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Candles of Change: Nonviolent Resistance in Sudan

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ABSTRACT

Overthrowing dictatorial regimes presents a formidable challenge, as these governments often maintain tight control over state mechanisms and media narratives; this paper explores the concept of nonviolent resistance, particularly within the context of the Sudanese revolution, utilising a qualitative research methodology and gathers qualitative data through interviews and focus groups with key participants in the Sudanese nonviolent movements. These include secondary data from online reports from civil society organisations of members of Resistance Committees and women activists. It also examines the tactics and strategies employed by nonviolent movements, including sit-ins, media campaigns, and the strategic use of the “butterfly effect,” demonstrating how small, coordinated actions can lead to significant societal change. The paper concludes with recommendations to strengthen civil society, enhance the capacity of Resistance Committees, and ensure women’s continued participation in the political process. These measures are essential for preserving the revolution’s achievements and supporting Sudan’s transition towards a more democratic and peaceful future.

INTRODUCTION

In the heart of Sudan, where the echoes of authoritarian rule have long stifled the voices of its people, a powerful and resilient force has emerged—one that wields not weapons but the unyielding will of nonviolent resistance. The Resistance Committees, born from the crucible of Sudan’s ongoing struggle for freedom, have become the vanguard of a movement that challenges the very foundations of dictatorship. These grassroots networks, fueled by the courage of ordinary youths and the unwavering determination of women, have redefined the landscape of political activism in Sudan. Through peaceful protests, strategic civil disobedience, and a steadfast commitment to justice, they are lighting the path toward a future where power lies not in the hands of the few but in the collective strength of the many. This article delves into nonviolent resistance as it unfolds in Sudan, exploring the strategies, challenges, and transformative impact of these remarkable movements.

Overthrowing dictatorial regimes may seem impossible, as they control the levers of the state, monopolise the power over the media, and establish a legal system that bolsters their control. The peaceful political options are limited; one can either accept the regime and engage in electoral and constitutional battles against it or declare a war of nonviolence, a war of peaceful means that cannot be achieved through conventional weapons. Some may perceive the power of nonviolence as embodied in the masses’ resistance to dictatorial regimes through traditional means such as demonstrations and civil disobedience. However, nonviolent action warfare, also known as civil resistance or nonviolent action struggle, is a more expansive concept. It encompasses various peaceful methods, including virtual ones, and

is categorised based on the nature of the action. It is divided into three sections: weapons of indirect action, non-cooperation, and weapons of intervention. The role of nonviolent action resistance in empowering people to challenge oppressive systems and achieve significant social and political change is a unifying force, bringing people together for a common cause.

Nonviolent action resistance, civil resistance or nonviolent struggle is a powerful social and political change method that relies on peaceful means to challenge oppressive systems, demand justice, and achieve transformative goals. Unlike armed conflict, nonviolent resistance emphasises moral and strategic power rather than physical power. Sudan, a country that did not fit into what some Western analysts would see as the conditions necessary for a successful pro-democracy civil resistance movement, proved the power of nonviolent resistance. The regime, consisting of a coalition of ultra-conservative Islamists and right-wing military officers under the leadership of General Omar al-Bashir, had been in power for nearly thirty years. It was widely believed to be too oppressive, too entrenched, and too successful in its divide-and-rule tactics of the large and ethnically heterogeneous nation to be vulnerable to a civil insurrection. Their reactionary limitations on women’s rights had seemingly disempowered half the population. However, with its strategic power, nonviolent resistance proved to be a potent force in challenging this oppressive regime, demonstrating its potential for social and political change (International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, 2021).

The country’s once-vibrant civil society had been decimated under three decades of military rule, and the Sudanese people were seen as too impoverished, uneducated, and isolated to mobilise successfully. Millions

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of the country's most educated and ambitious potential leaders had emigrated. Wealthy Gulf monarchies were helping to prop up the Sudanese military regime. Most of the West had written mainly off Sudan as a hopeless case, with some countries maintaining strict sanctions on Sudan that hurt the people more than the government. Sudanese civil society organisations, particularly labour unions, played a critical role in the successful pro-democracy uprisings against military dictatorships in 1964 and 1985 (International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, 2021). However, with unions and other independent organisations—from human rights groups to 1 Interview, Hashim Mattar, Khartoum North, January 8, 2020. 2 the Rotary Club—suppressed by the regime, organising was highly challenging. The independent business sector was also limited, with the government making it difficult to run a successful company unless it was pro-regime. Opposition political parties were severely restricted in their activities, and the older, more established parties had little credibility or support among younger Sudanese. Despite this, starting in December 2018, Sudanese citizens took to the streets to protest in the face of severe repression. By April 2019, al-Bashir had been overthrown by fellow military officers, who had come under pressure from millions of irrepressible protesters. Protests for change continued despite hundreds of civilian deaths, and by August, the military stepped down to make way for a civilian-led transitional government. (Sudan's Revolution: The Power of Civil Resistance, 2019) “candles” beautifully capture the essence of hope and illumination. Just as candles dispel darkness, peaceful protests serve as beacons of hope, unity, and the collective desire for a brighter future. They flicker against adversity, reminding us that optimism can light our way forward even in challenging times.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review: The Concept of Nonviolent Action

