

**Democratic Transition in Sudan:  
Challenges, Opportunities and Future  
Prospects**

**Prepared by**



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## **Abstract**

The Sudanese transitional government, which came to power after the fall of Al-Bashir regime, faces many challenges related to the nature of its composition and the ongoing conflicts between its parties, the poor economic conditions, the continuous external interference in Sudan's affairs, and the difficulties of sustaining peace. On the other hand, it has many opportunities, including the broad popular base, in addition to international and regional support. The future of the democratic transition in Sudan depends on the ability of the transitional government to take advantage of the opportunities, and its ability to overcome difficulties and face the challenges.

**Key words:** Transitional government Armed Forces, Forces of Freedom and Change, Peace, Transitional Justice.

## **Introduction:**

After thirty years of military rule in Sudan (1989 AD - 2019 AD), the revolution that began on the thirteenth of December 2018 succeeded in overthrowing the regime of President Omar al-Bashir on the eleventh of April 2019, to start a new phase in the history of Sudan. political.

Since its independence on January 1, 1956, Sudan has witnessed three democratic experiments, three military coups, and four transitional periods. The stage of national rule began with a short democratic experiment that lasted less than three years, after which the military, led by Lieutenant-General Ibrahim Abboud, seized power on November 17, 1958 and continued to rule the country for six years, but a massive popular revolution overthrew them in October From 1964 AD and restored democratic rule, which continued in what was known as the second democracy.

On the twenty-fifth of May 1969, the army overthrew again under the leadership of Colonel (at the time) Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri, who ruled the country for sixteen years, so that the people again staged a new uprising and uprooted the second military government on the sixth of April 1985 AD.

The fall of the Nimeiri regime was followed by the third democratic stage, which lasted for about three years, after which the military pounced for the third time against the elected democratic government led by Brigadier General (at that day) Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir on June 30, 1989 AD, which continued in power for thirty years until the people revolted against him and were able to remove him from power. Judgment on the eleventh of April 2019.

Despite the multiplicity of transitional governments in Sudan, the current transitional period is different by all standards if compared to other transitional periods in the modern history of Sudan, where the current transitional government faces more complex situations than all previous transitional periods, due to several reasons,

including: The structure of the government itself, the ongoing conflicts between its parties, the nature of the tasks it seeks to achieve, the fragile economic, social and security conditions that it inherited from the Bashir regime, as well as the intense regional and international interventions in Sudanese affairs.

Based on the foregoing, the main question of the paper is to what extent is the transitional government able to confront the challenges of the democratic transition and to exploit the opportunities available to it to bring Sudan to the desired stage of democratic transition? Sub-questions branch from this main question: What is meant by democratic transition? Gesticulate

The challenges facing the democratic transition process in Sudan, and what are the chances of the current transitional government in overcoming these challenges? What are the prospects and future of the democratic transition in Sudan in light of these challenges and opportunities?

### **Objectives and importance of the paper:**

The paper aims to shed light on the challenges facing the transitional government of Sudan and the opportunities available to it, with the aim of contributing to drawing up a road map that enables addressing the serious challenges facing the democratic transition, and investing the opportunities available to the transitional government to enhance the chances of democratic transition in Sudan.

The importance of the paper comes from the fact that it seeks to contribute to solving a problem related to the fate of governance in Sudan, since the failure to reach the transitional period to its goals and the establishment of democratic rule would wreck the political stability of the country due to the intense ethnic conflicts that prevail in all its parties without exception. The paper stems from the fact that it seeks to contribute to presenting a scientific vision that contributes to the desired democratic transformation and the country's avoidance of conflicts and civil war.

### **Research Methodology and Suggested Entrances:**

The study is based on the democratic transition approach; And due to the nature of the subject, the researcher uses a set of approaches such as the historical approach in order to extrapolate historical events and know their impact on the development of political and social events in Sudan. Also, the analytical approach with the aim of exploring the challenges facing the democratic transition in Sudan and the opportunities available to it, as well as the forward-looking approach to clarify the hidden challenges that may arise from the complex conditions of reality in Sudan and the nature of the intertwined relations between its political, military and security forces, and the intense regional interference in its internal affairs .

### **Study division:**

The research was divided into an introduction, three axes and a conclusion, as follows:

The first axis: the theoretical framework of the study

Theme Two: Challenges and Opportunities for the Democratic Transition in Sudan

The third axis: prospects and future of the democratic transition in Sudan.

### **First: The theoretical framework of the study**

Delving into this topic requires discussing the concept of democratic transition, and distinguishing between it and related terms such as democratic transition, democratic consolidation, and others. Civil society in accelerating and strengthening the democratic transition.

Perhaps it is necessary, before going into the literature of democratization and the various schools in this regard, that we begin with the linguistic definition of transfer, as it came in Lisan Al-Arab by Ibn Manzur that “transfer: transferring something from one place to another, transferring it, transferring it by transferring it, then moving. And mobility: transformation”) Ibn Manzur, D. T.: 4529), as stated in it: a shift: move from one place to another, and the shift is the movement from one place to another, and the name is the term, and from it the Almighty’s saying: “They will abide in it and do not seek it for a year” (previous source, 1056). Thus, it is clear that there is a synonym between transition and transformation from a linguistic point of view, but from a terminological point of view, scholars distinguish between democratic transition and democratic transformation, and they see that democratic transition necessarily precedes the process of democratic transformation, and that the process of transition to democratic rule includes three basic stages, as follows: the following:

1. The phase of weakness of the old regime and the emergence of a reformist wing from within or opposition from outside calling for political reform.
2. The stage of the ruling regime initiating reforms by adopting some open-ended steps.
3. The stage of the real transition to democracy and the striving to consolidate its rules and institutions (Al Boshi, 2018: 9).

