

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

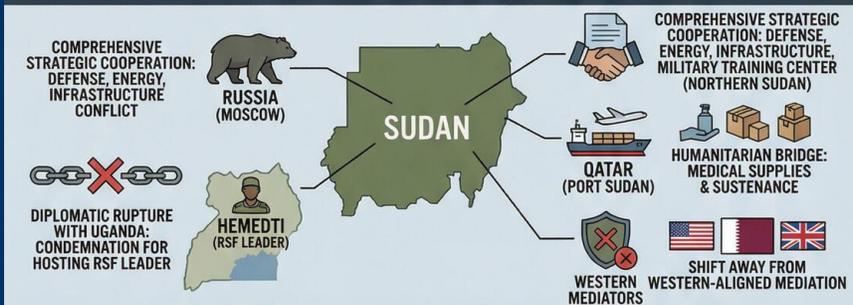
FEBRUARY 23, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

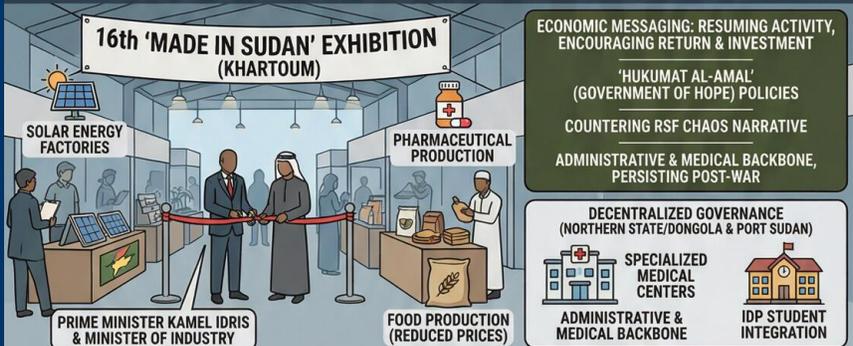
REPORT SUMMARY: SUDAN SHIFTS TOWARD A RUSSIA-ALIGNED SECURITY ARCHITECTURE WHILE LEVERAGING INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITIONS TO PROJECT INTERNAL STABILIZATION AMID ONGOING CONFLICT.

SUDAN'S STRATEGIC SHIFT & THE BATTLE FOR NORMALIZATION

GEOPOLITICAL PIVOT & NEW ALLIANCES



PROJECTING STABILITY: INDUSTRY & 'NORMALIZATION' NARRATIVE



CONFLICT REALITY: TECH-HEAVY WAR & TARGETING



STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & IMPLICATIONS



OVERALL TREND: SUDAN IS ON A TRAJECTORY TOWARD A DECENTRALIZED, MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL STATE, ACTIVELY RECONFIGURING ITS ALLIANCES AWAY FROM THE WEST AND TOWARDS A RUSSIA-LED BLOC, WHILE USING ECONOMIC DISPLAYS TO MASK ONGOING, TECH-DRIVEN WARFARE.

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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On February 23, 2026, the Sudanese government intensified its efforts to project an image of "normalization" and state resilience through the 16th "Made in Sudan" exhibition in Khartoum, while simultaneously navigating a deepening diplomatic crisis and a significant geopolitical pivot. Prime Minister Dr. Kamel Idris used the exhibition to signal that [Khartoum is returning to activity](#), despite the scars of the "War of Dignity." This economic messaging is intended to encourage the return of displaced citizens and foreign investment into "safe" pockets of the country. However, the reality of the conflict remains stark, with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reportedly targeting critical infrastructure, including the University of Kordofan, and internal tribal fractures deepening as the RSF moves against the strongholds of rival militia leaders like Musa Hilal.

