

“FLOWERS WILL EMERGE FROM THE DESERT”

Interviews & Communiques from Sudanese Anarchists





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Sudan: Anarchists against the Military Dictatorship [2021]

Sudanese Anarchists Gathering & Crimethinc

Yesterday, in Sudan, during nationwide demonstrations against the military dictatorship that seized power on October 25, state forces repeatedly used live rounds against protesters, killing at least four people and wounding many more. Security forces have killed scores of demonstrators since the coup of October 25. Nevertheless, a powerful movement based in local resistance committees and courageous street demonstrations continues to resist the consolidation of power under the military. We present the following interview with anarchist participants in the demonstrations in hopes of helping people outside Sudan to understand the situation.

In December 2018, massive countrywide protests broke out against dictator Omar Al-Bashir, who had ruled Sudan for some three decades. Al-Bashir fled in April 2019; yet riots, blockades, and sit-in protests continued against the Transitional Military Council that seized control of the government, and a massive protest occupation held territory in Al-Qyada Square at the heart of the capital city of Khartoum. Militarized forces associated with the Council stepped up their attacks on protesters, culminating on June 3, 2019 when they brutally evicted the sit-ins. They committed a particularly brutal massacre when they attacked the occupation in Al-Qyada Square.

In response, a general strike gripped much of Sudan from June 9 to 11. Yet some representatives of the movement consequently entered negotiations with the regime, establishing a power-sharing agreement in which a provisional government composed of military and civilian representatives was to manage the transition to a new administration. This came to an end with the military coup of October 25. The first part of this interview with anarchists in Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan, took place on December 28. The second part was written immediately after the nationwide demonstrations of December 30. You can learn more about Sudanese Anarchists Gathering via their facebook page. We will update this article with more information as we learn how people outside Sudan can best support them.

The interview was conducted in Arabic and hastily translated. We've combined some questions and answers together for clarity.

First of all, tell us a little about your group.

The group was created in Khartoum at the end of 2020 after we assembled all anarchists in Khartoum. We've been together since the revolution of December 2018, and some of us have known each other since high school and university.

We, anarchists of Khartoum, are members of the “resistance committees” and we raise our flags during marches with the rest of revolutionaries, and we promote anarchy by writing graffiti on the walls.

We oppose all types of authoritarianism. We are for freedom of expression and individual autonomy.

Do you have any connections with anarchists outside of Sudan?

You're the only anarchists we have connections with outside Sudan.

Are there other anarchists and anarchist groups besides you?

Or as far as you know is it just you?

There are other anarchists in Sudan in the city of Port Sudan, and we're reaching out to them so that we can get together with them and then hopefully eventually with anarchists in the rest of the world—and with earnest efforts, we will spread anarchy throughout the world together.

Does Sudan have a history of anarchist struggle or is it a newer thing there?

Anti-authoritarianism as an idea and practice emerged for the first time in Sudan during the first march of the 2018 revolution. But the media coverage was very weak and thus it was overlooked.

How have people been responding to anarchists? What is the relationship of anarchists to the broader protests and the social movement?

The people are polarized about the anarchist movement, but what matters to us is that our fellow revolutionaries are in cohesion and complete solidarity with us; we are together with them in this struggle to subvert the fascist system and to create a

horizontal system, organizationally speaking, and a socialist system, economically speaking. The demands of the “revolution” are very similar to ours.

Can you tell us about the current situation in Sudan? As we understand it, protests have been ongoing since at least 2019, first against [former head-of-state] Omar Al-Bashir and now against the military junta. What forms of repression are state forces or others carrying out at this moment?

The revolution has been ongoing since December 2018. When the revolution started, protests were suppressed violently at the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood government led by Omar Al-Bashir, which we overthrew on April 11, 2019, when we occupied and sat-in at the general headquarters of Sudan’s military. But unfortunately, the occupation was later suppressed: 500 revolutionaries were killed and our revolution was stolen by the military’s commanders and the “soft landing.”^[1]

On August 17, 2019, they (the Transitional Military Council, or TMC, and the Forces of Freedom, or FCC^[2]) agreed to a 39-month transition process to return to democracy. We the revolutionaries, however, didn’t stop—we kept protesting against the military in the hopes of making the transitional government transition to an actual “technocratic” civilian government [i.e., a government composed of civilians, not career politicians].