According to Abdel Fattah Madi, there are several entrances to democratic transition, including: the transition from colonial rule to national democratic rule directly, as in the cases of India and Malaysia, the gradual transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, reform from above led by reformists from within the system itself, and the transition due to the collapse of authoritarian regimes The establishment of democratic regimes in their place, and the transition through external interference

through diplomatic and intelligence pressures, or through direct military intervention (Madhi, 2015: 21-17).

There are those who believe that the democratic transition has occurred and is happening all over the world in one of three ways. It either comes from above when the regime seeks on its own to implement reforms, and the (soft faction) begins in power.

(Soft-line) calling for tolerance of greater freedom of the press, opposing arbitrary imprisonment, introducing some formal democratic procedures such as calling for elections with limited participation, or allowing the formation of civil society organizations and other measures (Schmitter).

The shift may take place from the bottom up, as happened in Venezuela following the intensification of internal pressures on the political system, which led to the end of the regime, and opened the door to liberal democracy and the establishment of an elected government, and as happened in Sudan in October 1964 and April 1985.

The transformation may occur with the convergence of the interests of the ruling authority and the opposing forces, when the two parties realize the importance of shifting to a new square, and this happened in South Africa due to the convergence of the interests of the capitalists: white and black, especially in their efforts to pressure the racist government in order to lift restrictions on black labor because of the need for capitalism. To this employment, in addition to the international and regional pressures on the two sides, forcing them to converge on the goal of democratic transformation based on equality between whites and blacks.

After the democratic transition and democratic transition comes the stage of democratic consolidation, which refers to the realization of democracy and the rooting of democratic mechanisms and culture in society ((Rustow, 1970:361; and with waves of transition towards democracy, but these democratic waves are usually faced with opposite waves, which leads in Sometimes it leads to widespread setbacks from democracy (Huntington, 1991).

There are thinkers, as well, who argue that the growth and rooting of democracy in society is largely related to the political culture prevailing in the concerned society. For example, Almond and Verba believe that democracy requires the existence of a value system that protects it and supports its path and contributes to promoting broad political participation by citizens (Almond and Verba, 1965), and there are also those who say that there is a direct relationship between the economic situation and the consolidation of democracy, the more the economic conditions improve in the state, the more democratic and stable the state is in government (Lipset, 1959). On the other hand, some thinkers rely on the role of the elite in the stability of the democratic system, and they believe that elite unity usually leads to a stable democratic system,

and on the contrary, a divided national elite leads to an unstable political system, and opens the door to external forces to interfere in the internal affairs of the state, and may have provided it with a favorable opportunity to overthrow the existing political system (Higley and Burton, 1988).

Some thinkers have relied on the pivotal role of civil society in achieving democracy and consolidating its institutions. They have emphasized that strong civil societies are those that are characterized by broader networks of interaction between individuals in society, and a greater acceptance of personal freedom and individual rights; And that a strong civil society will allow a greater opportunity for democracy to be successful, long-term and capable of facing challenges, and to the same extent, the application of democratic principles strengthens civil society and creates the necessary conditions for its success (Whitehead, 2002).

Some thinkers concluded that among the obstacles to the democratic transition are the political ambition of the army, a state apparatus that opposes the democratic transition, the failure of the people's high expectations, chaos, and uncontrolled competition; And that the strategic importance of the state increases the possibilities of the external factor in obstructing the transition; On the other hand, the democratic culture of the ruling elites, the flexibility of these elites, their ability to bargain and reach compromise solutions, their commitment to democracy, and their ability to overcome their differences are decisive factors during the democratic transition phase (Bishara, 2020:558).

## **Second: Challenges of the democratic transition in Sudan:**

The fall of the regime of Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir and the country's entry into a new transitional phase (1) does not necessarily mean reaching the desired democratic transition. The Arab movement in 2011, for example, witnessed setbacks and setbacks, and the democratic transition process failed completely. In a number of countries that witnessed widespread popular movements aimed at overthrowing the ruling regimes and establishing democratic regimes, peoples were able to uproot dictatorial regimes in some countries, yet they were unable to complete the democratic transition project, as happened in Libya and Yemen, while peoples failed to uproot some regimes. The ruling regime is despite the opposition's determination, as in Syria, due to the Russian support for the regime. Some Arab thinkers have described these cases, whose revolutions were not completed, as representing "disappointments" for the revolutionaries (Belkeziz, 2012). Azmi Bishara also dealt with cases of apostasy that occurred in the Arab world, such as Syria, which "turned due to the regime's intransigence and rejection of reform and its brutal methods in the face of the popular civil movement, the opposition's loss of experience, and the sliding of armed movements to religious extremism, into a civil war with countless foreign interventions" (Abu Shouk,

18:2021). In fact, the transitional government in Sudan faces a number of challenges that it is feared that the efforts of the democratic transition will fail as a whole. In the following pages, the researcher will address the most important challenges facing the democratic transition in Sudan.

### **Challenges of democratic transition in Sudan:**

1. The nature of the composition of the transitional government and the ongoing disputes between its parties:

The researcher believes that the composition of the current transitional government represents the biggest obstacle to the democratic transition in Sudan. Since the early days of the fall of the regime, conflict has arisen between civilians and the military over the role of each party in the revolution and the consequent political entitlements. Civilians affirm the civility of the revolution, and that it succeeded due to the pressures exerted by the political forces against the regime for thirty years and was the reason for its continuous weakening until its fall in April. On the other hand, the military say that the army was the decisive factor in the change, and that its intervention spared the blood of the people, and that the coming period necessitates the presence of the army in the Sudanese political scene due to the fragility of the security conditions on the various outskirts of the country and inside the capital.

Some political analysts believe that this dilemma is rooted in the moment when the Forces of Freedom and Change (Qaht)[1] directed the demonstrators to gather in front of the General Command of the People's Armed Forces and asked the army leadership to side with the street.

