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The Impact of War on Sudan's Higher Education and Academic Research Community

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Cover

Cover photo: An artistic depiction of the war in Sudan
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Executive Summary

The outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023 has created immeasurable suffering and damage, threatening critical institutions across the country. Amongst these is Sudanese higher education, which has faced not only the destruction of critical facilities, but also the mass displacement of students and faculty. This report assesses the extent of the damage and how these institutions have, to some degree, continued to operate, despite the extremely difficult conditions. It also highlights the experiences of Sudanese academics and students in displacement as they have attempted to continue their work and rebuild their lives—inside Sudan, as well as in neighbouring countries.

Key Points

Sudanese higher education began in the colonial era with the advent of Gordon Memorial College. Since independence, it has been a site of politics, but also an essential site of knowledge production, leadership training, and idea incubation. Prior to the current war, Sudan hosted 39 public and 25 private universities, with at least 700,000 students enrolled in university and over 14,000 university lecturers, of which over 8,000 were PhD holders.

Sudanese academics and students have been particularly impacted by the war due to the concentration of institutions of higher education in Khartoum and other urban areas across the country. While many academics and students have been displaced internally in Sudan, a significant portion, including university lecturers and researchers, have been displaced to neighbouring countries.

The decisions made by students and faculty to remain in Sudan or leave the country have rested on questions of economics and social ties. The cost of travel and prospects for Sudanese academics and students in different receiving countries vary greatly. Different countries have contrasting levels of infrastructure and capacity to receive recent arrivals, as well as contrasting opportunities for students and academics once they are there.

Sudanese universities have been disrupted by the war; however, many have also continued their work. Private and *ahlia* universities have discontinued operations in large part, with some relocated to other countries and others taking up online study with diminished capacity. Meanwhile, government universities have continued their work in different capacities, with educators working heroically to ensure that students have the opportunity to proceed with and even complete their studies. This has been facilitated by continued coordination by the Ministry of Higher Education, which has been able to provide backups of diplomas and records of registration at government universities. The University of Khartoum, as well as other government universities, have transferred some courses to online teaching, with lecturers at times sending pre-recorded lectures to students by way of Telegram and WhatsApp, even as they work at 60 per cent of their already devalued salary, paid in deep arrears.

University administrators have been able to arrange exams periodically in safe areas of Sudan in which government ministries are functioning, particularly in the East, with University of Khartoum offering exam sites in Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well. At the same time, these efforts have been severely hampered due to the progress of the war, particularly due to the movement of the RSF into Gezira state, which forced many people into a secondary displacement, and the concurrent internet outages. Moreover, certain academic records, including university transcripts in some cases, have been lost due to the sudden outbreak of war limiting access to university servers and hampering institutions in securing their own data.

In neighbouring countries, Sudanese academics and students experience opportunities and impediments for study and work. These may be related to the general living situation for Sudanese refugees in the country, or to the needs and capacity of the higher education system in the country in question. In Egypt, where a substantial number of Sudanese people have gone—either through documented means using visas, or increasingly via people smugglers—Sudanese academics have faced significant hurdles to employment in an academic system that is already highly competitive and underfunded. This has forced many to turn to other, often irregular means of employment. Meanwhile, students, many of whom have moved to Egypt with their families, have faced prohibitive fees and bureaucratic measures making it extremely difficult to continue their studies.

In Ethiopia, Sudanese citizens have been forced to choose whether to enter as refugees—and remain confined to refugee camps—or on visas, which cost USD100 per month and last for 6 months. This has meant that Sudanese academics and students entering Ethiopia, where there are few opportunities for work or study, have typically gone there to arrange for onward travel. At the same time, the centralized nature of the higher education system in Ethiopia, combined with the shortage of higher degree holders, particularly PhD holders, presents an opportunity for both the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education to create a recruitment mechanism that would both improve the quality of Ethiopian higher education and employ Sudanese academics in the region.

South Sudan is one of the only countries currently recruiting Sudanese academics and is relatively open for students. While the number of students who studied in Sudan prior to the war seeking registration in South Sudan has been surprisingly small, the South Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education has enacted a flexible policy allowing for the integration of students into the system should they enter South Sudan. South Sudanese universities, particularly Juba University, have been actively recruiting Sudanese academics into lecturer positions. This has been crucial for many Sudanese academics who have found opportunities in South Sudan. These universities require further support to make the recruitment of Sudanese staff smooth—particularly regarding the question of accommodation.

While technically not a neighbouring country, many Sudanese academics have travelled to Uganda as well, either by land through South Sudan or by plane from Port Sudan. In Uganda, opportunities exist for students (particularly studying English), though challenges exist

regarding recognition of university credit for those students whose study was interrupted mid-degree. While Sudanese academics have mostly not been able to find teaching jobs in public universities due to widespread hiring freezes, opportunities exist to participate in training programmes, including English language, and for collaborations on joint research projects with Ugandan academics.

Efforts to support Sudanese higher education, both inside and outside of Sudan, are urgent and will be essential for preserving the academic infrastructure of the country long-term and creating a foundation for rebuilding when the war ends. These could include:

- Sudanese government institutions can coordinate regionally to assist Sudanese academics and students now living outside the country.
- International donors can undertake essential work to support Sudanese academics in displacement. For example, by assisting institutions hiring Sudanese academics and taking in students, and supporting Sudanese academics and students directly through emergency grants, scholarships, and opportunities for language training.
- They should also consider providing support for Sudanese universities, for example to facilitate distance learning and the holding of exams.

Map: Sudan Border Crossings

Base map data source: OpenStreetMap

Introduction

Since war broke out in Khartoum on 15 April 2023, Sudan's population has faced a series of unspeakable tragedies and challenges. The war has displaced millions of people, among them Sudanese academics and researchers. This means that analysis of Sudan has been particularly thin, with researchers and academics focused primarily on the survival and well-being of themselves, their families and their communities, leaving only some investigative reporting to fill the gap.[1]

This report examines the situation of Sudanese researchers and academics now and seeks to find ways to support them in an attempt to generate knowledge on Sudan and preserve the future of the production of Sudanese knowledge. Researchers and academics cannot be separated from the system of higher education at large: Most researchers, in and out of Sudan, work in universities or in institutes that work closely with universities. They work as lecturers and teachers, teaching students the fundamentals of their disciplines. Students themselves work as researchers in the course of writing their Master's degrees or PhD theses or as research assistants to their mentors. As such, the system of higher education functions as an ecosystem, and understanding the ways that higher education as a whole has been threatened by this war is essential to provide support for researchers and assure a future for Sudanese academia and academic knowledge, both during and after the war.

In the immediate term, supporting Sudanese higher education will involve supporting Sudanese research and knowledge production, most especially outside Sudan, alongside supporting Sudanese pedagogy and education. This war has displaced the overwhelming majority of academics and students, and with this displacement has come a serious loss of life, of possessions, of writing and information. To monitor the war as it continues and analyse what is happening, it is essential to support Sudanese academics and researchers as they try to stabilize their lives and refocus on the issues facing Sudan. It is also important to ensure they can continue their work as lecturers and teachers and that opportunities exist for Sudanese students to continue their education.

Higher education will be essential to the future of Sudan in that the training students receive in Sudanese universities will contribute directly to the processes necessary to rebuild Sudan once this war ends. After the war, there will be great need for specialized skills to address the destruction of infrastructure and vast human suffering caused by it, and skilled workers will be essential to organizing the process of addressing these needs. This will only be possible if professionals return at the end of the war and will only be assured with the reopening of

1 Among the best of which is in *Atar* magazine, which published a special issue on education in Sudan in June 2024, focusing on the primary and secondary education. Bayn al Mustaqbilain: 'Milaf khas 'an al ta'lim' [Between Two Futures: Special Edition on Education], *Atar*, Sudan Facts Center for Journalism, 13 June 2024.

universities to train the next generation of civil servants and professionals. In a sense, this involves a measure of class continuation in that it speaks to the continuation of a Sudanese middle class, historically essential to the formation of the Sudanese state and to Sudanese politics, though doing so does not require replicating the regionalized and racialized inequalities previously present.[2]

Supporting Sudanese higher education has a stake in political terms. Higher education has been a major crucible for civilian politics since the Anglo-Egyptian colonial period of British rule (1899–1956), starting with the Graduates' Congress in the 1940s and continuing well into the present day. Students and professionals participated in the street protests in December 2018 that culminated in the December revolution that ousted President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 after 30 years in power and forced the establishment of a transitional government in which the security apparatus was forced to share power with civilians. In Sudan's history, acculturation in university politics has been essential to fostering a sense of nationhood and will be essential to continuing the polity. Faculty at universities have been key to generating political ideas that have fed into Sudan's major political projects since its independence in 1956. In order for civilian politics to function following this war, universities will need to exist—as sites of knowledge production, and as sites of political training, where students learn to exist with others and form the intellectual foundation of their political initiatives going forward.

To address the ways Sudanese higher education can best be supported, this report will explain its research methods before moving onto the larger context of the history of higher education in Sudan, the damage caused to it by the war and the state of institutions of higher education since. It will then pivot to the routes along which people fled when they were displaced from their homes and the status of Sudanese students and lecturers in neighbouring countries. The report concludes with an exploration of the efforts underway to support students and lecturers now and possibilities for further support.

Methodology

The nature of the war necessitated the use of multiple research methods. Since its outbreak, sites of higher education have been destroyed and academics and students have been scattered. In order to understand where exactly students and academics are located—and what institutions are working (and in what capacity)—we needed to work across borders. This involved reading reports, publications and government documents published in different media, sometimes on social media. It also meant reaching academics and students where they were, and using different mediums to communicate with them, whether online or in person.

The research itself consequently crossed international borders. As part of the study, we conducted interviews and undertook 'fieldwork' in four cities—Cairo, Addis Ababa, Juba and Kampala. Of great importance to us was interviewing academics and students affected by the war and assessing their experiences of new locations and what they needed to live in them. At times

2 Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, *The Sudanese Bourgeoisie : Vanguard of Development?* New Jersey: Zed Press, 1984.

we interviewed lecturers individually; at others, we met groups of people together, whenever gathering in one place was more convenient for the lecturers and students in question. Because of limitations on our ability to enter Sudan, due in part to the war, we interviewed those still there either on WhatsApp or by phone. These phone networks are quite weak, meaning that, to gather information, sometimes we relied on messaging and voice notes.

In addition to interviews, we released an online questionnaire. Our goal was to gain a sense of the locations and short-term needs and priorities, of university lecturers and researchers outside our immediate network and beyond the geographic scope of this study. Having developed the questions together, we released this questionnaire into our respective academic circles on Twitter and Facebook, as well as in key WhatsApp groups frequented by Sudanese academics. We received 92 replies, demonstrating a cross-section of academics different to those we were able to meet during our fieldwork. A significant portion—roughly 20 per cent of those surveyed—were still in Sudan, largely in Northern, Port Sudan and Kassala states, while 34 per cent of all those who responded were in the Gulf—either Saudi Arabia, Qatar or the Emirates. Another 16 per cent said they were in Egypt, almost all in Cairo. Others responded from countries farther away, including Malaysia, Somalia, Germany, France and Canada. These academics represented employees from over 20 institutions, ranging from secondary schools (in one or two cases) to professional associations to universities. The vast majority of respondents had been employed in Khartoum, and the variety of their responses and the range of their new locations gave us insights into their living conditions, beyond those in the places where we conducted our field research.

In addition to interviewing Sudanese academics and students, we conducted interviews with academics and officials from academic institutions and government ministries that oversee higher education in Egypt, South Sudan and Ethiopia, and consulted Sudanese officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education. The goal of these interviews was to gain an understanding of the priorities of institutions in these countries and prospects for the students and academics displaced to them, as well as to understand the priorities of Sudanese ministries with regards to higher education both before the outbreak of war as well as after it.

All of this research has been influenced by our own experiences and connections to Sudanese higher education, as well as information gained over the course of our own displacement. Muna Elgadal was a lecturer at Omdurman Ahlia University prior to the war and has continued her work as a PhD student from Cairo, where she has first-hand knowledge of the academic opportunities that exist for students and faculty in Egypt. Rebecca Glade was a volunteer lecturer at the University of Khartoum and has since worked as a visiting researcher at Makerere University in Uganda. Our own experiences, and those of our friends and colleagues, shaped our research questions and understanding of the challenges displacement brings, as well as giving us detailed knowledge of some of the choices recently displaced academics have to make and the administrative and logistical processes they have to undergo.

