The Coup in Sudan: From Reform to Resistance with Mohamed Os...

Fri, 11/5 11:09AM • 37:28

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

sudan, bashir, military, omar al, moving, khartoum, civilians, al, protesters, happened, political, sudanese, terms, people, demands, reform, transition, ethiopia, government, abuses

**SPEAKERS**

Mohamed Osman, John Torpey

**John Torpey** 00:06

Sudan, which has been on a path to a democratic transition after the departure from power of dictator Omar al-Bashir, has recently undergone a military coup, yet massive numbers of Sudanese have poured into the streets to oppose the coup. What comes next?

**John Torpey** 00:25

Welcome to International Horizons, a podcast of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies that brings scholarly and diplomatic expertise to bear on our understanding of a wide range of international issues. My name is John Torpey, and I'm director of the Ralph Bunche Institute at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

**John Torpey** 00:45

Today we explore the situation in Sudan with Mohamed Osman, a researcher in Human Rights Watch's Africa division. He joined the organization in late 2018 and covers Sudan for Human Rights Watch. Prior to joining the organization, Osman worked with the Open Society Justice Initiative in New York as an Aryeh Neier Fellow working on corruption and advocacy. He started his career as a practicing lawyer in Sudan before working as a legal adviser to Redress and Sudan Human Rights Monitor on its torture and ill treatment project. He's also worked as the Legal Adviser for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Sudan, focusing on international humanitarian law dissemination, among officials and arms carriers. He has a law degree and a postgraduate diploma in human rights from the University of Khartoum, as well as a degree in international human rights and humanitarian law from the University of Essex. Thank you for joining us today, Mohamed Osman.

**Mohamed Osman** 01:55

Thanks, John. Happy to be here.

**John Torpey** 01:57

And I hope I'm pronouncing your name reasonably correctly.

**Mohamed Osman** 02:01

Absolutely.

**John Torpey** 02:02

Great. Thanks. So great to have you with us. So let me just launch into some questions. I mean, I think the first thing would be simply for you to help our listeners understand what has actually happened in Sudan in the past few weeks. You know, what happened to this path, that democratic transition that it seemed to be on after getting rid of Omar al-Bashir, and you know, what has been the popular response to this coup.

**Mohamed Osman** 02:29

So I think the best way to look at it is to start on what happened on October 25. So basically, few hours after midnight, the social media was flooded with reports of military forces deployed around the capital, Khartoum, and different reports about roundups of civilian officials. In couple of hours, it became obvious that this is a takeover being taken place in Sudan. And then the first thing that people realize is that different ministers had been arrested the Prime Minister, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, as well being put under house arrest at that time.

**Mohamed Osman** 03:06

The road to what we saw on the 25th, of course, comes with little surprise, despite however still shocking for many people in and outside Sudan, but it was definitely something that many people, especially protesters, and pro-democracy groups had warned of for quite some time. From the 25th up to now, from a rights perspective, I think definitely what they're seeing, in terms of the rights situation, is a display of repressive tactics by the military; we have saw a wide range of abuses that include use of lethal force with live ammunitions, violent crackdown on peaceful protesters, complete or even severe disruption of the Internet services and telecommunication, rounding up civilian officials, activists and journalists, many of them still detained in undisclosed location without access to a lawyer or family.

**Mohamed Osman** 04:04

So basically, the situation now remains as it is that the military grab power, the civilian government, the cabinet, and the Sovereign Council, which is a body that was established by the virtue of the transitional agreement representing the military and the civilians, all of them had been dissolved. The military leader Lieutenant General Burhan, who used to be the chairperson of the state Sovereign Council, also declared a state of emergency. The last days he'd been hinting to the possibility that he would move forward with the so-called "civilian led transition," but however moving to and appoint a new prime minister and a new Sovereign Council in place. We're hearing now in the media and from people on the ground that there are a lot of mediation efforts taking place, especially by the UN, the United States and the Troika countries. And in the meanwhile, protesters have remained defiant; they continued to protest in different parts of the country. We saw, on October the 30th, large crowds in Khartoum and other cities took to the street making clear their reaction to the military takeover, making clear to the support for democracy and echoing the calls to establish a better, fairer rights respecting country that they always fought for.

**John Torpey** 05:28

So this all began really with the, you know, removal from power of Omar Al Bashir. Maybe you could talk a little bit about his rule, his long standing rule and what it did to the country and what was expected to come out of that transition.

