

Profile: How Ibn Auf went from regime insider to new Sudan ruler

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Fri, 2019-04-12 15:20

CAIRO: Sudanese General Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf, who led the overthrow of veteran leader Omar Al-Bashir and has emerged as the country's new ruler, is already under US sanctions for his alleged role in the brutal Darfur conflict.

In a somber televised statement on Thursday, Ibn Auf announced the ouster of Bashir, who ruled the northeast African country with an iron-fist for 30 years before angry protesters brought him down.

"I announce as minister of defense the toppling of the regime and detaining its chief in a secure place," Ibn Auf said.

"We have replaced him by a transitional military council for two years and have suspended Sudan's 2005 constitution."

Later on Thursday state television announced that Ibn Auf had been sworn in as head of the military council triggering anger among the protesters.

"The regime has conducted a military coup by bringing back the same faces and the same institutions which our people rose up against," the Alliance for Freedom and Change, the group that is leading the protests said in a statement.

"We call on our people to continue their sit-in in front of army headquarters and across all regions and in the streets."

Protesters remained camped at the army headquarters in the capital for seventh straight day, vowing not to leave until the new military rulers quit. Born in 1950, Ibn Auf, a career soldier has been a regime insider and a close aide of Al-Bashir since the former leader came to power in a coup in 1989. Ibn Auf held several top ranking positions in the army as well as in the foreign ministry.

He rose through the ranks first to become a commander of the military's artillery division and then to head the army intelligence wing.

In 2010 he retired but was brought back five years later as the country's defense minister. In February Al-Bashir made him his first vice president "Awad Ibn Auf is not only a high-ranking officer of Bashir's old guard, but one of the few in the army to be able to maintain the cohesion between the rival branches of the regime's security apparatus," said Paris-based Sudan analyst, Jerome Tubiana.

Between 2010 and 2015, Ibn Auf served as a counsel in Khartoum's embassy in Cairo and later as ambassador to Muscat.

But it is his alleged role in the conflict in Darfur that analysts say might make Western powers wary of dealing with him directly.

Analysts say Ibn Auf, a close aide of Bashir, played a key role in managing militias like the feared Janjaweed, who have been accused of committing genocide during the initial years of the conflict.

The United States put his name on its backlist of Sudanese officers

sanctioned for their role in the conflict that has seen his assets blocked by the US treasury since 2007.

In May 2007, Washington said Ibn Auf has been “linked to violence, atrocities and human rights abuses” in Darfur.

Bashir himself has been indicted for alleged war crimes and genocide in the Darfur conflict, in which according to the United Nations about 300,000 people have been killed and millions displaced.

Hundreds of thousands of people still live in sprawling camps across the region.

The conflict erupted in 2003 when ethnic black rebels took up arms against Khartoum’s Arab-dominated government, accusing it of economic and political marginalization.

Ibn Auf was as “deeply involved” in the conflict as Bashir himself, said Hollywood actor George Clooney on Thursday.

“Removing the leader of a violent, corrupt system without dismantling that system is inadequate,” said Clooney, founder of The Sentry Project, which researches illicit money and war crimes in Africa.

But analyst Tubiana said the fact that Bashir agreed to go and Ibn Auf had replaced him showed that it was “a palace revolution, aimed at protecting the regime and preventing the opposition, civilians and non-Islamists ... from taking power.”

Some analysts say however that Ibn Auf might not remain for long time as head of the military council.

“He’s been taking decisions for a long time when it comes to the armed forces, but the task ahead is not going to be easy,” said an analyst.

“The anger among protesters will be a continuous challenge. For all you know he might not be there for a long time.”

Protesters vow to do exactly that.

“Ibn Auf is weak, we will ensure he quits,” said a protester without revealing his name for security reasons as he prepared for Friday prayers at the army complex.



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World reacts to the downfall of Omar Al-Bashir in Sudan
Demanding civilian government, thousands defy military curfew in Sudan

[Palestinian teen killed by Israeli fire in border clashes: Gaza ministry](#)

Fri, 2019-04-12 18:27

GAZA CITY: A Palestinian teenager was shot dead by the Israeli army Friday during renewed clashes on the Gaza border, the health ministry in the Palestinian enclave said.

A ministry spokesman said Maysara Abu Shaloof, 15, was “shot in the stomach by the (Israeli) occupation east of Jabalia,” referring to a demonstration site in northern Gaza.

At least 48 others were taken to hospital with a variety of injuries from clashes at several spots along the border, the ministry said without elaborating.

An Israeli army spokesman told AFP that around “approximately 4,700 rioters

and demonstrators” took part in various incidents along the frontier. “The rioters were hurling rocks and there were several attempts to breach the security fence,” he said.