They say that the belief that the army could remove the salvage system and then return to its barracks was wishful thinking (Syed Ahmed, January 4, 2021). However, in reality, civilians did not have many options, as the revolutionaries were unable to achieve a complete and decisive victory over the regime, which forced them to resort to the General Command with the aim of calling on the army to resolve the matter, but this step gave the armed forces the opportunity to resolve the matter in favor of the demonstrators, and then demand share in power.

In this regard, Azmi Bishara says, “We have the right to “suspect” that the General Command’s choice of a location for the sit-in included a bet on the army to help the revolution to get rid of Al-Bashir [...] It is assumed that the Sudanese political parties were aware that the army in Sudan is difficult to neutralize, and to persuade it to turn against Al-Bashir is more difficult than neutralizing him [...] It was not possible to bring down the regime in Sudan, as long as the army was surrounded by its president” (Abu Shouk, 25:2021).

During the formation of the transitional government, a dispute arose between the two parties over a number of points, and the most prominent aspects of the dispute

between them were the subordination of the security services, the immunity of members of the Sovereign Council, the subordination of the Ministry of Justice, and the distribution ratios.

1 The Legislative Council[1] During the negotiation, the dispute between the two parties became clear when General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, head of the Military Council, announced on the fifteenth of May 2019 the suspension of negotiations with the Forces of Freedom and Change for 72 hours, on the pretext that they were practicing provocation against the armed forces. express support, road closures; He stipulated, to return to negotiations, that the Forces of Freedom and Change remove the barricades, open roads and bridges, and stop the media escalation against the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper, May 16, 2019). The deadlock between the two parties was the reason for the situation of the barricades and the provocation of some of the youth elements of the army and the rapid support, and the aim of Al-Burhan's decision was to confirm that the army takes the initiative and directs events and can stop and resume negotiations according to its terms.

However, the prolonged negotiation period and the escalation of differences, accompanied by many popular concerns, forced the two parties to accept the African mediation, through which the two parties reached a political agreement on July 16, 2019. In this agreement, the two parties pledged to deal with "the principle of partnership, good faith, and to stop hostile and provocative rhetoric." [...] and the settlement of all disputes that may arise through dialogue and mutual respect" (Al-Jazeera Net, 17/7/2019 AD), and the agreement was followed by a phase of relative consensus that allowed the signing of the constitutional document on August 17, 2019 AD, that is, after more than four months after the fall of the regime.

During that stage, the conditions within the FFC declaration were no better than the situation between them and the military component. Ideas and positions varied between the components of the forces of freedom and change after the fall of the regime, and this was not excluded for several reasons. The primary goal and the unifying factor (The Unified Element), which formed a broad umbrella under which all these political forces gathered, but the fall of the regime itself was the cause of the demise of the unifying factor between these parties, and the fall of the regime itself created new political opportunities and economic gains that led to severe conflicts between Yesterday's allies, but tomorrow's conflict and rivalry is the feature that characterized the relationship between these forces.

Disagreements escalated within the Declaration of Freedom and Change Alliance, and one of its results was the Umma Party's announcement on April 22, 2020 AD that it would freeze its activities in all structures of the Declaration of Freedom and Change Forces coalition, arguing that "there are fundamental defects that appeared in

the performance of the tasks of the transitional government.. (And) turmoil in the The positions of the political leadership of the forces of freedom

And change, and a difference in the competencies of the transition institutions, and a violation of the constitutional document on which all the arrangements for the transitional period stand” (Adel Abdel Rahim, Anadolu Agency).

This was followed by the exit of the Sudanese Professionals Association from the coalition, as the group’s statement, which it published on its Facebook page, clarified that its withdrawal came due to the lack of commitment to the goals of the transitional phase, the confusion of the coalition’s performance, and the preference of the forces of freedom for narrow interests and tactical considerations over major strategic interests[...] Weak commitment to the stated goals of the transitional period (SdnProAssociation, 25 July 2020).

Later (November 2020 AD) the Sudanese Communist Party announced its withdrawal from Qaht, and the party said in its withdrawal statement, "After more than a year [...] our country is still facing the same crises and the transitional authority is working to reduce the space for freedoms and violate rights in an attempt to stop the tide The revolution, emptying the slogan of freedom, peace and justice from its content, confiscating the tools of change represented in the Legislative Council, local popular government, commissions and others, slowing down the achievement of justice, retribution for the martyrs, investigating the dispersal of the sit-in, trying the symbols of the former regime, while maintaining the laws restricting freedoms, and making agreements and alliances behind the back of our people. Al-Sudani newspaper, 7/11/2020 AD).

And if we consider what John Hegley and Michel emphasized about the role of the political elite uniting in a stable democratic system, and how the divided national elite leads to an unstable political system, we will realize the need for the political elite to agree in the transitional period in order to achieve the goals of the revolution. The dispute between the military and civil components, and the dispute between the civil forces affiliated with the banner of freedom and change, has wasted a lot of time and effort, and the challenge now is to compensate for the time that has passed from the life of the transitional period by intensifying work and moving forward to achieve the tasks of the transitional period in the remainder of the transitional period, time.

1. The multiplicity of tasks of the transitional period and the delay in completing the transitional institutions:

The tasks of the previous transitional periods were mostly limited to the population census, the distribution of electoral districts, the holding of elections, and then handing over power to the elected leaders of the people, but the current transitional government has tackled other tasks that it considered as factors for the sustainability of democracy in Sudan, according to the statements of the former Minister of Culture

and the official spokesperson for The government at the time, Mr. Faisal Muhammad Saleh, the current transitional government, in its first meeting, identified ten priorities: achieving sustainable peace and stopping the war, addressing the economic crisis, especially the rise in prices, forming an independent committee to investigate the events of the sit-in, strengthening the role of women, reforming state agencies.

Determining the aspects of the relationship between the central and state governments, setting a foreign policy that takes into account the interests of Sudan, paying attention to services such as health, education, social care and the environment, preparing for the constitutional conference, and fighting corruption (Sputnik Arabic, 2019).