**Mohamed Osman** 05:46

So exactly. So because what we are seeing now with the military takeover, it cannot be isolated from al-Bashir time itself. I mean, those military leaders are, or were, to be the close military commanders to Omar al-Bashir, who, let's start with one date, which is April 11 2019; that was the date when the military commanders moved to remove Omar al-Bashir, in the pressure of the huge popular movement that was seeking to oust the al-Bashir regime. The al-Bashir regime started in 1989, that's three decades that many Sudanese had lived under was again full display of atrocities, human rights abuses and disregard of the fundamental rights. It was three decades of conflict, abuse, like abuses related to conflict that's been taking place, especially in Darfur and other parts of the country, corruption, embezzlement, and complete deterioration of public services.

**Mohamed Osman** 06:45

Human Rights Watch and other organizations have well documented records of the abuses by the security forces of al-Bashir time. Many of them survived and continued to be functioning, whether in terms of the military or in terms of significantly another force that is called the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo ("Hemetti"), who is the second person in command after al-Burhan, and for many people is almost a de-facto leader when it comes to the military part. So in the last months of 2018, there were a couple of protests that took place in different parts of Sudan. And those protests at that time were merely addressing the economic issues in terms of the increase of prices of subsidies, shortages of public services and all of that.

**Mohamed Osman** 07:41

Very quickly, the movement turned to demand political overhaul of the whole system, namely talking or demanding the ousting of al-Bashir and his regime. This movement was met ruthlessly by lethal force and forced disappearances, the same tactics that we always saw by al-Bashir. That wasn't the first time that the al-Bashir regime faced such a large movement, but it was significantly moved forward to establish the alternative political leadership that then after the ousting of al-Bashir in April 2019, engaged in negotiation in terms of transferring of power from the military to the civilian.

**Mohamed Osman** 08:22

At that time, protesters were camping outside the army headquarters in Khartoum, from April to June. The demands of the protestors was complete transfer of power from the civil into the military. At the same time, those political groups were open to negotiate a power sharing deal at that time, but they didn't reach an agreement. And despite the many assurances that the military leaders at that time made to the public and to the internationals that the protesters' sit-in will be safe and would not be dispersed, the military forces, especially the Rapid Support Forces, moved violently remove protesters on June 3, 2019.

**Mohamed Osman** 09:04

And on that day, and the dates followed, it was a full campaign of repression by these forces. Human Rights Watch did its own research at the end of 2019, finding that over 120-150 persons were killed during those attacks. There's a wide range of those violations that also include unlawful detention, ill treatment, sexual and gender based violence. And after that, in July, the military and the civilians sat again to negotiate and more or less returned back to the same deal that they had disagreements over in terms of sharing the power. One of the key demands to accept that deal was to ensure accountability for past crimes by the al-Bashir regime, including what happened on June 3, 2019, key demands in terms of reform in particular security sector reform.

**Mohamed Osman** 09:58

Unfortunately, the last two years, despite some little progress that we saw in terms of moving forward with some of the cases of the killings and abuses in terms of legal reform, Sudan, for example, abolished apostasy as a crime, removed some gender discriminatory provisions from its legal system, criminalized FGM [Female Genital Mutilation], ratified international treaties, including the Convention Against Torture. So there is some achievements. But looking at it in terms of the bigger picture, there was a lot of outstanding tasks that protesters on the ground, human rights groups kept calling, both on the civilians and the military to move forward with these reforms. This did not happen, that definitely created huge frustration among those groups. This includes protesters, includes families of victims, survivors, activists, and Sudanese from all walks of life, they were quite frustrated about the performance of the government at that time

**Mohamed Osman** 10:57

When we look at it, which of course we cannot say, there are a couple of things that we need to identify here. I was in Khartoum actually almost a month ago, myself, and had different conversations with people, including prosecutors, officials, those families of the missing and the victims, the survivors, different brave activists. And it was clear that when we talk about the civilian component, the government, there was a lack of prioritization of reform and accountability. There was a political process in place that focused on different priorities, but not the demands of rapid moving forward with accountability and reform.

**Mohamed Osman** 11:38

The military itself was pushing harshly back against any potential for reform, any potential that would limit their power that was threatening, you know, their existing political and economic interests. And at the same time, there was heavy international engagement, which in particular the US has been playing a leading role for that. One of the key reasons Sudan has been under sanctions for, I think, definitely over almost three, two decades in connection to the former regime's sponsorship of terrorism and human rights record. And after the removal of the regime, it was a tough negotiation between the traditional government and the previous Trump Administration, in terms of moving forward with lifting of sanctions.

