

# Statement on the German Government's Resumption and Expansion of Political, Economic and Development Policy Cooperation in Sudan

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## Introduction and Summary

SudanUprising Germany is an activist platform founded by Sudanese and Sudanese-German activists shortly after the revolution began in Sudan in December 2018. We use this platform to support the revolutionary demands of freedom, peace and justice in Sudan, in order to connect the Sudanese revolution in solidarity with emancipatory struggles in Europe, Africa and around the world, and to call for a decolonization of European foreign policy in Africa and the “Middle East”.

On 11 February 2020 in Berlin, the German Bundestag passed a proposal supported by the CDU/CSU and SPD parliamentary groups for the resumption and expansion of bilateral political, economic and development policy cooperation with Sudan. Policy cooperation had been suspended by the German parliament on June 15 1989 in response to the civil war in Sudan, two weeks before al-Bashir and the military, with the aid of the National Islamic Front, took power in a coup d'etat. The Covid-19 pandemic has, for the moment, thrown the future of many policy decisions that require budgetary allocations into question, both at the European Union (EU) level and in Sudan. However, what is certain is that Germany intends to be a major player in Sudan's transition. While we agree with the German government that the recent Sudanese revolution presents a historical opportunity to dramatically improve the human rights situation in Sudan, we contest, on several fronts, its narrative and actions in regards to our country.

Below is the statement issued by SudanUprising Germany on the resumption of aid and the proposal from the ruling coalition (CDU/CSU and SPD) on which it is based. What is clear in the ruling coalition's parliamentary proposal is that it reduces the Sudanese revolution and the many intersecting grievances that drove it to only economics. Such a simplified analysis downplays the importance of the call for freedom, peace and justice that Sudanese protesters rose up and sacrificed so much for. We see these demands as Sudanese revolutionaries do – in all their social, legal, political and economic dimensions.

We notice also that the German government likes to confuse the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) with the protestors who made the revolution. These protestors are the millions of Sudanese who engaged in strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins and other forms of nonviolent civil disobedience. The FFC, on the other hand, are a group of opposition political parties, civil society organizations and some armed movements who came together under the banner of the Declaration for Freedom and Change. It is the protestors who give the FFC the legitimacy to represent the revolutionary demands at the political level. This means that power stems from the protestors to the FFC, and not the other way around. Understanding this point has important implications for those who claim to stand with the Sudanese, not least of which is that any policy which seeks to undermine protestors' demands will ultimately fail, even if embraced by civilians in Sudan's current transitional government.

The CDU/CSU and SPD's proposal furthermore suggests that it is only the militias that were involved in the violent and deadly dispersal of the Khartoum sit-in on June 3rd, and that the military played no role. This is evidenced by the following sentence: "The militias in particular were not immediately ready for this. For their part, they escalated on 3 June 2019 with the violent evacuation of the main protest camp". How does the German government know that it was only the militias who committed violence, despite the fact that there are multiple eyewitnesses who implicate the military and the National Security and Intelligence Forces, in addition to the militias, in the massacre? How are the CDU/CSU and SPD so certain when the committee formed by Sudan's transitional government to investigate the attack has not concluded its work or issued its findings?

Of most concern to us in the German government's narrative on the massacre of 3 June is that it does not name the main militia, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), as the group accused by many protestors of being the main perpetrator of violence against them. As is well-known by now, even outside Sudan, the RSF, led by Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo ("Hemedti"), is a rebranding of the genocidal Janjaweed militias, which are accused of committing genocide in Darfur. We find it dishonest that the German government's narrative fails to inform the German people of the role that the European Union, led by Germany, played in the growth and enrichment of the Janjaweed RSF militia. Most Germans are unaware that their government collaborated for years with the al-Bashir regime under the framework of the "Khartoum Process" to further its migration-control agenda in the Horn of Africa. Germany and the EU are still deal-making post-revolution to further their unethical agenda, violating not just the human rights of migrants and refugees, but threatening the whole transition to democracy in Sudan in the process.

