Call for Papers

Where Is Sudan? The Politics of Visibility, Suffering and International Responsibility

Dedicated to the memory and intellectual legacy of Hamid Khalafallah

Global Development Institute (University of Manchester)
Conference date: 22-24 April 2027 ·

The conference is scheduled for April 2027, with the final format and duration to be confirmed. Online participation will be available, with the possibility of an in-person component at the University of Manchester. Further details will be announced in due course.

Conference

Where is Sudan in contemporary academic, political and humanitarian debates? What determines when its experiences of violence, displacement and political transformation become visible to the international community, and whose accounts shape that visibility?

The ongoing crisis in Sudan raises questions that extend far beyond the immediate humanitarian emergency. It demands critical engagement with histories of political authority, colonialism, economic inequality, resource distribution and international intervention. Understanding Sudan also requires moving beyond narratives of war and suffering to recognise the intellectual, cultural and political agency of Sudanese communities themselves.

This conference seeks to bring together scholars, practitioners and civil society actors to examine Sudan's contemporary realities in relation to their historical and structural conditions. It invites interdisciplinary contributions that challenge established understandings of Sudan, interrogate the politics of international attention and explore alternative visions of its future.

The conference is dedicated to the memory of our late colleague Hamid Khalafallah, whose intellectual contributions and commitment to Sudan have inspired this initiative.

Conference themes

We welcome theoretical, empirical, historical and policy-oriented contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

1- **Political violence, sovereignty and governance**

- State formation, political authority and armed conflict with particular focus on the origin and evolution of SAF, and the paramilitary forces.
- Colonial legacies and postcolonial governance
- Political mobilisation, resistance and revolutionary movements
- Contestations over citizenship, belonging and territorial authority

2- **Humanitarianism and the politics of international visibility**

- International responses to Sudan's humanitarian crisis
- Media representations and the politics of selective attention
- Humanitarian governance and local responses
- International responsibility and regional geopolitics

3- Political economy, land and resources

- Uneven development and structural inequalities
- Resource extraction, land ownership and dispossession
- War economies and transnational economic relations
- Livelihoods, labour and economic survival

4- **Displacement, gender and everyday life**

- Forced migration, displacement and diaspora communities
- Gendered experiences of conflict and political violence
- Education, knowledge production and institutional disruption
- Cultural expressions, memory and everyday forms of resistance

5- Imagining Sudan's futures

- Reconstruction, justice and accountability
- Grassroots political initiatives and civil society
- Peacebuilding and alternative models of governance
- Sudanese intellectual traditions and visions of political transformation

Conference format

The conference will bring together academic researchers and practitioners through thematic panels. We plan to invite two keynote speakers: one from academia and one with direct field experience.

We particularly encourage submissions from Sudanese researchers, early-career scholars, postgraduate researchers, independent researchers and practitioners.

Publication opportunity

Selected abstracts may be invited to be developed into full-length chapters for a proposed edited volume. Further details regarding the publication plans will be announced in due course.

The proposed volume will also engage with Hamid Khalafallah's publicly available scholarship and writings, recognising his intellectual legacy and its relevance to continuing discussions about Sudan.

Submission guidelines

Please submit:

- A proposed paper title
- An abstract of 250–300 words
- A short academic or professional biography of up to 100 words
- Institutional affiliation, where applicable
- Contact details

Submission details

- Abstract submission deadline: Mid-January 2027
- Notification of acceptance: Mid-February 2027
- Registration deadline: Mid-March 2027
- Conference date: 22-23-24 April 2027
- Full chapter submission deadline: Mid-May 2027 (provisional)
- Submission address: sudanresearchconference@gmail.com

Registration: Registration will open in mid-February 2027. The registration fee will range from £50 to £100, with all proceeds donated to humanitarian initiatives supporting Sudanese communities affected by the ongoing conflict.

Sincerely,

Organising Committee