions like Darfur – an RSF stronghold. Similarly, after the RSF captured the city, many young people were seen escorted and mal treated by the RSF as they were indigenous people from areas such as Darfur and Kordofan. They were most targeted for their ethnicity and were accused to be affiliated with SAF and as part of citizens who paraded on the street to celebrate the temporary retreat of the RSF. Clearly and unfortunately, these young people have been victimized by both

SAF and RSF as both parties accused them of being affiliated with the other side while they are just innocent young people fleeing for their lives and struggling day to day to survive.

After the RSF took over the city, soldiers started to set up checkpoints around the important traffic route, blocking people's way to escape and trapping them in the city. At the same time, it burned down some government buildings, looting people's houses and stealing properties. The public services like markets and hospitals were also forced to shut down since they could not get any supplies.

Wad Madan was the second city after Port Sudan where Humanitarian aid agencies including international and national have located their offices and have been providing assistance to those indeed. The RSF capture of the city also forced a lot of international organizations to evacuate and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, as the evacuation brought away necessary aid that people need urgently and professionally workers who help coordinate the functioning of public service and making documentation of the atrocities. The residents now are mobilizing and trying to help themselves out of the dire situation. According to Ahmad al-Hassan, an activist friend of DWAG, the resistance committees — neighborhood groups providing life-saving relief to their communities since the start of the war — are buying fuel on the black market to evacuate women, children and men who are too poor to afford a bus ticket out of town.

With the current urgent situation in Wad Madani, we at DWAG are calling on the international community to turn their attention to what is happening in Wad Madani. It is mandatory that innocent civilians must not be targeted and slaughtered because of who they are. Today again, the people of Sudan are left alone to fend for themselves and to die in despair and silence. We implore the international community to take the following steps to end the suffering and hold criminals responsible:

- Urge the US and international community to lead a robust intervention to protect civilians, and to stop ethnic-based killings.
- Open unhindered humanitarian aid channels across Sudan to reach all those in need.
- Pursue accountability for those most responsible for past and current genocide crimes, warn crimes and crimes against humanity committed across the Sudan.
- Impose targeted sanctions on individuals, such as freezing assets, imposing travel bans and sanctioning all businesses associated with the two warring generals in Sudan, and to cut the funding for weapons.
- Hold the regional enablers of the atrocities accountable, including regional and international actors like UAE that are supplying funds and weaponry to the RSF.
- Provide support for women and civil society from historically marginalized Sudanese to have capacity and voice at all levels of decision-making processes regarding solutions to the current crises.

In the face of a serious humanitarian crisis, we must not let our leaders look the other way. We must speak up and hold them accountable to their obligation. Therefore, we call on our friends and allies around the world to echo our voices and keep in mind that Sudan Needs You and

people in Wad Madani Need You more than ever before! Please join us and lend us your hands and voices for the justice and peace of the Sudanese people. The crisis in Sudan is of global magnitude which requires global responses, and if we can speak in one voice and demand our government and the UN to work for an end, we can end this genocide and hold perpetrators accountable.

With our collective effort we can make a difference!

Thank you for your continued support! Stay tuned for more opportunities to take action.

With Gratitude,

Niemat Ahmadi, DWAG president, and DWAG team