

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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THE SUDAN CRISIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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Table of Contents----- page no

<u>CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION</u>	11
<u>1.1.BACKGROUND</u>	11
<u>1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</u>	12
<u>1.3.RESEARCH QUESTIONS</u>	17
<u>1.4.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY</u>	17
1.4.1.General Objective.....	18
1.4.2.Specific objectives.....	18
<u>1.5.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY</u>	18
<u>1.6. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY</u>	19
<u>1.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</u>	19
<u>1.8. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY</u>	19
<u>CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS</u>	21
<u>2.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS</u>	21
2.1.1. National Security.....	21
<u>2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</u>	22
2.2.1. Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT).....	22
2.2.2. Regional Conflict Complex.....	24
<u>2.3. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE</u>	26
2.3.1.Overview of the Root Causes of the Current Sudanese Conflict.....	26
2.3.1.1.Brief Overview of the Post-Independence History of the Sudanese Political Trajectory.....	27
2.3.1.2.The Role of Religion in the Sudanese Socio-Political System.....	28
2.3.1.3.The Role of the Military in the Sudanese State System.....	29
2.3.1.4.The Role of Civilian Actors in the Sudanese Politics.....	30
2.3.2.Geopolitical factor in Sudanese Crises.....	32
2.3.2.1. Dual Identity factor in Sudan: the confluence of Afro-Arab Identity.....	32
2.3.2.2. The Gulf and Maghreb Impact to Sudan.....	33
2.3.2.3. The Horn of Africa Impact to Sudan.....	35
2.3.2.4. The Sahel Challenges to Sudan.....	36
<u>CHAPTER THREE- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</u>	38
<u>3.1. THE STUDY DESIGN</u>	38
<u>3.2. EPISTEMIC AND ONTOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS</u>	38
<u>3.3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION</u>	38
3.3.1. In-Depth Interview.....	39
3.3.2. Secondary Sources.....	39

3.4. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	39
3.5. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS	40
3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	40
CHAPTER FOUR- BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ETHIO-SUDAN RELATIONS	41
4.1. HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA	41
4.2. THE CURRENT ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SUDAN	42
4.2.1. Post 2018 Ethio-Sudanese Relation: changes and continuities.....	44
<u>SECTION FIVE: THE IMPACT OF THE CURRENT SUDANESE CRISES ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF ETHIOPIA.....</u>	49
5.1. INTRODUCTION	49
5.2. INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN ACTORS	50
5.3. SCENARIO OF THE SUDANESE CONFLICT	59
5.4. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT DOMESTIC SECURITY DYNAMICS IN ETHIOPIA	65
5.5. TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCE	68
5.6. BOUNDARY ISSUE	70
5.7. BORDER SECURITY AND TRANSBOUNDARY CRIMES AND TERRORISM: ANALYSIS BASED ON REGIONAL CONFLICT COMPLEX.....	75
5.7.1. Terrorism and religious radicalization.....	75
5.7.2. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).....	77
5.7.3. Human Trafficking.....	80
5.7.4. Illegal Sesame and gold trade.....	81
5.7.5. Migration.....	83
5.8. REVERSAL OF PROGRESSES ON ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION SCHEMES.....	89
<u>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	95
6.1. CONCLUSION	95
6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS	96
<u>7. REFERENCES</u>	99

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the varied influence of the ongoing Sudanese armed conflict on Ethiopia's national security in the context of domestic political dynamics in both countries, emerging regional dynamics, and interstate ties in the Horn of Africa. The study examines historical relations, contemporary diplomatic engagements, and regional security frameworks to demonstrate how Sudan's internal instability affects Ethiopia's strategic interests, border security, resource management, and refugee flows. The study employs the Regional Security Complex Theory and Regional Conflict Complex frameworks to investigate the interconnectivity of regional conflicts, transboundary threats, and foreign actors that shape the security environment. It emphasizes the importance of Sudan's geostrategic location, its geopolitical entanglements with Middle Eastern and Gulf states, and the implications of regional conflict forms for Ethiopian stability. Methodologically, the research employs qualitative analysis based on interviews with Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and experts, experts from the Institute of Foreign Affairs. It also undertook extensive review of secondary sources. The findings reveal that Sudan's protracted conflict exacerbates Ethiopia's vulnerabilities, including border disputes, transboundary water resource tensions, refugee influx, transboundary crimes which threaten regional stability. In addition, the protracted war in Sudan compromise Ethiopia's national interest by indirectly fueling domestic instability, exposing to involvement of external adversaries.

Key Words: regional conflict complex, Regional Security Complex, National Security, bilateral arrangements, Trans border organized Crimes, external intervention

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACAPS – *The Supervisory Authority of Insurance and Social Welfare*

ACPM – *African Common Position on Migration and Development*

ANDM – *Amhara National Democratic Front*

ASEAN – *The Association of Southeast Asian Nations*

AU – *African Union*

BRI – *Belt and Road Initiative*

CFA – *Cooperative Framework Agreement*

CFR – *Council on Foreign Relations*

COHA – *Cessation of Hostilities Agreement*

CPA – *Comprehensive Peace Agreement*

DP World – *Dubai Ports World*

DRC – *Democratic Republic of Congo*

EAC – *East African Community*

ELF – *Eritrean Liberation Front*

ENA – *Ethiopia News Agency*

EPLF – *Eritrean People's Liberation Front*

EPRDF – *Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front*

EU – *European Union*

FDRE – *Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

FIRs – *Flight Information Regions*

GAM – *Global Acute Malnutrition*

GCC – *Gulf Countries' Council*

GERD – *Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam*

HoA – *Horn of Africa*

HRW – *Human Rights Watch*

ICHREE – *International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia*

IFA – *Institute of Foreign Affairs*

IGAD – *Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought*

ISPI – *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*

ISS – *Institute for Security Studies*

MAP – *Migration Action Plan*

MoFA – *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia*

MoU – *Memorandum of Understanding*

MPFA – *Migration Policy Framework for Africa*

NBC – *Nile Basin Commission*

NBI – *Nile Basin Initiative*

NCP – *National Congress Party*

NIF – *National Islamic Front*

OIS – *Organization of the Islamic States*

OLA – *Oromo Liberation Army*

ONLF – *Ogaden National Liberation Front*

PSC – *Peace and Security Council*

PSC (CISSA) – *PSC Sub-Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa*

RCP – *Regional Consultative Process*

RMPF – *Regional Migration Policy Framework*

RSCT – *Regional Security Complex Theory*

RSF – *Rapid Support Force*

SAF – *Sudanese Armed Forces*

SALW – *Small Arms and Light Weapons*

SPLA-N – *Sudan People's Liberation Army–North*

SPLM – *Sudan People's Liberation Movement*

SPLM-N – *Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North*

TDF – *Tigray Defense Force*

TIA – *Tigray Interim Administration*

TPLF – *Tigray People's Liberation Front*

UAE – *United Arab Emirates*

UN – *United Nations*

UNGA – *United Nations General Assembly*

UNHCR – *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

UNISFA – *United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei*

UN OCHA – *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

UNSC – *United Nations Security Council*

USAN – *Union of South American Nations*

USIP – *United States Institute of Peace*

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1. Background

The domestic situation of the majority of the Horn of African states is deteriorating over time. Ethiopia has been engulfed in a devastating internal conflict since November 2020 with the start of the Northern conflict followed by another round of ongoing armed conflict with Fano, an armed group operating in the Amhara Region. The instability and continuing military confrontation with the Oromo Liberation Army in Oromia (OLA) is also another feature of domestic instability in Ethiopia. Although the war with Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) was culminated with the signing of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), full implementation is not yet achieved. A long-term deal on the disputed areas between the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea, on the one hand, and the contested territories between Tigray and the Amhara regions, on the other, remains a long way off.

The post-colonial Sudan passed through uneven political trajectory with a handful of military coups, two major civil wars, a number of civil conflicts, successful and unsuccessful popular protests against its successive governments and secession of South Sudan. On April 15, 2023, a conflict broke out between the Sudan Armed Forces-SAF and the Rapid Support Force-RSF in Khartoum. RSF claimed SAF attacked its base in Soba, while SAF said RSF attacked its main command center. The conflict spread across the country, raising concerns about peace and security in Sudan, the region, and Africa. The two warring generals collaborated to topple the al-Bashir regime in 2019 and to remove the civilian prime minister via military coup in October 2021. However, once the SAF, RSF, and civilian political leaders agreed to a new framework for democratic transition in December, doubts arose about how the RSF would be integrated into the SAF, as well as who would lead the newly consolidated force. Negotiations to resolve the issues stalled, and tensions quickly rose between al-Burhan and Hemedti, the leaders of SAF and RSF respectively, in the weeks leading up to the current violence (United States Institute of Peace [USIP], 2023).

Unsuccessful rounds of mediation efforts have been made so far. Behind the mediation efforts, different countries are envying to side with one of their favorite parties based on their respective interests. As to Council on Foreign Relations (2025), after a year of civil war, Sudan's warring factions are locked in a deadly power struggle, leading to 10 thousand deaths

and 9 million displaced. Following a refugee crisis resulted in with around 2 million Sudanese fled to neighboring countries of Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Egypt, The United Nations (UN) warned that of the world's largest hunger crisis is looming and called for additional support. With an estimated 13.6% incidence of global acute malnutrition (GAM), Sudan is currently among the top four nations in the world, according to the OCHA situation report published on October 2, 2024. There have been several illness outbreaks recorded nationwide. Since mid-April 2023, 8.1 million out of Sudan's 10.9 million internally displaced people have suffered from re-displacement. Flooding and heavy rains affected around 600,000 people across the nation (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2024).

What complicates the matter more is that, Sudan is located in a very volatile geostrategic location where the insecurities drawn from the Indian Ocean to the Red-sea and the Gulf, the Maghreb region to the Sahel and Horn of Africa converges. The convergence of all these hotbeds of conflict invites actors not only from within the regions but also superpowers from Afar.

Ethio-Sudan relation is defined mainly by mutual distrust, exchange of accusations and supporting and hosting each other's rebel groups which ultimately resulted in the succession of Eritrea in 1993 from Ethiopia, and South Sudan in 2011 from Sudan (Belete, B.Y, 2013). Because of all these developments in Sudan, Ethiopia's largest and very important neighbor, it warrants a deeper and systemic investigation in to how and to what extent the Sudanese crises can possibly impact the national security of Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, conflicts were dichotomized as international and internal (Wallensteen, 2018). With the surge of intra-state wars recently, the category of internal war is broadened to include conflicts with in a country's border and between two states. On the other hand, the clear boundary between international and internal conflicts has become blurred as the definitions of some concepts such as security, human rights and humanitarian intervention evolved with the introduction of new normative frameworks such as the right to intervene that universalize the responsibility to act. Civil war or intrastate war has become the most prevalent form of

conflict as many deadly battles in the 21st century have occurred within a single country's borders since the end of WWII (Gleditsch et al., 2002). Sudan has experienced three major civil wars and other domestic upheavals including the Darfur crises in the aftermath of WWII. Ethiopia at the same time has passed through domestic armed conflicts with (Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), TPLF and other ethno national armed groups; and recently with the Tigray Defense Force (TDF), OLA and Fano armed groups. The insurgency movements, popular uprising and internal political crises in Sudan and Ethiopia have common features as these conflicts happen slightly in similar periods.

Following the interdependence of countries in the world and the emergence of contemporary common global security threats the impacts of domestic instability is usually universalized. Most importantly, the possible impact of a civil war to its neighboring states could be explained by two inter related conceptual frameworks of spillover effect, transnational dimension.

The spillover effect of neighboring political crises includes civil war contagion, but also comprises the spread of lower levels of violence and instability to neighboring states. According to Phillips, (2015) spillover fears increase military spending of a neighboring state out of fear of refugee fleeing the conflict, rebels seeking shelter and state security forces pursuing rebels which ultimately divert the resources from development endeavors towards military spending. In this respect, refugee flows, harboring rebel groups from Sudan and from Ethiopia to Sudan has been part of the uneven relation between the two countries before and now. Following the recent crises in Sudan, a good number of refugees flee to Ethiopia from Sudan opening an exit corridor for the other nationals living in Sudan through Ethiopia was also a concern for the government of Ethiopia (United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2024 & Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2024). Beyond that, Ethiopia's citizens suffering from collateral damages in the conflict of Sudan, loss of life and displacement of Ethiopians in Sudan are worrisome for the government of Ethiopia. Analysis has also tended to highlight the "spill over" or "spill into" phenomenon of conflict, where a one-time influx or inflow of conflict-promoting actors and activities (such as cross-border

raids, refugee flows, and the inflow of arms) can devastate a neighboring state and jeopardize the stability of a region (Studdard, 2004).

Literature that analyze impacts of domestic armed crises to a neighboring state from the perspective of transnational dimensions explain that Civil war as the dominant form of armed conflict in the international system, with most severe post-Cold War conflicts being civil/intrastate, often have transnational characteristics, including inspirations from other countries, links to actors, and international interventions (Gleditsch, K. S. 2017).

Literatures provided us a number of cases that proves the formations of regional conflict complexes in Africa. The regional conflict formation in the great lakes region following the exodus of Hutu to Democratic Republic of Congo in fear of revenge from Tutsi rebel led government (Rwandan Popular Front) and reorganization of Hutus to overthrow the Rwandan government with the help of humanitarian aid and the Maputo regime is a case in point explained by Ansorg, N. (2014). The same regional conflict system was formed in the Horn of Africa that mainly involve Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan from the Horn, other Middle East and great powers from afar and non-state actors/armed resistance groups that resulted in the two break away independent states of South Sudan and Eritrea, a defacto-autonomous State of Somaliland, a semi-independent state of Puntland, failed states of Somalia and South Sudan, a land locked Ethiopia and a further destabilized Sudan (Ansorg, N., 2014).

Regional conflict complexes encompass a wide range of actors tied together through a fluid web of alliances and enmity: rebel groups, official state actors, and the civilian population (Studdard., 2004 p.3).

When internal instability and conflict breaks out in one country, it can spark regional movements and contests for territory, resources, and power, potentially destabilizing neighboring governments. Alternatively, long-standing regional rivalry based on power and economic control over important natural resources can result in grievances and political trans-border disputes, leading to regional conflict (Studdard, K., 2004).

According to Ansorg, N. (2014), four specific conditions lead to a regional spread of violence: economic networks sustained through the support of neighboring countries; an intervention

on the part of the government; militarized refugees; and, non-salient regional identity groups. Ansorg is arguing that violence doesn't just stay within one country's borders—it spreads regionally when certain structural and political conditions are in place.

These four factors show how weak state capacity, transnational ties, and external involvement can transform internal conflicts into regional crises, making peacebuilding and conflict resolution much more complex.

In terms of Economic networks supported by neighboring countries, Sesame and gold trade in Al-Fashaga and borderlands are lucrative. SAF's consolidation of Al-Fashaga since the start of the war with TPLF in 2020 allows them to reroute high-value white sesame from Ethiopia, profiting the Sudanese war economy (Soliman, Ahmed, & Abel, A. D., 2024). Moreover, illicit Arms flows through porous borders between Ethiopia and Sudan or flow of arms passing through Sudan to finally destined in Ethiopia are encouraged by weak state system that failed to ensure strict border control. The presence of armed groups in Sudan and Ethiopia, and arms producers (like Turkey), sustain illicit weapon networks. This unregulated flow of arms contributed for the domestic conflict in Ethiopia. Smuggling of refugees and labor migrants is a source of lucrative business for actors operating between Ethiopia and Sudan all along to the Maghreb and the Middle East.

In terms of Government intervention also, proxy intervention between the two countries is historical. Recently, during the war with TPLF, the government of Ethiopia accused the Sudanese government of forcefully controlling the Al-Fashaga triangle and supporting TPLF allied armed groups and insurgents from Benishangul insurgents in eastern Sudan. The military rule in Sudan shifted its alliances around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) **by** tilting towards Egypt to challenge Ethiopia's hydro-political strategy.

Sudan still hosts militarized refugees that fled from Maikadra and those Tigryan ex-peacekeepers who refused to return to Ethiopia when the Ethiopian peacekeeping force in Abiye suspended. The Samri youth, who are accused to be complicit in the Maikadra massacre fled to Sudan during the start of the war in Tigray and later joined by the ex-peacekeepers in a refugee camp in Sudan and formed an "Army Seven". These forces are taking part in the

ongoing Sudanese war alongside of the SAF. The SAF is also supported by Egypt and Eritrea. The normalization of Ethiopia's relation with Eritrea gradually collapsing, while the outstanding differences between Egypt and Eritrea are still remained unaddressed. As Ethiopia's bold quest of sea access alarmed its neighbors, new alignments and re-alignments are in the making, spearheaded by Egypt and Eritrea.

Ethiopia and Sudan also shares ethnic groups that have religious and racial affinity along their border. These ethnic groups used to have questions of marginalization rooted in the center-periphery politics in Sudan and Ethiopia. The SPLM/N armed groups in Sudan, shares communalities with their kins living in Ethiopia's Gambella region. The SPLM/N is part of the ongoing war in Sudan siding the RSF. Similarly, ethnic groups like the **Gumuz** and **Berta**, have significant historic and current disagreements within Ethiopia. The groups are entertaining their questions both through political and armed struggle. Their armed wing straddled along the Ethiopia–Sudan border. Their real or perceived marginalization makes them susceptible to mobilization by cross-border insurgents (Kassaw, A., 2018; Rift valley Institute, 2023 & Mulugeta A. A., 2018). These trans-border resource and border disputes are not limited to the relations of the two countries; but also transcends to neighboring countries to define the regional conflict dynamics. Historically speaking, along the border and Nile related contentions between Sudan and Ethiopia, the stake of Egypt was high in coordinating the support for anti-Ethiopian armed resistance movements that opened offices in Cairo and Khartoum.

Moreover, Sudan's geopolitical location is crucial as it affects regional issues in the Maghreb, Sahel, Gulf, and Horn of Africa. The conflict's impact on Ethiopia's security dynamics is exacerbated by its unique Arab-African identity and historical bonds between Sudan and Ethiopia. The ongoing conflict has led to an increase in refugees seeking shelter in Ethiopia, potentially causing humanitarian crises. Ethiopia's national security concerns are further complicated by border disputes, recent confrontations over water resources, and the disputed Al-fashaga Triangle.

The Cairo-Asmara-Mogadishu alliance, driven by historical intransigence, is attempting to counter Ethiopia's economic and security initiatives. Sudan has remained a key proxy of Egypt

against Ethiopia, and its membership in the Arab League further complicates the situation. The ongoing Sudanese crisis is not clearly between Arab and non-Arab Sudanese actors, as it divides the Arab League countries into two factions. Non-Arab League middle powers and great powers also play a role in the conflict, with significant differences from cold war alignments. This intensified regional challenge captures the complexities of inter-state relations in a shifting geopolitical landscape.

The warring domestic actors in Sudan are far different from the actors of the first and second Sudanese civil wars. Furthermore, the regional dynamics has evolved so much given the growing involvement of new actors, middle powers and the new super powers in Sudan. Given the domestic challenges that could increase Ethiopia's vulnerability and the new level of instability in Sudan, the new actors ranging from the middle powers to the biggest international actors, and the challenges Sudan could pose to Ethiopia due to its geopolitical location, this paper will attempt to analyze how the interaction of the old and new dynamics could possibly impact Ethiopia's national security.

1.3. Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions.

- How does the involvement of external actors in the Sudan conflict impact Ethiopia's security?
- How does the ongoing crisis in Sudan affect Ethiopia's foreign policy objectives towards Sudan?
- To examine Ethiopia's economic, social and political vulnerabilities, in the context of the ongoing Sudanese armed conflict.

1.4. Objective of the study

By giving brief background on the post-colonial Sudanese political history and its relation with Ethiopia, and further highlighting the importance of Sudanese geopolitical importance and the stakes of major actors in Sudan, this paper would like to achieve the following general and specific objectives.

1.4.1. General Objective

- To understand how the ongoing Sudanese conflict affects the national security of Ethiopia, within the context of domestic, regional, and global geopolitical dynamics.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

- To investigate how the participation of major external actors in Sudan impact Ethiopia's national security.
- To explore the impacts of the Sudanese crisis on the execution of Ethiopia's foreign policy objectives towards Sudan.
- What are the key economic, social, and political vulnerabilities of Ethiopia in the context of the ongoing Sudanese armed conflict?

1.5. Significance of the study

This study is significant as it aims to analyze the impacts through a comprehensive lens that considers not just the immediate repercussions of the conflict, but also the historical, cultural, and geopolitical ties that link Ethiopia and Sudan. Given the shared transboundary resources, cultures, and peoples, the stability of Sudan is directly tied to the security and well-being of Ethiopia.

This study therefore contributes to the discourse on regional and national security by filling a critical gap in the existing literature. By examining the Sudanese crises in the context of Ethiopia's national security, this research enriches our understanding of how regional conflicts can manifest in ways that challenge national stability. Additionally, it drew upon regional complex security, which provides a valuable framework for analyzing how interconnected security dynamics across surrounding regions—the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and Sahel—interact with one another.

Ultimately, this research offers insights that not only inform Ethiopian policymakers and foreign policy experts but also encourage ongoing academic inquiry into the intricate relationships between regional conflicts and national security. By illuminating the challenges faced by Ethiopia in light of the Sudanese conflict, this study may help foster informed dialogue and strategic planning that can mitigate the risks posed by this turbulent backdrop. Such analysis is vital for devising effective policies that safeguard Ethiopia's national interests in an increasingly unpredictable regional dynamic.

1.6. Scope and delimitation of the study

The study focuses on the impact of Sudanese crises on Ethiopian national security, with a specific emphasis on the borders between the two countries. In terms of time framework, the study highlights the historical context of Sudanese crises and their impact on Ethiopian national security, with a focus on the post 2018 developments. Moreover, the study analyzes the impact of Sudanese crises on Ethiopian national security, including its economic, political, and social dimensions.

Whereas, the study neither attempted to examine the impact of Sudanese armed conflict on other countries or regional organizations beyond Ethiopia nor thoroughly investigate the internal dynamics within Sudan or Ethiopia, but rather focus on major vulnerability points of Ethiopia in its relation with Sudan in the context of the ongoing war.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations that include limited data availability, time constraints, access limitations and language barriers.

Moreover, this study is limited by the fact that all interviewees are from a single public office, which may introduce a perceived bias. To address these limitations, I supplemented the data with archival materials, online sources and insights from my informal personal encounters. These additional sources provided broader context and helped balance the perspectives.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This Study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory part that comprises background of the Study, the research problem, objective of the study, research questions, and limitation of the study and significance of the Study. Chapter two provides a review of relevant literature and discusses conceptual and theoretical frameworks pertaining to the topic. Chapter three deals with methodology and research design employed in the study. Chapter four gives Historical overview of Ethio-Sudan relation. It also highlights the changes and continuities in terms of Ethiopia's foreign policy orientation towards Sudan. Chapter five discusses the implications of the ongoing conflict towards Ethiopia. It specifically addresses the impacts vis avis the involvement of foreign actors, Ethiopia's domestic situation,

outstanding issues of contention between Ethiopia and Sudan. It also explains the impact of the war in the context of transboundary crimes such as illegal arms transfer, human trafficking; terrorism and extremism; and migration. The last chapter provides conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter Two - Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

The literatures that are going to be covered mainly capitalize on the post Al-Bashir era of Sudan, giving a brief hindsight on some outstanding political turning points of colonial and postcolonial era to reflect upon patterns established across this span of time. Theoretical frameworks that are assumed to fit the objective of the research work are regional security complex theory and the regional conflict complex theory.

2.1. Conceptual Frameworks

2.1.1. National Security

The concept of national security has evolved over time and varies depending on historical context. The evolution corresponds with the expansion of the very notion of security itself. As to Williams, P. D. (2012), during the Cold War, security studies focused on political realism and the four Ss: states, strategy, science, and the status quo. States were seen as the most important actors in international security, with a primary focus on military force.

