

**EMBARGOED TILL MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2019, 06:00 GMT**

## **Secret documents reveal financial network supporting Sudan's most powerful militia - responsible for the Khartoum massacre**

- New evidence uncovered by anti-corruption NGO Global Witness reveals how the most powerful military leader in Sudan has captured a large swathe of the country's gold market, and controls a network of front companies.
- The secret documents show how Hemedti's RSF militia bought a fleet of almost one thousand Toyota pick-up trucks – easily converted into highly mobile 'technicals' with mounted machine guns – used to suppress popular uprisings around the country for over a decade.

*Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019* – A new exposé by international NGO Global Witness has uncovered how Sudan's most powerful military leader – Mohammed 'Hemedti' Hamdan Daglo – and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia he controls, uses front companies and banks based both in Sudan and the UAE.

Secret documents obtained by the group also revealed the purchase of a fleet of over 900 Toyota Hilux and Land Cruisers, models which the RSF frequently converts into 'technicals' – 4x4 military vehicles mounted with machine guns.

The news comes just six months after numerous witnesses [accused](#) Hemedti's RSF and Sudanese police of massacring pro-democracy demonstrators at a sit-in in Khartoum on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2019 – where video footage taken a few hours before show large numbers of police and RSF militiamen [arriving](#) in Toyota Land Cruiser and Hilux vehicles.

Global Witness states it cannot be certain that the vehicles uncovered in this new evidence were the same ones used by the RSF and police on 3<sup>rd</sup> June massacre. But it also flagged how there are dozens of videos on social media of similar vehicles – including from earlier shipments – being used to [suppress demonstrations](#), [beat](#) and [arrest protestors](#) and to indiscriminately [shoot](#) in civilian areas.

The briefing details how a sophisticated network of front companies based in Sudan and the UAE support the RSF. It outlines how the RSF received US\$11m in payments from Tradive General Trading, which appears to be an RSF front company based in the UAE, to an account seemingly in favour of RSF at the National Bank of Abu Dhabi, based in the UAE.

And it shows how Hemedti has effectively captured a large part of the entire gold market in Sudan, by virtue of his close links to Al Gunade, a large conglomerate active in gold trading and construction, which is owned and controlled by Hemedti and his family.

### **Richard Kent, Campaigner, Global Witness said:**

“The documents reveal that Hemedti is in control of a largely self-financed and powerful military force in the form of the RSF, and an independent source of great wealth. And despite being Vice Chairman of the Sovereignty Council – a body intended to support the transition to a democratic Sudan – Hemedti's economic and military power effectively gives

him and the RSF impunity and distance from effective democratic civilian control and oversight.

Kent outlined how it was key for Sudan's civilian government to get full budgetary control over all armed forces. "Independent finances mean independent militias," he said.

"Sudan and other states must act quickly to prevent the RSF and its front companies from gaining more revenue – whether from gold, the provision of mercenaries, or transfers from meddling states.

"And companies and banks should also exercise due diligence to prevent human rights abuses: bank accounts named 'Rapid Support Forces' or the sale of dozens of pick-up trucks that can be quickly converted into armed 'technicals' should set alarm bells ringing."

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#### Notes to editor:

- **Interviews:** are available with, please contact [hiqbal@globalwitness.org](mailto:hiqbal@globalwitness.org) to arrange.
- **Visuals:** Social media posts of the vehicles in use, visuals and video clips are available on request.
- **Briefing:** An embargoed copy of the full briefing is available on request. Please contact [hiqbal@globalwitness.org](mailto:hiqbal@globalwitness.org) to arrange.
- **Methodology & Investigation:** Global Witness will also set out in detail the methodology of the investigation in part two of its investigation. Details of specific allegations are available on request.
- **Details of vehicle sales:** The secret documents obtained by Global Witness include a Rapid Support Forces spreadsheet. This details how US\$40m was spent by the RSF in early 2019 on over 1,000 vehicles, satellite phones, computers and other equipment. Payments are also made to, or on behalf of, Al Gunade and another company called GSK. GSK and Tradive General Trading – the UAE company which sent millions of dollars into the RSF bank account – appear to be front companies for the RSF controlled by one of Hemedti's brothers. Al Gunade is controlled by another brother, who is himself deputy leader of the RSF.
- **Context on the RSF:** The RSF incorporated many members of the Janjaweed militia, responsible for terrorising civilians in Darfur since 2003. More recently the RSF is accused of killing 120 pro-democracy protestors in Khartoum in June 2019. After the RSF seized control of gold mines in Darfur, and reportedly received payments from the UAE for sending mercenaries to the war in Yemen, the militia has become rich enough for Hemedti to claim that he donated \$1 billion to the Sudanese central bank.
- Some of the bank and corporate documents were originally published by satirical Sudanese online channel [Al Bashoum](#), others were obtained by Global Witness in the course of our investigation.