And then the coup [of October 25, 2021] happened and the military dissolved the civilian government and arrested its members.

But we’re not giving up. The streets are brimming with defiance and opposition to them again, although they’ve murdered 47 revolutionaries and injured 1200 others using tear gas, stun grenades, and live rounds ever since the coup. We’re still protesting and aiming to overthrow them now.

What is your position on the non-anarchist groups in the Sudan? Do you work with them or not? If you cooperate with them, what is the nature of your cooperation?

We’ve separated ourselves from the “political incubator”^[3] that participated in the revolution and we’ve formed resistance committees with fellow revolutionaries consisting of all revolutionary movements; we started leading the revolution on the streets to overthrow the government despite the violence we face from them. We face their violence and bullets with unprotected chests and non-violent means,

such as rocks and roadblocks which have taken hold (protecting participants in the march from getting arrested and obstructing the government's forces), and we use Molotov cocktails when necessary. Sometimes we clash with the police and other militias; we set their cars on fire and give some of them a thrashing. And they sometimes shoot live rounds at us, which leads to either injuries or deaths.

Is there something else we should know? Do you have any requests of the international anarchist movements?

We've got plenty of marches and protests planned on Thursday. We've already decided the routes of the marches with other revolutionaries before the authorities could block the internet; all of them are headed toward the Republican Palace. These marches will be met with excessive violence; I might end up dead, because we anarchists are always at the front and we organize the marches on the streets.

We ask for material support because we don't have any sponsors. We spend money out of our pockets and the money we have doesn't cover our needs because prices have become prohibitive in Sudan and as youth we don't have enough money. We hope all anarchists in the world will support us.

UPDATE: DECEMBER 30, 2021

Two days after conducting the above interview, at the conclusion of the demonstrations of December 30, we received the following message from our contact in Sudanese Anarchists Gathering.

We couldn't reach the palace. They had obstructed the roads with huge dry containers and they blockaded the cities of Omdurman and Bahri (nobody from those cities was allowed to get into Khartoum) and then they committed atrocities towards us in Khartoum (where the palace is).

They shot live rounds at us and they even used a DShK^[4] which inflicted injuries and deaths on our numbers. They also assaulted journalists and raided the buildings of Al-Arabiya (a TV news channel) and al Hadath (another TV news channel); they had arrested their employees but have already released them. They also raided hospitals, attacked doctors, arrested them, and arrested our injured comrades too.

They're not allowing us to take the martyrs' bodies to bury them. We've only retrieved and buried two from so far. We're working on doing the same for the rest.

Our cell phones were not advanced enough to capture their atrocities on film, but some people who had advanced cell phones managed to capture some of the atrocities they committed.

There are four martyrs so far, but there are many live-round injuries. Glory for the martyrs and death to the military and to authority.

Martyrs of December’s Revolution; Martyrs of the Military Council’s Coup.

The Martyr Ahmed Alaamin Alkununa

Date: December 30, 2021

Injury: A gunshot to the head

Place of Martyrdom: Omdurman

The Martyr Mustafa Mohammed Musa

Date: December 30, 2021

Injury: A gunshot to the chest

Place of Martyrdom: Omdurman

The Martyr Mohammed Majed Muhammad “Bebo”

Date: December 30, 2021

Injury: A gunshot to the head

Place of Martyrdom: Omdurman

The Martyr Mutawakil Yousef Saleh

Date: December 30, 2021

Injury: A gunshot to the chest

Place of Martyrdom: Omdurman

[1] In 2011, the expression “soft landing” was used in Sudan to describe the proposal to offer Omar Al-Bashir a negotiated transfer to civilian rule, complete with some sort of amnesty for his war crimes. Since then, it has been used to describe a proposed alliance between the regime and the opposition, in which the latter would stop attempting to overthrow the regime in return for sharing power, as well as to describe submission to US policy and the status quo in general.