The German government's near obsession with "stability" in Sudan and the region essentially means, in terms of policy, a focus on supporting and encouraging forms of governance there that can best serve German and European interests. What the Sudanese have been demanding is freedom, peace, justice and the power to determine their own futures; it is only the achievement of these demands that can lead to a stability that is just and lasting.

Since Sudan's transitional government took power in August 2019, the German government has liked to repeat, as the ruling coalition does in its proposal, that it welcomed the revolution in Sudan. Yet none of its actions at the moments that the Sudanese people most needed support demonstrate such a welcome. Until the beginning of June 2019, when the massacre at the Khartoum sit-in took place, the German government had not suspended its cooperation with the dictatorial al-Bashir regime. The months before had been rife with violence against protestors, in Darfur, Kordofan, Khartoum and elsewhere, but this apparently was not enough reason for Germany to end its cooperation with the military.

The German government is also proud of its initiation of the "Friends of Sudan", a group of countries which Germany brought together in June 2019 to coordinate response to events in Sudan. Since August 2019, this Friends group has expanded, meets regularly, and very much looks like it is morphing into a key platform for policy on Sudan. Its membership includes countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which actively worked to undermine the Sudanese revolution and to prop up the al-Bashir regime. It also includes imperialist countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany itself, who seek to make various political and economic gains in the Horn of Africa region, from migration control to oil profits and terrain for their anti-terrorism operations. All of these agendas have proved destructive to the lives of poor and working-class people in these countries.

We found it striking that the CDU/CSU and SPD proposal does not acknowledge the efforts by civil society to rebuild the Sudanese trade unions, farmers unions, workers collectives, women's rights organizations, non-profit associations and independent media bodies. These bodies, along with the yet-to-be-established parliament which will also likely represent local resistance committees, are critical to the decision over which deals Sudan's transitional government may or may not make, and to holding the government accountable for its policy-decisions. Until these structures are in place, the framework to establish bilateral or multilateral relations remains missing. In such a climate, German aid can easily become a policy-making tool.

The German coalition also notes in the proposal that it will explore, under the right conditions, settling Sudan's arrears on its debts to international creditors, therefore helping the country to "normalize relations" with global financial institutions – presumably, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Sudan's backbreaking debt is indeed a major hurdle to fulfilling the Sudanese people's aspirations. This is especially true at a time when the transitional government is seeking to invest heavily in education, health and other social sectors as a response to the socio-economic inequity, militarism and corruption that triggered the uprising. However, dangling the carrot of debt relief serves only German interests, not those of the Sudanese people. Sudan's debts were acquired mostly by unelected, illegitimate and corrupt governments, and are premised on colonial relations of power. They must therefore be canceled completely.

In addition, German direct investment in Sudan, which the proposal also promises to explore, is likely to come primarily in the form of classic extractive relations of production that rely on importing raw material, especially mining products, and exporting manufactured goods, just as

is the case elsewhere in Africa. This economic model, whose roots lie deep in the colonial project, has failed not just Africans, but generations of workers and farmers across the Global South. If adopted, it will fail the Sudanese people again, as it has in the past. Hence, we will fight against it and any other attempts to impose neoliberal policies on the country.

Not surprisingly, given the above, the CDU/CSU and SPD proposal fails to mention the German government's recent decision to begin deporting refugees to Sudan, a decision it justifies through the false narrative that Sudan is a safe place to return. We reaffirm our commitment to the human right to freedom of movement and call on Sudanese revolutionary bodies to spread awareness and resist attempts by Germany to impose its migration-control and extractive agendas on Sudan in exchange for aid and economic investment. We also call on progressive and radical groups and movements in Germany and Europe more broadly, as well as groups in the Global South fighting for social justice, to support the Sudanese people in their continuing demands for freedom, peace, justice and a future that we determine. We express our deep solidarity with social movements around the world, from Iraq and Iran to Burkina Faso, India, Chile and Haiti, in their common fight for the same.