However, in the aftermath of the cold war the concept of security has been evolving in terms of what is an issue of security, whose security and how to ensure security. Since then, varieties of security theories and conceptions came in to the realm of security studies. This expansion reflects a shift from traditional state-centric military security to a more comprehensive approach that considers non-traditional security threats (Yuan, 2022).

The security endeavors of the most of the states nowadays seem to derive from an awareness that modern security is a complex of ingredients, embracing various areas of social life (economy, politics, social welfare, health, education, culture, ecology, military affairs, etc.), and that modern (national and international) security can be effectively ensured only if the concept of security is considered in all its complexity (Grizold, A., 1994, p.37).

The non-traditionalist security agenda includes transformation of security in to broadening to non-military threats like terrorism and deepening to consider individuals, social groups, and the environment, beyond just the state. By broadening, we refer to the recognition of threats beyond armed conflicts and conflict-related humanitarian emergencies as collective security issues (Ozguc, U., & Rabbani, A. 2023). With regard to broadening and deepening of security

matters, the critical theories entertained by the Welsh School of thought and the Securitization theory of the Copenhagen school of thought are at the forefront. Moreover, the Paris School of thought of Security that adds the importance of habits and identity element through its ontological security perspective to the concept of securitization is among the new approaches of security studies.

By deepening, we mean expanding the list of referent objects – the main recipient’s security system to include not only states, but the most vulnerable people, marginalized communities, and even fragile ecosystems. Security encompasses environmental security, human security, and gendered perspectives on security (Farzayee, S. 2023).

2.2. Theoretical framework

This work employs Regional Security Complex and Regional Conflict Complex frameworks to properly capture the objectives of the thesis.

2.2.1. Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)

Regional Security Complex Theory is a variant of the Copenhagen School Theory. Regional Security Complex theory as most of the International Relation theorists assert is a post-cold-war theoretical development. For most of the Security studies, the level of international relations has been individual, state and systems level. The addition of the Regional level of analysis since the end of the cold war has become important as the level of importance of regions grows over time. Therefore, regional security complex theory is something in between the local/national and international level of security analysis.

The RSCT posits that these interdependencies can lead to distinct patterns of security behavior within regions, influencing how states perceive threats and respond to them. This theory also highlights that security dilemmas and conflicts can be region-specific, suggesting that security dynamics may differ significantly from one region to another. Söderbaum (2012) as cited by Amable, D. S. (2022) argues that “there are no ‘natural’ regions; all regions are heterogeneous with unclear territorial margins. Thus, regions are created and recreated in the process of global transformation; hence, there are no “natural” or “given” regions (Söderbaum, 2012). Security complexes are regions understood from regional security perspectives (Buzan and Wæver, 2003).

When we come to Sudanese peculiar situation, Region as a de jure African State, it geographically located entirely in the Horn of Africa. However, due to the unique historical, cultural and religious relations with the Middle East and the Arab world, it is not far from the socio, political and economic patterns of the Middle East region. Its geopolitical location also puts Sudan in close interaction with the Middle East along the Red Sea and to the Maghreb region. Partly, it is also part of the Sahel Region.

Therefore, the security dynamics of Sudan could better be analyzed within the framework of an inter-Regional Security Complex setting. It is a member of the African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC), Inter Governmental Authority on Drought (IGAD) and others as an African State. It is also a member of the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic States where the first Regional setting resembles a geographic proximity or geographic boundary, while the second regional memberships Sudan is characterized by the existence of commonality or meaningful interaction. Even as Sudan and the gulf states share the Red Sea, the Sudan's inclusion to the Middle East's regional Security complex can be defined by both geographic proximity and meaningful interaction.

Therefore, the region where Sudan is located and the security dynamics resembles an inter-regional security complex most specifically the interaction of the security of the horn of Africa and the Gulf region hugely impacts Sudan. The very critical links of these inter- security regions are the red sea line that connects the interest and security of the two important regions the HoA and Gulf. The issue of hegemony, the transboundary water resources that link the horn of African states and the gulf states especially of Egypt brings Sudan on board throughout history. The increasing agricultural demand, the strong interest of port diplomacy of UAE, military interests and quest for military bases of some gulf states, the water scarcity concerns in the gulf and the interests in the waters of the horn of African States in the long run all brings an inter-regional security complex between the Horn and the Gulf/Middle East states along and out of the red sea lines.

On the other hand, the involvement of great powers in these regions in general and in Sudan and Ethiopia in particular is a well-established reality since the old days including the colonial era, the cold war and recent militarization of the horn to make few mentions. RSCT's

application extends beyond traditional security concerns to non-traditional issues like migration and environment, pandemics etc (Farzayee, S., 2023). As cited by Williams, P.D. (2012) for Buzan security is not just about states but related to all human collectivities; nor could it be confined to an ‘inherently inadequate’ focus on military force.

In dealing with the impact of the ongoing Sudanese Crises to Ethiopia’s national security, it is important to highlight regional security complex theory where Sudan and Ethiopia fall under influence of the interaction of the Gulf and Horn of Africa Security complexes specifically. As to Gebru et al. (2023), the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, two interdependent Regional Security Complexes, have increased security interactions over the past two decades, raising concerns about peace and security. The increased involvement of Middle Eastern and Gulf states, rooted in rivalry and competition, has led to instability and conflict in the region, particularly in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan (Gebru et al., 2023).

2.2.2. Regional Conflict Complex

Regional conflict formations (also known as regional conflict complexes) can be understood as “sets of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts”. This analytical category should not be understood as distinct from interstate conflicts and intrastate conflicts with multiple parties, nor can it be reduced to situations where there is simply a “spill over” effect from one conflict to another or where there are several essentially autonomous civil wars within a region. Rather, regional conflict formations are typically characterized by fundamental, interconnected networking and processes within a region: 1) institutional weaknesses of one or more states, 2) regional security competition, 3) a parallel and transnational informal economy, 4) trans-border social networks, 5) illegal trafficking and trade, 6) natural resource exploitation, 7) militarization and arms transfers, and 8) trans-border armed group (Cater, C., 2003).

One of the dimensions of regional conflict complex theory is the Regionalization of Conflict. It has become commonplace among scholars and policy makers to assert that the latter half of the 20th century witnessed a decline in the incidence of interstate war and a rise in the frequency of intrastate war. While this assertion has no factual error, it is also important to

note that intra-state wars are not confined to the concerned states only. Most of the civil wars invited the involvement of external state and non-state actors to further complicate the impacts of the war. This entails that the war is no more an intra-state one. Proxy wars are typical features of intra-state war which is familiar since the cold war era. The impact of Intra-state war to its neighbors could be high as the conflict tends to spillover due to various factors.

Impacts of Civil wars or intrastate conflicts such as the ongoing war in Sudan cannot be limited to the state concerned. It has transcended impacts. There are times civil wars become international and regional concerns. Civil wars could have spillover impacts or transnational impacts. Civil wars spread to the countries that border them. Two primary channels of conflict diffusion can cause civil wars to spread. A regional market for war materials can develop in the porous frontier due to a lack of effective territorial control. Furthermore, refugees may unintentionally cause instability in their new country when they leave a conflict zone (Silve, A., & Verdier, T., 2018).

Trans-border war economies:- have at least three different dimensions: activities that directly support belligerent parties such as the extraction and sale of natural resources by rebel groups; war profiteering by actors such as arms merchants, organized crime syndicates, and corporate mercenary firms; and economic coping mechanisms among civilian populations such as trade in a wide range of goods across state borders.

From this perspective the conflict in Sudan has multidimensional impact to the peace and stability of the Horn of Africa region, in particular and to the Sahel and Magrheb also. Sudanese geopolitical importance has attracted various actors from near and afar. The warring parties have their respective allies and foes. As for the RSF is supported by the UAE, Chad and factions from Libya, the SAF is also enjoying an all rounded support of stronger states and non-state actors from the Gulf, the Levant and the Horn of Africa regions such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Turkey, Eritrea and TPLF. The UAE's involvement in the Gold extraction business and the deal it has with the RSF group who has effective command on the territories of gold mines, the possible inter-regional market opportunities to be formed or to be expanded between rebel groups in Ethiopia and Sudan on human trafficking, drug

trafficking, arms smuggling and other trans-border crimes can be better analyzed with the framework of regional conflict complex theory.

This theoretical framework gives context to analyze the war economy enabled by the conflict in Sudan and the vulnerabilities in Ethiopia with the participation of a host of individual and sub-state actors in Ethiopia and Sudan. The propensity and impact of migration and transboundary crimes is explained within the context of the interaction of the Sudanese conflict to within a broader regional geopolitical set up.

2.3. Empirical Literature

2.3.1. Overview of the Root Causes of the Current Sudanese Conflict

The political landscape in Sudan is characterized by a zero-sum game, where governments attempt to unify all constituencies under a common vision or constitutional framework but consistently fall short. The limited political space in Sudan poses a challenge for its political actors. The country's cohesion relies on an ongoing process of dialogue and bargaining within a framework of enduring impermanence. Additionally, governmental institutions and socio-political norms that once upheld cohesive patrimonial networks are gradually deteriorating, giving way to monetized, internationalized, and factionalized patronage systems (Warburg, 2012).

Johnson, (2016) explained that present-day Sudanese challenges predate the colonial system's unequal legacy in the 20th century. It can be found in the concepts of legitimate power and governance that the Sudanic State developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. These ideals were incorporated into the Turcco-Egyptian empire's structure, gained new traction in the jihadist state of Mahadiyya, and were never completely replaced by the colonial state in the 20th century, though they were occasionally modified. The central state's tendency to exploit its wealthy southern hinterland, the army's ability to exert pressure in both political and economic affairs, the leaders' prerogative to redistribute revenue to the peripheries, and the unclear status of those who are not entirely of the central heritage have all returned to Sudan with force since independence, particularly during the Gaafar Nimeiry period.

Douglas Johnson disproves the notion that the nation's civil wars are solely the result of religious conflict, rather he emphasizes the economic divide between the economic center in

Khartoum and the outskirts, notably the South, colonial legacies and external interventions as historical factors contributing to Sudan's North-South splits and hostilities (Johnson, 2016).

As many authors explained common thread throughout the history of various conflicts in Sudan is the struggle over power, resources, and identity, exacerbated by deep-seated ethnic and religious divisions. In the same vein, the current armed conflict can be traced back to a military coup in April 2019 and ongoing communal disputes over natural resources, exacerbated by disregard for international laws and porous borders. The dynamics of various and interlinked causes resulted in the current crises. Most of the arguments assert that colonial legacy has in one way or the other been the primary factor in determining Sudanese fate.

2.3.1.1. Brief Overview of the Post-Independence History of the Sudanese Political Trajectory

Since achieving independence from British-Egyptian control in 1956, Sudan has faced multiple political disruptions, characterized by a series of coups, internal conflicts, and the eventual separation of South Sudan in 2011 among others. The struggle between the Arab-Muslim north and the African Christian/animist south has significantly influenced the political landscape, resulting in periods of military rule and civil opposition. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 briefly eased tensions but did not address fundamental grievances, leading to increased violence in Darfur and other marginalized areas. The ongoing power struggles following the removal of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 have reignited conflicts, underscoring the enduring instability in Sudan's political path (Johnson, 2020; Hassan, 2023).

As to Gregoire, R. (2024), the post-independence Sudanese political trajectory is fundamentally characterized by political instability defined by series of coups, civil war and power feud. Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has primarily been controlled by military forces with only a few short periods of democracy. The country has experienced three democratic periods, interspersed with dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. Five military coups have occurred since independence, with the latest one in 2021. In 2018, civilian protests led to the ousting of President Omar Al Bashir and the formation of a transitional government. However, political instability persisted, leading to further coups and resignations. A new agreement in December 2022 promised a transitional period and free elections, but

disagreements between the military and civilians delayed progress, eventually leading to armed conflict in April 2023 (Gregoire, R., 2024 & Fekade, 2023).

2.3.1.2. The Role of Religion in the Sudanese Socio-Political System

After CPA in Darfur the marginalization feeling led the continuation of armed struggle in Darfur, Nuva mountain and the Blue Nile region among others that led to the Darfur “Genocide” culminated in the issuance of arrest warrant on Omar Al Bashir on grounds of Crime against humanity, war crimes and genocide.

Religion plays a critical role in shaping the socio-political context of Sudan. The imposition of Islamic law (Sharia) by successive governments has been a source of significant discontent, particularly among non-Muslim populations in the south and marginalized regions, who perceive it as a mechanism of cultural suppression and political control (Khalid, 2021). The religious identity of the ruling elite has exacerbated the divide between the Arab-Muslim majority and the diverse non-Arab populations. Religious differences contribute to a complex socio-political fabric, where faith not only influences personal identity but also intersects with issues of governance, authority, and resistance (Elhaj, 2022). Though religion has a significant contribution in the Sudanese political trajectory in creating political, social and economic elites that control resource and power, race matters the most as Jok (2013) argues. Both Beja and indigenous people of Darfur no matter how they subscribe to Islamic faith, they feel that they are discriminated based on their non-Arab racial identity. Discrimination within Islam has caused conflict in Darfur, as Black Africans rebel against Muslim Arabs (Jok, K. M., 2013; Anderson, K. 2019). The government targets Black rebels using groups like the Janjaweed, leading to violence and crises. The Beja ethnic group also faces discrimination in Eastern Sudan, rebelling against the Arab-led government. This shows the racial issues within Islam and the challenges marginalized groups face in accessing power and resources (Jok, K. M., 2013). A non-Muslim, non-Arab Sudan is therefore at the lowest layer of the social and political stratification in Sudan. This has been the outstanding source of dissatisfaction in Sudanese politics which challenges Sudanese unified identity as it creates friction between its African and Arab identity (Anderson, K., 2019).

2.3.1.3. The Role of the Military in the Sudanese State System

Sudanese politics has historically been heavily influenced by the military, which has often taken charge during periods of transition and political instability. The military's significance dates back to the initial military coup in 1958 led by General Ibrahim Abboud, establishing a recurring pattern in Sudan's political history (Osman, 2020). The military's participation in governance and its interactions with different political groups have led to conflicts of interest in terms of resource allocation and power dynamics. Similarly, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are key players in the ongoing crises, contributing to further destabilization of the state (Hassan, 2023). Throughout history, the military has maintained its own external allies or contacts.

Gallopín, J. B., Thomas, E., Detzner, S., & De Waal, A. (2021) in their Political Market Framework analysis of Sudan explained that during the war, Sudan's security forces increased, the civil government became lean, and military and paramilitary units were reintroduced in counter-insurgency areas. The state divested from agriculture and pastoralism, militarizing peripheries. Government militias raised taxes, while opposition militias followed suit. Employment terms for laborers, particularly displaced people, were enforced with violence. The outsourced militia governance system used rural production to finance itself (Gallopín, et al., 2021).

Following South Sudan's independence, the country's transition from an oil to a gold economy has damaged the Sudanese government's financial situation, making a system to regulate gold income from mines throughout the nation necessary. The Rapid RSF, led by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, began as a militia affiliated with the government but, as a result of the system the authors call the military-commercial-public partnership, have grown to be essential to the government at both the local and national levels. political finance, the Juba agreement and contests (Gallopín, et al., 2021).

As many experts and commentators argue, the stake of the military is high throughout the history of Sudanese politics. As to the Dr. Fekade Terefe commentary, except a promising start and a briefly reversed exercise of representative government in the 1980s, Sudanese politics has been always the preserve of the military, where power is transferred through a

series of coups (Terefe F., 2023, September 21; Mo, K. 2014). Therefore, the current power struggle between the two parallel military institutions led by the two generals is not far from the already known anomaly in Sudan. The military is central in the age old center-periphery exploitative relationship that continued in different forms since the Sudanese colonial period.

2.3.1.4. The Role of Civilian Actors in the Sudanese Politics

Except the three short parliamentary periods, 1954-1958, 1964-1969, and 1985-1989, Sudan had longer stretch of military regimes: 1958-1964, 1969-1985, 1989- to present day (Mo, K., 2014). However, civilian actors, including political parties, grassroots organizations, and social movements, play a vital role in advocating for change and representing the interests of marginalized communities. The 2019 revolution showcased the potential of civilian mobilization in challenging authoritarian rule, yet the transition to democratic governance has been fraught with difficulties (Berridge, W., 2019; Albino, 2020). Civil society groups, while significant in voicing demands for justice and accountability, continue to face repression and violence from the Sudanese state and military forces. The struggle for political inclusivity and representation remains a critical challenge, as various sectors of the population seek to reclaim agency and reshape the country's political future (Abdel Ati, 2006).

The Security apparatus and commercial actors who were beneficiaries of the al-Bashir regime in 2019 wanted to hold onto as much of their material wealth and influence as possible while, if at all possible, taking advantage of the revolutionary moment. Even while there were victors and losers on an individual basis, the old regime's structures were able to adapt to the new circumstances quite well.

During the 2018/19 popular rising of the formidable civilian actors such as the professional's association, the civil society coalition and trade unions was neutralized by the intra-security apparatus alignment and re-alignments. Two new strategies emerged: a stiff competition for supremacy between the SAF and RSF leadership, and an attempt to thwart, impede, or reverse the opposition's attempts to democratize or establish civilian roles (Gallopín et al., 2021).

Even when the Sudan is facing civil conflict and deep divisions, the Sudanese civilian actors composed of trade Unions, Political parties and the rest of the people from all walks of life

came together and had successfully toppled down strong authoritarian regimes of M. Aboud and Nymeri, in 1964 and 1985, which finally failed to serve the presumed goals and ended up with the hijacking of the military (El-Affendi, A., 2012; Munzoul, A. M., 2016).

The 2019 huge crowds of popular protest that deposed the three decades' iron-fist rule of Al-Bashir is the third successful quest of civilian rule by the Sudanese mass. Off course much of the civilian protests were foiled by successive governments of Sudan including the 2011 public outrage which was inspired by the Arab spring. There seems a pattern in most of the successful protests of the Sudanese actors in many respects such as they usually start as a bread question and evolve to include all political questions of the state participating political parties, armed resistance groups of the periphery and demanding regime change and replacement of civilian led non-Islamist government (Berridge, W., 2019; Munzoul, 2016).

The leaders of Sudan's two previous popular uprisings, the October Revolution of 1964 and the April Intifada of 1985 were ultimately unable to establish a democratic political order in the long term, as the parliamentary systems they created were ultimately overthrown by military coups in 1969 and 1989 respectively (Berridge, 2019, p.1).

The other outstanding issue with regarding to civilian participation in Sudan is the Islamic-Secularism divide of civilian actors - political parties in Sudan. The stake of the Islamists has been dominating since the Mahdists revolution and there have been various forms and names of Islamic Parties that have bigger role. The Islamic rule in Sudan has culminated with the coming to power of Colonel Al-Bashir through coup with the support of the National Islamic Front's leader Hassan Al-Turabi in 1989. There are always fallouts between the secularist groups and Islamists before, during and in the aftermath of popular uprisings (Berridge, 2019).

Nonviolent movements played a key role throughout the colonial independence of Sudan from the United Kingdom in 1956. There were unarmed and unsuccessful uprisings in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2016 (Berridge, 2019; Zunes., 2021).

2.3.2. Geopolitical factor in Sudanese Crises

2.3.2.1. Dual Identity factor in Sudan: the confluence of Afro-Arab Identity

Sudan shares common borders with 8 African States and common frontiers with the Arab and African states. The very reason of the two civil wars in Sudan and the Darfur crisis are said to have direct relation in the Sudanese successive regimes' failure to entertain the Arab and African identities and interests in the state system. Although there were attempts to give equal recognition to both identities by some leaders of Sudan especially during their early age of power, lately they will end up in prioritizing the Arab identity of Sudan. As quoted by Stevens, R. P. (1976), in 1973 President Nimeri has said that:

It is the fate of the Sudan and the Sudanese people to be an inalienable part of the Afro-Arab entity. If conditions of disunity and humiliation in the past and defunct regimes prevented our country from contributing to the Arab and African fields of struggle, the present-day Sudan responds today to the call of affiliation and the call of destiny in fulfilment of its national responsibility towards our Arab nation and our mother continent (Stevens, R. P., 1976 p.247).

However, the African civilization spearheaded by the Nubians in Sudan was dominated by Islamic Identity especially in the Northern Sudan since the 17th century Ruay, D. D. (1994) and the Northerners-Southerners divide started by then.

“The Nubians continued to resist the Arab invasion until 1652 when they concluded a peace treaty with the Arabs, known as the Baqt Treaty (A Ruay, D. D. A., 1994, p 13).” In an utter disregard of promises made during the early days of his administration, President Nimeri's government made Sharia as a state religion in 1983 in an attempt to favor the Arab Islamic identity over the groups of Sudanese people belonging to the African identity. This resulted in the outbreak of the second Sudanese civil war involving government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), led by John Garang.

Sudan's quest for a national identity has been shaped by historical tensions between its diverse ethnic and religious groups, particularly the Islamic-Arab North and the Christian-Animist South (De Waal, 2005). Religious tensions between the dominant Arab Muslim North and the “less developed” Christian and traditional African South were deeply embedded in overlapping historical, cultural, social, and economic grievances that resulted in the two civil wars of Sudan (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) (University of Berkley, 2013). This dual identity

was perpetuated in the history of Sudan all along its colonial era and resulted in the civil wars that resulted the independence of South Sudan in 2011. As to Majak, J (1995), post-independence Sudanese regimes attempt to achieve national integration through pan-Arabist Policies that seek to Islamize and Arabize the African and largely Christian South has even alienated other Muslims in the North who favor secular government. Such a clash of pan African and pan Arab identity which according to Okeke, V. O. S., & Okechukwu, e. (2011) are antithetical to each other has always affected Sudanese politics. Although Sudan is not the only country, this historical fact pushed Sudan in a problem to reconcile its Arab and African identities at times. Sometimes the interests of the Arab League and the African Union to which Sudan is a member, might not be in congruent.

Even after the secession of South Sudan, the North –South or the Arab-Non Arab dichotomy is continued resulting the Darfur crisis. Armed and non-armed political opposition groups in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States are still believed to be marginalized by the Arab-Northerners, Khartoum elites (Collins et al, 2024).

2.3.2.2. The Gulf and Maghreb Impact to Sudan

Foreign actors such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel have contributed significantly to the escalation of the Sudanese conflict by favoring one side over the other in order to promote their own interests. Egypt, for example, sought to prevent the formation of a civilian administration in Sudan in order to retain control of the country and defend its own interests, particularly the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). However, Egypt's support for military authority in Sudan exacerbated internal tensions and conflicts. Despite historical ties, Egypt's influence in Sudan has diminished due to its misguided policy, as seen in its exclusion from the Quartet overseeing Sudan's transition. Additionally, Egypt's support for al-Burhan in the current conflict has further escalated tensions and led to the capture of Egyptian soldiers by the RSF (The Washington Institute,2023).

Al-Bashir had long skillfully navigated the shifting tides of Arab politics and remained on sufficiently good terms with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE ('the Arab Troika') and also Qatar and Turkey (the Islamist coalition) to be able to secure some support from each camp. In 2018, he was cornered, antagonizing the Saudis and Emiratis, without being able to draw on any alternative patrons (Gallopín, J. B., et al, 2021, p. 15).

Gulf Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have notably influenced Sudan's political scene in the past few years. Formerly, these countries were associated with the regime of Omar al-Bashir. They offered financial aid in return for military backing and assistance in various conflicts, like the ongoing campaign against the Houthis in Yemen. After al-Bashir was removed in 2019, Saudi Arabia and the UAE cultivated relationships with various factions in Sudan, each aligning with their own unique interests. Saudi Arabia backs the Sudanese Army and General al-Burhan to safeguard its strategic interests and investments in the nation. Meanwhile, the UAE has made significant investments in Hemeti, considering him a crucial ally for pursuing its goals, such as combating Islamist factions and ensuring economic interests in the Red Sea region.