The Theory of Nonviolent Resistance asserts that dictatorial regimes maintain power through the cooperation and consent of various societal institutions and the populace. By strategically withdrawing this consent through nonviolent means—such as protests, strikes, and civil disobedience—oppressive regimes can be effectively challenged and dismantled. This approach emphasises the use of nonviolent action not only as a moral choice but also as a pragmatic strategy for political change.

The concept of nonviolent resistance is deeply rooted in the philosophical traditions of ahimsa (non-harm), as seen in Jainism and Buddhism. However, its modern application as a strategy for political change emerged more prominently in the 19th and 20th centuries. Russian writer Leo Tolstoy's Christian pacifism, particularly as articulated in his work *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894), laid an early foundation for nonviolent resistance by advocating non-resistance to evil and the moral superiority of passive resistance. Gandhi expanded

on Tolstoy's ideas and applied them to the Indian independence movement through his satyagraha (truth force) concept, emphasising nonviolent resistance as a powerful means to challenge injustice. Gandhi's success in mobilising mass movements through nonviolent means has inspired countless other struggles globally, connecting people across borders in a shared vision of change. American political scientist Gene Sharp further developed the strategic aspects of nonviolent resistance. In his work *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973), Sharp detailed 198 methods of nonviolent action, illustrating how strategic nonviolence can undermine oppressive power structures by withdrawing support and cooperation. Nonviolent resistance has been evident in various historical contexts. The American Civil Rights Movement, led by figures like Martin Luther King Jr., employed nonviolent tactics such as sit-ins, marches, and boycotts to challenge racial segregation and discrimination (King, 1963). The fall of the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War also showcased the power of nonviolent resistance, as seen in the peaceful transitions in countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia (Ackerman & Duvall, 2000).

In the Middle East and Africa, nonviolent resistance has played a significant role in challenging autocratic regimes. The Arab Spring, for instance, highlighted the potential of nonviolent action in countries like Tunisia and Egypt, where mass protests led to political change (Howard & Hussain, 2013). In South Africa, movements such as the struggle against apartheid demonstrated the power of nonviolence in achieving political transformation (Bainbridge, 1994).

The Sudanese revolution, culminating in overthrowing Omar al-Bashir's regime in 2019, provides a significant case study in nonviolent resistance. The movement began with protests against economic hardship and corruption, evolving into a broader campaign for democratic change (Khalid, 2019). Key tactics included mass demonstrations, sit-ins, and strategic use of social media to mobilize support (El-Sheikh, 2020).

Critics of nonviolent resistance argue that it may only be effective in some contexts, especially where regimes are highly repressive and resistant to change (Havel, 1994). However, adaptations of nonviolent theory have emerged, focusing on the strategic and pragmatic aspects of resistance rather than strictly moral principles (Kaldor, 2003).

The application of nonviolent resistance in these regions has varied based on local contexts and specific challenges. In some cases, nonviolent movements have faced severe repression, requiring adaptations to maintain effectiveness (Lederach, 1997). Regional studies emphasize contextualizing nonviolent strategies to fit local political and cultural dynamics (Pankhurst, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Definition of Nonviolent Resistance

Nonviolent resistance is a form of social and political action that rejects using violence as a principle to achieve

its goals. It utilises tactics such as protests, strikes, civil disobedience, and other forms of non-cooperation to exert pressure on oppressive regimes and initiate change through peaceful means. The conceptual basis of nonviolent resistance is based on the belief that power structures are maintained through the consent of the governed, and by withdrawing this consent, these structures can be challenged and dismantled.

Prominent scholars such as Gene Sharp and Mahatma Gandhi have significantly contributed to the understanding and strategically using nonviolent resistance. Gene Sharp, often referred to as the “Machiavelli of nonviolence,” defines nonviolent action as “a technique by which people who reject passivity and submission, and who see the struggle as essential, can wage their conflict without violence” (Sharp, 1973). His work categorises nonviolent methods into three broad categories: protest and persuasion, non-cooperation, and nonviolent intervention. These categories encompass a wide range of activities designed to undermine the opponent’s power sources, including strikes, boycotts, and acts of civil disobedience.

Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of satyagraha, meaning “truth force” or “soul force,” is another cornerstone of the theory of nonviolent resistance. Gandhi emphasised that nonviolence (ahimsa) is not merely a strategy but a way of life rooted in the moral imperative to oppose injustice without harming the oppressor. According to Gandhi, nonviolent resistance relies on the power of truth and the willingness to endure suffering rather than inflict it, thereby appealing to the conscience of the oppressor and the broader society (Gandhi, 1951). Gandhi’s philosophy was instrumental in India’s struggle for independence from British colonial rule and inspired countless worldwide movements.

In Sudan, nonviolent resistance has been conceptualised similarly as a strategic and moral imperative in confronting dictatorship. Sudanese resistance movements, particularly during the 2018-2019 revolution, drew on these global traditions of nonviolence, tailoring them to local contexts. The Sudanese approach often involved mass protests, civil disobedience, and strikes, reflecting Sharp’s strategies while embodying Gandhi’s moral philosophy of confronting injustice without violence. These actions played a critical role in challenging the authoritarian regime of Omar al-Bashir, ultimately contributing to his ousting.

The roots of nonviolent resistance can be traced back to various historical and philosophical traditions, each contributing to its development as a coherent strategy for social and political change. The most notable historical figure in the development of nonviolent resistance is Mahatma Gandhi, whose leadership in the Indian independence movement demonstrated the power of nonviolent action on a global stage. Gandhi’s philosophy of satyagraha emerged from his experiences in South Africa, where he led campaigns against racial discrimination, and later in India, where he applied these

principles in the struggle against British colonial rule.

Gandhi’s satyagraha is grounded in the belief that nonviolence is not merely the absence of physical violence but a proactive force for justice. He argued that actual resistance involves a deep commitment to nonviolence, even in the face of aggression, and that this commitment can transform both the oppressor and the oppressed. Gandhi’s strategies included non-cooperation with the colonial authorities, such as boycotts of British goods, refusal to pay taxes, and nonviolent protests, all designed to erode the legitimacy and economic power of the colonial regime (Gandhi, 1951).

Gene Sharp expanded on these ideas by systematically analysing nonviolent resistance as a strategic tool. Sharp’s seminal work, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973), outlined 198 methods of nonviolent action, categorising them into protest and persuasion, non-cooperation, and intervention. Sharp’s work demonstrated that nonviolent resistance could be a highly organised and effective means of challenging oppressive regimes. His theories have been applied in various contexts, including the civil rights movement in the United States, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, and the pro-democracy movements in Eastern Europe during the late 20th century.

In the Sudanese context, the principles of nonviolent resistance have been instrumental in shaping the strategies of opposition movements. The 2018-2019 Sudanese revolution, which led to the ousting of Omar al-Bashir, drew heavily on the theoretical foundations of Gandhi and Sharp. Sudanese activists and civil society organisations utilised nonviolent tactics such as mass demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes to challenge the regime. Resistance committees often coordinated these actions and were crucial in maintaining the revolution’s momentum.

The influence of these nonviolent traditions in Sudan is evident in the strategic approach adopted by the resistance committees. These committees understood the power dynamics, using nonviolent methods to undermine the regime’s authority and legitimacy. The Sudanese experience demonstrates the practical application of nonviolent resistance theories in a contemporary context, highlighting the adaptability and effectiveness of these strategies in confronting entrenched power.

The Challenges of the Resistance Committee

The challenges facing the revolution and popular resistance before the war differ entirely from what the revolution faced after the war; with various data and facts, the challenges differ. Before the war, such as the transformation of Mayadeen from peaceful action to violent action, the challenges went in the aspects of challenges in the different political blocs, the lack of unity of civil forces and the fragmentation that affected them as a result of the difference in ideologies and haste in sharing power, as well as the lack of good preparation for the resistance youth and lack of experience and expertise. In addition, the regime’s security crackdown

made it challenging to conduct activities and meetings, and the spectre of arrests loomed over the minds of the resisters. The most critical challenge that can be treated as an opportunity from another perspective is the economic situation of active partners and targeted youth groups. There is also the challenge of community leadership and the social system that is submissive to community administrations.

These departments were working and intersecting their interests directly with the former regime and feeding its security control by obeying and shackling the movement of society with their loyal voices within societies that were not sufficiently educated or educated. Challenging societal customs and traditions This challenge is limited to the tactics of the security services in threatening communities with the rape of girls, so families tend to prevent young women, in particular, from participating in demonstrations

At the onset of the uprising, a significant shift occurred with the emergence of a teenager as a pivotal figure in the revolutionary work. His influence became the driving force, and he launched demonstrations with his dynamic voice. The political leadership, however, lacks the unwavering commitment to honouring the alliances they have formed. They often grapple with the ever-changing reality and disregard the covenants they have signed.