## Statement in Full

**SudanUprising Germany contests the reduction of the Sudanese revolution and the grievances that drove it to an economic crisis.**

It was not just the economic crisis that led to protests, though economic desperation – particularly the price of bread and basic commodities – triggered them in December 2018. What turned the early protests into an eight-month-long mass movement for change was the accumulation of decades of political repression, structural racism, corruption, sexual violence, misuse and looting of resources, war and mass violations of human rights. The ability to sustain the revolution was, in turn, the result of years of organizing and class struggle for change, in which many human rights defenders and working-class Sudanese, especially women and ethnic minorities, paid a heavy price. Reducing the protests to pure economics downplays the importance of the protestors' call for freedom, peace and justice in all their social, legal, political and economic dimensions.

**We reject the conflation of the Forces for Freedom and Change with the protestors who drove the revolution.**

The German government insists on presenting a story in which the civilian component of the Transitional Government of Sudan and the political coalition backing it, the FFC, are one and the same as the protestors. This fiction allows German policymakers to ignore the fact that the FFC and the transitional government are only informally delegated by the people to ensure that

their revolutionary demands are met. The protestors are the millions of Sudanese people who engaged in strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins and other forms of nonviolent civil disobedience. The FFC, on the other hand, is a group of opposition political parties, civil society organizations and some armed movements who came together under the banner of the Declaration of Freedom and Change – a document that was signed on 01 January 2019, and which laid out the demands of the revolution. It is the protestors who give the FFC, whose most important component is the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), the legitimacy to represent their demands at the political level. This means that power stems from the protestors to the FFC, and not the other way around. This power can thus be withdrawn should the Sudanese people feel that the FFC, and by extension the transitional government, no longer represent them. Instead of keeping its eyes firmly fixed on the demands of the millions of Sudanese people who rose up to say “enough!” to the status quo and prevailing modes of governance, Germany is instead dangling the carrot of aid and using the massive budgetary and economic crisis that the transitional government faces to make it a partner in violating the rights of Sudanese and other African migrants seeking a life of dignity and safety.

**We call on the German government to be transparent about its own role in the growth and enrichment of the Rapid Support Forces Janjaweed militia.**

The CDU/CSU and SPD proposal says: “The militias in particular were not immediately ready for this. For their part, they escalated on 3 June 2019 with the violent evacuation of the main protest camp in front of the army headquarters, which reportedly resulted in more than 100 deaths”. We are very concerned that the German government appears to have concluded that it is only the militias that were involved in the violent and deadly dispersal of the Khartoum sit-in on 3 June. How does the German government draw this conclusion, despite the existence of multiple accounts that also implicate the military and security agents in the massacre? On what is its assessment based considering that the committee formed by Sudan’s transitional government to investigate the attack has yet to conclude its work or issue its findings?

More importantly, the German report does not mention the main militia, the RSF, which is the group accused by many protestors of being the primary perpetrator of violence. As is well-known by now even outside Sudan, the RSF, led by Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo (“Hemedti”), is a rebranding of the genocidal Janjaweed militias, which are accused of committing genocide in Darfur. The German government’s narrative fails to mention the role of the EU, led by Germany, in the growth and enrichment of the Janjaweed RSF militia. While the EU imposed an arms embargo on Sudan between 2015 and 2018, it simultaneously channeled hundreds of millions of Euros into the country through the “Khartoum Process”, an agreement signed in 2014 between the EU and countries in the horn of Africa, that directly benefited the regime. A core plank in the EU’s unethical and immoral “externalized borders” policy, the Khartoum Process’ main objective is to restrict the ability of migrants and refugees in reaching Europe. In 2015, Brussels created a special pot of money – the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – ostensibly to assist the Khartoum Process countries in addressing the root causes of migration and to fight trafficking and smuggling. An Oxfam analysis found, however, that of the

400 million Euros allocated through the Fund, only 3% went towards developing safe and regular routes for migration. The vast majority was spent on migration control.

