

# Online Seminar

Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean

## THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF SUDAN'S TRANSITION

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**27 October 2020**  
**15:00 – 16:30 (GMT+1)**  
**Online Zoom Meeting**

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### Brief

Sudan is in the midst of a once-in-a-generation episode of change. This ethnically diverse country of 42 million people is undergoing a rare political transition after a revolutionary uprising and a military coup last year brought an end to President Omar al-Bashir's 30-year rule. In August 2019, Bashir's generals and the leaders of opposition parties agreed to share power in arrangement meant to lead the country to a new constitutional order and free elections in three years. A peace agreement finalized on 3 October 2020 saw the leaders of armed groups from Sudan's war-torn areas of Darfur, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan join the transitional institutions. But the economy has collapsed in a spiral of near hyperinflation, and the prospects for further destabilization are rising.

Regime change has brought a significant reorientation of Sudan's foreign policy, once fiercely anti-Western and supportive of Islamist groups across the region. Relations with Europe, long fraught as a result of the International Criminal Court Indictment of Omar al-Bashir for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur, are edging towards full normalization. Sudan has also moved away from its erstwhile allies Qatar and Turkey, largely aligning onto the "Arab Troika" (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt). Under the influence of the UAE, Sudan is now exploring a potential normalization with Israel in exchange for a recission of the United States' longstanding State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation.

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### Topics

In this panel discussion, the Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS PoDiMed) will explore how regime change has affected Sudan's international relations. Our panelists will seek to address the following themes and questions:

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#### **Sudan and great powers.**

How likely is a rescission of Sudan's US State Sponsor of Terrorism designation in light of the upcoming American presidential election? What would be the likely effects of a rescission? What other obstacles remain on the path to full normalization with the US and Europe? In the 1990s and 2000s, Sudan, facing isolation from the West, turned to Asia — mainly China — and Russia. Can Khartoum maintain close cooperation with these countries in the event of normalization with the US, especially in light of growing antagonism between the US and China?

#### **Sudan in its regional environment.**

Sudan in 2020 has moved away from Ethiopia and closer to Egypt in the tripartite negotiations of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which is nearing completion. What are the reasons for this shift? Is it representative of a broader change of Sudan's attitude towards its neighbors, or has continuity otherwise prevailed? What is the division of labor between civilian and military components of the transitional authorities when it comes to relations with Sudan's neighbors? How does Sudan affect, or is affected by, instability in neighbors such as Ethiopia, South Sudan, Libya and Chad?

#### **Foreign influence on the transition.**

What has been the impact of Sudan's new patronage — mainly from the UAE and Saudi Arabia — on the national political process in Khartoum? How have Qatar and Turkey reacted to their sidelining by the transitional authorities? Are foreign influences playing a role in the current dynamics of instability in peripheral regions of Sudan such as Darfur, Eastern Sudan, or Southern Kordofan? What are the factors likely to encourage or discourage further foreign meddling in Sudan's fragile transition?

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## Agenda

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

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| <b>15:00 – 15:10</b> | <b>Welcome Remarks</b><br><b>Thomas Volk</b><br>Director, Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung |
| <b>15:10 – 15:15</b> | <b>Presentation of the panel:</b><br><b>Jean-Baptiste Gallopin</b><br>Sociologist and researcher  |
| <b>15:15 – 15:25</b> | <b>Discussion Panel:</b><br><b>Al-Haj Warrag</b><br>Editor, Ad-Dimouqrati   |
| <b>15:25 – 15:35</b> | <b>Lauren Blanchard</b><br>Africa Analyst, Congressional Research Service   |
| <b>15:35 – 15:45</b> | <b>Reem Abbas</b><br>Journalist, blogger, writer and researcher   |
| <b>15:45 – 15:55</b> | <b>Ahmed Hussein Adam</b><br>Researcher   |
| <b>15:55 – 16:05</b> | <b>Commentary by Jean-Baptiste Gallopin</b>   |
| <b>16:05 – 16:30</b> | <b>Q&amp;A</b>  |

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### Biographies

#### Al-Haj Warrag

Al-Haj Warrag is a Sudanese journalist and editor. He has written for numerous Sudanese newspapers, including Al-Hurriya, As-Sahafa, and Ajas al-Hurriya. He was the recipient of the 2010 Human Rights Watch Freedom of Expression Prize and of the 2012 Pen - Oxfam prize. In September 2020, he launched the newspaper Ad-Dimouqrati.

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#### Lauren Blanchard

Lauren Ploch Blanchard is a Specialist in African Affairs with the Congressional Research Service, where she provides nonpartisan analysis on African political, military and diplomatic affairs, and on U.S. policy toward the region, to Members of Congress. Ms. Blanchard's portfolio focuses on East Africa, Chad, and Nigeria, and on security issues and military engagement on the continent—she has written extensively on these topics and testified before Congress in multiple hearings. Previously, Ms. Blanchard managed governance programs in East and Southern Africa. She also served as Legislative Assistant in the U.S. Senate. She holds a master's degree in National Security Studies from Georgetown University and a bachelor's degree in Political Science, with a minor in African Studies, from the University of Florida.

#### Reem Abbas

Reem Abbas is a journalist, blogger, writer and researcher. Her blog on human rights, culture and politics in Sudan won the 2011 Blogger International Activist Award. Her writings and socio-political commentary were published in the Guardian, Al-Jazeera, the East African, the Washington Post, Al-Monitor and other national and international outlets. She spent years working with Sudanese refugees in Egypt and published a profile in the book- "Voices in Refuge: Stories from Sudanese Refugees in Cairo". She is currently working on a book on the artistic scene and the Sudanese revolution in collaboration with Andariya- a cultural platform based in the region.

#### Ahmed Hussein Adam

Ahmed H Adam is a researcher. He was previously Research Associate at SOAS' School of Law, University of London, a visiting fellow at Cornell University's Institute for African Development, and a research fellow at the Department of Public Policy and Administration at the American University in Cairo. He is the former Co-chair of the Two Sudans Project at Columbia University, Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR).

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### Jean-Baptiste Gallopin

Jean-Baptiste Gallopin is a sociologist, analyst and writer. He has written on Sudan in the Washington Post, the European Council on Foreign Relations, Le Monde Diplomatique, African Arguments, Aeon, and War On The Rocks and he regularly appears as a commentator on Sudan in international media, such as Al Jazeera English, France 24, and Radio France Internationale. He previously worked as a political analyst in the private sector and as the Sudan researcher for Amnesty International, where he co-wrote the first report to document war crimes and potential crimes against humanity in the Blue Nile conflict. He holds a PhD in sociology from Yale.

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### Thomas Volk

Thomas Volk is the director of the Tunis-based Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean. Prior to this position, Thomas was the KAS Resident Representative for Senegal and the Gambia in Dakar. From 2014, Thomas was the Coordinator for Islam and Interfaith Dialogue in the Policy and Consulting Department at KAS headquarters in Berlin. He studied Middle Eastern Studies in Freiburg and Basel and finally graduated from the German-Turkish Master's Program in Social Sciences at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara and the Humboldt University in Berlin.

*All Information may be subject to change*

<b>Concept:</b>	<b>Jean-Baptiste Gallopin</b> Sociologist and researcher
<b>Organisation:</b>	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean
<b>Venue:</b>	Online Zoom Seminar
	<b>Link:</b> <a href="https://kas-de.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nsdqzkLPTtKDEMZ6DkueOg">https://kas-de.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nsdqzkLPTtKDEMZ6DkueOg</a>