Political discussions have been ongoing since the October 2021 coup, involving the mainstream FFC-Central Council, some opposition parties, and the transitional military council. These discussions have created a draft transitional constitutional document and a political framework agreement. It was also announced that a civilian-led cabinet would be appointed in the first half of April 2023, marking a significant step towards the country's return to democracy. However, opinions on these political developments remain divided, with members of resistance committees split on whether to accept or reject the political declaration. These divisions are not only present across resistance committees but also within them. Some members believe accepting these political developments and arrangements is the only way to gain legitimacy and address their concerns. In contrast, others disagree with the transitional military council, arguing that change can only occur if the political agreement fosters productive dialogue (International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. (2021).

However, some members have denounced the agreement and continue to advocate for a non-negotiation stance. Their opposition to the political settlement is rooted in the belief that the military could co-opt negotiations, just as it had been in the run-up to the October 2021 coup. This fear is grounded in the belief that the civilian opposition is repeating the same mistakes as in 2019 and that these negotiations could lead to further military control during Sudan's forthcoming transitional period. Regardless, there is a strong recognition of the situation's complexity and the challenges ahead across the three viewpoints. There is an underlying worry that the proposed two-year

transitional period may not be enough to address the root causes of instability in Sudan. It is widely acknowledged that it will take significantly longer to uproot remnants of the previous regime and address people's economic, political, social, and conflict-related concerns throughout the country.

In summary, interviews revealed that the resistance committees in Sudan are focused on achieving long-term progress in the country's economic, political, and social aspects rather than short-term political gains. Their concerns include addressing the lack of public services and economic opportunities, as well as the cycles of marginalisation and violence affecting millions living in Sudan's peripheries. Despite differences, the resistance committees have collaborated to mobilise, negotiate, and find common ground. They have also used internet platforms like Facebook Live and Twitter to discuss political issues and the future of Sudan. (Civic Space in Sudan, 2013-2018), Also, some resistance committees mobilised people to protest against the transitional military government. There is a desire amongst the committees to also work on supporting democratic elections in the future through educational programs and advocacy. Various logistical, geographic, and economic challenges have frequently impacted the ambitions and objectives of resistance committees.

Firstly, it was emphasised that the country's current financial situation continued to impact resistance committees' work. Resistance committees are primarily self-funded and depend on donations from their neighbourhoods and members to function. Given that the economic situation has affected people's incomes, resistance committees are frequently unable to fulfil their initiatives, travel for meetings and protests, or support their communities. This situation grew increasingly worse following the October 2021 coup due to the deterioration of the country's security situation, which has made it difficult for many members, particularly women, to travel far distances.

Secondly, given that Khartoum is the political capital and the wealthiest part of the country, resistance committees based in Greater Khartoum are more likely to have easier access to political opportunities and platforms than those in the peripheries, who finances may limit the consequences of conflict, or weak public infrastructure. As a result, resistance committees outside of Khartoum often feel that their priorities and visions for Sudan's future should be included in the political dialogue. Resistance Committees and Sudan, to solve this, have suggested that resistance committees outside of Khartoum can elect individuals based in Khartoum to represent them.

Lastly, resistance committees have pointed to their internal knowledge gaps and capacity-building deficiencies, impacting their ability to contribute meaningfully to political negotiations. In particular, there is a desire to improve committee members' team building, diplomacy, advocacy, and writing skills nationwide. Despite these challenges, resistance committees remain committed

to enacting and supporting long-term change in Sudan. Finally, on an external level, before April 2023, resistance committees argued that they could organise and participate in political change more effectively if there was more transparency from political elites and international stakeholders.

Since the October 2021 coup, the committees have noted that global and national actors have become less transparent in their dealings with the military junta. As a result, this has left the resistance committees feeling excluded from the political dialogue. Resistance committees believe that transparency from political actors is essential because it will provide reassurances that non-democratic forces, specifically those from the former NCP regime, will not be involved in the new democratic government. Lack of transparency also increases suspicion between the resistance committees and other political and civilian forces. There is a strong belief that transparent approaches to political dealings, such as through public speeches or TV broadcasts, will lead to more inclusive politics and help political forces gain more support and political buy-in. Notably, the young people part of resistance committees are keen to speak and negotiate with political actors but require platforms and technical and logistical support to ensure that their voices are heard. (Sowing the Seeds of Nonviolent Action in Sudan, 2022)

This adaptation reflects the resilience of nonviolent strategies and the need for flexibility in the face of evolving challenges.