Background: Higher Education in Sudan

The establishment of higher education in Sudan can be traced to the colonial establishment of the Gordon Memorial College in 1902, which became the University of Khartoum when Sudan gained its independence. At its outset, the scope of higher education in Sudan was extremely limited; at independence in 1956, the University of Khartoum was the country's only university, with students coming to it from one of first four, then five or six, secondary schools. There were several other colleges, such as the Sudan College of Technology and the Sudanese Arts College, as well as the Islamic Institute, all of which aimed to train students in specific fields of study.[3] Faculty at Gordon Memorial were initially foreign, largely British, in keeping with the colonial nature of the establishment and aims of the institution. This changed after independence, with efforts made by the state to bring more Sudanese into faculty and became more pronounced over time as the education system expanded.

Students in higher education in Sudan have had an important role in Sudanese politics since the colonial period. Students who enrolled at Gordon Memorial often began their careers by joining the state as civil servants, first under the colonial state and then in a newly independent Sudan. Enrolment in university was a high prestige activity, granting proximity to power; in the colonial period, students and graduates from Gordon Memorial made up part of the nationalist movement, manifested in the Graduates' Assembly that called for independence.[4] Later, in 1964, the death of a University of Khartoum student, at the hands of the police, sparked protests that culminated in the October Revolution that ousted General Ibrahim Abboud (1900–1983) a Sudanese military officer who by then had been Sudan's president for six years, from power.[5]

Following the rise of another military officer, Major-General Ja'afar Nimeiri, to the presidency in 1969, student activism remained a hotbed of opposition politics, seen by the regime as a serious threat to its legitimacy. Student protests and student activism remained prominent throughout the 1970s and 1980s, in spite of increased efforts by the state to monitor and regulate university life and prevent overt opposition politics. In February 1970, the Sudanese state established a ministerial technical committee to oversee the University of Khartoum. The committee recommended the creation of a national council for higher education, to which the universities would be subordinated. This led to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research being put in place in 1971 and the National Council for Higher Education in 1972,

3 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Educational Development in the Sudan*, 1898-1956, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

4 Heather Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*, Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

5 W. J. Berridge, *Civil Uprisings in Modern Sudan: The "Khartoum Springs" of 1964 and 1985*, London, UK; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

followed by the passage of the 1975 Higher Education Organisation Act.[6] Ten years later, after the April revolution, came efforts to open up university spaces further. Under the University Organisation Act of 1985, the institutions involved remained, though they now focused on coordinating a wider variety of institutions than had been the case in the early 1970s.

But it was in 1989, when another military coup brought Brigadier-General Omar al-Bashir and the *Ingaz* regime, or 'Regime of National Salvation,' to power, that the Sudanese state began to exert even greater efforts to govern university spaces, prevent protests and decentralize higher education. A republican decree, issued in 1990, approved recommendations made at a Khartoum Higher Education Conference after which what became known as the Higher Education Revolution stripped places of learning, such as scientific institutions, of the right—or need—to adhere to global standards.[7] Amid extensive expansion, universities were established elsewhere across the country—mostly elevated from educational centres and secondary schools, often without enough oversight or support for quality. This meant that many new institutions, while admitting more students and expanding access to a university degree, had large class sizes and limited equipment and literature for students to draw on, as well as weak or unqualified instruction.[8] The stated goals of the *tamkin*, or capacity, project, were to increase state capacity by increasing the number of qualified state employees.[9] Yet just as the *tamkin* initiative served a political purpose, rewarding regime supporters for their loyalty and embedding those who agreed ideologically with the regime in all levels of government, the expansion of higher education also had political ramifications, diluting the power of the University of Khartoum and the symbolic importance of the participation, by its faculty and students, in opposition activities.

A limited budget for higher education during the Ingaz period served to weaken the salaries of university lecturers, a policy that had both political and social implications. In the 1990s, low salaries made it harder for faculty to organize or act politically, given the precarity of their positions. As the state implemented neoliberal reforms in the early 2000s, salaries became a by-product of a system that tried to make universities more self-sustaining through student fees. This contributed to poor material conditions for university lecturers, who responded to these pressures by taking on extra work to support their families. Some of those we interviewed told us that these factors curtailed their ability to publish or pursue research, even before the war.

While all university lecturers faced this challenge, economic challenges resulting from austerity

6 Mahdi Amin Altom, 'Thoughts on the Organisation of Higher Education in Sudan', *Sudanese Online*, 17 June 2019, https://sudaneseonline.com/board/7/msg/1560785104.html.

7 Mahdi Amin Altom, 'Thoughts on the Organisation of Higher Education'.

8 Atta El-Battahani, 'Interrogating the Dilemma of Sudanese Academics: Producing Knowledge or Recycling Ideologies', in *Sudanese Intellectuals in the Global Milieu: Capturing Cultural Capital*, eds. Gada Kadoda and Sondra Hale, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022, 133–51.

9 Alden Young, 'The Intellectual Origins of Sudan's 'Decades of Solitude,' 1989–2019', *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 2/1 (Winter 2021): 196–226.

were particularly acute outside of the capital, where university lecturers, even those with PhDs, found fewer opportunities to supplement their income with consultancy work for companies or organizations. Weak salaries and limited opportunities contributed to a brain-drain, with the emigration of university lecturers to other countries—often in the Gulf—where they found employment at higher salaries.[10] At the same time that these measures were implemented, privatization and neoliberal restructuring encouraged the founding of private universities and colleges inside Sudan, which provided employment to lecturers with greater precarity and lower pay.

This contributed to the structure of the higher education system as it existed prior to the war. By April 2023, Sudan hosted over 35 public universities. It also had over 118 private universities and colleges, most of them established after 2000.[11] These private institutions varied, with some counting as *ahlia* universities or colleges, non-governmental institutions that receive the bulk of their funding from local communities and charge less in tuition fees, while others were higher priced private institutions, whose financial backing came from businessmen inside or, if they were outside Sudan, often in the Gulf.[12] These institutions included numerous medical schools, with the 70 programmes in Sudan making up 23 per cent of all the medical schools in sub-Saharan Africa.[13]

Statistics for students and faculty in 2023 were difficult to find, but numbers from 2017 indicate a wide network of students and a ratio of faculty to students of roughly 1:60. In 2016, the Ministry of Higher Education calculated 648,170 students registered at the undergraduate or diploma level, and the numbers enrolled in Master's, PhD or other higher diplomas, at another 35,255. These statistics excluded students at technical colleges or other institutes, indicating that, by 2017, the numbers enrolled in higher education across the country may have been close to 700,000.[14] It seems likely that, given efforts by the Ministry of Higher Education to expand programmes and access in the next six years, as well as delays in the academic year and time lost between 2018 and 2021, the number increased, bringing the total number of students closer to a million. Although we could not find official statistics on gender distribution, the experience of the authors, as well as comments during interviews, suggest that women made up slightly more than half of the student body, with the ratio varying between programmes.

These students were taught by a limited cadre of faculty, kept extremely busy. The Ministry of

10 Email correspondence with Professor Fadwa Abdel Rahman Ali Taha, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, 9 February 2024.

11 Internal PowerPoint presentation, Ministry of Higher Education, 2017, unpublished. However, subsequent interviews indicate that by 2023 there were 39 government universities and several more private universities and colleges in the country.

12 Internal report, Ministry of Higher Education, 10 March 2024, unpublished.

13 Esra Abdallah Abdalwahed Mahgoub et al., 'War and Education: The Attacks on Medical Schools amidst Ongoing Armed Conflict, Sudan 2023', *Conflict and Health* 18, no. 1 (29 March 2024).

14 Internal PowerPoint presentation, Ministry of Higher Education, 2017, unpublished.

Higher Education notes that, in 2016, it had a total of 14,169 staff teaching at its institutions of higher education, of which 8,357 were PhD holders and 5,812 holders of Master's degrees. In addition to putting students into local Master's and PhD programmes, with an eye towards increasing qualified faculty, the Ministry made an effort to send students abroad for both.[15] This, combined with the return of some diaspora faculty after the revolution in 2019, meant the number of faculty with higher degrees grew, though most likely on a modest scale. As with students, statistics on the gender distribution of these lecturers were hard to access. However, in our experience, lecturers were more or less equally divided between men and women, albeit with greater numbers of men in positions such as full professors.

Higher education in Sudan had faced logistical challenges in the five years preceding the war that delayed students' study in extreme ways and distorted academic calendars. When protests broke out in December 2018, the Ingaz regime closed all universities, with study only resuming in late September 2019 after the signing of the Transition Agreement that established a transitional government in the wake of the December revolution. Universities were closed again six months later, in March 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, reopening after three to six months. Studies were further delayed, at least in Khartoum, following the October 2021 military coup and anti-coup protests that paralyzed the city for several months. This final closure was most extreme at the University of Khartoum, where faculty held a strike demanding better pay, keeping it closed for even longer. It took some students at the University of Khartoum, through no fault of their own, up to ten years to complete a five-year academic program. Even at universities where delays were fewer, the closures led to distorted student cohorts, larger classrooms and two, extra years of study. University calendars were compromised, with individual faculties and universities taking every opportunity they could to make up time, placing a strain on departments accommodating larger class sizes and more demand for mentorship.

15 Internal PowerPoint presentation, Ministry of Higher Education, 2017, unpublished.

Higher Education Institutions and the War

The war has damaged institutions of education from the top down in Sudan, from the Ministry of Higher Education all the way to individual universities and colleges. On top of damage to the physical space where work took place, the war has displaced most government employees, university faculty and students. This has strained weak administrations, creating challenges for communication and collaboration at all levels, so that decisions have often been taken slowly and without coordination within institutions or between various universities and the Ministry.

Since the war started, the Ministry of Higher Education has continued to operate, though its administration, led by a temporary minister since the 2021 coup, has been slow to respond, with the acting Minister and most ministerial employees displaced. Challenges in leadership and coordination have been compounded by the mass displacement of ministerial employees. The Ministry of Higher Education formed a committee, under the oversight of Gezira University, to monitor educational institutions affected by the war, basing itself in Wad Medani, Gezira state, and issuing directives from there. With the invasion of Wad Medani and surrounding areas by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in December 2023, its activities moved to Port Sudan, where it has since been headquartered. Decisions taken by it have consequently been slow, at times trailing decisions of individual universities; the University of Khartoum, for example, began online courses before receiving orders to do so. Nonetheless, universities have relied on the ministry for logistics and information, including backups of university records.

The Ministry of Higher Education operates under the supervision of a government formed by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). As such, it has worked to further the interests of higher education within an authority whose priorities and material interests are focused on the war. This is reflected in the resources devoted to supporting university faculty at public universities, decisions made through a Ministry of Finance acting under military authority. While ministerial employees have been paid their full salaries, university staff are being paid 60 per cent. Resources for other initiatives are bare-boned, subject to those available to the ministry and individual universities.

Educational infrastructure in Sudan has been damaged in serious, long-term ways. The Ministry of Higher Education, having taken stock of higher education and scientific research institutions, has determined the extent of damage to staff and institutions as severe. All higher education and scientific research institutions in Khartoum and several other states have been destroyed, including the headquarters of the Ministry itself, which was completely burnt down, and the office of the General Administration for Admission, Evaluation and Validation, where all the

contents were smashed and stolen, including valuable devices and equipment.[16]

Many universities have been burned, looted and destroyed; this includes their various faculties and infrastructure, laboratories, workshops, libraries, halls and administrative offices. The destruction has been most visible at Omdurman Ahlia University, where the library and archives of the Mohamed Omer Bashir Center for Sudanese Studies was burnt down, and at Nileen University, which has been occupied by the RSF. The destruction at both has been documented in photographs and video footage, much of it posted on social media. In many cases, the full extent of the damage will not be known until hostilities in the neighbourhood end permanently. The destruction of physical infrastructure at universities outside Khartoum has also been extensive, particularly in Darfur. This, too, has been documented by the Ministry of Higher Education, as well as by faculty from the universities in question, who have described in depth the extent of the damage, which includes the destruction of Zalingie University, Geneina University and Nyala University in Darfur, and Gezira University and Al-Batana University in Gezira state.

The rapid speed of the outbreak of war and the scale of the damage has implications for academic records. Most universities had digitized copies of their records saved on university servers. Away from the initial combat, some, such as Omdurman Islamic University, were able to secure their servers and bring them to a safe location.[17] Others closer to the centre of combat, such Khartoum University, Nileen University, and Sudan University of Science and Technology, have lost access to their servers. This has caused serious problems in terms of recovering their students' academic records.