“Troops responded with riot dispersal means and fired in accordance with standard operating procedures.”

He had no comment on any Palestinian casualties.

Palestinians in Gaza have for more than a year gathered at least weekly along the border for protests, calling on Israel to end its blockade of the enclave.

Israel says it is protecting its borders and accuses Hamas which runs Gaza of orchestrating the protests.

An AFP correspondent said Friday’s protests were smaller than in the past. At least 264 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israeli forces since the protests began.

The majority were killed during clashes, though others were hit by tank fire or air strikes.

Two Israeli soldiers have been killed over the same period.



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Gaza will lose 'regardless of who wins Israel elections' Dozens of neglected animals evacuated from Gaza zoo

[Sudanese woman in iconic protest image reports getting death threats](#)

Fri, 2019-04-12 17:00

NEW YORK: A woman who has come to symbolize protests in Sudan after being photographed chanting atop a car during protests against President Omar Al-Bashir said on Thursday she had received death threats since her image went viral.

Clad in white, Alaa Salah can be seen poised above the crowds in Khartoum, where demonstrators gathered to demand the military hand over power to civilians.

The ouster on Thursday of Bashir, 75, followed months of protests against his rule.

"I wanted to get on the car and speak to the people," according to a post on a Twitter account for Salah, 22, an engineering and architecture student at Sudan International University.

the struggle continues... [#thawra #Sudan pic.twitter.com/zJ91Xqsew5](#)

– Alaa Salah (@iAlaaSalah) [April 11, 2019](#)

"We need international support, for people to be aware of what's happening and to understand our demands."

The post praised the role of Sudanese women, many of whom have taken to the streets in protest.

Figures from the World Bank show that less than half of women finish secondary school in Sudan where female life expectancy is about 66 years old.

"You cannot have a revolution without women. You cannot have democracy without women," read the tweet. "We believed we could, so we did."



Dubbed online as “Kandaka”, or Nubian queen, she has become a symbol of the protests which she says have traditionally had a female backbone in Sudan. (File photo/AFP)

Calling herself “very proud to take part in this revolution,” Salah said her life has been threatened since her picture and video went viral on social media.

“I will not bow down. My voice can not be suppressed,” according to a tweet on her account, adding that she would hold Bashir responsible “if anything happens to me.”

The Thomson Reuters Foundation could not reach Salah for comment or verify that she wrote the tweets herself on her account rather than representatives. Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague and faces an arrest warrant over allegations of genocide in Sudan’s Darfur region during an insurgency that began in 2003 and led to the death of an estimated 300,000 people. He denies the allegations.





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Viral 'Nubian queen' rally leader says women key to Sudan protests
Sudan should free protesters, investigate use of force: UN

[Morocco sentences Swiss man to 10 years in jail for 'terrorism'](#)

Fri, 2019-04-12 16:57

RABAT: A Moroccan court has sentenced a Swiss citizen arrested in connection with the murder of two Scandinavian hikers to 10 years in prison on terrorism charges, his lawyer said Friday.

Kahlil Idriss said the man, identified only as Nicolas P., 33, was convicted Thursday in the city of Sale, near Rabat, in a case unrelated to the double murder.

A dual Swiss-Spanish citizen was among more than 20 people arrested after

Danish student Louisa Vesterager Jespersen, 24, and 28-year-old Norwegian Maren Ueland were found beheaded on December 17 in the High Atlas mountains south of Marrakesh.

Nicolas P. was arrested in January for having had contact with the Swiss-Spanish national as well as compatriots with ties to Syria, Idriss said. He was found guilty of "forming a terrorist group."

The lawyer said he has filed an appeal on the basis that his client had signed a police report in Arabic without having read it.

The accused told the court he had been paid by Switzerland's secret services for making contact with Swiss terror suspects.

Moroccan authorities allege the four main suspects in the hikers' murders were sympathizers of Daesh but not in direct contact with Daesh members in Iraq or Syria.



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[Saudi Red Crescent, UAE to help Iranian citizens affected by floods](#)

Fri, 2019-04-12 15:01

The Saudi Red Crescent Society, in coordination with its UAE counterpart, has

announced a joint initiative to alleviate the suffering of Iranian citizens affected by the unprecedented floods in Iran, SPA reported on Friday

In a joint statement, the two bodies said that this joint initiative comes from “the bonds of Muslim brotherhood and emphasizes on human solidarity” with the Iranian people.

The Saudi Red Crescent Society and the UAE Red Crescent Authority are currently considering mechanisms to activate this initiative and to contribute positively to reducing the impact of floods in the affected areas.



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