Briefing to Lantos Commission

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Co-Chair Smith, Co-Chair McGovern, thank you for convening this briefing and your decades long advocacy for democracy, peace and human rights in the Sudans.

Co-Chair Smith, thank you also for your defense of press freedom in the Sudans. Nearly ten years ago, in December 2016, I was detained and expelled from South Sudan after reporting on ethnically targeted killings in the town of Yei. You wrote to President Kiir questioning that decision, and it meant a great deal to know Congress was watching. Of course, it is Sudanese and South Sudanese journalists who bear the brunt of censorship and intimidation, and I am eager to work with this Commission on that.

Co-Chair McGovern, you have worked on Sudan for more than twenty years, and your persistence has kept Sudan on the agenda in Congress and in the executive branch. You have been arrested protesting for the people of Sudan. You cosponsored legislation to halt U.S. arms sales to the UAE until it stops arming the RSF. And you have pressed the State Department to hold the UAE accountable for their support of the RSF.

I thank you both.

Today I will show research my organization has done using advanced technology to prove foreign facilitation of this war. But my first point is this: Sudan's war is primarily the fault of Sudanese leaders. The weapons, the financing and many of the tactics are foreign, but the conflict is rooted in hyper-local dynamics and would continue without foreign support. Foreign networks matter because they multiply the killing. And it is civilians who die under foreign drones and foreign weapons. Reduce the foreign support and you reduce civilian deaths.

Sudan's war is truly a world war. We have identified more than twenty states that have provided financing or logistics to the warring parties, or whose weapons have turned up on Sudan's battlefields. Some of those states — Western states in particular — never intended their weapons to reach Sudan. That shows how hard it is to keep arms and drones out of a third country's war once they have been sold abroad.

What follows uses commercially available, legally obtained phone location data. I will omit some details to protect civilians and to preserve our ability to keep monitoring these men.

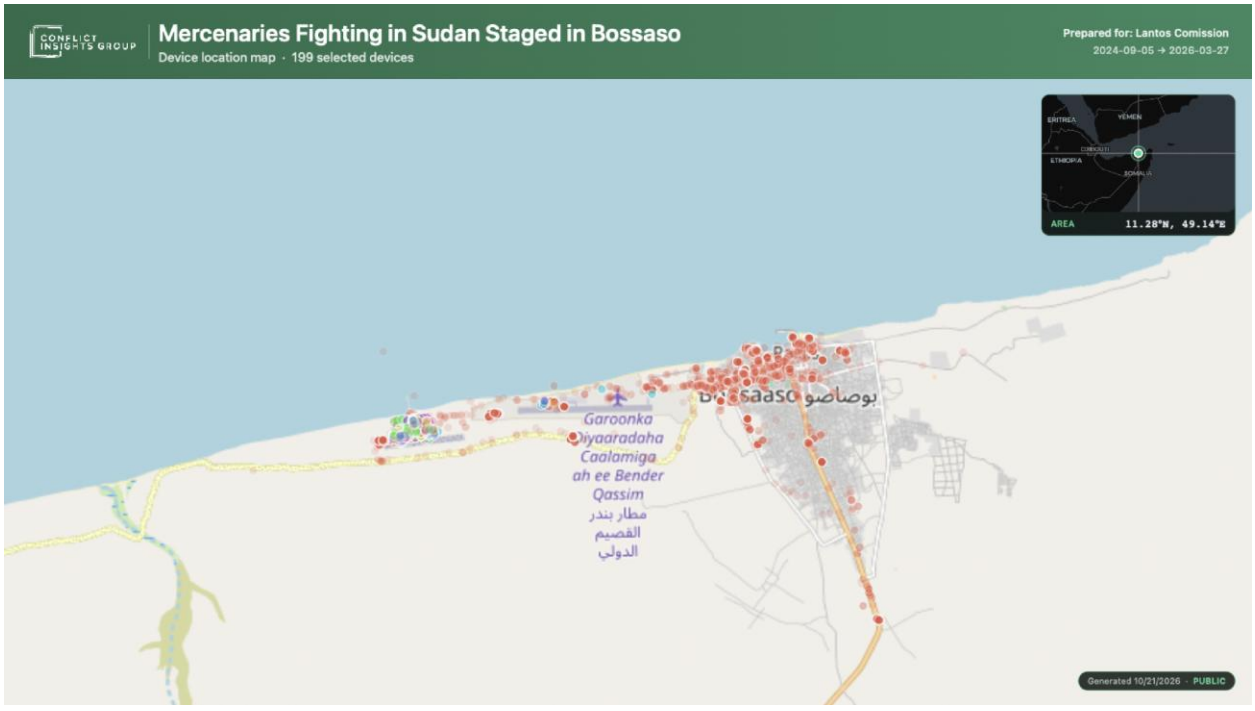
In April we published a report on how the UAE backed Colombian mercenaries who facilitated war crimes in Sudan in support of the RSF. We have tracked more than a hundred devices, and we continue to.

This first slide shows their general route.