This process of securing academic records played out over six to eight months, at least at the University of Khartoum, and is still going on at other universities. After some time and much labour by administrators at the University of Khartoum and civil servants in the Ministry of Higher Education, the University was able to access backup records of all the diplomas awarded to its graduates, as well as records of the students at the university and the years in which they registered.[18] For most colleges, they got hold of copies made in individual faculties of undergraduate records, as well as backup records stored centrally of all graduate transcripts. This has allowed it to issue transcripts and provide documentation for many, albeit not all, students of the courses they completed.

In many other states, however, the process of securing academic records and making them available has been even more difficult. The University of Geneina may have lost access to its servers and expects its academic records are entirely gone. At the University of Nyala,

16 Internal report, Ministry of Higher Education, 10 March 2024, unpublished.

17 Interview with Dr. Hasnaa Abdallah Ahmed Salih, Faculty of Theology, Omdurman Islamic University, Cairo, 3 February 2024.

18 Interview with Professor Ali Rabah, Secretary of Academic Affairs, University of Khartoum, 3 January 2024, via Zoom.

administrators and faculty took heroic measures, arming themselves with guns to get to the university premises to take the servers and move them to a secure location, where they have been kept ever since, since moving the servers from Nyala would expose their electronics to theft and looting.[19] There had been talk of moving them to Gezira, prior to it falling to the RSF. Insecurity on the roads and the movement of Ministry of Higher Education administrators and university administrations to eastern Sudan means this has not occurred. Similarly, at the University of Zalengie, where many academic records existed only in paper form, administrators were able to secure them and bring them to a safe location, where efforts to digitize them and send them elsewhere are underway.[20]

Other state universities, such as those in West Kordofan and Gezira, where conflict did not break out at the start of the war in April 2023, had time to take precautions, among them plans of where to keep their records and how to secure them in case the conflict spread. Such plans have proved essential, given the expansion of the war to Gezira and Sennar states as well as much of Kordofan between December 2023 and August 2024.

The status of academic records in private and *ahlia* universities has varied widely. Many private universities, including the University of Medical Sciences and Technology (UMST) and Ahfad University, had backup records on servers outside Sudan. They were able to reassure students their records remained intact early on, and, theoretically, to offer students access to them, though this was much slower in practice. Other private and *ahlia* universities had no such backups. It is unclear whether those institutions have access to their students' records, though they would, in theory again, be able to get backups from the Ministry of Higher Education of at least degree holders and the names and years students registered.

Given the variety, it is unsurprising that students are facing even greater differences in terms of access to their records. The University of Khartoum has been given permission by the Ministry of Higher Education to issue digital certificates to those who have graduated. These certificates can be verified in Kassala, where the Ministry of Higher Education announced the opening of an outlet for the authentication of university and post-university degrees and registration certificates at Kassala University in the last week of February 2024. This centre replaces a similar one that closed at Gezira University. Students have commented on the wait time for certificates and papers, and the cost, particularly when applying for them from abroad.

While universities in eastern Sudan, including Red Sea University, Port Sudan University and Gedaref University, and in northern Sudan, including Nile Valley University and Dongola University, can use this outlet, other universities are lagging behind. This is due to the challenges listed above in securing records as well as logistical hurdles in issuing students their records

19 Interview with Dr. Ibrahim El Saeid, Dean of Student Affairs, Nyala University, now Juba University, Juba, 1 February 2024.

20 Telephone conversation with Dr. Muhammad Teabin, Agricultural Economics, University of Zalengie, 4 July 2024.

online or through official outlets related to administrative capacity and experience. Even within universities, this varies from college to college. Private and ahlia universities have the same problems: Some have furnished students with their papers quickly; others have taken time and some had not given them out by August-2024.

The destruction and displacement that devastated the ministry and university campuses has affected university operations, particularly coursework. In April 2023, classes and the academic year were suspended almost entirely, particularly in Khartoum and other conflict areas; months later, however, many universities resumed coursework and their semester. By late 2023, the University of Khartoum had begun classes online. After a series of further conversations with universities, the Ministry of Higher Education held a meeting with the directors of public universities in Port Sudan on 10 March 2024, in which it directed universities in safe and stable states to reopen and proceed with classes, emphasizing the need to move where possible to shift to e-learning and distance platforms.[21] Universities in conflict areas were told that, if they reached sufficient numbers of students, they would be authorized to resume coursework as well. Universities undertook this at college level, with at least some taking the decision to resume, once they reached 60 per cent of students. Such instructions help explain a survey, conducted by researchers at medical schools, that found a large proportion of students, roughly 60 per cent, had resumed studying in some capacity, despite half of them coming under attack in the middle of the war.[22] Universities in Darfur have faced the most severe challenges in getting back to work: Massive displacement, internet outages and continued violence have halted university operations across Darfur, despite the best efforts of faculty and administrations.[23]

The most extensive move to remote and online teaching has come from the University of Khartoum, which initiated online classes very early, beginning in some cases as early as October 2023. This was extremely difficult; since the university servers were lost, normal online platforms were unavailable. With the resumption of coursework at college level, colleges attempted (in view of their scattered faculty and students) to instruct lecturers in online teaching. Lecturers say this was not smooth. Nor was it always complete—faculty and students were, and are, living in different situations, some in active combat zones in Khartoum or Darfur and others outside Sudan. Faculty decides which mediums to use for lectures, usually after polling their students. Some have given lectures on Google Meets live. Others used voice notes on WhatsApp or Telegram to send segments of their lectures to groups of students, with those with adequate internet sometimes arranging discussions or questions via Google Meets afterwards. Other faculty prepare PowerPoint slides or PDFs of key information, either to accompany the lecture or be used when the network is too weak for voice notes.[24]

21 Internal report, Ministry of Higher Education, 10 March 2024, unpublished.

22 Mahgoub et al., 'War and Education'.

23 Telephone conversation with Dr. Muhammad Teabin, Agricultural Economics, University of Zalengie, 4 July 2024.

24 Interview with Dr. Khalifa Omer, Department of History, University of Khartoum, 24 January, 2024 via WhatsApp.

All this has led to the impressive holding of University of Khartoum exams, an initiative that was already underway by December 2023. Then, the University was able to organize final exams for 4th and 5th year students and to graduate those able to attend. This was done at sites across Sudan in Wad Medani, Atbara and Port Sudan, as well as at a test site in Egypt at Cairo University.[25] A second set of exams was held in May 2024, using testing sites in Atbara, Port Sudan and Kassala, as well as in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. While incomplete, with some colleges unable to do this, it has allowed a significant number of students to keep studying, and even to graduate, since the war began. The model is being used by other Sudanese universities that had begun talking about how best to arrange final exams for students whose classes had moved online.

Decisions by private and *ahlia* universities have been based largely on their financial resources and prospects, since they receive no funding from the state. Some higher end private universities have been able to relocate and get certified in other countries. UMST, for example, has been able to relocate and conduct coursework for students in Rwanda and Tanzania. Ahfad University established an office in Cairo, where it held finals for 5th year medical students who had been due to sit these exams in May 2023. It was unable for a long time to resume general studies, though reports indicate that they are beginning to in August 2024 in partnership with an Egyptian university, at least for specific programmes of study.

Efforts to continue studies and maintain the basic academic administrative work of universities was massively disrupted by the invasion of Gezira by the RSF in December 2023. In the months after the start of the war in April 2023, many moved their administrative staff and offices to Wad Medani so they could continue to work. The Ministry of Higher Education, too, moved servers there and conducted work from there. Wad Medani became a centre of operations and exam centre for the University of Khartoum, acting in cooperation with Gezira University. Other universities that had resumed their study online had planned to do the same.[26]

With the expansion of the war to Gezira, these plans were disrupted. The loss of Wad Medani interrupted exam schedules set by the University of Khartoum, with its plans for February 2024 delayed to May. Other universities have suspended their exam plans and are trying to make other arrangements. The expansion of the war has been accompanied by communication blackouts, first in Gezira in December then countrywide by February.[27] These have made it even harder for students and faculty to keep online classes going, delaying study for students country wide and rendering online study particularly difficult in Darfur.

25 Interview with Professor Ali Rabah, Secretary of Academic Affairs, University of Khartoum, 3 January 2024, via Zoom.

26 Interview with Dr. Omer Abdallah Humaida, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, 17 January 2024, via WhatsApp.

27 '92 NGOs urgently call for the re-establishment of telecommunications infrastructure across Sudan', International Rescue Committee, 15 May 2024, https://www.rescue.org/press-release/92-ngos-urgently-call-re-establishment-telecommunications-infrastructure-across-sudan.

The Effects of War on Sudanese Students and Academics

The effects of the war on Sudanese students and academics have been consistent with the experiences of the Sudanese middle class as a whole, though they have faced challenges particular to their jobs and ability to study. When the war began on 15 April 2023, combat erupted first in Khartoum then in Darfur, and was concentrated in cities, where almost all universities were located. As both the warring parties, the RSF and SAF, had set up bases across Khartoum, the war very quickly made the capital unliveable, causing people with the means to do so to leave for safer cities and villages within Sudan and to neighbouring countries. The scale and speed of this movement may be unprecedented in recent times. By August 2024, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that over 10.3 million people had been forcibly displaced, over 2.1 million people to other countries and another 7.9 million people within Sudan.[28]

These numbers represent a bare minimum, taken from data UNHCR has collected by monitoring internally displaced people's (IDP) camps and Sudanese who have registered in neighbouring countries as refugees or asylum seekers. Displacement within Sudan rose in December 2023, when the RSF entered Gezira state and took Wad Medani, bringing the conflict to a city many had sought refuge in. As many as 234,000 people from Khartoum are estimated to have fled to Wad Medani. Many were forced to move again, alongside other residents of Gezira state, now newly displaced.[29]

For those from the middle class with means or family connections—including many university faculty and students—displacement, at least initially, did not necessarily involve moving to IDP camps or registering as refugees or asylum seekers in neighbouring countries; they moved to a family home or the home of a relative in a safer area of Sudan. Others moved to neighbouring countries, not through asylum mechanisms but by applying for visas and finding ways of acquiring residency, either as students, as employees of a company owned by a relative, or through family members whose own visa status allowed them to sponsor others. Few of the ways in which they sought residency have been reflected in official statistics.

This does not mean that such displacement was not severe; indeed, displacement, even to a

28 'Sudan Situation', Operational Data Portal, UNHCR, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation, Accessed 22 August 2024.

29 'SUDAN: Clashes in Wad Medani between the SAF and RSF', Flash Update No: 6, UNOCHA, 8 January 2024, https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/flash-update/405Zm94HTs1ilqxfZfZ40U/, Accessed 22 August 2024.

family home or with a visa and family network, came with extreme loss. Because the war broke out so suddenly, many left Khartoum thinking the war would be over quickly, and they'd be able to return. As a result, they left behind valuables. Some were told to leave behind markers of wealth, such as large sums of money, laptops or gold, in order to avoid being preyed upon by thieves or RSF forces. Many university lecturers, alongside the rest of the Sudanese middle class, lost most of their belongings, including cars, valuables and sentimental objects. For academics, these losses included some critical to their jobs—their libraries and papers, including writing and scientific material accumulated during long periods of research. Still many more reported losing their laptops, by either leaving them behind or because of theft while fleeing their homes. Some report the loss of their certificates, often because they left them in their offices at university or in other places made inaccessible by the conflict.

Though those displaced within Sudan often went to family homes in safer areas, this was not easy; homes in the towns and villages to which they fled were not built to house extended families, but rather a smaller number of people, plus periodic visitors for holidays and family events. Demand for accommodation skyrocketed and with it rent, which exploded in price, with reports of rents of over USD 1,000 a month for homes in rural villages. Those with no family in the area sought shelter in IDP camps and public buildings, often schools, as did some people *with* family in the area, because of overcrowding. This has been worse for people displaced twice, such as those from Khartoum who moved first to Wad Medani and Sennar. Having lost most of their belongings and paid exorbitant amounts for housing and the basics, many twice displaced have borne more cost, on top of enduring the risks and trauma displacement involves, with outright threats to safety, menacing violence and the prospect of long walks and physically taxing travel.

Those displaced to other countries had to navigate a complex web of choices on where to go, marked by regulations that defined where they were understood to be visitors (with visas) and where they were understood to be refugees, as well as to what extent crossing into other countries was even possible. This has changed over time. Getting to a border and travelling anywhere outside Sudan involves money and travel within Sudan first, with the difficulty level and cost determined by where an individual happened to be when the war broke out.