The UAE has provided financial, political, and military support to Hemeti. Reports indicate that the alliance among the UAE, Hemeti, and Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar has had a significant influence on security dynamics in Sudan and North Africa. In the broader geopolitical realm of the Red Sea region, the distinctive interests and alliances of Saudi Arabia and the UAE are reflected in their approach towards Sudan.

The events in the Maghreb and Gulf following the Arab Spring impacted the security dynamics in the Sahel region. Following the fall of Muamar Al-Gadhafi, transboundary movements of people and goods in the Sahel and Maghreb regions were free from any strong states' checking points. This coincides with the spread of ISIS in the wider Levant Region and resurgence of terrorism its southward expansion to the Sahel region. The further strengthening of Boko Haram and other groups impacted security in this region including the western and central African States. This was induced by the free flow of arms and scrutinized transboundary criminal activities in the Sahel-Maghreb Regions. Analyzing the direct impact of these developments in the Sahel-Magrheb region to the outbreak of the current crisis of Sudan is not in the domain of this paper. However, the impacts of unscrutinized transboundary criminal activities and terrorist resurgence in further complicating the Sudanese crises and its possible ramification to the Horn of Africa Region and particularly to Ethiopia will be assessed. The Arab Spring has provided local terrorist groups with the potential to establish ideological and material power, allowing al-Qaeda to consider repositioning itself on the African continent. The collapse of Libya's security flank and the setbacks of al-Qaeda in Asia

are two elements conducive to a new centrality for the Maghreb, Sahel, and West Africa (Ammour, L. A., 2012).

2.3.2.3. The Horn of Africa Impact to Sudan

The Horn of Africa is one of the most unstable and volatile region in the globe which is affected by inter and intra- state conflicts, climate induced natural disasters, terrorism and religious extremism and transnational crimes which ultimately led to the regions underdeveloped in every aspect. As to IGAD media review (2024), The Horn of Africa is being challenged by Intra- and inter-state conflicts, terrorism, economic decline, food insecurity and migration among others.

The Horn of Africa region is facing political and security issues due to poor governance and ethnic dominance. It is a region where by diverse geopolitical interests like maritime security, counterterrorism, and resource competition intersects. Sudan and Ethiopia are in a state of civil war with a had full of Insurgent groups and resurrection groups fighting the ruling governments since 2020 (wubante A., 2024).

Furthermore, the Horn of Africa is one of the hugely militarized region that attracts the interests of great powers and the newly emerging middle powers either vying for military bases, port, market and resource that helps to boost their respective spheres of influences.

In this sub-region we have a failed state of Somalia, the fragile states of Sudan and South Sudan. Ethiopia, once considered as an anchor of stability in the Horn is in a state of internal conflict since recently. Similarly, Djibouti and Eritrea are run by authoritarian Regimes characterized by one-man rule of two aged presidents for more than 25 and 31 years respectively.

ICG (2013), in its post-Isayas Scenario analysis asserts that instability and power struggle are topping the highly likely probabilities (International Crisis Group, 2013). Djibouti as a state located in a very strategic juncture in the Gulf of Aden connecting the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea serves as a vital transit shipment between Europe, Asia and also Africa. The other strategically important State is Eritrea located in the Red Sea Region. The post Omar Guelleh and post Isaias Afewerki's fate of Djibouti and Eritrea respectively is quite unpredictable

largely susceptible to descend to internal political crises which will ultimately open a room for foreign intervention. There is no institutional mechanism that can hold changes of leadership so far (Donelli, F., 2022).

Given the drive for militarization and the intense desire for agricultural land and port access, Sudan is one of the top victims. The gulf countries are struggling for dominance, Russia and USA over a military base, Turkey on Suakin, Saudi, Qatar and Emirates to Agricultural lands.

Sudan has a history of proxy war with Ethiopia in most of its post-independence history. Apart from harboring one on others insurgent groups and liberation organizations, the two countries engaged in an intermittent confrontation over the Al-Fashaga border land and the Grand Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam-GERD. This confrontation reached to its highest point During Ethiopia's conflict with the Tigray People's Liberation Front. As to Venkataraman, M. (2005), the issue of migration and the fear of an export of radical religious elements from Sudan is another source of friction between Eastern African States and Sudan. The independence of South Sudan after two devastating civil wars with Sudan, there remains unresolved conflict over Abiye which is a source of an appreciable challenge in the Horn of Africa.

Overall, the horn of Africa is economically underdeveloped and less integrated, featured by failure to manage internal diversity, vulnerable to climate induced shocks, victim of external interventions.

2.3.2.4. The Sahel Challenges to Sudan

The Sahel Region is a semiarid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan which includes countries such as Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2024) is one of the most underdeveloped and unstable regions in the world. It experiences security crises suffering from military attacks and terrorism, prone to natural calamities like climate induced draught and desertification which made it a source of threat for the Northern Africa region and Europe in terms of its migration and other trans-border criminal activities.

The Sahel region, plagued by poverty and state vulnerabilities, has become a hub for illicit firearms, narcotics, and organized crimes like kidnapping. The collapse of Libya's government in 2011 has exacerbated this issue, facilitating terrorist access to firearms (El Moussaoui, E.A., 2016).

The decline in international counterterrorism support and regional leadership has created a vacuum for violent extremism to grow and thus organizations like JNIM, ISGS, ISWAP, and others have exploited this by using countries as platforms for attacks on government forces and civilians. Non-state actors like the Wagner Group have also expanded their influence (Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

Of the Sahel countries Chad is the closest state to Sudan that has been affected by the Sudanese crisis both before and after April 2023. Darfur has been plagued by armed conflict over land, resources, and power for years. Rebel groups in Darfur united against the central government in the early 2000s due to neglect and oppression of non-Arab minorities. The government responded with a brutal crackdown targeting rebels and ethnic militias using the Arab Darfurians called the Janjaweed militia that later formed the Rapid Special Force-RSF (Crisis Group, 2023). After the fallout between the two military groups in April 2023 the Chad government closed its border for any military use, however non-Arab Chadians are reportedly joining the Sudanese Armed Force in support of their neighboring non-Arab victim communities in Darfur (Crisis Group, 2023). Chad and Sudan has long experience of proxy war where they support each other's insurgent groups in from Darfur and Eastern Chad respectively (Tubiana, J., & Walmsley, E., 2008).

Chapter three- Research Methodology

3.1. The Study Design

This study is predominantly a qualitative research that mainly prefers to employ a case study research design to better examine security implication of a state in crisis to its neighbor. This approach is ideal for exploring complex, context-dependent phenomena involving perceptions, experiences, processes, and social/political dynamics. It allows for in-depth understanding of how and why the Sudanese crisis impacts Ethiopia's security, by better capturing nuances.

3.2. Epistemic and Ontological Underpinnings

The study adopts an Interpretivist epistemology. This approach emphasizes understanding the complex, subjective meanings and interpretations of actors involved in or affected by the Sudanese crisis and its regional security implications. It focuses on gaining deep insights into perceptions, motivations, and social constructs through qualitative methods, recognizing that knowledge is contextually situated and constructed through human experience. Interpretivism emphasizes understanding the subjective meanings, experiences, and social contexts of individuals or groups, which aligns closely with qualitative methods like interviews and content analysis. It allows researchers to explore complex, nuanced perspectives, making it well-suited for in-depth exploration of issues like regional security and political crises.

In terms of Ontological orientation, the research aligns with a relativist ontological stance, acknowledging that social realities such as security perceptions and regional dynamics are multiple and context-dependent, rather than objective or singular. It views the security impacts as constructed through political, social, and regional processes.

3.3. Method of Data Collection

To meet the intended objective of this study, data is collected through the use of primary and secondary sources. The researcher used open-ended questions and non-structured guiding questions to allow participants to provide their individual responses, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the research problem.

3.3.1. In-Depth Interview

In-depth Interviews are preferred to gain a detailed personal account and individual perceptions on certain issues such as state of affairs, programs, or notions.

In-depth, qualitative interviews are excellent tools to use in planning and evaluating Extension programs because they use an open-ended, discovery-oriented method, which allows the interviewer to deeply explore the respondent's feelings and perspectives on a subject (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2001. p. 1).

In this light, In-depth interviews are conducted employing a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, accompanied by follow-up why or how question with four key informants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute of Foreign affairs to better capture rich qualitative data beyond surface-level insights on the area of work.

Primary data is also collected using semi-structured interview questions dispatched to a selected expert working in one of the Embassies of Ethiopia via email. Follow up interview is also conducted via whats up with one of the informants.

3.3.2. Secondary Sources

In the effort to triangulate and to compliment primary data gathered by interviews, secondary data sources, through online and offline sources, including books, journal articles and government reports and archives are broadly consulted in the successful conduct of the study. Bilateral agreements signed between Ethiopia and Sudan, official diplomatic exchange of letters are also referred.

3.4. Sampling techniques

The study uses purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to target experts on the topic of this study. The sample is taken intentionally with the expectation that selected interviewees are derived from competent authorities in the area of study. Thus, officials and experts from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) are selected in due consideration of the nature of their work and area of specialization.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

The study applied a combination of thematic and document analysis to code interview transcripts and documents to uncover recurring themes related to regional security implication, political crises, Ethiopia's foreign policy orientation towards Sudan, scenarios of Sudanese political future and Its implementation on Ethiopia.

3.6. Ethical Consideration

The research topic is sensitive as it may impact state to state, state to non-state entities and individual to state or non-state entities' relations which ultimately may implicate informants. In lieu consideration of the sensitivity of the topic of the research, utmost care has been taken by the researcher to comply with ethical consideration principles during dissertations as provided by Bryman and Bell (2007).

All research participants voluntarily participated. The researcher disclosed the objective and goal of the research to the participants without any attempt of deception and exaggeration. Names and identities of two informants that requested to remain anonymous is respected throughout the study and remained undisclosed.

Chapter Four- Brief overview of Ethio-Sudan Relations

4.1. Historical Relations between Sudan and Ethiopia

The relation between Ethiopia and Sudan dates back to the time of antiquity. The people of the two nations had also closer trade contacts since the time of Aksum civilization of Ethiopia and Meroe civilization of Ancient Sudan (MoFA, 2002). Ethiopia and Sudan too had a history of military skirmish during the time of Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia and the Mahdiist/Dervishes era of Sudan in 1898 before the official establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. That military expedition of the Mahdists to Abyssinia was instigated mainly by historical, religious and geopolitical reasons. The Mahdists were angry with Ethiopia for allowing safe exit corridor to the encircled Turco-Egyptian army, and partly due to perceived religious differences between Ethiopia and Sudan as the Mahadists had a policy of liberating Muslims through Jihad. This politically and religiously motivated expedition has resulted in the beheading of the Ethiopian Christian Emperor and the change of government in Ethiopia.

The border zone spreading from the Atbara River to the Blue Nile remained as a major theater of Mahdist–Ethiopian collision during the years 1885–89 (Seri-Hersch, 2009). Various occasions of military confrontation at various levels had been witnessed between Ethiopia and Sudan before and after the Metema incident. Emperor Tewodros and his elder brother Kinfu (1837) had exchanged fire with the Ottoman-Egyptian forces at the border of Ethiopia and Sudan in the first half and early second half of the 19th c.

Beyond the conflict over religious expansion in the borderland regions, the interest to control the source of Nile River has been a source of major contention between Ethiopia and rules that govern Sudan for centuries. Egypt's role is found out to be instrumental as it was part of the ruling arrangement on Sudan both during the Turco-Egyptian rule (1820-1885) and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899-1956). The battle of Gundet and Gura in 1875 and 1876 respectively fought over the control of the sources of river Nile between Ethiopia and Turco Egyptian Rule of Sudan are other incidents that were concluded by the victory of the Emperor Yohannes IV' army of Ethiopia. Similarly, a number of border agreements that also includes

provisions over the use of Nile were negotiated during the time of Anglo-Egyptian condominium. Throughout these agreements, Egypt's interest was given precedence not only over the interest of Ethiopia, but also prevailed over Sudanese interests. This was enabled by the coercive power of the UK. The outstanding issues of contention between Sudan and Ethiopia have to do with the 20th century British brokered border agreements and treaties over Nile including the 1929 agreement between Britain and Egypt over Nile which excluded the major contributor to the Nile water and source of the Blue Nile (Marcus, 1963).

As we capture from these series of confrontation between Ethiopia and Sudanese rules, attempts to conquer and recruit enslaved troops from the Ethiopian border area and, to punish rulers and groups who run away to Ethiopia from Sudan in opposition to the centralized rule were common practices. Thus, the border trade and interaction of the people was affected by the politics and the perceived religious differences between the two rules in the two countries.

In the 20th c too, Ethiopia and Sudan were engaged militarily either in the form of border conflict at military level or through proxy engagements. The involvement of Sudanese leadership in supporting Ethiopian armed groups including EPLF, TPLF and others and the reciprocation of the Ethiopia side by supporting the South Sudanese liberation movement is a universal knowledge affirmed by various research outputs and recognized by the 2002 Ethiopia's Foreign Policy document (Belete B. Y., 2016; MoFA,2002; Bekele, T. M., 2015).

After the coming to power of EPRDF, it seemed that the two sides reflecting on the damages of previous foreign policy approaches followed by Ethiopia and Sudan, and hence tried to forge healthy policy towards each other. However, following the attempted assassination of Hussein Mubarak, Egyptian president in Addis Ababa and other reasons related with border dispute, the normalization was reversed briefly as the Ethiopian army engaged in the Sudanese war siding the SPLM-A. This was mainly happened as a retaliatory move by Ethiopia to the Sudanese Islamist involvement in the assassination attempt (Ronen, Y. 2002).

4.2. The Current Ethiopian Foreign Policy towards Sudan

According to Ambassador Yibeltal, former Ethiopia's Ambassador to Sudan, Ethiopia's foreign policy towards Sudan is generally underpinned within the context of its foreign policy to the Horn of Africa Region (Yibeltal. A., Personal communication, April 6, 2025).

Ethiopia's Horn of Africa policy as we can infer from (MoFA,2002) states that Ethiopia has long standing connection with the Horn of African States in terms of religion, history, culture and natural resource. The document stipulates that Ethiopia's foreign policy is articulated based on the national interest and national security in the region. In this regard, it come up with a general assessment based on the impacts of horn countries on the democratization and development aspirations of Ethiopia, which are matters of vital interest during the (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) period. On this basis the Horn of African states contribution to the democratization and development of Ethiopia was considered as minimal in the short term, while it could have promising impact on the long run. On the other hand, the foreign policy document clarified threats emanating from the Horn of African countries as follows:

What they have of value is port service and the sole danger that would arise is if they were to collaborate to deny Ethiopia the use of their ports or if they were to reduce the efficiency of the ports. Such a situation would not arise from economic interest, but rather as a result of political differences and conflict..... In the negative sense, they could believe in our vulnerability, and by promoting religious extremism and narrow ethnic sentiments, they could disturb the peace and our development and democratization efforts (MoFA, 2002, P.38).

The foreign policy of Ethiopia towards the region and Sudan has not changed much even today. Ethiopia's foreign policy orientation in the horn and in Sudan particularly is shaped across time by threats out of the attempts of neighboring countries to exploit Ethiopia's vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities are attributed to developments that hinder Ethiopia's secured sea access; dangers emanating from exports of political Islam and religious extremism; resource conflict particularly on the utilization of Nile River; border security and border conflict.

As to Ambassador Zerihun Abebe, the African Affairs Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, boundary issues; Management and utilization of transboundary resource; regional peace and security; and Joint Economic cooperation and Regional Integration are the four major pillars that anchored Ethiopia's foreign policy towards Sudan (Zerihun. A., Personal communication, January 20, 2025). Similarly, for Amb.Yibeltal, terrorism and extremism, border security and trade, conflict on trans-border resource utilization and boundary dispute, regional integration, port access, infrastructural integration

which defines Ethiopia's policy in the Horn all together govern the relation with Sudan. Sudanese historical, cultural and geographical relation with the Middle East and Egypt in particular influences Ethiopia to treat its relation with Sudan with utmost cautious, Amb. Yibeltal adds. Ethiopia has issues with Sudan on natural resources such as Nile which also involves Egypt behind and this river has been a source of conflict as it equally could have been a source of cooperation. The unresolved boundary conflict spanning decades and Ethiopia's desire to use Port Sudan; the security of huge number of Ethiopians living in Sudan; religious and cultural interdependence; border security concerns as a neighbor sharing large porous territory; Islamic extremism threats from Sudan; strong interest of economic cooperation on energy export, trade, Investment, tourism and civil aviation; infrastructural connectivity projects on road, rail, and pipeline to enable regional integration, all made the bilateral relation with Sudan the most important one in the region.

4.2.1. Post 2018 Ethio-Sudanese Relation: changes and continuities

While most of the foreign policy orientations and principles enshrined in the 2002 foreign policy and national security policy document retained, new emphasis is added in the draft 2019 foreign policy document, pursuant to the evolving regional dynamics and geopolitical setting in the Horn of Africa Region. The new draft policy has identified five major foundations for the new foreign policy of Ethiopia. These are nation building, national pride, public safety and security, regional geopolitical setting and regional integration and international world order and dynamism (MoFA, 2019).

The new Ethiopia's draft foreign policy document states that the evolving geopolitical shift in the Horn region and the new developments and new power dynamics in the Red Sea region will certainly impact the national security and national interest of landlocked Ethiopia in particular and the wider region in general. Securing dependable and sustainable port access in the region is proposed as a way out to avert this security risk. Realizing region and continent wide economic and social integration and cooperation is also the other pillar of Ethiopia's foreign policy. This in turn is believed to help to respond in coordination and jointly to the new developments in the region. Thus, regional geopolitics and regional integration should be taken as the foundations of the foreign policy of Ethiopia (MoFA, 2019).

In addition to the 2019 foreign policy document, the book written and publicized by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed as a guideline to his government, the Medemer book, (2019) advocates for harmonious coexistence, equal partnership, and fair sharing of rewards and obligations with the neighboring countries (Jalu, A. T., & Adgeh, A. K., 2025).

Beyond policy documents, post 2018 foreign policy actions in the region and in Sudan in particular have not witnessed a major shift. Ethiopia wants to further strengthen the existing bilateral arrangements and to implement agreements signed with Sudan to address outstanding issues between the two countries, to further strengthen the regional integration scheme through infrastructure connectivity, energy export, port access, trade, investment, tourism, border security cooperation, and enhancing people to people relation. Ethiopia thus cares for the peace and security of Sudan for the sake of the stability of the region and for the security of itself as well. While Al-Bashir had a very fraternal relation with the EPRDF/TPLF leadership, Sudan has not opposed the 2018 political transition in Ethiopia. On April 21-22, 2018, Sudanese ousted President Omer al-Bashir and Ethiopian Premier Abiy Ahmed Ali met at the sidelines of Tana Forum in Bahir Dar and agreed to enhance bilateral ties and underlined the need for Ethiopia-Sudan cooperation and partnership in regional and international forums (Sudan Tribune, 2018). Prime Minister Abiy paid a two days official visit to Sudan to discuss with Al-Bashir on bilateral cooperation in trade and economic exchange, border security and regional and international issues of mutual concern. This was made as the continuation of the meeting during the Tana Forum and as a culmination of ministerial visit exchange (Anadolu Agency, 2018). The Foreign Minister of Ethiopia was quoted by FBC's news report that claimed, during the visit, Ethiopia and Sudan have reached an agreement allowing Ethiopia to maintain a stake in Port Sudan's development and administration (Brussels Embassy of Ethiopia, 2018). It is to be recalled that Ethiopia and Sudan have signed a number of agreements over the use of Port Sudan such as Protocol Agreement on Port Sudan Utilization signed on March 05,2000 and Amendment to the Protocol Agreement on Port Sudan Utilization signed in January 24,2003 (MoFA Treaty Archives). During the visit, President Al-Bashir pledged support to GERD the National Technical Committee. The leaders agreed to turn Assosa, capital city of Benishangul regional state into a commercial center, link Ethiopia and Sudan with a railway line and a number of Ethiopian prisoners in Sudan were released (Brussels Embassy of Ethiopia, 2018).

Following the change of government in Sudan, Ethiopia seems not to spare time to contribute towards the peaceful transition in Sudan. Ethiopia's reaction to the Sudanese popular protest that deposed Al-Bashir was measured with all due respect to the sovereignty of Sudan and the sovereign right of the Sudanese People to determine their fate. Ethiopia only called for calm and peaceful transition, as PM Abiy after he met Al-Burhan and the leaders of the strong civilian force, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) called the Sudanese people and political forces to show "courage" and move quickly toward a democratic, inclusive transition (VoA News,2019). PM Abiy has appointed Ambassador Mohamoud Dirir as his Special Envoy to facilitate the resumption of talks between the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the FFC. Ambassador Yibeltal strongly believes that Ethiopia's role along with the AU and IGAD was instrumental to enable an agreement between the FFC and the TMC in 2019.

However, a turning point of the relation between the new administrations in Ethiopia and Sudan emerged following the eruption of the conflict between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and Tigray People's Liberation Movement- TPLF in November 2020. The Sudanese administration of the Military wing used the situation; immediately acted in December 2020 by mobilizing its army and forcefully evicted Ethiopian farmers from the Al-Fashaqa area. Ethiopia frequently, protested the forceful occupation of the disputed land and called on Sudan to cede the territory to resume the border demarcation and other arrangements to seek sustainable solution for the deadlock. The usual trading of accusations between the two countries continued for years till the signing of CoHA. This step of the military according to Amsalu, my informant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was indirectly related with the internal feud between the civilian and the military group. The Military was taking advantage of the control of the disputed territory to garner public support in the effort to preside over the civilian government. Egypt was also reacting to this new development by conducting a serious of military drill with the Sudanese Army. The Sudanese administration started tilting towards Egypt on the issue of the GERD, changing previously held understanding between EPRDF and the NIC. As to unanimous informant from IFA, Sudan further resort to support the training, organization of Tigray forces to open another war front from the West, which was overturned by a combined Eritrean and Ethiopian strong military presence along the Ethio-Sudanese border. Logistic supply via air was made to TPLF, as the Ethiopian government

protested by the time and as recently proved by Getachew Reda, the deputy President of TPLF by then. This informant also believes that Egypt was behind this support.

Even after the end of the war with the signing of CoHA in 2022 November, Ethiopia still remained committed to resort to peaceful avenues to resolve the border dispute with Sudan. Meetings between Al-Burhan and PM Abiy still continued in Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. On the other hand, the Sudanese transition degenerated to the worst as an all-out war broke out between the RSF and the SAF in March 2023. Ethiopia still preferred not to take advantage of the war and forcefully occupy the territory in question. MoFA official x and Facebook pages quoted PM Abiy that he said: “We are not willing to solve our border disputes with Sudan through violence, and we will continue supplying electrical power to Sudan despite its inability to pay us now. Ethiopia is not willing to take advantage of Sudan's misfortune” (2025). X (Formerly Twitter). <https://x.com/mfaethiopia>

Similarly, no matter how highly the Emperor, Durgue and Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) governments valued the geopolitical positioning of Sudan and sought the good neighborly relations, the history of the relations of the two states tells us that it was not going as expected.

The political system in Sudan was dominated by the Northern Arab and Islamist elites for so long which puts at odds with the Southern Sudanese political elites. The deep historical, religious and societal connection to the Arab and Islamic world has become one of the sources of the mistrust that existed for so long in its relation with Ethiopia.

Sudanese elites working with international Islamic fundamentalists including with Al-Qaida leadership and attempts to undermine the stability of Ethiopia has contributed for the unhealthy relation between the two neighboring countries in the 1990's. Furthermore, the stake of Egypt on the Ethio-Sudanese relation is instrumental as almost all anti-Ethiopia liberation armies established in Egypt used to open their second office in Khartoum.