Impact and Future Directions

The Sudanese revolution demonstrated the potential of nonviolent resistance in achieving political change despite the complex and repressive environment. The ongoing challenge is sustaining and building upon the gains achieved through nonviolence, addressing immediate and long-term needs for democratic consolidation and social justice (Omer, 2021).

Sudan has a long history of nonviolent resistance, particularly against oppressive military regimes. The most recent and notable example is the Sudanese Revolution of 2018-2019, where sustained nonviolent actions led to overthrowing long-time dictator Omar al-Bashir.

The Role of Sudanese Women in the Sudan Revolution

Women, particularly those organised in groups like the Kandaka (a symbol of female leadership in the resistance), played a crucial role in the revolution, leading protests and civil disobedience campaigns. Youth-led Resistance Committees organised and coordinated many nonviolent actions mobilising large population segments.

Sudanese women have a history of political activism dating back to the pre-independence era. After independence, Sudanese women fought to address post-independence challenges, including underdevelopment, lack of democracy, marginalisation, poverty and inequality. Their public presence as protesters in the Sudanese political

landscape varies but continues to rise, notably during Omar al-Bashir's dictatorship and the current regime. Women activists across all ages in Sudan have been active actors in the toppling of the Bashir regime. This regime lasted 30 years, followed by a transitional period where a hybrid government (civilian, militia and military) was formed to rule the country.

On October 25 2021, the military seized power through a coup, and the political landscape in Sudan has changed to a dictatorship regime — a clear departure from the December revolution and its slogan: freedom, peace and justice. Despite this, women have continued to show bravery and courage since the start of the revolution. Their revolutionary actions include leading street protests, blocking roads, building barricades, and chanting against racism for a peaceful and democratic Sudan. They also actively participated in the sit-in at different sites, including at the military headquarters, where a massacre was committed by the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on June 3 2019. The security services, RSF, police and the military, have responded brutally to this rising women's activism by firing live ammunition and tear gas, including unknown and expired tear gas, as well as arresting, kidnapping and sexually assaulting women protesters, including raping protesters, during the sit-in at the military headquarters and other cities as well as in front of the presidential palace.

Many female detainees were severely treated, and some experienced sexual assault while in detention. A few pregnant women had miscarriages while in detention, and no medical assistance was provided for them. Others were murdered during peaceful street protests. An example is Sit Alnefor, a female nurse in her twenties who was targeted and shot during a street protest. The number of male and female martyrs since the October 2021 coup stands at more than 90, and some of the injured are currently in critical condition, while unknown numbers of protesters have been kidnapped. In remote areas, particularly the Darfur region, female activists have been subject to continuous attacks and abuse by the military and militia.

Women have also resisted the military regime using innovative means, including the arts, songs, and poetry. Young female activists have used social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to publicize their revolutionary actions and recruit more activists. They have challenged negative perceptions about them and continued to prove their activism and bravery for democratic change. Women actively participate in the resistance committees (legan almogawama) in their neighbourhoods, where local plans for street protests and logistics are negotiated and distributed to other activists. (Sowing the Seeds of Nonviolent Action in Sudan, 2022)

They also organise lobbying and networking events with civil society groups and political figures. Female activists have restored trade unions, which were paralysed by the former regime. They have also taken a leading role in campaigns to establish democratic trade unions based on

democratic trade union laws instead of the undemocratic laws developed by the Bashir regime and adopted by the current coup advocates. The unprecedented role of women in the December Revolution has prompted some revolutionaries, activists and human rights defenders to call it a “women’s revolution” because it is a revolution for women’s emancipation, freedom, equality, equity and peace. It is a revolution for a civilian and democratic regime where women have made tremendous sacrifices. The revolution has female icons, including Tayseer Mohamed Ahmed, who lost her eye due to police brutality. The bravery of Sudanese women and their innovative means of activism tend to be ignored by the conventional media, which rely on the so-called strategic experts who tend to give a fabricated analysis that deliberately ignores the bravery of the Sudanese women and their peaceful revolutionary actions. In this respect, social media served as a helpful alternative that women (as well as youth activists) have relied on to let the world know about their revolution and their struggle for freedom, peace, and justice. (Global fund for women, 2019)

The road to freedom, peace and justice is long and thorny. Still, Sudanese women are determined to continue making history and to topple the current dictatorial regime once again and replace it with a civilian and democratic government. Sudanese Women raised their voices against racism and advocated for a peaceful and democratic Sudan. They chanted slogans that resonated with the entire nation. These female activists hoped to overturn discriminatory laws and promote gender equality. Their contributions were instrumental in shaping Sudan’s path toward justice and freedom.