In general, more academics seem to have ended up outside Sudan than students, even though most Sudanese academics and students have stayed in Sudan. Students have been more likely to stay in Sudan with their families, travelling outside Sudan to accompany them. Their mobility has been defined by the social and economic situation of their families at large, especially that of their parents. In contrast, Sudanese academics who have travelled outside Sudan have relied on both family and friends, as well as on professional connections made in the course of their work. In some cases, academics and their families separated, sometimes with male academics going ahead of their families in search of work. In other cases, female academics travelled with their children ahead of their husbands, who stayed behind with relatives, or to care for property or follow up on other concerns.

Students and faculty face institutional challenges. University students have found themselves in difficult situations with regards to the possibility of continuing their studies, even when their institutions are open to them. Most students have remained inside Sudan, most often reuniting with family to move with them to their home village or town. Some have followed their families into neighbouring countries. In either case, they face difficult choices on whether—and how—to continue studying. While first and even second year students displaced outside Sudan might be able to start over in another country's university system with relative success (provided their families have the funds to support them, by no means universally the case), upper-level students face doing so with incomplete academic records. Universities outside Sudan have discretion in assessing whether to acknowledge the credits of these students. However, without their records or with poorly documented records, many upper-level students have to make difficult choices on whether to begin all over again, often after four or five years of study, or to wait for their university in Sudan to resume.

Students inside Sudan are in limbo; with many institutions at a standstill, it is unclear how students can best proceed. Those with the opportunity to study remotely have challenges related to the internet, an expensive commodity, not consistently available in parts of Sudan, as well as costs related to moving to sit exams and to paying for accommodation during them. These challenges are difficult for all students but pose a barrier especially for young women students, for whom safe travel and accommodation at testing sites is more difficult and of greater concern to their families.

Graduate students have unique difficulties as they try to finish their academic work. Master's and PhD students in researching or writing phases have obviously faced massive disruption, loss of data, and limits on their ability to pursue their research. Students who were close to finishing writing or had already finished have a different set of challenges, depending on their university. Master's and PhD students who had finished their theses at the University of Khartoum have been able to defend them, complete their courses, and receive their diplomas. Other universities have not allowed students to do the same due to suspension of operations. In some cases, this has been due to their supervisors, who may not have any method of communication or be living in a difficult situation and unable to work in a supervisory role. Some universities say they do not have the money to pay examiners to hear graduates defend their theses; students, in these cases, have been told to cover the cost of this with an extra fee.

Employment, too, has remained uncertain for faculty. Faculty at public universities still have jobs, however precarious, while faculty at private and *ahlia* universities have seen layoffs or changes in their terms of employment. The Ministry of Higher Education has been slow to send university salaries. The University of Khartoum used its own accounts to pay its faculty one month's salary, but other public universities were unable to do the same. Months into the war, the Ministry of Finance announced a system by which university faculty would receive 60 per cent of their salaries. But these have been paid irregularly and in arrears, leaving faculty unsure when they will receive them next. The 60 per cent has dropped in value, with the Sudanese Pound falling against the dollar on the parallel market even as the cost of goods skyrockets. The

Ministry of Finance announced the discontinuation of salaries for faculty at Darfuri universities, due to inactivity. There is some talk of Zalengie University starting up in some capacity in White Nile state, though this is by no means guaranteed. It is also unclear if faculty from central Darfur will be able to join, and thus keep earning, given the scale of displacement and problems in internet connectivity in Darfur.[30]

Faculty at private and *ahlia* universities have found themselves in an even worse situation, due to the precarity of their contracts and their universities' lack of financial backing. Some private universities that moved their study outside Sudan have cancelled contracts, leaving faculty from Sudan without work and hiring faculty in their new locations instead. Other private and *ahlia* universities suspended study by discontinuing jobs, meaning lecturers were last paid before the war. Some private and *ahlia* universities have offered lecturers remote work in elearning. The ability of lecturers to take it up has been dependent on their living conditions and internet access.

Academics displaced outside Sudan have been forced to contend with the challenge of finding employment in new countries; in most, academic employment has not been forthcoming. This has meant relying on their devalued or precarious income and savings, as well as turning to work in other sectors. Some university lecturers, particularly women, have moved into other fields of work to earn money. This has included preparing food, as well as work making and selling Sudanese products, such as perfumes and incense. Families with capital have opened shops that sell Sudanese goods, bakeries and other small businesses. Others have taken up jobs in education, particularly in private Sudanese secondary schools, such as those that moved their operations to Egypt and sought Sudanese teachers.[31] While these jobs help provide money for families facing great scarcity, only some of them make use of the degrees and skillsets university lecturers earned, and many do not provide stability for their families.

All of these challenges come on top of the human cost of this war: Faculty and students have been killed during fighting between armed parties. They have also died from lack of access to medical care, brought about by the war, as many medical facilities have been destroyed. Older members of faculty have died from conditions brought on or exacerbated by trauma, as well as from stress caused by the war and the process of displacement. Those who survive have to contend with the psychological trauma of being forced to leave their homes, witness the menacing of loved ones and the destruction of the places they cared for. This trauma has resulted in mental health issues that affect the ability of faculty and students to function academically. As well as symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other conditions of trauma, many have reported problems with their ability to focus their attention or to write, as well as anxiety. Such challenges make it difficult for academics to write, even when conditions allow them to continue research and publishing.

30 Telephone conversation with Dr. Muhammad Teabin, Agricultural Economics, University of Zalengie, 4 July 2024.

31 Interview with Dr. Hasnaa Abdallah Ahmed Salih, Faculty of Theology, Omdurman Islamic University, Cairo, 3 February 2024.

Movements Outside Sudan

Sudanese academics and students, like all those displaced, base their decisions on where to go on their finances and social ties. As noted in the previous section, the process of displacement is devastating—mentally, physically and financially. Each different area, in and outside Sudan, comes with specific financial and physical constraints, dictated by geography and the legal landscape. These determine in large part where academics and students end up and, consequently, which countries the authors have focused their research on.

At the outbreak of the war, travel by plane was almost impossible. The airport in downtown Khartoum was bombed, and the airport at Wadi Seidna was reserved for emergency evacuation flights. Most travel took place by car or bus, as residents of Khartoum and other cities sought to leave by land. People fled towards the borders of Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan and, in the early days, by boat to Saudi Arabia.

The conditions at these borders and requirements for entry varied. Boats to Saudi Arabia required not only a valid visa but also the ability to get on one of the ships, a process that, in turn, required more authorization on the Sudan and Saudi sides. Initially, Eritrea and Ethiopia closed their borders, though some people moved through them anyway. The status and requirements necessary to enter both countries changed over time, necessitating movement to Kassala or Gedaref first.

Entry to Ethiopia has involved a shifting landscape of legal requirements as well as a lot of onward travel. People seeking refugee status are expected to remain in camps at the border. By August 2024, more than 47,000 people were in refugee camps close to Blue Nile state in Sudan. Conditions were reportedly harrowing, prompting protests from refugees themselves, and even an exodus of refugees from the camps because of attacks by armed groups in the area.[32] Those who wished to move onwards, either to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa or other countries afterwards, had to pay for visas. While, initially, the Ethiopian government wanted proof of onward travel to grant a visa, this has since been dropped. The Sudanese government though continues to require proof of a visa to a third country, or a letter of invitation to seek one, in order to grant an exit visa to leave Sudan. Upon entry to Ethiopia at Matema, the displaced are required to travel by bus straight to Gondar where they then book flights to Addis Ababa.

The border to Chad has always been fluid, and this fluidity became crucial as circumstances became more dire, with many Sudanese civilians fleeing across the border, especially from

32 'Sudan Situation', Operational Data Portal, UNHCR, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation, Accessed 22 August 2024; 'Sudanese refugees hiding in Ethiopian forest to escape bandits and militias,' *Aljazeera*, 10 July 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/7/10/sudanese-refugees-dwell-in-ethiopian-forest-away-from-bandits-and-militias.

West Darfur, which is very close to the border and saw massive violence in the early months of the war. As violence increased in Al Geneina, civilians fled to Adre in Chad, where many have settled in refugee camps near the border or moved onwards. Some academics and students have reportedly moved in search of opportunities, with reports of students moving as migrant labour to Libya (and some presumably travelling to Europe) and university lecturers moving between Chad, South Sudan and Uganda.

It is the situation regarding entry to Egypt that has shifted most over the course of the war. For the first month, Egypt allowed Sudanese women and boys and men under the age of 16 and over the age of 50 to enter without a visa. Men and boys from 16 to 50 needed visas; however, they were relatively easy to get before the war. When the war broke out, applications swamped the Egyptian consulate in Wadi Halfa and wait times and procedures grew. Then, on 10 June 2023, the Egyptian government announced, with little notice, that all Sudanese citizens would be required to obtain a visa for entry. The process of applying became increasingly difficult, with more and more procedural hurdles and long wait times with extended waiting lists. Even having your papers considered for a visa has required paying brokers USD 1,500 or USD 3,000 per person.

With conditions in Sudan deteriorating, many have resorted to smuggling themselves to enter Egypt, travelling with smugglers across the desert through irregular crossing points. This process, too, is expensive, and it is also dangerous, with reports of violence in border areas, and of individuals being abandoned or subjected to exploitation. Those who enter Egypt like this face other risks, including the possibility of being deported back to Sudan should they be discovered before meeting with UNHCR, which can grant them a refugee card. They also face prohibitions on employment.[33] Those who stay are required to pay USD 1,000 in administrative fees to resolve their status, but in adherence to a murky legal framework. They are given a series of strict deadlines in which to do so, which, though extended regularly, create pretexts for Egyptian crackdowns on refugees.[34]

South Sudan has been accessed at a number of border points, most commonly after a journey from Kosti to the Sudan–South Sudan border, and onwards from there to Renk, where travellers can board infrequent flights to Juba. Others have accessed South Sudan through border points near Malut and Aweil, often from Blue Nile or Darfur, respectively. These routes are costly and the journeys difficult. Renk, Aweil and Malut have limited facilities for travellers—accommodation is expensive and comes on top of buying plane tickets to Juba, since the roads

33 'EXCLUSIVE: Inside Egypt's secret scheme to detain and deport thousands of Sudanese refugees', *The New Humanitarian*, 25 April 2024, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigations/2024/04/25/exclusive-inside-egypt-secret-scheme-detain-deport-thousands-sudan-refugees.

34 'Egypt's crackdown on refugees shows no signs of slowing', *The New Arab*, 15 July 2024, https://www.newarab.com/analysis/egypts-crackdown-refugees-shows-no-signs-slowing; 'Pay $1,000, register as a refugee, or face deportation? Egypt's undocumented migrants confront difficult choice as deadline looms', *Mada Masr*, 30 June 2024, https://www.madamasr.com/en/2024/06/30/feature/politics/pay-1000-register-as-a-refugee-or-face-deportation-egypts-undocumented-migrants-confront-difficult-choice-as-deadline-looms/.

south are non-existent or bad.

The South Sudanese government has decided not to build more refugee camps. Reports suggest a policy of moving new arrivals, if without enough money for onward travel, into existing refugee camps near these entry points. These camps are basic and located in remote areas without almost any access to telecommunication networks. In order to move past the camps, refugees must register as a foreigner with the police then get a visa in Renk or the nearest city to their border crossing. They are responsible for paying for their own accommodation and essential services, all difficult to find, while waiting for costly (upwards of USD 200 per person) flights to Juba. These dynamics have meant that refugees without resources on hand have been forced to stay in conditions that the Sudanese middle class, including academics, find new, difficult, and lacking in opportunity for the future. There are some reports of people in the camps being forced to stay, even when they have obtained the financial means to leave.

Those who travel to Juba have the option of seeking employment in South Sudan or moving to Uganda. This journey is easier, with buses running from Juba to various cities in Uganda, as well as direct flights from Juba to Entebbe. Entry to Uganda is relatively easy, too; a tourist visa can be acquired on arrival or online for USD 50, and lasts three months, renewable for a total of six months. Those without the money to buy one can apply for refugee status if they hand over their passports, though they are then transferred to a refugee camp in Kiryandongo, about 200 km north of Kampala, where conditions are extremely basic.[35]

Several months in, the airport in Port Sudan opened to more commercial flights. Flights from domestic airlines, such as Tarco and Badr, as well as Egypt Air, go to Gulf countries—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman—as well as to Egypt, Djibouti, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan and Turkey. These flights have been the primary means of travel for members of the Sudanese middle-class to the Gulf, and for those with enough money to fly to other locations. Flights are quite costly; a flight from Port Sudan to Entebbe costs USD 750 one way, to Cairo USD 675 and to Dubai, USD 700.[36] While visas to Djibouti can be processed on arrival, visa rules in the Gulf countries mentioned vary, and many have changed over the course of 2023 and 2024. They generally require connections in the country, plus adherence to administrative procedures, including police checks and bureaucracy, that is labour intensive.