Both Ambassador Zerihun and Ambassador Yibeltal believe that TPLF, Eritrea, Egypt and the Al-Burhan wing of SRF are forming an alliance which could pose security threat on Ethiopia, given the unresolved structural differences between Ethiopia and Egypt in particular.

It is with this broader context the relation with Sudan is treated as well. Therefore, Ethiopia's policy of seeking a united, stable, friendly Sudan is maintained throughout the policies of different governments in Ethiopia since the Emperor's time.

Section Five: The Impact of the Current Sudanese Crises on the National Security of Ethiopia

5.1. Introduction

Since the objective of the study is exploring the impacts of the ongoing Sudanese crises on Ethiopia's national security, data is collected through extended interview conducted with Ambassadors and experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and the Institute of Foreign Affairs who have expertise on the matter. Furthermore, in the effort to triangulate biases, documents; articles produced on Sudan and Ethiopia; bilateral agreements; letters exchanged between the two countries and Ethiopia's foreign policy document have been consulted broadly.

In the aftermath of the cold war the concept of security has been evolving in terms of what is an issue of security, whose security and how to ensure security. Since then, varieties of security theories and conceptions came in to the realm of security studies. This expansion reflects a shift from traditional state-centric military security to a more comprehensive approach that considers non-traditional security threats (Yuan, 2022).

The security endeavors of most of the states nowadays seem to derive from an awareness that modern security is a complex of ingredients, embracing various areas of social life (economy, politics, social welfare, health, education, culture, ecology, military affairs, etc.), and that modern (national and international) security can be effectively ensured only if the concept of security is considered in all its complexity (Grizold, A. 1994).

It is with this modern set of national security understanding that this section tries to capture the impacts of the Sudanese crisis to the national security of Ethiopia. With this broader context, the impact of the Sudanese crisis to the national security of Ethiopia can be analyzed from the perspectives of the following major parameters governing the relation between the two states. These are the utilization of transboundary resources, particularly the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam; boundary dispute; border security and migration including other trans-border criminal activities; and regional integration and economic cooperation, among others. In an attempt to look in to the national security threats to Ethiopia, it is worth to shed light on the possible scenarios of the future of the Sudanese conflict, the domestic dynamics of Ethiopia and Involvement of external actors in the ongoing war in Sudan. The whole

discussion of this section is broadly informed by the Regional Security Complex theory of IR and more specifically aligned to regional conflict complex framework as the Sudanese conflict is believed to embody a myriad of spillover and transnational impacts to the wider region.

5.2. Involvement of Foreign Actors

The conflict in Sudan cannot be taken as an incident confined to the Sudanese boundary. Sudanese geostrategic significance, historical and cultural affinity to the middle east and in general its Afro-Arab identity draw the interests and/or involvement of various external state and non-state actors from near and Afar. As Sudan is situated at the confluence of the Sahel, the Arabian Gulf across the Red Sea, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa whereby the SAF and RSF collaborate militarily, politically, and economically with a variety of governments and armed groups from these (and other) regions, it is inaccurate to consider the Sudanese conflict to be just a civil war between two groups (Chatamhouse, 2024).

Beyond its geostrategic significance and socio-historical factors, Sudan, one of Africa's biggest nations, is the continent's third-largest producer of gold, gas, and enormous agricultural fields, among other natural resources (RFI, 2025). Sudan is suitable for the production of large-scale crops and livestock due to its abundance of arable land, water, pastures, and forests (Abdalla, A. A., & Abdel Nour, H. O., 2001). These are the pulling factors Sudan is endowed with to be a center of attention for various external actors.

The outbreak of the Sudanese conflict is happening in a cloud of regional conflicts such as in South Sudan, Libya and others. France 24 (2025) alluded that powers including the UAE, Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Russia accused of supporting one side or the other. Since the Start of the war in 2023, both the SAF and RSF are busy of recruiting not only Sudanese but also international fighters from across the Sahel and the Horn of African Region (ACAPS,2024).

Gulf nations, especially Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar have been heavily involved in Sudan driven by a combined set of military, political, and economic interest. The involvement has increased over time particularly since the Arab uprising, and has been inspired by regional aspirations and concerns (Kringen, J. A., 2012). Sudan has been the largest recipient of Gulf Countries 'Council (GCC) development assistance and a primary destination for GCC investment. The alarming question of food security driven the Gulf States investment in Africa

in General and in Sudan in particular. With more than 50,000 hectares under cultivation and a 2022 agreement for an additional 16,000 hectares, the UAE-based International Holding Company is well-represented in Sudan. Together, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have invested \$400 million in Sudan's agricultural sector, and Saudi Arabia has made \$3 billion in contributions to the nation's economic growth and agricultural productivity. (GCC-Africa Agriculture, 2024).

Gulf ties with Sudanese army also stems from cooperation in Yemen, after Khartoum joined the Saudi-led coalition fighting a civil war there in 2015, where by Al-Burhan led the Sudanese force who fought under the Saudis, while Daglo's RSF were deployed with soldiers from the UAE. The UAE and Saudi Arabia though tried to coordinate their approach towards Sudan and the entire region, they have competing interests which is driven by broadening spheres of influence in the Horn.

Despite competition from Turkey, Iran, and Qatar, the UAE is now focusing on its economic future and diversifying international partners. President Mohammed bin Zayed is leading a long-term strategic vision to acquire a string of ports connecting the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, including investments in Yemen and the Horn of Africa. This is expected to provide UAE strategic depth and make it indispensable to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Quilliam, 2022). The UAE's aspiration to be a port belt is spearheaded by the DP World group and the Abu Dhabi Ports. Abu Dhabi ports has inked an agreement with Sudanese private company, DAL to develop a \$4 billion port in Sudan. DP World, plays a significant role in UAE foreign policy by managing ports in the Horn, including and Somalia such as Bosaso (state of Puntland), Kismayo in the state of Jubaland, and Barawe from South-west state, Berbera from Somaliland to serve the UAE's projection of power in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean (Eltahir, N. 2022, June 21).

Saudi on its part has a profound interest in the Sudan even before the start of the war. The Al-Bashir administration has been playing off Saudi and Iran throughout his tenure to maximize financial backings from both sides. At the end of his reign in 2016 Al-Bashir has joined anti-Iran and anti-Houthi coalition forces led by mainly Saudi Arabia and send troops to Yemen in exchange for financial aid (ISPI, 2022). However, Al-Bashir was not fully cooperative

especially in cracking down Islamic extremist elements and he was not favored by the Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Following the removal of Al-Bashir, the involvement of Saudi and UAE has increased as a reflection of their interest not only in Sudan but also in the Red sea and the HOA Regions.

Qatar, based on its selective exercise of quiet diplomacy, has been actively involved in conflict resolution in Africa, providing financial assistance and perceived impartiality. Since 2008, Qatar has hosted negotiations involving the Sudanese government and rebel groups in Darfur. In 2012, the Sudanese government and a faction of the Justice and Equality Movement signed a declaration in Qatar to cease hostility and hold peace talks (Kringen, J. A., 2012). Qatar's involvement in African agriculture increased in 2008, when it formed a joint holding company with Sudan to facilitate agricultural investment and according to the GCC-Africa Agriculture (2024). Qatar committed 500 million to Sudan's agriculture.

The UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the immediate aftermath of the removal of al Bashir regime were on the same page based on mutual interests on the strong stance against political Islamism. UAE's aggressive involvement through port investment and the Saudi's military base driven engagement in the Horn were perceived to be better served by the military led government than the civilian governance.

This involvement of the Gulf and favoritism to the military has gradually hampered the transition of Sudan to a civilian administration as these states supported the military wing to force Prime Minister Hamdok remain trapped between the demands of the army and the wider public. Egypt has also forced the Prime Minister to result in a turnaround on Sudanese position over the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (Italian Institute for International Political Studies [ISPI], 2022). The outbreak of the war has brought up different power alignment along the SAF and RSF. The UAE, that has deeper connection with the RSF both during its operation in Yemen and in Libya poised to side the Hemedti forces. The fact that the interest of UAE transcends port investment to include vital resources such as gold which are under the control of the RSF wing for so long has impacted its decision to favor the SAF.

On the other hand, Egypt and Saudi Arabia seems to be convinced that their interest is better served when the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan remains intact and hence they are of the believe that the Sudanese army has relatively better popular support and legitimacy. Moreover, the strong tie existing between the national Military and Security units of Sudan and Al-Burhan coupled with the personal attachment between Al Burhan and Al Sisi has influenced the position of Egypt.

Egypt also brings in the issue of Nile and containment of Ethiopia which has been at the core of its foreign policy for centuries in to the equation of treating its foreign policy in Sudan in the context of the ongoing war. In this vein, Al Burhan is found to be the preferred ally who have relative legitimacy from the influential elites of Sudan, mainly of the Arab Sudan elites, whose influence in the North, Central and Eastern part of Sudan is higher. For Egypt as it shares border in the North and it has indirect interest in the East along the Ethiopian border, its decision to prefer a faction that has strong hold in these areas seems quite reasonable.

Chad, a country sharing over 20 ethnic groups with Sudan, has been accused of facilitating and delivering weapons from the United Arab Emirates using its eastern airports in Abeche and Um-Djaras. Both countries deny the accusations, but The UAE also built a hospital in Abeche for free medical services, though doctors working there deny any military operations within the facility (Salih, 2025).

There is also clan-based support or intervention from Chad that has changed the tribal alignment on the Western Sudan side. Chad is serving as a major corridor for the UAE's arms and logistic supply heading to the Rapid Special Force of Hamdan Dagalo. The SAF accuses Chad of serving as a logistical hub and siding with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to supply weapons and military equipment – including drones carrying guided missiles – to the RSF through Amdjarass International Airport (Institute for Security Studies [ISS] Africa, 2025).

According to a letter of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, three lines of support underpin the RSF takeover of Darfur: The Arab allied communities; dynamic and sophisticated financial networks; and new military supply lines passing via Chad, Libya, and South Sudan (United Nations Security Council [UNSC], 2024). The Sudanese Armed Force leadership continuously accused of the involvement of the

government of Chad in collaboration with the UAE and recently tensions between Sudan and Chad heightened following a senior Sudanese army commander's public statement that legitimizes airports in neighboring Chad to be military targets (Sudan Tribune, 23 March 2025).

A free flow of weapons from Libya will not be limited within Sudan. There is every possibility for the transfer of these arms to the countries of the Horn of Africa, mainly to Ethiopia, given the huge demand created by domestic conflict in Ethiopia. The fact that the Rapid Support Force has the expertise in making business out of shadow trans-border trade, transferring arms from the Sahel to Ethiopia might be considered one of the means to finance its war in Sudan.

As to the words of a report in the Wilson Center, paradoxically, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are receiving military and diplomatic support from Russia and Ukraine in the conflict of Sudan. At the UN systems, Russia still backs 'Sudanese government'. Ukraine also backs it because SAF opposes the Wagner group, which used to back the RSF both before and during the war. Ukraine's team is spotted in both Omdurman and El-Geneina, capital of west Darfur State, maintaining SAF's fighter jets. While the SAF is also receiving support from Qatar, Turkey is offering Bayraktar drones. Islamist groups like Al-Baraa Ibn Malik brigade, a favorite of Turkey is fighting alongside of SAF too. Iran's drone supplies to SAF and Algeria's fighter jet offer are also reported. Algeria's support is made in response to Morocco's support for the RSF (Salih, 2025).

Egypt: -Unlike the Gulf States and other actors, the top priority of Egypt's policy towards Sudan is not about the investment in the agricultural sector or containing Iran or having military base or port investment. Rather, its major policy has to do with ensuring its historical right over the use of Nile, ensuring border security and containment of radical Islam. In the context of the ongoing Sudanese crisis, concerns about water security, the possibility of cross border armed and terrorist incursions, and an influx of Sudanese migrants have all been exacerbated by the violence next door of Egypt, in Sudan. Egypt, thus considers the general situation of Sudan as a national security threat; it has made its position clear and stands along the Sudanese Army, condemning the formation parallel state by the RSF faction. Its diplomatic, material and technical support to the SAF seems instrumental in helping the Al

Burhan Force to the moment to further exploit beyond neutralizing the perceived threat from Sudan crisis.

Although Egypt publicly advocates for a peace deal between Hemedti and al-Burhan, it's preference is reaching a negotiated outcome that favors al-Burhan's camp. In contrast to Hemedti, who Sisi sees as a rogue actor, al-Burhan and Sisi as military man are on the same page on a number of issues, and have worked closely together in the past (Skinner, 2023).

On the other hand, strong arguments are presented in support of Egypt's expressed position which underlines that It is highly interested to work out a sustainable peace in Sudan through dialogue. The arguments are made on the basis that Egypt doesn't want the prolonged war in Sudan as it might increase the security threats out of migration, loose boundary control and terrorist infiltration. Egypt also wanted to avoid civil war close to its border, whereas the RSF is threatening to relocate the war to the Northern front.

As to the words of Ambassador Yibeltal, other things remain unchanged, Egypt has concerns on the growing influence of Sudanese Islamic elements in the SAF circle. RSF's attack to the North and North Eastern part of Sudan sends shockwaves to Egypt. Egypt is providing military hardware and assistance to Sudan. The Egyptian air force has been accused of intervening in Sudan by the RSF General, Hemedti.

Eritrea has changed its mind and normalized its relation with the SAF. Esayas Afeworki is heard of speaking that he is trilled of why RSF's leader Dagalo is not still got killed, while Dagalo threaten to take target Eritrea. A number of armed groups such as The Eastern Sudan Liberation Forces, the United Popular Front for Liberation and Justice and the Beja National Congress got trainings in camps inside its territory. Though these forces drive out the RSF siding with the SAF, as various local communities are recruiting for training, the Eastern part of Sudan is highly militarized with sporadic skirmish with the SAF.

Ethiopia too is accused of backing the RSF faction (Salih, 2025), which Ethiopian authorities rejected it as unfounded. While there's been speculation and accusations, there's no concrete evidence which confirms Ethiopia's overt support to the RSF in Sudan. However, some analysts point to Ethiopia's close ties with the UAE, a key backer of the RSF, and a perceived

lack of enthusiasm from the Ethiopian government for a no-fly zone proposal early in the conflict as potential indicators of a pro-RSF stance. Three of my Interviewees from the MoFA rejected the assertion and explained that, Ethiopia as a neighboring state that has multifaceted cooperation with Sudan will not benefit from taking sides in the ongoing war. Neither a prolonged instability nor a further division of Sudan is in the interest of Ethiopia. They further emphasized that given the foreign policy priorities of Ethiopia to a secured border, regional economic integration, amicable solution to border and resource sharing through the established regional and bilateral arrangements and existing agreements, Ethiopia's interest can be better served when there is a peaceful, stable and unified Sudan.

When the RSF was about to control Sennar state, which borders Ethiopia, Ethiopian officials were concerned that RSF's growing presence on its border could lead to cooperation between RSF and Amhara militants, known as Fano, which fights the federal government (Institute for the Study of War, 2024).

Conversely, this illustrated that Ethiopia wants to distance itself away from the Sudanese conflict, as analyst Khalid Mohamed Taha expressed. The more the conflict intensified around the border, the more insecurity Ethiopia feels. It was during this time, the then spokesperson of MoFA Ethiopia, Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla, during a biweekly press briefing, expressed an increasing concern from the eastward expansion of the Sudanese conflict and notified the designation of a national joint task force in charge of assessing the escalating danger from the fighting in Sudan not only from the perspective of Ethiopian citizens but also other possible challenges (Nardos Yoseph, 2024).

On the other hand, there are commentators who argue that the Ethiopian side believe RSF, as a more transactional force might not fend off the border, while the SAF assume national responsibility (at least it took itself as the only guarantee of Sudanese territorial integrity), it might not compromise with Ethiopian armed groups to operate at the border area at least because of its stronger position over al-Fashaga.

The meeting of Prime Minister Abiy with Al-Burhan at Port Sudan in July 2024, during a time where RSF forces get closer to Ethiopia's border demonstrates that Ethiopia has no desire to favor RSF over SAF. Its major concern is to help find out peaceful solution in the long run

while minimizing threats in the short term. The short term solution is managing to get the Sudanese conflict scene far from the Ethiopia's border.

Ethiopia's objective not to escalate or aggravate the long-standing diplomatic conflicts that put the country at loggerheads with Sudan and Egypt—first over the filling and operation of the GERD, and second, its border dispute with Sudan over the Al Fashaga triangle, which is rich farmland, results in Ethiopia's neutral stance over the conflict in Sudan (Kiros, K., 2024).

According to Middle East Eye, a UK based news outlet supposedly funded by Qatar, Tigrayan fighters are seen among the ranks of the SAF, including in Port Sudan. Meanwhile, during conflicts with the RSF, Sudanese soldiers have also captured foreign fighters from South Sudan, Libya, and other nations (<https://www.facebook.com/middleeasteye>, 2023).

My Interviewees alluded that factions of TPLF, Eritrea and Egypt are working together against Ethiopia. This view is also shared by the former President of the Tigray Interim Administration (TIA), Mr. Getachew Reda, activists and commentators from his circle as well. TPLF's 'faction' is widely reported to side the SAF and might not have contradictions with the position of Egypt. Reports and public statements by various government and military officials, some political parties and independent activists from Tigray and the rest of Ethiopia are claiming a rapprochement is in the making between a TPLF faction and the Eritrean Government. Given the deep seated animosity between Eritrea and TPLF which is exacerbated by the Eritrea's involvement against TPLF during the war in Tigray before 2 years, the current alleged alignment of some factions of TPLF with Eritrea against Ethiopia seems hard to believe.

Western diplomatic sources suggest a rapprochement between TPLF factions and Eritrea, possibly involving communication and meetings in early 2025 (Institute for the Study of War, 2025). The undoubted fact is that forces that are aligned to TPLF/TDF are fighting alongside of the SAF. Sources close to the Government of Ethiopia revealed that while Tigrayans are very welcomed by the wider public of Sudan who are siding the SAF the rest of Ethiopian refugees in Sudan are suffering from violence. The reverse is happening in the areas under the control of the RSF. Given the delicate security and political dynamics in the Horn and the

experiences of the leaderships of Eritrea and TPLF in maneuvering, the possibility of forming such an unexpected tactical alignment cannot be ruled out.

Ethiopia's current foreign policy to the Horn brought the issue of access to sea a priority agenda (IFA, 2024). The re-establishment of naval force and the signing of the January 2024 MoU with Somaliland among others are part of this policy change. This solid position of Ethiopia has alarmed Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Egypt among others for various reasons. Ethiopia's access to sea will be perceived from the Egyptian side as the second foreign policy failure towards Ethiopia and the Horn. Egypt has been successful in containing Ethiopia from the utilization of the Nile water until 2011 and in distancing Ethiopia from the Red Sea following the independence of Eritrea in 1993. These achievements were enabled by its support of anti-Ethiopian armed struggles with the support of Arab States including Sudan and, through its diplomatic success to deny Ethiopia of any International funds for construction of Dam over Nile. Egypt's supremacy over Nile seems overturned with the construction of GERD as all attempts of Egypt except direct military venture, failed to ensure its claimed historical right over Nile.

Although the GERD issue seems a fate accomplished, the controversy over Nile is far from being closed. Future use of the Nile water remained to be a source of concern for Egypt. Another front of concern for Egypt becomes the strongest quest of sea access from the Ethiopian side. This prompted the formation of a de facto anti-Ethiopian axis (between Somalia, Eritrea and Egypt) throughout 2024. The normalization of the relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea gradually eroded upon the signing of CoHA; the war of words between the military and civilian leadership of the two countries is intensifying over time. Preparation and resort to war is reported.

Thus, Eritrea strengthened ties with Egypt. While Eritrea has long-standing ties to Amhara rebels and met with TPLF leadership in March 2024, Ethiopia started hosting major Eritrean opposition groups in Addis Ababa in 2025 (Institute for the Study of War, 2025). As we can learn from the change in the behavior of Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) recently and as Wazema Radio expressed in its official twitter account, Eritrea is also trying to reinvigorate its relation with ONLF. Although ONLF started to frequently criticizing the

Ethiopian government since the new development, it is so weak as its faction allied with the government (2025). X (Formerly Twitter). <https://x.com/Wazemaradio>. Somalia's resentment has also cooled down following the Ankara Declaration, while Egypt still continued to influence Ethiopia via Djibouti (Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Djibouti, 2025).

According to the words of Mr. Amsalu, Egypt, uses Sudan to destabilize Ethiopia and weaken Ethiopia in every capacity it can. Ethiopia is almost completing the filling of GERD and doubling its effort to secure access to Sea. Historically, the issue of Nile and Ethiopia's Red Sea quest remained Egypt's red lines which are against its Arabization of the Nile and the Red Sea (Daniel K., 2005). Towards this end, strong pressure had been put over Sudan not to have healthy relation with Ethiopia. The government of Ethiopia has concerns of the possibility Egyptian pressure on RSF to engage in anti-Ethiopian proxy war. Cairo's attempted regional encirclement of Ethiopia by forming Somalia, Eritrea and Egypt axis and Sisi's historical visit to Djibouti are extensions of its containment policy.

In general, the myriad of armed factions is proliferating in Eastern Sudan, which currently number around 18, most of them are allegedly siding the SAF. This militarization in the region is a concerning development not only for Eritrea but also to Ethiopia.

A shift in the security equation in the Red Sea as the **United States** seeks to gain commercial advantage through the presence of naval fleets in the region to confront the Iran-backed Houthi group in Yemen as it can have led to a potential Russian presence which could lead to increased pressure on the littoral states, including Sudan. Observers add that any **US-Russian** tension in the Red Sea at any time would not be in the interests of Cairo and Khartoum. Russia and the US still do not abandon their interest to have military base at Port Sudan.

5.3. Scenario of the Sudanese Conflict

Avalanche of peace conferences however failed to tap the comparative advantage and complementarity of these conferences; the fact that the current misunderstanding between Europe and USA has weakened unified position from the west, has become an opportunity for the Middle powers to assert their spheres of influence in the region and in Sudan in particular. The African Union is intentionally sidelined by the middle powers such as Egypt not to play

a key role in Sudan in terms of coordinating peace initiatives. The most recent London Conference on Sudan (April 15/2025) has called for silencing the guns, safe humanitarian access, coordinating peace talks, respecting Sudanese sovereignty and perusing a Sudanese owned and Sudanese led peace deal. However, no entity is encharge of leading and coordinating these solemn proposals so far.

Despite a number of peace conferences, every country that organizes such fora tried to maneuver according to its own interest in the conflict at the expense of the interest of the wider public in Sudan. Indeed, efforts at peace have exploded as different interests generate conflict among peace brokers (ISS Africa, 2024). Assessments around the circles of AU and some member states revealed that regional mechanisms such as the AU and IGAD are not able to take the lead due to their structural weakness and the hurdles from states involved in the conflict. The proliferated peace initiatives are not centrally coordinated and lack strategic guidance. With this backdrop, different sources and commentators propose different but interrelated possible scenarios on the prospect of the ongoing Sudanese conflict.

Sudan Democracy First Group (2023) came up with 6 scenarios i.e. First Scenario: Reaching an agreement to cease hostilities and initiating a political dialogue leading to the resumption of the political process; Second Scenario: International Intervention Mandated by International Decisions; Third Scenario: Victory of SAF and repelling the RSF in Khartoum and other States; Fourth Scenario: Victory of RSF and occupation of the remaining regions and strongholds of SAF; Fifth Scenario: Continuation of the current situation with each party holding onto its territories and cities, and prolongation of the war and Sixth Scenario: total chaos: which entails the continuation of the war, with the armed parties losing control, and the emergence of other armed groups.

Al Sharq Strategic Research (2023) on the other hand, proposed 4 possible scenarios: 1) Protracted Civil War, 2) Emergence of General Burhan as a Strongman, 3) Victory of Hemedti and his Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and 4) Fragmentation of Sudan.

ACAPS (2024) in its part has proposed 4 possible scenarios that can define Sudan at the end of 2025 i.e Fragmentation, Control, partition and International Spillover.

