

UK International Development Committee Hears Evidence on Sudan as RSF sets its sights on El Fasher's vast displacement camp

As Russia exploits UNSC veto to block civilian protection in Sudan, the UK must lead bold diplomatic efforts with African nations to bypass UNSC deadlock

[On November 18th](#), Russia vetoed a UN Security Council resolution to protect civilians in Sudan amid the worsening conflict and campaigns of atrocity violence. Co-authored by the UK and Sierra Leone, the resolution had support from all 14 remaining members. Russia's last-minute veto, ordered from Moscow, came as a surprise to Sudan, the three permanent African members, and China, marking the first time since 2004 that Russia vetoed while China voted in favour.

- During Monday's meeting of the United Nations Security Council, UK **Foreign Secretary David Lammy** delivered an emphatic speech that signalled a welcome step change in the UK's Sudan policy. Noting the identity-based nature of ongoing atrocities being committed he [said](#), "I will not stop calling for more action to protect the people of Sudan. I will not stop calling more aid. I will not stop working with our partners in Africa and around the world to help. The UK will not forget Sudan."
- Meanwhile, having found extensive evidence of the commission of mass atrocities, the **Chair of the UN Independent Fact Finding Mission for Sudan, Tanzanian lawyer Mohamed Chande Othman** has [said](#) "it is imperative that an independent and impartial force with a mandate to safeguard civilians be deployed without delay".

At 2:45pm on Tuesday 26th of November, in a timely International Development Committee session on the situation in Sudan, experts will give evidence on the UK's integral diplomatic role in forwarding civilian protection in Sudan:

- [Dr Kate Ferguson](#), Co-Executive Director – [Protection Approaches](#)

Dr Ferguson will welcome David Lammy's new leadership at the UNSC and encourage a continued diplomatic surge that would see the UK leading – alongside African partners – a distinct track on civilian protection and atrocity prevention measures that can be pursued outside of the deadlocked UNSC. She will call for the raising of the UK's ambitions to include closer working with the African Union's Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide and other Mass Atrocity Crimes.

- [Dr Eva Khair](#), Director – Sudan Transnational Consortium

Dr Khair will speak to the breadth and role of Sudanese civil society and its evolution into a powerful but underutilised political, diplomatic and humanitarian assistance network. Dr Khair will offer reflections on the UK's lack of adequate policy engagement with Sudanese civil society writ large, including neglect of UK-based diaspora. She will call for the establishment of an engagement mechanism to ensure Sudanese voices are heard and not instrumentalised.

- [Dame Rosalind Marsden](#), Associate Fellow – Chatham House and former British Ambassador to Sudan

Dame Rosalind will speak to the UK's diplomatic history and engagement, drawing particularly on her experience as a former ambassador and envoy. She will note the concrete changes needed to bolster the new Sudan Envoy's role and resourcing necessary to appropriately engage both allies on the international stage, and Sudanese civil society both in the UK and internationally.

Experts will coalesce around a central call to David Lammy to forward his welcome leadership on the protection of civilians in Sudan beyond the UNSC deadlock due to Russia's egregious use of the veto, working in partnership with the African Union. In particular, focusing on the establishment of a distinct track – complementary to ceasefire discussions – on the protection of civilians.

--NOTES TO EDITORS--

Background

As of November 2024, 25 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance, with over 8 million internally displaced, a further 3 million seeking refuge in Chad, Egypt, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and 18 million facing famine. It is estimated that 150,000 people have been killed.

Right now, in El Fasher, over 500,000 civilians face the triple threat of identity-based mass violence, armed conflict, and famine. Unless the warring parties are compelled to agree to a ceasefire, in the coming critical weeks the world should expect to see continued widespread and deliberate loss of life, forced displacement and the use of torture and sexual violence.

In recent months and weeks, South of Khartoum, the RSF continue their campaign to destroy and displace into Sennar, Blue Nile, and most notable, [Al Jazira](#) states. As they gain increasing territorial control of the eastern and western parts of the country's South, the RSF will close in on Port Sudan and the Red Sea, where the SAF, governmental, and United Nations agencies are now based. This will trigger an escalatory juncture in an increasingly internationalised crisis.

Several organisations and institutions have now made credible assessments of genocide and crimes against humanity:

- Alice Wairimu Nderitu, [Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide](#), has warned that **'the situation today bears all the marks of risk of genocide, with strong allegations that this crime has already been committed.'**
- The Raoul Wallenberg Centre's warned in April that the risk of **imminent genocidal mass killing is approaching a point of no return** and [Human Rights Watch](#) has detailed violations committed against the Masalit people and other non-Arab communities in West Darfur, in what they described as crimes against humanity and widespread war crimes as part of **an "ethnic cleansing campaign."**

Comment

We are able to obtain comment from the following experts:

- Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the International Development Committee
- Dr Eva Khair, Director of the Sudan Transnational Consortium
- Dame Rosalind Marsden, Associate Fellow at Chatham House and former Ambassador to Sudan
- Dr Kate Ferguson, atrocity prevention expert and co-executive director of Protection Approaches
- [Nathaniel Raymond](#), Executive Director of the Humanitarian Research Lab at the Yale School of Public Health
- [Yasmine Ahmed](#), Director of Human Rights Watch UK
- [Kholood Khair](#), expert analyst and Founding Director of Confluence Advisory