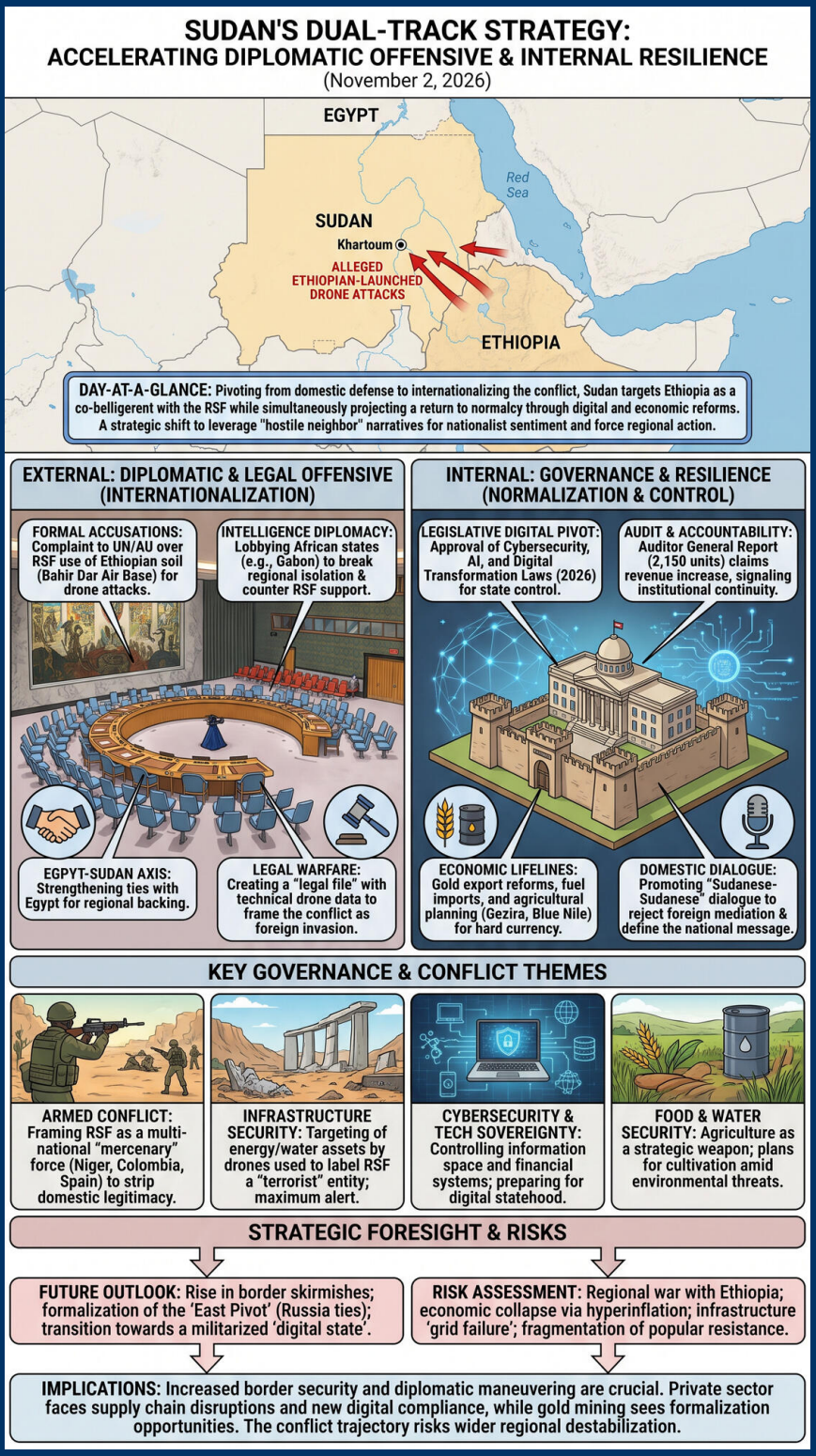
TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