**Mohamed Osman** 12:27

The engagement that the internationals had that time focused largely on the economic crisis Sudan was undergoing, which was severe in terms of inflation; we're talking about 200-300%. We are talking about unstable market prices happening within the inherited deteriorated public service sector. So the focus on the economy was reasonable and understanding. And many people could understand why that focus, but the problem is that happened on the cost, on the account of these demands of reform and accountability, and many reasons of like, why human rights groups and protesters were really pushing hard on the international actors to also focus on supporting and sponsoring this agenda is exactly to avoid the moment we are at now.

**Mohamed Osman** 13:20

We are talking about military forces that continue to feel that they are enjoying impunity, that they are not enjoying or are going to undergo any civilian oversight in the future. And at the same time, we are talking about security services, who killed those protesters who committed a series of abuses, even including in Darfur, having to face accountability. And that definitely created issues and an existential threat to be honest, from our point of view, to the whole transition at that time. However, despite all of these different protests, you know, different demands, different reports, that didn't happen. And basically, what we're seeing now is something that we hope the international community may rectify, and understand that when you put justice at the back burner, that doesn't end well. I mean, despite the fact you can always make your political positions and assumptions, but removing justice from the table in the name political expediency, that doesn't work. And I think what's happening in Sudan should confirm that.

**John Torpey** 14:30

Right? I mean, what sort of intrigues and puzzles me in a way is that despite the kind of climate of repression that you've described that existed for two to three decades under al-Bashir? You know, nonetheless, you have this situation in which there's a military coup and yet, you know, massive numbers of people pour out into the streets and seem to be imposing a kind of limit on, you know, how far their military can go in doing what it's trying to do. So that seems to me as an outsider kind of a puzzle. I mean, how do you understand that? How do you think that happened? I mean, 30 years of a dictatorship living under that kind of those kinds of conditions tend to undermine the creation of civil society groups and this kind of civil opposition. And yet here it is, how should we understand that how that happened?

**Mohamed Osman** 15:27

Exactly. I mean, this is a very good point. I mean, especially if you would look regionally into other contexts, for instance. The Sudanese civil society, in the largest meaning for what civil society means, had been quite vibrant and quite active in pushing against the authoritarian regime of Omar al-Bashir. I mean, of course, there was a moment of like, you could say, like a breeze that happened during that regime, which a couple of years that followed the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Sudan as a government and the Sudan Liberation Army movement, which now seceded and became South Sudan.

**Mohamed Osman** 16:04

And in this couple of years, of course, there was a little bit of space of like political and civic rights. And that also added to the momentum of the civic space and civil society groups, and also for political parties to engage more collectively on different issues. And I think when you look at the moment of the protest, I mean, of course, right in this, what happened in 2018, as I said earlier wasn't the first; we saw the same thing happening in 2013, mostly also triggered by hard hitting economic reform policies and austerity measures.

**Mohamed Osman** 16:41

And it was the same reaction: security forces respond ruthlessly, almost in this like shock and awe approach, killing, abusing as much as possible in the fastest period of time, thinking that would crack down and scare people pushing back to their house. And that sometimes that might happen. The movement clearly kept organizing itself over and over the last years. I mean, people will talk about who took to the street in 2018-19, people would see, you know, we talked about like between 16 and 25 years old men and women. This is new generations that were definitely exposed to global and regional experience, they were very connected to the political history of Sudan, when you have three different --we have had like, two revolutions before happen ousting military dictatorships. So for Sudanese, this is part of our history, that even despite how long an authoritarian regime would survive, at the end of the day Sudanese are able to move forward collectively and remove abusers from power.

**Mohamed Osman** 17:45

And this is, you know, like even what happened on the 25th, with the military takeover. And I think, why I mentioned were shocking for some people, despite all the signs is four days ago, like four days before the takeover, the October 21, those protest groups took to the streets in large demonstrations making sure that the military would not move to do this step, making clear that the message that, "we are frustrated by our government, but we want to ensure that we want to continue walking on the path of a rights respecting country, a democratic country, the country that many people paid to their lives to establish."