Another report published in November 2017 by the International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), and The Centre for Human Rights Law at SOAS, University of London, concluded that “the Khartoum Process’ partnership model, whereby the EU provides funding, services and other benefits in return for African countries’ management of migration, is asymmetrical and largely driven by European interests and demands”. It also concluded that this model is part of a broader trend of migrant and refugee “off-shoring” – whereby states pay another state to host asylum seekers or refugees. A Deutsche Welle report published on 22 July 2019 notes that the EU-financed intelligence centre known as the Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum (ROCK), was only suspended in June 2019, following the June 3rd massacre. According to this report, the centre brought together the security forces of nine countries in the Horn of Africa to “share intelligence about human trafficking and people smuggling networks”. The same report notes that a project led by the German development agency GIZ, which provides training and equipment to Sudanese border guards and police, was only “halted” in mid-March 2019, three months after the revolution started, when hundreds had already been killed, injured and arrested by the regime. At the time, the EU made no announcement that it halted the programme. In our estimation, this was likely in order not to draw attention to the fact that the programme had been in operation in the first place.

According to the Sudanese Media Center, cooperation between the al-Bashir regime and the German government included at least one visit to Berlin, in 2016, by a delegation of the Sudanese Ministry of Interior, the same ministry that worked closely with the notorious National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS).

The effect of this EU policy, spearheaded by Germany, on the RSF’s power, has been catastrophic. As human rights activist Suliman Baldo noted in his April 2017 report for The Enough Project, “Sudan’s strategy for stopping migrant flows on behalf of Europe involves a ruthless crackdown by the RSF on migrants within Sudan”. Later in the report, he adds that “starting in 2015 and 2016, and convinced of the RSF’s effectiveness as a counterinsurgency force, the regime designated the RSF as Sudan’s primary force tasked with patrolling Sudanese borders to interdict migrants’ movement. The Sudanese government made this designation within the framework of its partnership with the EU for the control of migration. As such, the RSF is positioned to receive EU funds for reducing the flows of migrants from Sudan to Europe. The Sudanese government enacted a law in January 2017 that integrated the RSF into the Sudan Armed Forces ... The 2017 law (conflictively) made the RSF autonomous, integrated into the army, and under the command of President Omar al-Bashir”.

Baldo is further quoted in a New York Times report on the subject, published in April 2018, as saying: “There is no direct money exchanging hands. But the E.U. basically legitimizes an abusive force.” The same article mentions ROCK- the “joint-coordination” centre set-up in Sudan and funded by the EU to exchange intelligence on migration flows and trafficking. “European officials have direct contact only with the Sudanese immigration police, and not with

the R.S.F., or the security forces ...known as N.I.S.S. But their operations are not that far removed.”

Furthermore, an investigative report published in The New Humanitarian (formerly IRIN NEWS) on 30 January 2018, less than a year before the revolution started in Sudan, notes that “the pattern of corruption and rights violations uncovered feeds into broader concerns over whether the EU’s migration policies are making a difficult situation worse.... Sudan’s previously porous northern border with Libya has become increasingly dangerous to cross after Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir deployed the former Janjaweed – a paramilitary group implicated in war crimes during the Darfur conflict – in 2015 as border guards. This militia, re-named the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and integrated into Sudan’s army in January 2017, arrests asylum seekers and hands them over to the police, who detain, fine, and deport them for illegal entry – regardless of whether returning them to their countries will result in torture or imprisonment.”

