

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7384>



Sudan

Behind the coup in Sudan

- IV Online magazine - 2021 - IV562 - November 2021 -

Publication date: Friday 5 November 2021

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General Abdel Fattah al-Burhane has just put an end to the transitional process resulting from the 2018 revolution that overthrew Omar al-Bashir. This coup d'état is accompanied by a ferocious repression of protesters, opposition activists and civil society. More than a hundred people had been injured and ten killed by 31 October.

The generals do not want a democratic transition in Sudan. They have too much to lose. Indeed, the military hierarchy has taken over most of the country's wealth and businesses. The military top brass was not happy with the civilian government's interference in their affairs. Already, bank boards have been dissolved. The Sudanese Commission for the Dismantling of the Ingaz Regime (that is al-Bashir's regime) was beginning to expose major misappropriations of funds.

As for Mohamed Hamdan Dogolo, known as Hemidt, one of Sudan's strongmen, he was opposed to the integration of his paramilitary structure, the Rapid Support Forces, into the army, as proposed by the civilian authorities. With 60,000 men, this militia is financed from human trafficking rackets, the control of gold mines, or mercenaries in Yemen for Saudi Arabia.

In addition, there was concern in the army that justice, whether national or the International Criminal Court, would catch up with senior officers who were guilty of war crimes in different parts of Sudan - notably Darfur.

Finally, the signing of a peace agreement in 2020 with the two leaders of the armed rebellion, Mini Minawi and Djibril Ibrahim, allowed an alliance between them and the army. Thus, their militias now participate in the repression.

Disappointing civilian government

To justify their putsch, the generals are trying to capitalize on the very real popular discontent. Indeed, Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok, under the injunctions of the IMF, has pursued a policy of austerity in order to pay the arrears of debt and thus benefit from the ["Heavily Indebted Poor Countries \(HIPC\) Initiative"](#).

The measures taken, such as the abolition of energy subsidies and the reduction of budgetary expenditure, have increased the precariousness of the majority of Sudanese and eroded the popularity of the Prime Minister and his team.

The economic situation worsened considerably with the month-long blockade of Port Sudan, the country's main source of supply, organized by Mohammed el-Amin Tirik, leader of the Beja tribe. Many consider that he was instrumentalized by the army leadership. It is certainly no coincidence that Amin Tirik has just given his support to the generals.

The irony is that this tribe has suffered for decades, like many others, from the marginalization orchestrated by the very people who made the coup.

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhane thus managed to strengthen his position by allying himself with Hemidt and winning over the rebel leaders Mini Minawi and Djibril Ibrahim. Their departure from the civilian government is not a surprise.

For several months they had been demanding better representation in government structures.

Western hypocrisy and popular mobilization

Although the leaders of Western countries have condemned the coup, they are partly responsible for it by supporting the IMF policy. The IMF's policy has only worsened the economic conditions of the majority of Sudanese and has favoured Abdel Fattah al-Burhane's takeover. It should be noted that he was supported by Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, loyal allies of the US in the region.

The coup d'état will be defeated above all by popular resistance. The general strike is being massively followed and despite the repression, the participation in the demonstrations is strong as shown by the hundreds of thousands of Sudanese who took to the streets last Saturday to demand a 100% civilian government.

4 November 2021

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