

Research Article

FEMICIDE: SUDANESE WOMEN'S STORIES OF RAPE AND OPPRESSION

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We are three Muslim/ Hijabi/ Arab/ female/ community psychologists who came together to disrupt the silence amidst one of the worst humanitarian crises in contemporary history! We used a collective narrative inquiry approach, to amplify, document and acknowledge the voices of Sudanese women, who have taught us what resistance and resilience mean amidst unimaginable terrors. We aim to unsettle the geopolitical indifference that allows this war, and the violence against women to continue with impunity. We argue that the targeted sexual violence against women in Sudan, should be understood not only as a weapon of war, but as clear acts of femicide: deliberate and clear intent to harm Sudanese women because of their gender and ethnic identity. We further examine how historical and ongoing imperialism and colonization shape the global response to the crisis exposing inherent racism and white supremacy. This paper centers the lived realities of Sudanese women, documenting their stories as acts of testimony, sharing truth, and defiance against erasure. Despite immense loss and global neglect, Sudanese women continue to find strength through faith, community, and care for others. Their collective healing practices and solidarity networks embody a deeply communal and spiritual resilience that challenges western notions of recovery. We call for critical reflection and collective accountability. Bearing witness is an act of resistance; to speak up is a moral obligation. The stories shared here invite readers to listen, confront their own silence, and stand in solidarity with Sudanese women as they reclaim their narrative, dignity, and future.

Keywords: Femicide, Sudan, sexual violence, Sudanese women, resistance, white supremacy, Displacement, collective accountability

"To the young women who were raped at the sit-in attack, my young sisters, know that you are innocent and honorable... it is he who is tainted, not you."
Leila Aboulela (Sudanese storyteller and writer)

1. Introduction

She had only stepped out to buy breakfast supplies for her family, in Khartoum, the capital city where the rhythm of daily life is now punctuated by the sounds of falling shells and

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relentless gunfire, a new and harrowing reality. A rapid support forces (RSF) car screeched to a halt beside her. Weapons were drawn. In seconds, she was abducted and blindfolded. When the blindfold came off, she found herself in a dim room with thirteen other girls, every day, they were raped, systematically, repeatedly, and brutally.

Their bodies are used as battlegrounds. They were beaten. They lived in a constant state of fear, unable to rest, unsure if they would survive. Food was scarce, only one meal per day, and they were often denied water. The men who violated them, all dressed in RSF uniforms, spent their free time playing ludo and card games between assaults.

It was only when a shell struck the house they were held in, that a chance to escape emerged. In the chaos, some girls flew. She was among them. Before she ran, she saw it all: the piles of stolen goods, the looted money, and the overwhelming proof of how violence and greed intertwined. She had been held for seven days. Some of the other girls had been there for more than ten days. “I would recognize them if I saw them,” she said (Al Hadath, 2023).

Over 12.7 million individuals, approximately one-third of Sudan’s population, have been displaced, with 3.7 million seeking refuge in neighboring countries (Oxfam International, 2025). As reports of sexual violence, and forced displacement multiply, Sudanese women are enduring one of the gravest humanitarian crises of our time. Yet they continue to resist through community mobilization, documentation, and care networks that sustain survival amidst collapse. Their work embodies both grief and defiance, a refusal to be erased.

This paper centers the lived realities of Sudanese women and interrogates the global silence surrounding their suffering, examining how sexual violence is used as a weapon in the ongoing war, and how women’s grassroots movements embody resilience in the face of systemic destruction. Readers are referred to appendices throughout the manuscript for additional contextual information.

1.1 Objectives

The femicide in Sudan is largely rendered invisible. It is rarely covered in mainstream international media and only mentioned in UN reports or in the urgent appeals of grassroots organizations (Appendix A). When Sudan is mentioned, it usually involves decontextualized headlines or reductive humanitarian frames that erase the systemic, and gendered nature of the violence. The deliberate invisibilization of this war, and the erasure of Sudanese women’s suffering within it, reflects a global hierarchy of whose lives and deaths are seen as newsworthy or grievable. In writing this paper, we aim to unsettle the geopolitical indifference that allows this war, and the violence against women within it, to continue with impunity. We argue that the targeted violence against women in Sudan, particularly sexual violence and gender-based killings, should be understood not only as a weapon of war, but as clear acts of *femicide*: deliberate and clear intent to harm Sudanese women because of their gender and ethnic identity (Doja, 2025; Grzyb, Naudi & Marcuello-Servós, 2018). This framing challenges reductive narratives that depoliticize gendered violence and highlights its structural and intentional nature.

The atrocities inflecting women in Sudan are not just meant to humiliate and destroy women, they are meant to humiliate and destroy the environment (Gabaitse, 2025), as there is a huge

bond between women and the environment especially in African cultures (Aluko, 2018). It underscores a critical challenge not only within the country but across much of Africa's conflict-affected regions: the persistent struggle for control over land and people (Ayoub, 2006). Thus, *ecofeminism* becomes a vital lens, it brings attention to the deliberate violence inflicted on women and the environment in conflict zones, violence rooted in systems of patriarchy and militarism, which are central to the concept of eco-femicide (Gabaitse, 2025).

In the Sudanese context, environmental degradation, militarized resource extraction, and forced displacement intersect to disproportionately affect women, particularly those from historically marginalized communities. Recognizing this entanglement opens the door to more holistic, decolonial approaches to justice, those that center healing, land sovereignty, and the leadership of women as stewards of both the community and the environment.

1.2 Positionality

We draw immense pride from our faith and from the legacy of being Muslim, African Arabs, a legacy that has been distorted and sabotaged by colonization and western ideologies. We resist being boxed into the orientalist and white supremacist feminist framework that portrays us as helpless or voiceless. Our agency and autonomy are rooted in the solidarity we share as women, empowered by nurturance, protection, resistance, and unconditional love. These are the forces that sustain our collective resistance in this space, allowing us to confront systems of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. May we be able to produce knowledge that reflects our heritage, strengths, and resilience as Muslims, Arabs, Africans, and as women. May we amplify the voices of the courageous Sudanese women who have survived unimaginable atrocities. View Appendix B for each author's positionality, and the dynamics of the writing process.

1.3 Methodology

This paper adopts a collective narrative inquiry. As Sudanese, Egyptian and Palestinian community psychologists, we position ourselves not as detached observers but as part of the narrative we document. This approach allows us to intertwine the lived experiences of Sudanese women with our own reflections as researchers, advocates, and members of a community enduring collective trauma. The stories of Sudanese women, collected through conversations, art, and lived testimonies, become a form of resistance against erasure. They reveal how women continue to survive, live, nurture, and lead in the face of relentless loss and oppression.

We begin this documentation with the eruption of femicide in April 2023, when Sudanese states turned into a battlefield and the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) escalated. In this struggle for power, unarmed civilians have become human shields (Braunschweiler, 2023). As in many conflicts, women and children continue to bear the greatest burden (Appendix C), facing the harshest consequences of displacement, violence, and deprivation (United Nations OCHA, 2023). Women have been used and continue to be used as weapons in this devastating war (CVAW, 2025), underscoring the prevalence of femicide in the ongoing conflict.