They typically fly from Colombia to Ethiopia, then to Bosaso in Somalia, where they stay at the Puntland Maritime Police Force base — a force the UAE has funded and trained since 2010. Here is that base and the movements of those who went on to Sudan.

From Bosaso they fly to N'Djamena, to Kufra in Libya, or to Abu Dhabi. We tracked their phones at a UAE military base in Ghayathi, Abu Dhabi, where UAE officers trained them in drone operations and other tactics. Here are those devices.

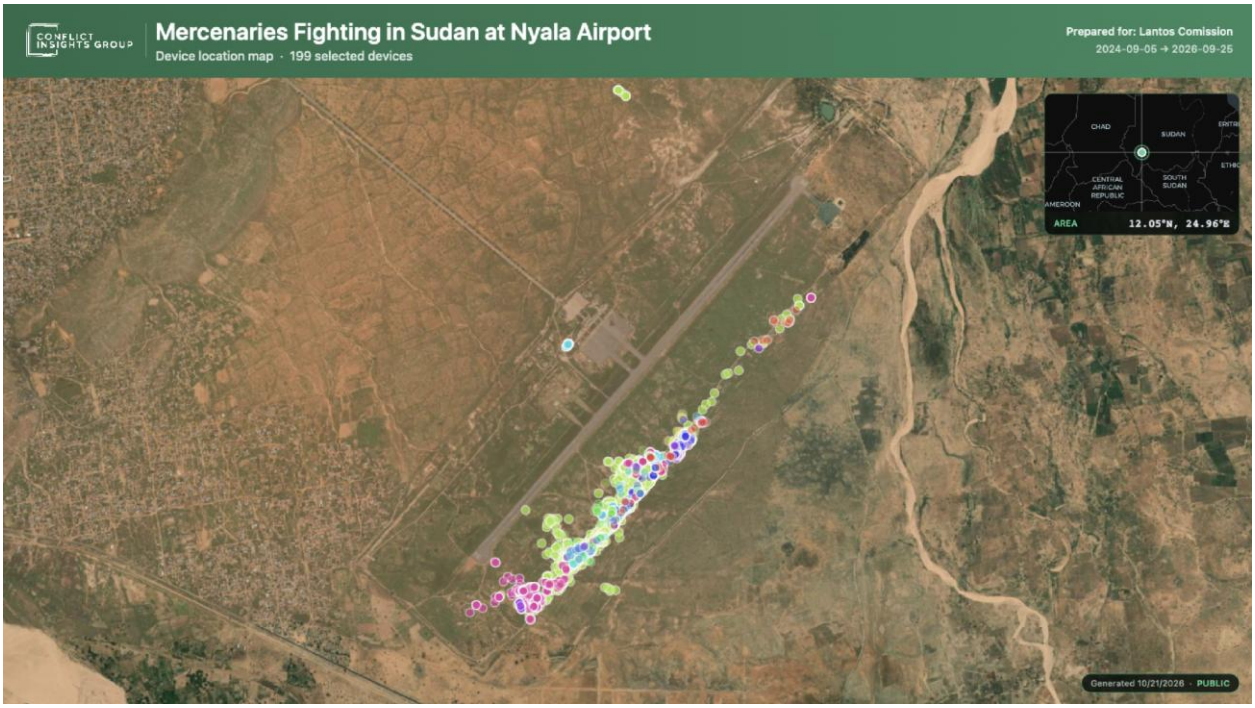


Kufra and N’Djamena are logistics hubs. From there they usually fly into South Darfur. We have tracked the pilots who flew them on cargo aircraft.



The main hub is Nyala in South Darfur. This slide shows their device locations over the past two years. This one shows their movements over the past month. They are still there. These mercenaries describe training child soldiers. They specialize in drone warfare. They name their Wi-Fi networks things like “drones” and “anti-aero.”

