



### [Trial of Former Sudanese President Commences in Khartoum](#)

The trial of deposed Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir began in the country's capital city of Khartoum this week. The former leader is currently serving a prison sentence on corruption convictions, and faces additional charges in this case over his role in the coup that brought him to power back in 1989. He and his other co-defendants are accused of plotting the coup which included the suspension of parliament and the arrests of Sudanese political leaders. Following the first day of court proceedings on Tuesday, the trial was adjourned until August 11th. Separately, al-Bashir is also wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on multiple charges of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Sudan's Darfur region. Back in February of this year, authorities in Sudan stated that they were ready to hand him over to the ICC to face those charges as well.

The 76-year-old al-Bashir was overthrown last year by the military following several months of pro-democracy protests and demonstrations calling for the end of his rule. He had been in power for almost 30 years, since June of 1989, after fomenting a coup against the democratically-elected government of then-Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi. Upon the removal of al-Bashir from office in April of 2019, a joint transitional government was formed a few months later in August which was made up of top army officials and civilians. This governing authority is tasked with leading the country under a 39-month power-sharing agreement until a new round of elections can be held.

The ousted former Sudanese president and around 20 of his former officials who stand trial alongside him as well, face charges of undermining the constitution, violating the Armed Forces Act, and plotting the coup in 1989 which toppled the regime of al-Mahdi. Some of the other defendants in the trial include al-Bashir's former vice presidents, Ali Osman Taha and Bakri Hassan Saleh, in addition to ex-ministers and governors. However, the person believed to be the true architect behind the 1989 coup, Hassan al-Turabi, died in 2016 and is therefore not present to face charges.

Moaz Hadra, one of the lawyers leading the push to pursue the case, stated that al-Bashir "has totally refused to cooperate with the commission of enquiry, but will be present at the court." Hadra added that the defendants are charged under crimes including Chapter 96 of the 1983 Penal Code, which carries the death penalty for attempting to destroy the constitutional order. According to Hadra, "This trial will be a warning to anyone who tries to destroy the constitutional system...and will safeguard Sudanese democracy. In this way, we hope to bring an end to the era of putsches in Sudan."

Before any statements or evidence could be presented during the opening of the trial, it was adjourned until August 11th in order to reconvene in a larger venue. This will allow more lawyers and family members of the defendants to attend, since some had complained that they had not been able to get into Tuesday's first session. In addition to already being convicted on corruption charges, facing this trial for his role in the 1989 coup, and being wanted by the ICC for severe human rights violations, al-Bashir is also being investigated over the killing of protesters during his time as president.