Academics and Academia in Egypt

Prior to the war, Sudan produced a pipeline of academics, many of whom could pursue opportunities in Egypt, a country known as relatively affordable. The influx of Sudanese refugees has impacted this, particularly in Cairo. Educators and students without financial help from family, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or other international organizations, now face harsh reality. House rents in Cairo have tripled from pre-war levels, placing a huge

35 'A new life in Kiryandango – Sudanese refugee stories', *Ayin Network*, 22 February 2024, https://3ayin.com/en/refugees-3/.

36 Prices listed on Tarco website when accessed 16 May 2024, https://www.tarcoaviation.com/.

financial burden on those seeking to continue their education or wanting to start a new life after leaving everything behind in Sudan. The devaluation of the Egyptian Pound in late 2023 has exacerbated the situation: The soaring cost of living, with the dollar briefly doubling in price against the pound, has made basic necessities and education more expensive. While the exchange rate has shown some recovery, the overall cost of living remains inflated. Such costs are difficult for many Sudanese academics and others who left for Egypt early, often without essential belongings, valuables or paperwork.[37] These factors have unfortunately forced some Sudanese academics and students to abandon their pursuit of higher education in Cairo and return to Sudan, despite the limited educational opportunities there.[38]

Those who have stayed in Egypt have struggled to find enough work to support themselves, even those working in academia with higher degrees. Unlike in Sudan, the number of advanced degree holders in Egypt is high. There is a large presence of academics from other Arab countries, meaning that competition for academic positions is strong. Sudanese academics have had serious difficulty gaining academic affiliation or lectureships since arriving in Egypt. Such challenges are exacerbated by a lack of documentation; many of those who arrived in Egypt early came without their academic certificates and have struggled to prove their qualifications when seeking academic work.[39] Crackdowns on Sudanese refugees by the Egyptian authorities (noted earlier) have created obstacles for Sudanese academics in terms of ensuring their families' stability. These have been manifested not only in the closure of Sudanese secondary schools in Cairo, but a recent regulation that Sudanese children cannot register for study in Egyptian schools without a residency permit.

Sudanese academics are comparatively expensive for Egyptian universities to hire due to the increased needs of Sudanese academics as they start over in a new country. Egyptian universities therefore have to provide housing and health insurance for Sudanese employees, who often arrived without either and are left to find accommodation on their own. This is expensive, particularly in light of the rising cost of living in Cairo and Alexandria where most Sudanese academics have settled. Egyptian universities must also ensure that Sudanese academics have the training to adapt to emerging technologies, and that they embrace new educational platforms to integrate themselves in Egyptian academic institutions. Such technologies were often unavailable in Sudan.[40]

Some work has been done to address missing papers and verify documents, but these efforts have

37 Interview with Dr. Samar Sameer Alshami, Faculty of Sciences, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Cairo, 5 February 2024.

38 Bahira Amin, 'Unable to survive in Egypt, refugees return to war-torn Sudan', *Al-Monitor*, 12 February 2024, https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/02/unable-survive-egypt-refugees-return-war-torn-sudan.

39 Interview with Dr. Samar Sameer Alshami, Faculty of Sciences, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Cairo, 5 February 2024.

40 Interview with Dr. Hajar Abashar, Dean of the Faculty of Musical and Theatrical Studies, East Kordofan University, Cairo, 16 February 2024.

been limited. The Sudanese Embassy in Cairo has taken steps to streamline certification and has issued documents they have in their databases, like birth certificates, but they do not have access to Ministry of Higher Education databases and are thus limited to verifying documents that already exist rather than to issuing new ones. The issuance of some certificates by the Ministry of Higher Education and the University of Khartoum has allowed some academics in Egypt to get hold of their certificates, albeit at great financial cost due to elevated fees. Yet these efforts are very much in the beginning stages for many, and the challenges involved underscore the urgent need for a wider solution and for the simplification of the process.

Attempts to create bilateral agreements between Egyptian and Sudanese institutions to facilitate the hiring of Sudanese academics have been extremely limited. Collaboration between the University of Khartoum and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport is reportedly underway, but details of it are shrouded in uncertainty. An announcement regarding the specifics, expected in June 2024, was still not out at the time of publication. Similarly, while Ibn Sina University has secured an agreement in principle with Al-Azhar University to allow its students to continue their studies, this has yet to take off.[41] Steps have been taken to ease the visa process for students admitted to Egyptian universities. These will facilitate their arrival and settling-in period. But there is a glaring gap in support for displaced Sudanese educators. By August 2024, there were no programmes to connect them to new institutions or opportunities, leaving their futures hanging precariously in the balance.

The situation for students trying to pursue academic study in Egypt is not just challenging but expensive. Before the war, Sudanese students received a 90 per cent discount on tuition fees at all Egyptian universities, at Egypt's initiative. This lessened the burden for them of higher education in Egypt. After the war's outbreak, this discount was slashed to 60 per cent for the 2023–2024 academic year. This policy shift, coupled with a rise in base tuition fees for Egyptian universities (now ranging from USD 900 to USD 2,400 a year, compared to the pre-war USD 300 to USD 600 a year), has made them far less affordable for Sudanese students.

New, mandatory supplementary charges, payable in USD, have been introduced by the Foreign Students Platform, an offshoot of the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education. These charges can come to USD 2,000 upfront, with a USD 300 annual fee, calculated from the year the student completed high school. A student who graduated in 2020 would have paid only an additional USD 1,200 in fees. The increases paint a picture of the dramatic rise in educational expenses for Sudanese students in Egypt since the start of the war in Sudan in April 2023.

Given the financial strain on the average Sudanese household mid-war, with depleted savings and diminished income, these fees present an added burden. Many parents may find themselves unable to afford them, which could cause a drop in Sudanese enrolment at Egyptian universities. Even getting to Egypt to enrol has been a challenge; stringent visa limits mean that students have been unable to secure entry visas, even after receiving admission offers. Students who have

41 Conversations with Ibn Sina students, Cairo, May 11, 2024.

made it to Egypt without papers have found it difficult to enrol and get their work from Sudan acknowledged. As mentioned earlier in this paper, this leaves them with the difficult decision of whether to start all over again.

Some of these issues are being discussed, at meetings between the Sudanese Professors' Association Delegation in Cairo and the Arab Academy for Administrative and Banking Services. They could yield an agreement to accept Sudanese undergraduates living in Egypt into programmes on the same fee plans as Egyptian students. This would allow them to apply for free—rather than going through the Foreign Students Platform (with its USD 2,000 fee)—and accept Sudanese undergraduates for 50 per cent fees, provide facilities for teaching and graduate defence, and hire Sudanese faculty currently in Egypt.[42] These measures would be truly life changing for the faculty and students covered by them: Even if ratified, though, it only covers students and faculty in administrative and banking studies. Other institutions have stepped up individually: Al-Azhar University accepts Sudanese students for the same fees as Egyptians, with payments in Egyptian currency and lower fees than other universities. There is great need for other Egyptian academia to follow suit and allow reforms to support Sudanese students and academics.

Academics and Academia in Ethiopia

The situation for Sudanese academics and students in Ethiopia, like that of all Sudanese who come to Ethiopia, is intentionally transitory and unstable. Those who enter with a visa are able to extend their visa for up to six months for USD 600. After that, they are expected to leave, though they can apply for another visa. In practice, this has meant that for many academics and students, Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital and only city they are authorized to stay in, is a transit hub from which they apply for visas or look for options on where to go.

There are some exceptions to this, however. One professor, Professor Abdel Rahman Shangal, the former Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Sudan University and a professor of sculpture, spent the year 2023 to 2024 leaving Addis every six months, and then returning to continue his work there. He has displayed his artwork at exhibitions in Addis Ababa.[43] Other university lecturers from the University of Khartoum were able to get work permits and residency through external, UK-based PhD programmes with relationships with the University of Addis Ababa, or through the institutions they had jobs with previously, such as foreign secondary schools. These institutional relationships have allowed lecturers to apply for work permits and enter Ethiopia on a work visa, flying in directly from Port Sudan. The stability afforded longer-term residents, whether recent arrivals or members of the Sudanese community who lived and worked in Ethiopia before the war, has been essential in imparting information and knowhow to arrivals navigating a new bureaucracy. Due to the lack of work opportunities and lack of places

42 'Meeting Outputs,' Meeting of the Sudanese Professors Association with the Arab Academy of Administrative and Banking Services, 15 May 2024, unpublished.

43 'Sudanese artist paints war time emotions to protest Sudan's war', *AfricaNews*, 17 August 2023, https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/17/sudanese-artist-paints-war-time-emotions-to-protest-sudans-war/.

to congregate and gather as a community, many new arrivals are somewhat isolated, gathering with friends and colleagues at Sudanese restaurants in town but ultimately focusing on their plans for onward movement.

University lecturers looking for work in Ethiopia have found it extremely difficult so far, due to the structure of higher education in Ethiopia and limits imposed on it by finances and priorities. Higher education in Ethiopia is extremely centralized, with decisions on admissions, budget and hiring coming from the Ministry of Education. While there have been efforts made to change this in recent years, these are very much in their beginning stages; the University of Addis Ababa was given autonomy only in September 2023. There, a review is underway. Many assume this will recommend austerity measures and possible layoffs to make the university largely self-sufficient.[44] Other universities have recruited foreign faculty in the past; however, with the 2020 to 2022 war in Tigray, the Ministry of Higher Education lost much of its funding, meaning its budget for external hires is very limited.[45]

But there is need and potential for Ethiopian universities to hire qualified Sudanese university lecturers, particularly those with PhDs able to lecture in English. Universities in Ethiopia have expanded rapidly over the past 25 years, from the 'first generation' universities that made up the different colleges of Haile Selassie University, elevated to individual universities in the early 2000s, to third and fourth generation universities established in the mid-2010s. Each generation is defined not only by chronology, but also by the courses of study they offer and number of students they serve.[46] While expansion has increased the number of graduates, the system has lacked qualified lecturers (especially for third and fourth generation universities), with most PhD holders concentrated at first and some second-generation universities. Efforts are underway to expand the numbers of higher degree holders employed at Ethiopian universities, with attempts to shift from a 70 to 30 ratio of Master's to PhD-holders to a 60 to 40 ratio.[47]

Some Ethiopian universities, usually those closer to the border with Sudan, have preexisting relationships with Sudanese universities and might be able to take in lecturers or provide some sort of support for them. The Universities of Bahir Dar and Gondar have hired Sudanese lecturers in some capacities. Pre-existing memorandums of understanding with Sudanese universities include those with the Sudan University for Science and Technology, which has

44 Interview with Professor Bahru Zewde, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, 22 February 2024.

45 Interview with Head of Office of Scholarship and Internationalization, Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 February 2024.

46 Interview with Professor Debebe Sero, Dean of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University, Professor Debebe Sero, Dean of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, 19 February 2024.

47 Interview with Head of Office of Scholarship and Internationalization, Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 February 2024. This seems to be an improvement on the statistics cited in education related studies. See Tebeje Molla and Denise Cuthbert, 'In Pursuit of the African PhD: A Critical Survey of Emergent Policy Issues in Select Sub-Saharan African Nations, Ethiopia, Ghana and South Africa', *Policy Futures in Education* 14/6 (2016): 635–54. The paper reports that the rate of PhD holding at Addis Ababa University in 2016 at the time of publication was 28% with roughly 9% of faculty at other universities holding higher degrees.

connected faculty and administrators. Profesor Shangal reported that his move to Ethiopia and his work in Addis Ababa, while not institutionally supported, came as a result of Ethiopian colleagues he knew through these institutional connections.[48]

Smaller institutions, with a degree of financial autonomy, are willing and interested in hosting Sudanese scholars, particularly in research positions. The Institute for Peace and Security Studies, for instance, has the ability to onboard Sudanese academics, furnishing them with a work permit and support for accommodation and logistics if they find funding for an appropriate research project.[49] University departments, too, have the ability to give a lecturer a title and to invite outside researchers into existing projects, though their financial resources are limited and require outside support to onboard Sudanese academics in a more elaborate way.