2. Femicide

Reports have documented a surge in sexual violence, abductions, and forced marriages, often carried out by the RSF militia, in Sudan (Human Rights Watch, 2025, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2024; SIHA, 2024; The Federal Unit for Combating Violence against Women and Children, 2025). While the exact number of affected women remains unknown, some survivors have described being abducted, held with other women, and repeatedly raped (UN Women, 2024). Official data on rape cases remains limited; Sudan's Combating Violence Against Women (CVAW) unit estimates that recorded incidents reflect approximately 2% of the actual total (Ergene & Eken, 2024). These systematic acts of sexual based violence against Sudanese women are not merely acts of sexual assaults, but amount to acts of femicide. According to Grzyb, Naudi & Marcuello-Servós (2018) femicide is "*the killing of women because they are women*", and any act of systematic violence against women just because they are women as a way to humiliate, enslave and conquer them.

The femicide taking place in Sudan reminds us of the femicide strategy used by the Serbs (1992-1995) against Muslim Bosnian women in the former Yugoslavia (Randall, 2015). The same brutal tactics are now being used against women in Sudan, where mass femicides and sexual violence have become weapons of war. Just as in Bosnia, Sudanese women are being systematically raped, tortured, and killed as part of a campaign to destroy communities. Recent reports describe women and girls taking their own lives to escape relentless abuse (Gichuki, 2024), a heartbreaking echo of the suffering endured by Bosnian survivors. Back then, the world eventually responded with tribunals and justice, however imperfect they were. Today, the international community must not wait to act. Sudanese women deserve their stories to be heard, their pain recognized, and their attackers to be held accountable before more lives are lost to the same cycle of violence.

There are hundreds of testimonies from women who survived unimaginable suffering during the Bosnian genocide (Allen, 1996; Weitsman, 2015). Women endured being repeatedly gang raped and often times forcibly impregnated (Appendix D). Those resilient, brave women have stated that the Serbs systematically raped, impregnated, enslaved and tortured them to break their pride (Weitsman, 2015; Weitsman, 2008). According to Allen (1996) there were 20,000-50,000 women who were viciously and purposely raped. Perhaps one of the reasons the Bosnian genocide became so internationally recognized was the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (1993-2017), which was created largely due to increasing international pressure on the United Nations (Randall, 2015). It was the first-time women had the chance to testify against their rapists. Although the women's complex stories were not fully captured (Randall, 2015), because of those women it was the first time to admit that "*sexual enslavement was a crime against humanity*" and for rapists to be held accountable (Human Rights Watch, 1995). As stated by Doja (2025); "*rape in times of armed conflict is profoundly destructive to a community and a 'fate worse than death' for women of traditional societies*" P.77. Sudanese women must have their voices heard, their pain acknowledged, and their perpetrators brought to justice. Documenting femicide from their perspective is not just important, it is essential for justice and closure.

3. Sudan's recent history & current conflict

Sudan sits at the crossroads of Africa and the Arab world, bordered by seven countries and held together by the twin veins of the Nile that meet in Khartoum; the heart of its political and social life. Yet beneath this geography lies a history of imposed divisions. Northern Sudan's Islamic and Arabic dominance, contrasted with the distinct African languages and cultures of the south and west, not as a natural fault line but a colonial and postcolonial inheritance. These hierarchies were dependent through the successive regimes that followed independence through weaponizing languages, religion, and identity as instruments of power. Furthermore, the elevation of Arabic as the sole marker of national belonging and the erasure of Sudan's plural linguistic and cultural traditions became state tools of marginalization (Mugaddad, 2006). This structural exclusion did not only silence communities in the south or in Darfur, it also silenced women. Women in marginalized regions faced compounded layers of invisibility, as Africans in an Arabized state, as rural dwellers in a centralized economy, and as women in a patriarchal political order. The same systems that stripped communities of their land and language also stripped women of agency and safety, both in the public sphere and within their own homes.



Figure 1. Map of Sudan's Regional Geography

Note. From *Sudan: Religion*, by Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2011, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Sudan/Religion#/media/1/571417/61838>). Copyright 2011 by Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. CC BY 4.0.

Sudan's landscape both vast and rich with resources (Appendix E) has long been a site of extraction and exploitation. Before South Sudan's secession in 2011, the country was the largest in Africa, covering over 1.8 million square kilometers and home to nearly 49 million people (McKenna, 2023). With nearly half of the region's arable land, it was once idealized as Africa's and the Arab world's "future breadbasket" (World Economic Forum, 2024). Sudan's natural wealth became both a blessing and a curse, inviting external interference, regional competition, and the corruption of those in power.

In Sudan's long history of inequality and division, women's bodies often became the first sites where systems of control were enacted. The same political forces that used ethnicity and language to divide communities also imposed strict boundaries on women's behavior and autonomy. Expectations around how women should act, and participate in public life reflected the broader authoritarian logic of the state, one that sought to discipline both citizens and subjects into silence and conformity (Makawi, 2024). In this sense, the experience of Sudanese women reflects the country's wider struggle, navigating resilience and survival within structures that repeatedly promised liberation yet delivered new forms of control (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

To grasp the severity of the situation facing Sudanese women today, it is essential to contextualize the ongoing proxy war within Sudan's broader historical and political landscape. This conflict is the culmination of deeply entrenched, layered tensions and power struggles, many of which are rooted in the legacy of the former regime that was overthrown during the 2019 revolution (Sapa, 2024). These dynamics are further compounded by the fragility of the Sudanese state following its independence from colonial rule in 1956 (Sapa, 2024).

Sudan gained independence from British rule in 1956. Unfortunately, any progress achieved during colonial rule, whether in education, health, or the economy, was primarily designed to serve British interests. When the colonial troops withdrew, they left behind a fragile foundation: a country rich in natural resources but lacking accountable institutions (Johnson, 2003). This fragility set the stage for a vicious cycle of military coups, brief democratic experiments, and popular revolutions. The cycle culminated in 1989 with the military coup led by Omar Al-Bashir¹¹, ushering in a regime built on a strategy of divide and rule.

This marked the beginning of the systematic dismantling of the Sudanese republic, a nation rich in ethnic diversity and tribal heritage with around 500 ethnic groups (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2025). To ensure their grip on power, Al Bashir's regime exploited divisions between tribes, sowing distrust, hate, and classism, making it nearly impossible for a unified opposition to rise (Weiss, 2009). In the early 2000s the regime colluded with mercenary armed groups, weakening the national army and creating an alternative force loyal only to them. One of the most destructive outcomes of this strategy was the creation of the RSF, a brutal, foreign entity that disrupted Sudan's already fragile balance of power (Human Rights Watch, 2015). What began as a state-backed counterinsurgency became a force of terror that preyed on the same communities it claimed to protect. Although Omar al-Bashir was indicted by The International Criminal Court

¹¹"Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, a former military officer, seized power in Sudan through a military coup in 1989 and ruled the country until he was overthrown in another coup in 2019."

(ICC), western colonial powers regarded him as a provider of regional stability and a valuable security partner, which achieved their main goal of protecting foreign investments, securing geopolitical leverage, and providing control over resources (Plaut, 2019). Due to this global silence and complicity, the people, especially women, bore the cost. Their bodies and lands became sites where political ambition, global indifference, and militarized masculinity converged.

