



## Congestion and Diversification of Third-Party Mediation in Sudan and South Sudan: First Look at some Longer-Term Trends

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## Abstract

This report draws from a preliminary dataset on third-party mediation in Sudan and South Sudan (1988-2022) to elucidate if and how the growing presence of non-Western powers – especially out-of-region ones – indicates their greater involvement in peace processes and mediation. The dataset builds on existing datasets, but further disaggregates activities of international actors, accounting for increasingly divergent understandings of mediation. Our analysis of the preliminary dataset confirmed some findings in the qualitative literature, showing that conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan have been, and remain to this day, primarily a domain of mediation efforts by neighbouring states and regional organisations. The data also questions some other claims, most notably about the wide-reaching involvement of out-of-region non-Western actors, especially the role of China and the Gulf states, in mediation processes in the Horn of Africa. While all these actors have become more prominent in mediation efforts over the last decade, they rarely lead mediation efforts themselves, most often supporting regional initiatives alongside a constellation of Western powers.

The analysis of preliminary data on Sudan and South Sudan signals two important longer-term trends in third-party mediation, which have been alluded to in qualitative studies but would need to be more systematically tested in other locales. We are seeing both a congestion of mediation efforts and of discrete actors involved in these efforts, as well as an increasing diversification of mediators in the recent period. While the mediation of the Second Sudanese Civil War/the Darfur Crisis (peaking in the mid 2000s) and the South Sudan civil war (around 2013) were more coordinated, with specific key mediators leading and obtaining the endorsement of the international community, this has not been the case with the post-2019 transition in Sudan. The data seems to indicate that mediation efforts are becoming more ad hoc and sporadic, reflecting the desire of more actors to influence events around peace and political transitions today than in the recent past. Mediation efforts appear to be much more piecemeal, which is also reflected in the eventual peace agreements.

## Key Findings

- ▶ The amount of mediation efforts and actors involved in mediation activities in Sudan and South Sudan has grown in the last decade. While we would expect increased mediation activities around the more acute political crises and conflicts (the Second Sudanese Civil War/the Darfur Crisis in the mid 2000s, eruption of the civil war in South Sudan in 2013, and the removal of Omar al-Bashir in 2019), our data shows a significant jump in both mediation activities and the number of actors involved over the last five years.
- ▶ The increased congestion of actors around the post-2019 transition in Sudan indicates that mediation efforts today are more ad hoc and sporadic than they were during previous crises, with more actors attempting to influence events in the Horn. Mediation efforts seem to be much more piecemeal.
- ▶ There has been an increased diversification of mediators in Sudan and South Sudan over the last three decades, but the data does not support the claim of the disproportionate role of out-of-region non-Western actors.
  - ▶ Between 1988 and 2000, regional actors, states, and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), were the main mediators.
  - ▶ Between 2001 and 2011, the total number of mediators increased significantly, with Western states and global IGOs becoming the second largest grouping alongside regional actors. Non-Western actors were marginal, with only Qatar breaking into the ranking of the top fifteen mediators due to its hosting of the Doha Peace Process.
  - ▶ Since 2012, we have seen a further diversification of international mediators, with out-of-region non-Western actors becoming more active.
    - ▶ In Sudan Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia are all among top fifteen mediators, alongside a constellation of regional and Western powers. In South Sudan, China is the only non-Western mediator among the top fifteen mediators.

- ▶ Neighbouring states and African regional organisations have consistently led both bilateral and multilateral mediation efforts. While non-Western actors have led individual mediation efforts, they have in no way surpassed global IGOs and Western actors.
- ▶ In the last decade, China played an increasingly significant role as a mediator of the South Sudanese conflict, especially as a participant in multilateral mediatory initiatives. Despite this, China's role in Sudan and South Sudan is comparatively minimal compared to Western and African states and IGOs.
- ▶ From 2009 to 2020, Qatar played a prominent role in Sudan as a unilateral mediator, brokering the Doha Document for Peace in 2011 and consistently pressuring for and mediating resolutions to conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. Since 2020, Qatar has taken a step back as a lead mediator and has participated frequently in global initiatives led by Western and other Arab Gulf actors.
- ▶ South Sudan has emerged as one of the key mediators of the Sudan crisis after Omar al-Bashir's ouster in 2019, reflecting a broader trend towards regionalisation of mediation efforts. South Sudan, therefore, not only provides an illustrative example of neighbourly mediation in the Horn, but also offers a rare case study of mediation by an actor that seceded from the country whose conflict it is mediating.

## Introduction

The constellation of third-party interveners has been changing in the Horn of Africa for the last decade. While the interests and commitments of the West in this area continue to be significant, the prominence of non-Western powers has risen, especially as the need for energy products by powers such as China and India, increases ([Patey; 2014](#)). Although much of the literature on non-Western actors in the Horn is still dominated by analyses of motives underpinning their activities in the region, we now have a growing body of work examining the diplomatic, economic, and military engagement of actors such as China ([Anthony and Hengkun; 2014](#), [Mariani; 2022a](#), [Van Hoeymissen; 2011](#), [Xuejun; 2018](#)), Russia ([Council on Foreign Relations; 2021](#), [Mariani; 2022b](#)), Turkey ([Sofos; 2023](#)), and the Gulf States ([Barakat; 2012](#), [Freer; 2022](#); 2023) in the Horn. There are also related studies on the role of regional organisations in the continent ([Apuuli; 2015](#), [Coe and Nash; 2022](#), [Nash; 2021](#)). Trying to make sense of these individual engagements, a recent PeaceRep report by Pospisil and Jenner ([2022, 5-10](#)) mapped the overlapping and contradicting priorities and types of engagement by key international and regional actors in Sudan post 2019. Similarly, another PeaceRep report detailed third-party competition around the recent transitions in Ethiopia ([Abate Demissie et al; 2022](#)). Both reports highlight not just the complexity of relations but also point to the congestion of actors engaging in political crises in the Horn.

Our scholarly conclusions on the role of non-Western actors in peace processes and political transitions in the Horn have been primarily based on observations of single actors, such as China, or have focused on shorter periods of acute political crises, such as the two aforementioned *PeaceRep* reports on Ethiopia and Sudan. This qualitative depth has brought us richer analyses of non-Western actors in the region, but has also meant that authors have, by design, highlighted instances of significant intervention by individual actors – such as key investments or military engagement – or have focused on specific peace processes and the international constellations around them. Case studies on non-Western interveners have, based on a few instances of intervention, drawn conclusions not just on the approaches and motivations of these powers but also on their impact on peace processes and political transitions. They have not tended to look at the role of other actors or instances when these powers were absent. Analyses of constellations around grave political crises, while important as a snapshot, are not designed to study longer-term trends systematically.

In this report, we draw on the knowledge gained through previous qualitative studies and focus on longer-term trends indicating third-party influence in the region. We probe the importance of various international actors by systematically studying their presence and role in mediation activities over a longer period. For this purpose, we constructed a dataset of third-party mediators and the types of mediation activities undertaken between 1988 and 2022. The dataset covers Sudan and, since independence in 2011, South Sudan. The findings below draw upon the preliminary version of the dataset. Through this dataset, we seek to assess if and how the growing presence of non-Western powers, especially out-of-region ones, has translated into their involvement in peace processes and mediation.

The new dataset builds on the already existing datasets on the region – most notably the PA-X ([Bell and Badanjak; 2019](#)) and APP datasets ([Duursma and Gamez; 2022](#)) – updating these to the end of 2022 and deepening the existing data by unpacking the type of support offered by an actor as part of mediation activities, and whether the mediation effort was bilateral or part of a multilateral constellation. Previous PeaceRep research ([Peter and Rice; 2022](#)) has shown that often the parameters used in research on non-Western third-party mediation and peace intervention activities are not broad enough, as they are informed by the documents and activities of liberal institutions, which inadvertently exclude certain activities. We therefore unpacked the type of mediation activities undertaken by each actor, ranging from direct mediation, hosting, to inducement and the threat of sanctions. We also systematically traced whether mediation activities were undertaken bilaterally or through multilateral efforts, and highlighted which actors played a leading role in multilateral efforts. Such a dataset allows us to see key international mediators over time, and any changes in their composition. It allows us to select data on individual mediators, enabling comparisons of action by third parties across time and between mediators. It also enables quantitative comparisons of the types of activities different third parties conduct when acting bilaterally and multilaterally. While this is possible with case studies, the quantitative element enables more systematic and comparative analysis, which, alongside the case studies, can give us a fuller understanding of the importance of various third-party actors in the region.

This report works with the preliminary dataset to identify some of the key trends in mediation in Sudan and South Sudan, focusing primarily on the role of non-Western powers. After providing a brief overview of existing mediation datasets and introducing our new dataset, the report presents findings on general trends in mediation in Sudan and South Sudan. It discusses the overall trends in these mediation efforts, the involvement of Western, regional, and non-Western actors, and maps the leaders of the initiatives. It then provides three country-studies, exploring mediation efforts by China, Qatar, and South Sudan.

## Datasets on Mediation: What's Out There

There are several datasets on mediation. However, until now, only one other dataset has described the types of actions undertaken by mediators in detail, which is the International Crisis Behaviour (ICB) dataset ([Brecher and Wilkenfeld; 2000](#), [Brecher et al.; 2021](#)). The ICB covers mediation efforts between 2005 and 2017, and is global in its coverage of international crises. Importantly, the ICB does not just include data on conflicts, but all escalations of international hostilities (including action short of military confrontation). While it is comprehensive in detailing the dynamics of the crises, third-party identities, the impact of global power involvement, and crisis management activities, it is limited in that it only includes state-level third parties as mediators of international crises. Similarly, other datasets on mediation, namely Civil War Mediation (CWM) ([DeRouen, Bercovitch, and Pospieszna; 2011](#)), International Conflict Management (ICM) ([Bercovitch and Fretter; 2004](#)), Peace Time Ceasefire Agreements ([Fortna; 2004](#)), and datasets by Gurses, Rost, and McLeod ([2008](#)), and Svensson ([2007](#)), limit who can be classed as a mediator to states, and usually democratic ones, the UN, or other IGOs. These datasets inevitably leave out important data on mediation behaviour pertinent to regional and global inter-governmental organisations, non-state actors – such as non-governmental organisations, private organisations and individuals – and non-liberal actors.