[2] The Forces of Freedom and Change (FCC) is a coalition of civil society groups and political parties that has been organizing protests. It was part of negotiating a return to civilian rule with the Transitional Military Council (TMC).

[3] “ةيس ايس لاقنضاحل”—roughly translated, “political incubator”—describes the role that the transitional government was supposed to serve in Sudan.

[4] The DShK is a Soviet-era belt-fed heavy machine gun. crimethinc.com/2021/12/31/sudan-anarchists-against-the-military-dictatorship-an-interview-with-sudanese-anarchists-gathering



Interview With A Sudanese Anarchist [2024]

Anarchist Federation (Sudan) & CNT-AIT (France)

Hello mate!

I'm with the French CNT AIT, I'd like to thank you dearly for taking some time to answer these questions. First I hope you are safe. Rest assure you have all our support. As you know, we've been relaying information about revolution and global situation in Sudan and about your anarchist group to the readers of our magazine « Anarchosyndicalisme! »

Hello companions! Revolutionary greetings from the comrades in Sudan to the CNT-AIT and to the AIT, and to all those who support us in France and elsewhere. We thank you for your support and interest in the issues of Sudan, the revolution, the war, and our anarchist activity. We are also happy to convey our experience to you, share our daily struggle with you, and exchange opinions

First I'd like to ask you a few questions about your anarchist group in Sudan. For how long has your group been organised? Did your group start during the last revolution or before?

Did you personally participate in the creation of this group or did you join?
Do you have an official name for your group?

The formation of our group began in April 2017, before the December [2018] Revolution, and I personally participated in its formation. It was a small group of 5 individuals. The name of the group is the Anarchist Federation.

There seem to have been very few examples of anarchist organisations in African countries, could you tell us how you and other members of your movement became familiar with the anarchist ideas?

Was anarchism rooted in prior social movements and revolutions in Sudan? What were the other forms of socialist ideas in the previous social movements?

Yes, anarchist movements in Africa are not widespread. As for Sudan, there was no anarchist organization or group before. Most of Sudan may be self-administered in a complex manner, but authoritarian ideas control it in the state, the tribe, and the military and religious system. This is what makes the anti-regime social movement complex. We gained our revolutionary awareness and knowledge of anarchism

through our exposure and self-education about social movements in the world, and the injustice inflicted upon us contributed mainly to the adoption of anarchist ideas. The socialist ideas present in Sudan contribute directly or indirectly to supporting and consolidating power, such as Marxist communist ideas and the ideas of neoliberal armed movements [guerrillas others than RSP and official army, Note of typist], and their continuous search for positions in the state and even their demolition of the social movement.

Could you tell us about the social composition of your group, were you mostly students or were there workers to? I understand women took a great part in the revolutionary movement, were there many women among your group? Were you mostly city based or did people also come from the rural areas?

Our group was initially composed of students, as students represent the tip of the spear in the social change movement and the December Revolution. After the formation of our groups and their spread in several universities in various states of Sudan, we were able to participate and form groups through comrades in their areas of residence in cities and rural areas, and to form groups outside the student community in various areas in Sudan Women are an essential part of the formation of our groups in universities and even in rural areas and cities. Women constitute more than 60 percent of the composition of our groups.

If that's possible could you tell us about how many members you had in your groups, after the movement spreads in several universities and various parts of the country?

The number of group members was estimated at more than 60 comrades at the beginning, but now the number has increased, but there is no accurate count due to the loss of contact with many comrades.

Could you tell us about activities you were able to carry as an anarchist group during the past years? How did people react to the diffusion of your ideas?

One of the most important activities that we carried out in 2017 and 2018 was to call on young people and students to overthrow the regime, break the barrier of fear, and unite around overthrowing the dictatorial rule of Bashir. We held activities in universities and seminars against the regime and began organizing spontaneous processions that brought together all Sudanese. This cost us the loss of comrade (Abu Al-Rish), comrade (Qusay) and comrade (Mudawi). After the fall of the Omar Al-Bashir regime, we called for the continuation of the struggle to overthrow the military regime in Sudan, and the abdication of General Ibn Auf came quickly due to the terrible pressure of the people on power. Brutal repression was strong against us and we were subjected to arrest, flogging, abuse and death threats.

