# ICJ rejects Sudan’s bid to hold UAE accountable for West Darfur genocide



An attempt by Sudan’s government to hold the United Arab Emirates (UAE) legally accountable for acts of genocide in West Darfur has been dismissed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In a decisive vote of 14 to 2, the court ruled it had no jurisdiction over the matter, and by a narrower margin of 9 to 7, voted to remove the case entirely from its list.

The ongoing civil war in Sudan, which has persisted for two years, has resulted in myriad accusations against the UAE for allegedly supplying arms to the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF), seeking to destabilise the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) under the command of General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. However, the UAE, when it signed the genocide convention in 2005, included a reservation stipulating that it would not permit disputes regarding the interpretation and application of the convention to be resolved at the ICJ.

Yuji Iwasawa, the president of the ICJ, stated that while the Sudanese government claimed that the RSF had committed serious human rights violations—including extrajudicial killings, ethnic cleansing, and rape—the UAE's reservation was explicitly worded and did not conflict with the genocide convention's aims. The court expressed its "deep concern" over the loss of life and suffering caused by the conflict in West Darfur.

The ruling was largely anticipated and represents another diplomatic win for the UAE as it seeks to deflect ongoing allegations of its involvement in the civil war, which has been marked by violence and humanitarian crises. A report from a UN panel of experts published on 29 April found no evidence linking the UAE to the arming of the RSF.

After the ruling, the UAE's Deputy Assistant Minister for Political Affairs asserted, “Today’s decision represents a resounding rejection of the Sudanese Armed Forces’ attempt to instrumentalise the court for its campaign of misinformation.” He asserted that the UAE bears no responsibility for the conflict and that the documented atrocities are the result of the actions of the warring factions. He emphasised the need for the international community to focus on humanitarian aid and to facilitate the establishment of a civilian-led government in Sudan as a basis for lasting peace.

The ICJ's decision has evoked controversy among some observers. Recently, a group of prominent international jurists, aligned with the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, offered support for a legal opinion stating that broad reservations to Article IX of the genocide convention should be deemed invalid. They contended that allowing states to exempt themselves from the genocide convention’s judicial mechanisms undermines both the integrity of the convention and the effectiveness of the international legal system.

Currently, 153 states are signatories to the genocide convention, with 16—including the UAE—having made blanket reservations. The UK has been vocal in its stance against such reservations, arguing they may conflict with the convention's intended purpose. The Wallenberg Centre’s opinion concluded with a call for the ICJ to require participating states to be accountable in court for significant cases such as genocide, emphasising that these states should not be allowed to dictate the terms of judicial proceedings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://apnews.com/article/b517981f245af2ca864a2f5b8ca58d55> - This article reports on the International Court of Justice's dismissal of Sudan's case against the UAE, highlighting the court's lack of jurisdiction due to the UAE's reservation under the Genocide Convention.
* <https://apnews.com/article/ef029a14e87224bb40bff32aecca1702> - The article discusses the UN's condemnation of external parties, including the UAE, for supplying weapons to Sudan's warring factions, exacerbating the conflict and humanitarian crisis.
* <https://apnews.com/article/857a66e660bf9ea8417e8e32c097e7c8> - This piece details Sudan's allegations against the UAE at the International Court of Justice, accusing it of violating the Genocide Convention by supporting the Rapid Support Forces.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/uae-flights-flood-airstrip-un-says-supplies-weapons-sudan-rebels-2024-12-12/> - The article reports on UAE flights suspected of delivering arms to Sudan's Rapid Support Forces, raising concerns about the UAE's involvement in the conflict.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudan-uae-clash-un-security-council-over-sudan-civil-war-2024-06-18/> - This report covers the confrontation between Sudan and the UAE at the UN Security Council over allegations of UAE's support to Sudan's warring factions, highlighting the diplomatic tensions.
* <https://www.siasat.com/uae-dismisses-sudans-claims-of-complicity-in-genocide-at-icj-3191165/> - The article presents the UAE's response to Sudan's allegations at the ICJ, where the UAE dismisses the claims as misleading and seeks immediate dismissal of the case.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2025/may/05/sudan-fails-in-attempt-to-make-uae-accountable-for-acts-of-genocide> - Please view link - unable to able to access data