With the exception of the ICB, PA-X ([Bell and Badanjak; 2019](#)), and African Peace Processes (APP) ([Duursma and Gamez; 2022](#)) datasets, other databases on mediation are more limited in their temporal scope, ending at around 2005. These include the CWM, Uppsala Conflict Data Project's (UCDP) Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict ([Melander, Möller, and Öberg; 2009](#)), and ICM datasets. These datasets code for the mediator's identity, their strategy, and the outcome of their efforts, such as whether there was a peace agreement. However, some of these databases are organised around the UCDP's definition of conflict, which risks the exclusion of many instances of mediation. The UCDP requires a minimum of twenty-five battle-related deaths in a year to be considered an active conflict, and, therefore, any mediation that occurred during a lull in violence is not considered conflict mediation ([Ari; 2018](#)). Furthermore, some of these datasets consider state-actors to be the main protagonists within the conflicts and omit conflicts wherein non-state actors are fighting each other without a state-level conflict actor.

The ICM, CWM, and Issue Correlates of War ([Hensel et al; 2008](#)) datasets only provide international or national level outcomes, excluding local agreements and developments where conflicts have fractionalised. Moreover, these datasets focus on specific types of conflict, such as inter- or intra-state conflicts, or low-intensity wars. These issues limit the sample and, therefore, our ability to compare how actors with different approaches behave in multiple types of conflict settings towards a variety of actors and the outcomes of these efforts.

### **PA-X and APP datasets**

The datasets that most comprehensively chart mediation efforts and outcomes, with particular reference to the Horn of Africa, are PA-X and APP. PA-X provides data on peace agreements since the Cold War to the present day with a global scope. This dataset includes the identity of third-party mediators, which differs from many of the other datasets which code dichotomously for the presence of a mediator. Mediators are considered such irrespective of their nature. Therefore, any actor, whether they be representatives of states, IGOs, NGOs, civil society groups, armed groups, religions, or private individuals who appeared on peace agreements, is coded as a third-party. Furthermore, this dataset includes the identities of the conflict actors, which enables analysis of the types of actors that various mediators engage with when an agreement is signed. The focus of this dataset is on formally agreed, public peace agreements relating to an armed conflict, which may, as acknowledged by the researchers, risk the exclusion of less formal or verbal agreements during which a mediator may have been present. Additionally, this dataset does not include instances of mediation that did not culminate in a peace agreement, which inhibits data analysis that may reveal which types of mediators and activities are more successful, under which circumstances (bilateral, regional, or global initiatives), and with which conflict actors. However, data from APP, and from the dataset presented here, fill this gap.

Unlike most of the other datasets (CWM, ICM, and ETH/PRIO's Civil Conflict Ceasefire dataset ([Clayton et al.; 2022](#))), the PA-X coders use not only media sources, but also local contacts, which give the researchers better access to detailed data about peace processes and agreements otherwise not mentioned in media sources. Furthermore, this dataset codes for the characteristics of the conflict to which the agreement relates (including its Correlates of War (COW) War ID, UCDP-PA ID, PEACE Accord Matrix (PAM) ID) and the details of the agreement, such as its signatories (including third parties), its processes, its location, and its provisions, enabling analysis across multiple datasets.

The APP is a comprehensive dataset that maps all negotiations that occurred in African conflicts up to 2019. This dataset includes the identities of mediators and third parties involved in negotiations, including whether they were a regional, religious, or civil society organisation, IGO, NGO, state, or private individual. APP also indicates how long negotiations endured, whether a negotiation ended in a ceasefire or peace agreement, and whether this agreement is still active. It is rare to find datasets on mediation that code for negotiation efforts that did not end in an agreement, something APP does. However, APP is limited in its description of mediator activity. While it includes details of the negotiation effort, the way the data is arranged does not lend itself to statistical analysis. With Russia, China, and the Gulf States increasing their activity on the African continent over the past ten to fifteen years, building upon the APP to include such data enables analysis that demonstrate the way in which different types of mediators, particularly non-Western ones, behave towards conflicts.

## The Case for a Disaggregated Dataset

There is a dearth of research and literature on peacemaking and peacebuilding models or frameworks for non-Western actors (Peter and Rice; 2022). Literature based on qualitative research about conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Africa more broadly indicates that non-Western actors have developed a specific approach to conflicts in the region. This approach is centred around: promoting the norms of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the sanctity of state sovereignty through multilateral and state-centric engagement, and a developmental approach; protecting security and economic interests in the region by providing peacekeepers in the case of China and dedicating PMCs for Russia; and playing a more active role in mediation for these two powers and Arab Gulf actors (Anthony and Hengkun; 2014, Council on Foreign Relations; 2021, Freer; 2022, Xuejun; 2018). According to these studies, regional actors appear to be attracted to this form of mediation, which also lends itself more to dealing with African IGOs, such as IGAD and the AU (Van Hoeymisssem; 2011).

A quantitative approach would work to validate these claims about non-Western mediation trends if they indeed persist. The dataset presented here can help to identify whether what is being observed in limited case studies translates into a peacebuilding or peacemaking framework and *theory of change* that is different to those espoused by Western or liberal mediators. By mapping the activities undertaken by all mediators within a given conflict locale, and, preferably, for all such locales, peace-intervention models can be extrapolated to show if there are any connections between specific motives for mediation, mediation actions, and results within the conflict locale.

Literature and research about non-Western *theories of change* and, therefore, the types of activities non-Western actors believe are most conducive to promoting peace, or their preferred form of peace, is still underdeveloped. By mapping the activities of mediators, not only in the Sudan/South Sudan and Horn of Africa conflicts, but globally, a better understanding of the types of activities non-Western actors believe to be effective could indicate their *theory of change* – i.e., how their ideological/cultural perspective impacts what they believe about effective peacebuilding, and, in turn, how that affects conflicts and prospects for peace. Furthermore, by mapping each instance of mediation by actor, including the types of activities undertaken and whether this was part of a global, regional, or bilateral effort – including which other actors were involved in multilateral initiatives – it is possible to compare how third parties behave when acting bilaterally versus multilaterally.

## Mediation in Sudan and South Sudan: A Disaggregated Approach

The dataset on mediation in the two Sudans seeks to uncover a basis and methodology for mapping the mediation activities of all third parties in conflicts. The research to refine this data is still ongoing, but the PeaceRep team is now operating with the complete preliminary datasets of third-party mediation efforts in Sudan and South Sudan between 1988 and 2022.

Our preliminary work has focused on trends related to the role of non-Western actors, with the following questions motivating our initial queries: What does the dataset show in relation to the presence of non-Western actors in mediation? When do non-Western actors get involved and with whom? Is their action more bilateral or multilateral and do they act differently depending on whether they are cooperating with others or acting on their own?

### Methodology

The preliminary dataset presented here comprises 360 instances of mediation, whether that be bilateral (where only one third party was involved) or multilateral, split into 1,220 occurrences of mediation by actor. In mapping the activities of all third parties involved in the conflict, comparisons between different types of mediators and the strategies they employ is possible, as well as comparisons over time.

For the purposes of this study, we grouped third parties into the following categories:

Table 1

Neighbours (states)	States that directly border either Sudan or South Sudan of are considered part of the Horn of Africa. These are Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti.
Other African states	All African states not mentioned in the above list (Neighbour)
African regional organisations (Africa)	Organisations whose members comprise representatives of African states, e.g., IGAD and the AU
Global IGOs/UN	The UN, its subsidiaries, and in-country missions, other global IGOs such as the World Bank and IMF
Western states	States belonging to NATO (excluding Turkey/Türkiye) and/or the EU + Switzerland
Western intergovernmental organisations	Inter-governmental organisations whose membership comprises Western states, e.g., the EU
Non-Western states	States not on the African continent nor part of the Western state grouping
Non-Western organisations	Inter-governmental organisations whose membership comprises non-Western states (non-NATO and/or non-EU) and is not solely made up of African member states, e.g., the Arab League

Given that different mediator-types behave in ways that often do not fall into traditional definitions of mediation, such as providing developmental aid to induce agreement, it is necessary to broaden the definitional scope of what can be considered mediation. The list of activities coded in the dataset is experimental and forms a step towards rethinking how we can conceptualise mediation in an era of global fragmentation.

Table 2

<p>Good offices</p>	<p>Third parties facilitate consultative talks, usually without face-to-face interaction between belligerents. This includes shuttle diplomacy, convening consultative meetings, fora, workshops and summits between combatants or stakeholders, pre-negotiation talks, and informal talks.</p>
<p>Mediation</p>	<p>Third parties hold, and chair talks between combatants and political stakeholders. This may include offering solutions to the conflict parties and face-to-face meetings between the main conflict parties.</p>
<p>Hosting</p>	<p>An actor is said to host when talks are held within the territory of a state or when states, NGOs, IGOs, or individuals convene and chair talks.</p>
<p>Negotiating</p>	<p>Third parties negotiate ways forward or draft agreements without the presence or direct input of the conflict parties. This also includes when previous talks and consultations took place, but when the main conflict parties are not physically present or directly involved in the mediation incident. This category also refers to when third parties do not chair, host, or mediate, but participate as a party to negotiations that are led by the primary conflict actors.</p>

Manipulating	Third parties pressure conflict actors to conclude an agreement, implement it, or re-enter negotiations. This primarily includes threatening sanctions and other punishments, but also offering conditional incentives to the conflict parties.
Humanitarian	This category refers to diplomatic efforts to address the humanitarian crisis, which are directly linked to the political peace process.
Witness/party to an agreement	If a third party signed an agreement document pertaining to the peace process, they are considered either a direct party to the agreement or a witness.
Other	Other diplomatic efforts that are not covered by the alternative categories, such as funding initiatives, logistically supporting initiatives, and providing peacemaking training, amongst others. When an 'other' activity is indicated in the database, further details are provided in the in-database notes.

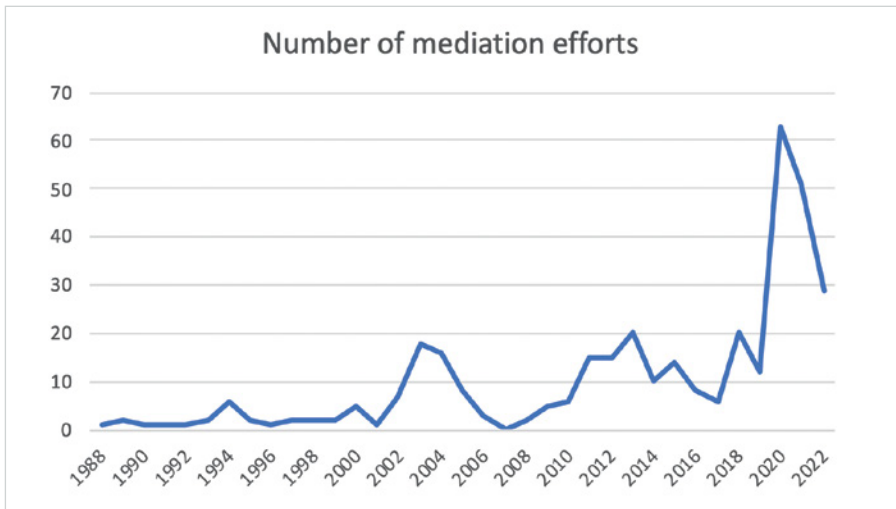
## Mediation Trends in Sudan and South Sudan Over Time

Over the course of the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan (starting in 1988 to the present day), a plethora of third-party actors have been involved in mediation efforts. The identities and the number of third-party actors involved in the conflicts and the activities they undertake have changed over this thirty-five-year period. This section explores and substantiates some of the key trends visible in the data over time. The preliminary data highlights some common misconceptions about the nature of the mediating actors, particularly in the early period under study, and reinforces some hypotheses about how and when Western and non-African, non-Western states involve themselves in mediation. This data-driven study is accompanied by a related report providing an overview of economic and security activities by China and Russia in Sudan (Peter and Plichta; 2023), and three in-depth qualitative studies on the engagement of Turkey (Sofos; 2023), the Gulf States (Freer; 2023), and regional actors (Pospisil; 2023) in Sudan, South Sudan and the wider Horn of Africa.