NOVEMBER 2, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

NOVEMBER 2, 2026

SUDAN ACCELERATES DIPLOMATIC AND LEGAL OFFENSIVE AGAINST ETHIOPIA AMID ESCALATING CROSS-BORDER DRONE CONFLICT AND STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE TARGETING

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

Sudanese state narratives on November 2, 2026, were dominated by a decisive shift toward internationalizing the conflict, specifically targeting Ethiopia as a co-belligerent alongside the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the transitional government issued formal complaints to the UN Security Council and the African Union, providing alleged technical evidence of **drones launched from Ethiopian soil** targeting critical energy and water infrastructure. This shift suggests a strategic pivot: the SAF is attempting to leverage "hostile neighbor" narratives to consolidate domestic nationalist sentiment and force regional bodies to move beyond their current mediation frameworks, which Khartoum views as inadequate or biased.

Simultaneously, the government is intensifying efforts to project an image of "return to normalcy" and institutional resilience. This is manifested in the presentation of the Auditor General's report, the push for "Sudanese-Sudanese" dialogue, and a legislative flurry concerning **cybersecurity and digital transformation**. By emphasizing administrative functions and agricultural planning in "safe" states like the Blue Nile and Northern State, the SAF-led government aims to delegitimize the RSF's territorial claims while securing economic lifelines through gold export reforms and fossil fuel imports. The convergence of these events indicates a dual-track strategy of military attrition and diplomatic legal warfare.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Formal Accusations Against Ethiopia:** Sudan filed a complaint with the UN Security Council and the AU, alleging the **use of Ethiopian territory** by the RSF to launch suicide drones against civilian and service facilities inside Sudan. Technical data allegedly extracted from downed drones indicates launches from the **Bahir Dar Air Base** in Ethiopia.
- **Legislative Digital Pivot:** The Council of Ministers approved three significant bills: the **Cybersecurity Regulation Law**, the Data and AI Regulation Law, and the Digital Transformation Regulation Law for 2026.
- **Intelligence Diplomacy:** Sovereignty Council Chairman Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan met with the Director of **Gabonese Intelligence**, Gerard Ngami Ngay, to discuss security cooperation and counter-terrorism in the region.

- **Domestic Dialogue Framework:** The "Sudanese-Sudanese Dialogue" committee met with media leaders to refine the "national message" and emphasize **local ownership of peace** to reject foreign intervention and tutelage.
- **Audit and Accountability Claims:** The Auditor General submitted a comprehensive report for the fiscal year 2025-2026 to Al-Burhan, covering **2,150 government units** and claiming a significant increase in national revenue despite wartime conditions.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization The military narrative shifted to emphasize the **multi-national nature of the enemy**. General Yasir Al-Atta claimed the RSF is utilizing mercenaries from Niger, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Northern Somalia, and **even Colombia** and Spain. This framing is designed to strip the RSF of its domestic identity and recast the conflict as a foreign **colonialist invasion** of Sudan.

Critical Infrastructure Security The targeting of power and water stations has become the primary metric for the SAF to label the RSF as a "terrorist" entity. The Council of Ministers **condemned drone attacks** launched from Ethiopia, describing them as crimes against humanity intended to cripple the civilian service sector. Provincial governors were directed to **maximum alert levels** to protect strategic installations.

Diplomacy & Statecraft Sudan is aggressively seeking to break its regional isolation. The meeting with the Gabonese Intelligence Director signaled an attempt to **lobby African states** within the AU, where Sudan currently faces failure to secure enough votes to overturn its suspension. Additionally, Egyptian condemnation of RSF drone attacks provides Khartoum with its most **consistent regional ally** in international forums and the UN.

Food & Water Security Agricultural "stability" in the Gezira and Blue Nile regions is being treated as a strategic weapon. Plans are underway to **cultivate 400,000 acres** of wheat in Gezira this season. However, water security is threatened by "environmental pollution" and structural damage to irrigation in the Zaidab.

