



Activist Brief: Sudan's New Army of War Criminals

The first six months of 2014 have brought devastating death and destruction in Sudan, on par with the height of the genocide in Darfur from 2003-2005. Despite the United Nations Security Council mandating that the Sudanese government disarm its Janjaweed militias a decade ago, it never did. Now, as the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor says, a new iteration of the Janjaweed have taken the country by storm. A new Enough Project Report, "[Janjaweed Reincarnate](#)," traces the movements of these fighters -- newly trained, heavily armed, and re-branded as "Rapid Support Forces."

Who are the Rapid Support Forces?

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is a "new security force" launched by the Sudanese government. Many of the same men who were once a part of the Janjaweed are now members or leaders within this new force. The Sudanese government says these forces are tasked with defeating rebels. However, in the past nine months, the RSF has been spotted around the country burning civilian areas to the ground, raping women, and displacing non-Arab civilians from their homes. Many of their attacks have been committed in tandem with aerial bombardments by the national army, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). These lethal combinations have directly targeted life-saving medical facilities, schools, humanitarian infrastructure, and entirely civilian areas where no rebels were present.

How do the RSF differ from the Janjaweed?

The RSF are an upgraded version of the Janjaweed that the world came to fear in Darfur during the height of the genocide. First, these forces are better equipped, centrally commanded, and fully integrated into the Sudanese government's security structures. Second, under Sudanese law, they can't be prosecuted for any acts committed in the 'course of duty.' Finally, although most were recruited in Darfur, the RSF troops have been deployed around the country at the command of Sudan's government. Now, they threaten peace and stability not only in Darfur, but in various areas across Sudan. At the moment the forces are active in Darfur, South Kordofan and in Khartoum, Sudan's capital city. These revitalized Janjaweed fighters have even been linked to regional criminal looting and poaching networks in the Central African Republic and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

How is the Government of Sudan involved?

The RSF are engaged in the same genocidal campaign that the Janjaweed were tasked with ten years ago, but this time, the Sudanese government does not feign dissociation from the RSF in the way they did with the Janjaweed. The government publicly announces RSF "victories" and even maintains a Facebook Page detailing its activities. Those who attempt to draw attention to human rights abuses committed by the RSF, though, have faced prosecution in retaliation.

What can you do?

You can urge the U.S. Government to enhance our diplomatic capabilities to better influence the Government of Sudan, by [signing this petition](#) to Secretary of State Kerry, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power, and National Security Advisor Susan Rice. The rise of the RSF as a nationwide threat to Sudanese civilians proves that we need to ensure that our policies towards Sudan address the root problems comprehensively, instead of dealing with each region separately.