Strategically, Sudan is moving decisively away from Western-aligned regional mediators toward a robust partnership with Russia. The announcement of a [comprehensive strategic cooperation agreement](#) with Moscow, including the establishment of a Russian military training center in Northern Sudan and infrastructure projects, marks a definitive shift in Sudan's security and economic alignment. This pivot is mirrored by a sharp escalation in tensions with Uganda, which the Sudanese government has condemned for hosting RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Daglo (Hemedti). Domestic rhetoric has increasingly framed the conflict not just as a civil war, but as a struggle against "secular" and "foreign-backed" forces, with the government and military (SAF) consolidating support through "civil resistance" movements and Islamist-aligned brigades.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Geopolitical Pivot to Russia:** Sudan and Russia have finalized an agreement to [enhance strategic cooperation](#) covering defense, energy, and infrastructure, including a military training center in the north.
- **Diplomatic Rupture with Uganda:** The Sudanese Foreign Ministry issued a [strongly worded condemnation](#) of the Ugandan government for receiving the "rebel leader" Hemedti, warning of severe diplomatic consequences.
- **Projected Normalization via Industry:** The Prime Minister and Minister of Industry inaugurated the 16th "Made in Sudan" exhibition in Khartoum to prove [industrial activity is resuming](#) despite the war.

- **RSF Mercenary Allegations:** Governer Minni Minnawi claimed the RSF has moved from denial to admission regarding the use of [foreign mercenaries and drone technicians](#), specifically citing Colombians.
- **Targeting of Educational Infrastructure:** The government of North Kordofan condemned a [drone strike on University of Kordofan](#) classrooms, labeling it a "complete moral crime" against the nation's future.
- **Qatari Humanitarian Bridge:** Qatar has initiated a massive "sea and air bridge," delivering over [1,000 tons of medical supplies](#) to Port Sudan to sustain a failing health system.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

International Relations & Strategic Alignment: Sudan is actively reconfiguring its alliance network. The military government is prioritizing "smart" and "technological" warfare, seeking Russian [surveillance and defense technology](#) to secure its borders. This is coupled with a deep skepticism of regional neighbors like Uganda, whose reception of RSF leadership is viewed as an act of hostility. The government is also maintaining strong ties with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, seeking both [diplomatic legitimacy and humanitarian aid](#) to offset Western pressure.

- Commitment to a "Smart Army" utilizing advanced technology and science.
- Strong condemnation of Ugandan "interference" in Sudanese sovereignty.
- Leveraging Saudi National Day to reinforce [bilateral brotherhood and cooperation](#).

Economic Security & Resilience: The "Hope Government" (Hukumat al-Amal) is attempting to revive the industrial sector to

mitigate the collapse of the national economy. By showcasing [local pharmaceutical, solar energy, and food production](#) in Khartoum, the state aims to prove it can function independently of foreign aid while providing low-cost goods to a weary population.

- Establishment of solar panel and transformer factories to address [chronic energy shortages](#).
- Focus on "reduced-price sales" within exhibitions to ease the [cost of living crisis](#) during Ramadan.
- Protection of the Sudanese Currency Printing Press as a symbol of financial sovereignty.

Domestic Stability & Health

Infrastructure: While Khartoum remains a battlefield, the Northern State (Dongola) and Port Sudan have become the administrative and medical backbone of the country. Massive investments in [specialized medical centers](#) (Kidney, Diabetes, Heart Surgery) in Dongola suggest a decentralization of governance that may persist post-war.

- Deployment of specialized consultants from Khartoum to [hospitals in Northern State](#).
- Integration of IDP students into the Northern State's school system for [education continuity](#).
- Implementation of environmental health campaigns to prevent disease [outbreaks in crowded IDP zones](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Governance activity focused heavily on executive decrees regarding industrial recovery, health emergency responses, and education restarts in non-conflict zones. There is a clear emphasis on "Hukumat al-Amal"