It is self-evident that the multiplicity and complexity of the tasks of the transitional government necessarily requires effective institutions that address the accomplishment of these tasks, but the paradox is that the government, despite addressing tasks that many see outside its tasks and powers, has been unable to form the institutions that are entrusted with the implementation of these tasks. Between the two components: civil and military, and within the forces of freedom and change, the delay in completing the structures of the transitional authority, which in turn was reflected in the general performance of the transitional government. The constitutional document stipulated the institutions of the transitional period. In addition to the main transitional governing bodies, represented by the Sovereignty Council, the Council of Ministers, and the Transitional Legislative Council, the document stipulated the establishment of a number of political structures that would enable them to achieve the tasks of the transitional period, the most important of which are the so-called independent commissions. Which includes: the Peace Commission, the Border Commission, the Constitution-making Commission and the Constitutional Conference, the Electoral Commission, which is formed by the Sovereignty Council, in addition to the commissions formed by the Council of Ministers, which are: the Legal Reform Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Recovery of Public Funds, the Human Rights Commission, and the Civil Service Reform Commission The Land Commission, the Transitional Justice Commission, the Women and Gender Equality Commission, and any other commissions that the Council of Ministers deems necessary to establish (Republic of Sudan, Constitutional Document, 2019: Chapter 12).

As of this writing, more than two years have passed since the fall of the regime, and many of the structures of the transitional period have not yet been completed. Among the structures and institutions stipulated in the Constitutional Document that have not yet been formed: the Transitional Justice Commission, the Electoral Commission, and the Legislative Council; There is no doubt that delaying the completion of the structures of the transitional period would affect the overall performance of the transitional government, and if we take into account that the most important functions

of the transitional period are the liquidation of the legacy of the previous regimes, which requires speeding up the formation of the Transitional Justice Commission; Creating the atmosphere for democratic elections, which requires the formation of the Electoral Commission, and that these two commissions have not been formed yet, we realize the apparent imbalance in the performance of the transitional authority and the arrangement of its priorities.

Perhaps one of the most important reasons that hindered the establishment of the structures of the transitional period is the conflict between the parties to the political process over positions. Despite the transcendent calls for the establishment of a government of technocrats of competencies, the selection of political office holders was made on the basis of quotas between the allied political forces. it took

Negotiations on this matter a lot of time and effort that could have been spent in carrying out the tasks of the transitional period had the government been chosen on the basis of competence and well defined criteria for holding office.

In addition, the transitional government chose to postpone the formation of some political institutions, such as the Legislative Council and others, until an agreement was reached with the armed struggle movements, but, as expected, reaching peace was not an easy matter. Negotiations between the two parties continued for more than a year. During the establishment of many institutions, the efforts of the transitional government froze in many urgent and dangerous files, and even after the signing of the peace agreements, the ruling parties did not show the necessary seriousness in establishing important power structures such as the Legislative Council.

#### 1. Weakness of parties and civil society organizations:

Political parties have become an urgent political necessity in any democratic society. Lipset says that political parties are "indispensable to democracy" (Lipset, 2000:48.55), as they represent the tip of the spear during the democratic transition stage, yet the Sudanese political parties suffer from weakness and continuous decline due to the decreasing of the grassroots base, and the weakness or loss of Funding, the absence of political succession mechanisms, and the weakness and underdevelopment of party programmes.

The history of the emergence of Sudanese political parties dates back to the mid-1940s, and the two major parties at the time (the Federal National Party and the Umma Party) continued to rotate in positions of government and opposition, or to rule in the framework of a coalition formula throughout the periods of democratic rule in Sudan. These two parties, along with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communist Party, have played active roles in overthrowing military governments and restoring democracy many times. However, the Sudanese political reality has witnessed radical changes with regard to the status of historical parties, as these

parties were unable to attract young people to their ranks, and they did not. Thus, it can maintain its previous position in terms of mass bases.

The former military regime contributed to the weakening of these parties, as it divided them and provoked conflicts between their leaders, which resulted in wide divisions in these parties, including the Umma Party, which was divided into several parties, as well as the Democratic Unionist Party and the Communist Party. nineties of the last century.

Dr. Abdel Rahim Bilal says that the Salvation regime, in order to remain in power, “built party institutions and alliances (consecutive parties, national unity parties, dialogue parties, fragmentation of independent parties such as the Ummah and the Unionist, building institutions supporting the system, and domesticating unions and civil organizations”) Al-Bathani, 9: 2019 ).

Partisan divisions, the absence of these parties from power for decades, the absence of historical leaders due to illness or death, and the absence of leaders with the same strength and attractiveness, have led to the decline in the role of these political parties. The emergence of some armed movements in eastern, western and northern Sudan also contributed to the weakening of political parties, as many of the supporters of these parties joined these movements, and others joined the ruling party at the time, leaving their historical parties.

When the ruling military regime fell, the political arena was devoid of any effective party with a broad mass base. The National Congress vanished with the fall of the regime after it was banned, and other political parties were unable to fill the void due to the factors mentioned above, and the expansion of the military and armed movements to fill the void left by the fall of the Bashir regime.

The biggest evidence of the political parties’ lack of the simplest sources of power is the marginalization they are experiencing now, and the almost complete absence from the political arena, which was led by the armed forces, the Rapid Support Forces and the armed movements on the one hand, with a modest presence of some partisan forces such as the Umma Party that allied with the ruling forces, and the party Communist, who opposes the orientations of the transitional government.

Because the ruling forces in the transitional period lacked mass bases that would enable them to gain power through the election boxes, they resorted to extending the transitional period to four years, then extended it again during the negotiation stage with armed struggle movements, and despite the fact that holding elections is one of the most important tasks of the government. However, it does not pay enough attention to this matter, as evidenced by the fact that it has not, until this writing, formed the new electoral commission, which suggests that holding elections is not a priority for the new rulers and does not serve their political goals.