South Sudan's succession took place in 2011, leaving the north in an economic decline marked by inflation and widespread shortages due to the fact that most of the oil revenues belonged to the South. By 2018, years of repression, corruption, and economic despair ignited a nationwide protest movement. It was not led by political elites but by ordinary people, doctors, teachers, farmers, students, and at its heart, by women. Sudanese women, long silenced by patriarchal norms and state control, became the revolution's most powerful symbol. From Alaa Salah in the white toub (Figure 2), to women leading chants of freedom in the streets of Khartoum, the revolution's pulse was unmistakably feminine and marked a pivotal moment in Sudan's revolutionary struggle for Democracy (Al Jazeera, 2019). Even though Al Bashir was overthrown in April 2019, the promise of democratic transition was quickly entangled in the very systems it sought to dismantle. The remnants of Al Bashir's regime lingered within state institutions, obstructing reform and protecting their privileges (International Crisis Group, 2022). Women, who had been central to the revolution, were again sidelined in decision making spaces, their contributions quickly overshadowed by the return of military control.

It was during this fragile transition that the RSF, once a militia synonymous with state sponsored violence, rebranded itself as a political actor. Its leader, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Sovereign Council (Elhag, 2024), marking a dangerous normalization of militarized power. This legitimization of the RSF embedded a legacy of impunity into Sudan's new political order, one that would later manifest in unspeakable violence against women.

The seeds of femicide were sown long before the first shot of the 2023 war. They were planted in systematic devaluation of women's lives, in a state that repeatedly used women's bodies as instruments of control and erasure in Darfur for years. The tragedy that unfolded in Darfur two decades ago was not merely a localized conflict or even a genocide in isolation, it was a rehearsal for the brutality that would later engulf the capital and beyond (Wozniak, 2007; Tubiana, 2023; Bereketeab, 2025). For over twenty-five years, Darfur's people have endured displacement, rape, and extermination, while the world's silence persisted in the face of international competition over its land and resources. Sudan became a ticking time bomb, its detonation delayed by decades of systemic oppression and racialized violence (SAPA, 2024; Tubiana, 2023).

In 2021, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led a coup that dismantled the fragile civilian government born of the uprising. Backed at the time by the RSF, despite their rivalry, the coup renewed Sudan's long cycle of betrayal and unfulfilled democratic hopes (Bereketeab, 2025). Between 2021 and early 2023, the two forces coexisted uneasily, each seeking dominance while claiming to protect the nation. That rivalry finally erupted into open war in April 2023, reigniting collective trauma and ending yet another chapter of Sudan's unfinished revolutions (Ergene & Eken, 2024).

4. Situation of women amid the Femicide

The RSF are systematically using sexual violence as a tactic of war in an attempt to degrade the Sudanese women's dignity and honor as a form of punishment to push back their acts of resistance (CVAW, 2015). Although, there's evidence that the SAF has also committed sexual assaults, more than 97% of the assaults were reported against RSF (CVAW, 2015). Women as young as 6 and as old as 80 years old are exposed to sexual violence and cannot seek medical assistance to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and unwanted pregnancies. While the exact number of affected women remains unknown, some survivors have described being abducted, held with other women, and repeatedly raped (UN Women, 2024). Official data on rape cases remains limited; Sudan's Combating Violence Against Women (CVAW) unit estimates that recorded incidents reflect just about 2% of the actual total (Ergene & Eken, 2024).

Sudanese women are exposed to systemic conflict related sexual violence by the RSF. They would threaten them with a gun or threaten that they would kill them or kill their loved ones if they didn't have sex with them. Often, they would sexually assault all the female members in the household no matter their age. Most of the rape incidents took place in the survivor's house in front of her family members as a way to humiliate the whole community. Some women were forced to serve the RSF soldiers by cooking, cleaning and even dancing to entertain them. In a harrowing testimony shared on Shahada Podcast, an official from the National Commission for Human Rights in Sudan reflected on the weaponization of sexual violence against Sudanese women during the ongoing conflict. She explained, *"Women are targeted because if you want to insult the dignity of Eastern society, break it and bring it to the stage of humiliation, there is nothing worse than raping its women."* She linked this deliberate targeting to the actions of the RSF, describing their conduct as barbaric and rooted in a strategy of dehumanization. In one chilling account, she recounted a case reported to the Commission: a woman who lived across from an RSF camp was enslaved for three months. During that time, she was subjected to repeated rape by members of the militia and forced to serve and clean for them (Shahada Podcast, 2024).

Women desperately decide to move from one place to the other within Sudan to escape the atrocities, but unfortunately, they would also be exposed to sexual assaults while fleeing. The majority of women end up on their own trying to protect themselves and their children because the men in their families would be either killed, abducted by the RSF soldiers, forcefully recruited, or are lost in the traveling journey inside Sudan or while leaving Sudan.

"My transition from Sudan to Chad was brutal, marked with uncertainty and an overwhelming sense of sadness. I witnessed violence and human rights violations against my community, including rape, killing, burning, displacement, and torture of women, children, men, and even animals. The scenes were indescribable, akin to Judgment Day," (SIHA, 2025).

Many girls and women were abducted for days and weeks and were gang raped repeatedly or were exposed to sexual enslavement. Others were abducted for trafficking reasons within Sudan or in other neighboring countries. In a podcast interview with a Sudanese activist (*Fahem Qasdi?*, 2024). She recounted the escalation of violence against women at the start of the conflict. She explained, *"when the war first started, we began noticing that many girls and women were being*

reported missing. Then it became clear, they were being deliberately targeted. The militias would raid homes, and if there were male figures present, they would either kill them instantly or detain them, and then seize the women. Some women were taken for sexual abuse, others were forced to cook and clean. Girls are being used as weapons to break their opponent. ‘To break the state, I will rape the women,’ they say.” She also described an area by the border with Chad known as “Hell Creek”, where she stated, “women are being sold, much like what happened to Yazidi women in Iraq in the past by ISIS” (Shahada Podcast, 2024).

There’s also evidence of the enforced disappearance of hundreds of girls and women. There are multiple social media initiatives to create pressure on the international community to support in finding the missing girls and women, hashtags like the below were frequently used:

الدعم السريع يستبيح بيوتنا

#LostSudaneseSisters

#BringSudanMissingGirlsAndWomenBack

مفقودات السودان

أعبدوهم

#WhereDidYouTakeThem, #LostSudaneseSisters, #BringSudanMissingGirlsAndWomenBack

It’s very difficult for women to seek medical assistance after the sexual assault due to how dangerous it is to go outside the house, and due to the collapse of the health care system in the war affected areas. Oftentimes women wouldn’t be able to get the post rape protocol that prevents sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and unwanted pregnancies. In her testimony on Shahada Podcast (2024) the official of the National Commission for Human Rights in Sudan described the catastrophic health consequences of sexual violence by the RSF. She warned “*This is a militia whose movement extends throughout West Africa, so there are also many diseases that may have been transmitted to the Sudanese women who were raped.*” She stressed that the fear of pregnancy should not overshadow the broader health risks, urging survivors to seek testing and care. Yet, even this plea is mired in tragedy, as medical care in wartime Sudan has collapsed. “*Medical care has become very poor, and medical staff have come under the control of the militia*”.