Tactics and Strategies

Nonviolent Action Tactics Used in Sudan Include Peaceful Protests

Peaceful gatherings to express disapproval and demand change Since 2013 through youth, professional, and political bodies until The Sudanese Revolution or the December 19 Revolution or the Glorious December Revolution is a series of Sudanese protests that broke out on December 19, 2018, in some Sudanese cities due to the high prices, high cost of living and the deterioration of the country at all levels at the invitation of the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) and other regime-resistant forces.

The protests began in response to the deteriorating economic conditions, the high cost of living, rampant government corruption, and the ongoing war in the regions in the southern cities of Rosairees and Sennar in the centre of the country. They intensified in the eastern cities of Port Sudan, Atbara in the north, and Gedaref in the east. The next day, December 20, they spread to other cities, including the capital, Khartoum, before renewing on Friday and Saturday, especially in Khartoum, Omdurman, and El Abyad in North Kordofan state. These peaceful protests witnessed a violent response by the authorities, who used various weapons to disperse

the protesters, including tear gas and rubber bullets, and some cities even witnessed the explicit use of live bullets by the Sudanese security forces, causing dozens of deaths and injuries among the protesters.

Sit-Ins

Long and steady protests in specific locations to show disapproval and pressure the authorities. Thousands of protesters entered the General Command on January 6, 2019 This was a significant and strategic event with the saying that the formula here is a year to topple the regime. Strategic follow-up after the fall of the first ousted Omar Hassan al-Bashir until the fall of the second ousted Ibn Auf11 February 2019 Stop working as a way to increase pressure on the government.2019 Professional and professional bodies, Teachers, Journalists, Doctors, Railroad workers

Creative forms of Expression

Using poetry, dance, and visual art to express demands. Before the projection of The Balloons Movement in Bari 2018/12, It was expressive and a strong message of evacuation, announcing a procession tomorrow, on the 13th, at one o’clock in the afternoon, which made the soldiers visit them. After the siege of Bari, they wondered how people could come out at one time and in one hour. Théâtre is in the sit-in square, where revolutionary artists, dramatists, and visual artists participate. The Bahari procession was a demonstration of renewing the tools of resistance.

In the hour of the coalescence of the Omdurman procession with Bahri, creativity began with candlelight on 12/13/2019 and reflected the creative beauty of peaceful resistance. These tactics greatly influenced change in Sudan through A campaign of protest vigils carried out by resistant youth to hold accountable all those who were killed by bullets or tortured in their detention. This campaign was carried out in all government institutions and local processions, most notably the headquarters of the Representative of the World Article 130, the noose, but not the gallows.

They used pictures and drawings expressing Article 130 on December 19, 2020. The goals were to attract international attention and increase the international community’s pressure on the government, Unite the community, increase its awareness of essential issues, Demonstrate the strength and unity of demands, and increase the purchase of demands by the government. These tactics contributed to overthrowing an unconstitutional regime in 2019, leading to significant political change in Sudan.

The Role of Civil Society Organizations and Political Parties During Sudan’s Transitional Government Period

During Sudan’s transitional government period, civil society organizations (CSOs) and political parties played crucial roles in advocating for democratic reforms, ensuring government accountability, and mobilizing

citizens for civic engagement. This study explores these actors' functions, challenges, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses in shaping the transition to democracy.

Role of Democratic Society and Political Parties Advocacy for Democratic Reforms

Civil society and political parties were pivotal in pushing for democratic reforms during the transition. They worked to ensure that the government remained transparent and accountable, constantly advocating for the protection and expansion of civil liberties and democratic norms.

Shaping Public Opinion and Mobilizing Citizens

These entities were instrumental in shaping public discourse and mobilizing citizens to participate actively in the democratic process. Through public campaigns, grassroots organizing, and civic education, they fostered a culture of civic engagement critical for a successful transition.

Political Participation and Policymaking

Political parties contribute directly to the political process by participating in policy debates, drafting legislation, and representing diverse societal interests. Their involvement was crucial for ensuring the transitional government reflected the people's will and worked towards democratic consolidation.

Challenges Faced by Democratic Actors

Weak Institutional Capacity and Lack of Trust

One of the primary challenges faced by democratic actors was the weak institutional capacity and the pervasive lack of trust in government institutions. These issues often needed to improve the effectiveness of both CSOs and political parties in achieving their goals.

Political Polarization and Its Impact on the Transition Process

Political polarization significantly affected the transitional period, leading to intense competition among various factions. This not only hindered consensus-building efforts but also slowed down the transition process. The resulting conflicts posed a severe threat to the continuity of democratic progress.