Cybersecurity & Tech Sovereignty The approval of laws on AI and cybersecurity indicates a government effort to control the **information environment** and protect government financial systems from RSF-aligned cyber-attacks. The focus on **digital transformation** during a kinetic war suggests the SAF is preparing for long-term administrative control of "liberated" territories via digital means.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Ethiopian Border as a Secondary Front The recurring theme of Ethiopia as a launch point for drones marks a significant escalation in regional tensions. Khartoum is no longer just complaining about border disputes (Fashaga) but is alleging direct **military support for the militia** by allowing Ethiopian bases like **Asosa and Bahir Dar** to be used by "Colombian and Spanish" technical operators supporting the RSF. This narrative serves to justify potential Sudanese military responses across the border under the **right of self-defense** and sovereignty.

Delegitimizing International Mediation There is a coordinated media push to frame international mediation (specifically the "Five" group and Western-led efforts) as an attempt to **impose a "foreign mandate"** on Sudan and its people. By promoting the "Sudanese-Sudanese Dialogue" committee, the government is creating a counter-platform that excludes political factions it deems "agents of the militia," thereby narrowing the path to any peace deal that would **compromise SAF dominance**.

Normalization through Bureaucracy The government is using routine state functions—such as the **Auditor General's report** and the 70th anniversary of **Sudanese-Russian relations**—to signal that the state apparatus remains functional and superior to the RSF's decentralized control. The claim that the Audit Bureau reviewed **over 2,100 units** during a total war is intended to project **institutional continuity** and fiscal health to international lenders.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

Domestic focus is currently fixed on the "Popular Resistance" (Mustanfareen) and the **reconstruction of the social contract** through tribal and communal support. In the Blue Nile and Kordofan regions, local tribes are being mobilized not just for combat, but for **agricultural production** as a form of "dignity" resistance. However, the reliance on these localized forces risks long-term fragmentation once the central conflict concludes.

The government is also managing **internal displacement** via "Voluntary Return Committees" in areas like Shambat (Bahri). While framed as a triumph of SAF security, these returns are often to **heavily damaged neighborhoods** where residents are used as human shields or to demonstrate a "liberated" status for propaganda purposes. The psychological toll is addressed via "mental health missions" for youth, acknowledging the **trauma of the war** on the populace.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Khartoum is actively navigating a **multipolar strategy**, deepening ties with Russia while simultaneously engaging with Egypt and the Arab League to maintain a veneer of traditional diplomatic legitimacy. The celebration of **70 years of relations with Russia** highlights a pivot toward Moscow for military and industrial support, including **gold mining technology** and grain processing. This is a direct challenge to Western sanctions regimes, as Sudan seeks partners who do not condition support on **civilian democratic transitions**.

The relationship with Ethiopia is reaching a **breaking point**. By naming Ethiopia as a drone launch site, Sudan is inviting the international community to view Addis Ababa as a destabilizing actor. This posture aligns with Egypt's interests, potentially creating a **Sudan-Egypt axis** against Ethiopian regional **hegemonic ambitions** and the Nile Dam.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic focus is shifting from survival to **monetizing existing resources** under SAF control. The government is moving to "unify gold pricing" with global standards to incentivize **legal exports** through the Central Bank, bypassing the black markets that have

historically funded various factions and militias.

- **Fuel Imports:** The Sudanese Petroleum Corporation announced the arrival of **three tankers** carrying 120,000 tons of **refined petroleum products** into Port Sudan.
- **Gold Reform:** Directives were issued to **review transfer ceilings** and export restrictions to facilitate gold flows through formal channels.
- **Agricultural Output:** Targeted cultivation of **950,000 acres** in the Blue Nile, including cotton and sesame, to generate **hard currency** exports.
- **Revenue Performance:** The Auditor General claimed an **increase in national revenues** due to the "electronic receipt" (E-Receipt) system implementation in federal units.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Personnel shifts reflect a consolidation of **loyalists and intelligence-led diplomacy**. The appointment of new ambassadors to critical posts (Russia, Iraq, Australia, DRC) indicates a relaunch of the **diplomatic corps** after a year of paralysis.