Despite the nobility of the Sudanese parties, most of them are still unable to exercise their required political role, and it is clear that these parties have not developed,

neither in terms of their intellectual visions and political programs, nor in terms of their organizational structures.

To measure the effectiveness of political parties, a number of criteria are used, such as: organizational structure, grassroots bases, program, leadership, mechanisms of political succession in the party, sources of funding and others (Makawi, Effectiveness of Parties, 2018: 10.24), and by applying the criteria referred to on Sudanese parties, it was noted that most of them It suffers from fundamental problems such as weak organizational structures, the absence of a program, the absence of internal democracy and mechanisms of political succession, and most of these parties suffer from funding problems, and in general, things are not going in these parties for the better, with reason to be optimistic about their future or to rely on an active role in the process The democratic transition is currently underway, as all indicators point to its decline and the deepening of its crises (Makawi, Ma'ariq al-Liwa, 2018: 119.126), and there is no doubt that the weakness of political parties is directly reflected in the political structure of the country, and therefore reforming the affairs of Sudanese parties is the main entrance to strengthening and strengthening the political structure.

In fact, Sudanese parties need to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the changes in the political environment, and what this requires for the development of their programmes, plans, structures and methods, and to study the experiences of political parties in other countries and benefit from their experiences when that is useful, and work in particular to attract more Youth and women join their ranks as the vital mass in the political environment at this pivotal stage of Sudanese history, and seek to develop front work and expanded party alliances based on common denominators.

In this regard, Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk and Salah El-Din El-Zein see that these parties need to “exercise institutional self-criticism in order to consolidate commitment to the values of democracy in managing their internal conflicts [...] (and review) the relations of horizontal parties [...] which must be based on Agreements on the supreme national policies and interests (Abu Shouk and Al-Zein, 2020: 27).

Civil society organizations also suffer from significant weakness due to the practices of the former regime and its relentless efforts to control and restrict these organizations. Civil society has been politicized to a large extent, which has led to divisions in many of its organizations, and most civil society organizations in Sudan suffer from a lack of funding sources, in addition to political and ethnic conflicts within them.

Therefore, with the exception of the crucial role played by the Sudanese Professionals Association in igniting the revolution, a large section of civil society was, and remains, largely absent from the political arena, and as Whitehead emphasized, the presence of a strong civil society allows a greater opportunity for democracy to be successful. Long-term and able to meet the challenges.

Activating civil society requires coordination between its organizations, working to provide the necessary funding for its activities, and defining its relationship with parties.

There is no doubt that the weakness of the Sudanese political parties and civil society organizations negatively affects the democratic transition. Consequently, the challenge facing the transitional government in this aspect is the ability to form an effective political bloc of political parties and civil forces to fill the void that became clear after the fall of the regime.

#### 1. Economic decline and cost of living:

The deteriorating economic conditions are among the most prominent obstacles facing political systems in the transition towards democracy, and as Roberto Stefan Foa put it, “Securing a broad coalition for democratic reform becomes more difficult with the faltering economic performance of mature and transitional democracies” (Tarek Masoud, *The Arab Spring*)

In Sudan, the deteriorating economic conditions were the main reason for the Sudanese revolution that erupted in Sudan on December 19, 2018, and led to the fall of the regime on April 11, 2019. The masses in a number of Sudanese cities revolted in protest against the high prices of basic materials in the country, the depreciation of the Sudanese currency, the scarcity or absence of many commodities in the markets, as well as the scarcity of cash and the inability of citizens to obtain their savings in banks in order to provide for their basic needs.

After the fall of the regime, the economic conditions did not improve as the rebellious masses expected. On the contrary, the economic deterioration increased, and the Sudanese citizen continued to suffer from the high prices of living, and the scarcity of basic commodities such as bread, fuel and others. The inflation rate has risen to more than 378%, and the national currency has deteriorated to equal one dollar of 375 Sudanese pounds (in March 2021 AD), and the Sudanese debt has reached 201% of the GDP (BBC, December 17, 2020 AD).

The Sudanese Ministry of Finance has set general policies for the 2021 budget, the most important of which are addressing all forms of tax evasion, rationalizing tax exemptions, and directing bank financing towards the productive sectors. The budget policy also stressed the need for the Ministry of Finance to have jurisdiction over all public funds and to review laws that contradict this principle, and that the mandate of the Ministry of Finance should include all institutions, including the armed forces companies (Ali, 2021). By handing over his companies to the government and transferring them to Nations,2020), and the International Crisis Group called on donors to provide urgent assistance or risk the transitional government to collapse (Creta,2020).

The economic crisis was reflected in the relationship of the two parties: the military and the civilian to the authority, who exchanged accusations publicly. While the

civilians accused the military of controlling most of the country's economic resources, the military asserted that the economic crisis was caused by the weakness of the civilian government headed by Hamdok, and its inability to address the economic crisis.

#### 1. Achieving peace:

Article 8 of the constitutional document related to the tasks of the transitional period stipulated “working to achieve a just and comprehensive peace and ending the war by addressing the roots of the Sudanese problem and addressing its effects.” On the third of October 2020, the transitional government signed an agreement with the armed movements affiliated with the (Revolutionary Front). The most prominent movements that signed the agreement were: the Justice and Equality Movement led by Dr. Jibril Ibrahim, the Sudan Liberation Army Movement - Minni Arko Minawi wing, the Northern People's Movement - Malik Agar wing, in addition to the East and North tracks, and later the transitional government began negotiations With the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North led by Abdel Aziz Al-Hilu, which refused to sign the Sudan Peace Agreement signed in Juba in October 2020, and the transitional government had not reached an agreement with the (Sudan Liberation Movement) led by Abdel Wahed Mohamed Nour until this writing.