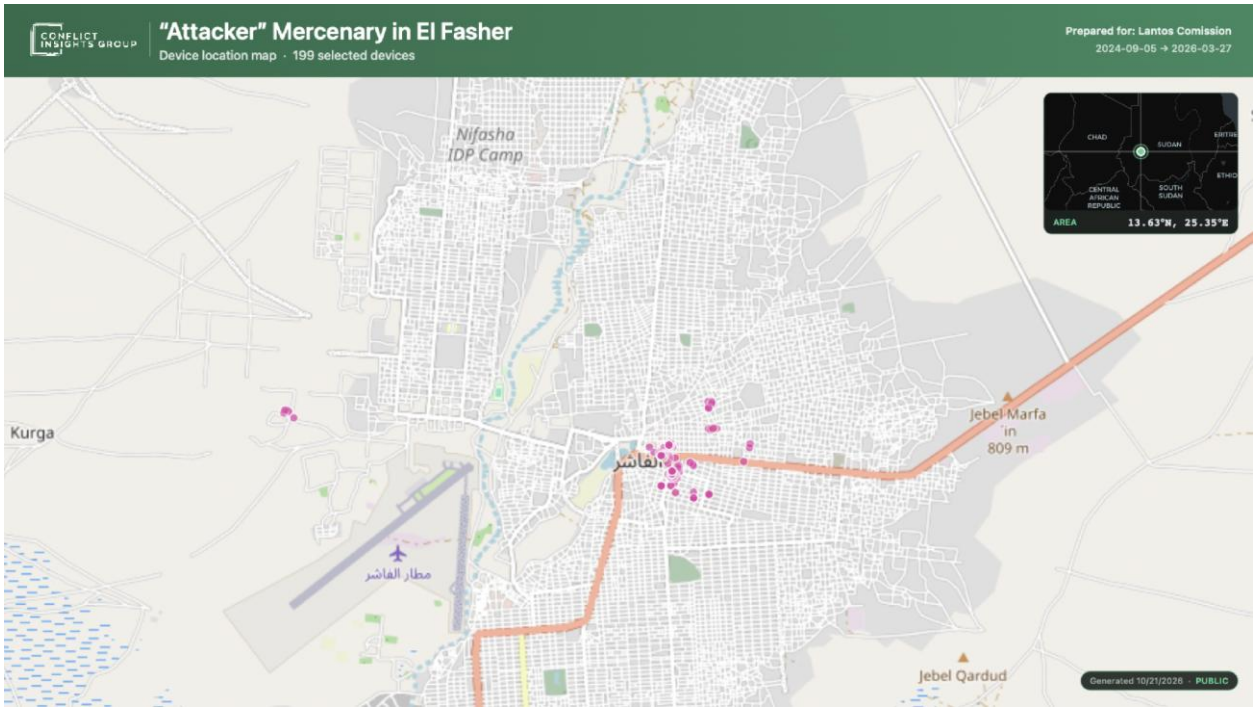
We know they are part of a broader UAE network not only because they were trained at a UAE base, but because they use Wi-Fi networks like “Lobos del Desierto” — the Desert Wolves — the mercenary battalion led by Álvaro Quijano. He is a retired



Colombian colonel based in the UAE who has been sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury, the UN Security Council, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Quijano's recruiting company supplied these men to an Abu Dhabi firm, Global Security Services Group, which has documented ties to senior Emirati officials and the ruling family.

In October 2025 these mercenaries were in El Fasher during the RSF's capture of the city. The ICC has said that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed there — rape, executions, arbitrary detention and mass graves on a massive scale. One Colombian we tracked named his Wi-Fi network "ATACADOR" — attacker. Our assessment is that these UAE-backed mercenaries facilitated these crimes, and that without them the RSF's takeover of El Fasher was unlikely to have occurred.

We have also identified RSF-linked individuals who continue to use Western and American financial architecture. Work can be done with American businesses to ensure their products are not used by sanctioned individuals, support the war in Sudan, or sportswash the UAE's image.



But this war has two sides. SAF drone strikes overwhelmingly cause civilian casualties, according to data we have collected, and those drones have been supplied by Iran and Turkey. Egypt is a critical provider and logistical hub for the SAF. And as you know, the State Department determined that Sudan's government used chemical weapons in 2024 in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention — reportedly with the direct approval of the army's commander, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

What can this committee and the U.S. Congress do?

First, the only way to ensure that U.S. weapons don't end up in Sudan is by halting arms sales to suppliers of the RSF —specifically the United Arab Emirates. Several western countries have had arms or parts manufactured in their country end up being used by the RSF although they had no intention.

Second, declaring the RSF a Foreign Terrorist Organization would make material support to the RSF a federal crime and tighten its exclusion from American and Western financial systems. The U.S. has already done this to an SAF-aligned group.

Third, the U.S. is often not seen as a credible actor in Sudan by Western diplomats because of the view that it has been captured by Abu Dhabi. This is not unique to this administration — it was present in the Biden administration as well. But we need to rebalance our policy toward the UAE — on Sudan, across Africa, and on its ties to Russia and China. The UAE remains a money-laundering hub, especially for Russian networks that harm American interests. For the U.S. Congress, it requires sustained legislation and engagement through appropriations to ensure the Executive branch is executing policy in line with American interests. It also requires greater legislative action to deter countries to be a hub for Russian money laundering.

Fourth, a precedent must continue to be followed to ensure that those who approved the use of chemical weapons or crimes against humanity don't have a future in a country's leadership. This test is meant to deter future use, but is also a yardstick for where the U.S. should prioritize its diplomatic relations. There will come a time when normalizing relations with the leadership of the Sudanese Armed Forces is considered. This Commission should use its oversight role to ensure that U.S. engagement is principled, not a naive rush to act for its own sake — the mistake some European governments are making now.

Finally, I applaud this Commission's history of highlighting press freedom. This attention should also be used for the arrest of local journalists across the world, who face the brunt of intimidation, arrests and death.

Thank you both for your longstanding commitment to human rights and to peace in Sudan, and for this briefing. I am happy to provide whatever information you need, now or in the future.