Students face an even more difficult situation with regards to prospects of enrolment in Ethiopian universities. Applications from Sudanese students must either come through the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education by way of the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before being sent to the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and forwarded to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, from where they are sent to the Ethiopian Education and Training Authority for consideration—to determine student equivalence and level. Students could be accepted but would be expected to pay full tuition. The alternative is through the Refugees and Returnees Services, where refugees in the camps at the border with Blue Nile are registered.[50] Once registered, a few students have applied for admission into university, but the number able to do so are very small—doing so requires convincingly full documentation, meaning certificates with stamps from the relevant Sudanese ministries. It also means living in the difficult conditions of the refugee camps until being accepted.

Should any high-level agreements be reached to expand the recruitment of Sudanese lecturers into Ethiopian higher education, or should policies change to accept Sudanese students into Ethiopian universities in higher numbers, the other challenge will be language. Sudanese lecturers and students often have weak English, especially verbally, which would interfere with their ability to navigate the Ethiopian system, in which the language of instruction is often English. Efforts to support students and lecturers would be essential to easing their transition. Most Sudanese academics currently in Ethiopia are waiting for visas to join faculties or graduate programmes abroad. Sudanese students already admitted into programmes in Europe have been encouraged to apply for their visas from Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, however, they meet with mixed success; while many are granted visas to proceed, some have been denied visas to Europe despite the fact they were accepted into programmes and had the means to attend. Visa

48 Interview with Professor Abdel Rahman Abdalla Hassan (Shangal), Department of Sculpture, Former Dean, Faculty of Arts, Sudan University, Addis Ababa, 21 February 2024.

49 Interview with Dr. Fana Gebresenbet, Director of Institute of Peace and Security Studies, University of Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa, 22 February 2024.

50 Interview with Head of Office of Scholarship and Internationalization, Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 February 2024.

rejections cost time and money; a lecturer and aspiring graduate student recounted how he had gone to Ethiopia from Uganda to apply for the visa, alongside others who were admitted. To afford the travel and stay, he sold his laptop. After applying, he was rejected. Clarity about visa requirements, and the likelihood of getting one, are essential. Institutions of higher education in Europe should do more to push their governments to grant lecturers visas in a timely fashion.

Academics and Academia in South Sudan

In stark contrast to other countries, South Sudan has been relatively forthcoming in offering opportunities for employment. This can be best accounted for by its need for qualified lecturers and professionals in the country. When Juba University relocated from Kafori in Khartoum North, following South Sudan's independence in 2011, it had a shortage of faculty; of the approximately 600 faculty members that taught in Khartoum, only 168 or so followed the university to South Sudan, with the rest staying in Khartoum to work at Bahri University, which took over the campus.[51] While Juba University and, indeed, other state universities, have recruited widely among South Sudanese academics and higher degree holders since, the shortage in qualified lecturers has limited their academic scope. Sudanese holders of higher degrees provide South Sudanese a real opportunity as they have the potential to help expand academic programmes and provide instruction to students in South Sudan.

Efforts to recruit Sudanese professionals have been most noticeable for medical doctors and others in faculties of medicine, though there has been some recruitment across all fields. The South Sudanese government has made it relatively easy for medical doctors to practice medicine, outlining a process involving registration with the physicians' union that involves a USD 400 fee and a work permit.[52] This has brought an influx of doctors to private clinics in Juba, as well as to public and private universities. Universities have been given space within ministerial budgets to allow recruitment and salaries. The salary scale for faculty at public universities was updated in 2023, meaning that, even with the devaluation of the South Sudanese Pound, faculty are paid well relative to other professions, though they experience delays collecting their salary and have many living costs to cover, due to conditions in Juba.[53]

Most prominent in recruitment has been the University of Juba, which has been reaching out to Sudanese academics seeking employment. According to the University's Director of International Cooperation and Alumni Affairs, as of February of 2024, the university had recruited and contracted approximately 80 faculty members and expected to recruit a total

51 Interview with Dr. Milton Moling Suk, Director of International Cooperation and Alumni Affairs, University of Juba, Juba, 30 January 2024.

52 Interview with Dr. Muhammad Waheed al Sharif, medical doctor, now Faculty of Medicine, University of Juba, Juba, 30 January 2024.

53 Interview with Job Akuei, Director General for Admissions, Ministry of Higher Education, South Sudan, Juba, 2 February 2024.

of about 200 for the year.[54] Recruitment often takes place prior to arrival in South Sudan—many lecturers heard about it by word of mouth. This has been most pronounced for faculty at the University of Bahri, where many academics had taught or studied before with South Sudanese colleagues who relocated to Juba.[55] Those who have applied in advance of arrival sent copies of their certificates and letters of application electronically, either by way of colleagues who printed them out and presented them to the administration, or directly to university administrators by WhatsApp or email. They were sent contracts and, in some cases, signed them prior to travelling to South Sudan.

In the process of recruitment, the University of Juba has spent money in advance to make it possible for displaced faculty to move. The University has arranged to advance new faculty their salaries through university accounts rather than waiting until the budget item is paid by South Sudan's Ministry of Higher Education, as they do for most faculty. It has also made payments up front to cover the cost of travel to Juba and has even bought plane tickets for recruited faculty directly, so they can fly to Juba from Port Sudan or Rumbek without advancing the money themselves.[56] These measures have been generous and important for those recruited, though the long-term implications of such payments have been challenging due to the long delay in payment of South Sudanese university lecturer salaries for all of 2024 up until the time of publication. The ensuing difference between resources advanced to Sudanese faculty and South Sudanese faculty going without pay has caused tensions at times within the university.

Recruitment has occurred at other public universities in South Sudan, too, but to a lesser extent, due to geographic, material, and other constraints, as well as their lack of existing connections. Administrators at Upper Nile University, itself displaced due to conflict and currently located in Juba, noted that while they have a need for qualified lecturers, particularly in their medical school, the university has limited resources to recruit them. As of February 2024, they had hired five faculty from Sudan, who taught in the medical school, forestry and environmental science. This small number is in part due to an expectation that the university will return to Malakal in coming years, which has made it difficult for it to invest in physical structures and housing for faculty, as well as its small size, itself a product of being a university in displacement.[57]

The University of Bahr al Ghazal, located in Wau, has made efforts to recruit faculty by collaborating with the South Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education and University of Juba. Again, as of February, the university had contracted four faculty members, all of whom were set

54 Interview with Dr. Milton Moling Suk, Director of International Cooperation and Alumni Affairs, University of Juba, Juba, 30 January 2024.

55 Interview with Sulafa Omer Kabashi, Department of Architecture, Bahri University, now University of Juba, Juba, 31 January 2024.

56 Interview with Dr. Mairi John Blackings, Registrar of Academic Affairs, University of Juba, Juba, 29 January 2024.

57 Interview with Dr. Yoanes Edward, Deputy VC for Academic Affairs, Upper Nile University, Juba, 31 January 2024.

to teach in the medical school, with others applying. Though the University of Bahr al Ghazal has fewer resources to invest, they earmarked money from their own budget (roughly 200,000 South Sudanese Pounds per faculty member) to give new recruits something to tide them over while they waited for their salaries to arrive. The university was arranging accommodation, which has been much less expensive than in Juba.[58] Other universities, including Dr John Garang University, located in Bor, have also hired faculty from Sudan. Faculty seeking to work there must submit their applications through its offices in Bor or Juba, meaning they have to have arrived in Juba already.[59] The fact that faculty must be willing to relocate to Wau or Bor has lowered the number of applications.

While this recruitment into South Sudan's education system is admirable, not all challenges can be easily addressed by South Sudanese universities. South Sudan's Ministry of Higher Education is notorious for sending salaries a month or more late. Although a challenge for South Sudanese and Sudanese alike, for those just beginning their work in South Sudan, delays can be more burdensome as many lost their savings and have racked up relocation costs.

Universities in Juba endure the high cost of living, for accommodation in particular, which is expensive and difficult to find. This is a challenge for the entire faculty of roughly 1,000 at the University of Juba. The University has housing for about 100 faculty, meaning the vast majority are left to find their own, either with family or by renting. The university has tried to address the issue for new faculty from Sudan by renting housing or giving them a housing allowance.[60] This allowance is not enough to rent accommodation, though faculty have been able to pool their allowances to rent. Though the university intends to build more housing, this is understood to be a long-term plan with an unclear timeline.

The housing shortage has shaped exactly who has sought employment at the University of Juba and in South Sudan generally. The gender ratio of university lecturers in Sudanese universities is roughly equal, at least in humanities and social sciences, but most of the lecturers hired by the University of Juba have been men, with only five or ten women among the 80 or so recruited. This is largely a result of difficulties in finding comfortable, secure accommodation at an affordable price, as well as the tensions within families that occur when relocating to a country where the wife has a job, but her husband does not.

Many male lecturers have chosen to travel to South Sudan on their own, leaving their families in secure locations in Sudan or Chad, or sending them on to Uganda, where they live in the camp at Kiryandongo or in Kampala, where housing is more affordable. In South Sudan, they share modest housing with other men; some Sudanese faculty say they live four to a single room

58 Interview with Dr. Hawa Abdullai Marjan, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Bahr al Ghazal University, Juba, 2 February 2024.

59 Interview with Dr. Abraham Matoc Dhal, Vice Chancellor of Dr. John Garang University, Juba, 2 February 2024.

60 Interview with Dr. Milton Moling Suk, Director of International Cooperation and Alumni Affairs, University of Juba, Juba, 30 January 2024.

near the market. They send the money they save to their families. Women lecturers usually come on their own—they are unmarried, or their husbands have stayed elsewhere. Those who come with their husbands say their husbands have problems finding a job and, through force of circumstance, have to live separately from their wives.

Sudanese faculty start from scratch, working without the necessary equipment. Many lost their laptops with their other belongings. This has made research and writing challenging and created an extra burden for lecturers beginning in a new university setting. One lecturer described how, to prepare for lectures, she used a notepad and her cell phone, which took time and made preparation difficult.

The situation for students has been equally marked by generous policies and structural barriers. Though Sudanese academics have sought work in South Sudan, the number of students seeking to enrol there has been few. Before the war, the South Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education sent roughly 500 students a year to Sudan on scholarships, bringing the number of South Sudanese students in Sudan on scholarships to about 2,000 to 3,000 when the war broke out. The Ministry expected them to return and prepared to offer them scholarships to South Sudanese universities instead. By February, however, only roughly 400 students were admitted to South Sudanese universities, both Sudanese and South Sudanese.[61] This is despite an open admissions policy, even after the deadline for registration has passed. Sudanese students are required to apply through official channels, though they are treated in them the same as South Sudanese students. They would go through more an even formal process, should they receive refugee status, though it seems that none have sought admission that way.[62]

While South Sudan's Ministry of Higher Education had no explanation for how few students had sought university admission in South Sudan, it did say the records needed for admission were a problem. A UN declaration stipulates that such documents should be subject to cross-border scrutiny, but the Ministry of Higher Education in South Sudan has been flexible, accepting unofficial documents without the requisite stamps, pending later verification. Many students have come to South Sudan without any documents to speak of and been unable to register.[63] This is worst for third, fourth- and fifth-year students, who, without their academic records, face the prospect of beginning all over again.

The war has left students in vulnerable situations in which enrolment in university, whether in South Sudan or elsewhere, is difficult. Although South Sudanese scholarship holders have their fees waived, South Sudanese 'returnees' and Sudanese students are likely to find registration

61 Interview with Job Akuei, Director General for Admissions, Ministry of Higher Education, South Sudan, Juba, 2 February 2024.

62 Ministerial Order No. (11) 2023, Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology, Republic of South Sudan. Signed by Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang, 17 October 2023.

63 Interview with Job Akuei, Director General for Admissions, Ministry of Higher Education, South Sudan, Juba, 2 February 2024.

costs of USD 300 to USD 500 a year, prohibitive. As it stands, there are no programmes designed to assist these students to pay for university fees, meaning their families are responsible for them. Most students would likely find the cost of moving to South Sudan by land and finding accommodation to be prohibitive as well.

Academics and Academia in Uganda

Uganda does not directly border Sudan. Consequently, Sudanese entering Uganda have to travel by land through South Sudan or fly to Entebbe from Port Sudan, raising the cost of getting there. While Uganda's refugee policy is relatively open, Sudanese without the money for visas or onward travel when they reach Uganda's border, are brought to a refugee camp in Kiryandongo, 200 km south of the border, where they fill out the paperwork for refugee status. This camp has limited opportunities for university lecturers, since it is focused on farming.