But this did not make us give up our cause and our struggle against the authorities. We called for a sit-in at the General Command, which represented a small self-administration community in which the greatness of anarchist ideas was evident. It was a living example of the self-administration of Sudan, as it included millions of Sudanese from all states. The dictatorial authority sensed the danger in this and carried out a massacre that dispersed the sit-in, to which the political force contributed greatly and facilitated this hideous massacre in which more than 700 unarmed civilian revolutionaries died and were drowned in the Nile. Many of the revolutionaries are still suffering from psychological problems due to the ugliness of the killing they saw. He was beaten and insulted horribly.

This also did not break us, but rather made us more determined and convinced of the importance of the fall of this brutal, murderous regime. So we began to form resistance committees in the neighbourhoods, gather the revolutionaries into organized groups, and unify the banner of struggle. Brutality, killing, and violent suppression of processions were an inherent characteristic of every procession. We knew that we might pay a price for this with our lives, and we were also going out seeking a social revolution.

The resistance committees seemed to organise themselves in a very interesting -and quite close to anarchist-way, can you describe it for us? How did you and your group could participate in those committees?

We participate continuously in resistance committees, which are groups of revolutionaries in the neighbourhoods and regions of Sudan. Resistance committees make decisions collectively for each committee.

The general understanding I got of the last years social movement in Sudan, especially after the military coup d'état in October 2021, is that people strongly rejected the authority army and militias, official political parties and unions, and elites both from Sudan and foreign countries, and wanted to build a society from bottom to top while developing on a daily basis a strong sense of social solidarity and self-organisation, which I found very encouraging and rooted in a perspective of struggle of class and direct democracy. Nevertheless, the main political goal as described in the 'charter for the power of people' is still the creation of a government and a state, even if democratic – which is without any doubt better than war and military or religious dictatorship – and so seemed a bit in contradiction with the achievements of day to day popular self-organisation as developed in the resistance committees, from my anarchosindicalist point of view. Can you comment on that?

It is important to know that the liberation struggle involves a lot of persistent and patient work that is not achieved overnight. We see that what the awareness of

the youth, revolutionaries and society in Sudan has reached is a turning point in the revolution. What the Revolutionary Charter proposes to establish people's authority is what the resistance committees agree upon, and they are not union bodies or professional bodies, but rather groups of revolutionaries who differ in their orientations to running the country or organizing. What we need now, and we are working on, is to preserve the unity of this force from the catastrophe of the civil war that is tearing apart the social fabric. Certainly, self-administration is the points that we can easily raise, and this is considered one of the gains of the revolution, but implementing it now in light of this catastrophic situation is very complicated.

War is going on for more than a year now, can you tell us how you managed to get through this last year, and were you and your group able to maintain some of your political activities during those hard times?

The outbreak of war in Sudan directly affected our organization, as all the comrades in Khartoum, Madani, and El Fasher fled to different cities and outside Sudan, and the suspension of universities, damage to infrastructure, farmers, unions, and the Internet made it difficult to communicate and communicate with the comrades. We lost comrade Sarah and comrade Omar Habbash, and we lost an ambulance that we had allocated. In Zamzam camp for displaced people in El Fasher to transport patients. It has been a disastrous year, with terrorism everywhere, arbitrary arrests and liquidation by the army of revolutionaries and politicians, and killings on an ethnic basis on both sides.

Can you tell us about the situation today in Sudan?

The situation in Sudan is catastrophic. More than 25 million were displaced and education stopped for more than 15 million children. More than 4,000 thousand civilians were killed, although the numbers are inaccurate. Famine has begun in Sudan. There are no life-saving medicines, there is no work, and more than 70 percent of hospitals are not working in Sudan. The situation is horribly disastrous.

I understand some of your comrades had to leave Sudan recently. Do you manage to keep in touch with them? Do you have some perspective of carrying on with your organization even in a distance?