### *Mediation Efforts by Year*

Graph. 1 shows the number of mediation efforts that occurred per year, including bilateral (where only one third party was involved) and multilateral initiatives. When analysing the prevalence of mediation per year across the near-thirty-five-year period (1988-2022), we expected to see a spike in mediation activity towards the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War/the Darfur Crisis (2002-2006), around the South Sudan civil war (around 2013), as well as after Omar al-Bashir's ouster from Sudan's presidency in April 2019. As Graph 1 visualises, we do indeed see three spikes in mediation efforts during these periods.

Graph 1



As shown in Graph 1, there was a three-fold increase in the number of mediation efforts during the Second Sudanese Civil War/the Darfur Crisis, as compared to the previous smaller spike in 1994. From 2007, the number of mediation efforts steadily grew until a sharp increase in 2010/2011, coinciding with the secession of South Sudan from Sudan. The number of mediation initiatives increased further around 2013, preceding the outbreak of the civil war in South Sudan. While there was a small dip from 2014 to 2017 in the number of mediation efforts, there was another steep escalation in efforts after 2019. This jump is primarily connected to the proliferation of initiatives regarding Sudan's political transition after al-Bashir's ouster, which accounts for two-thirds of mediation instances in 2020.

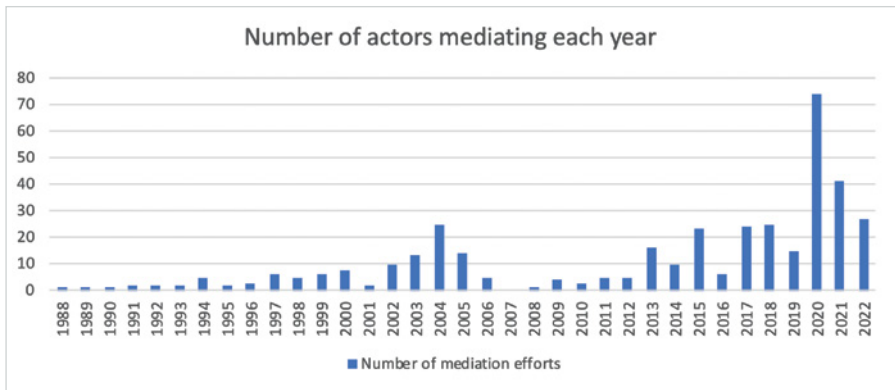
This spike around 2020 is in stark contrast to much smaller peaks around previous key crises and merited a second look at the data. Our analysis shows that some of this spike is likely related to wider reporting of mediation initiatives compared to previous periods. However, this potential overreporting does not account for the disproportionate jump in mediation efforts.

We are therefore comfortable concluding that such a steep incline in mediation efforts implies a congestion of mediation initiatives, and most likely mediators, over the last few years, compared to the previous periods under study. This finding corresponds with recent PeaceRep qualitative work on the region (Pospisil; 2023).

### Actor Presence by Year

To ascertain the veracity of the claim about congestion of third-party actors, we disaggregated the data to show the number of distinct actors mediating within a given year. Graph 2 indicates how many third parties, be they states, IGOs, or non-state actors, were involved in all the mediation efforts that occurred in a specific year. Similar to the expectations related to the number of mediation efforts in the previous section, it is anticipated that there would be increases in the number of actors involved in mediation around the three crises: the Second Sudanese Civil War/Darfur Crisis; South Sudan's civil war; and after al-Bashir's ouster.

Graph 2



Graph 2 indicates that indeed more actors become involved around crises where there is an increase in violence or political instability. The sharp incline in 2004 is explained by the many actors that were involved in the 2004 agreement, Declaration on the Conclusion of IGAD Negotiations on Peace in the Sudan, as signatories. Similarly, Graph. 2 highlights that there were also many actors involved in 2015, as compared to the years before and after. This spike in actors is due to the inclusion of many distinct third parties in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan as signatories.

What stands out is that after al-Bashir's ouster in 2019, there were significantly more actors involved in mediation than during previous crises, with seventy-four in 2020. In comparison, there were fifteen actors involved at the height of the Darfur crisis (removing those actors only involved as signatories of the 2004 Declaration). This may indicate that the mediation of the crisis in Darfur was more coordinated, with specific key mediators leading and obtaining the endorsement of the international community. In a similar vein, the almost five-fold increase in actors in 2020 seems to indicate that mediation efforts are more ad-hoc and sporadic reflecting the desire of more actors to influence events in Sudan and South Sudan. Mediation efforts seem to be much more piecemeal, something that seems to be reflected also in the eventual peace agreements (Badanjak; 2022, [Badanjak; 2023](#)).

Since 2020, the number of actors involved in mediating these conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan has remained relatively high, when compared to figures prior to 2019. These numbers can only tell us so much about who is engaging in mediation and how. Therefore, analysis of more disaggregated data, which follows in the next section, and qualitative studies are required to identify which new actors are becoming increasingly involved in mediating these conflicts, how they are doing so, and whether this is on a bilateral or a multilateral basis.

## Which States and IGOs are Involved in Mediation Activities in Sudan and South Sudan?

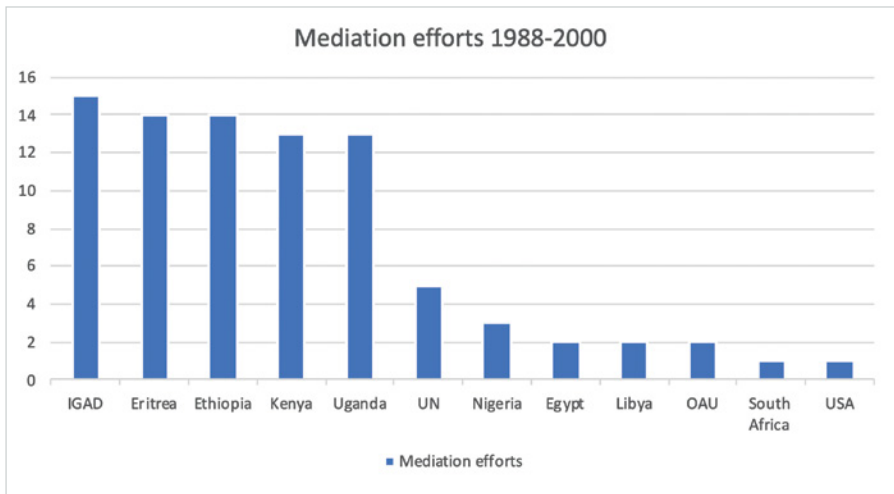
This section maps the participation of states and IGOs in mediation of the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan. While non-state actors have at times played an important role in mediating these conflicts, their participation is far less prevalent when compared to state actors and IGOs. The aim of the analysis here is to ascertain how often states and IGOs participate, whether these are Western, African, or (out-of-region) non-Western, and whether these actors engage bilaterally or multilaterally.

To carry out this analysis and allow comparison between different timeframes, the thirty-five-year period that the dataset maps is split into three chronological intervals: (1) 1988 to 2000, the period immediately after the Cold War, during which time human security and the protection of civilians (PoC) enshrined by norms such as Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and PoC peacekeeping had not yet gained broad traction; (2) 2001 to 2011, during which the Second Sudanese Civil War and the Darfur crisis occurred, ideas contributing to R2P became widely accepted, and liberal peacebuilding had arguably reached its apex; and (3) 2011-2023, a period of greater multipolarity in the global system, in which South Sudan obtained independence and experienced civil war, and Omar al-Bashir was deposed as Sudan's leader. After 2011, our analysis is split between Sudan and South Sudan, reflecting the secession of the latter from the former. Analysis in the two periods prior reflects Sudan's territorial unity. For each period, the prevalence of all the mediators involved in bilateral and multilateral initiatives is charted, with graphs representing the fifteen most active mediators. Further, the types of third-party actors are mapped, the categories for which are outlined in Table 1. These are visualised in graphs that show how prevalent certain actor-types were in mediation initiatives during the outlined period.

### *Period 1988-2000*

During this period immediately after the Cold War, there were a total of 12 state- and IGO- actors involved in mediating the conflicts in Sudan (see Graph 3). This conflict was largely between the Sudanese government and member organisations of the National Democratic Alliance, which were demanding the abolition of Sharia law as the main foundation of national legislation and for the government to drop military pacts with Egypt and Libya. This was followed by calls for self-determination and the continuing Second Sudanese Civil War ([de Waal; 2016](#)).

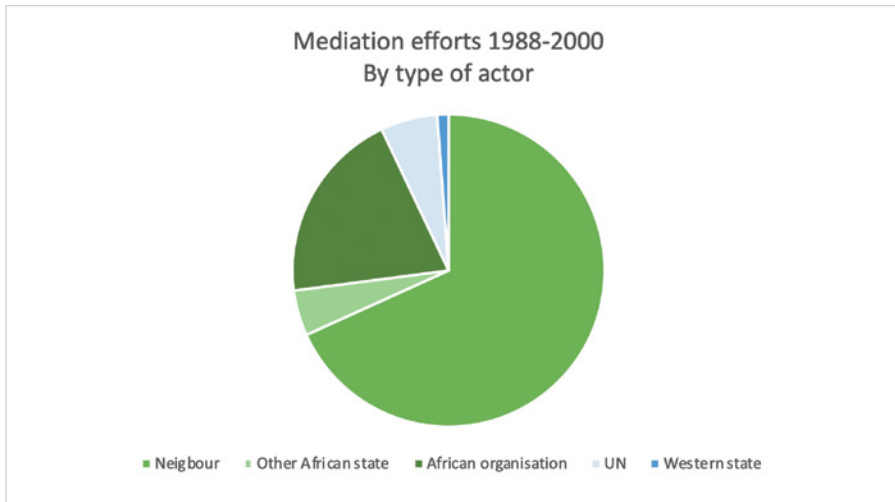
Graph 3



As shown in Graph 4, nearly three-quarters of all the mediators during this period were neighbouring states. Eritrea, Ethiopia Kenya, and Uganda were all heavily present in mediation efforts. The second largest grouping was regional intergovernmental organisations (IGAD as a sub-regional organisation and to a lesser extent the Organisation of African Unity), followed by the UN, and the United States, which was involved in only one instance of mediation. The United States was asked in 1990 by the Sudanese government to mediate this conflict. US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, conducted shuttle diplomacy and proposed a roadmap, which included a ceasefire and demobilisation, and a constitutional conference to establish a federal system. This was rejected by al-Bashir ([Duursma and Gamez; 2022](#)).