- **Fragmentation:** - due to splits within the RSF and SAF resulting in heavily fragmented territories controlled by new non-state armed groups emerging throughout. Amani Africa (2025) insights that most importantly, the present dynamics have increased chances of the nation being divided into several territories under the authority of competing armed groups and the SAF (Amani Africa, 2025).
- **Control:** - with the strengthened advance of RSF Eastern and Central Sudan to force SAF retreat to further North or exile which will result a further chaos.
- **Partition** of Sudanese territory between the spheres of influence of SAF and RSF, as SAF manages to repeal advancement of RSF to go back to Darfur as its center and while RSF can defend back to create stalemate around Khartoum. SPLM-N/Abdelaziz Adam Al Hilu Control South Kordofan and SPLM-N (MA) – SPLM-N/Malik Agar in return controls parts of Blue Nile; and SLM-AW remains in control of Jebel Marra.
- **International spillover:** - After taking over Darfur, the RSF will attempt to seize Kassala and Khartoum. Armed forces and mercenaries from South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Chad are drawn into the conflict as neighboring countries become unstable. To defend the ethnic Zaghawa, the RSF also enters the camps of Al-Fasher and Zamzam. The political and economic conditions of all four nations deteriorate, and violence rises in Ethiopian and Chadian border regions. Egypt still backs the SAF in order to keep control over the distribution of water resources. The chaos will create a safe heaven for State and non-state armed groups from nearby nations, as well as Islamic armed group (ACAPS,2024).

In essence, Sudan's situation is quite uncertain, that a complicated interaction of politics, conflict, and humanitarian considerations will probably define the future. From three of my Informants, (Amb. Yibeltal, Anonymous informant and Amsalu) possible scenarios which have many things to do with the aforementioned scenarios can be developed. i.e.

Al-Burhan forces further advance to control Khartoum, East and Northern Sudan, while Dagalo continue retreating west wards and resort to form parallel state upon negotiations with Small armed and political forces of Kordofanian and Blue Nile regions (Yibeltal. A., Personal communication, April 6,2025). This view is also shared by other commentators & A. Hate, personal communication, Jan 9,2025). Protracted confrontation is a likely fate of the conflict due to the balance of power among the supporters of each groups. This state of affairs might

perpetuate a protracted deadlock until the standoff reaches to a saturation point compelling to a negotiated outcome. It depends on the will and capacity of external actors.

The second possible future of the conflict is the consolidation of an internationally recognized State of Sudan under the Military's rule or a military arranged civilian transition, with the possibility of continued low intensity war in the west and probably in the south (Yibeltal. A., Personal communication, April 6,2025).

According to another informant from the MoFA, who want to remain anonymous, the most certain possible outcome is that Sudan will never be like it used to be before the war. The elite of the center that served as a deep state to preserve the northern dominance is disintegrated. It has slim chance to re-emerge in its previous form. Unlike the previous ones, the current war is between powers that have nearly comparable power, resource, constituency and ally. Plus, both have Arab and non-Arab identities that divided the support of the Arab states in to two. It is not clearly between the North-South or Arab-Non Arab or center- periphery dichotomies. The alignment of power is relatively arbitrary. As Jones, M. (2023) aptly put it Sudan's conflict is not a binary contest between SAF and RSF, but a complex struggle involving regional and hyperlocal conflicts. The possible scenario inferred from these is fragmentation and localized conflict that could lead to state collapse or state failure as likely but worst case scenario.

All the scenarios predicted by various commentators on the Sudanese conflict, can be summed up into three sound scenarios. i.e. Scenario 1: continued war without resolution, Scenario 2: military victory and Scenario 3: negotiated settlement.

Scenario 1: continued war without resolution: - this is a highly likely scenario at least in the near future as agreed upon by many commentators and informants. Continued stalemate might happen until we see a change in the policy of the countries/parties supporting one of the blocks either out of economic reasons or due to diplomatic pressure. If this failed to happen, the dead lock will have led to fragmentation in to sub localized conflicts. Fragmentation can happen both within the SAF and RSF blocks, as there are sub factions that joined SAF or RSF without unity of purpose to their respective group. The deep seated polarization in Sudan is susceptible to localized clash.

Scenario 2: military victory: - It is a less likely scenario, as the two parties have strong backing from outside and as they have managed to secure dependable means of finance to their war. If it happens, it could be when war concluded with the surrender of one of the warring parties. As things stand the most likely scenario could be ceased UAE support to the RSF which enable SAF victorious. The SAF has relatively huge popular support and is enjoying the support of quite a number of state and non-state actors from the Horn, the Gulf and the Levant as well. It has diplomatic representation throughout the world; is gaining military upper hand as it reclaimed Khartoum and most of Sudan; has appointed a civilian Prime Minister to give hope to the international community of resumption of transition of power to a civilian administration.

Scenario 3: negotiated settlement: - This is a less likely but not impossible scenario. Balance of power between the warring parties and their allies or significant diplomatic pressure of the International community on the supporting external actors could led to negotiated settlement to result various alternative arrangements. Either the two militaries merge to form national military and arrange transitional governance to forge a civilian led government or resulting in a kind of federal or confederal arrangement to accommodate the interests of various groups apart from the two parties. The possibility of negotiated settlement is not only hampered by balance of power between the two groups and incompatible interests of external actors, but also the incompatible interests of various local actors and factions in the ongoing conflict.

The regional, national and local dynamics in Sudan is a precipitating factor of the war. The states that in public call for peace arrangements are already taking sides to make one of the parties victorious over the defeat of the other. When each group feels that their side is losing the war, they are doing huge military support reinforcement. As the Saudi and Egyptian group felt the advancement of RSF further to East and anticipating North, supports of military equipment and logistics and military training increased to push the RSF back to Darfur, the UAE's military support is also highly reinforced and hence the RSF is intensifying drone strikes on the strong holds of SAF in the Northern part of Sudan spanning for weeks.

Foreign engagement on both sides of the conflict has been another crucial issue that has been making it more difficult to resolve. It is to be recalled that the AU PSC, in its communique of

the 1218th session, condemned external interference fueling the conflict in Sudan, citing violations of PSC Communiqués and UNSC Resolutions. It also urged all actors, including states and non-state entities, to cease military and financial support to the belligerents, and directs the PSC Sub-Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) to identify and contain these actors in three months since June 2024.

The possible scenarios are valid as we are at the first half of 2025. Moreover, all the three possible scenarios are not mutually exclusive and independent each other. From all the scenarios, it is hard to anticipate peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan in the near future. The conflict in Sudan is far from reaping as things stand. The involvement of foreign actors and the lucrative business dividend gained in the state of war economy emboldens the warring parties, sub factions within the two parties and external supporters. Stiff competition of external actors and the huge external financing to determine the conclusion of the war in each one's side further complicated the chance for peaceful resolution of the conflict. The instability of the region and the presence of armed groups in the neighbors, and the vulnerability of the region for clandestine groups including terrorist and radical elements further complicate the future of peace in Sudan which in turn affect security of the whole region.

As the possibility of negotiated outcome through coordinated influence from big powers and the UN or bold steps taken by regional mechanisms such as IGAD and AUPSC is considered as less likely scenario in the near future, the damages of protracted war or further fragmentation is huge to Sudan and its neighbors. The possibility of international spillover seems the most likely scenario. Even the current state of the conflict is nearly characterized by a situation where by RSF consolidating its position in Darfur and strengthening its attack to claim Eastern and Central Sudan while at the same time forming a parallel state named as "Government of Peace and Unity" basing the Five Regional States of Darfur controlled by RSF, South Kordofanian controlled by Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North of Al-Hilu's faction and other Smaller factions that are part of the Sudan Founding Alliance to counter SAF's political and diplomatic stature. Interestingly, although the parallel state right now doesn't want to limit itself to some territories of Sudan and aspires to expand until it controls the whole of Sudan this alliance might be transformed to an independent statehood

with some Darfur and other states around Darfur. The very intention of the RSF leadership and external supporters are also expecting a two state system resembling the two Libyan States. The factions in Libya and the actors in Libya are also involving in the ongoing conflict on Sudan. This highly likely possible scenario has a higher propensity to create deadlock, further damages to Sudan, enable clandestine movements, exploitations, transboundary criminal activities to further undermine the security of neighboring states as it spilled over. Ethiopia is one of the neighbors threatened by this dynamic given its closer border, domestic vulnerability, its unfavorable current relation with Egypt and Eritrea.

If a state in the western Sudan is formed, an internal division within the SAF and SPLMA-N could emerge and so, Internal ethnic dynamics and resource conflicts will be surfaced given the bad record of RSF in Darfur and the long held grievances and armed struggle that characterize SPLM-N, agreement could not be reached easily. SPLM-N has factions that aligned with the RSF, which might not go along if the State of Sudan is going to be divided in to two. Therefore, the possibility of further disintegration in Sudan or continued armed struggle is a frightening scenario. This according to Amani Africa (2025), “Given Sudan’s strategic location, its collapse or division would have far-reaching consequences across the Lake Chad, Great Lakes, North Africa, and Horn of Africa regions” (p.2).

5.4. An Overview of Current Domestic Security Dynamics in Ethiopia

The ongoing conflict in Amhara and Oromia Regions among others divert, the government’s attention and resource, overstretch government security apparatus to make effective border control impossible, increase illegal cross-border movements and crimes. These interdependent challenges facilitate spillover effects of the ongoing conflict in Sudan in the one hand, create an interlink not only between the conflicts in Sudan and Ethiopia but also have the capacity to transcend the two countries to include other state and non-state actors in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and the Red sea. As to the Amb. Yibeltal and Amsalu, through this broader spectrum of regional security dynamics, the illegal movement of arms, human trafficking, drug trafficking, illicit financial transfer, illegal gold trade, unregulated border trade, ethnic conflicts, cattle rustling in turn create fertile grounds for the expansion and operation of extremism and terrorism will expand.

Moreover, between 2020 and 2022, Ethiopia fought a deadly war with Tigray Defense Forces, resulting in alleged war crimes, human rights abuses, and ethnic cleansing. The conflict ended in November 2022. After a series of efforts, The TPLF and Ethiopian central government signed a cessation of hostilities agreement in Pretoria, South Africa, promising to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate Tigrayan troops, resumption of public service to Tigray, return of IDPs to their homeland and gradual resolution of contested territorial matters. The implementation of the Pretoria Agreement while achieved significant milestones, it still faced challenges out of the uncompleted task of the DDR process, returning of IDPs to the contested territories, especially to Wolkite, and the alleged existence of Eritrean Forces inside Ethiopia's territory.

The agreement doesn't involve Eritrea. Similar concerns raised from the side of the Amhara armed groups. Accusations are exchanged between Eritrea and Tigray Interim Administration over the border, where by the TIA accuse Eritrean forces over forceful occupation of Territories and people belonged to Tigray while Eritrea defy the accusation denying that its force only controlled territories that belong to Eritrea according to the rulings of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC).

On the other hand, recently Tigray has experienced destabilization, leading to factions and the expulsion of Getachew Reda by Tadesse Worede, veteran General and leader of the Tigray Defense Force to lead the Interim Administration. The federal government accused TPLF of working with Eritrea and Amhara forces which are considered as enemies to the country; and the allegation is confirmed by the ousted TIA leadership. Furthermore, the TIA leader is expressing the complicity of Senior leadership of TPLF in an illegal gold mining and human trafficking. If these allegations proved to be true, it certainly complicates the security dynamics of North Western Ethiopia.

According to the commentary of the Center for Preventive Action, (2025) this intertwined grapple threatens to escalate into a regional war between Ethiopia and Eritrea as Eritrea fears Ethiopia's mounted talk of ports and sea access, while Ethiopia believes Eritrea will exploit Tigray's instability for an offensive. At the same time political disputes over Ethiopia's

construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the fertile border region of Al-Fashaga persist.

The contention between the Amhara and Tigray Forces over Wolkaite, as one of the most strategic geopolitical hotspots in Ethiopia located adjacent to the Sudanese border. The control over Wolkaite matters for the Amhara Forces, the TPLF and equally for the Federal government. For the armed groups especially for the TDF/TPLF it is a main outlet that connects to the outside world; it is equally important for the federal government to ensure effective border control and the movement of goods, services and people along that border. The Amhara forces claim the territory as it belonged legitimately to the Gondar-Amhara until the forceful subjugation of the land to the Tigray Regional State by TPLF/EPRDF. And hence, the claim from the Amhara side is not only the land mass but also the inhabitant expressed that the people are Gondarians and the land too belongs to Amhara. As this fertile land is well known in its production of cash crops such as Sesame, the conflict and contention between TPLF and Amhara has resource dimension. For Tigray, the area is much more than a resource as it equally is a question of strategic outlet to Sudan. On the other hand, the government is alarmed by the die-hard need of Tigray to the border. In this context, the border adjacent to Wolkaite is the Alfashqa Triangle, similarly a strategic agricultural land. This contested territory between Ethiopia and Sudan is bordering Amhara regional State with Sudan. Ethiopia and Sudan have been engaged in an unfinished boundary demarcation mechanism, joint boundary development mechanisms and signed several agreements and communiqués since 1902. Most of the border development and boundary demarcation mechanisms were active after 2000 until the change of government in Sudan and Ethiopia in 2018 and 2019. The war in Tigray has changed this smooth course of dialogue as the Sudanese army controlled the forcefully. The Sesame war that engulfed Amhara, Tigray and Sudan with considerable interest from the Gulf is a bone of contention and a source of threat for the security of Ethiopia as well. This inter-state and intra-state contention over the western front of Ethiopia poses multifaceted threat to its security. The ongoing war in Sudan is the precipitating factor as it closes the chance for negotiable solution and at the same time it creates opportunities for trans-border criminal activities, new military alignments that are antithesis to Ethiopia. The Tigray Forces alignment with SAF, Egypt and Eritrea is an indication of the credibility of this

vulnerability. The presence of Amhara forces in this porous land adds another layer of vulnerability to Ethiopia.

5.5. Transboundary water Resource

Ethiopia is Africa's water tower, supplying over 86% of the Nile River's flow (Beza, Y. T., & Bahru, B. Z., 2023). Ethiopia's foreign policy is influenced by its water resources and regional politics, particularly the Blue Nile waters. Disagreement arises from the need to protect the basin's hydro-hegemony, primarily in favor of Egypt, against Ethiopia's stance and other non-hegemonic riparian states advocating for equitable usage. The Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) and subsequent dam construction however had challenged Egypt and Sudan's hydro-hegemony.

After the 1990s, the most comprehensive Nile treaty, namely the Cooperative Framework Agreement, was signed by the Nile basin states in 2010 while Sudan and Egypt opposed to sign it, as they claim it violates the 1959 and 1929 treaties that grant sovereign/unilateral right to Egypt. Egypt and Sudan's demand that the CFA specifically mention their uses and rights (referred to as their "water security").

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) is a huge landmark that provides a framework for dialogue among all Nile basin countries. The relations between Egypt and Ethiopia have become more adversarial since Ethiopia started the construction of Africa's biggest dam, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in April 2011. The potential impacts of GERD have been the source of severe regional controversy determining Ethiopia's foreign relations. Egypt, a heavily Nile water dependent country, has requested that Ethiopia hold the Dam construction as a precondition to negotiations. Egypt has sought regional support for its position, and some political leaders of the country have made a televised discussion on methods to sabotage it. Egypt resorted to diplomatic initiatives to block international and regional financial support for the dam. However, NBI member countries have expressed support for the dam, including Sudan (h2olwadmin, 2024).

As the relation between Ethiopia and Sudan has witnessed significant improvements since the 2000s, which was manifested by several bilateral agreements on border security, joint border development, border demarcation, infrastructural connection, port utilization, trade and

investment enhancement, etc, that can realize regional integration schemes, the leadership in Sudan has toned down the Egyptian escalation of the GERD's impact. Moreover, as Ambassador Zerihun expressed, Sudan was convinced of the benefits of GERD to its irrigation schemes as the dam will provide a regular flow of water. This can save Sudanese Dams from seasonal flooding.

Commentators such as BBC and Aljazeera claim that Sudan finds itself torn between Ethiopia's and Egypt's conflicting ambitions. Despite its early opposition to the GERD's construction, Khartoum has now come around to the idea, pointing it that it might enhance opportunities for domestic growth.

Sudan is caught in the middle of a decade-long row between Ethiopia and Egypt over the dam Ethiopia is building on the River Nile and in recent months it has undergone a major shift in attitude, as Zeinab Mohammed Salih reports from Khartoum ((BBC News, 2021).

However, the new administration in Sudan has gradually changed its mind and started to be concerned that the operationalization of GERD would endanger the security of Sudan's own dams and make it much more challenging for the government to oversee its own development initiatives (Mbaku, J. M.,2020). This event coincided the change in government both in Ethiopia and the Sudan, where the Military took power dominating the civilian transitional government of Sudan. Following the ousting of former President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, the policy of Sudan towards Ethiopia has witnessed a gradual shift. Following the outbreak of conflict between the Tigrigna Regional Administration and the Federal government of Ethiopia, Sudanese Military mobilized its army and controlled contested border of al-fashaga, crushing the only insignificant resistance from the local Amhara militia. The new Sudanese administration effectively turned its face towards Egypt in the effort to securitization and internationalization of the Dam issue.

Ethiopia managed not to bow down to the influences of the United States facilitation role questioning the impartiality of the US. The Trump administration further went on giving green light and justifying that Egypt has every right to blow up the dam and the American administration withhold bilateral development assistance. The Security Council also referred the GERD negotiation to the African Union. The negotiation went on but without significant progresses made so far in terms of reaching a legally binding agreement governing the filling

of the Dam as Egypt claims. The filling of the dam on the other hand is not interrupted yet. The CFA entered in to force since the adoption of the agreement by the South Sudanese Parliament on 8, July 2024. This can enable the establishment of the Nile Basin Commission (NBC) replacing the NBI with wider and more elaborate mandate, power, visibility and recognition by the world water and development aid communities. Ethiopia and the other upper riparian states are proposing Egypt and Sudan to join the NBC, as remaining out of this framework will not benefit them anymore. However, Egypt never gives up of reaching binding legal agreement over the operation of the dam and on the future use of the river.

Given the dead lock in the several rounds of trilateral negotiations over the matter, the current state of Affairs in Sudan will further push the Semi-legitimate Al Burhan led government of Sudan towards Egypt to derail the possibility of negotiated outcome. Beyond the disagreement on the future use of the water, the fact that the place where the dam is being built is very close to the border with Sudan, could be threatened by forces operating at the border area. As Sudan continued to be racked by conflict, the dispute over the dam and the river will not enjoy the constructive role of Sudan in terms of mediating a long lasting solution between Ethiopia and Egypt.

Beyond that, if the conflict continued unabated, Sudanese might fail to hold the peripheries together and the probability of civil war led by different ethnic groups cannot be ruled out. This can create irresponsible sub state actors in the region which can undermine the security of the dam which is located only 15 km away from the Sudanese border. The worst of all is that the instability in Sudan will close the room to turn the Nile as a source of cooperation to further stifle the regional integration and security coordination aspirations.

5.6. Boundary issue

The Gwynn line, established by the Anglo–Ethiopian Treaty of 1902, is said to be an unofficial de facto border between Ethiopia and Sudan. Ethiopia continues to contest the validity of this border. Long-standing conflicts along the border have influenced links between people on both sides of the border, altered relations between the two countries, and occasionally jeopardized regional stability and security (Belete, B.Y., 2016). For Ambassador Zerihun Abebe, the border demarcation made between the British Lieutenant Gwynn and the Ethiopian

leadership in 1902 and 1907 is valid and recognized by the exchanged notes in 1972 between Sudan and Ethiopia to serve as a basis to demarcation, while the Ambassador rejected the validity of the Lieutenant's claim to put boundary marker on the ground based on the aerial demarcation in 1903.

While the Al-Fashaga contention is important due to the fertile land and its endowment with a crucial cash crop, the sesame, Ethio-Sudanese border covers other spot of border conflict along the Benishangul Regional Administration which borders the Blue Nile Administration. These two sites are far from their respective capitals and are centers of ethnic based insurgencies against their centers. The borderland is endowed with resources that at times contribute to trans-border conflict. This border area has remained a flashpoint of the proxy war between Ethiopia and Sudan for several decades. After South Sudan's secession from Sudan in 2011, the SPLM North, an armed group that remained in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states was operating in the border. However, as the relation between Ethiopia and Sudan progressed well, it failed to enjoy Ethiopia's support and subsequently, the movement engaged in a bitter internal dispute that resulted a split in to two in 2016, of which one faction signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) with the post-Bashir Khartoum government in 2020. The other SPLM-N faction, under the leadership of Abdelaziz al-Hilu, is still operating by controlling of significant territory in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states (Rift Valley University, 2023). Al-Hilu's force is fighting alongside of the RSF and is a party to the recently established parallel Sudanese State.

From the Ethiopian side, insurgent groups in Benishangul-Gumuz, used to enjoy support from successive regimes in Khartoum to reverse their perceived and real political marginalization. After, a brief relief along this border since the end of 1990s, recent shifts in relations between Sudan, Ethiopia and, crucially Egypt, which sees the GERD as a threat to its control over the Nile, has emboldened the group. Until, the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM) signed a reconciliation agreement with the regional administration in late 2022, it has received military support from the Sudanese government, via the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), since 2020 (Rift Valley University, 2023).

As the insurgent groups in this front are deeply entrenched with issues related to land utilization and political representation in the respective adjacent regions of the two countries, there is always the probability of resurging depending on the regional, national and local political dynamics. Beyond that this border is located close to the GERD and to the sources of the river Nile.

As to Ethiopian News Agency's assertion in 1903, British surveyor Major Gwynn unilaterally demarcated the boundary line between Ethiopia and Britain, without Ethiopia's representatives' authorization and disregarding the 1902 Treaty, leading to the Ethiopian Government's rejection (ENA, Feb 17/2021). Following the independence of Sudan, a number of bilateral dialogues made between the authorities of the two countries. Among them was the outstanding exchange of notes agreement made in 1972 following the relatively improved relation between the governments of Emperor Haile Sellasie of Ethiopia and General Gaafar Mohamed Nimeiri of Sudan. This was possible because the Nimeiri regime was initially entertaining an Afro-Arab Foreign Policy orientation, that also resulted the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement ending the 17 years Sudanese conflict, the first civil war. The role of the emperor was instrumental in the signing of the agreement between the Anya Anya movement leadership and the government of Sudan. The Ethiopian emperor during the signing ceremony of the agreement said:

The Unity and territorial integrity of Sudan is a matter of supreme national interest to Ethiopia. We say this because the stronger a nation is it would be in a better position to consolidate its national interests and establish brotherly relations with its neighbors and contribute in a significant way to the maintenance of peace and security (Stevens, R. P., 1976).

As, the border conflict was strongly linked to the overall bilateral relations of Kartoum and Addis Ababa, following the improved relation in the early 1970s, Ethiopia and Sudan agreed to re-demarcate the border using the Gwynn's demarcation as a basis for future dealings between the two governments. Following the change in government in Ethiopia and frequent coups in the Sudan as well, significant achievement has not been made in this venture until the end of the 20th c. In the 1990s EPRDF led Ethiopian leadership was so ambitious that it can establish cordial relation with the Sudan, while it had not ready made solutions for some of the underlying structural causes of contention between the two countries including the

border issue. As to Haileselassie G. (2023), the cordial relations started to fade at the end of 1993 in the Metema Region with the eruption of some minor conflicts between the Sudanese army and the Ethiopian border landers, primarily over resources (This boundary bounded resource conflict reversed the overall relation between the two countries and dashed EPRDF's hope as the Islamic extremist party of NIF resorted to harbor elements of political Islam from its Arab neighbors to disrupt the non-Islamic states of the Horn (Haileselassie G., 2023). The border conflict is not only important for its symbolic significance; it rather has a crucial resource component as it consists a large fertile swaths of land along the Al-Fashga triangle. The important cash crop, sesame is at the center of interests ranging from various national state and non-state actors to regional/international actors (Soliman, A., & Demissie, A. A. (2024, April). The old anomalies between Ethiopia and Sudan such as mistrust, proxy engagement and malign activities resurfaced once again. Sudanese strengthened involvement in the export of political Islam and its engagement in the attempted assassination of Mubarak in 1995 has pressed Ethiopia to form regional and international counter terrorism alliance among Eritrea, Uganda, Ethiopia and the US. Ethiopia has been engaged in a direct military involvement aligning with the SPLM/A forces resulting a major blow on the Sudanese armed force. Its involvement on various terrorist attacks affecting the coalition members, Sudan has been designated as a state sponsor state by the US and faced sanctions until it was lifted by the Trump Administration in 2019.