- **Muawiya Othman Khalid:** Appointed as Ambassador to **Russia**, a pivotal post for military and mining cooperation.
- **Othman Al-Tayeb:** Appointed as Ambassador to **Iraq**, likely to secure regional energy partnerships.
- **Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Mufaddal:** The Director of the **General Intelligence Service (GIS)** is taking a leading role in diplomatic meetings (e.g., Gabon), signaling the **militarization of foreign policy** and intelligence.
- **Darfur/Kordofan Tribal Chiefs:** Emerging "winners" are those aligning with the SAF's **Popular Resistance** (Mustanfareen), receiving state recognition and **administrative resources** in return.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The editorial hierarchy was strictly nationalistic and SAF-centric. The lead story throughout the day was the **Ethiopian drone threat**, framed as an existential assault on the Sudanese state. This was followed by administrative "victories," such as the **Audit report** and legislative approvals, designed to show the government's competence compared to the "chaotic" RSF. Military victories were portrayed through **communal support rallies** rather than purely kinetic updates, emphasizing the "People's Army" concept. Notably **omitted** were any reports of SAF setbacks, internal logistics failures in the Gezira, or the full extent of the **famine conditions** reported by UN agencies, which were minimized in favor of "successful harvest" planning stories.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The transcripts reveal a hardening of the "Axis of Resistance" versus "State of Evil" (UAE/Ethiopia) framing. Sudanese state media is now openly categorizing regional neighbors as **complicit in war crimes**.

- **Ethiopia:** Portrayed as a **lawless launchpad** for foreign-operated drones. "The use of Ethiopian territory to target Sudanese land is a hostile act" by the regime.

- **Egypt:** Framed as the **steadfast brother** and strategic depth. "Egypt's security is part of Sudan's security" is the mantra.
- **Russia:** Portrayed as a **principled partner** that respects sovereignty. "Russia's position is stable in support of the legitimacy of **state institutions**" and the SAF.
- **USA/West:** Depicted as **inept or malicious**, attempting to bypass Sudanese sovereignty through "international mandates" and failing to gain African votes in the UNSC.
- **UAE (Implicitly "State of Evil"):** Framed as the **financier of mercenaries** from Colombia and Spain who operate technical weaponry for the militia.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The government is seeding the narrative that the RSF is no longer a Sudanese force but a **foreign mercenary corps**. By naming specific foreign nationalities (Colombia, Spain, Niger), they aim to **dehumanize the opposition** and delegitimize their political claims.
- **The "National Truth" Committee:** The use of the "Sudanese-Sudanese Dialogue" as a media filter. This committee is tasked with ensuring all "nationalistic" outlets **broadcast a unified message** that rejects foreign mediation as "tutelage" on the state.
- **Ethiopian Drone Technicality:** Detailed release of alleged **GPS coordinates (1.7km inside Ethiopia)** and drone models (Baikar/Kinji) to create an **irrefutable "legal file"** for international consumption, even if the data remains unverified.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Conflict Expansion:** Hypothesize that the SAF may initiate **limited cross-border strikes** or support Ethiopian opposition groups (such as Fano or TPLF factions) if drone attacks from Ethiopian soil continue.
- **Gold-for-Arms:** With the new gold pricing and Central Bank reforms, expect an **increase in weapons procurement** from Russia or other Eastern Bloc partners, bypassing Western financial systems.
- **Internal Legitimacy War:** The SAF will likely hold a "National Conference" in Port Sudan or Khartoum (Bahri) soon, using the "Sudanese-Sudanese Dialogue" results to **form a new government** that completely excludes the RSF.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a **sharp rise in border skirmishes** with Ethiopia. The mobilization of "Popular Resistance" units in the Gadaref and Blue Nile regions will likely increase in anticipation of **cross-border drone retaliation**. Domestically, the government will likely use the new **Cybersecurity Law** to crack down on social media accounts supporting the RSF within Sudan.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): A **formalization of the "East Pivot."** The 70th-anniversary celebrations with Russia will likely culminate in new **bilateral security agreements**, possibly including the long-discussed Russian **naval logistics center** on the Red Sea. The agricultural season in the Blue Nile and Gezira will be the primary metric for the **government's survival capacity** into 2027.