At the same time, Sudanese refugees do not have to stay in the camp. Academics may be concerned about limiting their ability to move to other countries, but refugee status in Uganda comes with benefits for both academics and students. Those with a refugee card can be hired for regular employment by a company, university or institute without a work permit, a huge advantage, since permits cost between USD 500 and USD 2,000 a year. Additionally, they can open a bank account and operate in the formal economy. Students with refugee cards who gain admission to public universities in Uganda have their tuition subsidized by UNHCR. The decision to take up refugee status does not need to be made immediately. Sudanese students and academics with the money for it can stay in Uganda on a single tourist visa for up to six months, with the possibility of travelling to a nearby country and returning again. This gives Sudanese families time to make decisions on the best course of action. These conditions have made Uganda an appealing country for many, since there is infrastructure in cities, the cost of living is lower, and the security is on the whole better.

While obtaining legal status in Uganda has been relatively easy, Sudanese lecturers have had few opportunities of employment at Ugandan universities. This is largely due to the limits of the size and capacity of Ugandan institutions, as well as the fact that Sudanese academics have few ties with them, leaving Ugandans unfamiliar with Sudanese degrees or skillsets. Ugandan public universities have limited ability to recruit Sudanese faculty, at least for the moment. Although there are 9 public universities and a number of public institutes, these institutions are run with hiring freezes that require new hires only to replace faculty that have left. [64] All hiring decisions for new positions are made by the higher administration, if not the Ministry of Higher Education itself. Job vacancies are limited, and most opportunities exist mostly at private universities.

Facility in the English language and the ability to apply for academic jobs at universities where English is the language of instruction, is an impediment for many Sudanese academics. Due to

64 'Information on Public Universities Admissions for 2021/2022 Academic Year', Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education & Sports, https://news.mak.ac.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Notes-to-Schools-2021-2022-Academic-Year.pdf.

the geographic proximity, many Sudanese lecturers in Uganda have come from universities in Sudan's states, especially Darfur. Many have skills and specialties useful in the rest of East Africa, since universities in Sudan's states hosted faculty specialized in agriculture, environmental sciences and engineering. At the same time, these faculty often have limited English. This has placed Sudanese lecturers at a disadvantage when it comes to employment in a university system taught in English.

Nonetheless, Ugandan universities are relatively open to collaboration with external researchers. There is real potential for individual Ugandan university departments to host Sudanese academics by granting them affiliation, which can open up research opportunities, access to libraries and collaboration with university faculty on existing projects. It also allows applications for funding for Sudanese researchers working with Ugandan researchers on projects they wish to pursue together. Decisions on affiliation are made at the departmental level and between individual faculty, meaning that possibilities exist for inter-departmental collaboration.

Students wishing to enrol in Ugandan universities must go through the Ministry of Education to equalize their certificates. This process, while not slow, has been challenging: Secondary school in Uganda is 12 years, unlike Sudan's 11, so secondary school graduates from Sudan are expected to take a foundation year. University certificates are generally recognized, but the process for equalization disregards incomplete degree programmes and key courses Sudanese students have already taken. This is particularly true of students without their transcripts, but also applies to many who have full transcripts.

Opportunities abound, though, for Sudanese students and lecturers to study the English language. In addition to Makerere University's language institute, Sudanese students and faculty have enrolled in English language classes at private institutes, such as the Sir Nelson English Centre, which has locations in Wandegeya and Kabalagala in Kampala. Private institutes charge 100,000 and 150,000 Uganda Shillings (UGX), roughly USD 25 to USD 40 for two-month classes. Makerere University's language classes have a good reputation, especially for academic English and grammar, but are more expensive, costing UGX 580,000 for course fees and UGX 130,000 for books, more than USD 180 for three months.[65] Makerere University gives students in the East African Community (EAC) a discount, but Sudan is not part of the EAC, meaning that while South Sudanese students can take advantage of this, Sudanese students cannot. Enrolment in classes allows students to apply for Ugandan residency, granting them legal status in Uganda without applying for refugee status.

Academics and Academia in other East African Countries

Conditions for Sudanese academics and students in other East African countries, including Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda are similar to those in Uganda. While opportunities to travel

65 Interview with Dr. Abdel Salaam Abubaker Khatir, Institute for Peace and Development Studies, University of Geneina, Kampala, 8 January 2024.

directly by plane from Port Sudan to Nairobi exist, travel to Tanzania and Rwanda requires further transit overland or by plane through another country. The Sudanese community in these two countries is smaller as a result, though a number have gone to Kenya to work with the UN or NGOs that relocated there.

A few private Sudanese universities have relocated within East Africa. This has been the case for UMST, which is operating now in Rwanda and Tanzania. Employment for faculty and enrolment for students at East African universities has otherwise been limited for reasons similar to those in Uganda. Academics and students are hindered by the need for English (or alternatively, French or Swahili). They are also burdened by their lack of existing professional and institutional relationships with academics or universities in these countries, making job seeking or student registration more difficult.

Academics and Academia in the Gulf

Sudanese citizens can only reach the Gulf by plane or boat from Port Sudan. As a result, movement to the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, has relied on existing social connections and the ability to apply for visas in a shifting legal landscape where visa requirements have varied radically over time. Most Sudanese academics and students who travelled to the Gulf did so with the help of those already there. Some secured visas through the family sponsorship, while others did so through professional relationships or other networks.

The vast majority of Sudanese academics who have gone to the Gulf since the war began have done so without lining up employment first. Some have found work since, but many have relied on the support of their extended families and their savings. Potential collaboration and space for Sudanese academics exists in the Gulf, but this requires institutional decisions to employ Sudanese academics.

Students, too, have found opportunities to be limited. While some have been able to enrol in universities after moving and others have been granted admission before, the vast majority has not been able to do so, either because they find the fees prohibitive or because of difficulties in having their credentials accepted. Some students have reported applying for visas to work in the Gulf in non-academic postings while studying online with their Sudanese universities. However, even this seems to be hard without family or professional connections to help them get a work visa.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The factors and conditions described in this report represent a threat to higher education in Sudan and risk leaving students without access to university education and academics in precarious, unstable working conditions. Knowledge production on Sudan, past and present, risks dwindling, making understanding the trends for a future Sudan even more difficult.

This report serves as a beginning to discussions on higher education in Sudan and ways to support it. As such, it does not propose to answer all questions or have solutions to all the problems facing Sudanese universities. Further research will be required in the different settings and locations described in this report, as well as in the other places to which Sudanese academics and students have moved, or could move, with recommendations necessarily specific to different countries. By elaborating on the status of Sudanese institutions of higher education and the needs of Sudanese academics and students, the report provides an opportunity for institutions, in and outside Sudan, to address pressing issues and preserve Sudanese higher education in the midst of this war.

Support for Sudanese higher education now has consequences for Sudan in coming decades. The authors are struck by the divergent outcomes different countries have faced after extended wars based on the level of support given to institutions of higher education and academics themselves. In Uganda, the end of civil war and the need to rebuild all institutions across the country left the university subject to neoliberal pressures for over a decade, with faculty underpaid and academic programmes weakened by the departure of academics from the country and the slowness of their return, as well as the need to appeal to external donors for funds.[66] In Somalia, a total lack of support for higher education internally and externally has left it with almost no public universities and only unregulated private universities filling the gap.[67] In contrast, the international community has stepped up for Ukraine, organizing programmes to host Ukrainian students and faculty and supporting Ukrainian institutions, setting the stage for the large-scale restitution of higher education when the war ends there.[68]

Efforts to support Sudanese academics so far have been few. Programmes like Scholars at Risk, the Council for At Risk Academics (CARA), and the Scholar Rescue Fund have set aside funds to support individuals in need. The Threatened Scholars Initiative has administered small

66 'The State of Higher Education in Somalia: Privatization, Rapid Growth, and the Need for Regulation', The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2013.

67 Josephine Ahikire et al eds., *Historicising the Humanities at Makerere Trends, Patterns and Prospects*, Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 2022.

68 Volodymyr Lugovyi et al, 'Transformation of Higher Education in Ukraine: Impact of the War and Objectives for Post-War Recovery', *European Journal of Education* 58/4 (2023): 611–28.

grants for four Sudanese scholars and formed the Sudan Crisis Research Network, with the intention of administering grants to another eight scholars, nominated by the network, in the coming year. The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is offering competitive USD 5,000 awards for scholars, displaced by war from the Middle East and North Africa region, to join MESA's conferences and other conferences, with preference going to scholars located in North America. Anecdotes abound of individual scholars having used research funds originally set aside for work in Sudan to support Sudanese colleagues. All these funds and initiatives are limited in scope and depend on universities in the United States and United Kingdom, meaning the number of academics who can be supported is small in comparison to the scale of need.

As well as providing scholars small grants and finding placements for Sudanese academics in Europe and America, it is vital to find ways to employ Sudanese academics nearer to Sudan, ideally in it and in neighbouring countries. Doing so keeps them in close proximity to their extended families and communities of care, allowing them to be there for their friends, colleagues and students in this time of crisis. Doing so also helps to create a foundation for return when this war ends, as those who settle far away will incur greater expense to visit and find collaboration with those in Sudan more difficult. The French research institute Centre for Economic, Legal, and Social Studies and Documentation (CEDEJ), has offered support to Sudanese academics in Cairo, both by employing some and by giving others small research grants. Its example should be replicated by other research institutes in countries neighbouring Sudan and accompanied by programmes at larger institutions for scale.

Support for higher education on its own will not address the crisis looming should this war continue, which is the paralysis of primary and secondary education. UNESCO reports 19 million children out of school in Sudan, with its representative, Mandine O'Brien, quoted as saying "Sudan is on the verge of becoming home to the world's worst education crisis."[69] Schools have been systematically destroyed, looted and burned; student dormitories and classrooms have been turned into shelters for IDPs, and the Sudanese secondary school graduation exam has not been held for a year, which will have a direct impact effect on university admissions. Many are resorting to taking final exams in other countries. Many, many more are without any access to education or proof of their education at all.

No single thing will solve all the challenges facing higher education in Sudan but the foundations of support for it can be laid by policymakers and officials, as well as by members of the Sudanese diaspora and institutions outside, with policies and programmes, large and small, designed to address the needs of academics and students. These should not focus solely on researchers or students as individuals but also the way they interact with their families. Doing so ensures that female as well as male academics are supported and that Sudanese academics continue producing knowledge and working with connections to Sudan that will extend beyond this war and facilitate the rebuilding of higher education when it ends. This report cannot possibly

69 '19 million children in Sudan out of school as conflict rages on – UNICEF, Save the Children', UNICEF, 9 October 2023, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/19-million-children-sudan-out-school-conflict-rages-unicef-save-children.

suggest all the mechanisms needed to support it. Instead, it points to certain key themes where interventions of different scale by different actors would help.

Recommendations

Recommendations for international Institutions, including governments, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs)s, NGOs, academic associations and universities:

Assist Sudanese academic institutions continuing or restarting activities:

- Medium-size grants can be developed to assist Sudanese universities in moving to online and distance education. Funds can be earmarked for student support, helping students purchase internet bandwidth to download lectures and notes to prepare for exams. The cost of the internet is prohibitive for many, even in areas with stable networks, but funds are vital in areas with telecom blackouts, where satellite internet like Starlink is the only way to gain internet access.
- Technical and material support for Sudanese universities, to develop and maintain e-learning platforms, will help universities restart. While some universities in Sudan already have experience with such platforms, ongoing engagement and offers to host servers, or help manage the systems, would assist in universities where no such program exists or the capacity to scale it up is limited.
- Material support for universities in organizing accommodation and travel for students to take their exams will help students unable to complete their studies due to financial constraints and will likely increase participation in exams for female students

Provide material support to Sudanese academics displaced by the war:

- Emergency grants for Sudanese lecturers, particularly those displaced outside Sudan will be essential to encourage academic employment and research. Many of those displaced during the war lost everything, including their laptops and all their data. Some found themselves in so difficult a position they were forced to sell their laptop to pay for items essential for them and their families. This has made applying for jobs or grants extremely difficult. It has also made it difficult for those who have found work to carry it out. Provision could be made to issue them grants or laptops themselves in Egypt, South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia.
- International institutions, working on the preservation of cultural and scientific facilities, should employ Sudanese scholars with specialties in those fields.