The peace agreement signed between the two parties, which included 8 protocols, dealt with a number of issues such as: transitional justice and compensation, land ownership, development of the pasture and grazing sector, wealth and power sharing, and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

The agreement gave the Revolutionary Front 3 seats in the Transitional Sovereignty Council, in addition to 5 ministers and 75 seats in the transitional parliament. The agreement also stipulated the integration of armed movements into the Sudanese army, and the agreement gave them 20% of jobs in the civil service. The agreement excluded the leaders of the movements from Article 20 of The constitutional document that prohibits anyone who holds a position in the transitional authority from running in the upcoming elections (Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper, 10/4/2020).

There is no doubt that reaching a peace agreement to stop the war, which had profound humanitarian, economic and social effects, was, in and of itself, an appreciable progress towards Sudanese national unity. However, achieving the desired peace faces many challenges. Among the most prominent challenges facing the peace process are the following:

a. The delay in the formation of the new power structures stipulated in the peace agreement, the peace agreement provided for the formation of a new transitional government, the re-formation of the Sovereignty Council, the appointment of new governors in the regions, and work to integrate fighters into the Sudanese army, but most of these provisions will not be implemented according to the agreed timings. in the agreement matrix. Sher Abu Nammu, head of the negotiating delegation of the

Sudan Liberation Movement led by Mona Arko Minawi, says, "We have spent more than three months now, and unfortunately things have not gone away." Noay, 2020).

NS. The deteriorating economic conditions and the continuous decline of the Sudanese currency, which was manifested in inflation, which reached 250% at the beginning of the year 2021, with the spread of the Corona epidemic, all made it difficult to implement the commitments included in the peace agreement.

NS. The issue of achieving peace is related to the issue of transitional justice to liquidate the legacy of the former regime, but accusing some of the current leaders of participating in violations that took place in conflict areas makes it difficult to achieve this goal.

The agreement provided for the start of the process of merging and demobilizing forces after 60 days of signing, but the scarcity of financial resources required for the merger process prevented the implementation of this order at the time specified in the agreement, and in an attempt by the movements that signed peace agreements to put the government in front of the fait accompli, reached The forces of some of these movements, with all their military equipment, moved to Khartoum, and an armed group took control of the "Olympic Committee" building, and almost caused a crisis after being asked to leave the site.

The armed manifestations in the streets of Khartoum, which coincided with the manifestations of lawlessness, raised citizens' fears, and fears escalated of a military clash within one of these groups in the capital, Khartoum, but the police managed to control it.

In his first periodic briefing to the UN Security Council, Volker Perthes, head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Transitional Phase in Sudan (UNITAMS), warned of the dangers posed by the presence of several armies in Sudan, stressing that Peace will not be achieved in light of this fragile security situation, and observers point out that there are, at least, five armies roaming the streets of Khartoum (Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper, 15454).

#### 1. Achieving transitional justice:

According to the United Nations definition, transitional justice includes "the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with attempts by society to understand its legacy of large-scale past abuses in order to ensure accountability, establish justice and achieve reconciliation, and it includes [...] And examining the personal record to reveal abuses" (Benyob, 2012).

The International Center for Transitional Justice defined it as "the set of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented by different countries to address the legacies of grave human rights violations. These measures include prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and various forms of institutional reform" (the Center International Transitional Justice International, 2020).

Transitional justice aims, in general, to achieve the following objectives:

1. Uncovering the truth and presenting a comprehensive historical account of the truth of what happened.
2. Acknowledgment of the mistakes that have been committed.
3. Identification of those responsible, and accountability for violations and abuses that occurred.
4. Achieving reconciliation.
5. Ensure the non-repetition of human rights violations, including the guarantees undertaken through institutional reform.
6. Restoring confidence in state institutions.
7. Strengthening the rule of law.
8. Providing compensation to victims (Benyoob, op.cit., p. 9).

The era of the third military government, which lasted for thirty years (1989 - 2019), witnessed widespread violations of human rights. This period witnessed bloody wars that included South Sudan, Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and some areas of the north, and these wars left hundreds of thousands of civilians dead. , the population was forced.

The locals were forced to leave their villages and resort to displacement camps that lack the most basic necessities of life such as food, medicine and personal security, which led to the loss of more lives, and prisons and detention centers witnessed cases of unprecedented torture in what were known as ghost houses, and demonstrators were subjected to mass killings, as happened during the days of the revolution. In addition to the huge numbers of young people killed in the massacre of the leadership sit-in, the disappearance of hundreds of citizens and thousands of wounded. Human rights were violated during Al-Bashir's rule and in the days of the revolution and after it, in a remarkable way, which calls for speeding up and seriousness in the transitional justice procedures to reveal the facts, hold those responsible for violations accountable, and to ensure non-repetition of violations, and to implement comprehensive societal reconciliation.

Aware from all parties of the serious abuses that occurred during the (rescue) period, the constitutional document included clear texts on transitional justice, as it stated the following:

1. The transitional authority is committed to enforcing the rule of law, applying the principle of accountability, and redressing grievances and usurped rights.

2. During the transitional period, state agencies are obligated to hold accountable the employees of the former regime for all crimes committed against the Sudanese people since June 30, 1989, in accordance with the law.
3. Dismantling the enabling structure of the June 30, 1989 regime and building a state of law and institutions.
4. Forming a national investigation committee [...] to conduct a transparent and accurate investigation into the violations that took place on June 3, 2019.
5. Formation of the Transitional Justice Commission.
6. Initiating the implementation of transitional justice procedures and accountability for crimes against humanity and war crimes, and bringing accused persons to national and international courts in implementation of the principle of non-impunity.

The subject of transitional justice has been emphasized in several places in the constitutional document, which is the main guideline for the transitional period, but the implementation of the principles of transitional justice is still far from being realized on the ground, and the most important indicators of that are the following:

1. The Transitional Justice Commission has not been formed as of this writing, although it represents the entrance to a new democratic era that transcends the negatives of the past and opens a new page in Sudanese history. Perhaps the reason for this is the delay in the commission law, which took a long time to prepare, and is still a draft It has not yet been approved.

