

## **Civil disobedience campaign empties streets of Sudan's capital**

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Opposition and protest groups had called for workers to stay at home after security forces stormed a protest camp on Monday, killing dozens and dealing a blow to hopes of a peaceful transition after ex-President Omar al-Bashir's removal in April.

***A Sudanese protester holds a national flag as he stands on a barricade along a street, demanding that the country's Transitional Military Council hand over power to civilians, in Khartoum, Sudan June 5, 2019. (Reuters)***

**Khartoum:** A campaign of civil disobedience to demand civilian rule left the streets of Sudan's capital Khartoum largely deserted as the working week began on Sunday, while police fired tear gas to disperse protesters in Khartoum North, witnesses said.

Opposition and protest groups had called for workers to stay at home after security forces stormed a protest camp on Monday, killing dozens and dealing a blow to hopes of a peaceful transition after ex-President Omar al-Bashir's removal in April.

The raid came after weeks of wrangling between the military council that took over from Bashir and the Declaration of Freedom and Change Forces (DFCF), an opposition alliance, over who should steer a transition leading to elections.

On Sunday morning few pedestrians or vehicles could be seen in the capital's streets. Public transport was barely functioning and most commercial banks, private companies and markets were shut.

***FILE – In this June 3, 2019 file photo, a protester flashes the victory sign in front of burning tires and debris on road 60, near Khartoum's army headquarters, in Khartoum, Sudan. (AP)***

Some state banks and public utility offices were working normally.

“We will not go back to work until the (Sudanese Professionals) Association announces the end of the strike,” said Ahmad al-Noor, a 46-year-old employee at a private foodstuffs company. The SPA, which spearheaded the anti-Bashir protests, is part of the DFCF.

“Sudan must be governed by a civilian government,” Noor said.

At Khartoum airport, where very few flights were operating, travellers crowded the departure hall. Most travel agencies were closed because of an internet outage, and ticket prices soared.

State news agency SUNA said Khartoum airport was “operating normally” and reported “complete attendance of employees in different airport units”.

In Khartoum North, across the Blue Nile from the centre of the capital, police fired tear gas to scatter protesters. There were no reports of casualties.

Demonstrators have been trying to barricade roads in the capital over recent days as a way of sustaining the protest movement.

Also on Sunday, a well-known Sudanese banking expert rejected his appointment by the TMC as deputy governor of the central bank, he said.

Mohamed Ahmed Bushra turned down the job "because the current conditions the country is going through and the failure to form a transitional civilian government make it difficult for the central bank to arrange policies to address the economic crisis," he told Reuters.

Sudanese state TV meanwhile reported that a senior commander of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Mohamed Abdallah, had been replaced.

Witnesses said the RSF, whose leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo is deputy head of the Transitional Military Council, led last Monday's raid.

Opposition medics said that 20-year-old Ayman Osama died on Sunday after he was shot in the chest at a road barricade in Omdurman, across the Nile from central Khartoum.

That brought the opposition's death toll to 118 in the storming of the camp outside Khartoum's Defence Ministry and subsequent security crackdown. The government has put last week's death toll at 61, including three members of the security services.

- Reuters