The shame is doubled for Sudanese women with unwanted pregnancies making them resort to unsafe abortions or abandon the child to the Sudanese alternative care system. In rare cases the mother decides to keep the child (Appendix F).

We end this section with a quote from the submission of SIHA to the UN Human Rights Council; “The continued neglect of this crisis by the international community amounts to complicity in the suffering of Sudanese women and girls. Without urgent and decisive action, the situation will only deteriorate further. We, therefore, urge the Human Rights Council to act decisively to protect Sudanese women and girls, ensuring justice, accountability, and urgent humanitarian support before more lives are lost” (SIHA, 2025).

4.1 Targeting of Sudanese Women

Before Sudan descended into the control of the RSF, women played a leading role in the 2018 - 2019 revolution, widely known through the hashtag #FallThatIsAll, standing at the forefront of activism and calls for democratic change (Hassanain & Sidig, 2024). Many were widely recognized

and celebrated in the media for their courageous roles during the demonstrations, and honored with the title "*Kandaka*," a reference to the ancient Nubian queens of Sudan (Nugdalla, 2020).



Figure 2. Alaa Salah "*Kandaka of the Sudanese Revolution*"

Note. From Alaa Salah "*Kandaka of the Sudanese Revolution*" [Photograph], by L. Haroun, 2019, X (<https://x.com/lanahago/status/1115359151696142337/photo/1>). Courtesy of the artist.

Alaa Salah (figure 2); the Sudanese protester led the protest chants in 2019 (فيديوهات الثورة السودانية, 2019) (Appendix G), while the protestors shouting "*thawra*" "revolution". She mobilized the protestors by more than just powerful chants, she utilized a long history of women activism, strengths and resistance against tyrants aka the British colonization, and later the multiple militarized dictatorship rulers (1900-2019) (Brown, 2017). By wearing the traditional white *thobe*; a symbol of resistance and advocacy used to be worn by women activists in the 20th century (Jaafari, 2019). She became an international symbol of the Sudanese Revolution (2019). She was later named the "*Kandaka*² of the Sudanese Revolution". This striking image not only represented the Sudanese people's shared desire for democracy and reform but also underscored the vital leadership of women in the pro-democracy movement. The chants she led were inspired by the poetry of celebrated Sudanese writer Azhari Mohamed Ali, including the powerful line: "*The bullet doesn't kill. What kills is the silence of people.*" These words echoed throughout the 2018–2019 uprising, as well as during earlier protests in 2011–2013, drawing on Sudan's long history of resistance.

Recognizing the strengths and leadership of Sudanese women, the Sudanese regime at the time systematically targeted women activists in an effort to crush the movement, knowing it was rooted in their leadership, this targeting took the form of beatings, detentions, and rape

² Kandaka is the name of Nubian queen who is empowered and fights for her country and her rights

(Nugdalla, 2020). The painting above, by talented Sudanese artist Yasmeen Abdullah, reflects the militarized invasion by the SAF on the Sudanese revolution in 2021. Followed by the looting and invasion of people's homes by the RSF, acting with complete impunity, as though they have the right to do whatever they please in spaces that are not theirs, in homes that families spent years building, nurturing, and filling with memories, only to be forced to flee and leave everything behind when the war erupted in order to save their lives.



Figure 3. *To the enemy who drinks tea in our house*

Note. From *To the Enemy Who Drinks Tea in Our House* [Painting], by Y. Abdullah, 2022, *Inspire Gallery* (<https://inspire.gallery/artists/yasmeen-abdullah/>). © Yasmeen Abdullah. Courtesy of the artist.

It is increasingly evident that the RSF are systematically employing sexual violence as a tactic of war, in an attempt to degrade Sudanese women's dignity and violate their honor, a form of retribution aimed at pushing them back after the progress they achieved during and following the revolution (CVAW, 2025). This practice is deeply embedded in their broader political agenda, which seeks to reshape demographics through ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, economic and political subjugation of populations in areas under their control, and the use of sexual violence as a strategic weapon significantly heightens the risk of impunity (CVAW, 2025).

4.2 Sudanese women's resilience

The experiences of Sudanese women shared in this paper underscores the importance of approaches that recognize survivors as active contributors to the development of responses to gender-based violence. Rather than positioning women solely as recipients of protection or humanitarian assistance, community-based approaches can create opportunities for their knowledge, experiences, and recommendations to shape advocacy, support, and prevention efforts. This is particularly significant in contexts affected by conflict, war, and institutional disruption and failure, where formal mechanisms of protection are limited and informal networks play an important role in helping women navigate violence and its consequence. Survivor informed peer and community networks may offer spaces for collective reflection, information sharing, and the strengthening of agency. Addressing femicide therefore requires collaborative and community-based action that centers women's voices and supports their meaningful participation and efforts toward protection, prevention, and accountability (Vargas Moniz et al., 2024).

Despite all the suffering and with little to no resources, grassroots and community-based initiatives, particularly those led by women: women led organizations (WLOs) are playing a crucial role in response efforts by maintaining a presence in areas controlled by both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the RSF. They are utilizing local networks to provide services to GBV survivors, particularly in challenging locations (UN Women, 2024). This facilitates referrals, and access to essential medical and mental health support services to survivors of sexual abuse. They are working tirelessly to coordinate aid for civilians in affected areas, this was mostly through Emergency Response Rooms which work under extreme conditions to offer support where international and formal humanitarian organizations are absent (CVAW, 2025). These efforts have addressed the needs of internally displaced women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and sexual violence survivors (Ergene & Eken, 2024).

Throughout this hardship, Sudanese women have taught us to view trauma, healing and resilience through a community, collective and togetherness lens. Which has been evident in similar African contexts (Most & Masango, 2012). Asserting that the socio-centric perspective is the most logical lens to use in trauma healing interventions (Most & Masango, 2012). A pitfall that multilaterals and aid foundations fall into when trying to intervene in contexts like Sudan is offering mental health services that are Western and not relevant to the context (Bhui & Bhugra, 2007; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). It's another mask of coloniality and white supremacy where the white European is saving the oppressed black people! (Bhui & Bhugra, 2007). The amount of superiority and arrogance is revolting.

They often rely on the traditional Western mental health interventions through conducting psychotherapy sessions (Most & Masango, 2012). Røren, et al. (2019) argue on the importance of modifying and negotiating the trauma treatment in Sudan to be relevant to Sudanese women. The article also portrays the intense penetration of western education and training in countries like Sudan making it essential for mental health practitioners to stay vigilant to constant modifications to their trauma treatment interventions (Røren, et al., 2019). Oftentimes, unfortunately in countries that were once colonized and currently are neo-colonized, we find the mental health services offered, especially by international aid organizations, utilize culturally

insensitive interventions (Miller, & Rasmussen, 2010). They often also disregard the local healing practices found in these communities (Miller, & Rasmussen, 2010).