Sudan Uprising Germany can only conclude from the above that while the German government and the EU present their interest in Sudan as purely altruistic, in fact, one of the biggest threats to the transition in Sudan is German and European policy itself. The RSF, led by Hemedti, was helped by EU and German policy to continue the violent and oppressive security measures that the Sudanese have suffered from for decades. As the leader of the RSF, Hemedti’s power only grew under the “externalized borders” policy of the EU, led by Germany, so much so that when the revolution took place in 2018/2019, a political deal could not be reached without him. The constitutional declaration, signed in August 2019, legitimizes the RSF as a parallel force to the army, and Hemedti is now the deputy head of the Transitional Sovereign Council. He and his militia are not only one of the biggest obstacles in the way of Sudan’s transition to a fully civilian and democratic state, but in achieving justice- a core demand of the revolution- for those in war-affected areas and for murdered, raped and injured protestors there and elsewhere.

The repression of migrants and refugees as a matter of German and EU policy of course does not stop in Sudan but extends to those on European soil. On the 3 February 2020, the Ministry of Interior of the German state of Lower Saxony made the decision to deport Sudanese refugees. The decision was based on a report by the Federal Foreign Office at a German Ministers of Interior meeting (Innenministerkonferenz, IMK) which took place from 12 to 14 June 2019. Since February, this decision has come into force in different cities in Germany, including Braunschweig, Göttingen, Hannover, Lüneburg, Oldenburg, Osnabrücke and Stade.

## We challenge the German government’s emphasis on “stability” .

The language of “stability” is self-serving to Germany. What the Sudanese have been demanding is freedom, peace and justice; it is only the achievement of these demands that can lead to a stability that is in the interest of Sudanese and other Africans in the region, and not just in the interest of Europe’s ruling elites. While the German government has proven it will go far for the sake of “stability” in Sudan, this stability only serves its own unethical interests. For example, the German Federal Foreign Office, with tax-payer money, supported the highly dubious “National Dialogue Process” of the al-Bashir regime, designed by the al-Bashir regime

to stabilize and prolong his hold on power. Most Sudanese correctly understood the “dialogue”, which began in January 2014 and which went on for almost three years, as simply an attempt by al-Bashir and his party to maintain their hold on power. It was boycotted by most of the opposition political parties and forces in the country.

While Germany supported this process, mass atrocities were simultaneously being committed by the regime and its militias in parts of the country, women were being harassed and abused through the regime’s Public Order Laws and subjected to rape and displacement in war-affected areas, migrants were confronted with hellish conditions on land and at sea, and political dissidents were routinely imprisoned, tortured and denied basic rights. Millions of Sudanese were also driven into cycles of poverty and dispossession, having to battle for basic necessities just to survive. Many didn’t. Yet the German Federal Foreign Office, through the Berghof Foundation and in close collaboration with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), poured money into “mediating” al-Bashir’s dialogue. There has been no transparency on the part of the German government as to whether the same “advisors” who steered its policy in Sudan during the al-Bashir era are still guiding current policy. If they are, what justification does the German government have for that?

In October 2019, only two months after the transitional constitutional declaration was signed between civilians and the Military Transitional Council, the *Khartoum Star* reported on a statement by the Sudanese Foreign Affairs Ministry that it had signed an agreement to be the permanent continental headquarters of the African Union’s Centre for [Combating] Illegal Immigration. “The statement pointed out that the center is the first of its kind in the African continent, where it will provide services to all African countries, pointing out that the European Union supports the centre technically and financially.” In other words, the cynicism and self-serving nature of German and EU policy in regards to Sudan - disguised as concern and altruism - continues.

We disagree with the German government’s assertion that it welcomed the revolution, since none of its actions at the moment the Sudanese people needed support most, demonstrated such a welcome.