(Government of Hope) policies aimed at post-war recovery and stabilization.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Prime Minister's Industrial Briefing:** Dr. Kamel Idris and Minister of Industry Mahasin Ali Yaqoub visited the "Made in Sudan" exhibition to promote [national industrial self-sufficiency](#).
- **Foreign Ministry Statement on Uganda:** A formal declaration was issued [holding Uganda responsible](#) for supporting "terrorist militias."
- **North Kordofan Government Briefing:** A cabinet-level condemnation of the [RSE drone attacks on educational facilities](#).
- **SAF Commander's Address:** Al-Burhan addressed the 46th and 47th graduation batches, detailing the [transition to a modern technological military](#).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Normalization: The government is using events like the "Made in Sudan" exhibition as a strategic communication tool. By hosting high-profile industrial fairs in Khartoum, the state is attempting to [counter RSE narratives](#) of the city being a chaotic war zone. This "economic theater" serves two purposes: boosting domestic morale by suggesting an imminent end to the conflict and signaling to the international community that the SAF-led government maintains administrative control over the capital's industrial heartlands.

Geopolitical Realignment Toward the East: The comprehensive defense and infrastructure deal with Russia signifies a pivot away from Western-led mediation. The inclusion of a [military training center in](#)

[Northern Sudan](#) and modern "surveillance technologies" indicates that the SAF is looking for non-Western partners who provide hardware and technical expertise without the political conditions attached by the EU or US. This trend is reinforced by the "sea bridge" from Qatar, which suggests a solidification of a "Middle Eastern-Russian" support bloc for the Sudanese state.

Mercenary Integration and Drone Warfare: The conflict is evolving into a tech-heavy war of attrition. Governor Minnawi's focus on [Colombian drone technicians](#) and RSF admissions regarding foreign technical assistance highlights the internationalization of the combatant forces. Simultaneously, the SAF is promoting its own [shift to a "Smart Army"](#) suggesting that the next phase of the war will be defined by long-range drone strikes and electronic surveillance rather than traditional infantry maneuvers.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): The diplomatic rift with Uganda will likely lead to the [reciprocal withdrawal of ambassadors](#) or the suspension of Sudan's membership in certain regional bodies if Uganda continues to host Hemedti. On the ground, expect intensified RSF drone strikes on Khartoum and Kordofan as a reaction to the government's normalization narrative. The Ramadan period will see an [increase in local charity-led relief](#) as the state struggles to match its "normalization" rhetoric with actual food security.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The implementation of the Russia-Sudan deal will likely see the first arrival of [Russian military advisors and equipment](#) in the Northern State, potentially creating a "protected zone" that secures Sudan's Mediterranean-to-Red Sea

trade corridor. Internal rifts between the RSF and tribal leaders like Musa Hilal in [Mistariha](#) will likely lead to a new sub-conflict in Darfur, as Hilal's Mahameed tribe resists RSF dominance.

Long Term (1-5 Years): Sudan is on a trajectory toward a decentralized, military-industrial state model. The growth of Northern State (Dongola) as a medical and educational hub suggests that even if Khartoum is reclaimed, the [political weight of the country](#) has shifted northward and eastward toward Port Sudan. The reliance on Russian and Qatari interests may lead to a long-term [exclusion of Western influence](#) in Sudan's extractive and security sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The emergence of a Russian military footprint in Northern Sudan poses a [significant strategic challenge](#) for Western interests in Africa and the Red Sea.
- Uganda's role as a host for Hemedti may disqualify it as a neutral mediator, requiring the UN or AU to [shift mediation efforts](#) to more neutral venues like Saudi Arabia (Jeddah).
- Humanitarian aid must be decoupled from the normalization narrative; support for [Qatari-led medical bridges](#) is essential as local systems remain fragile.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- The solar energy sector in Sudan presents a [high-growth opportunity](#) as the government seeks to diversify its energy grid away from vulnerable centralized plants.

- Supply chains through Port Sudan and the Northern State are [relatively stable](#), but logistics into Kordofan and Darfur remain high-risk due to drone-targeted transport routes.
- Investors in "Made in Sudan" initiatives should prioritize partnership with the [Military Industry Corporation](#) and "Hope Government" agencies, as they currently control the most viable industrial zones.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts

that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDEL Project at <https://blog.gdelproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.