



First war crimes complaint against UAE-backed Sudan paramilitary filed in Kenya

Description

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Rapid Support Forces

The UAE-backed Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been accused of genocide, massacres and sexual violence. Sudan's civil war has raged for three years with the backing of foreign and regional powers. Now survivors have filed the first war crimes complaint in Kenya.

Twelve victims backed by a Swiss legal NGO urged Kenya's chief of prosecution to pursue the case. *Associated Press* (AP) [reported](#) on 9 June:

It is the first attempt to prosecute members of the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, the paramilitary group fighting against the Sudanese military for over three years, outside Sudan.

[Adding that](#)

The group, which has been accused by rights organizations of committing atrocities amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, has ties with Kenya's government.

[AP said](#)

Kenyan President William Ruto has previously hosted RSF leader Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo for talks that he said were aimed at advancing peace efforts in Sudan, a move that sparked diplomatic tensions.

The twelve survivors are working with the Switzerland-based NGO Legal Action Worldwide. Their testimony [details](#)

torture and sexual violence committed by RSF members at various locations in and around Khartoum between April 2023 and March 2025 when the Sudanese capital was controlled by the paramilitaries.

The charges against RSF [included](#) that their victims:

were held in inhumane conditions, with little or no food, limited access to water, and inadequate sanitation facilities. They allege that they were beaten, burned, suffocated, subjected to electric shocks, and sexually abused, including through rape.

[Additionally](#)

Some were reportedly [forced](#) to transport dead bodies from detention facilities.

RSF is backed by the UAE but many other nations [have](#) made the war worse through active participation or through humanitarian inaction.

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Rapid Support Forces and Sudan's ongoing foreign-backed civil war

The RSF, backed by the UAE, is fighting the Sudanese government, with [gold interests](#) and regional influence at stake.

Numerous foreign actors, [including the UK](#) have caused the war to fester through active participation and/or outright passivity. Israel, too, is a [player in the war](#)

The war in Sudan is theoretically between the Arab-majority [RSF](#) and the Sudanese government. But foreign states pursuing [their own interests](#) are backing the combatants.

[Turkey](#) [Egypt](#) and many more countries are pursuing their own interests in Sudan too. British military components have also [shown up](#) on the battlefield in RSF hands. The UK is a major arms supplier to UAE.

The RSF has killed Sudanese civilians in vast numbers. Some [estimates](#) say 150,000 people have died and more than 10 million civilians have been displaced by fighting.

Sources have also [claimed](#) the UK downgraded the situation in Sudan to avoid [pissing off the Emiratis](#).*.

Drone war over Sudan

Drones have been [a major feature](#) of the war. Both [RSF](#) and [Sudanese government forces](#) have deployed them. On 9 June government forces engaged RSF drones over the capital Khartoum. The *Sudan Tribune* [reported](#)

Military sources said a Rapid Support Forces (RSF) drone attempted to bomb military sites northwest of Omdurman before ground defences intercepted it and prevented it from reaching its targets.

The same sources said air defences also engaged strategic drones in East Nile, with no casualties reported.

A recent UN report [said](#) drones were a serious threat to life and limb in the war:

Drones caused more than 80 per cent of civilian deaths in Sudan's war during the first four months of 2026, killing at least 880 people.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk [condemned](#) both sides for their use of unmanned aerial weapons:

Armed drones have now become by far and away the leading cause of civilian deaths.

And the Ayin investigative network [reported](#) that clashes between local people and RSF allies in Sudan's south have resulted in a village being burned:

violence last month killed at least 61 civilians, including women and children, who were targeted during clashes between the [RSF-aligned] SPLM-N, led by Abdel Aziz al-Hilu and the Ottoro tribe in Kauda.

Part of the conflict is [due to](#)

the Ottoro's refusal to allow the SPLM-N-allied Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to mine in their area.

The [submission](#) of a first official war crimes complaint is a good sign. Yet lawyers [say](#) allegations are hard to corroborate in a country gripped by war and devastation. A semblance of peace and justice for Sudan in this foreign-backed war may still be a long way off.

Featured image via Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

By [Joe Glenton](#)

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