It was during in the first two decades of the 21st century that different agreements signed and joint mechanisms put forth to address the long standing disagreement.

In 2007, Sudan and Ethiopia's leaders, Omar al-Bashir and Meles Zenawi, agreed on a cooperation formula for land cultivation, but political turbulence and leadership changes have intensified rivalries and resurfaced the al-Fashaga dispute.

In relation to the border, Ethiopia's position is to seek solutions based on the existing joint boundary demarcating and joint border development mechanisms prioritizing the long term mutual interests of the two peoples. In this view, Prime Minister Abiy has proposed to General Al Burhan the resumption of these mechanisms. The new Ethiopia's leadership position has been consistent even after the start of the war in Sudan. PM Abiy, after his visit and his

meeting with Al Burhan in Port Sudan on 9 July 2024 he reiterated Ethiopia's policy towards in a social media post as follows: "the problem of our brother Sudanese people is our problem, their peace is also our peace, so we will work hard for the Sudanese people's peace and prosperity journey like yesterday" (Addis Ababa, September 4/2024, ENA).

After their meeting in the sidelines of the 39th IGAD meeting in 2022, PM Abiy twitted that underscoring the agreement reached to demonstrate commitment for dialogue and peaceful resolution to outstanding issues between Al-Burhan and himself (Al-Jazeera, 2022) (July 5,2022). Similarly, the then Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen during the 76th GA Summit in Sep 2021, before the start of Sudanese war affirmed Ethiopia's resolve to find out diplomatic solution to the border conflict.

It is well known that the Sudanese side, and in particular General Al Burhan, tried to use the border dispute to win over the support of political forces in Sudan to aid in his victory over the civilian force. If Ethiopia's regular army or any military activity was perused, the Sudanese side can change the direction of the issue at any time. Sudan's political agenda is unpredictable and geared by temporary interests than strategic interests. Apart from this, it is necessary to be careful that Ethiopia's approach does not invite foreign interference. The Arab League and Egypt's repeated statements of "protecting and respecting the sovereignty of Sudan" are indirect demonstrations of their support for Sudan regarding the Ethiopian-Sudan border. Despite Sudanese abrogation of the existing boundary demarcation and border development arrangements and agreements between the two countries in their act of forceful occupation of the contested territories by displacing Ethiopian farmers while Ethiopian forces was distracted in the law enforcement operation, Ethiopia's PM Abiy Ahmed expressed that Ethiopia will not take advantage of the Sudanese war and attempt to control the disputed territory along Al-Fashqa triangle by force. This position is not taken without its own costs in the domestic politics of Ethiopia as many believe that armed resistance movement in the Amhara region is partly fueled by this policy. The political pressure on the leadership of TPLF/EPRDF and Amhara National Democratic Front (ANDM) centering the Ethio-Sudan border was high. Following the growingly strained relation between the federal government and Amhara forces, the claim over Al-Fashga has put pressure on the position of the federal government of Ethiopia and complicated the relation with Sudan (ACAPS thematic report, 21 May 2023).

Therefore, instability in Sudan will perpetuate the status quo over the border as the room for border development, regional economic integration and enhanced people to people relations that could lubricate the contention will be closed. Thus the border issue will remain a source of threat coupled with other domestic and regional ramifications.

5.7. Border Security and Transboundary Crimes and Terrorism: analysis based on regional conflict complex

These linkages fit into the regional conflict complex. The fact that Ethiopia and Sudan shared a large porous contested border, trans border resource coupled with rich history proxy engagements and internal instability there is ample reason for the formation of regional war economy that could further undermine security of the region as a whole and Ethiopia's security in particular. "A variety of regional linkages, including population movements, smuggling routes, transnational identity groups, criminal rings, and political connections are often systematic features of a conflict" (Studdard, K., 2004, p.3).

5.7.1. Terrorism and religious radicalization

The period after Sudan's independence was marked by political instability, ethnic divisions, and oil-related conflicts. The first major civil war between 1955 and 1972 led to the emergence of militant groups, fueled by ethnic and religious divisions. The second civil war (1983-2005) worsened the situation, forming more organized extremist factions, with ideological differences, particularly around Islamic fundamentalism, playing a significant role. In the 90's, Sudan was declared a State Sponsor of Terrorism by the Secretary of State in 1993 for supporting Abu Nidal, Palestine Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Hizballah.

From Ethiopia's perspective, an Islamist regime in Sudan was not likely to be a long-term strategic partner for the secular and multi-ethnic Ethiopia. Under the political guidance of Hassan El-Turabi, a long-time influential Islamist politician, Sudan increasingly supported Islamic armed groups inside Ethiopia. As a result, both Northern and Southern Sudan began posing a threat to the security of Ethiopia, and the development agenda introduced by the EPRDF (Doop, V. M., 2013).

This threat has remained at the core of uneven relations between the two countries for years since the 1950s.

As the influence of the National Islamic Party and Hassan El-Turabi increased over time, the initial cordial relation between EPRDF and Al-Bashir Regime was reversed. Sudanese strengthened involvement in the export of political Islam and its engagement in the attempted assassination of Mubarak in Addis Ababa has pressed Ethiopia to form regional and international counter terrorism alliance among Eritrea, Uganda, Ethiopia and the US. Ethiopia has been engaged in a direct military involvement aligning with the SPLM/A forces resulting a major blow on the Sudanese armed force. Its involvement on various terrorist attacks affecting the coalition members, Sudan has been designated as a state sponsor state by the US and faced sanctions until it was lifted by the Trump Administration in 2019. As Sudanese link to terrorist groups is not favored by Gulf states, its relation strained with them.

Following the overall improvement of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Sudan and AL- Bashir's crack down on the Turabi's circle has weakened the stake of Islamist forces and religious extremism in Sudan. Ethiopia and Sudan also signed bilateral agreements to mutually combat terrorism and religious extremism. Sudan also joined different regional anti-Terrorism and religious extremism blocks in its de-radicalization effort. Consequently, the US lifted the sanction and delisted it from state sponsor terrorist file in 2019. However, following the political unrest and squabble between the Military and civilian wings during the transition, Islamists involvement started to increase.

The growing prevalence of terrorist activities is exacerbated by the increasing complexity of the threat, which involves geo-politics, external actors, and local dynamics. This intersects with terrorist groups and local militias, resulting in collaboration or contestations for resources and territory control (Amani Africa, 2024).

The ongoing war bring them to the side of Al-Burhan and is said to be increasing. Sudan as a country located in a geo-strategic region where a number of influential terrorist groups from Sahel, Magrheb, the Horn of Africa and the Gulf States converge, this conflict could help terrorist groups freely move, secure means of survival and source of finance for their operation and space to penetrate states to work on religious radicalization projects. With this background, Ethiopia could not be spared of this threat given the ever disturbed regional dynamics coupled with internal conflicts and insecure border along Sudan. The border

security mechanisms with Sudan are stalled, the border area is militarized, other transboundary crimes such as illicit financial flow, human trafficking, illicit trade, arms transfer are sources of security challenges to Ethiopia as Amb Yibeltal alluded. These serious security challenges usually exacerbate terrorism and radicalization.

The threat is strengthened even in the context of the ongoing Sudan war. As per the US Country report on Terrorism for 2023, Al-Qaida and ISIS kept in constant contact with parent groups inside Sudan with a primary aim of exploiting the Sudanese unrest to use the country as a facilitation hub (Sudan - United States Department of State, 2023). On the same note, Al Qaeda and IS have also encouraged their followers to capitalize on the Sudanese civil war to establish havens in Sudan and would likely do the same in Ethiopia, especially given IS's recruitment efforts among ethnic groups in Ethiopia (Institute for the Study of War, 2025). According to the words of Ethiopia's National Intelligence and Security Service-NISS sources although further investigation is needed, there are indications that ISIS and Al-Shabab are eyeing to exploit the ongoing conflict in Sudan in an effort to expand their cells, ensure their presence and create a source of finance for their operation in Somalia.

5.7.2. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

The movement of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a longstanding activity that continues to occur even during peacetime. However, the transfer of SALW during the cold war period was conducted in the form of illicit and explicit aid and sell of arms based on ideological alignment and geopolitical interest. The illicit transfer of SALW has taken new forms in the post-cold war era with the emergence of new security challenges. Clandestine military operations, which are covert transfers by corrupt government officials to separatist or rebel forces operating in another country are part of the SALW transfer business (Kassaw, A., 2018).

Concerning the circulation of SALW there are academic and intergovernmental debates on determining the illicitness of the transfer of SALW. The argument usually emanates from the UN GA guideline to SALW which defines illicit transfer of SALW as "international trade in conventional arms which is contrary to the laws of states and/or international law". This led to confusion when there is discrepancy between national and international law on the question

of which law shall prevail (UNGA,1999). However, what matters most in determining the illicitness of SALW is the nature of clients of the arms. Based on this the UNGA 1999 report on SLAW, the clients that fall in the category are categories of illicit small arms trafficking are armed groups; criminal organizations; terrorists; individual criminals; private security services; mercenaries; and private citizens' excluding states.

The Horn of Africa's warfare is fueled by the trafficking of small guns, which are used by traffickers, rustlers, refugees, and migrant smugglers, prolonging conflicts, promoting crime, and stifling social and economic stability. Illicit arms transfer and militarization are both source and outcomes of the process of regionalization of conflict. According to the International Peace Academy's research work, Illicit transfer of SALW is a central agenda of the discussions of Regional conflict complex/regional conflict formation and regional war economy (Cater, C., 2003). The fact that illicit trade of SALW is one of the components of regional conflict complex, the Horn of Africa region is one of the largest market for it (Studdard, K., 2004).

One of the factors that increase the propensity of using small arms and light weapons is the breakdown of law and order which will increase the demand for arms, as security becomes a concern for individuals, clans, or ethnic groups. This has led to communities arming themselves for self-defense and property security, undermining political stability and human and state security. Communities in Sudan and Ethiopia as located in a conflict (intra and interstate wars, and violence) ravaged region for centuries, the culture of self-defense and low trust for government provision of security has been a standing culture inculcated to the social psychology. Beyond this, the local conflict and the business motive coupled with the diverse local and international actors further exacerbated the illicit movement of SALW across the Horn of Africa Region.

The report of Amnesty International revealed that an almost unbridled supply of weapons into Sudan by governments and corporate players worldwide is driving this conflict. Many armed groups and governments use almost all of the nearby nations as supply routes to move weapons into and around Sudan. The UN Security Council's response to the Darfur conflict has been inadequate, with the current arms embargo being too narrowly focused and poorly

implemented. Despite the UNSC's two-decade mandate, weapons and military equipment from countries like Russia, China, Türkiye, and the UAE are being imported into Sudan and diverted into Darfur. Weapons and ammunition are also being smuggled into the country directly through Darfur, with some in the hands of parties accused of human rights abuses. Amnesty International has identified a disturbing trend of small arms being diverted to government forces and armed opposition groups, with companies in Türkiye and Russia exporting variants to arms dealers with strong links to the Sudanese Army. Both Russian and Turkish arms are used by parties to the conflict (Amnesty International, 2024). Turkish arms sales to African countries have attracted widespread attention as it provided with a relatively attractive price and without much strings. The abundant and less regulated arms supply to Africa has been diverted to the illicit market.

The transfer of arms from the post-conflict states in the Maghreb to the Sahel and to East Africa has an established route and a well-known actor. While harmonized national and regional border control mechanism is hard to realize in the border between Sudan and Ethiopia, the flow of illicit arms is alarmingly increasing. This illicit flow of arms is a source of finance for the internal wars in Sudan and in Ethiopia. Similarly, this business attracts the border communities and displaced persons whose lively hood is severely affected by the internal conflicts as a means of survival or as source of income. The ever increasing demand of arms in Sudan and Ethiopia due to the presence of a number of armed groups, the general perception of continuing instability in the two countries which entails an inclination to resort to self-defense intensify the illicit transfer of arms. On the Ethiopian case, one of supply line of arms to the Fano struggle is said to come via the Sudan outlet. The same logic works for arms that reached OLA. The major illicit arms route finally reaching Ethiopia's border passes via Sudan. In the middle of its journey, it might pass through South Sudan and Somalia which ultimately led to the smuggling of quite a good number of the arms to Ethiopia to be circulated among the ordinary residents, the OLA and Fano fighters. Beyond the increasing demand of arms due to the Fano and OLA factor, groups such as the TPLF, who anticipates future conflicts might be additions to this market.

The absence of effective administration in Sudan that controls border coupled with the presence of state and non-state actors that can take advantage of the uncontrolled border and

the demands that exist from the Ethiopian side ease the flow of arms to Ethiopia which ultimately undermines the peace and security of Ethiopia. This imminent danger will be worsened given the probability of other clandestine movements such as terrorism in the region. The Sudanese conflict has created an opportune moment for states that are at odds with Ethiopia such as Eritrea and Egypt to be involved in the transfer of arms business. The Sudanese conflict is a hot bed for forces (state and non-state actors) that operate against Ethiopia. Serious allegations are made from Ethiopia's army officials on the involvement of external actors such as Egypt, Eritrea and TPLF factions in the Ethiopian domestic conflict. These actors are siding the RSF in the Sudanese conflict. The flow of arms via Sudan to Ethiopia is thus one of the dimensions of the concerns.

The flow of arms in the context of Sudanese conflict is encouraged by regional war economy with the enabling local, regional and international dynamics. Ethiopia had enacted laws, forged regional and international cooperation mechanisms. A number of agreements were signed with Sudan that had helped to minimize border security threats. The convergence of these three factors in Ethiopia- in the context of the ongoing conflict in Sudan i.e demand related factors such as (the resort to self-defense, preexisting gun culture and financial gain); instability in the region (enablers) and the impracticability of harmonized anti-trans-border crimes cooperation mechanisms increased Ethiopia's vulnerability.

5.7.3. Human Trafficking

Sudan is located in one of the very famous migration route named as the western route. In this vein, Ethiopia and Sudan are active partners under the auspices of various regional frameworks such as the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), the African Common Position on Migration and Development (ACPMD), which were both adopted in 2006 and the Kampala convention among others. Similarly, as tourist destinations, transit and source countries they cooperate under IGAD with the platforms of the Regional Consultative Process (RCP) on migration in 2008, the 2012 Regional Migration Policy Framework (RMPF) and the Migration Action Plan (MAP) 2015-2020. Ethiopia and Sudan were active on the inter-regional cooperation frameworks between Europe and Africa through Khartoum process and others. Beyond the regional frameworks, Ethiopia and Sudan also have bilateral cooperation frameworks to combating irregular migration. As One of the agendas of the Joint Ministerial

cooperation was migration, three agreements (The Tripartite Agreement (Ethiopia, Sudan, UNHCR) for Voluntary Repatriation of Refugees in Ethiopia back to the Sudan signed on February 27,2006; Protocol on Defense and Security Matters and the Free Movement of Peoples and Goods Dec 23,1991 and MOU Regarding Cooperation in the Fight Against Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking December 04,2013) that govern the relation in the bilateral sphere were signed. Because of the ongoing war, migration and human trafficking via the western route through Sudan becomes fully unregulated. This illegal movement of people and human trafficking usually confluence with a range of trans-border crimes including illicit transfer of arms, trade, drug and at times terrorism which jeopardize the Security of the region and maximize the suffering of fellow citizens.

5.7.4. Illegal Sesame and gold trade

The conflict brings about warring groups that look for means of financing their war including sesame and gold. The conflict also made it difficult to check the flow of these illicit trade. It attracted national, subnational and international actors to the region and further complicated the conflict. It undermines the implementation of CoHA. It will have lasting impact in the region as various groups get used to doing this business at the expense of peace in the region. Actors will pay utmost sacrifice to maintain this business. External actors that are engaged in this illicit trade might also add another layer to this conflict to create another long lasting conflict in Africa next to DRC. This will invite also other actors.

The RSF along with the UAE is blamed for expropriating gold mines. This gold mine from Sudan is said to be channeled to Dubai via Ethiopia. Some of The TPLF/TDF leadership is also accused of engaging in the illicit gold trade. The expropriation of gold mines in Tigray seems an established fact as all the factions in Tigray acknowledged it and vowed to fight such an illegal practice.

Fighting over ‘white gold’: Sesame in Ethiopia and Sudan: Sesame makes up 14% of global exports, making it the second most exported crop behind coffee. Ethiopia ranks among the top six producers of sesame seeds worldwide (Sirany, T., & Tadele, E., 2022). It is a cash crop produced in the geo-strategically important area of Wolkait, Humera and the contested territory of Al-Fashaqa Triangle. The impact of the sesame factor over the diehard position

over Wolkaite between the Amhara and Tigray peoples is clearly addressed in the previous topics, it is essential to highlight stake of this crucial crop in the context of the ongoing Sudanese war. Though the contested border of Ethiopia and Sudan is not limited to the Alfashaqa Triangle, what makes this triangle famous is its endowment with this vital cash crop-the ‘white -gold’, as referred by Soliman, A., & Demissie, A. A. (2024). During the outbreak of the conflict between the federal government and TPLF in 2020, the Sudanese military mobilized controlled 90% of this important triangle. General Al-Burhan’s SAF is in full control of the area since then by evicting the Amhara Farmers and even Sudanese farmers who were in control of some part of the land. As Dagallo also had an interest in Agriculture through his family business Al-Junaid, the competing interest over sesame has also contributed for instability in Sudan. Since then, the supply chain is rechanneled from Ethiopia.

These seemingly harmless cash crops are now embedded in local, subnational and national political contestations in both countries. Sesame value chains are being reshaped, with power and profits being used to entrench the grip of political and armed actors who are reinforcing new patterns of land control and driving informal and illicit trade – impacting the coping mechanisms of local communities and threatening to fuel further conflict.

There is no clearly investigated and articulated literature on the details of the illicit network and the mode of operation. However, government officials and Chatham House papers revealed that illicit sesame trade has been at the center of the conflict in Sudan, started during the northern conflict in Ethiopia that changed the relatively cordial and friendly relationship the two countries enjoying since 2000s. Competition between Sudanese security actors fuels volatile political rivalries, and further entrenches military control of this vital economic resources.

Informal and illicit trade reinforces conflict dynamics transcending the boundaries of Ethiopia and Sudan. It hampers the implementation of the Pretoria agreement and the resolution of contest over “Western Tigray. The impracticability of border control creates an opportunity of war economy for state and sub-state actors. A huge interest of agriculture from the Gulf states to this triangle is reported (Al-Estiklal Newspaper, 2025 and Staff Writer, 2021); which will complicate the fight over this crop in this conflict hotspot.

In general, this competition over sesame exacerbates border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan, attract external actors that further complicate peaceful avenues for the domestic conflicts in Sudan and Ethiopia, create opportunity to other criminal and terrorist elements of the region or encourage the emergence disruptive elements. The conflict has significantly decreased formal revenue of sesame since 2016 while the informal market is find out to be profitable (Sirany, T., & Tadele, E., 2022; Gejea, Yonas. M., & Tolesa, S. F., 2024).

5.7.5. Migration

Movement of people between Ethiopia and Sudan is increasing specially since the 1970's following the instability in Ethiopia and Sudan due to their respective civil wars. Both Ethiopia and Sudan are source, host and transit countries for migrants in the region. Apart from refugees in the two countries which is primarily attributed to conflict, there is also a high scale of movements of people around the border for trade, and for different social affairs due to ethnic and religious affinity between the border community. Moreover, quite a big number of Ethiopian economic migrants flee to Sudan and via Sudan in the normal time of peace either to live and do business in Sudan or to transfer to a third country mainly Europe and the Middle East. According to an assessment conducted by the Ethiopian Embassy before 5 years, close to 1.7 Million Ethiopians have migrated to Sudan since the time of the Hailesellasie era (A. Hate, personal communication, Jan 9, 2025).

Moving forward quickly to the post 2018 era in the relations of the two countries, close to 60 thousand Tigrayan Ethiopians are said to be fleeing to Sudan during the war between TPLF and the Federal Government of Ethiopia since 2020-2022. Conversely, according to the UN, since the start of the war, approximately 163,000 people from Sudan, including 85,000 Sudanese nationals, have arrived in Ethiopia. Migrants to Sudan during the time of Hailesellasie, the Derg and unregulated border movements in the vast history of the two countries have been an issue of contention, apart from the humanitarian burden to the countries.

Refugees especially between two unstable states have usually been a source of security threat not only from the perspective of humanitarian burden but also it can be exploited for political,

diplomatic and military maneuvering. Within this backdrop, the impact of Sudanese migrant influx in the context of the ongoing crisis can be assessed as follows.

a. Securitization and Politicization of Refugees

Refugee contention dates back the current ongoing crisis in Sudan. During those difficult times in the first Sudanese Civil war, the high number of refugees on both sides was among the three factors that shaped Ethiopia-Sudan relations which also include the non-delineated border and the problem of dissident elements (Belete, B.Y.,2016). Insurgencies and refugee flows frequently feed off one another: Civil wars are often accompanied by violence, discrimination, and suffering, which often results in the displacement of populations that support and prolong the initial conflict. Insurgent groups have similarly been successful in recruiting refugees in a variety of nations, including Ethiopians (Byman et al., 2001). Exchange of allegations over refugees crossing borders, over reporting the number of each other's refugees and utilizing refugees to their defamation agenda was part of the broader unhealthy relation between Ethiopia and Ethiopia during second half of the 20th c. Documents from MoFA achieves reveal that Ethiopia had prepared counter propaganda strategy to the Sudanese media campaign during the Dreg regime. As noted in archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia and referred by Belete (2016), Sudan's official statement on the growing number of Eritrean refugees (about 300,000) in its territory and its appeal to the UN High Commission for Refugees for assistance since March 1967 (which Ethiopia considered was an intentional act to internationalize the cause of the rebels) again changed the equation. Irrespective of Ethiopia's protests, both to the government of Sudan and the UN, the former had received funding to the amount of 1,000,000 dollars for 1967 and 2,125,000 dollars for 1969. Sudan's intentional violation of the rule of reciprocity guiding the conduct between the two countries had for long angered the imperial government. As a result, a policy directive was issued whereby Ethiopia would publicize the issue of around twenty thousand South Sudanese refugees in its territory and seek assistance from the international community.

Ethiopia rejected the offer of assistance and service by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in June 1963 with respect to South Sudan refugees in its territory. It allegedly did so "in order to avoid being instrumental to internationalization of the Southern Sudan

problem and in order to safeguard Ethiopia's long existing friendly relations with the Sudan (Belete B. Y., 2013).

Sudan allowed the UN Experts group ICHREE a UN human rights mechanism instituted by the HRC without the consent of Ethiopia to organize its report from Sudan. As one of my interviewee informed me, Ethiopia believes that the allowing such a mandate to access politically motivated refugees, most of them complicit with the Mikadra massacre has contributed to the biases and subjectivity of the reports produced by the experts group. This in turn harmed the good names of Ethiopia and its people at the global stage which also served as a pretext to various forms of diplomatic pressures and unilateral sanctions such as the suspension of Ethiopia from AGOA, the suspension of direct aid by the EU and the US. This has affected the lives and livelihoods of Ethiopians in particular working in the textile sector.