Yes, we are in contact with most of our comrades abroad. We have a plan to manage the organization remotely and manage its activities.

To what extent is it possible to maintain anarchist positions under civil war?

Maintaining the anarchist group in Sudan is possible, but it is not easy, and this is

an additional burden now in light of the war and the displacement of most of the comrades outside Sudan.

During the insurrection in Egypt, anarchists had started a newspaper. Although they were all atheist, they didn't criticize Islam in their writings, it was hardly possible. How is it in Sudan ?

As for criticism of Islam in Sudan, it is very prevalent in revolutionary youth. The Revolution occurred against the Muslim Brotherhood regime and its extremist authoritarian reactionary ideas, it has been a turning point in the youth's awareness of religion itself.

Our collective in the city of Calais works with some exiles who have relatives in Sudan. Concerning medicine distributions and activities for children, they'd like to know in which area, which town or even which neighbourhood do you conduct your humanitarian actions? Does your anarchist group organise such actions or do you take part in other groups' actions? Do you take part as individuals or as an anarchist collective?

At the beginning of the war, we distributed meals in shelter centres in Dongola, Atbara, and Khartoum in Karari locality. Regarding medicines, they are distributed according to the needs of the displaced people in shelter centres, in cooperation with the Al-Hawadith Street Initiative, medical supplies, and sometimes the Sudanese Red Crescent. Regarding infant formula and sanitary pads for women, we conducted inventory and distributed it to 8 centres in Al-Damer and Atbara, and 5 centres in Dongola, and now we are distributing in Al-Dabba locality, where it received thousands of displaced people fleeing from El-Fasher.

In our anarchist group, we have several comrades working in the health professions who were instrumental in providing health supplies. We distribute it through our group most of the time, and we also cooperate with anybody that contributes to solving the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, initiatives and sometimes organizations. At the beginning of the war in Sudan, I directed our group to volunteer in hospitals and emergency centres in the nearest locality to our comrades.

In the 'Sudanese anarchist forum' some of the Sudanese exiles we help have seen that you shared in July 2022 a piece concerning the "Forces of Freedom and Change". Is the 'Sudanese anarchist forum' the page of your group? How does it work: can anyone publish what he wants or do you moderate or sanction the articles that are released? What do you think about the Forces of Freedom and Change? In a more general way what do you think about the Rapid Support Forces and the army? Is this possible to refuse to support one side or another, or are you forced to take side?

As for our group, it does not have an official platform, as we avoid propaganda work in this critical political situation, and we do not have an online platform. The only way to contact us is via email

The “Forces of Freedom and Change” is a Sudanese political body that has its own conflicts and has no authority over the state. The war is now led by two army generals.

We do not support any party to the war; on the contrary we support its immediate cessation

We strongly condemn the massacres committed by the Rapid Support Forces and the army against innocent citizens, and we do not support any of them. What we want is an end to war and peace

Do you wish to tell us something more?

Yes. We must be in constant communication. You are the only party that supports us and stands with us. You are saving the lives of revolutionaries and anarchists in Sudan. Do not stop spreading our cause and supporting our revolution. Tell revolutionaries and anarchists all over the world about us.

Long live peace, not wars!

cnt-ait.info/2024/08/17/interview-sudan/



The Tribe and the State: An Attempt to Analyze Authoritarian Conflict in Sudan from an Anarchist Perspective [Oct 2024]

Anon

This is an attempt from my humble self to explain the authoritarian conflict in Sudan from my point of view as an anarchist born in Sudan, drawing from my knowledge of its conflicts.

Before British colonialism, Sudan did not know a unified state but rather consisted of small states and kingdoms governed by tribal, ethnic, or clan systems, such as the Kingdom of Wadai, the Nubians, the Nuba Mountains' kingdoms, and many others.

Sudan itself is divided into regions that bear significant cultural and social differences, making it difficult to compare with any other state.

The north of Sudan, for example, is inhabited by the remnants of Nubian kingdoms whose people share cultural ties across the border with Egypt, extending to Aswan.

