



Amidst the gunfire, Voices of Peace Lead the Ranks and Defy the Rifle (Part 1/2)

Villages and cities destroyed, and homes abandoned by their inhabitants due to the destructive war that has been ravaging Sudan since it erupted on April 15, 2023, between the armed forces and the Rapid Support Forces. Despite the extensive damage that has affected the Sudanese people, and the drastic deterioration in humanitarian conditions, voices rise that do not carry weapons but raise flags of peace; women, youth, elders, children, and a weary civil society, yet resilient, calling out for peace. They call for an end to the war machine that has torn the country apart and to save what remains of the nation. These voices have emerged from the depths of pain and suffering, diversified between popular initiatives, artistic appeals, feminist efforts, and youth and media campaigns, all striving to silence the sound of gunfire and elevate the voice of humanity. These voices are not armed with guns or loaded with bombs, but carried with hope, from throats, hearts, and consciences. They are the voices of peace.

Despite the challenges faced, members of the Sudanese civil society, creatives, journalists, and artists have reemerged with powerful messages through songs, plays, and drawings that oppose/condemn the war and spread the message of peace and hope, and call for Sudanese solidarity. Artists have painted murals on the ruins of destroyed buildings, social media platforms have become voices for peace, with citizens sharing content calling for an end to bloodshed, fighting hate speech and racism, and documenting war crimes. Some of the most common slogans on social media include: *"The nation accommodates everyone"* and *"No to war, yes to peace."*

The People's Pain:

Despite the deep pain engulfing the country, glimpses of hope flicker through individual and collective initiatives led by youth and women who believe the nation deserves a second chance. In the overlooked neighborhoods, villages, rural areas, and displacement camps, as well as in closed university campuses, small discussion groups are forming, awareness workshops are being held, and bridges of trust are being built between communities divided by war. These efforts are the first steps towards building genuine peace, not imposed from above but created from the grassroots, from pain and lost dignity.

Women, despite facing compounded violence, both physically and mentally, insist on participating in peace-building, not as victims but as leaders and initiators. They lead peace marches, establish centers for psychological and social support, among other initiatives. The youth, on the other hand, have chosen to confront the culture of war with a culture of life. They are active in aid centers, providing food and care, spreading messages of hope through social media platforms, and resisting marginalization by creating alternative spaces for

expression and participation. The voices of peace paint a picture of a diverse Sudan without war or hatred. Sudan does not determine its fate by guns, but rises on the foundations of justice, participation, and recognition of diversity.

Sudan, my vulnerable homeland that has long been a beacon of culture and resilience, does not deserve to be reduced to a map of conflicts, nor left alone to face its pains. Let the voices of youth and women be the last thing before silence engulfs everything. Let peace not be just a slogan, but a real path forged by popular will, inscribed by sacrifices that have never ceased in a country exhausted by wars and thousands of lives displaced. The voices of peace continue to emerge from the rubble, timid yet sincere, calling for a homeland that embraces its people, not one that tears them apart. In Sudan, the cries of bereaved mothers, the lamentations of displaced children, and the tears of youth deprived of dreams and life resonate. During these dark times, the participation of women, youth, and civil society has emerged as candles resisting extinction, holding the olive branch in hand and a nation crucified at the doors of oblivion. A War, which does not differentiate between young and old, has left no home without pain, yet it has also been unable to silence the calls for peace. These voices, more urgent than ever, are not just a sign of hope but a national and ethical necessity to save what remains of Sudan and end the cycle of bloodshed and suffering.

Memory of Pain:

Although today we write about war, tomorrow we want to write about return, reconciliation, about the birth of a nation rising from the ashes like a phoenix, carrying in its eyes the memory of pain, yet moving steadily towards a future it deserves. Sudan does not deserve this silence, nor does this devastation befit it. It is a land of poets who sang of love and freedom, a land of the kind-hearted who prayed for peace in every prayer, and a land of children who dreamed of schools, not camps. Today, the voice of peace in Sudan is akin to a distress call from a soul worn down by suffering, knocking on the doors of the world with the tears of men and women, the patience of mothers, and the voices of youth that have not lost their ability to dream. In times of war, holding onto hope becomes resistance, and words become a weapon against destruction, turning dialogue into a narrow path, but the only one that can lead to life.

The youth who have lost opportunities for education and work, who have only known the sounds of guns instead of schoolbooks, do not ask for much; they simply want the war to stop, to be allowed to live like the rest of the people on Earth. As for the women who have found themselves guarding empty homes and tending to wounds that do not heal, they have become active participants in all fields of peaceful struggle, founding initiatives, distributing food, and building bridges of trust in communities torn apart by racism, hatred, and displacement. Peace is not born out of nothing; it requires political will, popular pressure, and genuine participation from those who have been marginalized, particularly the youth and women. Therefore, these voices rising amidst the rubble today do not ask for charity; they demand the right to life, the right to safety, and the right for Sudan to be built by the hands of all its children, on the ruins of their dreams. If these calls go unanswered, Sudan is heading towards a darker future. But if they are listened to, it could be the beginning of emerging from the tunnel, the start of writing a new chapter, titled: Peace made by its people.

Peace Written with Love:

Women who have lost their children, youth whose dreams have been shattered on the frontlines, and artists who have resisted through art and song - all of these are not just victims, but they are

also the keepers of memory and builders of the coming peace. Their voices are the only truth that remains amid the lies of war, the only light at the end of this long tunnel. Let this call be the last words against war, against the unjust death, against the ruin of homelands. Yes, to peace made by the people, not just by governments. Yes, to peace written with love, not with bullets. Yes, to a new Sudan where the voice of poetry is louder than the sound of weapons. What pains the heart is that these voices calling for peace are sometimes met with silence or suppression, as if talking about ending the war is a crime, as if demanding life is a form of rebellion in a country shifting between fragile peace agreements and the threat of a major explosion. The demands of the vulnerable - for security, food, and education - have become luxuries in the eyes of decision-makers, when in fact, they are the most basic human rights.

Women who have lost their children and husbands in battle have found no time for mourning; they have found themselves forced to bear greater responsibilities beyond their capacity - supporting families, treating the wounded, and calming the cries of fear in the hearts of the young. Yet, their wills have not been broken. They are the ones who are building a new language of peace today, a language that every grieving mother and every girl who has seen war steal her childhood understands.

As for the youth, they are a generation that grew up in the heart of crises and often did not know the taste of stability, but they did not choose to withdraw. On the contrary, you find them at the forefront of every initiative that demands transitional justice, every call for change, and every dream of a country where rights are safeguarded by law and constitution. Although the road to peace is long and arduous, these efforts and hopeful spirits tell us something important: Sudan has not died, it still has a pulse, life remains within it, and it still has the potential to rise. Let's listen well to the people's voices, not the sound of guns. It is time to stop the bleeding, to lay down the burdens of war, not just by a decision from above but by a collective will emerging from the depths of the streets, from the tears of mothers, from the hands of youth who have not lost their ability to dream. If the future of Sudan is not built on destruction but on reconciliation, recognition, and justice, then we must listen more than we justify, and humble ourselves more than we assert. Every moment of delay means more death, more fragmentation, and more generations losing faith in the idea of the nation. Will the world listen? Will conscience awaken? Sudan is calling - through the voices of its mothers, youth, and women. Is there anyone who will answer?

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