1. A committee was formed to investigate the events of June 3, 2019, but the committee was unable to submit its final report until this writing and requested an extension several times, perhaps due to pressures on this committee.

In fact, despite the strong popular support calling for justice, it is often not achieved, and history tells us of the evasion of those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity during the First World War, and the evasion of the fascists in Italy after the fall of their regime, and the evasion of the majority of leaders The communists in Eastern Europe after the collapse of their regimes, except for the case of Romania, and in Argentina, the military suspended the military courts that had been formed by the government after the transition to civilian rule (Benyoob, op.cit., p. 10). The military may not accept the prosecution of their employees for the violations that occurred during the years of war in several parts of Sudan, just as happened in Argentina in the eighties of the last century, and as happened in South Africa, where the security authorities insisted on not continuing negotiations with the black majority until after Obtaining guarantees that its employees will not be prosecuted in the future, and they have what they wanted.

In fact, one of the challenges facing the implementation of transitional justice is the prevailing understanding in general of the contents of this justice and its restriction to the legal aspect, but transitional justice includes other aspects: social (positive discrimination of the marginalized), financial (compensation for victims to enable them to engage in a normal life) and psychological (By establishing psychological treatment centers for victims of violations in war zones) (Barimah, 2019). Contrary to the prevailing opinion, which limits it to “holding trials,” it includes the formation of truth commissions, rehabilitation of victims, national reconciliation, and legal, judicial and political reform (Al-Jazouli, 2019) It is a comprehensive and complex societal process, in which the entire people must participate, especially victims, survivors, and survivors of “gross” violations of human rights, the effects of which are addressed by transitional justice (Al-Baqir, 2020).

In addition, transitional justice in Sudan faces other challenges represented in the lack of a sufficient number of qualified personnel to investigate human rights violations and to withstand pressure from those involved, in addition to the scarcity of financial resources allocated to these tasks that require a lot of financial resources necessary to obtain The information and data required that lead to access to the facts on which the judgments are based later.

At the same time, a pressing question arose about who manages the foreign relations file in the transitional government, as it seemed clear that there are multiple centers for external decision-making in the transitional government, and the most obvious case was the meeting of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Entebbe What was raised about their agreement on normalization between Sudan and Israel, which sparked a dispute between the military component and the civilian component, which considered what Al-Burhan had done does not reflect the government’s opinion, but rather a personal initiative that bears sole responsibility.

In fact, there is no clear picture about the center of the decision in this dangerous file, as it is noted that the management of external relations is shared between the different parties. For example, it was noted the emergence of the role of Al-Burhan in the file of the border with Ethiopia, and the dominance of Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok over the file of relations with the states The United States and the European Union, and the Renaissance Dam file, and Lieutenant-General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) playing a greater role in the file of relations with Chad and South Sudan, while the three of them compete in the issue of relations with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE, and some believe that, in many cases, “the share of Each of the ruling partners in Sudan, according to the desire of the external party, the stakeholder, to deal with any of them or to avoid any of them” (Emirates Center for Studies, 2020).

Although there is no indication that a fundamental dispute could erupt between these parties on the issue of foreign relations, as the issue has recently taken a form of exchanging roles, the complexity of the external files and their intertwining with the length of the transitional period may lead to future disputes over the management of this important file.

However, the external aspect should not be neglected, as external interventions play a major role during the stages of democratic transition, as international and regional forces begin to intervene intensively in order to direct matters in a way that achieves their interests, and the opportunity is often favorable for such interventions due to the fragility of the situation during the stages of democratic transition. In general (Snyder, 1998).

In this regard, Azmi Bishara believes that external interventions can contribute to thwarting the democratic transition in Sudan, especially since some of the regional forces that have been interfering extensively in Sudanese affairs since the fall of the Bashir regime are among the countries that initially oppose the democratic transition due to their own internal conditions, and some of these countries It contributed to changing the regime from within in coordination with some of its parties (Abu Shouk, 2021: 20.21).

### Third: Opportunities and Prospects for Democratic Transition in Sudan:

The failure of the previous regime: economically, politically, and securityly. Corruption spread among the elite, who control the political affairs, and the power was concentrated in a small, corrupt and isolated group. The regime adopted some slogans of reform, but its attempts were formal and lacked seriousness, which eventually led to the escalation of popular protests that led to the fall of the regime, and thus the change took place from the bottom up and ended with changing the symbols of the regime, but Sudan is still far from the desired democratic transformation, and it is feared To cause a setback in the process of democratic transition in Sudan.

There is no doubt that the current transitional phase in Sudan represents the most complex phase in the history of modern Sudan, due to the weight of the legacy that the transitional government inherited from the previous regime, which was manifested in: the deteriorating economic conditions, the lack of the minimum necessities for a decent life, and the continuous betrayal of the expectations of citizens, the politicized ethnic That struck all parts of the country, the complete international and regional isolation of Sudan, the apparent weakness and the almost complete absence of political parties and civil society from the political arena, the weakness of the democratic culture among the people in general, and the insecurity that affected large parts of the country, including the capital, Khartoum.

At the same time, there are some opportunities for the transitional government, which can be exploited to contribute to achieving the desired democratic transition in Sudan, and perhaps the most prominent of these opportunities is the national consensus that was achieved during the revolution against the former regime, where all political groups forgot their differences and focused on achieving one goal, which is to topple the regime. At the same time, the success of the political and military forces - in joint coordination - in overthrowing the regime raised the morale of these forces on the one hand, and convinced them of the importance of national unity and solidarity in order to achieve the major goals, which they tried to build on in the phase that followed the fall of the regime. Also, among the most important opportunities for the transitional government is the unprecedented external support it has received, which was manifested in the removal of Sudan's name from the state sponsors of terrorism, the generous financial support provided by Western countries to the transitional government, and the clear international efforts that sought to cancel Sudan's debts.