Long Term (1-5 Years): Sudan may transition into a **permanently militarized "digital state."** The focus on AI, data regulation, and cybersecurity during the war suggests an intent to build a **highly surveilled society** where legitimacy is derived from the SAF's role as the **guardian against "foreign" and "mercenary" threats** to the nation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Regional War with Ethiopia:** The risk of direct military confrontation with Ethiopia is high. **Triggers** would be a successful SAF strike on an Ethiopian drone launch site or a major civilian casualty event in Sudan from an Ethiopian-launched drone. **Likelihood:** Moderate-High. **Impact:** Catastrophic regional destabilization. **Mitigations:** Immediate AU/Egypt mediation and a **joint border monitoring** force.
- **Economic Collapse via Inflation:** Despite audit claims of revenue growth, the war-torn economy faces **hyperinflation risk**. **Triggers** would be the failure of the **winter wheat season** or a total disruption of gold exports from the Gezira. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Severe famine and total loss of government mandate. **Mitigations:** Implementation of the **gold pricing reforms** and securing Gulf financial aid.
- **Infrastructure "Grid Failure":** Continued drone strikes on power and water. **Triggers** would be a strike on a **major hydro-dam** or the national transmission hub in Khartoum. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Mass urban exodus and inability to maintain hospitals. **Mitigations:** Rapid deployment of **anti-drone systems** (likely Russian) and decentralization of the power grid.
- **Fragmentation of the "Popular Resistance":** Armed tribal groups (Mustanfareen) may turn into **localized warlords**. **Triggers** would be a decrease in central military funding or ethnic tensions between **allied tribal militias** in Kordofan. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Chronic low-level civil war across all states. **Mitigations:** Strong **integration programs** into the formal military and administrative oversight.
- **Cyber Warfare Disruption:** RSF or their foreign backers may use **AI-driven disinformation** or hacking to disrupt the E-Receipt system. **Triggers** would be a **major data breach** of the Ministry of Finance for 2026. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Loss of fiscal control and public trust. **Mitigations:** Urgent implementation of the **new Cybersecurity Law** and technical **partnerships with Russia/ China**.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **RSF Capabilities and Governance:** The transcripts provide zero information on the **RSF's administrative actions** or civilian life in areas they control (e.g., Nyala, Madani). This leaves a massive blind spot regarding the **viability of a rival state**.
- **Famine Severity:** While agricultural plans are touted, the **actual current hunger levels** and the failure of aid delivery to RSF-held or contested areas are completely **unreported**.
- **Internal SAF Factions:** There is no mention of **disagreement within the SAF high command** regarding the "East Pivot" or the escalation with Ethiopia, which historically are **contentious issues**.

- **Verification of Foreign Mercenaries:** The claim of "Colombian and Spanish" mercenaries remains **entirely unverified** by independent sources, potentially serving as a **psychological operation** to discredit the RSF.
- **Casualty Counts:** SAF-aligned media consistently omits **military casualty figures**, focusing only on civilian "martyrs," which prevents an accurate assessment of the **attrition rate**.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Ethiopian Threat" as a Diversion: The intense focus on Ethiopia may be a **manufactured crisis** to distract from significant SAF territorial losses in the West or center. By creating a foreign villain, the Al-Burhan government can justify **declaring a full state of emergency**, suspending even the minimal civilian governance remaining, and consolidating **totalitarian control**.

Administrative Collapse Hidden by AI Laws: The rush to pass cybersecurity and AI laws might not be about modernization, but about **covering for the total breakdown** of physical state records. If the government has lost its paper trail and physical control of ministries, it may be **inventing a "digital state"** as a placeholder to maintain **the illusion of governance** for international organizations.