Limited Resources and External Interventions

Democratic actors also faced challenges related to limited resources, which constrained their activities and effectiveness. Additionally, external interventions and the historical legacy of divisions within Sudanese society further complicated efforts to build a stable democratic system.

Opportunities for Democratic Actors

Pressing for Meaningful Reforms

Despite the challenges, the transitional period allowed democratic actors to push for significant reforms. This was a chance to address long-standing governance, human rights, and social justice issues.

The Crucial Role of International Support

The increased global focus on Sudan's transition brought a surge in international support. This support played a pivotal role in bolstering local initiatives aimed at promoting democracy and enhancing the country's stability.

Influence of Civil Society Organizations and Grassroots Movements

Civil society organizations and grassroots movements had the opportunity to influence policy decisions and promote inclusive governance. Their advocacy efforts ensured that the transition process was more participatory and reflective of the broader population's needs.

Strengths of Democratic Actors

Diversity of Civil Society Groups

The diverse range of organizations brought multiple perspectives and experiences to the democratic transition debate. Their contributions enriched the process and ensured a more comprehensive approach to reform, which is worthy of appreciation.

Political Parties as Representatives of Citizen Interests

Political parties play a vital role in representing the interests of various segments of society. Their efforts in promoting political participation and building coalitions were essential for advancing reform agendas and providing reassurance about the democratic process in Sudan.

Commitment to the Transition Process

Key stakeholders' commitment to the transition process was a significant strength. This commitment reflected a collective willingness to overcome challenges and work towards establishing a more inclusive democracy in Sudan.

Weaknesses of Democratic Actors

Division Within Civil Society and Political Parties

Internal divisions within civil society organizations and political parties sometimes undermine unity and coordination, making it challenging to advocate effectively for democratic change.

Limited Resources and Capacity Constraints

These actors' limited resources and capacity constraints often hinder their ability to influence policy outcomes and implement their initiatives effectively.

Inadequate Legal Frameworks and Authoritarian Legacies

Insufficient legal frameworks and lingering authoritarian legacies posed significant obstacles to democratization. These issues often hampered democratic actors' ability to create lasting institutional changes.

The SPA initially focused on wage-related issues but became a significant revolutionary force by leading the December 2018 movement. Despite not formally

declaring leadership, the SPA played a crucial role in uniting various factions against the former regime. Following the revolution, the SPA faced dilemmas regarding participation in power and maintaining its original goals. The tension between political involvement and advocacy for labour rights reflected broader challenges in balancing revolutionary ideals with practical governance demands. The SPA's experience highlighted the transitional period's complex relationship between professional organizations and political forces. Its legacy remains a critical reference point for understanding the dynamics of civil society and political activism in Sudan. Civil society organizations, political parties, and grassroots movements like the Resistance Committees and the Sudanese Professionals Association played pivotal roles in Sudan's transitional period. While they faced significant challenges, including internal divisions, resource constraints, and external pressures, their efforts were instrumental in advancing democratic reforms and promoting civic engagement. The future of Sudan's democracy depends on these actors' continued commitment and collaboration in addressing ongoing challenges and seizing opportunities for meaningful reform.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the dynamics of nonviolent resistance against dictatorial regimes, explicitly emphasizing the Sudanese revolutions. The methodology is structured around several key components. First, the case study analysis explores instances of nonviolent action during the Sudanese revolutions. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how these strategies have been used to challenge and ultimately disrupt authoritarian regimes. Second, the study utilizes thematic analysis to identify and explore crucial themes related to nonviolent resistance. These themes include the pivotal role of women in the movement, the unique challenges faced by Resistance Committees, and the broader strategic implications of nonviolent action. This analysis helps reveal patterns and strategies critical to nonviolent movements' success or failure. Third, the research includes a document review and media analysis. This involves examining various documents, such as reports from civil society organizations, government records, and media coverage, to provide context and evidence on the strategies employed by both the resistance and the regime. Fourth, the study gathers qualitative data through interviews and focus groups with key participants in the Sudanese nonviolent movements. These include members of Resistance Committees and women activists, offering valuable firsthand insights into their experiences, motivations, and challenges. Finally, the study conducts a comparative analysis with other global nonviolent movements. This comparison helps contextualize the findings from Sudan by identifying common strategies

and challenges across different contexts, providing a broader perspective on the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance in overthrowing dictatorial regimes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Salmiya Group in Promoting Nonviolent Resistance in Sudan

The Salmiya group, a prominent youth initiative in Sudan, is critical in training resistance committees and human rights activists in nonviolent strategies. This study examines the group's contributions to nonviolent resistance in Sudan, focusing on its training programs, strategic approaches, and the challenges faced, particularly in light of the April 15 war and subsequent displacement.