Create pathways for work and study at academic institutions in neighbouring countries:

- In neighbouring countries, institutions of higher education should offer access to academic facilities, particularly libraries, to Sudanese lecturers and graduate students at no cost. This would be a large and low-cost step that would make a difference to

Sudanese researchers as they try to stabilize their lives and rebuild their research in a new country.

- Academic advising and mentorship should be offered to students, and mentoring for graduate students and early career academics, to help them navigate choices and alert them to opportunities to further their study and academic careers.
- Grants should be provided for university departments, research institutes and researchers to facilitate collaboration between academics in host countries and Sudanese academics on joint research projects.
- Whenever possible, scholarships should be offered to Sudanese students at all levels to help them continue their studies when re-enrolling in university outside of Sudan.

In South Sudan:

- Efforts should be made to support Juba University and other universities recruiting Sudanese lecturers to ensure recruitment runs as smoothly as possible and allows lecturers to create stable living conditions.
- Donors and outside institutions should work to strengthen the facilities of Juba University, particularly in terms of their ability to offer accommodation for university staff, Sudanese and South Sudanese alike. This would stabilize living conditions for academics in South Sudan, making them less sensitive to devaluation of the national currency. It would also help Sudanese academics settling in South Sudan immensely by eliminating the need to put down deposits on accommodation.
- Efforts should be made to provide supplemental English classes for lecturers teaching for the first time in institutions where English is the medium of instruction. This can be done through courses organized in Juba or by sending lecturers for intensive English classes in Uganda when other classes are not in session.

In Uganda:

- In Uganda, grants should be offered to enrol Sudanese lecturers in six months English training, ideally with stipends to support their study. This would be essential for lecturers, many of whom have arrived in Uganda with limited English but with higher degrees and extensive skills in their field of study. Doing so would be beneficial for Uganda in that it would allow Ugandan institutions to meet and collaborate with Sudanese academics, ultimately serving the country of Uganda as well as its students.
- Efforts should be made to subsidize language classes and other self-development programmes for Sudanese lecturers and students. Many of these programmes offer a discount for students who are nationals of countries in the East African Community (of which South Sudan is a member, though Sudan is not). Sudanese nationals should not be penalized for the political decisions of the Ingaz regime and should be granted the same discounts, which will demonstrate larger East African solidarity and encourage Sudanese engagement in East Africa in future.

In Egypt:

- The Egyptian government should resolve the legal status of Sudanese refugees, particularly Sudanese academics and students. The need to have a residency permit to access essential services has limited the options of entire families and made it difficult for Sudanese academics and students to seek employment, study and to regularize the lives of their families.
- Efforts should be made to reform and make affordable the registration process for Sudanese students seeking to enrol in academic programmes in Egypt. Proposals for such reform already exist; academic institutions and associations working in Egypt should push for their approval and implementation.
- Material and logistics support should be provided to register Sudanese students in the Egyptian university system, including dedicated scholarships for Sudanese students.

In Ethiopia:

- The Ethiopian government should reform the legal status of Sudanese academics and professionals more generally to facilitate their employment within Ethiopian institutions of education and higher education.
- Support, both logistic and material, should be given to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education to negotiate and reach agreement regarding possibilities for the employment of Sudanese academics within Ethiopian education and higher education institutions.
- Academic institutions and governments should work to make sure that Sudanese academics and students seeking visas for onward travel, particularly visas to Europe, are given fair consideration, facilitating speed and reliability in the knowledge that drawn-out visa application processes that end unexpectedly in rejection have extremely negative financial and professional implications for Sudanese at an already difficult time.

Recommendations for Sudanese institutions, including universities, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- Sudanese universities organizing testing sites for students outside Sudan should include a location in Uganda. Sites in Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been invaluable for students displaced and located in these countries but the restrictions and expense of obtaining visas to the Gulf and Egypt have meant that students displaced to other areas, including those in Chad, South Sudan and Uganda, are unable to sit exams without great expense or challenging government procedures. Uganda's accessibility, requiring only a tourist visa to enter, would make university exams more accessible to students displaced to other parts of the world.
- Sudanese universities and the Ministry of Higher Education should work to speed up and streamline the process of accessing academic records and certificates, reducing

the cost and creating more locations where records can be obtained, where possible. This is essential for displaced students seeking to apply to academic programmes, and for graduates seeking employment in and outside Sudan.

- This is a particular opportunity at this moment for the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate with neighbouring countries to create avenues for Sudanese lecturers in neighbouring them. This could be fruitful in Ethiopia and Egypt. In Ethiopia, higher education is centrally controlled, and the Ministry of Education could facilitate a hiring process for lecturers with PhDs, if there was political will and funding. In Egypt, the large number of Sudanese academics and longstanding relationships between the Egyptian and Sudanese Ministries of Higher Education, could be useful in fostering larger relationships and creating avenues for Sudanese academic employment.
- The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) would be essential to negotiating affordable tuition arrangements in neighbouring countries, particularly in Egypt, as well as facilitating visa processes for students and exploring scholarship opportunities to alleviate financial barriers for students whose study has been interrupted by the war.
- The Sudanese MFA would be well placed to coordinate with the Ministry of Higher Education to create a point for displaced students to access their university records. This requires communication between the MFA and the Ministry of Higher Education, with the latter granting diplomatic officers access to their database to fetch degree certificates and other critical documentation.

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Interviews and Correspondence

Over the course of this research, we interviewed academics, officials and students in multiple locations. All those listed below gave their consent to cite them as part of our research. Some also sent along reports and correspondence on institutional policies and provided further information about the institutions they had encountered in displacement.

Abdel Rahman al Habib, Agricultural Engineering, University of Geneina, 8 January 2024, Kampala.

Professor Abdel Rahman Abdalla Hassan (Shangal), Department of Sculpture, Former Dean, Faculty of Arts, Sudan University, 21 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Abdel Salaam Abubaker Khatir, Institute for Peace and Development Studies, University of Geneina, 8 January 2024, Kampala.

Dr. Abraham Matoc Dhal, Vice Chancellor of Dr. John Garang University, 2 February 2024, Juba.

Dr. Abulfida Muhammad Ahmed, Department of Mathematics, Nyala University, 23 January 2024, Kampala.

Dr. Abubakr Muhammad Musa, Dean of School of Information and Media, University of West Kordofan, 19 January 2024, Kampala.

Ahmed Suliman Mustafa, Department of Geography, Bahri University, now University of Juba, 1 February 2024, Juba.

Dr. Ali Abdel Mahmoud Abdel Gadir, Private Law, University of Nyala, now Juba University, 31 January 2024, Juba.

Professor Ali Rabah, Secretary of Academic Affairs, University of Khartoum, 3 January 2024, via Zoom.

Ayoub al Safi, MA student, Sociology, Nileen University, 8 January 2024, Kampala.

Azza Alshafee Khedr, Faculty of Medicine, Nileen University, 17 February 2024, Cairo.

Dr. Azza Osman Mohamed Osman, Faculty of Mathematical Sciences and Information, University of Khartoum, 7 February 2024, Cairo.

Badraldeen Ali Bashir, Faculty of Geography and Environmental Science, University of Khartoum, 20 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Professor Bahru Zewde, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 22 February 2024, Addis Ababa

Dr. Barraba Korina, Dean of School of Law, Juba University, 31 January 2024, Juba.

Br. Bruno Dada, Deputy VC of Academic Affairs, Catholic University of Juba, 2 February 2024, Juba.

Professor Debebe Sero, Dean of Social Sciences, Addis Ababa University, 19 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Ezzeldin Hajjaj, research assistant, Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum, 22 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Professor Fadwa Abdel Rahman Ali Taha, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, 9 February 2024, correspondence via email.

Dr. Fana Gebresenbet, Director of Institute of Peace and Security Studies, University of Addis Ababa, 22 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Hajar Abashar, Dean of the Faculty of Musical and Theatrical Studies, East Kordofan University, 16 February 2024, Cairo.

Hala Taha Abdel Karim, visual artist, now University of Juba, 31 January 2024, Juba.

Dr. Hasnaa Abdallah Ahmed Salih, Faculty of Theology, Omdurman Islamic University, 3 February 2024, Cairo.

Professor Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, retired, 13 January 2024, Cairo.

Professor Hassan Bashir Mohamed Nour, Faculty of Economic and Social Securities, Nileen University, 10 January 2024, Cairo.

Dr. Hawa Abdullai Marjan, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Bahr al Ghazal University, 2 February 2024, Juba.

Head of Office of Scholarship and Internationalization, Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 22 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Ibrahim El Saeid, Genetic and Animal Breeding, Dean of Student Affairs, Nyala University,

now Juba University, 1 February 2024, Juba.

Professor Intisar Soghayroun Elzein Soghayroun, Former Minister of Higher Education, 22 January 2024, Cairo.

Israa Mohamed Osman, former student University of Khartoum, 20 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Job Akuei, Director General for Admissions, Ministry of Higher Education, South Sudan, 2 February 2024, Juba.

Dr. Kawthar Sir Elkhatim Awad Elkarim, Faculty of Arts, Omdurman Ahlia University, 21 January 2024, via WhatsApp.

Dr. Khalifa Omer, Department of History, University of Khartoum, 24 January 2024, via WhatsApp.

Dr. Login Dohia, Business Administration, Jordan-Sudanese College, now Juba University, 1-2 February 2024, Juba.

Professor Mahdi Amin Altom, Retired, 3 January 2024, correspondence via WhatsApp.

Maha Ahmed Yousif, Department of Technology, Imam al Hadi University, 22 January 2024, Kampala.

Mahasin Yousif Abdel Jalil, Faculty of Arts, University of Bahry, 20 January 2024, via WhatsApp.

Dr. Mairi John Blackings, Registrar of Academic Affairs, University of Juba, 29 January 2024, Juba.

Mesoud Abdel Bagi, Faculty of Geography and Environmental Science, University of Khartoum, 20 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Milton Moling Suk, Director of International Cooperation and Alumni Affairs, University of Juba, 30 January 2024, Juba.

Dr. Muhammad Hamid, Veterinarian Pathology, University of Nyala, now Juba University, 1 February 2024, Juba.

Dr. Muhammad Teabin, Agricultural Economics, University of Zalengie, 8 January 2024, Kampala.

Dr. Muhammad Waheed al Sharif, medical doctor, now Faculty of Medicine, University of Juba, 30 January 2024, Juba.

Dr. Muhanad Faroug, Deputy Dean and Head of Educational Programmes and Curriculum Section Holy Quran University, 30 January 2024, correspondence via email.

Dr. Muna Abdal Wahab Abdal Razag, Dean of College of Languages, Bahri Ahlia College, 1 February 2024, Cairo.

Musa Jumaa, Computer Science and Technology, University of Zalengie, 8 January 2024, Kampala.

Nasraldin Muhammad, lawyer, 8 January 2024, Kampala.

Dr. Nusra Ibrahim Ali Musa, Department of Gender, University of Da'in, 22 January 2024, Kampala.

Dr. Omer Abdallah Humaida, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, 17 January 2024, via WhatsApp.

Dr. Omer Abdullah Suliman, Environmental Sciences, Ribat University and UMST, 30 January 2024, Juba.

Omer Muhammad Ahmed, medical school student, Zaim al Azhari University, 22 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Omer Suliman Zaroog, Mechanical Engineering, Sudan International University, now Juba University, 1 February 2024, Juba.

Dr. Randa Hamza Gindeel, Rural Training School, Al Ahfad University, 1 February 2024, Cairo.

Dr. Saad El Nour, Mechanical Engineering, Nyala University now Juba University, 1 February 2024, Juba.

Salim Abdel Salam Abaker Abdullah, Department of French, Shendi University, 23 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Dr. Samar Sameer Alshami, Faculty of Sciences, Sudan University of Science and Technology, 5 February 2024, Cairo.

Professor Sami Mohamed Shareef, Faculty of Engineering, University of Khartoum, 9 January 2024, via WhatsApp.

Dr. Shamsoon Khamis Kaafi, Department of Clinical Pathology, UMST, 30 January 2024, Juba.

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Dr. Waleed Mohamed Al Mubarak, General Management of Information and Communication Centre, Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education, 18 February 2024, Cairo.

El Wathig Youssif, French Department, University of Khartoum, 21 February 2024, Addis Ababa.

Yahya Omer Dawod, Private Law, University of Nyala, now Juba University, 31 January 2024, Juba.

Dr. Yassin Hassan Muhammad Osman, Public Law, University of Nyala, now Juba University 31 January 2024, Juba.

Dr. Yoanes Edward, Deputy VC for Academic Affairs, Upper Nile University, 31 January 2024, Juba.