

# The Charters of Sudan's Political Landscape

Thursday 19 May 2022, by [ALNEEL Muzan](#) (Date first published: 26 April 2022).

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Almost six months since the military coup in Sudan, peaceful protests continue to take place according to weekly schedules issued by [resistance committees](#). New forms and tools of resistance have emerged—even after more than [90 protesters](#) have been killed by the state forces in protests, and [tens more killed](#) in various attacks by militias around the country. The number of strikes and barricades have been increasing throughout the country since January 2022, and have involved numerous syndicates and blocked major roads axes.

In February 2022, a number of political documents with varying impacts on the political landscape, process, and public debate in the country were released. Political charters issued by the resistance committees have had a major impact in shaping events and debates in March and April. They have included political and economic visions, roadmaps to appointing a government that would implement these visions, and foundations for political alliances. Also in February, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) released a summary report on its consultations for a political process for Sudan, with a contrastingly-limited impact on the public space. A review of these documents, their intersections, and their divergences, reveals important factors shaping Sudan at a critical moment of its history.

## The political charters

News of new political charters being discussed by resistance committees had been circulating since November 2021, with some proposed drafts issued publicly as early as December 2021. As the public had been demanding an acceleration of the process, the resistance committees issued several statements explaining the necessity of inclusion and deliberation to ensure a representative document. In February 2022, two main charters were publicly released and have been shaping the debate ever since. The first is the [Revolutionary Charter for People's Power](#) (RCPP) signed by resistance committees in seven states when it was first issued, before reaching fifteen states out of Sudan's eighteen states by the end of March 2022. The second political charter is [the Charter for the Establishment of the People's Authority](#) (CEPA) issued by the coordinating body of the resistance committees in Khartoum.

In the RCPP, a clear focus on the democratization of decision making and wealth distribution can be found across all of its points. It includes a roadmap to form a government, starting with the selection of local councils in a process that would start immediately as part of the ongoing resistance against the coup. These councils are then set to elect representatives for higher levels in each state, up to the federal legislative council which would then appoint a prime minister. The first section of the RCPP provides a "conceptual framework for analyzing Sudan's historic problems," and looks at the

country's underdevelopment, economic crises, and conflict as a product of the colonial and postcolonial structuring of the economy, as well as that of the ruling elite. Within this framework, the RCPP defines the Sudanese revolution as one "against military and civilian totalitarianism, coups, and colonial relations of subjugation." The charter's second section provides an analysis and guidelines that would help direct the work of the new government. It includes details on ministries, commissions, as well as political and socioeconomic guidance. In terms of political economy for example, the RCPP focuses on a national developmental project that aims to restructure Sudan's rentier economy into a more industrial one, through a mixed economic policy guided by the public sector in collaboration with the private sector. The RCPP also clearly rejects the IMF's structural adjustment programs and related austerity measures and argues for Sudan's eligibility for preferential measures with regards to debt relief given the country's extraordinary conditions.

In other words, the charter addresses the causes of economic underdevelopment in Sudan, instead of seeking quick and ephemeral financial relief from the international community. The charter also addresses the issue of women's rights by proposing a Commission for Dismantling Systems of Oppression and Dependency, and links the violations of the rights of minorities to the underlying socioeconomic and political economy structures.

In addition to being signed by resistance committees in fifteen states, the RCPP has elevated the level of public political debate in the country, with its roadmap of a government built-from-below.

The other major political charter issued in February is the CEPA. Although yet to be opened for resistance committees in states beyond Khartoum to sign on, the charter derives its importance from the political and population weight of the capital in comparison to the rest of the country. The CEPA was released for consultations among Khartoum's resistance committees, their constituency, and the general public. The charter includes revolutionary values that can be spotted in different parts of the document, including an emphasis on "no compromise on the people's right to life." It also criticizes the political process for not addressing the economic, social, and cultural origins of Sudan's current crisis, and highlights the "lack of sustainable developmental vision" for the country. These are all points it shares with the RCPP to some extent.

