

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

MARCH 20, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

MARCH 20, 2026

SUDANESE STATE ASSERTS TRANSITIONAL STABILITY AMID EID CELEBRATIONS AS MILITARY LEADERSHIP PIVOTS TO ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND TOTAL REJECTION OF RSF CEASEFIRES

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On March 20, 2026, Sudanese state-aligned media broadcast a synchronized narrative of resilience, military consolidation, and the gradual return to normalcy during the Eid al-Fitr holidays. The day's coverage was dominated by the Sovereign Council's refusal to consider ceasefires without the total withdrawal and assembly of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), framed as a "terrorist militia." This hardline stance is coupled with a domestic push to "redefine" Sudanese identity around the "Battle of Dignity" (Karama), emphasizing the fusion of civilian society with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). The military's grip on the state is expanding beyond the battlefield, as evidenced by high-ranking commanders transitioning into key economic roles, such as the management of the critical cotton industry.

Strategically, the state is leveraging successes in the health and infrastructure sectors—specifically cited vaccination rates exceeding 70% despite the conflict—to demonstrate institutional survival and legitimacy. However, beneath the celebratory Eid rhetoric, there are clear indications of a protracted war footing. Reports of RSF attacks on agricultural assets and ongoing sieges in regions like El Fasher underscore the fragility of the "recovery" narrative. The information environment is increasingly hostile to foreign media, particularly Sky News Arabia, which is accused of "misleading" coverage, suggesting a tightening of the state's grip on the national narrative and a pivot toward more insular, military-led social order.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Sovereign Council Rejects Ceasefire Proposals Without RSF Capitulation**
 - The Chairman of the Sovereign Council, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, issued a definitive statement for Eid al-Fitr, declaring [no truce or ceasefire](#) without the complete withdrawal of the RSF from occupied areas.
 - The state's official position remains that any peace process must include a [fixed timetable](#) for the end of any armed presence outside the official military framework.

- **Military Leadership Shifts to Economic Management**

- Lt. Gen. Nasr al-Din Abdel Fattah, the former commander of the strategic Armored Corps, has been appointed [Director General](#) of the Sudan Cotton Company, signaling a militarization of the country's primary agricultural export sector.
- The move is framed as a step toward [economic reconstruction](#) and stabilizing the national currency through increased cotton production and marketing.

- **State Claims High Resilience in Health Infrastructure**

- The Ministry of Health reported that vaccination rates reached [over 70%](#) in 2024-2025, exceeding international expectations despite the ongoing war.
- Officials highlighted "heroic" medical interventions, including [surgeries performed by mobile phone light](#) and the rapid reopening of dialysis centers in El Fasher after they were targeted by shelling.

- **Escalation of Conflict in Agricultural and Transport Sectors**

- Reports emerged of the RSF [burning agricultural crops](#) and destroying transport trucks, which the state has labeled a direct attack on human dignity and food security.
- Incidents in [West Blue Nile](#) involved the destruction of large numbers of vehicles and equipment by militia forces.

- **Hostility Toward Regional Media Narrative**

- The Sudanese media apparatus is actively campaigning against [Sky News Arabia](#), accusing it of spreading misinformation and "misleading" the international community regarding the reality of the war.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

- **Economic Security & Statecraft**

- The appointment of military figures to lead the [Sudan Cotton Company](#) suggests a shift toward a state-managed "war economy" intended to bypass traditional civilian administrative hurdles.
- Gedaref state is prioritizing the [root solution for water projects](#), linking infrastructure development directly to military-governed stability.

- **National Security & Security Architecture**

- The Military Academy at Wadi Seidna is integrating [modern drone technology](#) into its training curriculum, reflecting a modernization effort born of battlefield necessity.
- The fusion of [popular mobilization \(Mustanfaren\)](#) with formal SAF structures is being institutionalized as part of the permanent national defense architecture.

• **Domestic Stability & Social Order**

- Traditional religious institutions, specifically the [Quranic schools \(Khalwas\)](#), are being leveraged as centers for community resilience, mobilization for "jihad," and social welfare distribution.
- State governors are using Eid to conduct [prison visits](#) and social aid distributions to signal a functioning rule of law and social safety net.

• **Biosurveillance & Public Health**

- Despite the conflict, the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) continues to operate, with officials emphasizing the [maintenance of the cold chain](#) through decentralized fuel and power management.

• **International Relations & Geopolitical Power Dynamics**

- Sudan's leadership is projecting solidarity with [Gulf nations, Palestine, and Turkey](#) regarding security threats, while simultaneously criticizing international silence on RSF "crimes."