Significantly, as Graph 4 shows, this period did not see any mediation efforts by out-of-region non-Western actors and was dominated not by Western actors but by regional ones. Therefore, mediation in the Horn during this period was not conducted by out-of-region third parties, but by actors impacted by the crises directly.

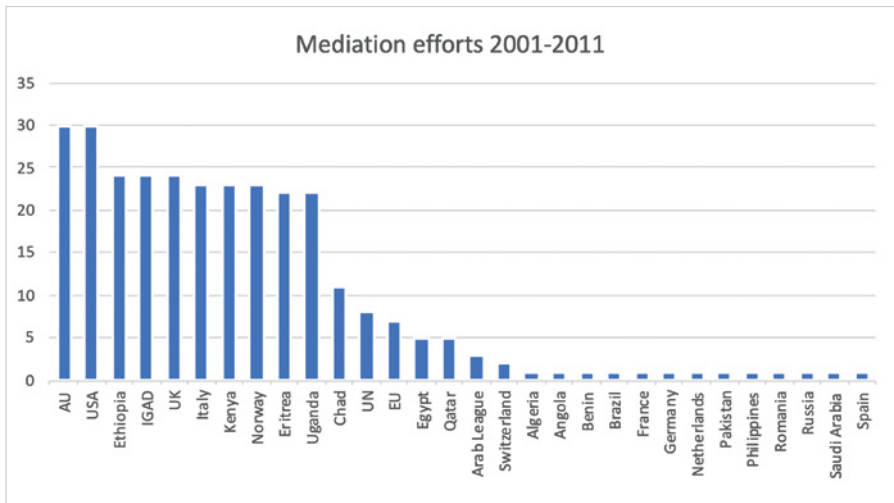
Graph 4



*Period 2001-2011*

Due to the conclusion of the Second Sudanese Civil War, which created the path towards the independence of South Sudan, and the occurrence of the Darfur crisis during this period, there are many more distinct mediators involved as third parties in the Sudanese conflict, with a total of thirty states and IGOs. As shown by Graph 5, thirteen of these actors were only involved in one mediation effort during this decade. Ten of these actors (Algeria, Angola, Benin, Brazil, France, Germany, Pakistan, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, and Spain) were involved in negotiating the 2004 *Declaration on the Conclusion of IGAD Negotiations on Peace in the Sudan*. The Netherlands, also only involved once, was a signatory to the 2005 *Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Naivasha Agreement)*. Saudi Arabia was involved in a bilateral initiative in December 2003, which ended in the *Jeddah Framework for Peace*.

Graph 5



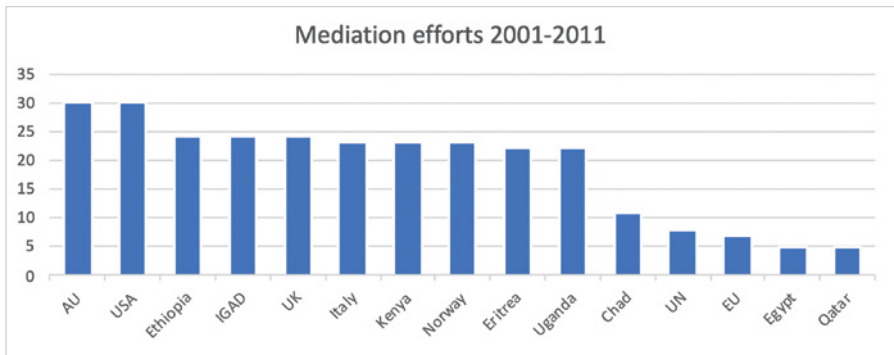
During this period, Western actors became far more involved in mediating the conflicts in Sudan, becoming a second big grouping alongside African actors. Graph 6 shows the fifteen main mediators within this period. During this period, the African Union (AU) and the United States were the most prominent mediators.

The African Union, having transformed into a political union from its predecessor the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), took the lead on a bulk of mediation initiatives regarding the Sudanese conflict. Only the United States came close in the number of mediation efforts. The AU made its first appearance during this period in 2004 immediately after its establishment and at the height of the Darfur crisis. The AU was also a leading mediator during South Sudan's secession from Sudan, the beginning of which is captured towards the end of the period under scrutiny. IGAD and IGAD members, Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda, remained active mediators into this period. While Egypt maintains a similar presence in the Sudan conflict, its neighbour Chad becomes more involved. This is likely because Darfur, and the ensuing crisis there, sits directly on Chad's border with Sudan.

The United States, while having previously played a minimal mediatory role in Sudan, became a key mediator during this period. The United States, which formed the Troika alongside the United Kingdom and Norway, became heavily involved in mediation efforts from 2001. While the United States participated in thirty mediation efforts, this was mainly in support of IGAD- and AU-led initiatives. However, the United States also became more involved in leading mediation efforts during this period, spearheading four efforts in total: both bilaterally and in collaboration with other Western actors. The UN maintained a similar level of activity into this period, either in support of Western and non-Western mediation efforts, or as a sole mediator particularly of conflicts in Darfur and Abyei. As previously mentioned, the United Kingdom and Norway, as part of the Troika, as well as Italy became deeply involved in mediating the Sudan conflict, mostly supporting IGAD-led initiatives. Furthermore, the EU became more active in this period, joining forces with the United States, AU, and UN, as well as working as a sole mediator on two occasions, to broker peace.

Regarding out-of-region non-Western actors, Qatar appears on the scene in 2009 as a key mediator of the Darfur crisis, working for the most part on a bilateral basis in four efforts during this period. This indicates that the Darfur crisis spurred Western and non-Western (non-African) actors to become more deeply involved in mediating conflicts in Sudan.

Graph 6

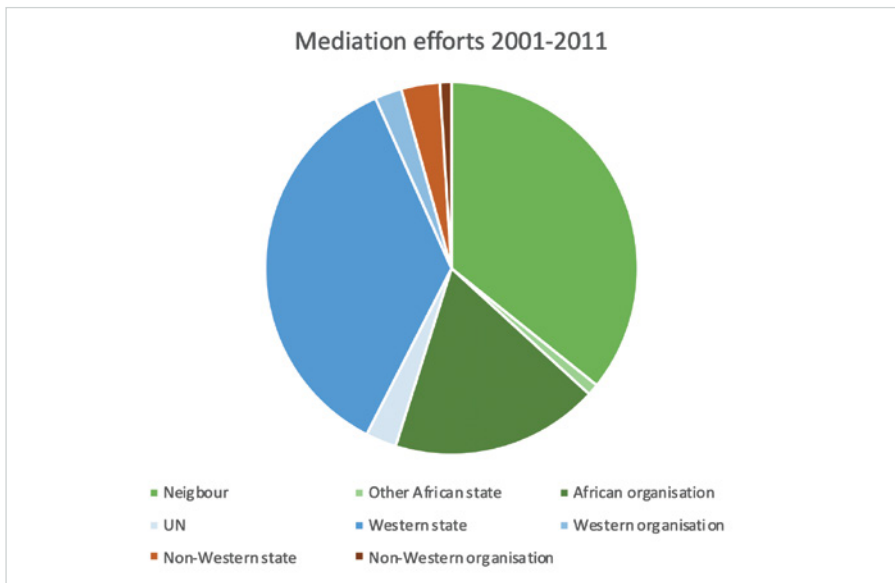


As the discussion above already signals, during this period there was a greater variety in the types of actors involved in mediating conflicts in Sudan. Graph 7 shows that Sudan's neighbours made up around a third of involved mediators, in comparison to around two-thirds in the previous period. Similarly, other African states formed a smaller proportion of those involved in mediating the conflicts in Sudan, going from five percent to one percent. Whereas regional organisations commanded a similar proportion of third-party mediatory activity compared to the previous period. Overall, African actors accounted for more than half the presence in mediation efforts.

The type of actor that saw the most growth during this time was Western states. Between 1988 and 2000, Western states were only marginally involved in mediation (one effort by the US), compared to over a third of mediation efforts conducted by this grouping between 2001 and 2011. Western organisations, such as the EU, did not participate as mediators in the previous period, whereas during 2001 to 2011, these organisations entered the stage.

Non-Western states made up a small proportion of mediation efforts but started appearing as third-party mediators in Sudan. This was mainly because of Qatar's steering of the Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement-Sudan on the Basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, also known as the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which will be explored in greater detail in the section on Qatar's mediation below.

Graph 7



*Period 2012-2023: Sudan*

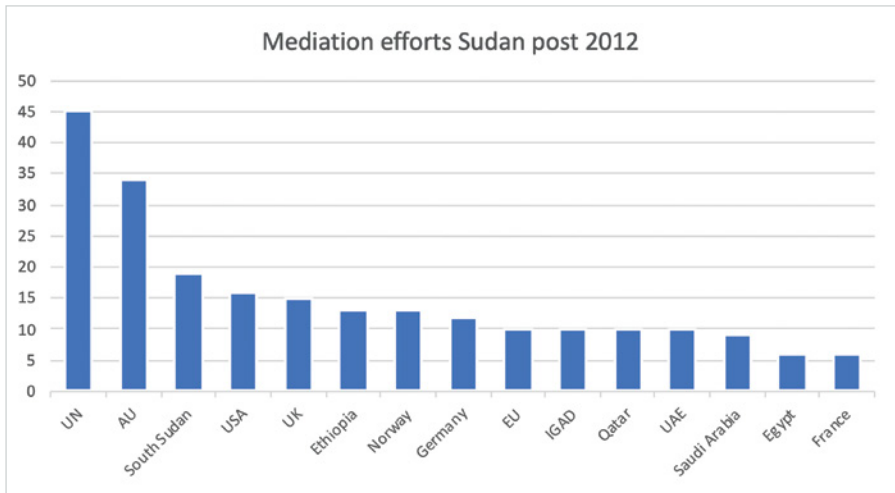
During this period there were fifty-six states and IGOs mediating conflicts in Sudan, which is a dramatic increase on the last period, where there was a total of thirty participating mediators. This indicates that a broader range of states and organisations were keen to be seen as active mediators of the Sudanese conflict, especially after the South's secession. Most of these actors participated in multilateral initiatives, many only appearing once.