However, Sudanese women astonished us by their organic healing abilities. They utilized available resources in their environments to promote their resilience and accelerate their healing journeys. When sexual violence survivor Sudanese women were asked about their needs for support in their healing journey, they asked for Quran lessons and Islamic teaching classes (S. Sharif, personal communication³, January 20, 2025). Which is a significant finding in this particular context where sometimes the utilization of their own community resources and spiritual beliefs might be much more effective in their trauma healing journeys than the interventions conducted by mental health practitioners (Most & Masango, 2012). They healed through using their faith in Allah and practicing their religious rituals, which made them find meaning in this suffering. What gave them strength to endure such atrocities, was their connection with Allah and their belief that Allah placed them in this situation so he will give them the strength to handle it. *"Their connection with Allah gave them strengths and meaning"* (S. Sharif, personal communication⁴, January 20, 2025). They seek refuge in Allah, and believe that no one can make them feel better, but full submission and seeking refuge in him. *"If someone is distressed, they will pray and make Duaa and hold their prayer beads "سبحة" (H. Essam, personal communication, February 24, 2025). Sudanese women would commonly say; "as soon as I held my prayer beads, and recited the Quran I felt better"* (H. Essam, personal communication, February 24, 2025)⁵.

Social support was also an essential component in their healing journey. It was portrayed in the way women opened their homes for one another even when security and food were scarce, choosing communal hardship over individual security. Sudanese women utilized social cohesion in healing, *"they heal by being together"* (H. Essam, personal communication, February 24, 2025). They would meet at a neighbor's house for coffee or for tea and this gathering acts as a venting session that gives them strength and energy to cope with the current cruelty taking place. *"The community of Sudanese women is interconnected and there's warmth and feelings of belongingness among them; social cohesion is essential for their survival. They genuinely create spaces for themselves to meet even in such horrific circumstances, and pass by each other's places and check on one another even if it's risky.....they would support one another unconditionally.....with such horrific living conditions Sudanese people's homes are open to welcome whoever needs shelter and food even if the food is scarce"* (H. Essam, personal communication, February 24, 2025). Social support was especially important when they met with other women who faced the same atrocities of sexual violence, there was a beautiful feeling of universality that reassured them that they can get over this and move on. Their special way of healing just by feeling truly heard and felt. One sentence that Sudanese women often use to console each other is *ante ma baraki أنتي ما بركي* which means you are not alone.

Additionally, their position as women, daughters, mothers, sisters, aunts and wives gave them this specific superpower of healing "nurturance" (Appendix H)! This superpower originated from

³ head of the Federal Unit for CVAW, who is also a trauma therapist. She interacted directly with the Sudanese women who survived sexual assaults between April 2023-April 2025

⁴ head of the Federal Unit for CVAW, who is also a trauma therapist. She interacted directly with the Sudanese women who survived sexual assaults between April 2023-April 2025

⁵ Sudanese counselor practicing in Egypt and has interacted directly with Sudanese women who survived sexual violence.

their beliefs that family comes first. A brave 47-year-old mother of 5 stated, “*war taught me to be the pillar of the house and the Sudanese woman is the foundation and the head of the family. I love my country,*” (*Women’s Refugee Commission, Sudanese Family Planning Association, & Gender in Emergencies Group, p. 22, 2024*). Perhaps western readers might not fully understand this concept because of the amount of exposure to literature and propaganda that portrays African/ Arab/ Muslim women as submissive and oppressed. I ask you to wear the cultural relativism lens when reading this to truly understand the warmth and healing abilities those amazing women have. Abu-Lughod (2002) explained beautifully the case of so many women placing the highest importance to their own homes and families and called their home the “*sanctity of women*” P. 785. Sudanese women, including working professionals, hold family and home as their highest, most sacred priority. Why is it so hard to accept that? This is the case in most collectivist cultures that only after colonization did women start to put more priority to the sphere outside the home than within the home. It’s a classic plan to destroy the power of the family structure that has always distinguished and strengthened collectivist communities (Almessiri, 2004; Nady, 1983; Smith, 2012; wa Thiong’o, 1986).

4.3 Authors’ Reflection

The writing process of our collaboration functioned as a site of radical solidarity and healing, allowing us to forge strength from our shared encounters with coloniality and oppression. In a deliberate challenge to mainstream psychology, we privileged authentic emotional testimony over the rigid norms of academic publishing, an act we found to be intrinsically healing.

As authors, we write these words not only to document but to bear witness, to say that while the world’s silence echoes, Sudanese women continue to survive.

5. The Cost of Silence: Sudan and the Politics of Neglect

5.1 Colonial Legacies, Racism, and the Global Response to Sudan’s Crisis

How can the world remain silent in the face of one of the gravest humanitarian crises in contemporary history? We question whether global attention has grown indifferent to certain human tragedies. Is this a result of conflict fatigue or something else? We then recall the international response to the war in Ukraine, a response marked by swift and widespread mobilization, and we are left with unsettling questions. Conflicts in predominantly Black, African, or Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) countries rarely elicit the same level of urgency or empathy within global discourse (Satya, 2005; Sholgami, 2024). Colonial imperial legacies have played a role in normalizing the suffering of African, Black, and Muslim populations by subconsciously linking poverty, hunger, and war to their identities (Satya, 2005; Sholgami, 2024). The world appears indifferent, or perhaps unsurprised, as if imagining “a group of barbaric, uncivilized, or inferior people engaged in yet another conflict”. Decolonial scholars highlight how systemic oppression has rendered the suffering of non-white people invisible, framed by narratives of barbarism versus civilization and dehumanization versus humanity. In addition, they systematically use colonial power and whiteness to single out, and label, non-white people as

both a problem and a threat (Bhatia, 2020). Such hierarchies justify the exploitation and erasure of marginalized communities, treating their lands, lives, and histories as insignificant (Bhatia, 2020; Gonzalez & Sanchez-Lasaballett, 2023). It shows how the world is divided based on one's race as Fanon (1963) puts it *"It is clear that what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to."* p.5.

The global response to the war in Ukraine demonstrated remarkable solidarity, a level of compassion and support that raises critical questions when contrasted with the world's treatment of Sudan. Why hasn't the same level of solidarity been shown to the Sudanese people? Do they not deserve the same degree of empathy and mobilization? After more than two years of conflict, the UN's humanitarian appeal for Sudan remains only 57% funded (Mishra, 2024), in stark contrast to how swiftly resources were mobilized for other crises such as Ukraine. As Sudan's humanitarian conditions deteriorate, severe funding cuts by international donors are placing millions of lives at risk by restricting access to essential food and health services (UNFPA Sudan, 2025). The limited global attention and support for Sudanese suffering reflect a deeper pattern of embedded racism and white supremacy. From a Eurocentric standpoint, the Ukrainian crisis appears more "relatable", the Ukrainian people often perceived as "white", "European", and "civilized" (Sholgami, 2024). This lack of solidarity constitutes a form of systemic violence. As Gonzalez and Sanches-Lasaballett (2023) argue *"imposition of policies, knowledge and logic, reproduces unequal relationships between the West and the 'rest'; it keeps the non-European people as the 'other', which is the fundamental systemic violence that structures the patriarchal, racial, capitalist world order"* p.2.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Towards collective accountability

This paper has sought to center Sudanese women and their lived realities within the broader landscape of war, displacement, and systemic injustice. As the African proverb reminds us, *"when the elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled."* The Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF must be held accountable for the atrocities committed against civilians. Accountability begins with knowledge, through learning about Sudan, engaging in critical conversations, documenting war crimes, and listening attentively to Sudanese voices. True solidarity demands action, and collective responsibility is essential to support the women and people of Sudan as they reclaim their narrative, land, and dignity. Dismissive responses such as "it is just a civil war" diminish the crisis and obscure its complexity. While evidence points to broader proxy war dynamics (Berekteab, 2025), the framing of conflict must never devalue innocent human life. As Azhar Sholgami⁶ (2024) states *"any form of human calamity deserves full solidarity. Selective humanitarianism defeats the purpose of humanism, which is that any loss of innocent life is a loss to all of humanity regardless of where or to whom it happens."* Achieving legal accountability for gender-based violence amid ongoing conflict is deeply

⁶ Dr. Azhar Sholgami, a Sudanese activist.

challenging as institutions often collapse or become complicit. Yet, documenting these acts remains vital for future justice and collective memory.

