

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome to the visitors' tribune three Sudanese activists from Sudan Uprising, a group which is active here in Germany.

(Applause from the LEFT and the Alliance 90/The Greens)

It was the vast majority of the population itself that overthrew the dictator Omar al-Bashir in Sudan almost a year ago. Millions of people took to the streets and went on strike for their political and social rights.

They defended their revolution against military and militias. This is the good news.

(Applause from the LEFT)

For decades Sudan was ruled by Omar al-Bashir. He deliberately exploited conflicts over pasture and arable land in the province of Darfur to instigate a bloody civil war between different ethnic groups.

Millions were displaced, hundreds of thousands of were killed by Bashir's brutal Janjaweed militias.

German soldiers were sent to Darfur as part of the UN military mission UNAMID. It was said that an international military mission would end this conflict.

UNAMID is the most expensive UN mission of all time and it has not ended the civil war to date.

(shouting from the LEFT: That's right!)

The Left has rejected this mission from the outset.

(Applause from the LEFT)

Since 2016, the EU and the German government have begun to seek cooperation with the dictator Bashir. The Rapid Support Forces, the successor militia to the Janjaweed, played a central role in this process.

The motivation of the EU and the German government was as banal as it was brutal: Bashir was to stop refugees on the borders of Sudan who wanted to migrate to Europe. That was cynical from the outset.

(Applause from the LEFT)

When the mass movement brought down Bashir, it was the Rapid Support Forces that caused a bloodbath of hundreds of demonstrators.

Today, a transitional government is ruling in Khartoum, consisting of civilian forces of the opposition movement on the one hand and military forces of the old regime on the other, including the head of the Rapid Support Forces, Lieutenant General Daglo, known as "Hemeti".

The struggle for political and economic influence in Sudan is in full swing, and regional and major powers are involved, all with their own interests in mind. These are your "Friends of Sudan": the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, among others,

(shouting from the LEFT: Hear! Hear!)

Egypt, the USA, several European countries, including Germany.

I tell you: none of these powers are the true friends of those who carried the revolution last year.

(Applause from the left - Christoph Matschie (SPD): What arrogance!)

In order to justify the renewed mandate for the Bundeswehr mission, the Federal Government is also glossing over the situation in Darfur. Thus, it claims that the situation there has stabilized with the exception of the Marra Mountains.

That is simply not true.

For example, the situation in the western part of the province escalated in December. The Rapid Support Forces' militiamen attacked a refugee camp: over 80 people were killed, 190 injured, tens of thousands fled.

A resident of the attacked camp reported: "This level of violence was like the worst days of the Darfur conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen, as is customary with foreign deployments of the Bundeswehr, the Federal Government is not taking honest stock here. This is unacceptable.

(Applause from the LEFT)

An increased resumption of development cooperation is good. However, the Federal Government's proposal on this issue is a slap in the face for the democracy movement.

(Applause from the LEFT - Christoph Matschie (SPD): What nonsense!)

They act as if the Rapid Support Forces were no longer there, even though they occupy leading positions in the state.

The Left Party says: There must be no carte blanche for the Federal Government to cooperate with these same forces.

(Applause from the LEFT)

In our motion, we call for an end to direct, but also indirect cooperation between the German government and the EU with the Sudanese military and the Rapid Support Forces.

(Applause from the LEFT)

In its Sudan motion, the grand coalition demands support for the economic reform process. This sounds harmless; but it is nothing more than a diplomatic paraphrase of the IMF's demand for cuts in subsidies for wheat, fuel and medicine.

Let us remember: these are the very measures that the Bashir regime implemented. This led to the doubling of the price of bread and mass protests.

Instead of passing on the debts from the Bashir period to the population by means of a austerity mandate, we want the debts to be finally cancelled.

(Applause from the LEFT)

We want development cooperation that is geared towards the needs of the population and not to the neoliberal logic of the IMF or the interests of German or other international companies.

We do not want cooperation on migration and security policy that strengthens the forces of the old regime.

And we say no to the participation of the Bundeswehr in the UNAMID mission.

(Applause from the LEFT)

Finally, one more thing: Lower Saxony has lifted the deportation stop to Sudan due to the euphemistic assessment of the situation by the Foreign Office. This is fatal and causes great concern to many Sudanese living here.

We say it clearly: there must be a comprehensive stop to deportations to Sudan. We on the left will continue to fight for this.

(Applause from the LEFT)