The Sudanese request for the termination of Ethiopia's military under the UN peacekeeping force in Sudan has also diplomatic and financial costs to Ethiopia beyond the security costs it inflicted to Ethiopia and even to Sudan, as per anonymous informant, of the armies took refuge in Sudan and involved in the destabilizing Ethiopia since then. Sudanese army recruit soldiers from the Ethiopian refugees that have already taken political sides. This has posed continuing threat to the full implementation of CoHA and the peace in the contested territories.

Going fast forward, refugees that flee "Western Tigray" and army members that joined these refugees from the Abyei Ethiopian contingent- UNISFA are taken as a source of security threat by the Ethiopian side. Moreover, the Ethiopian side was not happy with the propaganda and media influence produced by international human rights institutions and media outlets out of the conversations with these "politicized" refugees. Ambassador Redwan Hussein, the secretariat of the then Ethiopia Emergency Fact Check Task Force, during his interview with Reuters raised suspicions about potential youth involvement in the Maikadra massacre among Sudanese Refugees (Reuters, 2020). The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission reports a horrific massacre of civilians in Maikadra by an informal Samri group, supported by local administration and security establishment of Tigray (EHRC, 2020). Ethiopia's government still fails to accept these migrants as civilian and decent refugees. Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs week in the Horn Blog also produced news release expressing that following the massacre, many criminals, including youth from the 'Samri' group, former local

administrators, and militia members, have crossed the Sudanese border and are now hiding in refugee camps, running from justice, and spreading misinformation (MoFA Ethiopia, 2021). This group is actively engaging in the ongoing war alongside of the SAF.

The other alarming refugee issues in the context of the ongoing Sudanese war apart from the security threat it poses to Ethiopia is the amount of sufferings Ethiopian migrants bearing in Sudan. Migrants that have lived in Sudan since the Emperors time roughly estimated to 1.7 million before the start of the war are displaced, their properties damaged and looted amidst the armed conflict in Sudan. Ethiopian refugees in Khartoum are fearing for their lives as the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) approach reclaiming control from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Fears of retaliation from the SAF and its supporters for their decision to remain under RSF rule are mounting (Tesfaye, H., 2025). RSF claimed it has documented evidence that forces from the Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF), previously accused of committing atrocities in Ethiopia, are now fighting alongside the SAF and its allied militias linked to the “terrorist former regime (Emre, 2024) which the Interim Administration of Tigray denies allegations. The Administration claims that the TPLF has 270,000 armed forces and portrayed Sudan as a "safe haven" for Tigreans, highlighting their long-standing brotherly relations with the Sudanese people (Getachew Reda, 2024).

Though the Ethiopian government especially before the signing of CoHA accused some of the refugees that fled to Sudan during the war as criminals and TPLF affiliates, no one including the government denied the existence of a significant number of civilian and innocent refugees in Sudan. Nevertheless, the RSF’s characterization of all Tigrayans is a dangerous move given the precarious situation in Sudan and the experiences of senseless profiling and killing experiences of the rapid force. The silence by the federal government to respond to RSF’s profiling speaks volumes and has impacts the trust between Tigray and the Federal government which ultimately the implementation of the Pretoria agreement.

Weaver, in his work produced in 1988 titled as Searching for Survival: Urban Ethiopian Refugees in Sudan accounted how the future of Ethiopian migrants in Sudan was blurry as follows:

Currently the urban refugees survive; but for most the future is unclear, probably uncomfortable, and possibly inhospitable. They have reached a halfway house from which few go ahead and almost none go back. As the rains begin and the drought victims return to their fields, the urbanites remain in Sudan awaiting resettlement, not rain; political decisions, not seeds. While politicians maneuver and combatants clash, the urban refugees wait—marginal people whose lives appear to be held in suspension by forces they seem powerless to affect. Will they ultimately go home? Or integrate economically as have Armenians and Lebanese else-where in east Africa? Or will they become the Palestinians of the twenty-first century (Weaver,1988, p.475).

10000 Ethiopian daily labor workers used to cross border to Sudan for work and return home as per an agreement reached between Ethiopia and Sudan. The ongoing conflict has unsecured border movement denied Ethiopians their means of survival and income. A good number of Ethiopians fled to Sudan in the old days before the start of proper documentation in Ethiopia become undocumented and stateless forever. Some of them have mixed families and properties in Sudan. However, they are stranded in Sudan and suffering from the atrocities. They cannot claim their Ethiopian identity and cross Ethiopia's border like fellow Ethiopian refugees nor they have documents to easily run away the conflict to other neighboring states of Sudan. (Amsalu Interviewee, December 2024).

International pressures on Ethiopia is mounting as 8,000 people according to Reuters news that have left the Kumer and Awlala refugee camps, set up by the United Nations in Ethiopia's northern Amhara region, since repeated assaults last month, mostly by unknown armed groups (Nafisa Eltahir. 2024). Similar allegations aired out by different international media outlets reporting that Sudanese refugees were killed and 10 others were injured in an attack launched by gunmen yesterday evening on the Awlala forests in the Amhara region of Ethiopia badly impact Ethiopia's good name and the capacity of its security (Anadolu & Algezeera; 2024). Human Rights Watch in its part recommends the Ethiopian government to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to Sudanese refugees, ensure access to food, shelter, and healthcare, safety, to prohibit forced return, and to assist refugees in conflict-affected areas to relocate safely. It also urged an investigation into attacks and abuses against refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Such pressures impact's Ethiopia's stature in front of the international community and put extra-burden on Ethiopia in terms of material resource and security operation.

b. Humanitarian Burden

As of August 2024, Ethiopia is the third largest refugee hosting countries in Africa, home to more than 1 Million refugees and asylum seekers mainly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea (Ethiopia: Refugees and Asylum-seekers (as of 31 August 2024) - Ethiopia, 2024). The outbreak of the war in April 2023 has sent shockwaves to its neighbors particularly to Ethiopia.

Displaced persons seeking refuge in areas like Benishangul-Gumuz, Amhara, and Tigray has put immense strain on Ethiopia's already overburdened refugee infrastructure.

Country	Data Date	Refugee Returnees	Sudanese Refugees/Asylum Seekers	Non Sudanese Refugees/Asylum Seekers	Total New Arrivals	Individually registered Refugees
CAR	April 11, 2025	6,360	36,437		42,797	33,405
Chad	April 13, 2025		774,754		774,754	725,258
Egypt	January 31, 2025				1,500,000	628,544
Ethiopia	April 21, 2025	18,595	43,491	10,443	72,529	9,643
Libya	March 24, 2025		256,000		256,000	48,027
South Sudan	April 20, 2025	750,168	351,914	3,986	1,106,068	228,822
Uganda	April 17, 2025		73,246		73,246	73,246

*This figure is an estimate of the number of new arrivals (registered and un-registered) who would be assisted under the RRP. The new arrivals figures are generally based on numbers counted around border crossings, whereas registered refugees have gone through an individual registration process and reflects post 15 April 2023 figures.

As we can see from this UNHCR data, although Ethiopia is not among the top Refugee affected among the 8 neighbors of Sudan, it hosted 72,529 total number of refugees, 10,433 are non-Sudanese, 18,595 are Ethiopian Refugees in Sudan while 43,491 are Sudanese

Refugees/Asylum Seekers. Given the high level of humanitarian fund cut due to an ever increasing crisis and ever decreasing appetite of world nations towards humanitarian aid, out of 1.81 Billion humanitarian demand for Sudanese refugee plan, only 11% are met. 160.3 M fund needed in Ethiopia, of which only 13% is secured so far. This puts Ethiopia in to a precarious situation as the country is struggling with overcoming the compounded impacts of domestic conflict, climate induced drought, flooding and landslide, seismic/volcanic eruption, surging cholera and malaria outbreaks, global value chain disruption, debt burden etc. These alone raised humanitarian aid demands to 2 billion USD only for months from February to April 2025 and the funding gap is \$496 Million for the same months, according to the report of OCHA ((Ethiopia Priority Humanitarian Response and Critical Funding Gaps (February - April 2025), 2025). Similarly, WFP (2025) expressed that in Ethiopia it faces a funding shortfall of US\$222 million between April and September 2025 and 3.6 million of Ethiopia’s most vulnerable people will lose access to WFP’s life-saving food and nutrition assistance if it failed to secure emergency fund.

Funding Status of the 2025 Sudan Refugee Response Plan as prepared by UNHCR

Country	Requirement	Funded
Central African Republic	US\$ 76.4M	7%
Chad	US\$ 701.3M	9%
Egypt	US\$ 237.7M	17%
Ethiopia	US\$ 160.3M	13%
Libya	US\$ 106.6M	14%
South Sudan	US\$ 415.8M	8%
Uganda	US\$ 107.1M	12%

5.8. Reversal of progresses on Economic and Regional Integration Schemes

Regional integration is at the center of Ethiopia’s foreign policy towards Africa in general and to the Horn in particular. One of the pillars of Ethio-Sudanese relations according to my informants, is regional economic integration. The overall policies to the horn of Africa are economic integration taken as a viable and long term way out to address various challenges

including peace and security and access to port or recently access to sea outlet. As a landlocked state, investing on regional trade, investment and people to people relations is taken a priority agenda.

According to Y. Aemero (Personal communication, April 6,2025), the economic integration activities with Sudan were conducted with special focus to make it as a role model to Ethiopia's regional integration schemes with the rest of the neighboring states and at the continental level. The economic integration policy is designed to contribute for the peace and stability in the region and to smoothen the bilateral relations of the two countries. Arrangements such as joint

Trade and Investment: - various trade and investment agreements have been signed between Ethiopia and Sudan since 1972. The establishment of Ethio-Sudan Joint Ministerial Commission is also a clear manifestation of the centrality of economic cooperation and border trade to the bilateral relations.

Following the November 1999 Working Visit to Ethiopia of H.E. Lt. Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Beshir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, which was a turning point to the normalization of the bilateral relations of the two countries, among others, the two leaders engaged in a thoughtful dialogue regarding the strategies for revitalizing the Ethio-Sudan Joint Ministerial Commission and reached a consensus on the essential measures required to convene the forthcoming meeting of the Commission in February 2000. In this context, the leaders agreed on a visit exchange between the Presidents and governors of the bordering areas of the two countries, while stressing the need of advancing trade and commercial relations between the two countries.

Through the regular joint Ministerial Committee meetings, various agreements that helped to bolster border trade and border movement have been signed. With regard to normalizing and legalizing the border trade, MOU of Customs Border Offices and Control of Illegal Trade signed on November 25,1992; Border Trade Protocol signed May 02, 2001; MOU in the Field of Animal Health and Veterinary Services May 11, 2002; MOU on Collaboration and Joint Activities in Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Intervention April 24, 2003; Executive Program for the Implementation of the MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Animal, Health and Veterinary

Service for the Period December 2003-July 2004 signed in June 27,2003; Executive Program for the MOU for the Cooperation in the Field of Animal Resource Development, Health and Veterinary Service for the Period 2006-08 December 15, 2005; Border Trade Protocol signed on December 15,2005; MOU b/n the Quality and Standards Authorities signed in April 22, 2009 have been signed and put into force.

Agreements on preferential trade arrangement, prevention of fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, Agreement on the Purchase of Cotton, Agreement on the Purchase of Ready Made Military Uniforms and Shoes, MOU on Investment Matters, Agreement on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation, Agreement on Natural Gum Production, Processing and Utilization, on Banking, customs, investment promotion and avoidance of double taxation have been signed.

Sudan was the fourth investing partner of Ethiopia; next to China, Turkey, India, according to Y. Aemero (Personal communication, April 6,2025). The Sudan Tribune (July15, 2014) reported that Sudanese business firms have become Ethiopia's second largest foreign investors, with capital investment reaching \$2.4 billion. Sudanese investors are operating in Ethiopia, ranking second in the top ten countries for investment projects. According to the 2016 data, Ethiopia imported USD 184 million in 2014, and Sudanese tradable items were exported. Ethiopia needs 100,000mt of cotton for its textile and apparel industry (Birhanu Fikade, 2016).

All these [Ethio-Sudan Trade and Investment agreements](#) have been by default suspended following the outbreak of war in Sudan, which has jeopardized the economic interest of the two countries. The Joint development committee and the signing of an MOU on Social Welfare and Development Area on July 04, 2009 were planned to gradually create a trans-border economic community that ultimately soften border tensions and resource conflicts. It was not only about development and economic gain but also a tool to contribute for sustainable peace in the region.

Infrastructural connectivity between the two states gained sufficient attention so as to expedite the regional economic integration program. Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation plans (GTP 1,2&3) to a large extent focused on expanding domestic infrastructure coverage to serve

the regional integration schemes. It was planned also to construct a total of 2,741km national railway network in five corridors and six routes. In this vein, Air Service Agreement Between and Beyond their Respective Territories signed on September 06,1958, Amendment Agreement on the 1993 Agreement on Road and Traffic March 05,2000; MOU on Cooperation in the Sector of Road and Communication March 05,2000; MOU on Air Transport signed on March 05,2000; Agreements on Air Service signed on December 04,2013; Agreement for the Development, Operation and Management of Standard Gauge Railway Network signed on Dec 04,2013; Agreement on Passenger Road Transport Service December 04,2013 are signed between the two states manifest the earnest desire of the two states towards closer economic cooperation, though it has not been realized fully due to the unstable domestic situation coupled with external interventions.

Diversification of **port** as a means to maximize leverage and as a solution to the growing demand pursuant to the increasing volume of Ethiopian trade exchange is important priority. Thus, Ethiopia wants Port Sudan as an alternative port especially for the North and Northwestern parts of the country. A deal has been made on this venture with the signing of Transit and Port Services Agreement on September 29,1993, Protocol Agreement on Port Sudan Utilization on March 05,2000 and an Amendment to the Protocol Agreement on Port Sudan Utilization January 24,2003. An agreement to provide 30% of Port Sudan's service capacity to Ethiopia was reached. Ethiopia was able to import some 50,000 tons of fertilizers back in 2015 via Port of Sudan. The fact that Port Sudan is much bigger than Djibouti's ports, it was considered to be ideal for some products (Birhanu Fikade, 2016). This deal is practically not delivering its purpose due to the ongoing conflict. This adds the cost of imports and extra delay of delivery. Reports that expressed a deal reached by Ethiopia and Sudan allowing Ethiopia to acquire a stake in Sudan's Port Sudan, were circulating in 2018 (Maasho, A. & Africa News, 2018).

Ethiopia's current foreign policy brings the issue of sea access to the forefront apart from diversification of ports. Ethiopia's foreign policy is shifting towards securing reliable sea access as a national priority due to economic vulnerabilities and security threats. The Red Sea Forum, led by coastal states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, has excluded non-littoral states like Ethiopia from its membership, limiting trans-regional cooperation and leaving Ethiopia

vulnerable to port owners' decisions. Ethiopia faces significant security risks due to its lack of direct sea access, and is advocating for a broader regional cooperation framework. One of the proposed trans-regional cooperation platform by Ethiopia and its friends is forming a Horn-Gulf trans-regional cooperation framework to bring key non littoral states such as Ethiopia on board on the fight against trans-boundary crimes destabilizing the Red Sea (IFA, 2025). In this vein, its relationship with Sudan is critical, as Sudan's tactical support for Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was so crucial.

Since the end of 1990s the two countries deeply reflected on the damages of previous policies and forged to ramp up a wide range of cooperation in the economic, security, cultural and diplomatic ventures. Most of the agreements signed were going well until the outbreak of the Sudanese conflict in 2023, where all of the achievements backtracked due to the ongoing conflict.

Due to the strong historical bond between the two peoples, Sudanese potential in the tourism sector is another sphere to be exploited. In recognition to the vast historical, cultural, religious and ethnic affinity between the two peoples, various [agreements](#) were signed. Bilateral agreements ranging from media, to education, tourism and culture helped the advancement of the bilateral relations.

Ethiopia and Sudan signed a number of **flight agreements** and hence Ethiopian airlines has been instrumental in the increased economic and cultural interaction between the two peoples. However, as Khartoum become the center of the fight, the airlines is obliged to re-route its destination to Port Sudan since January 2024. Despite, temporary costs, the airlines managed to adapt to the new realities and relocated its flight destination. Similar, changes might happen in the future which will cost the airlines based on the future of the war in Sudan.

On the other hand, overflight options are still very limited, even though Sudan has reopened a limited amount of airspace for arrivals and departures at Port Sudan. There are only three backup routes, and they are primarily for specific flights to Port Sudan rather than general overflight. Except for humanitarian and evacuation flights, civilian aircraft are not permitted to fly over the remainder of Sudanese airspace. Most of Ethiopia's flights to Europe, North and West Africa were passing through the Sudanese airspace. The closing of Sudanese

airspace forces Ethiopian Airlines to choose longer, more expensive, occasionally congested routes, so affecting efficiency and raising running costs. As to Najaah Auzine (2023) “Ethiopian Airlines has the most significant exposure due to its geographic position, potentially having to reroute up to 38 routes in its network”. What is more concerning is that Ethiopia has no enough and secures alternative routes to use. The current relation with Eritrea is not favorable and at the same time there is a serious security concern of flying over the Red Sea given the presence of Houthi forces in Yemen. The airline is flying with significant risk and high cost via the Red Sea. An increased congestion between neighboring flight information regions ([FIRs](#)) is also another concern for ET (Team, 2023).

Power connectivity via electric power is considered as one of the tools to uniting neighboring countries to forge mutual prosperity. Informed by this strong policy direction, energy deal is made with Sudan, Kenya, South Sudan, Djibouti and Tanzania. Transmission line is established and energy is being exported to all except to Tanzania, which is under construction. Up to 100 megawatts of exports were agreed upon with Sudan, but the amount has since been lowered. Current export is between 10 and 20 megawatts because of the damages on Sudan's electrical infrastructure (Powering East Africa, 2025). Further, Sudan is not able to pay the money back to Ethiopia and has accumulated debts close to 90 Million as of July 2024, according to the Reporter News (Mengesha, 2024). The offer of Sudan to barter electricity with oil in May 2025, has been hampered by the closure of the oil pipeline from South Sudan to Sudan. Therefore, the Ethio-Sudan electricity agreement has been severely damaged by the conflict, so Ethiopia has had to adjust by diversifying its regional energy exports while maintaining optimism for future debt relief and stabilization. The completion of the GERD may bring the partnership back, but Sudan's internal crisis is still a major obstacle. On the other hand, Ethio Negari (2025) expressed that Egypt is trying to provide energy to the Eastern African States, Sudan and Djibouti) so as to reduce their energy dependence on Ethiopia.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

The protracted and escalating conflict in Sudan poses a multifaceted security threat to Ethiopia, with profound implications for national stability, regional integration, and economic development. The breakdown of bilateral relations, exemplified by the suspension of numerous cooperation mechanisms and agreements, significantly exacerbates transboundary insecurity and undermines Ethiopia's strategic interests. The absence of active border management and cooperation mechanisms has created a security vacuum, fostering the proliferation of transboundary organized criminal activities such as human trafficking, arms smuggling, illicit gold trade, and other transnational crimes. These illegal activities not only threaten regional stability but also directly jeopardize Ethiopia's border security, economic interests, and internal peace. There is a well-established knowledge on the cohabitation between transboundary organized crimes and terrorism and extremism globally and in the region. Sufficient threats on the possible surge of terrorism and extremism are identified by various stakeholders in the context of the Sudanese war.

Economically, the suspension of bilateral cooperation hampers vital cross-border trade, investment, and mutually beneficial arrangements. This disruption threatens Ethiopia's economic growth, particularly in sectors reliant on access to Sudanese ports and infrastructure, such as trade, energy exports, and regional connectivity initiatives. Moreover, the deteriorated security environment heightens the risk of destabilizing spillovers, which could undermine Ethiopia's efforts to attract foreign direct investment and regional integration.

From a security standpoint, the presence of militarized refugees in Sudan, especially those who have joined the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), a faction supported by Eritrea and Egypt, poses an immediate threat to Ethiopia's internal security. These armed groups, embedded within the conflict zones, threaten to cross borders, destabilize border communities, and engage in asymmetric warfare against Ethiopian security forces. Their alliance with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), further complicates the security landscape and endangers the proper implementation of the Pretoria agreement. Such alliances could facilitate the

transfer of arms, fighters, and illicit resources across borders, fueling Ethiopia's internal conflicts and undermining the fragile peace processes.

The ongoing Sudanese conflict amplifies Ethiopia's security vulnerabilities by creating a fertile ground for insurgency, extremism, and regional destabilization. The fragile state of Sudan, with weakened institutions and ongoing political turmoil, offers fertile ground for armed groups to exploit, potentially extending conflict into Ethiopia's border areas.

Furthermore, the complex alliances emerging within Sudan—particularly the support of the SAF and other factions by regional powers—pose an additional security challenge. These alliances are not only prolonging the Sudanese conflict but also complicate Ethiopia's diplomatic and security calculations. The involvement of external actors and proxy dynamics heighten the risk of regional escalation, making conflict resolution more challenging and increasing the likelihood of a wider regional instability, which would inevitably threaten Ethiopia's security and economic interests.

To sum up, the Sudanese conflict is not merely a regional crisis but a direct threat to Ethiopia's national security. The suspension of bilateral cooperation mechanisms has created a security vacuum that exacerbates transboundary criminal activities, hampers economic cooperation, and leaves Ethiopia vulnerable to cross-border insurgencies. The militarization of refugees and the alliances formed with regional and global actors intensify the security risks, making the conflict an urgent securitization priority for Ethiopia. To safeguard its sovereignty, economic interests, and regional stability, Ethiopia must pursue a comprehensive security strategy that includes diplomatic engagement, border security enhancement, intelligence cooperation, and regional conflict mitigation efforts—recognizing that the resolution of the Sudanese crisis is integral to Ethiopia's national security calculus.

6.2. Recommendations

From the perspective of Ethiopia's foreign policy, the only viable option that can serve the full achievement of Ethiopia's foreign policy interests in Sudan are dependent upon a peaceful Sudanese Republic if not a unified and democratic Sudan next to Ethiopia's door.

Therefore, as things stand, Ethiopia shall resort to make efforts towards finding a peaceful resolve to the crises. This can be achieved by doubling down its diplomatic resolve to strengthen the capacity of regional mechanisms through IGAD and AU to own the Sudanese peace talk. Ethiopia needs to demonstrate an impartial position but engage deeply in coordination with big powers and the active middle powers. To realize a Sudanese owned, regionally coordinated and internationally supported peace path, Ethiopia's role should be irreplaceable. Ethiopia's resolute on the otherhand should enjoy the support of at least big powers and the AU.

The other recommendation could be the need to devise contingent plan so as to minimize the impacts of the ongoing crises on Ethiopia. Ethiopia has to come up with a region wide strategy that brings its domestic capacity and major international actors together in support of its concerns and its proposals. This strategy might go to the extent of preparations guided by national and regional early warning principles that can help identify various possible scenarios with their respective mitigation strategies.

If the conflict in Sudan can be prolonged, it is incumbent upon Ethiopia to shoulder the preservation of the stability of the border and the region as a whole with an effective border control mechanism. This at least will minimize the danger though it could not address other challenges such as refugee influx, costs out of the interruption of border trade, investment and people to people interactions.

The third and very usual recommendation for an effective foreign policy is the need to put one's house in order. For an obvious reason Foreign policy is a reflection of domestic situation. In this regard, if Ethiopia managed to fix its domestic political, social and economic challenges, the national security threats posed by Sudan will surely and meaningfully minimized. The recommendations are mutually interdependent. A strong and peaceful Ethiopia, can enjoy the support and seek the attention of big and middle powers which in turn helps it actively engage in the pacification of Sudan and returning Sudan to normalcy so that the full implementation of bilateral agreements and resumption of engagements between the two countries enabled.

The other recommendation could be risk minimizing efforts of making sure the conflict is not closer to the Ethiopian borderland. The more the conflict gets closer to Ethiopia's border, the Ethiopia's vulnerability will be maximized as the influx of refugees, ethnic tensions and illegal cross border crimes mount.