As readers, researchers, and members of a global community, we are all implicated in the silence surrounding Sudan. Bearing witness is an act of resistance, to learn, to listen, and to refuse indifference. We invite readers to reflect on their positionality and the power and privilege they hold within global systems that render some lives invisible. Action can begin with small but meaningful steps like, amplifying Sudanese voices, supporting women led organizations on the ground, engaging critically with how Sudan is represented in media and academia, and challenging narratives that normalize or erase violence against women. You can also refer to (Appendix I) for a list of resources to support, and advocate for the people of Sudan

Beyond advocacy, self-reflection is essential, questioning how silence and selective empathy sustain injustice, and how one's own field, institution, or practice might unknowingly reproduce the same hierarchies that sustain global neglect. Understanding that solidarity with Sudanese women is not charity, it is an ethical commitment to justice, remembrance, and the belief that healing must be collective



Figure 4. Graffiti painting during the revolution in Khartoum Streets, Sudan

Note. Alaa Salah, the Symbol of the Sudanese Revolution, from *Street Art, Shoreditch* [Photograph], by D. Cumming, 2019, Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/duncan/48151428912/in/photolist-2gmYEfd>)

A graffiti painting on a wall in Khartoum⁷ features *Kandaka* Alaa Salah, a symbol of resistance in Sudan's contemporary history. In the context of ongoing femicide and gender-based atrocities in Sudan, this image reclaims space for women's voices and affirms their right to define the future of their country. We chose to end this paper with the image as both a form of resistance to the world's silence on the mass killing and brutalization of Sudanese women and girls, and as a tribute to their unmatched courage and endurance. In a conflict that has rendered women's bodies

⁷ Sudan's capital and the birthplace of the 2018-2019 revolution

battlegrounds, honoring their struggle is imperative to keeping Sudan as a nation rooted in justice, peace, and collective liberation.

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APPENDIX A

130 SUDANESE WOMEN COMMITTED MASS SUICIDE

On October 26, 2024 more than 130 women committed mass suicide in Al Jazirah state eastern central region of Sudan, to escape the detrimental consequence of rape by the militia group named Rapid Support Forces (RSF)⁸ (Gichuki, 2024). This took place at Al Jazirah, one of Sudan's 18 states, which is considered the second most significant state after Sudan's triangular capital, Khartoum (Sikainga, et al., 2025). This city housed most of the Sudanese people who escaped when the war first erupted in the capital in April 2023 (Jazeera, 2023). Horrific atrocities especially sexual violence, have been reported (Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, 2024). Such horrific news should have shaken the entire world, especially in a country such as Sudan, where the suicide rate is as low as 3.16% (World Bank Group, 2021). However, despite the gravity of events, the global media largely remained silent, and mainstream media poorly reported the situation (Sholgami, 2024). This global disinterest left the role of documentation and advocacy on Sudanese and African women coalitions, women advocacy organizations such as; Darfur Women Action Group (DWAG⁹), Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA¹⁰), and humanitarian aid agencies (Darfur Women Action Group, 2024; Gichuki, 2024). This shows a huge gap in documenting the terrors that Sudanese people are facing, especially women, which in turn dramatically affects the minimal international response to the crisis (Sholgami, 2024).

⁸⁸ Firmian, F. M. (2024, July 25). *How militia groups capture states and ruin countries: The case of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces*. The African Mirror. <https://theafricanmirror.africa/news/how-militia-groups-capture-states-and-ruin-countries-the-case-of-sudans-rapid-support-forces/>

⁹ <https://www.darfurwomenaction.org/about/>

¹⁰ <https://sihanet.org/our-story/>

APPENDIX B

POSITIONALITY

As the first author (Azza), a Sudanese woman who never had the privilege of truly living in my homeland, I write from a place of grief, urgency, and defiance. The violent, sudden loss of Sudan, a country I have longed for more than I have lived in, has left me with a profound sense of powerlessness, which I now transform into resistance through my work. I read Sudan's history not as a distant narrative, but as an inheritance that lives in my body (the echoes of colonization that fractured identity, the decades of dictatorship that silenced voices like my father's, and the revolutions that reawakened our collective will to resist).

As the daughter of a Sudanese activist, I learned from an early age that dedicating oneself to the liberation of a homeland is neither simple nor guaranteed, yet that does not diminish the commitment to doing what feels right. Writing from this generational lineage of struggle, I locate myself within the continuum of Sudanese women who have carried the burden of survival, remembrance, and renewal. As a Sudanese community psychologist writing on behalf of my people, particularly fellow Sudanese women, alongside fellow African, Arab, and Muslim community psychologists, feel like an act of resistance, unity, and deep care, a collective response shaped by our shared experiences of history, conflict, and collective trauma.

As the second author (Noha), an Egyptian woman who received colonial education and didn't realize it until working closely with care experienced youth, who taught me what it truly means to be a community psychologist and a resilience practitioner. I also learned how colonized my life was by bearing witness to the genocides in Gaza and in Sudan. The hypocrisy, racism, white supremacy, colonialism, imperialism and eurocentrism portrayed with clear audacity from the world, outraged me so I decided to utilize this rage to strengthen my journey in confronting and dismantling systemic inequities and oppression. Sudanese and Egyptians share an unbreakable bond, with a long history of intertwined narratives that extend to culture, language, religion, family lineage and colonization. So, as I embarked in the journey of advocating for Sudan I did so with a heavy heart as I cannot do anything to stop the continuous sexual assaults on my sisters in Sudan who are at a close proximity from where I live in Egypt. I hope this piece dismantles the silence of the world and gives voice to the Sudanese women who taught me resistance and resilience amidst unimaginable atrocities.

We draw immense pride from our faith and from the legacy of being Muslim, African Arabs, a legacy that has been distorted and sabotaged by colonization and western ideologies. We resist being boxed into the orientalist and white supremacist feminist framework that portrays us as helpless or voiceless. Our agency and autonomy are rooted in the solidarity we share as women, empowered by nurturance, protection, resistance, and unconditional love. These are the forces that sustain our collective resistance in this space, allowing us to confront systems of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. May we be able to produce knowledge that reflects our heritage, strengths, and resilience as Muslims, Arabs, Africans, and as women. May we amplify the voices of the courageous Sudanese women who have survived unimaginable atrocities.

