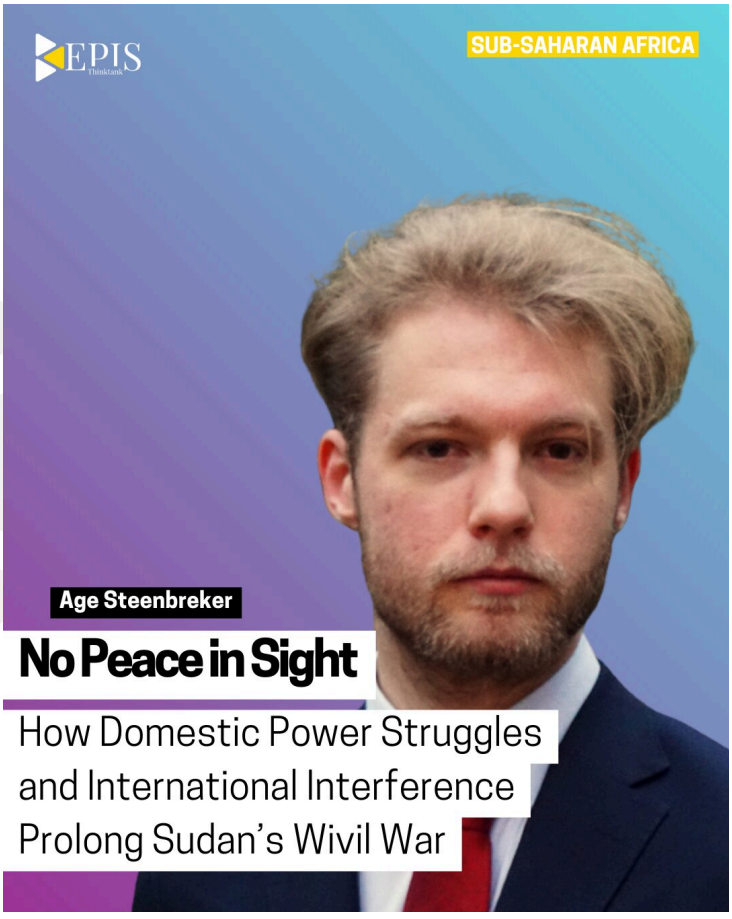
No Peace in Sight

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3 Main Points

The School for ThinkTankers 2025, organized by 'On Think Tanks,' was a five-day workshop designed to equip young professionals with skills for think tank leadership. The program covered governance, fundraising, policy influence, and communications, with insights from experts. Key lessons included the importance of adaptability, strategic foresight, and informal exchanges in strengthening think tank impact, emphasizing collaboration and strategies for future-proofing organizations.

About the Author

Age Steenbreker is pursuing a B.A. in International Relations & Organizations at Leiden University (NL). His research focuses on foreign policy, security, and strategic studies. Currently, he is a member of the Jubilee Task Force at the JASON Institute and Head of Logistics & IT at TEDxLeidenUniversity.

When Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir was removed from power in 2019, Sudanese generals al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo received powerful positions within the Sudanese government, leading to a coup d'etat in 2021. Ultimately, a power struggle between Al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (widely known as Hemedti) could not be prevented, and war broke out in 2023. Al-Burhan's government forces were quickly attacked by a large offensive led by Hemedti's Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Al-Burhan came under siege in the Sudanese capital city of Khartoum until he escaped towards Port Sudan in August 2023. Since then, Al-Burhan's government forces (SAF) have been steadily taking back the initiative in the large civil war that has engulfed the country. Both generals are motivated to continue fighting to protect their extensive clientelist networks. Their amalgamation of business interests, taxation privileges, and public goods provisions keep Al-Burhan and Hemedti powerful and secure in their positions. If these systems collapse, both leaders' personal security would be at risk, making serious peace negotiations unlikely.

The conflict rapidly drew international involvement, with various actors intervening covertly and overtly. For example, the recent SAF successes on the battlefield could be attributed to the weakening of foreign military aid provided by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the RSF after the USA imposed sanctions on the UAE earlier this year. The UAE took the stage as the RSF's primary backer to enhance its position in the Horn of Africa and possibly gain a port on the Red Sea. Egypt, the primary backer of the Sudanese government army, sees Sudanese stability as crucial for securing its southern border and maintaining influence over its neighbour. While these two actors are the most prominent in their interference in Sudan, several other actors also hold stakes there. Qatar and Türkiye sympathise with the government army, and Saudi Arabia has ties to both belligerent parties because it fears losing influence to the UAE. Lastly, a myriad of actors like Russia, Iran, Ukraine, the EU, the UK, and the USA have occasionally intervened in Sudan with motivations like access to Port Sudan, migration management, curtailing rival influence, and humanitarian sanctioning.

Recently, the balance of power in the conflict seems to be shifting in favour of the government's SAF. After the RSF took the initiative and came very close to capturing the capital in 2023, the SAF has incrementally chipped away at the RSF. The current focal point is the control over Khartoum, which has been fiercely contested since the start of hostilities. If the SAF can reclaim the capital of Sudan, this will boost Al-Burhan's legitimacy

and be a significant blow to the RSF. However, it is unlikely that this tactical victory can be turned into a strategic defeat for the RSF. With peace talks failing, both sides digging in, and no clear military solution, Sudan's civil war is set to persist, prolonging instability and suffering.

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