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Appendix I

a. Questionnaires (Four related interview questions)

Guiding questions for an interview with anonymous experts working at the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

Dear Participants,

I am conducting a research work in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts in peace and security studies titled as “the ongoing crises in Sudan: its impact on the national security of Ethiopia”. As we can learn from the title, the objective of this research is to explain possible national security challenges Ethiopia will endure due to the crisis in Sudan and to identify security threats and vulnerabilities of Ethiopia in the context of the ongoing intrastate war in Sudan.

The researcher selects informants for this research title based on the merits demonstrated by their expertise, area of work, and/or mandate.

Anticipating Interviewees’/informants’ busy schedule, guiding questions are prepared as an alternative to allow flexibility for informants to respond at their convenience and send back to the interviewer via email. In this regard, I hereby would like to request your good will to share me your take based on the guiding questions I attached here with.

Regards,

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guiding questions: -

1. Do you believe that the ongoing crises in Sudan will **impact Ethiopia’s national security**? If yes, how?
2. What is /are the **root cause/s** of the ongoing Sudanese conflict?
3. Who do you think are the major **foreign actors** involved in the ongoing crises in Sudan?
 - 3.1. What is their position and interest in the context of the crises?

- 3.2. How do you think their involvement impact the peace and stability of Sudan? What will be their role in the effort to bring about cessation of hostilities and bringing about peace in Sudan? Will they have a positive or negative outcome to this effort?
- 3.3. If negative, how?
- 3.4. If positive how that could be explained?
- 3.5. How can the involvement of these foreign actors impact Ethiopia's national Security?
- 3.6. What is the position and interest of Ethiopia on the ongoing Sudanese Crises?
- 3.7. Are there **probabilities that Ethiopia will resort to take sides** to one of the warring factions in Sudan?
4. How do you think the Sudan crises will unfold? What are the **possible scenarios** of the ongoing conflict in Sudan?
5. What **possible sources of security threats** are expected in the context of the **conflict** in Sudan?
6. Do you think **transnational criminal networks** such as illicit finance, arms smuggling, human and drug trafficking will be proliferated due to the conflict in Sudan? If yes,
- 6.1. how?
- 6.2. How do these security challenges undermine the peace and security of Ethiopia?
7. Do you think that the continuation of the civil war in Sudan boost **terrorism and religious** extremism in the country in particular and the sub-region in general? If yes,
- 7.1. What **fertile grounds are there for terrorism** and religious extremism to flourish in Sudan?
- 7.2. What will be the **contribution of Islamic elements in Sudan such as the Islamist National Front- ISF party**?
- 7.3. To what extent the geopolitical location of Sudan will fit for a surge to religious extremist terrorist elements?
- 7.4. It has been said that the influence of terrorism is expanding in the last 10 years in the Sahel region, following the Arab Spring specifically, with instability in Libya in the post-Gadafi era. Do you agree with this assertion and why?
- 7.5. If you agree, how do you think the proliferation of terrorism in the Sahel region affect Sudan? is there any probability to overrun Sudan and create a link with the terrorist

cells operating in Egypt and Somalia, given the instability in Sudan, S. Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and partly in Ethiopia?

8. Do you think **armed resistance groups** in Ethiopia will be joining one of the warring factions in Sudan and engage in the war in Sudan in one way or the other? If yes, how? What are the possible scenarios in the relation between Ethiopia's armed groups vis a vis the Sudanese conflict?
9. There are dual lines of arguments over the impact of the Sudanese conflict on **GERD**. There are groups that considers the Sudanese conflict as a blessing in disguise for Ethiopia to deescalate the tension over GERD. Whereas, others argue that the instability in Sudan and the civil war will close the door for negotiated solution and open the door for destructive approaches of the stakeholders (Egypt and Sudan) that ultimately undermine the security of the sub region in general and Ethiopia in particular. What is your take in this regard?
10. On the same note, how do you treat/see the impact of the **border contention** to Ethiopia's security given the continuation of the Sudanese conflict unabated?
11. What are the impacts of the Sudanese conflict from the point **of migration**?
 - ✚ Ethiopia has quite a sufficient number of Ethiopians in Sudan
 - ✚ Similarly, huge number of Sudanese refugees are flooding to Ethiopia and reside in camps not far from the border, in a place susceptible to active conflicts
 - ✚ There are also Ethiopia refugees of different status fleeing to Sudan during the Northern conflict

የሱዳን ዴሞክራሲ ሃላፊ በመሆን በዋናው መስሪያ ቤትና በሱዳን የኢትዮጵያ ኤምባሲ ካገለገሉት ከአቶ አምሳሉ ሃቴ ጋር ለተደረገ የስልክና የጽሑፍ መረጃ ልውውጥ የተዘጋጁ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

“The Sudan Crisis: its impact on the National Security of Ethiopia” በሚል ርዕስ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የሰላምና ደኅንነት ኢንስቲትዩት ለሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ማሙያ እየሰራሁት ላለው የመመሪያ ጽሑፍ የሚያግዝ መረጃ/ዳታ ለማሰባሰብ የተዘጋጀ የቃለ-መጠይቅ guide:

የጥናታዊ ጽሑፍ ዓላማ ከርዕሱ እንደምንገነዘበው በፖለቲካዊ ለውጥ/ሪፎርም ሽግግር ላይ የምትገኘው ኢትዮጵያ ሰፊ ድንበር በምትጋራት ጎረቤት አገር ሱዳን በተነሳው የእርስ በእርስ ውጊያ ምክንያት የሚያጋጥማት የብሄራዊ ደህንነት ስጋቶችና ተጋላጭነቶችን መተንተን ነው። ለዚህ ስራ ግብዓት የሚሆን መረጃ ለማሰባሰብ በጥናታዊ ጽሑፍ ርዕስ ላይ በቂ መረጃና ልምድ ካላቸው ተቋማትና ግለሰቦች አመቺ በሆነ መልኩ መጠይቅ ማዘጋጀት አስፈላጊ ሆኗል።

የተከበሩ የዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ መላሽም ለዚህ ዓላማ ተባባሪ ሆነው በተነሱት ጥያቄዎች እና ይጠቅማል በሚሏቸው ሌሎች ተጓዳኝ ጉዳዮች ላይ ለሚሰጡት ግብዓት ከወዲሁ አክብሮቴን ለመግለጽ እወዳለሁ። በመመሪያ ጽሑፍም ሆነ በማንኛውም ሁኔታ ማንነትዎ እንዳይገለጽ የሚፈልጉ ከሆነ የጥናታዊ ጽሑፍ አዘጋጅ ይህን ሚስጥራዊነት የመጠበቅ ሃላፊነቱን የሚወጣ ይሆናል።

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መነሻ ጥያቄዎች:-

1. በሱዳን እየቀጠለ ያለው የፖለቲካ ቀውስ በኢትዮጵያን ብሄራዊ ደህንነት ላይ ምን ዓይነት ተጽዕኖ ይኖረዋል ብለው ያስባሉ?
2. ለአሁኑ የሱዳን ቀውስ መቀስቀስ መሰረታዊ (root cause) የመጨረሻ (Immediate cause) መነሻ ምክንያቶች ምንድን ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?
3. በሱዳን ቀውስ ተዋንያን ናቸው ብለው የሚያስቧቸው የውጭ ሃይሎች (አገራትና ድርጅቶች)አሉ ወይ?

ካሉስ

- 3.1. የሃይል አሰላለፋቸውና ፍላጎታቸው/interest) ምንድን ነው?
- 3.2. የእነዚህ አካላት ተሳትፎ በሱዳን መረጋጋትና ሰላም ላይ ምን ተጽእኖ ይኖረዋል?
- 3.3. በሱዳን ሰላም ለማምጣት በሚደረገው የድርድር ጥረት ላይ እነዚህ አካላት የሚኖራቸው ሚና አዎንታዊ ወይስ አሉታዊ ይሆናል ብለው ያስባሉ? በምን ምክንያት?
- 3.4. የእነዚህ የውጭ አካላት በሱዳን የሚያደርጉት ጣልቃ ገብነት ለኢትዮጵያ ምን እንድምታ ይኖረዋል?
- 3.5. ኢትዮጵያ በሱዳን ቀውስ ያላት አቋምና ፍላጎት ምንድን ነው?
- 3.6. ኢትዮጵያ የሱዳን ቀውስ እየቀጠለ በሄደ ቁጥርና የሌሎች አካላትን አሰላለፍ የሚያመጣውን ውጤት መሰረት በማድረግ የአቋም ለውጥ ታደርጋለች/ከሁለቱ አንዱን የምትወግንበት አጋጣሚ ይኖራል ወይ?
- 4. የሱዳን ቀውስ ወይስ ሊያመራ ይችላል? ምን ዓይነት ቢሆኖች (possible scenarios) ይኖራሉ?
- 5. ከእነዚህ ቢሆኖች በመነሳት ምን ዓይነት ስጋትና ተጋላጭነት በኢትዮጵያ ሊያመጡ ይችላሉ?
- 6. የኢትዮጵያ እና ሱዳን ግንኙነት (ፖለቲካ/ዲፕሎማሲ፣ ኢኮኖሚ፣ የህዝብ ለህዝብ) ምን ፋይዳ አለው? ከሱዳን ለውጥ እንዲሁም ከአሁኑ ጦርነት በፊትና በኋላ ግንኙነቱ ምን መልክ ይዟል ማለት ይቻላል?
 - 6.1. ምን ዓይነት የውጭ ግንኙነት ፖሊሲ አቅጣጫዎች አሉ? የpolicy changes and continuities አሉን ወይ?
 - 6.2. ግንኙነቱን ለማሳለጥ በሁለቱ አገራት መካከል የነበሩት እንደ ድንበር ኮሚሽን ያሉ ሜካኒዝሞች ምን ነበሩ? ምን ውጤት ስንባራቸው?
 - 6.3. ግንኙነቱ አገራችን ከምታራምደው የregional integration scheme አንጻር እንዴት ይታያል?
- 7. በሱዳን ቀውስ ምክንያት የድንበር ዘለል ህገወጥ የወንጀል ኔትዎርክ በህገ-ወጥ ፋይናንስ ፣ ጦር መሳሪያ፣ የሰውና አደገኛ ዕጽ ዝውውር ወንጀሎች ሊሰፋፉ ይችላሉ ብለው ያስባሉ? አዎ ከሆነ መልስዎ እንዴት?
- 8. የሱዳን ጦርነት መቀጠል የሽብርና የኃይማኖት አክራሪነት በሱዳን ብሎም በቀጠናው እንዲስፋፋ ያደርገዋል ብለው ያስባሉ? አዎ ከሆነ መልስዎ
 - 8.1. ለሽብርተኝነትና ለሃይማኖት አክራሪነት መስፋፋት ምን ዓይነት ምቹ ሁኔታ አለ?
 - 8.2. እንደ Islamic National Front (ISF) ያሉ እስላማዊ ፓርቲዎች ለዚህ የሚኖራቸው አስተዋጽኦ/ሚና ምን ይሆን?
 - 8.3. የሱዳን ጅሖ-ፖለቲካዊ አቀማመጥ ለሃይማኖታዊ አክራሪነትና ለሽብርተኝነት መስፋፋት ምን አስተዋጽኦ ይኖረዋል?
 - 8.4. ባለፉት 10 ዓመታት ከአረብ አብዮት በኋላ እና ከሊቢያ መፈረካከስ በኋላ የሽብርተኝነት አድማስ በተለይም በሰሃል ቀጠና እየጨመረ ስለመምጣቱ አንዳንድ ጥናቶች ያሳያሉ። በዚህ አባባል የእርስዎ ምልክታ ምንድን ነው?

8.5. በሰሃል ቀጠና ያሉት የሽብር ቡድኖች በደቡብ ሱዳን፣ የመን፣ ሱዳንና በሶማሊያ ካለው አለመረጋጋት ጋር ተዳምሮ በሶማሊያ ካሉት አልሸባብና አይኤስ አይ ኤስ ጋር የመቀናጀት ዕድል ሊኖረው ይችላል ወይ?

9. በኢትዮጵያ የትጥቅ ትግል እያደረጉ ያሉት (በአማራና ኦሮሚያ ክልል) ቡድኖች በሱዳን ካሉት ከሁለቱ ተፋላሚዎች ካንዱ ጋር ወዳጅነት ሊፈጥሩ የሚችሉበት ዕድል አለ ወይ? ካለ ቢገልጹልኝ።

በምን አይነት አጋጣሚ (Scenario) መሰል አሰላለፍ ሊፈጠር ይችላል?

10. የሱዳን ቀውስ ባለበት ሁኔታ መቀጠሉ በታላቁ የህዳሴ ግድብ ግንባታና በአባይ ውሃ አጠቃቀም ላይ ለኢትዮጵያ የሚኖረው እጅግ ወይስ ጫና ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?

11. በተመሳሳይ የሱዳን ቀውስ መቀጠሉ በአወዛጋቢ የኢትዮ-ሱዳን ድንበር ጉዳይ ለኢትዮጵያ የሚኖረው እንድምታ አሉታዊ/አዎንታዊ ነው?

12.

- ኢትዮጵያ በርካታ ቁጥር ያለው ስደተኛ በሱዳን አላት።
- በተመሳሳይ በርካታ ቁጥር ያለው የሱዳን ስደተኛ ወደ ኢትዮጵያ ገብቷል።
- በሰሜኑ የአገራችን ግጭት ወቅት ወደ ሱዳን የፈለሱ “ስደተኞች”ም እንዳሉ ይታወቃል።

ከዚህ አንጻር ከማይግሬሽን አኳያ የሱዳን ቀውስ ለኢትዮጵያ ምን ዳፋ ይኖረዋል?

ሌሎች ሊያገሩኝ የሚፈቅዱት ምልክታዎችም ካለዎት-----

ውድ ጊዜዎን ሰጥተው መረጃውን ስለሰጡኝ ከወዲሁ አመሰግናለሁ።

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ከግጭቱ መቀስቀስ እና ከኤምባሲው መዘጋት በፊት በሱዳን የኢትዮጵያ አምባሳደር ከነበሩት ከአምባሳደር ይበልጣል አዕምሮ ጋር ለተደረገው ቃለ-ምልልስ መነሻ የጥያቄዎች


1. የኢትዮ-ሱዳን ግንኙነት ያለፈበትን ዝቅታዎችና ከፍታዎች (ups and downs) በወፍ በረር/ በአጭሩ እንዴት ያዩታል?

- የግንኙነቱ ፈታኝ ሁኔታዎች በአመዛኙ የሚመነጨው ከድንበር፣ አባይ ውሃ፣ ቀይ ባህር ጋር በተገናኘ እንደሆነ ይገለጻል። ከዚህ አኳያ የግብፅ፣ አረቦችና የኃያላን አገራት ሚና እና አሰላለፍ በግንኙነቱ ላይ ያላቸውን አስተዋጽኦ እንዴት ያዩታል?
- የኢትዮጵያ ውጭ ግንኙነት ፖሊሲ ሱዳንን በምን መልክ ያያታል? ባለፉት ጊዜያት እና በአሁኑ መንግስት የቀጠሉና የተለወጡ ነገሮች አሉ ወይ? በተለይ ከደቡብ ሱዳን መገንጠል በፊት ኢትዮጵያ የሱዳን ታጣቂ ሃይሎችን የደገፈችው ሱዳንን ለማዳከም እና የበላይነቷን ለማስከበር ነበር ወይ? ወይስ በሱዳን የነበሩት መንግስታትን ለማለዘብና አቋም ለማስቀየር? ከሱዳን መንግስት የሚመነጭ ምን ስጋትስ ነበራት? ምን ነበር ትክክለኛ ምክንያቷ?

2. በሱዳን የቀጠለው ግጭት ለኢትዮጵያ የአጭር እና የረጅም ጊዜ ጉዳትና ጠቀሜታ አለው ብሎ መናገር ይቻላል ወይ? የእርስዎ ምልክታ ምንድን ነው?

3. የኢትዮጵያና ሱዳን ግንኙነትን ለማጠናከር ምን ዓይነት የትብብር ማዕቀፎች አሉ?

- ስምምነቶች?
- forums (dialogue arrangements)
- regional integration projects/schemes including border trade

 የትብብር ማዕቀፎቹ ያስገኙት ውጤት፣ የገጠማቸው እክልና በተለይ በአሁኑ የሱዳን ግጭት ወቅት ያሉበት ሁኔታና ወደ ፊት የሚኖራቸው ዕጣ ፋንታስ ምንድን ነው?

4. በአጠቃላይ በሱዳን እየቀጠለ ያለው ጦርነት

- ከድንበር ንግድ፣
- ቀጠናዊ ትስስር (infrastructural connectivity-road, rail and air), energy connectivity (electricity export, oil import) አንጻር፣
- ከስደተኞች (በእኛም አገር እየገቡ ካሉትና፣ በሱዳን ከሚኖሩ የቆዩ የአገራችን ስደተኞች አኳያ፣ በቅርቡ ከማይካድራና አካባቢው እንዲሁም ከአብዬ የሰላም አስከባሪነት ወደ ሱዳን ከገቡ ኢትዮጵያውያን) አንጻር፣
- ከውጭ ሃይሎች ጣልቃ ገብነት (በተለይም የተለያዩ ጥቅምና አሰላለፍ ካላቸው የሃያላንና የmiddle powers፣ ከጎረቤት አገራት፣ በሱዳንም ሆነ በኢትዮጵያ ካሉ የታጠቁ ሃይሎች) አንጻር፣
- ቀድሞም ከነበሩት ድንበር ዘለል ወንጀሎች (የሰዎችና የመሳሪያ ዝውውር፣ ኮንትራባንድ ወዘተ አንጻር፣

- በድንበር አካባቢ ካሉ እንደ ሰሊጥ ያሉ strategic crops እና ሰፊ የግብርና ኢንቨስትመንት ፍላጎቶች በተለይ በአረብ አገራት የ2030 ዕቅድ አኳያ በኢትዮጵያ ላይ ምን የብሄራዊ ደህንነት ስጋት ይኖራቸዋል?

ከአፍሪካ ጉዳዮች ዳይሬክተር ጄኔራል ከቡር አምባሳደር ዘራሁን አበበ ጋር ለተገረገ ቃለ መጠይቅ ጥቅም ላይ የዋሉ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

1. የኢትዮ-ሱዳን ያለፈበትን ዝቅታዎችና ከፍታዎች (ups and downs) በወፍ በረር/ በአጭሩ እንዴት ያዩታል?
 - የግንኙነቱ ፈታኝ ሁኔታዎች በአመዛኙ የሚመነጨው ከድንበር፣ አባይ ውሃ፣ ቀይ ባህር ጋር በተገናኘ መሆኑ ይታወቃል። ከዚህ አኳያ የግብፅ፣ አረቦችና የኃያላን አገራት ሚና እና አሰላለፍ በግንኙነቱ ላይ ያላቸውን አስተዋጽኦ እንዴት ያዩታል?
 - የኢትዮጵያ ውጭ ግንኙነት ፖሊሲ ሱዳንን በምን መልክ ያያታል? ባለፉት ጊዜያት እና በአሁኑ መንግስት የቀጠሉና የተለወጡ ነገሮች አሉ ወይ? በተለይ ከደቡብ ሱዳን መገንጠል በፊት የሱዳን ታጣቂ ሃይሎችን ሱዳንን ለማዳከም እና የበላይነቷን ለማስከበር ነበር ወይ የምትደግፍ? ወይስ መንግስቱን ለማለዘብ? ምን ነበር ትክክለኛ ምክንያቷ?
2. በሱዳን የቀጠለው ግጭት ለኢትዮጵያ የአጭር እና የረጅም ጊዜ ጉዳትና ጠቀሜታ አለው ብሎ መናገር ይቻላል ወይ? የኢትዮጵያ ውጭ ጉዳይ ሚኒስቴር ምልክታ ምንድን ነው?
 - በተለይ በአባይ ግድብ ጉዳይ ከግብጽ ጋር ሆኖ በኢትዮጵያ ላይ የምታደርገውን የተቀናጀ ጫና ያስቀረዋል፤
 - በተለይ በአልቡርሃን መሪነት የአልፋቪቃ አካባቢን የመቆጣጠር፣ የኢትዮጵያ አርሶ አደሮችን በማፈናቀል ቀጥታ የኢኮኖሚ ጉዳት፣ የሉዓላዊነት መድፈር፣ የውስጥ ፖለቲካ ጫና መፍጠር የመሳሰሉ ጉዳዮችን እንዲቀሩ ያደርጋል፤
 - ሱዳን በሃገሪቱ ያሉ ኢትዮጵያውያን “ስደተኞችን” ማዕከል ያደረገ የደህንነት ስጋት በኢትዮጵያ እንዳይደቅን ያደርገዋል፤ ወዘተ የሚሉ አመክንዮዎች ይነሳሉ። በእርስዎ በኩል ይህን ጉዳይ እንዴት ይመለከቱታል? የመንግስት አቋምስ ምንድን ነው?
3. የኢትዮጵያና ሱዳን ግንኙነትን ለማጠናከር ምን ዓይነት የትብብር ማዕቀፎች አሉ?
 - agreements
 - forums (dialogue arrangements such as the border commission)
 - regional integration projects/schemes including border trade

✚ የትብብር ማዕቀፎቹ ያስገኙት ውጤት፣ የገጠማቸው እክልና በተለይ በአሁኑ የሱዳን ግጭት ወቅት ያሉበት ሁኔታና ወደ ፊት የሚኖራቸው ዕጣ ፋንታስ ምንድን ነው?
4. በአጠቃላይ በሱዳን እየቀጠለ ያለው ጦርነት
 - ከድንበር ንግድ፣
 - ቀጠናዊ ትስስር (infrastructural connectivity-road, rail and air), energy connectivity (electricity export, oil import) አንጻር፣

- ከስደተኞች (በእኛም አገር እየገቡ ካሉትና፣ በሱዳን ከሚኖሩ የቆዩ የአገራችን ስደተኞች አኳያ፣ በቅርቡ ከማይካድራና አካባቢው እንዲሁም ከአብዬ የሰላም አስከባሪነት ወደ ሱዳን የገቡ ኢትዮጵያውያን) አንጻር፣
- ከውጭ ሃይሎች ጣልቃ ገብነት (በተለይም የተለያዩ ጥቅምና አሰላለፍ ካላቸው የሃያላንና የmiddle powers፣ ከአፍሪካ የጎረቤት አገራት፣ በሱዳንም ሆነ በኢትዮጵያ ካሉ የታጠቁ ሃይሎች) አንጻር፣
- ቀድሞም ከነበሩት ድንበር ዘለል ወንጀሎች (የሰዎችና የመሳሪያ ዝውውር፣ ኮንትራባንድ ወዘተ አንጻር፣
- በድንበር አካባቢ ካሉ እንደ ሰሊጥ ያሉ strategic crops እና ሰፊ የግብርና ኢንቨስትመንት ፍላጎቶች በተለይ በአረብ አገራት የ2030 ዕቅድ አኳያ በኢትዮጵያ ላይ ምን የብሄራዊ ደህንነት ስጋት ይኖራቸዋል?

5. በተለይ በቀድሞዋ ዛፍ የአሁኑ DRC ላይ ከየቀጠለው የግጭት አዙሪት ሱዳንን ማዕከል ያደረገ ቀጠናውን የሚያውክ ቀውስ ሊፈጠር የሚችልበት ዕድል ይኖራል ወይ? ለማስታወስ ያህል

- በታላቁ ሃይቅ ቀጠና (great lakes region) የተፈጠረው ዓይነት ወይም በቀዝቃዛው ጦርነት ወቅት በአፍሪካ ቀንድ የተከሰተው ዓይነት ዓለም አቀፋዊ ይዘት የተላበሰ ክልላዊ ግጭት የመፈጠር ዕድል ይኖራል ወይ? በምን አግባብ?