The German government did not concretely support the uprising in Sudan until much too late, when numerous people had already lost their lives. Germany offered support only after things had settled down, an agreement between the FFC and TMC had been reached and the transitional government had been installed in August 2019. Between the beginning of the revolution in late 2018 and the removal of al-Bashir in April 2019, there had only been two statements (on 11 January 2019 and 14 March 2019) from the Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid. These were the only public announcements coming from the German Federal Foreign Office. The statement that followed on the 22-of May 2019 called upon the Transitional Military Council “not to turn back halfway, but to assume its responsibility and hand over power to a civilian-led government”. At first glance,

this seems like the German government using its power to pressure for democracy. But on closer inspection, it can easily be read as an act of legitimization, since it put the impetus to act in the hands of the military - which had seized power illegally - instead of promising the protestors support and urging them to carry their struggle forward. The EU had already conferred legitimacy on the militias and military shortly after the fall of al-Bashir. The then EU Ambassador to Sudan, Jean-Michel Dumond, as well as the US ambassador and several other European ambassadors, met with the deputy of the Military Transitional Council at the time, none other than the RSF's genocidal commander Hemedti.

Germany did not position itself in favor of the civilian uprising. We firmly believe that its continued engagement with the military well into the uprising strengthened the military's claim to power-sharing, and was a factor in the mounting pressure on the FFC to reach a political deal with the illegitimate Transitional Military Council. This deal has since revealed itself to contain critical flaws, including an institutionalization of the RSF militia as a parallel force to the Sudan Armed Forces, and an absence of a clear mechanism through which the militias will be dismantled and the military will retreat to the barracks at the end of the transition.

We refute the claim by the German government that its initiation of the "Friends of Sudan" group is for the benefit of the Sudanese people and their struggle for democracy, equity, peace and justice.

The German government proudly states that it initiated the "Friends of Sudan" (FoS) group of countries. However, most of these countries, including Germany, did not support the people of the Sudan during their revolution. Other members of the FoS, like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt actively worked to thwart the revolution, something that has been well-documented by journalists. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia quickly assured the Transitional Military Council of billions in support just a few hours after it assumed power. Those two countries also forwarded a total of \$500 million to the Central Bank of Sudan as well as \$2.5 billion in the form of food, medicine and petroleum products as economic support to the TMC thinking it would calm the uprising. When the German government convened a crisis meeting of the "Friends" in Berlin on 21 June 2019, almost three weeks following the massacre at the sit-in in Khartoum, this happened quietly and secretly. The Federal Foreign Office did not invite any Sudanese from government, civil society, the Sudanese diaspora in Europe or the opposition to this meeting. At that point of the revolution - shortly after the June 3rd massacre - and at any other, it was and remains unacceptable for Western powers to discuss Sudan without centering the voice of Sudanese civil society. By organizing a two-day sit-in in front of the Federal foreign office building parallel to that meeting in June 2019, We made it clear as SudanUprising Germany that the "Friends of Sudan", led by Germany, is a non-transparent, neo-colonial entity that has no legitimacy to make decisions on Sudan's future. This shady group has only expanded in membership since, yet remains non-transparent and inclusive of

countries whose agendas are diametrically opposite to those that the Sudanese people fought and died for. With friends like these, who needs enemies?

Germany, the most powerful country in the EU, has been positioned especially well in the world order recently. Since January 2019, it has been a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, with its two-year term expected to end in December 2020. During its first year on the Council, [Germany sponsored resolution 2467](#), which according to the German Federal Foreign Office, “created a foundation for combating sexual violence in conflicts and holding those responsible to account” and put “the victims and survivors of sexual violence centre-stage for the first time”. Ironically, while Germany was pushing for this resolution, its cooperation with the regime in Sudan, infamous there for the mass rape campaigns it sponsored in the regions where it has waged war, and against protestors, continued. On 4 June 2019, one day after the massacre at the Khartoum sit-in, the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation, Gerd Müller, [was questioned at the Bundestag](#) by member of parliament Christine Buchholz. To her question “when will the Federal Government cease cooperation with the military council ruling in Sudan, which has just caused a bloodbath among peaceful demonstrators?” the Minister gave no definite answer. To MP Buchholz's second question of how the German government can ensure that EU funds do not reach the assassins of the RSF, who are not only crushing the democracy movement but are also entrusted with the “defence” of Sudan’s external borders from refugees, the minister again had no answer. Instead, he said he had to follow up on the information, because he couldn’t reconstruct it. This suggests that at the time of questioning, in June 2019 and almost six months into the revolution, the German government was still continuing its cooperation with the Sudanese dictatorship.