Graph 8 shows the top fifteen actors involved in mediation efforts regarding Sudan post 2012, and highlights the prevalence of global and regional IGOs, Western and neighbouring states, and a significant presence from the Arab Gulf countries. While China and Russia, both debatably global powers that have risen to greater prominence in the international system throughout this period, began to engage as mediators in Sudan from 2020, their activity was minimal in comparison to Western, regional, and Arab Gulf actors. The most prevalent mediators are the UN and the AU. However, throughout this period, these actors are often involved separately from one another. While South Sudan is the most notable state-actor mediating the Sudanese conflict and will be explored further in the section on South Sudan below, there are four Western state actors (the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Germany, and France) in addition to the EU that appear amongst the fifteen mediators that engaged most frequently throughout this decade. Ethiopia and Egypt remain amongst the top fifteen most involved mediators, while the other regional actors appear to conduct their efforts as part of IGAD or the AU.

The period 2012 to 2023 gives rise to Arab Gulf states as prominent mediators within the Sudan conflict. These states have become frequently more involved in mediating conflicts in the Arab world, indicated here by the presence of these actors in Sudan and not South Sudan during the same period (see Graph 10 below). Their interest in securing their involvement in Sudan, specifically after the ouster of its leader, al-Bashir, perhaps indicates a broader interest in influencing the political trajectory of the country. The UAE appeared as a mediator in Sudan in 2019 with a bilateral initiative, offering al-Bashir a safe exit from Sudan, as protests against his leadership intensified.

From then on, the UAE participated in key multilateral initiatives to bring peace to Sudan. Similarly, Saudi Arabia appears around the time of al-Bashir's ouster and is involved in multilateral initiatives led by Western actors, regional states, and the UN, also itself having led one of the largest international conferences regarding Sudan in 2020. Further in-depth analysis of the Gulf states' broader activities in the Horn of Africa are explored in a qualitative PeaceRep study by Freer (2023). In this report, we focused on Qatar's mediation of the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan, which are detailed in the dedicated section on Qatar below.

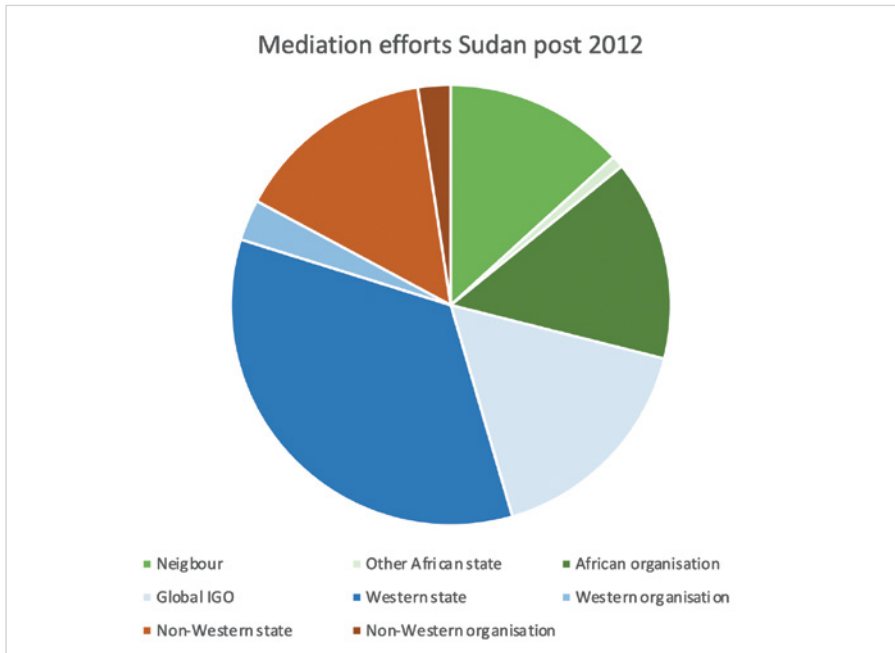
Graph 8



In contrast to previous actor configurations, the types of actors participating as mediators becomes more diverse during this period, as shown by comparing Graphs 9 and 7. According to the type of actor, Western states stand out as the most prevalent category of mediators throughout this period. But this is somewhat deceptive. Neighbouring states – which formed a big section of mediation efforts in the previous period, do not appear as single actors anymore. Only South Sudan and Ethiopia appear in more than ten mediation efforts individually.

Post 2012, neighbouring states seem to mostly participate in mediating the Sudanese conflict in their capacity as members of IGAD or the AU, which are counted as one actor within the database (rather than being disaggregated into their member-states). This means that while regional states are frequently involved in mediating this conflict, they appear less prominently in the statistical analysis describing their prevalence, as seen in Graph 9. This differs from regional activity towards the conflict in South Sudan post 2012 (Graphs 10 and 11), where neighbouring states have taken a more assertive role outside of their capacity as members of regional organisations. This highlights an important area of future research to understand why regional states sometimes act independently and sometimes as a grouping towards regional, and even related, conflicts.

Graph 9



### *Period 2012-2023: South Sudan*

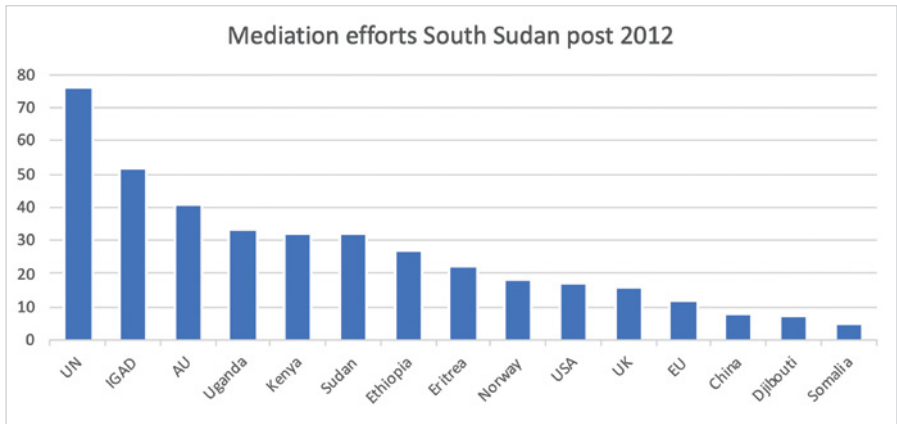
With regards to mediation of the South Sudanese conflict, there were a total of forty-one states and IGOs involved during this period, which was, similarly to the situation in Sudan, a substantial rise in the number of discrete actors participating as mediators compared to the previous period, during which time South Sudan was still part of Sudan.

Graph 10 shows the top fifteen mediators in this period. Whereas in Sudan there was a significant prevalence of non-African mediators, this is contrasted in South Sudan, where almost two thirds of all the mediators were regional states or organisations, as indicated by the green shades in Graph 11. While the UN, as for Sudan, is the most prominent actor in South Sudan, seven of the next most important third parties were the AU, neighbouring states, and IGAD. It is important to note here that while South Sudan's neighbours are members of IGAD, they also participated in their capacity as states as well as members of the regional organisation, which is distinct to their mediatory activity towards Sudan.

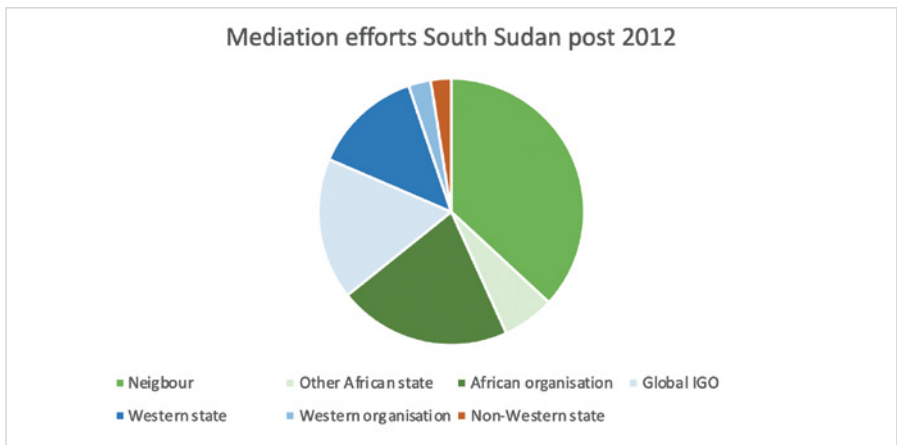
While Western states are much more present as mediators in Sudan, they play a lesser, albeit significant, role in South Sudan, indicated by the presence of the Troika powers (the United Kingdom, the United States, and Norway) in Graph 10.

Of all the out-of-region non-Western actors, China is the only one that features in the fifteen most prominent mediators of the South Sudanese conflict during this period, which is detailed further in the dedicated section on China below. It is important to note that while there were non-regional and non-Western actors who were involved in South Sudan, with the rare exception of bilateral initiatives from Russia in 2015, China in 2020, and Turkey/Türkiye in 2021, these actors only participated in large multilateral initiatives as signatories of declarations of international support for peace in South Sudan and in support of the main mediation efforts led by mainly regional actors.

Graph 10



Graph 11



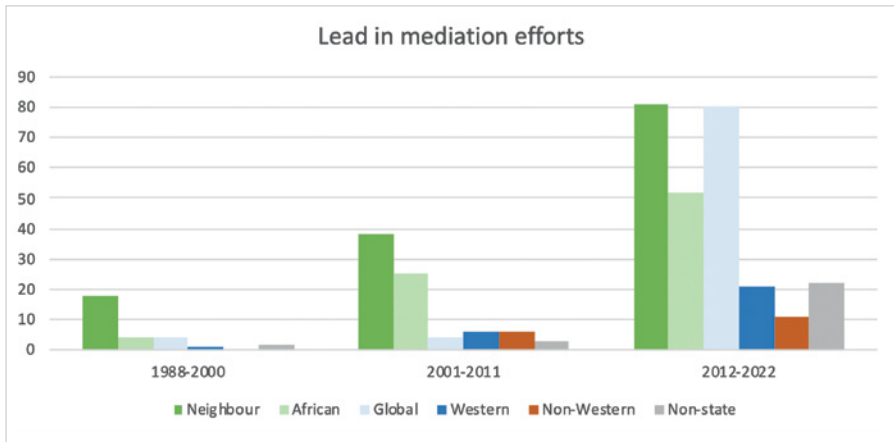
### Who has been Leading Mediation Efforts?