**Mohamed Osman** 18:26

And for many people thought this was a clear message, and especially for the Sudanese international community. For the military, they had a different response, basically, four days after that they moved to take and grab power. So what we're seeing now, and even now, despite all these restrictions, including the cut of Internet services, what we are hearing from the ground is that the defiance of those protesters, the organizations, the social welfare programs that are taking care of each other on a grassroots neighborhood base level. And at the same time making sure that their demands are translated into a political project. The demands are clear and obvious. So there is nothing really vague about what those people want on the ground. A) they show their clear rejection to the military takeover. They're showing clear rejection to the continuation of impunity that the military was enjoying. They want to make sure that whatever political process is in place, it should not happen on the account of these demands that I mentioned earlier with company reform and accountability.

**John Torpey** 19:36

I mean, with regard to the impunity matter, remind me what what has happened with Omar al-Bashir. Is he not under a kind of indictment of the of the International Criminal Court in the Hague?

**Mohamed Osman** 19:50

So this exactly speaks to the matter that many people are concerned about, which is, you know, the backrolling on the little achievements that happened in the transition. From the start, the transition leaders verbally committed to the justice process in Sudan, including the international dimension about it. Omar al-Bashir and two other ex-officials, Abdel Rahim Mohammed Hussein, who was the ex-Defence Minister, and Ahmed Haroun, who was a former state governor in Darfur, the three of them are indicted and wanted by the International Criminal Court.

**Mohamed Osman** 20:24

Around February last year, the government made clear that they going to cooperate with the court. However, it remained quite vague about what does that mean. And then for months to come, the pace of cooperation increased but at a very slow rate. You know, like one of the other wanted an equal shape, voluntarily surrendered himself to the court last year. So that gave a little bit of hope that that process may start at The Hague when it comes to the victims of the multiple crimes al-Bashir and his bandits committed in Darfur. So domestically, al-Bashir was undergoing a trial for corruption and also now, I mean before the takeover, he was also undergoing another trial for his role and participation in his 1989 coup. Those two cases are not really addressing the human rights record that al-Bashir is associated with, committed.

**Mohamed Osman** 21:20

And it became concerning that these processes may hinder the possibility of holding al-Bashir accountable, whether domestically or internationally. I mean, for sure, just to clarify, Sudan is under a legal obligation to hand over al-Bashir and the others to The Hague, according to the Security Council Resolution. However, under the Rome Statute, which governs the Court in the Hague, countries that are allowed --I mean, the ICC is a court of last resort, which means that if a country would show the willingness and the ability to conduct the complementarity test, that showed that willingness and the ability to hold fair trials to those indicted, domestically, then they would be allowed.

**Mohamed Osman** 22:09

However, what we see in the justice institutions in Sudan, they were not really undergoing any reform. And the authorities themselves didn't say that we're going to try al-Bashir domestically. However, they hinted to that over the time. I think, a couple of months ago, we saw the Cabinet of Ministers voting to hand over al-Bashir and others at the Court. One of the problems that we saw that, because of the absence of the legislative council in Sudan, a joint temporary mechanism to approve such decision is a joint meeting between the civilians and the military. And the military, according to what we heard, kept pushing those meetings for some time, creating that backlog of agenda items, which includes the handing over for al-Bashir. So of course, this takeover might be triggered by different elements, but one of the straightforward impacts is the hinderance of the justice process, whether for domestic accountability or for the international one.

**John Torpey** 23:11

I see. So I wanted to get back to the international sort of context and the American role that you referred to before. I mean, there's much talk, as I'm sure you know, about a kind of withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East, and a shift away from terrorism as a kind of principal concern of foreign policy. And Sudan has been seen in that kind of context, because Sudan has been a staging area for some Islamic terrorism and that sort of thing. And now, there's this generally thought to be this kind of shift to a focus on China. So I wonder if you could say how much is that playing a role in what's going on within Sudan itself, and what is the United States doing with regard to the coup? I believe some positive noises came out of Washington that, you know, this sort of thing couldn't be, you know, allowed to happen and that sort of thing, but how much it's actually played a role in trying to put an end to the coup? I'd be interested to hear you tell us.

**Mohamed Osman** 24:23

So basically, I mean, a couple of hours before the military takeover took place, Jeffrey Feltman, the US Special Envoy to the Horn was in Khartoum and different envoys including from the UK were in Khartoum to discuss the political tension. And from the media reports we saw, they made clear that to warn the military, to respect the transition, to ensure that transition is going to achieve its intended goals at the end. The military provided all the assurances that yes, they are some complex dynamics with civilians, but they would hope to solve this in a peaceful manner.