The German government likes to speak about Germany’s “special responsibility for peace and security in the world”, but this responsibility does not seem to extend to African lives like those of the Sudanese. The CDU/CSU and SPD’s proposal on Sudan remind us of the German Government's engagement as co-leader (together with the United Kingdom) of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). In the midst of the revolution and at the height of RSF spearheaded violence against protestors, UNAMID, under this co-leadership Germany is so proud of, made massive strategic mistakes. On 11 June 2019, [Human Rights Watch](#) strongly criticized the withdrawal of the UNAMID mission at the midst of the political instability generated by the regime’s response to the revolution, noting that the withdrawal has resulted in the RSF janjaweed militias occupying 9 out of 10 sites vacated by the peacekeepers in the previous eight months. HRW added that in Darfur, authorities have cracked down violently on protesters and that “[throughout the year](#), attacks on [civilians](#), including by the RSF, continued, especially in Jebel Mara region of Darfur, forcing civilians to flee.” Furthermore, HRW added that “the downsizing reflected a false narrative about Darfur’s war ending.”

Germany’s position on the world stage and its influence is likely to grow this year. In July 2020, Germany is expected to chair the United Nations Security Council while it also holds the EU Council Presidency. Increasingly, Africans - Sudanese included - understand this world order as a continuation of colonial legacies of subjugation of the African continent, of Asia and parts of

the Pacific, and of Latin America and the Caribbean. They continue to fight for their freedom and self-determination despite a world order that seeks to keep them enslaved to its conditional aid and its free markets.

## We argue that the German government's economic plans for Sudan risks becoming a policy-making tool to guard German interests in the region

As mentioned in the introduction, in 1989, Germany froze political cooperation with Sudan. The economic relationship between Sudan and Germany however, never ceased in the ensuing decades. It simply transformed, with the Khartoum Process eventually developed to protect Germany's interests in border control and migration-route disruption. Put another way, while Germany stopped investing in Sudan's public sector, which was rapidly being dismantled by the regime, it turned towards propping up the repressive security apparatus instead.

Today, eight months into the post-Revolution transition, Sudan's transitional government is incomplete. The transitional parliament, which is expected to represent various forces, including revolutionary groups, has still not been formed. The governors of Sudan's 18 states remain those appointed by the military during the revolution; they have not been replaced by civilians yet. The country lacks clear economic policies and frameworks, and many of its embassies are still understaffed or temporarily staffed. The peace process is still ongoing. Its successful resolution will require massive economic investment, from reconstruction of war-torn areas, to compensation of victims and an end to the extractive relationship between the centre of the country and its resource-rich but impoverished regions. Economically, the country is facing a deep crisis and shouldering a monumental debt burden. Based on the constitutional declaration, the transitional government must convene a conference on economics with wide participation of the various sectors and civil society entities, in order to help design Sudan's economic policies in a way that reflects the revolution's demands. This conference was supposed to take place in March 2019 but has been indefinitely delayed due to the serious threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We found it striking that the CDU/CSU and SPD proposal does not acknowledge the efforts by civil society to rebuild the Sudanese trade Unions, farmer unions, workers collectives, women's rights organizations, non-profit associations and independent media bodies. These entities, along with the yet to be established parliament which will also likely represent local resistance committees, are critical to deciding what deals the Sudanese transitional government may or may not make, and in holding the government accountable for its policy-decisions. Until these structures are in place, the framework to establish bilateral or multilateral relations with international economic institutions remains missing. The entrance of a third party (in this case the German government) under these conditions, waving its millions of Euros and still pushing its migration-control agendas, is likely to turn that party to a policymaker rather than a supporter. This maybe what the German government wants, but it is not what the Sudanese people mounted their uprising for.