The prevalence of regional, Western, and out-of-region non-Western actors who led mediation efforts over these three periods differed substantially. We consider an actor to have led a mediation effort if they were engaged in a bilateral initiative, or if they steered a multilateral initiative either on their own or in collaboration with other actors. These actors are categorised according to whether they were neighbours (the eleven states surrounding Sudan and South Sudan, with the addition of IGAD), African (other African states and the AU), Western (states and regional organisations), global IGOs, non-Western (states and IGOs), and non-state actors (grassroots organisations, non-state organisations, and individuals). This analysis is split into the same three time periods as the above sections.

Graph 12 shows that the first period was dominated by neighbouring states and IGAD. While this category continues to be most prominent throughout the next two periods, the role of other African actors increases. This is primarily due to the emergence of the AU as an actor.

Western and non-Western states and organisations rise in significance from 2001 onwards. The UN and non-state actors become far more prominent from 2012 onwards, leading more mediation efforts than any other actor, but this is primarily a result of an increasing number of initiatives. The UN led mediation eighty times, which comes close to the eighty-one mediation efforts led by neighbouring states and IGAD between 2012 and 2023. What can be gleaned from this analysis is that the sequential crises in Sudan and South Sudan encouraged a greater number of mediation efforts led by all types of actors, with neighbouring states and IGAD remaining the most prominent leaders of mediation initiatives throughout all three of the outlined periods. Indeed, the Darfur crisis, South Sudan's secession and civil conflict, and al-Bashir's ouster seems to have incentivised Western and non-Western states and organisations, as well as the UN and non-state actors to lead mediation efforts more frequently. But the takeaway message is that while out-of-region actors, both Western and non-Western, appear as lead mediators more often, mediation efforts in both Sudan and South Sudan are still primarily led by either African actors or global IGOs, with out-of-region actors more often in supporting roles.

Graph 12



### Country Profiles: China, Qatar, and South Sudan

#### *China's Mediation in Sudan and South Sudan*

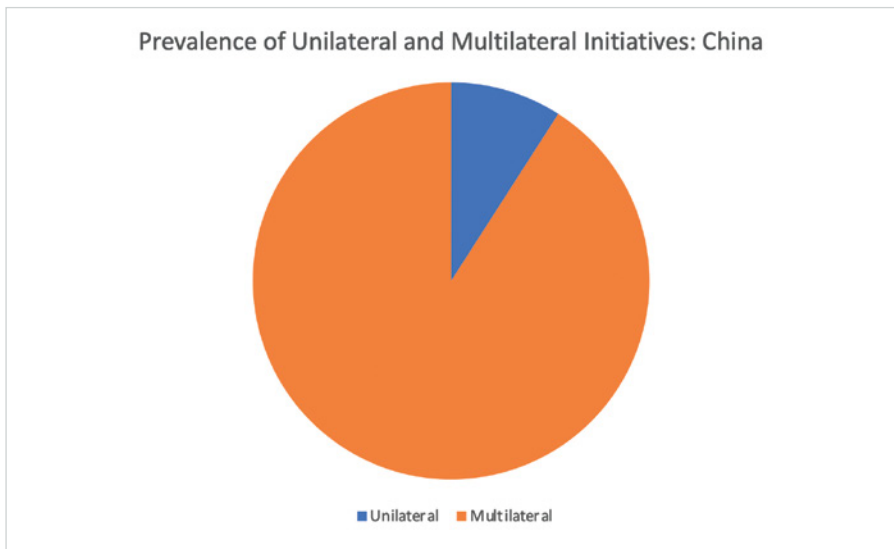
China became involved as a mediator to the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan in 2015 when it became a member of IGAD-plus, a conglomerate of IGAD member-states, non-regional global and medium powers, and key IGOs. China was involved in a total of eleven initiatives, eight of which were regarding South Sudan and the remaining three were towards conflicts in Sudan. During 2015, Beijing was involved in three global multilateral initiatives led by IGAD, during which it was involved in facilitating talks between conflict actors, negotiating agreements with other third parties, putting pressure on the parties to sign the *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*, and signing the document as a third party. The two subsequent instances of involvement from China were in 2017 and 2018.

Both times, China was a witness to agreements. The first was a ceasefire agreement and the second was a revitalised agreement on the 2015 conflict resolution document, which undergirded the South Sudanese peace process from 2018 onwards. China's signing of these two documents came on the heels of mediation by regional actors. In 2018, China also became a donor country to the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM) alongside the Troika (Norway, United Kingdom, and United States of America), South Sudan, Ireland, and Japan. In 2020, China was involved in three mediation efforts. Two of these were large global conferences on peace and political transition in Sudan: the Sudan Partnership Conference, which culminated in a total of \$1.6 billion in pledges towards development and humanitarian funding, and a Friends of Sudan meeting chaired by Riyadh, which culminated in The Partners for Sustainable Peace in Sudan Declaration. The third 2020 initiative China was involved in was a bilateral effort to provide humanitarian assistance and declare support for the establishment of a unified force in South Sudan. Beijing had provided most of the assistance to construct the force's headquarters. China also declared that it would pressure the international community to provide concrete assistance for this purpose to South Sudan. Table 3 (in the appendix) provides an overview of the mediation initiatives China was involved in and the activities Beijing undertook. It includes China's partners within these efforts and indicates the leading mediator in bold.

China has predominantly engaged in mediation on a multilateral basis and has rarely taken the lead within these initiatives, indicated by Graph 13, which shows that over 90% of China's mediation efforts were as part of multilateral initiatives. Beijing has tended to play a supporting role to more active mediators in the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan. From 2015 to 2018 China supported the regional IGAD-led initiatives as a member of IGAD-Plus, which included the Troika powers, European Union, and African Union. As previously mentioned, China also formed part of the donor board for the CTSAMVM alongside several Western actors, South Sudan, and Japan in 2018. From 2020 onwards, China backed the main global multilateral initiatives, which were headed by Western powers and Saudi Arabia.

The 2022 initiative was led by the RJMEC, of which China is one of the few international members, alongside the Troika powers. The sole instance of bilateral action led by China that we could identify, happened in 2020. This was explicitly bringing the parties together and incentivising unification of military forces, through quicker training, equipping, and deployment of a unified security force to prevent further violent escalations in South Sudan. Given China's developmental approach to peacebuilding, it is not uncommon to see Beijing providing aid as part of its mediation efforts with purported justification being to further the peace process, as in this case.

Graph 13

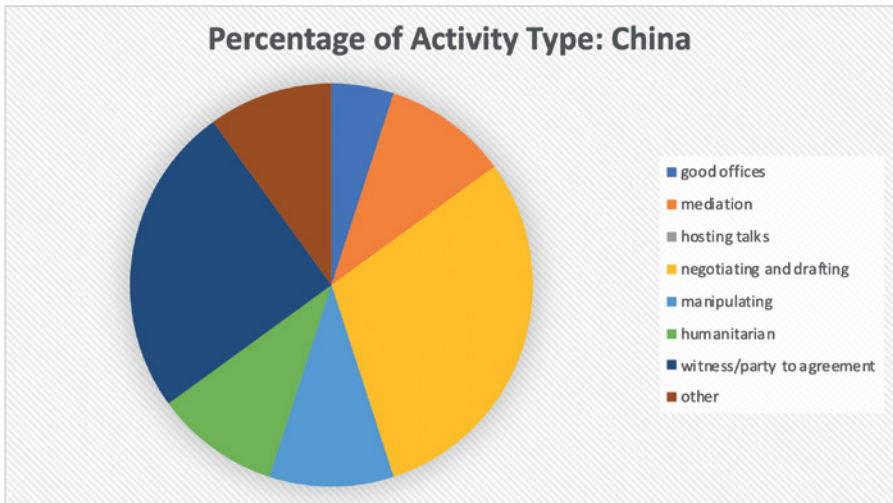


Graph 14



Looking at the type of activities China engages in, there are no major surprises. Given that it predominantly engages in multilateral mediation initiatives where it plays a supporting role to the main mediators, it is unsurprising that China focuses on negotiating and drafting agreements with other third parties, rather than guiding the political peace process directly with the conflict actors and signing the agreements that come from these efforts. According to Graph 15, negotiating and drafting agreements accounts for twenty-five percent of China's mediation activities and signing agreements constitutes thirty percent. In a similar vein, China has never hosted mediation initiatives, nor led multilateral peace processes in Sudan or South Sudan, only having engaged in peace talks with the conflict actors in fifteen percent of cases, representing the instances of mediation and provision of good offices.

Graph 15



### *Qatar's Mediation in Sudan and South Sudan*

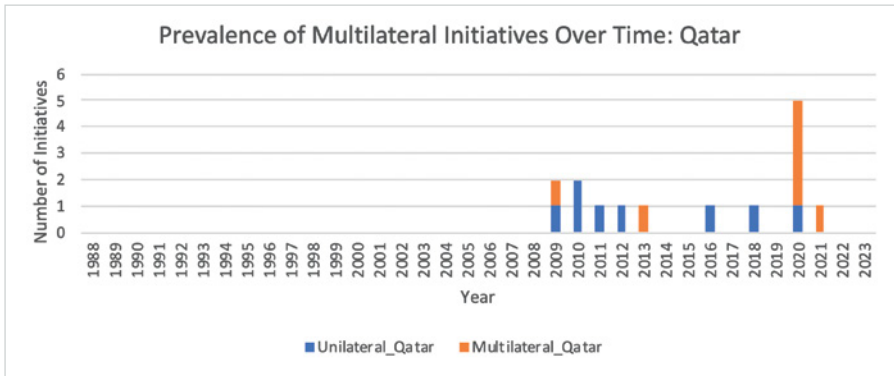
Qatar appeared on the scene in 2009 when it hosted UN/AU mediation efforts in Doha to resolve the Darfur crisis. From then, Doha went on to mediate the Sudan conflict fourteen more times. The Darfur crisis and protracted conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile were the main targets of Qatar's mediation until 2018. Between 2009 and 2018, Qatar was heavily involved in mediating these conflicts in Sudan. Of the nine initiatives regarding the three aforementioned areas Qatar was involved with, seven were bilateral. This is in stark contrast with China (above). Qatar hosted and mediated face-to-face talks between groupings of rebels and the Sudanese government and offered financial incentives to secure the conflict actors' cooperation to various degrees of success. As for China, aid is an important accompanying element in Qatar's mediation efforts.

The two multilateral initiatives Doha was involved with during this nine-year period were supported by the UN and AU. The final multilateral initiative during this nine-year period was in 2013, which culminated in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. After this agreement was brokered by Qatar, the AU and UN, there was a three-year pause until Qatar re-entered as a bilateral mediator of the crises in Darfur, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile areas. Qatar's mediation of these conflicts ended in 2018.