**Mohamed Osman** 25:03

One or two hours when Feltman was flying out of Khartoum, the military takeover took place. So that in itself was one of those indicators about the the role that played by the internationals may not be enough to deter the military from such a step. Of course, as you mentioned, there was a lot of words of condemnation came from DC, from London, from other places, from the European Union. And at the same time, we saw the same words warning the military not to move forward with measures that undermine the transition to ensure respect to the right to peaceful protest. On October 30, as I just mentioned earlier, the military also showed disregard to that until three protesters were injured a lot across the country.

**Mohamed Osman** 25:50

So it's clear so far that we are seeing that, despite the positive words of support to Sudanese people, a couple of things that we need to highlight here. One, it's clear that when you deal with human rights perpetrators who for long enjoyed that feeling of impunity, words of condemnation may not be enough. And there is an urgent need to draw some sort of red line in place, there is a need for that set of action that would show the military that there will be consequences for abuses. And that applies at the same time now when we will talk about the political negotiations in place.

**Mohamed Osman** 26:28

I mean, as Human Rights Watch, we don't have the mandate to comment on questions around legitimacy or political processes, but it's important for us, as well. This is the call that people are making in Sudan that the voices of those protesters should not be dismissed from the political process. I mean, those voices that demand justice and accountability are principled. And one of the things we saw throughout the transition, as again, I say about why the engagement of the internationals in the last two years wasn't that sufficient and fail to meet the demands around reform and accountability, it's very important that this approach should be revisited. We're now approaching this military-political negotiations. Because any political process that would allow perpetrators to be off the hook, in the name of whatever --in the name of stability in the name of, as I said, political expediency --it wouldn't work and it would backfire.

**Mohamed Osman** 27:28

I mean, what happened in October 25, is a result of that, or more or less is a result of the approach that internationals had. I mean, so far, there are different reports, the different conversations happening on the ground. I mean, it's really concerning. I mean, A) we have this internet have been cut in Sudan, so we don't really understand what's happening in the real time space, especially from the from the protest groups. At the same time, there is a lack of transparency of the conversations, what is happening behind closed doors. And that's why we are trying always to make sure that when we're doing our, you know, conversations with diplomats, governments, actors in and outside the country, that these principal demands for accountability for reform, including security sector reform, should be included as as much the protesters on the ground actually want.

**Mohamed Osman** 28:23

So basically, for the short term, we would want to see a bigger role for international actors, that is positive and is actionable, that ensure for the short term period, for the meanwhile, that the military stop its abuses, halt all arrests, release all the political detainees that have been detained since October 25, and allow the restoration of internet and telecommunications services to make sure Sudanese people are actually able to freely exercise their right and express their opinions. Whatever political shape and future they want and demand for the country, and then for whatever political process to take place by the support of the US or the internationals should then be built on the principle cause of reform and justice and accountability.

**John Torpey** 29:17

So as you speak, I'm reminded of the fact that a few months back we actually did an interview with -- you're speaking to us from Berlin, which I think I forgot to mention at the outset, but I'm reminded of the fact that a few months back we had a conversation with the recently departed German Ambassador to Ethiopia, discussing developments there, the Tigray Liberation Front, etc. And, of course, now the news seems to be that they're moving south and heading towards the capital, you know, increasingly it seems in striking distance of taking power in the central government. So I just wonder, Sudan's near abroad, so to speak. Does this affect developments in Sudan in any particular way?

**Mohamed Osman** 30:05

I mean, yes, I mean, one of the things with the whole region, I mean, we all understand this regional dynamics. I mean, there was a part of your question asked earlier about also dynamics related to terrorism, for instance, right. So again, a lot of dynamics that has been definitely influenced by the transition and potentially by the takeover. But let's take the regional dynamics. I mean, of course, the situation is up has been worrying and deteriorating for a very long time, the dynamics between Sudan and Ethiopia will be also changed, of course, right on, like on the outset, when the transition was trying to take shape.

**Mohamed Osman** 30:39

After the removal of al-Bashir, Ethiopia was heavily engaging into negotiating between the civilians and the military. That shifted a bit after the AU moved to lead on the mediation. And for a long time, the Sudanese government, a different government maintained a calm relationship that sort of exploded at the early stages of the conflicts in Ethiopia. When Sudan engaged in border clashes with Ethiopian forces and militias, which is like long, like probably like long decades for the dispute that wasn't really growing to the surface to like that time at the beginning of the coup in Ethiopia.