In eastern Sudan, you will find the Beja tribes, Beni Amer, and Hadendowa, who have deep connections with Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Darfur, too, is divided into north and south regions, with significant cultural and ethnic differences. These areas also have connections with Chad and the Central African Republic.

The large kingdoms that the colonial powers tried to unite in pursuit of wealth, given Sudan's riches in gold and fertile lands suitable for cotton cultivation at the time, remain at the heart of international disputes over Sudanese resources today. Colonial powers were unable to assimilate these communities into a single entity; instead, they applied policies that resulted in the separation of the north and south, as is still evident today.

All of this shows that, despite the revolutions that sought to expel the colonizers and unify the Sudanese kingdoms and communities, the tribal control system has remained dominant and in control to this day. This is one of the anarchist perspectives we will try to apply to our reality, aiming to deconstruct it through this lens.

Tribe and State

The tribe is a miniature form of social authority that possesses its own authoritarian culture and is governed by the authority of a tribal leader or chief, characterized by a hereditary transfer of leadership in most cases. It has been and continues to be the main obstacle in transforming the Sudanese people from a center of tribal conflict, violence, and immersion in ignorance and backwardness to a better stage.

Colonialism contributed to shaping hostilities between tribes by distinguishing some from others and arming them, granting them state authority, which formed complex coalitions of diverse human groups in even the simplest communal matters.

The transition from tribe to nationhood has not occurred in Sudan, leaving us at a late stage of self-organizational advancement. Even in the form of the modern state post-independence in Sudan, tribal systems and local administrations still control the state in one way or another, paving the way for the spread of racism, tribal conflicts, and civil wars.

The contemporary problem of Sudan, which is exploited by imperialist forces to control its strategic location and vast resources, is the formation of armed movements and militias based on ethnic and racial grounds in an attempt to divide and fragment the country for easier control.

Today, we find that Sudan has seven armed armies that have started fighting among themselves, and it is only a matter of time before chaos engulfs the entire country or it disintegrates. It is essential to combat the tribal mindset within the people, just as it is important to fight against nationalist ideas that lead to ongoing civil wars.

To be continued ...

An anarchist from Sudan

cnt-ait.info/2024/10/28/tribe-state

1st of May, 2024 Statement

Anarchist Federation (Sudan)

On the first of May, More than a year after the war, which left thousands of civilian casualties, displaced millions of children from their homes, and caused the largest education crisis in Sudan.

We call on all comrades in Sudan and outside it to continue their liberation and volunteer activities in shelter centers, refugee camps, and camps for displaced people, and hospitals, and not taking sides in the war.

We condemn the crimes committed by the Rapid Support Forces in Khartoum, Al-Jazira, and Darfur, including rape, murder, and recruitment of children.

We also condemn the army's exploitation of the country's catastrophic situation in an attempt to gain legitimacy for its dictatorial rule, which has reaped nothing but ruin.

We call on all revolutionaries to educate people against tribal fighting and stirring up strife and racism !

Long live the revolution

The soldiers go to the barracks and the Janjaweed disband !

Anarchist Federation in Sudan

cnt-ait.info/2024/05/02/sudan-may-en

Dispatch From Khartoum #7

[June 28, 2022]

Sudanese Anarchist Gathering

Demonstrations, propaganda processions, and decentralized processions continue to exhaust the government forces, and the revolutionaries have dubbed them The Road to June 30.

The large, central, mass demonstration that will have a significant impact on overthrowing the tyrannical military regime.

The revolutionaries will come from all the different states of Sudan to participate in it, which will be in Khartoum with a very large crowd and the rest of the Sudanese states. Most likely the target will be the presidential palace or the general command of the armed forces.

Injustice and tyranny will fall, and people will enjoy peace, equality and social justice.

Society will be cooperative and flowers will emerge from the desert.

O our great people, we must go out on the 30th of this June to uproot your rights that were plundered by the fascist authority and bring them down through collective resistance with the unified forces of revolution until the sun of salvation rises and the darkness clears.

This was one of a ten part series published on the Organise Magazine website, you can view them all here:
organisemagazine.org.uk/2023/04/17/dispatch-from-khartoum-10-international



“Anarchy Is The Only Solution”

