Sudan - Bashir's Ousting and Military Rule - II

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Why in news?

The power transition crisis in Sudan has led to a violent crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

What is the ongoing crisis in Sudan?

- Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir was toppled in April, 2019 after a months-long popular uprising.
- Military intervention ejected Bashir from power, and in turn, a Transitional Military Council (TMC) took power.
- Currently, the protesters are demanding a transfer of power to a transitional civilian government, followed by free and fair elections.
- But the military generals used the crisis to concentrate more powers in their own hands.
- Angry protesters continued a sit-in in front of the Defence Ministry in Khartoum, Sudanese capital.
- The talks between pro-democracy activists and the military rulers collapsed.
- So paramilitary groups unleashed deadly violence to break the sit-in, killing at least 100 people and injuring hundreds.
- The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) threw the dead into the River Nile and reportedly, 40 bodies have been pulled from the river in Khartoum.
- The RSF are the paramilitary troops notorious for atrocities committed in the impoverished western province of Darfur in the early 2000s.

How does the future look?

- After the crackdown, Lt. General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the military ruler, has offered to hold elections in 9 months, upturning an earlier plan of a 2-year transition.
- But there is no immediate plan to transfer power to a civilian transitional government, a key demand of the protesters.

- So unsurprisingly, protesters have rejected the military's offer.
- At present, Sudan's generals enjoy regional and international support too.
- The UN Security Council could not even condemn the violence as China, backed by Russia, blocked the move.
- Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which offered financial aid to the people as soon as Mr. Bashir was removed from power, also support the generals now.
- This gives the military rulers a sense of impunity even when they unleash murderous paramilitaries on peaceful protesters.
- So it is evident that the military will not easily give up power any time soon.

What is the way forward?

- If the military wants to keep its grip on power, there could be more bloodshed as the protesters are defiant.
- It will have to necessarily build a more oppressive regime, as in Egypt after the 2013 coup.
- So the other, wiser option is to compromise, resume talks with the protesters and facilitate a quick and orderly transition to civilian rule.
- Arab countries as well as the UN should put meaningful pressure on the military council to pay heed to popular demands.
- They should also hold those responsible for the recent massacre accountable.

Source: The Hindu

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