In the CDU/CSU and SPD proposal, the German government promises “to examine constructively, within the framework of the HIPC Initiative, at the appropriate time and under the appropriate conditions, a settlement of Sudan's arrears to international creditors, so that relations with international financial institutions can be normalized”. HIPC is the initiative for Highly Indebted Poor Countries, started in the 1990s by The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other bilateral, multilateral commercial creditors. It is worth noting that Germany is the third largest shareholder of the World Bank, and that Germany’s power in that institution is significant. The Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Gerd Müller, represents Germany on the Bank’s Board of Governors, which has the power “to admit and suspend members of the World Bank Group, increase or decrease the authorized capital stock, determine the distribution of the net income of the Bank, and decide on the World Bank Group’s overall strategic direction.” HIPC provides for bilateral debt relief but also for multilateral debt relief through international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, but, and here is the catch, “only to the extent necessary to restore a ‘sustainable’ level of debt”.

To be clear: there is no sustainable level of debt for a country like Sudan that ranks at the very tail end of the world’s poverty and socio-economic indicator lists, and which must increase its social spending many times over to overcome years of neglect and policymaking that has resulted in accumulated economic and social inequality and war. More importantly, the debt that Sudan and many postcolonial countries like it shoulder is illegitimate, acquired through a neo-colonial alliance between wealthy countries and dictatorial and corrupt regimes that were in many cases like Sudan’s not elected by their people. These debts must be canceled immediately and all the resources that go into the repayment of loans and arrears redirected towards health, education, social safety nets, establishing food sovereignty, environmental protection, the rebuilding of justice and other institutions, and compensation for those displaced and affected by war and violence.

Germany’s ruling coalition promises in its proposal “to work towards improving the framework conditions for cooperation between the private sector of the two countries, as well as to support a strengthening of the framework conditions for private investment by German business in Sudan.” Aid trends, in which Germany is very much a leader, show a big shift in recent years towards encouraging private sector investment rather than aid. Colonial relations of production. This economic model, whose roots lie deep in colonialism, has failed not just Africans, but generations of workers and farmers across the Global South. They will fail the Sudanese again, and we will fight against them, as well as any attempt to impose neoliberal policy on the country.

Currently, the Sudanese health sector needs solidarity and support in facing the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic, which in the current circumstances, including those of debt and economic crisis, risks causing mass havoc should it spread in the already vulnerable population. As a formerly colonized country that is still the source of raw materials to ex-colonial countries, Sudan must build economic policies that challenge this extractive relationship between it and countries

in the Global North. Any economic policy that does not do that, and that builds on exploitation and racism rather than reciprocity and fairness, will fail the Sudanese people.

## Conclusion

As activists and members of the Sudanese diaspora who have engaged in social justice struggles both in Germany and in Sudan, we will continue to resist the attempts by Germany and other powers to rob the Sudanese people, and other nations in the Global South, of their revolutions and their quest for equity, justice and self-determination. The neo-colonial policies favored by Germany as a framework for doing business with “Third World” countries must be brought to an end. Sudanese revolutionaries and millions like them around the world from Chile to Haiti, Iran to Burkina Faso and Algeria to South Africa, are fighting and dying for a new reality. It is one where they determine their own destinies, control their own resources and dismantle the racial, gender, ethnic, class and religious hierarchies within their own societies. SudanUprising Germany stands firmly with those struggles and will resist any attempts to co-opt or contain them, whether by the German government or any other.

We call on progressive and radical groups and movements in Germany and Europe more broadly, which are working to achieve social justice, and on groups around the world, to support the Sudanese people in their continuing demands for freedom, peace and justice.