I (Hana) met Noha during my visit to Cairo last year, following a presentation I gave on decoloniality, community psychology, and what it means to exist as a Palestinian woman scholar amid genocide. Afterward, Noha approached me, not only to express resonance with the ideas but to extend a powerful invitation: to co-write and mentor her through a process she had long

been denied. In her master's program, she had not been exposed to critical psychology or decolonial frameworks. She felt that collaborating with me would provide her with invaluable learning experiences. I said yes, not out of obligation, but because I am dedicated to creating spaces and times to facilitate the co-empowerment of women, and have been deeply reflective on the role of healed women accompanying other women, echoing bell hooks' call for feminist solidarity (*hooks, 2000*).

We began to meet weekly, eventually biweekly. These were not ordinary academic meetings. As we wrote, genocide raged in both Gaza and Sudan. Noha and I held space for each other's helplessness and grief, and she shared how the weight of global violence left her disoriented, as if both the world and language had failed her. This writing, then, was not merely scholarly; it was ancestral, affective, and embodied.

It was during this phase that Noha invited Azza, her friend and colleague, to join our collective. Azza, Sudanese and bearing witness to the brutal erasure of her people, entered the writing space with both fire and fragility. She had never published before, but she carried theory in her breath, in her body. Our work together became a practice of remembering what many systems had worked to erase: that they were not empty vessels awaiting knowledge, but rather, sites of ancestral knowledge.

We did not begin with an outline. The writing emerged from deep listening, critical dialogue, and the politics of presence. Our conversations about racism, rage, feminism, whiteness, and our responsibility as women from and writing about the Global South were the paper. When Azza and Noha spoke about how the world responds to white grief while ignoring Black and Brown death, we held it gently and did not look away. Hard questions were asked, and we sat with hard silences. Not all silence is avoidance; some is sacred processing.

This led to a critical reflection on my and Noha's positionality as white women, and what it meant to write with Azza, a Black Sudanese woman. Drawing on critical race theory (*Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017*), we acknowledged the power dynamics at play and the need to be accountable to Azza's lived experiences and perspectives. We understood that solidarity required discomfort, decentering, and deep listening, not symbolic inclusion, but structural reorientation.

Authorship order was guided by intention rather than academic status: Azza would lead the writing process. While Noha and Hana had more experience with publishing, the work unfolded as a collective and reciprocal process. Mentorship flowed in multiple directions, we each brought different forms of knowledge, experience, and perspective, and we learned from one another throughout. What emerged was not a hierarchy of expertise, but a shared practice of writing with care, humility, and mutual growth.

We met at 9 or 10 PM Cairo time, hours deliberately chosen, after Noha had tucked her children into bed, and once Azza returned from her work. The writing happened in between survival. And still, they showed up. This, too, is scholarship. This, too, is resistance.

Another transformative moment in our journey while writing came through a reflective meeting with Mazna Patka; one of the editors of this issue. We reached out to her during the process when we started to feel pressured with the approaching deadline and questioning our research methodology, as well as the writing process. She helped us recognize subtle power dynamics within our team, these dynamics were shaped by different levels of writing and publishing experience. At times, this created an unintended hierarchy, where the authors with

less experience deferred to the more experienced one, mirroring the very structures of authority and dependency that our paper seeks to challenge. This realization was crucial as it reminded us that decolonial practice is not only about what we write, but how we write. In that moment we reclaimed our collective agency as authors, affirming that our individual experiences, ways of knowing, and modes of expression are equally valid and deeply valuable. Writing together became an act of decolonization in itself, a conscious unlearning of the hierarchies inherited from western academic traditions, and mainstream psychology, and a re-rooting in our own authenticity and collaborative strength.

Our writing space became a ritual of collective liberation. As Black feminist scholar Aimee Meredith Cox reminds us, “Black women are always theorizing, always creating new modes of survival.” Similarly, Anzaldúa’s “theory in the flesh” was present here, not just as a citation, but as a methodology. Audre Lorde’s teachings on the uses of anger helped us name rage not as something to manage but as something to mine.

This collaborative process, born out of shared experiences and a commitment to decoloniality, became a testament to the power of women’s solidarity and the transformative potential of collective writing.

APPENDIX C

IMPACT OF THE CATASTROPHE ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Displacement crisis

The ongoing conflict in Sudan is now entering its third year, and in just the first two years it has resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, now considered the largest in the world, according to Oxfam International (2025) over 30 million individuals require urgent assistance meaning **3 in every 5 people living in Sudan**, That is approximately **60%** of the country's total population! As a central driver of global displacement, Sudan currently accounts for **one in every eight** displaced persons (IDPs) and **one in every thirteen refugees** worldwide. Almost half of all forcibly displaced individuals across East Africa originate from Sudan. Over **12.7 million** individuals, approximately **one-third** of the nation's population, have been displaced, with **3.7 million** seeking refuge in neighboring countries. These mass displacements have also intensified ethnic tensions, increased security risks, and led to heightened competition over scarce resources. In South Sudan, Chad, and Ethiopia, borders have facilitated movements of weapons and contributed to local conflicts, exposing both displaced populations and host communities to elevated risks of violence (Oxfam International, 2025). Food insecurity is widespread, affecting **one in every two people**. Famine conditions have been confirmed in five out of the 18 states of Sudan, while an additional **eight million** individuals face the imminent threat of starvation (Oxfam International, 2025). Despite the escalating scale of suffering, international aid remains alarmingly inadequate; only **10%** of the United Nations' 2025 humanitarian appeal for Sudan has been funded. A further worsening to the situation was the suspension of USAID aid to neighboring countries which in turn impacted refuge and support efforts. According to Oxfam Africa's director, Fati N'Zi-Hassane, the negligence of this crisis would not only represent a significant political and ethical failure, but also a fundamental betrayal of humanitarian principles. Highlighting that a swift financial intervention is urgently needed as without it millions will be at risk of dying from hunger and disease (Oxfam International, 2025), while the UN identifies it as "the largest and most devastating displacement, humanitarian and protection crisis in the world today" (Humanitarian Action Sudan, 2025).

Children's situation

Since the onset of the conflict in Sudan in April 2023, there has been a sharp and alarming increase in conflict related sexual violence (CRSV), disproportionately affecting women, girls, and children. These acts are perpetrated with apparent impunity, reflecting a widespread absence of accountability. Since early 2024, UNICEF had documented **221** confirmed cases of child rape across 9 states in Sudan, tragically involving children as young as one year old (UNICEF, 2025). Among these victims, **60%** are girls, **33%** are boys, and **7%** are under five years old, including four infants (Humanitarian Action Sudan, 2025). Data collected by SIHA network (2025) reveals that girls constitute approximately **23.15%** of the documented CRSV cases, illustrating the extreme vulnerability of minors in the current conflict. In addition, reports of sexual violence against boys

have also emerged. Unfortunately, many such violations remain undocumented due to fear, stigma, or lack of access to reporting mechanisms (SIHA, 2025). Due to these extreme and inhumane circumstances, often with no mechanisms of protection in place, children and girls in particular face brutal physical trauma, including fatal injuries such as excessive bleeding and dangerous infections, as well as unwanted pregnancies which increase the risks (UNICEF, 2025).