However, the CEPA and the RCPP differ in terms of the tools proposed to implement these values. The CEPA is anchored around the concept of "uniting the political actors of the revolution" as a primary objective, not a tool. Accordingly, it envisions a path shaped by building consensus and finding compromises. This is clear for example in the issue of political economy where, despite prioritizing the "people's rights to life," the CEPA calls for "balancing the management of public debt and development requirements," in a departure from the people-centered approach to development. The CEPA also includes a roadmap for forming the government, which starts by appointing a prime minister by consensus among the CEPA signatories. This clause upholds a centralized vision to political decision making, particularly when contrasted with the RCPP approach which relies on with local councils. The CEPA also includes details of the ministries and commissions it proposes to create such as the Peace Commission, the Commission for Reforming Security and Military Sectors, Sustainable Development Commission, and others.

The focus on development and provision of basic economic rights as the path to peace and stability in the country is a common feature of both charters. However, different arrangements of priorities have led to different tools and solutions being proposed, reflecting the general debate among various revolutionary committees on the ground.

## **But what is UNITAMS doing?**

Many resistance committees and protesters have coalesced under [the slogan](#) "No Partnership, No

Negotiation, No Legitimacy [for the military].” This positioning is in stark contrast with the official stance of Sudan’s political class and the UN’s attempts at reviving a civilian-led transition period in the country. UNITAMS launched a political process that began with “[initial consultations](#) with a wide range of Sudanese stakeholders,” which included the military coup government, political parties, and civil society organizations, among others. A number of resistance committees then [issued statements](#) against UNITAMS’s political process, citing its legitimization of coup leaders who have committed crimes against the resistance. This has divided the public on how to proceed with UNITAMS’s efforts.

In February 2022, UNITAMS issued its first [report on the consultations](#), which comprised sections on the status of the constitutional document, civilian-military partnership, the Juba peace agreement, security sector reform, and elections, among other issues. The selection of topics, as well as the [priorities presented](#) by the UN special envoy for Sudan, do not mention ending military rule in the country. The report had largely no impact on public discourse: It was not discussed, no slogans for or against appeared in protests, even among those politically active and engaged.

While both major resistance committees’ political charters addressed economic issues in detail, there was no separate section for economic issues in UNITAMS’s consultations and report. Instead, the economy is mentioned under the “Executive Powers” section, with a superficial and internationally-centered understanding of Sudan’s economy. The report presents debt relief, and the related process, among the significant advances achieved by the transitional government. It mentions unlocking the aid, which was suspended due to the coup, as a means of relief, when IMF-related austerity measures before the coup had already worsened the economic situation of many.

Throughout the report, numerous items describing the transitional period, including the impact and role of the Juba peace agreement and treating the military coup and its aftermath as part of a transitional period, raise questions on the stark difference between how the UN and the Sudanese people view successes, challenges, and opportunities on the ground. UNITAMS’s report is rich with examples of inclination toward quick and exclusive consensus-building processes, away from addressing the issues raised by the previously discussed political charters. The report has confirmed the disconnect of the international community and its unwillingness to seriously address the process of change in Sudan’s current political scene.

## **Understanding the political landscape of Sudan via its documents**

Reviewing these documents reveals major political currents shaping, or attempting to shape, the new post-coup political landscape. The differences in priorities between the international community and the Sudanese resistance is difficult to ignore and sets the two in different directions—the first toward uprooting the causes of an unjust recent and older past, and the second toward a return to that very same, unsustainable past.

The major charters of the resistance committees also reflect important indicators of the dialectics of the Sudanese political process. While both charters state similar objectives and core values related to development, justice, and sustainable peace and stability by addressing the sources of the country’s issues, they also take two different approaches. The debate on radical democratization of political decision and wealth distribution versus a reform of the old ways with the hope they might produce different results, is one that goes further than two charters. Both paths have their advocates among the resistance and their interactions are what shapes the political process and positions of Sudanese actors. While the international community [and regional powers](#) continue to disregard the visions of the resistance committees, these visions are the ones discussed in the Sudanese streets. They are the ones distributed during protests and they have an incomparably higher chance of bringing stable peace to the country.

**P.S.**

- The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP). 04/26/2022:  
<https://timep.org/commentary/analysis/the-charters-of-sudans-political-landscape/>
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