



## Crisis in Sudan

**For Prelims:** Location of Sudan and its neighbours.

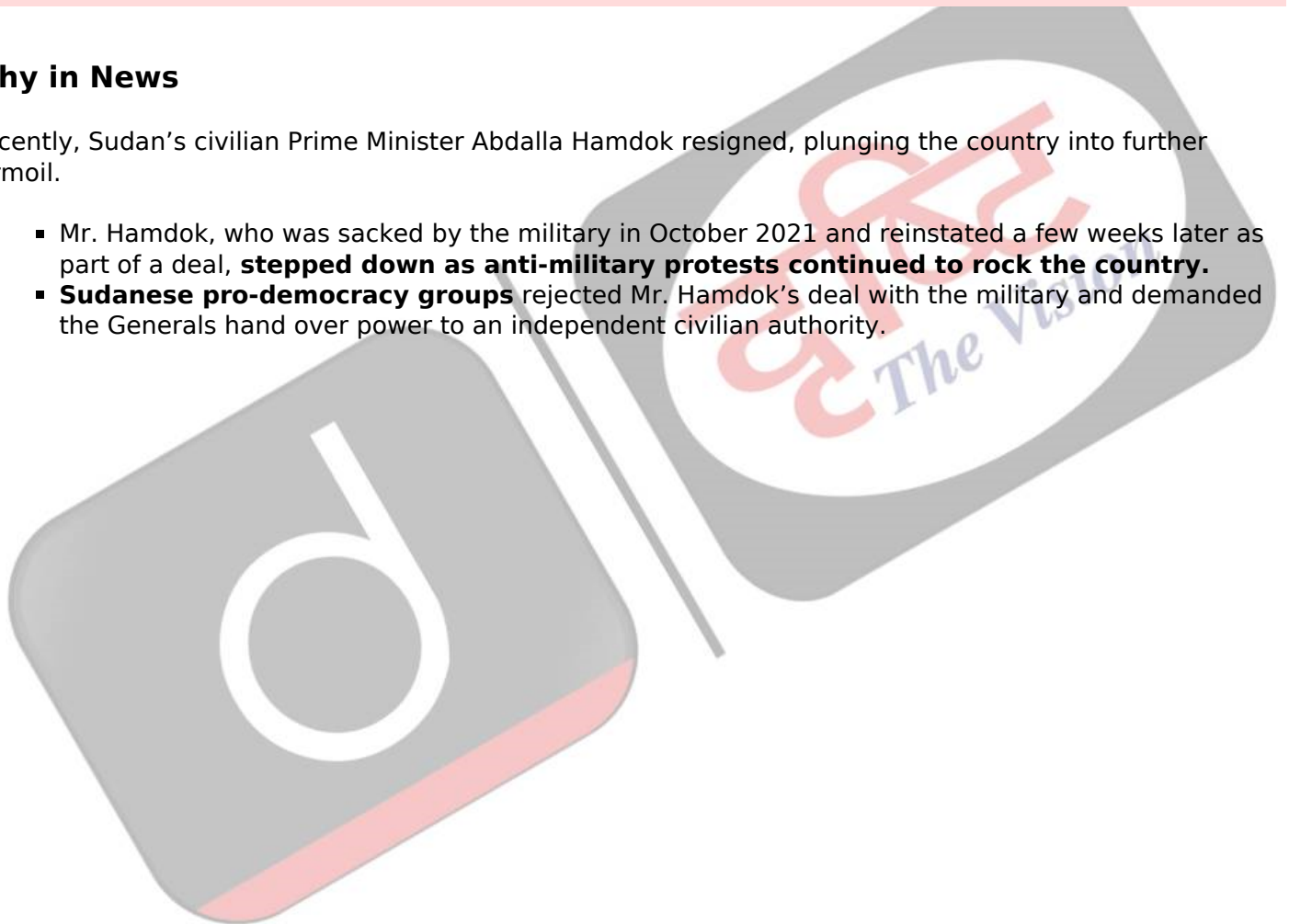
**For Mains:** Crisis in Sudan, reasons for it and way forward, History of upheavals in Sudan.