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Governance activity focused primarily on executive decrees and the restructuring of state corporations under military supervision. The discourse centered on the legality of the

RSF's presence and the frameworks for future reconstruction.

• **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED**

- **State Peace Initiative Framework:** A proposal outlining the [mandatory withdrawal](#) of militias as a prerequisite for any political settlement. It mandates the collection of weapons and the termination of any paramilitary bodies outside the official state structure.
- **Reconstruction and Social Justice Initiatives:** Debates on the "New Sudanese Identity" aimed at [social justice and identity correction](#) as part of the post-war constitutional framework.

• **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS**

- **Sovereign Council Eid Address:** A formal speech by Burhan setting the [non-negotiable terms](#) for the end of hostilities.
- **Ministry of Health Strategic Briefing:** An update on the [survival of the health system](#) and the "Relying on Ourselves" slogan (Despite what happened, we must continue).
- **Military Academy Briefing:** Leadership at Wadi Seidna discussed [future officer training](#) in electronic warfare and drone operations.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Militarization of Reconstruction The transition of Lt. Gen. Nasr al-Din Abdel Fattah from a frontline commander to the head of the [Sudan Cotton Company](#) is a significant trend. It suggests that the post-war Sudanese state will likely see the military occupying the "commanding heights" of the economy. This is not merely about security; it is an effort to

consolidate resources and ensure that the "Dignity Battle" results in a state structure where military loyalty is tied to economic patronage and resource management. This trend likely excludes civilian technocrats from the primary levers of economic power in the short to medium term.

Institutional Persistence and Institutional "Heroism" There is a concerted effort to document and broadcast a narrative of [institutional survival](#). By highlighting vaccination rates that defied international skeptics and the ability of hospitals to operate [under siege](#), the SAF-aligned government is attempting to delegitimize the RSF's claims to governance. This narrative positions the state as the only entity capable of providing essential services (health, water, education) and uses "heroic" stories of medical staff and engineers to build a nationalist mythos that transcends the violence of the war.

Rejection of External Mediation and Information Sovereignty The aggressive stance against [Sky News Arabia](#) and other regional media outlets indicates a deepening rift between the Sudanese state and some of its neighbors (specifically those perceived to be supporting the RSF). Sudan is moving toward a policy of "Information Sovereignty," where it seeks to [define its own history](#) and war narrative without foreign interference. This is coupled with a domestic media push to create new cultural content—songs, television projects, and local initiatives—that reinforce the [local identity](#) over a globalized or regionalized one.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): The refusal of an Eid ceasefire [likely signals a major SAF offensive](#) as the rainy season approaches.

Expect intensified military operations in Khartoum and El Fasher. Domestic security will remain high as the state enforces "normality" in liberated areas of Omdurman. The crackdown on "grey" political stances or neutral voices will likely intensify as the state demands [clear loyalty](#).

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The "Cotton Company" model of military-led economic management will likely expand to other sectors like [mining and transport](#). International aid organizations will face increased pressure to coordinate exclusively through military-approved channels. The "Dignity Battle" narrative will be integrated into the [educational curriculum](#), as suggested by calls for teachers to raise a "modern, enlightened generation" based on the war's values.

Long Term (1-5 Years): Sudan is on a trajectory toward a [hybrid military-civilian state](#) with a deeply entrenched internal security apparatus. The traditional political parties are being marginalized in favor of "Popular Resistance" groups and military-affiliated councils. The success of this model depends on the military's ability to transition from [defensive operations](#) to sustainable economic management and social service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The total [rejection of ceasefires](#) suggests that diplomatic efforts focused on immediate "pauses" are likely to fail. Policy should shift toward long-term humanitarian corridors and monitoring of military-led economic transitions.

- The high [vaccination and health metrics](#) claimed by the state should be independently verified but also recognized as a potential baseline for decentralized aid delivery through existing state technical cadres rather than new NGO structures.
- Regional powers must address the [media hostility](#) and information warfare that is hardening the Sudanese state's isolationist posture.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Investments in [Sudanese agriculture \(Cotton\)](#) will now require direct engagement with military-led state enterprises, necessitating robust "Know Your Customer" (KYC) and sanctions-compliance checks.
- The state's focus on [water and power projects](#) in Gedaref and the Red Sea State presents niche opportunities for infrastructure contractors, provided they can operate within a highly securitized environment.
- The emergence of [drone technology](#) and digital training in the SAF suggests a growing market for specialized technology and security services, albeit one fraught with reputational and legal risks.

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 GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.