**Mohamed Osman** 31:19

Of course, there is the issue around the Renaissance Dam, which also affect the positions and components in the government at the same time. And there is a growing analysis that the military component in the government, as aligned with Egypt was more taking a hard line position against Ethiopia in that regard for the civilians, with their own ties to Ethiopia at that time, were more accepting kind of the mediation to take its course peacefully. Of course, now that changed, so potentially that would have its own impact on the stability in the region, or any potential negotiations around the dam in Ethiopia, for instance.

**Mohamed Osman** 32:04

Again, terrorism is something that as I mentioned, Sudan was sanctioned for, because of the sponsorship of terrorism. I mean, regardless if it's true or not, because it's the fact why the US moved to impose these sanctions. Two months ago or even less, there was also different incidents in Khartoum, where security forces engaged in gunfights in the middle of the day in the middle of like residential areas in the capital with alleged members of ISIS.

**Mohamed Osman** 32:35

However, for some monitor that was seen as part of the campaign that the military in Sudan was trying to paint in terms of being the guardian and the savior of Sudan, the protector of the region when it comes to terrorism. I mean, we all understand how counterterrorism becomes also like a very winning policy card for some dictators and autocrats in terms of allowing or justifying certain abuses in the name of fighting of counterterrorism.

**Mohamed Osman** 33:03

I mean, from our perspective, any kind of engagement to counterterrorism will have to adhere to human rights principles, the national law. Again, that speaks to the problem in Sudan that these forces did not undergo any reform, which allowed transparency over the last civilian oversight. So yes, of course, with this shifting dynamics in mind, and of course, that may affect the engagement of the internationals, when they talk to the military or the civilians. And again, I mean, we definitely may sound as a broken record, because every time something like that happens, like, "oh, yeah, but like, ensure that you're not pragmatic in a way that throw justice out of the window, throw reform out of the window," because that will not lead to stability. If the people in Sudan wouldn't accept whatever the shape of the future that is. And they feel that the nationals, because of shifting regional dynamics, want to move in this direction, again, the demands for justice and reform, I think we are going to end up in a very concerning situation at the end of the day.

**John Torpey** 34:16

Well, thank you. So maybe one last question. Just simply, what do you think is going to happen in the next, you know, few months to a year? Can you give us some sense of what we should be looking for what would be hopeful signs?

**Mohamed Osman** 34:31

I mean, the situation is very moving. I mean, between this morning, and now talking to you, they probably a lot of events happening: different changes, different statements. So it's a very, very different, very fast moving situation. However, I think yesterday the head of the UN mission in Sudan mentioned that the potential of deal should be matter of days, not weeks because the situation won't be able to sustain itself if there is no political breakthrough happening soon. Nonetheless, of course, I think we would hope to see the rights of Sudanese to protest be respected, we would hope that there is no back rolling or backtracking on whatever achievements happen during the transition. And it's for the Sudanese at the end of the day to decide which direction they would go.

**Mohamed Osman** 35:23

So it's hard to tell, with all of these moving pieces here and there, at least the indicators we see in the media seems to be multiple initiatives are taking place. But we are also at a time when we should be also fully aware of misinformation that could take place, especially when the military is controlling that access to TV and social media. So it's very difficult to have a verified updates that could inform our understanding about how the situation is going.

**Mohamed Osman** 35:55

But for sure, I mean, today there was a special session of the Human Rights Council to talk about Sudan. We already saw the AU suspend the membership of Sudan, I think over a week ago. There is the joint statement from the United Nations Security Council. I think the last thing I would want to say that while these different steps are a good start, the time, you know, the clock is ticking it's important that actions become faster in terms of allowing Sudanese to express the rights but also making sure abuses cease from happening.

**John Torpey** 36:31

Great. Well, thank you so much for those remarks. And I want to say that's it for today's episode. I want to thank Mohamed Osman for sharing his insights about the fast moving situation in Sudan. Remember to subscribe and rate International Horizons on SoundCloud, Spotify and Apple podcasts.

**John Torpey** 36:50

I want to thank Merrill Sovner for helping put together today's episode, to thank Hristo Voynov as always for his technical assistance, and as well to acknowledge Duncan Mackay for sharing his song International Horizons as the theme music for the show. This is John Torpey, saying thanks for very much for joining us and we look forward to having you with us for the next episode of International Horizons.