

## Sudan on the brink:

### **The military rulers must climb down and transfer power to a civilian government**

When Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir was toppled on April 11 after a months-long popular uprising, the generals had two options before them. One was the Tunisian model in which the army allowed a smooth transition of power to a civilian government after Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was removed from power in 2011. The other was the Egyptian model in which the army, after losing power to a civilian ruler following Hosni Mubarak's ouster as President in 2011, staged a coup in 2013 and reinstalled itself at the helm. Unfortunately, the Sudanese generals chose the latter, setting the stage for a prolonged showdown. The protesters had demanded a transfer of power to a transitional civilian government, followed by free and fair elections. But the generals used the crisis to concentrate more powers in their own hands. They established a military council which took over governance, while angry protesters continued a sit-in in front of the Defence Ministry in Khartoum. As talks between pro-democracy activists and the military rulers collapsed, paramilitary groups unleashed deadly violence this week to break the sit-in, killing at least 100 people and injuring hundreds. The Rapid Support Forces, the paramilitary troops notorious for atrocities committed in the impoverished western province of Darfur in the early 2000s, reportedly threw the dead into the Nile.

It is evident that the military will not easily give up power. After the crackdown, Lt. General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the military ruler, has offered to hold elections in nine months, upturning an earlier plan of a two-year transition. But there is no immediate plan to transfer power to a civilian transitional government, a key demand of the protesters. Unsurprisingly, they have rejected the military's offer. At present, Sudan's generals enjoy regional and international support. The UN Security Council couldn't even condemn the violence as China, backed by Russia, blocked the move. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which offered financial aid to the junta as soon as Mr. Bashir was removed from power, also support the generals. This gives the military rulers a sense of impunity even when they unleash murderous paramilitaries on peaceful protesters. This has to change. Arab countries as well as the UN should put meaningful pressure on the military council to pay heed to popular demands and hold those responsible for the June 3 massacre accountable. There is no easy solution to the crisis. If the military wants to keep its grip on power, there could be more bloodshed as the protesters are defiant. It will have to necessarily build a more oppressive regime, as in Egypt after the 2013 coup. The other, wiser option is to compromise, resume talks with the protesters and facilitate a quick and orderly transition to civilian rule. The choice the generals make will determine the future of Sudan.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
On the brink		on the verge of, threshold, edge
Tepple		fall, tumble, overbalance, overturn, upturn
Uprising		rebellion, in surrection, mutiny, contumacious, insurgence
Ouster		throw out, drive out, force out, removal
Coup		seizure power, coup d etat, putsch, take over

Re-instate	Restore, return to power, re-install
At the helm	in charge, in control, responsible
Prolonged	continuous, sustained
Unleash	let loose, release, un tie, untether
Break the sit-in	to stop doing something, break off, give up
Notorious	infamous, scandalous
Atrocity	abomination, cruelty, enormity, outrage
Impoverished	poor, indigent, destitute, impecunious
Upturn	improvement, upswing, revival, resurgence
Condemn	blame, reprimand, pillory, lambaste, upbraid
Back (V)	support, advocate, buttress, endorse, prop up
Junta	faction, group, cabal, clique, confederacy
Impurity	Immunity, indemnity, exemption, from punish and
Pay heed	pay attention to, attend to, wary, cautious
Massacre	mass murder
Defiant	Intransigent, obstinate, un-cooperative, recalcitrant
Orderly transition	devoid of violent/disruption

### **Thin – skinned masters:**

#### **Arbitrary arrest for a social media post reflects a disregard for law and liberty**

The Supreme Court order granting immediate bail to journalist Prashant Kanojia, arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Police for sharing on Twitter a video pertaining to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, was not unexpected. It was obvious that the arrest was arbitrary, unwarranted and without any basis in law. The State government's attempt to justify its action smacked of perversity and malice. The vacation Bench, comprising Justices Indira Banerjee and Ajay Rastogi, made the right call in ignoring technical objections by counsel for the State government that the apex court should not intervene as only a regular bail petition could secure relief to someone remanded by the jurisdictional magistrate. The Bench did not consider the controversial tweets as sufficient grounds for abridging personal liberty. In observing that the order of release would not amount to an endorsement of Mr. Kanojia's tweets, the court was only making a minor concession to the police claim that he was making inflammatory comments on social media. It is difficult to believe that at a time when social media networks are full of rampant abuse and distasteful material, the police can be allowed to choose one or two that appear to target political functionaries and incarcerate those airing such views, disregarding well-established norms for arrest and remand. In Mr. Kanojia's case, defamation, a non-

cognisable offence, and Section 66 of the Information Technology Act were cited initially. The latter relates to damaging computer systems, and is inapplicable to a social media post. It was quite clear that there was no case for remand.

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There was a more flagrant illegality when Mr. Kanojia was taken out of Delhi without a transit remand from a local magistrate, mandatory when an accused is taken from one State to another. Faced with criticism, the U.P. Police added a section dealing with the offence of causing public mischief and disturbing public tranquillity, besides Section 67 of the IT Act, which relates to sharing of obscene or prurient material, with the motive of obtaining a remand order. A few other journalists have been arrested for discussing the content of the video clip, in which a woman is seen expressing her wish to marry the Chief Minister. What is disquieting, but unsurprising, is the perfunctory attitude of civil servants towards the personal liberty of citizens. It is one thing to pursue violations through legal action, but quite another to lock up people for posts they deem offensive to their political masters and conjure up justifications for their arrest. It is time magistrates who pass mechanical orders without application of mind and officers who carry out illegal instructions from the political leadership are made to face exemplary disciplinary action.

<b><u>Words</u></b>	<b><u>Kind</u></b>	<b><u>Meaning</u></b>
Thin-skinned (Adj)		sensitive
Pertain		concern, relate to, be connected with
Obvious		sure, clear, evident, apparent
Smack		slap, hit, strike, blow
Malice		malevolence, ill will, vindictiveness
Perversity		contrariness, recalcitrance, obstinacy, obduracy
Comprising		consisting of
Counsel		advise, impress upon
Apex		top, tip, zenith, acme
Intervene		inter fere, pry, nose into
Remand		the time before a prisoner's trial take place
Jurisdiction		Authority, control, power, domination
Abridge		brief, abstract, shorten, summarize
Endorsement		support, buttress, anchor, advocate

Inflammatory	provocative, incendiary, stirring tempting
Rampant	controlled, unrestrained, unchecked
Abuse	misuse, misapply
In car cerate	arrest, imprison, apprehend
Air (V)	express, expound
Defamation (n)	Libel, slander, calumny, vilification scandal
Cognisable	perceptible, clearly identifiable,
Flagrant	blatant, conspicuous, shameless, brazen
Transit	transport, movement, conveyance
In transit	on the way, en-route. In the offing.
Mandatory	obligatory, compulsory, binding, requisite
Mischief	naughtiness, bad behaviour, dis-obedience
Tranquillity	peace, calmness, composure, equability, equanimity, placidity
Obscene	shocking, scandalous, vile, atrocious
Prurient	lustful, salacious, licentious, lecherous
Disquiet	unease, uneasiness, worry, anxiety, perturbation
Perfunctory	cursor, desultory, brief, hurried
Violations	contravention, breach, infringement
Conjure up	bring to mind, re call, evoke summon up
Offensive	insulting, rude, impertinent, insolent, derogatory
Exemplary	perfect, ideal, impeccable, commendable
Disciplinary	connected with punishment for breaking rules
Controversial	disputed, contentious, at issue, tendentious
Carry out	execute, implement, put into practice