### Why in News

Recently, Sudan's civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigned, plunging the country into further turmoil.

- Mr. Hamdok, who was sacked by the military in October 2021 and reinstated a few weeks later as part of a deal, **stepped down as anti-military protests continued to rock the country.**
- **Sudanese pro-democracy groups** rejected Mr. Hamdok's deal with the military and demanded the Generals hand over power to an independent civilian authority.

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## Key Points

### ▪ Unstable Sudan:

- Sudan is at a familiar deadlock, subject to the whims of a brutal military regime after a coup. On a continent with a bad record in this respect, Sudan is in a class of its own, with **six coups and 10 failed attempts since independence in 1956.**
- Since independence **Sudan has been governed, with only occasional breaks, by an Arab elite in Sudan,** bent on plundering the country's considerable wealth at the expense of its people.
- Their rule, **exercised through the army,** has been cloaked in the language of Islam; it is **really a kleptocracy.**
  - **Kleptocracy** is a government whose corrupt leaders use political power to appropriate the wealth of their nation, typically by embezzlement or misappropriation of government funds at the expense of the wider population.
- The consequence is a country beset by wars and conflict between the centre and the immiserated peripheries. **The army and its allied militias, notably the Rapid Support Forces, have used their power to carve out swathes of the economy for themselves,** well beyond defence industries.

- Civilian rule, bringing transparency, as well as democracy, would threaten those financial interests.
  - The **victims of decades of misrule are ordinary Sudanese**. Facing [inflation](#) rates of over 100%, almost a quarter of the population can barely feed themselves and millions live in refugee camps.
  - By contrast, the **elites seem to get by**. Therefore the elites will fight to preserve the status quo.
- **Current Crisis:**
  - The churn has accelerated since [General Omar al-Bashir, indicted for genocide, was toppled by a popular revolution in April 2019](#).
  - Subsequently, the [Sovereignty Council](#), an **11-member body comprising military and civilian leaders** that replaced the military-led transition council, appointed Mr. Hamdok as Prime Minister.
  - During the Sovereignty Council's rule, **Sudan entered into a peace deal with rebel groups, banned female genital mutilation, made [peace with Israel](#)** and reached out to international powers for economic assistance.
  - During this period, **the U. took the country off the list of [state sponsors of terrorism](#)**. Reforms at home and international recognition suggested that Sudan was on a slow but steady transition into full democracy.
  - The army struck back almost immediately, killing scores of people. An uneasy **alliance of generals and technocrats, headed by Mr Hamdok, governed from August 2019 up to the coup October 2021**.
    - That so-called transitional government was supposed to pave the way to elections. **They now look further off than ever.**
  - Since the recent coup (2021) the protestors have been protesting against the coup and for a democratic government.
- **Russia and China Angle:**
  - **Russia's Supplies:**
    - An added complication is Russia's support for the generals. Wagner, a mercenary outfit acting in the interests of Russia, has **supplied training for militias and other goodies**.
    - Russia has also shielded Sudan at the [United Nations](#) (UN), playing its usual spoiler role against the West.
  - **China's Investments:**
    - China's **extensive investments** in Sudan have also afforded army protection; China **favours stability over good governance**.

## Way Forward

- The military is now in a difficult position. Given that the **civil-military relationship is already at a breaking point**.
  - The UN estimates that at least a third of the country's 43 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2022. What **Sudan wants is a stable, responsive government that can urgently address the myriad problems the country faces**.
  - Ultimately, the price of a successful transition to democracy, which will have to include structural economic reforms, will likely entail some distasteful compromises on issues such as accountability and retention of Bashir-era assets.
- There should be a **meaningful dialogue" between all Sudanese parties to "reach an inclusive, peaceful and lasting solution**.
- But **a genuine transition should also prevent the military from continuing to act as the country's ultimate authority**, able to reset timetables and remove governing officials at will.

[Source: TH](#)