Black Swan Event: The "Wagner" Return: A highly unlikely but catastrophic scenario would be a formal **re-entry of Russian private military companies** into the conflict under a new name, specifically targeting the Ethiopian border. This could trigger a **wider East-West proxy war** in the Horn of Africa, pulling in the US and the EU on the side of **Ethiopian "stability."**

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Increase **border monitoring** and electronic warfare capabilities along the Sudan-Ethiopia corridor to counter **drone proliferation**.
- **Diplomatic:** Leverage the "Sudanese-Sudanese" dialogue framework to **bypass stalled international processes**, but ensure it remains inclusive enough to gain **Arab League backing**.
- **Economic:** Prioritize **securing the Gezira Scheme's** winter season as the primary domestic **stabilization mechanism**.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Expect significant **disruptions at the Ethiopian border** and potentially the Port Sudan-Khartoum transit route due to **maximum alert status**.
- **Regulatory:** Companies involved in digital services or data must immediately **audit compliance** with the new **2026 Cybersecurity and AI Laws** to avoid "collaboration" charges.
- **Capital Allocation:** Gold mining interests should look for **new JV opportunities** as the government attempts to **formalize the sector** through the Central Bank.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The Council of Ministers held a high-level session in Khartoum (or the temporary capital) to address **national security via lawmaking**. The primary focus was on

establishing a **digital legal fortress** against the RSF and external threats.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**
  - **Cybersecurity Regulation Law (2026):** Designed to centralize the protection of **government networks** and criminalize "digital sabotage" and misinformation.
  - **Data and AI Regulation Law (2026):** Establishes **state sovereignty over national data** and regulates the use of AI in national security contexts.
  - **Digital Transformation Law (2026):** Mandates the move of all **government services to digital platforms** to ensure continuity despite physical territorial losses.
  - **Political Parties Law Reform:** Recommended 68 amendments to the 2007 law to **ban hate speech** and ensure parties align with the **SAF's national security** priorities.
- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**
  - **Auditor General Briefing:** Public presentation of the FY2025/26 audit, emphasizing revenue recovery successes.
  - **Sudanese-Sudanese Dialogue Media Summit:** Press event focused on **countering foreign "tutelage"** narratives in mediation.
  - **Animal Production Investment Conference:** Announcement of **3,000 European cattle** for the Nile states to boost meat exports.

KEY STORIES

- **Ethiopian Drone Complaint:** Sudan formally charges Ethiopia at the UNSC with **staging drone attacks** from Bahir Dar Air Base that **killed children** and hit power stations.
- **Auditor General Report:** Submission of a report for **2,150 government units** to Al-Burhan, claiming high E-Receipt compliance and **revenue increases** during wartime.
- **Yasir Al-Atta Speech:** General Al-Atta addresses "Popular Resistance" groups, claiming the RSF is a **colonialist mercenary project** using Colombian and Spanish specialists.
- **Gabon Intelligence Meeting:** Al-Burhan meets Gabonese spy chief **Gerard Ngami Ngay** to discuss **African security coordination** and intelligence.
- **Digital Transformation Laws:** Cabinet approval of laws regulating **AI, Cybersecurity, and Data** as part of a **2026 national pivot** to tech.
- **Gold Export Reforms:** New policies to **unify prices** with global markets and remove **export barriers** to aid reconstruction.
- **Gezira Winter Season:** Launch of a plan to plant **400,000 acres of wheat** despite the conflict disruption.
- **Sinnar Printing House Reopened:** Restoration of the **Education Printing Press** in Sinnar to print school **books and exams** post-RSF retreat.
- **Shambat Voluntary Return:** Commemoration of the **return of displaced persons** to Bahri neighborhoods and **social support ceremonies** for veterans.

- **Sudan-Russia 70th Anniversary:** Diplomatic events in Moscow celebrating 70 years of ties, focusing on **mining, trade, and industrial** cooperation.
- **"Waridi" Blood Drive:** Medical students launch a **national blood donation campaign** ("My Vein") for wounded **SAF soldiers** and civilians.
- **White Nile Women's Prison Project:** Opening of the "Gate of Hope" for **vocational training** for female inmates in Kosti.
- **Zaidab Irrigation Crisis:** Environmental warning regarding **rising groundwater and pollution** in the historic Zaidab agricultural project.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. To learn more or subscribe to our free daily newsletters, visit https://blog.gdeltproject.org/announcing-our-new-daily-todays-trends-on-capitol-hill-todays-media-trends-newsletter-briefings/. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at https://blog.gdeltproject.org/ and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at https://archive.org/details/tv.