With the collapse of the healthcare systems, many do not survive, dying in silence and neglect. Those who survive are left with profound psychological wounds and lasting physical damage (SIHA, 2025). The health crisis is further compounded by recurring outbreaks of infectious diseases such as measles and malaria, with **90%** of healthcare facilities not functioning (Humanitarian Action Sudan, 2025). At the same time, routine immunization coverage has drastically declined, leaving **one in every six children** without any form of vaccine protection (WHO & UNICEF, 2025, as reported in The Guardian). Nearly **one-third** of the population, or around **11 million individuals**, are in urgent need of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, with waterborne illnesses like diarrhea and cholera posing significant risks due to inadequate access to clean water and sanitation (UNICEF Sudan, 2025).

The ongoing conflict has significantly undermined food production, especially in major agricultural hubs such as Gezira and Gadarif states. As a result, food prices have increased dramatically, reported as much as **500%**, making essential food items unaffordable for much of the population (Humanitarian Action Sudan, 2025). According to UNICEF Sudan (2025) approximately **3.2 million** children under the age of five in Sudan experience acute malnutrition, with an estimated **770,000** of them suffering from severe acute malnutrition, which is the most life-threatening form. In addition to the health collapse, abuse, and sexual violations, according to UNICEF **90%** — over **17 million** of Sudan's 19 million school-aged children are currently out of school, jeopardizing their developmental prospects and long-term well-being (UNICEF Sudan, 2025).

APPENDIX D
STIGLMAYER (1994) QUOTES A WOMAN WHO SURVIVED THE DOBOJ CAMP

They said that each woman had to serve at least ten men a day. . . . God, what horrible things they did. They just came in and humiliated us, raped us, and later they told you, "Come on now, if you could have Ustasha babies, then you can have a Chetnik baby, too." . . . Women who got pregnant, they had to stay there for seven or eight months so they could give birth to a Serbian kid. They had their gynecologists there to examine the women. The pregnant ones were separated off from us and had special privileges; they got meals, they were better off, they were protected. Only when a woman's in her seventh month, when she can't do anything about it anymore, then she's released. Then they usually take these women to Serbia. . . . They beat the women who didn't get pregnant, especially the younger women; they were supposed to confess what contraceptives they were using. P. 119

APPENDIX E

SUDAN RESOURCES

Prior to the separation, the country's oil reserves were estimated to range between five and seven billion barrels (Islamic Relief UK, 2020). Sudan is the world's top producer of Arabic gum, supplying 70% of global demand despite utilizing only 20% of its gum-yielding trees, the gum is a crucial component in several industries including textiles, adhesives, paints, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, food production, and carbonated beverages (Muteti, 2023). As of December 2022, Sudan's gold production reached 41.8 metric tons (41,800 kilograms) (U.S. Geological survey, 2022), other mineral reserves include 700,000 tons of chromium, 1000,000 tons of manganese, 53 million tons of asbestos (Sudan Tribune, 2014).

APPENDIX F

STORIES OF SUDANESE WOMEN'S SURVIVAL

A brave woman whose motherly instincts were stronger than shame and social stigma. She already had a son before the sexual assault incident and her husband was missing. She became pregnant as a result of the rap and decided to keep the baby. Even though her whole family outcasted her for keeping this unlawful, illegitimate baby who was not only born out of wedlock (which is considered a disgrace in Arab, Muslim countries) but also a result of rape, in addition to the fact that the father of the child is a war criminal (RSF soldier). Despite all these reasons to abort or abandon this child, the mother chose to move to Egypt to raise her children alone. She felt she would not kill her baby, and that the rape was out of her hand, it's not her fault or the baby's fault (she was driven by strong faith in Allah, that it was Allah's will and not her fault) (H. Essam, personal communication, February 24, 2025).

APPENDIX G
SUDANESE REVOLUTIONARY POEM CHANTED BY ALAA SALAH (2019), REVOLUTION ICON
كلمات القصيدة التي تلتها آلاء صلاح أيقونة ثورة 2019

يا والدة أعفيلي.. وعدي القطعتو معاك..
إنو الكلام ممنوع.. في شلة الحكام... يا والدة دعي يفور.. لما البلد تغلي..
لما العساكر ديل.. الشوهو الإسلام... جايين تفاهاتم..
سجنونا باسم الدين... حرقونا باسم الدين... حقرونا باسم الدين... قتلونا باسم الدين..
الدين بريء يمة..
كوز السجم بيغرف.. في خيرنا ويتمتع... نحن السقينا النيل.. من دمنا الفاير..
ما بننكتم نسكت.. في وش عميل جابر... الخوف عديم الساس.. وأنا جدي ترهاقا..¹¹
حبوبي كنداكة.. وعبد الفضيل الماظ..¹² فراس بشيلو الرأس..
يمة الشباب بحيو.. وأنا بالسكوت ميت

**Translation of Sudanese revolutionary poem chanted by Alaa Salah (2019),
Revolution Icon**

*O Mother, forgive me... for breaking the promise I made to you.
They say speaking out is forbidden... in the circle of the rulers.
O Mother, my blood boils... when the country is on fire.
When these soldiers... who distorted Islam...
Bring their nonsense...
But we — we fed the Nile with the blood that flows from our veins.
We will not stay silent...
Not in the face of a cruel traitor.
Fear is baseless.
I am the granddaughter of Terhaka¹³.
My grandmother is a Kandaka.
And Abdel Fadil Almaz¹⁴
His head rose in resistance.
Mother, the youth have come to life, and I am dead from the silence.
Hazaa¹⁵ and Sanhour, Amjad Wali Al Deen,
Hazeem, Mona, Majdy.
These martyrs are all alive with silk garments in heaven.*

¹¹ A pharaoh of the Kushite dynasty, which ruled parts of modern-day Sudan

¹² A revolutionary who fought against British colonial rule

¹³ A pharaoh of the Kushite dynasty, which ruled parts of modern-day Sudan

¹⁴ A revolutionary who fought against British colonial rule

¹⁵ Names of martyrs who lost their lives during the protests

APPENDIX H

RESILIENCE OF SUDANESE WOMEN

In a small village in Al Jazeera State, Sakina rises each morning before the sun, although her heart is heavy with the cries of a war-torn land, her mind and hands remain steady with purpose. Armed with a cold vaccine box and a notebook of names, she walks for hours, dodging checkpoints and flooded dirt roads - as the Blue Nile floods villages and roads during this time of the year - to reach mothers hiding in abandoned schools, and children weakened by malnutrition and fear. Once a midwife, Sakina is now the village's only lifeline to healthcare. She speaks softly, listens intently, and gives a child a polio drops or a fever strip, she smiles as if to say, "you are not forgotten." In a world that seems to have forsaken her people, Sakina carries a quiet resistance in every step, resistance through care, through presence, through love. Where systems have collapsed and violence roams freely, Sakina is healing with nothing more than her hands, courage, and the ancient power of nurturance passed down by generations of Sudanese women.

UNICEF (2025, March 28). Empowering Sudanese women to protect children against all odds. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/stories/empowering-sudanese-women-protect-children-against-all-odds>