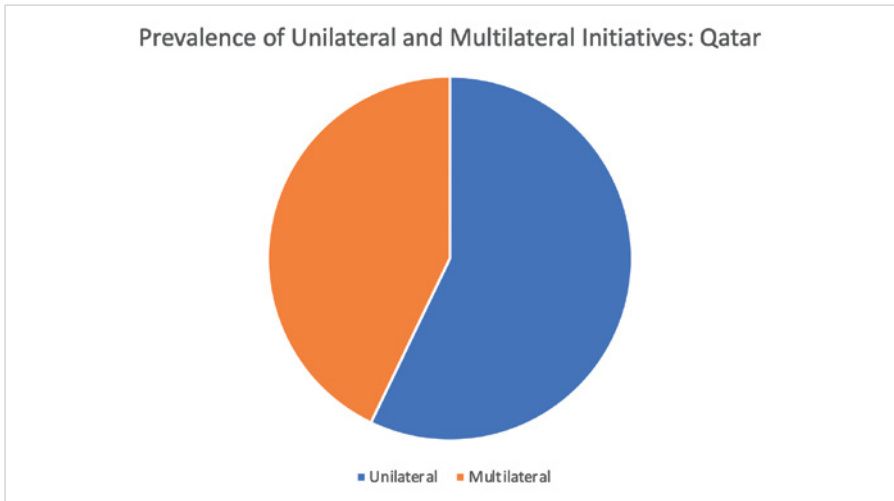
Since 2018, Qatar has participated actively and consistently as part of global multilateral initiatives to resolve crises in Sudan by negotiating resolutions with other third parties and witnessing the signing of multilateral agreements; it stepped back as a bilateral mediator. These multilateral initiatives involved a plethora of actors from the West, the African continent, and other Arab Gulf and non-Western states, as shown in Table 4 in the Appendix. Graphs 16 and 17 depict the prevalence of Qatar's bilateral and multilateral involvement in mediating the Sudan conflict.

The multilateral approach since 2018 diverges from Qatar's mediation strategy towards other conflicts in the Arab region. Barakat (2012) highlights how Qatar tends to mediate bilaterally between conflicting parties, as it did between the USA and the Taliban, and Palestine's Fatah and Hamas. However, in Darfur, Qatar, while playing a key role as the Arab League's representative in mediating between conflict actors, acted alongside AU and UN mediators in 2009. Despite Qatar's multilateral approach to negotiations on Darfur, it acted bilaterally in this context to provide financial incentives to quickly conclude a peace agreement, namely promising US\$2 billion in development aid and the establishment of a development bank for the region in 2010. In a similar regard, in 2014, Qatar provided US\$1 billion in agricultural aid, the product of which would be exported to Qatar. This was regarded by Doha as 'carrots' to encourage peace agreements. Qatar has been perceived to be a successful mediator as it is seen as neutral by Sudan's neighbours and the various international organisations involved. However, the Sudanese opposition have been sceptical of Arab states' initiatives, perceiving them as being pro-al-Bashir and pro-Islamist. Furthermore, talks led by Qatar were accused of not being inclusive enough of marginalised groups, such as civil society groups, IDPs, and women, which has been seen as the cause of failure in previous talks. In short, Qatar's approach to mediating the Darfur Crisis has been to rely namely on incentivising agreements with monetary rewards and hosting talks as a perceived impartial third-party (Freer, 2022).

Graph 16

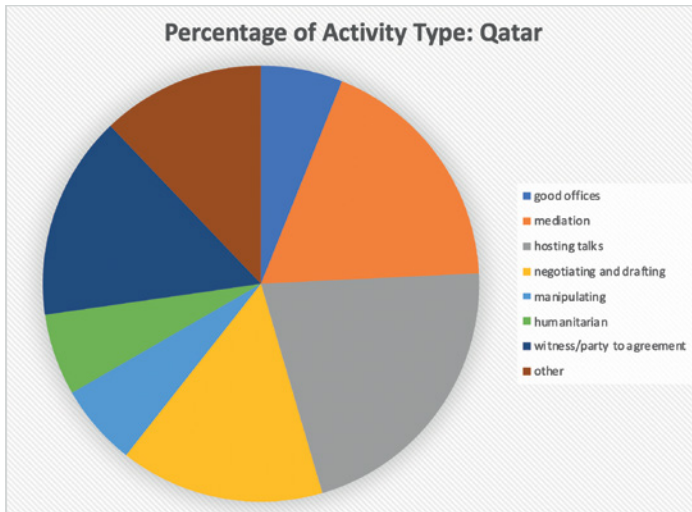


Graph 17



Qatar has deployed a variety of tools throughout its mediation. The three main activities, other than witnessing or being party to an agreement, represented by Graph 18 are: mediating, hosting negotiations, negotiating and drafting agreements with other third parties, and manipulating by offering incentives for compliance with the peace process. This analysis concurs with the trends highlighted by experts on Qatari peacebuilding, particularly in African conflicts, where Qatar has acted largely bilaterally, hosting and being the principal mediator of talks, as well as providing financial and developmental incentives for conflict actors to agree to the terms of an agreement, or to bring them back to negotiations.

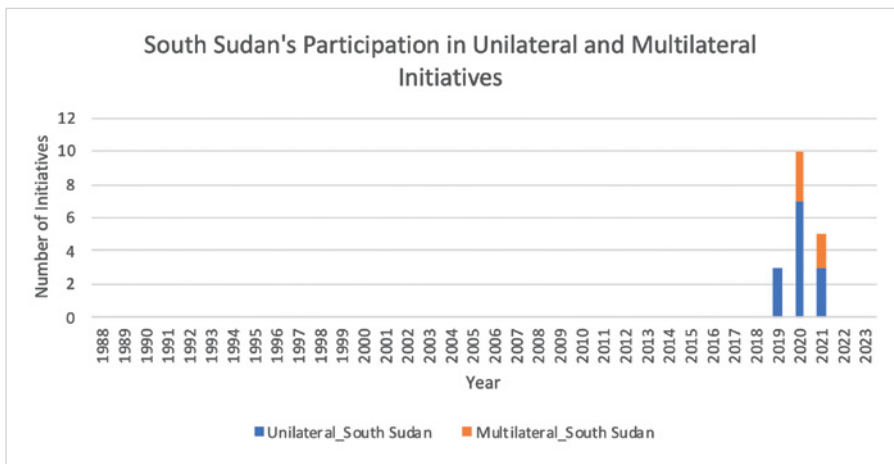
Graph 18



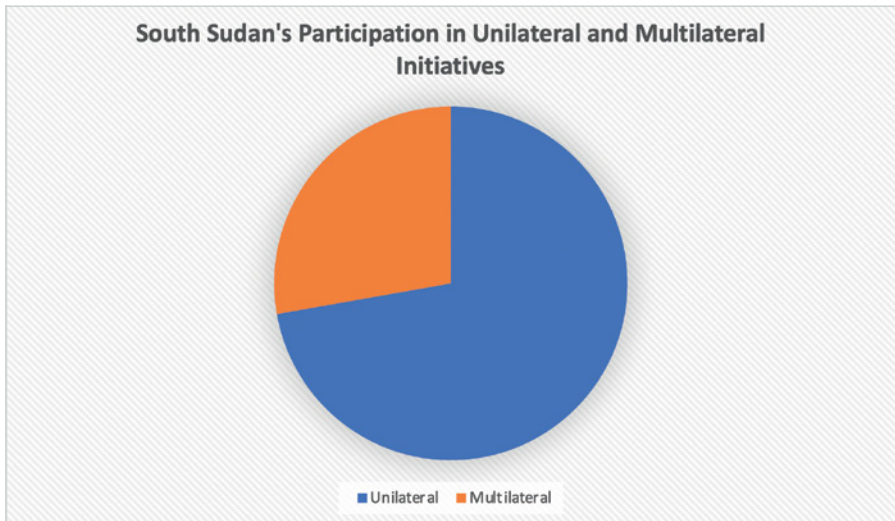
### South Sudan's Mediation in Sudan and South Sudan

South Sudan is one of the main mediators of ongoing crises in Sudan, its neighbour, and the state from which it had seceded. This makes South Sudan not only an interesting example of mediation by a neighbour, but also by a state that had emerged due to the conflict that it is mediating. South Sudan mediated the Sudan conflict nineteen times, thirteen of which were bilateral efforts. It spearheaded the Sudan peace process, known as the Juba process, and political transition after Sudanese leader, Omar al-Bashir's, ouster in April 2019. Across 2020 and 2021, South Sudan led two global peace initiatives and participated in three international conferences on Sudan led by France, Germany, the EU, the UN, and Saudi Arabia. As the youngest state in the world that is also grappling with its own political instability, the fact that South Sudan has led the primary peace process regarding Sudan, largely bilaterally, indicates that mediators do not necessarily require the international political or economic clout attributed to Western or Arab Gulf states to assert themselves as credible mediators. Table 5 in the Appendix provides more details of the initiatives in which South Sudan participated, including a list of the actors it collaborated with in multilateral initiatives and the activities undertaken by Juba.

Graph 19



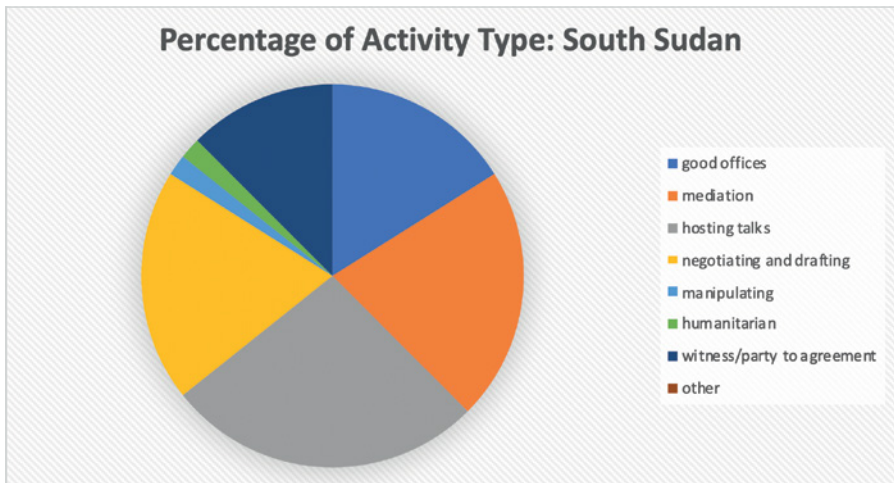
Graph 20



As shown in Graph 21, South Sudan engaged in many activities throughout its mediation efforts. Most importantly, South Sudan played host to the Juba process, provided good offices, such as holding consultative meetings with Sudan's conflict parties, mediating face-to-face talks with these actors, and negotiating and drafting agreements, not only in bilateral fora, but also with other third parties at multilateral initiatives. South Sudan's approach to mediation appears to be relatively successful, as the Juba government utilised its ties to rebel forces within Sudan to bring them to the negotiating table, agree on frameworks towards peace through consultation, and then build on these agreements to form comprehensive peace agreements. Between 2019 and the present day, South Sudan played host to three bilateral initiatives aiming to end the conflict in Darfur and the heavily contested areas of South Kordofan, the Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile.

