



Sudanese Armed Forces Return to Negotiations

Representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have returned to Jeddah to resume negotiations with the Rapid Support Force (RSF). This comes over a month after the SAF pulled out of the talks in May. The SAF's return to the negotiating table should be celebrated, but it is unlikely that this return is indicative of any coming end to the conflict.

In May, the SAF suspended its participation in the talks, citing the RSF's "repeated" violation of humanitarian ceasefires. This return to negotiations is a positive step, though it is unlikely to yield immediate results. The fighting in Sudan continues to intensify, but neither side has been able to win a decisive victory over the other. The SAF has been trying to regain control of areas in the capital city of Khartoum but has so far been unsuccessful. The RSF has been trying to take control of Sudanese military bases but has also failed to do so. This ongoing stalemate will have one of two outcomes. The generals may continue fighting to try and gain some advantage during negotiations, or they will come to the negotiating table to find a peaceful solution before their forces are depleted. Based on past events, the former option is more likely, however, any negotiations are better than none. The RSF has yet to release a comment on their return to the negotiating table.

An attempt was made by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an East African bloc, to restart negotiations in Ethiopia. These negotiations were to be led by Kenyan President William Ruto. The SAF refused to participate, accusing Ruto of showing favoritism towards the RSF.

Both sides have indicated they are open to solving the conflict through negotiations. The leader of the RSF, Mohamad Hamdan Dagalo, indicated in a statement posted on Twitter that dialogue is essential to reaching a political solution.

Prior talks in Jeddah had been mediated by Saudi Arabia and the United States. Both mediators became increasingly frustrated as neither side seemed interested in following through on any of the truces agreed to. After the SAF pulled out of the talks in May, the mediating countries decided to suspend the negotiations in Jeddah. In the past, negotiations between the warring parties have been mixed at best. Every short-term ceasefire has been violated to an extent and each side blames the other. It has been reported by witnesses that each side is guilty of violating past truces. Each side has also been accused of raiding aid shipments, occupying hospitals, and killing civilians.

External powers are using their influence to try and affect the outcome of this conflict. This will make negotiations more difficult. The SAF enjoys the support of Egypt, while the RSF is being supported by Russia and the United Arab Emirates through Libya and the Wagner Group. Pumping in more weapons will only continue to escalate the conflict and allow both sides to fight longer.

So far, there has been no indication of any approaching breakthroughs, but it is still very early in the renewed negotiation efforts. These negotiations bring some hope that a peaceful solution may be possible in the future, but with the current intensity of fighting, it appears unlikely. In the end, the people who will suffer the most will be the Sudanese civilians. Over 3,000 have already been killed with millions more fleeing. Those that have fled across the border into other countries face other hardships as these countries struggle to facilitate the sudden influx of refugees. Despite previous failures, it is important to keep negotiations going, as it is the best chance for a speedy end to the conflict.