Training and Capacity Building

The Salmiya group is dedicated to promoting a culture of nonviolent resistance in Sudanese society. It provides specialized training to resistance committees and human rights activists, equipping them with practical tactics and strategies to confront oppressive regimes. The group organizes workshops and training courses in Khartoum, Omdurman, and Bahri, covering a range of topics essential for nonviolent action:

Nonviolence Strategies

Participants are trained in nonviolent tactics, including peaceful sit-ins, demonstrations, and media campaigns. These strategies are designed to enable effective resistance in the face of repression.

Human Rights Education

The group promotes awareness of human rights and underscores the importance of protecting these rights within the context of nonviolent resistance.

The Butterfly Effect

The "butterfly effect" illustrates how small actions can lead to significant societal changes, motivating activists to understand the broader impact of their efforts.

Strategic Approaches and Adaptations

Development of Local Resistance Committees

The Salmiya group has trained numerous Khartoum state resistance committees to establish field offices responsible for planning and organizing resistance activities. This approach diversifies the committees' tools and tactics and enhances their capacity to challenge the regime effectively.

Addressing Community Gaps

The group identified gaps between the resistance movement and local communities, recognizing the importance of grassroots support for the movement's strength. Activities were conducted to engage and integrate the broader public into the resistance.

Adaptation Post-April 15 War

The outbreak of the April 15 war led to significant displacement, severing the connection between resistance movements and local communities. To mitigate this loss of strength, the Salmiya Group conducted online workshops to break the social siege. These workshops focused on peacebuilding, negotiation, conflict resolution, and psychological support, helping displaced activists maintain their engagement with the resistance.

Collaboration and Support

The Salmiya Group partnered with Pax for Peace, an international organization promoting peace and human rights. This collaboration provided additional resources, logistical support, and access to global experts in nonviolence. The partnership enhanced the effectiveness of training programs and strengthened the capacity of resistance committees to organize nonviolent events and communicate with the public.

Impact and Outcomes

Network Building

The training programs facilitated the development of a network of human rights activists dedicated to promoting nonviolent resistance. This network plays a crucial role in advancing the culture of nonviolence in Sudan.

Promotion of Nonviolent Resistance

The Salmiya group has promoted nonviolent resistance as a strategic option for confronting dictatorial regimes through its training and awareness-raising initiatives. These initiatives highlight the importance of collective action and the potential for young people to drive positive change.

The Salmiya group's comprehensive training and capacity-building approach has significantly promoted nonviolent resistance in Sudan. The group has empowered resistance committees and human rights activists by addressing nonviolence's tactical and strategic aspects, adapting to challenges such as displacement, and leveraging international support. Its work exemplifies the potential of nonviolent resistance to foster social and political change and advance a more just and peaceful future in Sudan.

CONCLUSION

This article highlights the power of nonviolent resistance, based on the Theory of Change (ToC), in challenging dictatorial regimes. Examining Sudan's revolutions shows how nonviolent action can effectively undermine entrenched power, mobilise mass participation, and gain moral legitimacy. Women's vital roles in these movements emphasise the importance of inclusivity and diversity. Despite the repression risks, Sudan demonstrates that well-organized nonviolent resistance can achieve significant political change without destroying armed conflict.

The article also addresses the limitations of nonviolent resistance, especially in repressive environments, stressing the need for innovation, international support, and post-revolution planning. Sudan's experience offers important lessons for global movements, proving that nonviolent action can dismantle authoritarian regimes and pave the way for democracy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sudan's civil and political forces, educational institutions, and civil society should incorporate nonviolent resistance into civic education, focusing on the Theory of Change (ToC) and practical skills like organising and mobilising. Educating youth on nonviolence lays a foundation for future movements and instils hope for a more peaceful future. International organisations should support nonviolent activists by building networks and providing legal aid, psychological support, and safe spaces. This strengthens resistance efforts and reduces the risk of fragmentation under repressive regimes.

Women's leadership is crucial in nonviolent movements, and platforms should be created to promote their roles in decision-making and strategy development. Diversifying tactics, such as digital activism and economic boycotts, help movements adapt to changing repressive strategies while allowing broader participation. However, it's the strengthening of international solidarity through global networks and advocacy that truly ensures external support, fostering a sense of connection and unity among nonviolent activists. This support can pressure regimes and legitimise nonviolent efforts, making us all feel part of a global movement for change.

Human rights organisations play a crucial role in documenting violations against activists. This not only holds the regime accountable but also garners international support, providing a sense of reassurance and support. Finally, nonviolent movements must plan for post-revolution governance, ensuring the transition leads to sustainable democracy and prevents a return to authoritarianism. Clear strategies for management and reform are essential to achieving the movement's long-term goals.

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