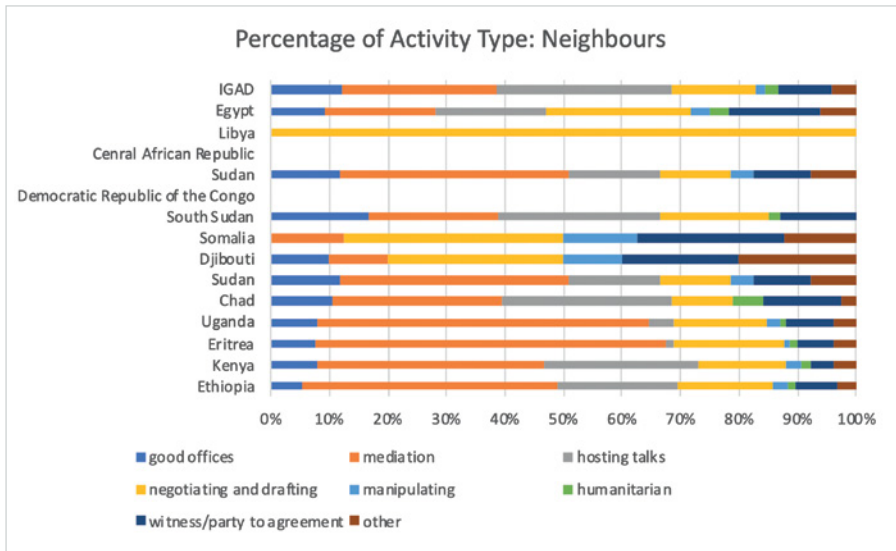
All these efforts ended in the signing of an agreement between the conflict actors, with South Sudan itself only signing the Framework Agreement for Peace in Darfur. The South Sudanese mediators worked with the many rebel factions, at times separately, to negotiate the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan in 2020. While some rebel factions refused to sign this agreement straight away, preferring an alternative peace process led by the religious organisation, Community of Sant'Edigio, the Juba process was eventually accepted by all major rebel factions by 2021.

Graph 21



As Graph 22 shows, South Sudan's approach to mediating the conflicts occurring in its neighbouring country Sudan is largely indicative of many other neighbours, especially with regards to hosting and mediating talks, as well as providing good offices.

Graph 22



## Conclusions

This report and the preliminary dataset underpinning its findings serve as an exploratory study in how we could probe the engagement of various third-party mediators, including non-Western powers, over time. We see this data going hand-in-hand with the in-depth case studies of individual interveners or specific mediation efforts, providing a bigger picture story, but one that needs to be nuanced by deeper exploration of both trends and anomalies.

We conducted our study on the case of Sudan and South Sudan, two states, where non-Western actors have been seen as playing increasingly important roles, potentially supplanting liberal efforts. The two countries were therefore a perfect research laboratory to explore some longer-term trends and draw out any peculiarities of the recent era. Our analysis of the provisional dataset confirmed some qualitative findings in the literature – most notably showing that conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan are primarily a domain of mediation efforts by neighbouring states and regional organisations. But the data also puts into question some other claims – most notably about the increasing authority of out-of-region non-Western actors, especially the role of China and the Gulf states, in mediation processes in the Horn of Africa. While all these actors have become more prominent in mediation efforts over the last decade, they are rarely in the lead on mediation efforts themselves, most often supporting regional initiatives alongside a constellation of Western powers.

The analysis of preliminary data on Sudan and South Sudan signals two important longer-term trends in third-party mediation, which have been mentioned in qualitative studies but would need to be more systematically tested also in other locales. We are seeing both a congestion of mediation efforts and of discrete actors, and an increasing diversification of actors involved in the recent period. While the mediation of the Second Sudanese Civil War/the Darfur Crisis (peak in the mid 2000s) and the South Sudan civil war (around 2013) were more coordinated, with specific key mediators leading and obtaining the endorsement of the international community, this has not been the case with the post-2019 political transition in Sudan. This seems to indicate that mediation efforts are becoming more ad hoc and sporadic reflecting the desire of more actors to influence events around peace and political transitions today. Mediation efforts appear to be much more piecemeal, something that is reflected eventually in the peace agreements.

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## Appendix

China's participation in mediation in conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan: Table 3

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2015	<b>IGAD</b> , Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, UN, United Kingdom, United States of America, EU, Norway	Good offices; mediating; negotiating and drafting
2015	<b>IGAD</b> , Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, UN, United Kingdom, United States of America, EU, Norway	Mediating; manipulating
2015	<b>IGAD</b> , Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, UN, United Kingdom, United States of America, EU, Norway, Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, AU, IPF	Negotiating and drafting; witness or party to an agreement; other activity
2017	<b>IGAD</b> , Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, UN, United Kingdom, United States of America, EU, Norway, Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, AU, IPF, Angola, Ghana	Witness or party to an agreement
2018	<b>IGAD</b> , Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, UN, United Kingdom, United States of America, EU, Norway, Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, AU	Witness or party to an agreement

(cont'd)

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2018	EU, Norway, Ireland, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America	Other activity (funding)
2020	Sweden, African Development Bank, Canada, Egypt, <b>EU</b> , Ethiopia, France, <b>Germany</b> , Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, <b>UN</b> , United States of America, World Bank, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, The Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, African Development Bank, AU, Arab Fund for Social Development, IGAD, IMF, Islamic Development Bank, Arab League	Negotiating and drafting; humanitarian; witness or party to an agreement

(cont'd)

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2020	Sweden, African Development Bank, Canada, Egypt, EU, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, <b>Saudi Arabia</b> , United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, UN, United States of America, World Bank, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, The Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, African Development Bank, AU, Arab Fund for Social Development, IGAD, IMF, Islamic Development Bank, Arab League	Negotiating and drafting; witness or party to an agreement
2020		Manipulating; humanitarian
2020	UN, EU, <b>France</b> , World Bank, AU, Arab League, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, IMF, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Rwanda, Russia, <b>Saudi Arabia</b> , South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America	Negotiating and drafting; humanitarian; witness or party to an agreement

(cont'd)

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2022	<b>RJMEC</b> , Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, AU, IGAD, Norway, United Kingdom, United States of America, EU, UN, IPF	Negotiating and drafting

Qatar's participation in mediation in conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan: Table 4

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2009		Hosting; other (attempt to initiate negotiations)
2009	AU, UN	Leading; mediating; hosting; witness or party to an agreement
2010		Mediating; hosting; manipulating
2010		Mediating; hosting; other activity (break-down of negotiations)
2011		Mediating; hosting; negotiating and drafting
2012		Mediation; hosting; manipulating
2013	AU, UN	Leading; mediating; hosting; witness/party to an agreement
2016		Providing good offices
2018		Mediating; hosting
2020		Humanitarian

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2020	<b>Sweden</b> , African Development Bank, Canada, Egypt, EU, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, UN, United States of America, World Bank	Providing good offices; negotiating and drafting; other activity (discussion about international support for Sudan)
2020	Sweden, African Development Bank, Canada, Egypt, EU, Ethiopia, France, <b>Germany</b> , Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, UN, United States of America, World Bank, Belgium, China, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, The Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, African Development Bank, AU, Arab Fund for Social Development, IGAD, IMF, Islamic Development Bank, Arab League	Negotiating and drafting; humanitarian; witness or party to an agreement

(cont'd)

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2020	Sweden, African Development Bank, Canada, Egypt, EU, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, <b>Saudi Arabia</b> , United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, UN, United States of America, World Bank, Belgium, China, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, The Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, African Development Bank, AU, Arab Fund for Social Development, IGAD, IMF, Islamic Development Bank, Arab League	Negotiating and drafting; witness or party to an agreement
2020	<b>South Sudan</b> , UN, AU, Egypt, EU, Arab League, United Kingdom, United States of America, Norway	Witness or party to an agreement
2021	UN, EU, <b>France</b> , World Bank, AU, Arab League, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, IMF, Netherlands, Norway, Rwanda, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America	Negotiating and drafting

South Sudan's participation in mediation in conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan: Table 5

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2019	UAE	Leading; mediating; hosting
2019		Mediating
2019	UN	Leading; mediating; hosting; witness or party to an agreement
2020		Hosting; negotiating and drafting; witness or party to an agreement
2020		Mediating; hosting; negotiating and drafting
2020		Providing good offices; mediating; hosting; negotiating and drafting
2020		Providing good offices; hosting
2020		Providing good offices; mediating; hosting

(cont'd)

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2020	Sweden, African Development Bank, Canada, Egypt, EU, Ethiopia, France, <b>Germany</b> , Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, <b>UN</b> , United States of America, World Bank, Belgium, China, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, The Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, African Development Bank, AU, Arab Fund for Social Development, IGAD, IMF, Islamic Development Bank, Arab League, Qatar	Negotiating and drafting; humanitarian; witness or party to an agreement
2020	UN	Leading; providing good offices; mediating; hosting; negotiating and drafting; witness or party to an agreement
2020	UN, AU, Egypt, Qatar, EU, Arab League, United Kingdom, United States of America, Norway	Leading; providing good offices; mediating; hosting; witness or party to an agreement
2020		Providing good offices; hosting

(cont'd)

Year	Other actors (lead in bold)	Type of activity undertaken
2020	<b>IGAD</b> , Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, AU	Manipulating
2021	<b>IGAD</b> , Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, UN, AU, EU, RJMEC	Negotiating and drafting
2021		Mediating; hosting; negotiating and drafting
2021		Providing good offices; mediating; hosting; negotiating and drafting; witness or party to an agreement
2021	UN, United States of America	Leading; Providing good offices; mediating; hosting
2021	UN, EU, <b>France</b> , World Bank, AU, Arab League, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, IMF, Netherlands, Norway, Rwanda, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Qatar	Negotiating and drafting
2021		Hosting; negotiating and drafting

## About Us

PeaceRep is a research consortium based at Edinburgh Law School. Our research is rethinking peace and transition processes in the light of changing conflict dynamics, changing demands of inclusion, and changes in patterns of global intervention in conflict and peace/mediation/transition management processes.

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