In the context of the transitional government's endeavor to expand the political base and compensate for what it lost after the alienation of part of the allies, it was keen to reach peace with (the armed struggle movements) to support the popular base of the government, and one of the leaders of Freedom and Change expressed this by saying that the government today "is based on a political base. Arida, after the accession of the Revolutionary Front, which includes four armed movements and five political alliances, in addition to the consensus of the political forces that

It falls under the umbrella of the forces of freedom and change, and its sense of the importance of facing the challenges of the next stage" (Ali, 2020).

But the success of the democratic transition in Sudan depends, to a large extent, on the availability of a political vision that recognizes the dangers facing the country and works to expand the base of participation during this delicate stage of the nation's life, and on the ability of the transitional government to deal positively with all the intertwined and complex files that have been referred to. And to face the heavy legacy left by the regime.

In order to achieve the requirements of a smooth democratic transition, it is necessary to speed up the completion of the structures of the transitional period, because the delay in completing these institutions will lead to the failure of the transitional government to address the grave tasks that it must undertake, and if we bear in mind that the delay in establishing many transitional institutions was On the pretext of postponing this until after the signing of the peace agreements, there is no longer a convincing justification for not completing these institutions now, especially since more than six months have passed since the signing of the agreement with the (armed struggle movements) until this writing. Fulfilling the entitlements of peace is what foreshadows the risks that may arise from not fulfilling these entitlements.

At the same time, it is necessary to address the deteriorating economic conditions, as these deteriorating economic conditions were the main reason for the revolution, and instead of improving conditions, it became clear that things are going the opposite of what the revolutionaries expected, as the economic conditions witnessed further deterioration, and the inflation rate increased dramatically Unprecedented, and although the government is required to pay the costs of peace, it is required, at the same time, to provide a minimum decent standard of living at this stage. This requires a package of urgent measures to address the economic situation, undertaken by the government, taking advantage of opportunities to open up to the international community.

Because national unity in Sudan depends to a large extent on fulfilling the entitlements of peace to ensure its continuity and our right to the blood of the people, this file should be dealt with as soon as possible to prevent any setback in this regard, and justice for the victims of wars in different parts of Sudan must be done by implementing the principle of transitional justice. Prosecuting human rights violators during the past thirty years, paying attention to the file of the revolution's martyrs, especially the file of the sit-in, and bringing those responsible for these crimes to justice.

Since international and regional isolation is the main reason behind most of the tragedies that Sudan has experienced, it is necessary to pay sufficient attention to this file, and to develop a specific strategy to advance Sudan's foreign relations, with the need to

Work to unify the center of external decision-making to prevent any conflict of positions between the ruling forces on the one hand, and to ensure that the interests of Sudan are achieved in the desired manner.

Before heading to the election boxes, it is necessary to work on creating the appropriate environment for the development of political parties and assisting them in that, and to work seriously in order to create the environment for the formation of a national bloc that will be able to achieve the aspirations of the people and make the transitional phase a success on the one hand and participate effectively in the upcoming elections on the other hand.

### **Conclusion:**

After thirty years of military rule, the Sudanese opposition was able to eliminate the rule of Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir and establish a transitional government based on an alliance between the People's Armed Forces and the Forces of the Declaration of Freedom and Change, which is scheduled to continue until the elections and the handover of power to an elected government in the year 2024 AD.

The transitional government faces a set of challenges, the most important of which is the nature of the government's composition itself and the lack of trust between its parties, which was manifested in many situations, as well as the almost complete absence of national political forces represented by political parties and civil society organizations, due to the policies of the previous regime that aimed to weaken and divide it, in addition to To some foundational and structural problems related to each other.

Among the deep challenges facing the transitional government in Sudan: addressing the issues of economic deterioration and improving the standard of living, sustaining peace, achieving transitional justice, and improving Sudan's foreign relations.

At the same time, the transitional government has great opportunities that, if appropriately exploited, can contribute to addressing the challenges that have been referred to, and among the most important of these opportunities is the broad popular consensus on this government from the revolutionaries who are hostile to the previous regime and who are keen on the continuation of the democratic system and blocking the road ahead. Any attempt to return the old regime in any way, and this unanimity helped the people's patience with the hardship of living that is intensifying its episodes day after day.

In addition, the current government has had unprecedented international and regional support due to the hostile policies of the former regime, international accusations of supporting terrorist movements, and his involvement in a number of terrorist acts.

The most famous of these is the attempted assassination of the Egyptian President in Ethiopia in 1995. The international community's support for Sudan was manifested in removing its name from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, and in providing bridge financing by the United States of about 1.15 billion dollars to help Sudan pay its arrears to the World Bank, and at the Berlin Conference Which sought to provide European support to Sudan in terms of economic and political terms, and which came out with an agreement to provide an amount of 1.8 billion dollars to support the transitional government in Sudan.

The future of the democratic transition in Sudan depends on the ability of the transitional government to confront the great and multiple challenges it faces, foremost of which is the ability to manage the dispute between its components, address the stifling living crisis, and pay the dues of peace leading to its continuation and sustainability, and its ability to manage the file of foreign relations in a flexible manner and balanced. In this regard, the paper recommends the following:

1. Accelerate the completion of the transitional period structures.

2. Address the deteriorating economic conditions by developing emergency plans that are in the interest of the citizen and stop the continuous erosion of the legitimacy of the transitional government.
3. Take urgent measures to bring justice to the victims of the revolution and wars in various parts of Sudan by implementing the principle of transitional justice, and prosecuting human rights violators.
4. Develop a specific strategy to advance Sudan's foreign relations and unify the external decision-making center.
5. Preparing the climate for the formation of a national bloc that will effectively participate in the upcoming elections.

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