

WHO warns of Sudan biohazard as lull in fighting allows more to flee

Fighting in Sudan eased overnight after the army and a rival paramilitary force agreed to a three-day truce, allowing more Sudanese to flee on Tuesday and foreign countries to extract citizens.

However, the World Health Organization said there was a "high risk of biological hazard" in the capital Khartoum after one of the warring parties seized a national laboratory holding measles and cholera pathogens and ejected the technicians, Reuters reported.

The warfare that erupted between the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitaries on April 15 has turned residential areas into war zones, killing at least 459 people, wounding over 4,000, and cutting water, power and food in a nation already reliant on aid.

Foreign countries have airlifted embassy staff out of Khartoum, the capital, after several attacks on diplomats, including the killing of an Egyptian attaché shot on his way to work. Some countries are also extracting their private citizens. On Tuesday, Britain launched a large-scale

evacuation of its nationals on military flights from an airfield north of Khartoum. France and Germany said they had each evacuated more than 500 people of various nationalities, and that a French commando had been hit by crossfire during the operation.

Sudanese families too used the lull to emerge from their homes after more than a week of fierce fighting to search for transport to take them to safety, worrying that the exodus of foreigners would leave locals more at risk.

Tens of thousands have left in the past few days for neighboring Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan, despite the uncertainty of conditions there.

The situation for those remaining in Africa's third-largest country, where a third of the 46 million people needed aid even before the violence, is deteriorating fast. Some expressed dismay at the departure of some international aid agencies and diplomats.

The UN humanitarian office said on Tuesday it had cut back activities due to the fighting.



Speaking to reporters in Geneva via video link from Sudan, the WHO's Nima Saeed Abid said technicians had been thrown out of the National Public Health Laboratory, which also contains blood supplies, because it had been seized by one of

the warring parties, which he declined to name. Yassir Arman, a leading figure in the civilian political coalition the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), urged humanitarian organizations and the international community

to help restore water and electricity, and send generators to hospitals. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the violence in a country that flanks the Red Sea, Horn of Africa and Sahel regions "risks a catastrophic con-



Evacuees from war-torn Sudan sit inside a military plane as they wait to be processed by members of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) upon their arrival at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya. **THOMAS MUKOYA/REUTERS**

Russia's Lavrov warns world at 'dangerous threshold'



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov chairs a Security Council meeting on Monday. **TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP**

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday that the risk of conflict between global powers was at an "historic high" and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned the world was at a threshold "possibly even more dangerous" than during the Cold War. Guterres, seated next to Lavrov in the U.N. Security Council, criticized Russia's war in Ukraine for causing massive suffering and devastation in the country and fueling global economic dislocation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Reuters reported. "Tensions between major powers are at an historic high. So are the risks of conflict, through misadventure or miscalculation," Guterres told the meeting of the 15-member body on multilateralism and the founding U.N. Charter. Lavrov chaired the council meeting because Russia holds the council's monthly rotating presidency for April. "As during the Cold War,

we have reached the dangerous, possibly even more dangerous, threshold," Lavrov said. "The situation is worsened with the loss of trust in multilateralism." "Let's call a spade a spade. Nobody allowed the Western minority to speak on behalf of all of humankind," Lavrov said. A string of Security Council members, including the United States, France and Britain, condemned Russia for its war on Ukraine. As the United Nations seeks to save an agreement that allows the safe Black Sea export of Ukraine's grain that could expire on May 18, Guterres also urged the continued implementation of that deal and a related pact in which the United Nations pledged to help facilitate Russia's own grain and fertilizer exports. "They clearly demonstrate that such cooperation is essential to creating greater security and prosperity for all," he said.

President Joseph Biden's strengths and weaknesses



EXCLUSIVE
U.S. President Joseph Biden, 80, on Tuesday formally announced he is running for re-election in 2024. Many, including his fellow Democrats, predicted that Biden would not run in the upcoming elections due to his age. If Biden had not announced his candidacy for president, the Republicans would have welcomed it. Two important points about Biden's candidacy are noteworthy: one is the concern over his age, and the other is his presidential record. When Biden ran for president in 2020, it was generally believed that he would become president for only one term, and that he would enter the race mostly to defeat Donald Trump. Running a big country like

the U.S. requires an agile and energetic president. Some experts even suggested that due to his age, Biden could not complete one full term as president. He is presently the oldest president in U.S. history. During his campaign, many inferred that he was nominated for only one term. He has not adhered to his unwritten and imagined promise, and it seems that the syndrome of wanting to continue in the seat of power has affected him. It seems that Biden's Achilles' heel during the presidential election campaign will be his age. Despite criticisms that are raised about Biden's performance, he has a 50-year record in Washington, and he can be considered a successful president. If he had not had a successful performance, both he and his party would not have decided to pit Biden against the Republicans. During his presidency, the economy has grown; Biden

has established a relatively good interaction with Congress and has advanced his agenda in a bipartisan manner; he handled the COVID-19 crisis successfully and has spent a lot of money to repair the country's infrastructure. In the international arena, he has brought some dignity back to the U.S. since the presidency of Donald Trump. Therefore, in terms of his record and performance, there doesn't seem to be any major obstacle. Biden is also the incumbent president, which always gives strength to the party in power. Some Republicans thought they would compete with a new, lesser-known candidate from the Democrats; but the announcement of Biden's candidacy was a surprise to them. Now, the Republicans must bring forth a strong candidate to compete with a relatively successful, yet old, incumbent president.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Damascus slams EU sanctions as 'threat' to quake-hit Syrians



AFP - Syria on Tuesday condemned fresh European sanctions against individuals and entities linked to President Bashar al-Assad's government, arguing the measures impeded aid to areas affected by a devastating earthquake. The EI on Monday imposed sanctions on 25 individuals and eight entities accused of involvement in human rights violations and drug trafficking in the war-torn country.

French bang pots, pans in fresh pension protest



AFP - French demonstrations against raising the retirement age from 62 to 64 have morphed from lobbying paving stones, dodging tear gas and brandishing banners to something nearer the soul of the gastronomic nation: Making noise by banging kitchen saucepans. Pots and pans were wielded earlier on Monday to harass ministers on official outings, including Health Minister François Braun visiting a hospital in Poitiers and Education Minister Pap Ndiaye, who took a detour in Lyon to avoid dozens of demonstrators.

Electrical shorts caused deadly blasts in Pakistan



BBC - At least 17 people were killed in two explosions at a counter-terrorism office in north-west Pakistan, officials said. Police said that there is no evidence of an attack and that it could have been as a result of an electrical fault igniting ammunition in the centre.