In a world besieged by conflict and strife, news that the Biden administration is championing a new initiative to end the conflict in Sudan offers a rare glimmer of hope. This fresh diplomatic push is a welcome reprieve in a narrative that has grown increasingly dire. The war in Sudan, as senseless as it is destructive, pits the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) against the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)—the same factions that once thwarted a complete civilian overthrow of the dictatorial regime in 2019. Now, in 2023, these erstwhile comrades have turned their weapons on each other, devastating a nation that once harbored the promise of revolution and change.

The elevation of this issue by the Biden administration provides a necessary focal point for the multitude of external actors with vested interests in Sudan. This approach is a critical step forward, steering the process away from the endless cycle of forum shopping that has plagued previous efforts. However, the road to peace is fraught with challenges. Both the SAF and the RSF have shown little genuine appetite for reconciliation. The war has not only fractured Sudanese society but also splintered their own coalitions. Yet, the alternative—allowing Sudan to implode and potentially destabilize its already fragile neighbors—is an untenable option.

Diplomatic endeavors must persist, bringing the belligerents to the negotiating table and halting the violence. But this alone is insufficient. Immediate, decisive action is urgently needed on the humanitarian front. The Sudanese people cannot afford to wait for their warring generals to discover common ground—they need substantial aid now. The civilian toll is staggering: over ten million displaced, more than half the population in need of assistance to survive, and a looming famine that threatens between three-quarters of a million to two and a half million lives. This humanitarian catastrophe is not an unfortunate byproduct of war but a result of deliberate choices by the warring factions, who have made humanitarian access nearly impossible.



Sudanese people, who fled the conflict in Murnei in Sudan's Darfur region, cross the border between Sudan and Chad in Adre, Chad, August 4, 2023.

In crises as complex as Sudan's, sequencing aid and intervention is inherently challenging. But we have no time to spare in moving desperately needed assistance into the country. Adhering to the SAF's dictates regarding western border crossings for aid is nonsensical—they lack control over these areas and have no legitimate authority. A localized, patchwork approach that taps into informal Sudanese civilian efforts, despite its risks, is our best shot. The risks of inaction are far greater. Policymakers must resist the temptation to delay hard and risky decisions in the hope that the latest round of talks will succeed.

The international community faces a moral imperative to act. Sudan's people are caught in a nightmare, held hostage by the ambitions of a few power-hungry

generals. They deserve more than our thoughts and prayers; they deserve concrete action and unwavering support. As the Biden administration takes commendable steps to broker peace, let us not forget that peace without aid is a hollow promise. The world must unite to ensure that Sudan’s civilians receive the help they so desperately need, even as we work tirelessly to bring an end to the senseless bloodshed. The cost of inaction is too high, and the time to act is now.