

The Failure of the Plan to Seize Sudan



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On April 15, 2023, Sudan experienced one of the most sophisticated attempts to seize power by taking advantage of the country's fragile security, political, and economic conditions, especially in the capital, Khartoum. The plan focused on controlling key locations in the capital, where military coups in Sudan have traditionally been decided. It included about 60,000 Rapid Support Forces (RSF) troops, compared to only 30,000 troops from other regular forces (army, police, and security).

Plan Details

The strategy involved moving at dawn to leverage Ramadan customs encouraging Sudanese to sleep after the dawn prayer, particularly in the last ten days of Ramadan. It comprised two main components:

1. Assassinate Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, followed by the announcement of Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hamedti) as the acting head of the Sovereignty Council.
2. Accuse the Islamic Movement of the assassination, then issue a decision to dissolve it and pursue its members.

However, the plan unexpectedly faltered, leading the commander of the Rapid Support Forces to appear fewer than an hour later on Al Jazeera to declare, "Burhan has no choice but to surrender or be arrested." This statement followed the failure of the initial plan due to several unforeseen and unplanned factors:

1. One of the pilots launched an attack on the main headquarters of the Rapid Support Forces in the center of the capital, across from the General Command of the Army, using a warplane without obtaining permission or

direction from his command. Dissatisfied with this, he struck the rear of the heavily armed company besieging Lieutenant General al-Burhan's home.

2. The steadfastness of the Presidential Guard, led by Major General Nader Al-Mansouri, shone during the "Pledge of Death" battle, in which most soldiers and officers were martyred except for him and a few others.
3. The Sudanese army attacked the Sarkab camp west of Omdurman, where special forces and warplanes conducted a 24-hour assault. This camp housed 6,000 Rapid Support Forces soldiers equipped with modern weapons, ammunition, and ready-to-eat meals. The attack concluded with the capture of the camp and a large haul of weapons, ammunition, and armored vehicles.

The Reorganization Phase

These unexpected confrontations resulted in the failure of the surprise attack; however, they did not cause the complete collapse of the plan. Army forces withdrew to their positions at the General Command and Karari in Omdurman, as well as the armored vehicles in Khartoum and other locations. Meanwhile, the Rapid Support Forces began regrouping and deployed quickly and horizontally.

In just eight months, the Rapid Support Forces managed to take control of more than half of Sudan's territory, which includes:

- Extensive areas of the capital, Khartoum (Khartoum, Bahri, and Omdurman).
- Al-Jazirah State, the most significant economic region.
- Four out of the five states in Darfur.
- Sennar State and significant portions of North and South Kordofan.
- Vast areas of White Nile State.

The Response of the Sudanese Armed Forces

The advance of the Rapid Support Forces, which surprised military observers and angered civilians affected by the army's setbacks, displaced over 14 million people into areas controlled by the military. They faced looting, home occupations, theft of savings, rape, and forced displacement at the hands of the Rapid Support Forces.

In response, the armed forces started reorganizing their ranks using several strategies:

1. The General Command, along with the military aviation and commando forces, holding on to the remaining strategic positions in Karari, Omdurman, as well as the armored corps in Khartoum and the engineering, medical, and signal corps in Khartoum Bahri. Hundreds of attacking forces were killed, and high-ranking army personnel were martyred in front of their own soldiers, which positively impacted the defensive forces.
2. Building new alliances outside of the Western and Arab powers that support the Rapid Support Forces led Sudanese leaders to visit Moscow and Beijing multiple times and reestablish diplomatic ties with Iran. This

contributed to the flow of weapons, albeit in limited quantities, yet still sufficient.

3. Repairing and maintaining aircraft and armored vehicles through collaborative efforts of Sudanese and foreign experts.
4. Opening volunteer camps for anyone who can carry a weapon in Sudan.

Transitioning from Defense to Offense

Starting in August 2024, the Sudanese Armed Forces transitioned from a defensive to an offensive posture, sparking widespread public joy. Among their most notable achievements, accomplished in record time, were:

- The liberation of the entire states of Jazira and Sennar.
- Significant progress in Khartoum and North Kordofan.
- Preparations to fully liberate Khartoum within days, allowing the army to advance westward toward the strongholds of the Rapid Support Forces.

Gaining Popular and Political Support

Recently, there has been a significant rise in popular support for the Sudanese army in its fight against the Rapid Support Forces, leading to noticeable advancements for the army forces headed by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. These manifestations were clear in several aspects, especially:

1. Formation of Popular Resistance Groups: Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan initiated a mass mobilization campaign called 'Popular Resistance' to unite different political and social groups to defend the nation's dignity.
2. Involvement of Islamist factions: Islamist groups, like the Al-Baraa Bin Malik Battalion, have aligned with the Sudanese army, leveraging their experience from the Popular Defense Forces during the regime of former President Omar al-Bashir.
3. Involvement of revolutionary youth: Youth groups like Angry Without Borders, recognized for their resistance against the Transitional Military Council following the 2019 revolution, have opted to take up arms and join the Sudanese army.
4. Arming and training civilians: In response to mobilization calls, various states set up training camps for civilians, including women, to enhance local defense capabilities and protect communities from threats posed by the Rapid Support Forces.

Conclusion

The recent clashes marked a significant turning point in the Sudanese conflict. With meticulous military planning, widespread popular support, and a realignment of international alliances, the armed forces managed to break through the state of siege and passive resistance to initiate an offensive. The coming days will introduce many



changes, but one thing is clear: Sudan is entering a crucial phase in its political and military history.