FairSquare

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
King Charles Street
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23 October 2026

Subject: Follow-up request re: role of the UAE in Sudan and UK sanctions

FairSquare is writing to follow-up on our previous submission to the FCDO, dated 7 April 2026, in which we called on the UK government to examine the role of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, in providing support to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan and consider the imposition of sanctions under the Sudan (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020. We are making this request in the run-up to the one-year anniversary of the El Fasher massacre, and in light of highly significant independent findings that conclusively identify the UAE as the key external actor in the Sudan conflict.

In its response to FairSquare of 30 April 2026, the FCDO stated:

"*Over a dozen states are enabling the conflict or supplying weapons. As the Foreign Secretary made clear in her statement on 19 February, 'We urgently need an end to arms flows. Reports into breaches of the [UN] arms embargo which we agree should be extended and enforced, must be investigated.'*"

The UK government's inference is that there is no need for it to investigate the UAE's specific role in the conflict, since it is just one of numerous states fueling the conflict in Sudan. However, the evidence detailed in our original submission, which is drawn from multiple highly credible organisations, clearly suggests that the UAE is by far the most significant external actor, and on 3 September 2026, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan published a report that provides further conclusive evidence of this.

In its report, titled "Fuelling Sudan's conflict: weapons, fighters and external support networks", the UN Fact-Finding Mission repeatedly identifies the UAE as the main culprit in the provision of weapons, fighters and supplies to the RSF.

The 20-page report is replete with references to the UAE's role and clearly indicates that the UAE is managing interconnected air, land, and maritime supply routes linking individuals and entities located in Chad, southeastern Libya, and Puntland in Somalia.[1]

The UAE is further referenced in relation to the provision of weapons, drones and logistical support, transit and facilitation, the recruitment of Colombian contractors, transit routes, training, and operational deployment.[2] The report provides numerous significant examples. Paragraph 84 of the report states, for example:

"The evidence identified Bosaso, Somalia, as a recurring logistical hub and transit point used by external actors to date, including United Arab Emirates-based individuals and entities, for personnel and cargo destined for Rapid Support Forces-controlled areas. Sources described Ilyushin-76 cargo flights linking Bosaso, Kufra, Benghazi, and Chad from which cargo and personnel were subsequently transferred into Sudan. Witnesses further reported that United Arab Emirates-based individuals and entities maintained facilities in Bosaso, including a military base through which foreign contractors transited."

The UN Fact-Finding Mission mission issued the following conclusion:

"Based on the totality of the evidence…the mission finds that individuals and entities operating from, registered in, or linked to the United Arab Emirates played a significant role in networks involved in the recruitment, financing, transportation and deployment of foreign military contractors and the provision of military-related support benefiting the Rapid Support Forces. This support sustained Rapid Support Forces' military operations during a conflict marked by serious violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and the commission of international crimes. This was particularly clear in El-Fasher." [3]

The report also makes clear the responsibilities of national governments in investigating those responsible for providing support to parties guilty of crimes under international law:

"The nature, scale and persistence of external support raise serious concerns regarding compliance with the Darfur arms embargo and other applicable international law obligations. They warrant further investigation, including by competent national authorities, regarding the responsibility of individuals and entities that knowingly provided assistance contributing to international crimes."[4]

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[1] Report of the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan, 1 September 2026, para 72.
[2] Ibid., paras 74, 80, 86, 90.
[3] Ibid., paras 125 and 126.
[4] Ibid., para 127.

An international humanitarian organisation with a presence on the ground in Sudan and Chad has provided FairSquare with updated information concerning the current state of the conflict.

The evidence provided demonstrates the escalation in fighting around El Obeid with both sides launching ground and drone attacks as well as continued fighting in Blue Nile, drawing in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Shifting frontlines are putting civilians at risk from direct attack and displacement, with fleeing civilians facing risks of execution, abductions and sexual violence. Fighting in Blue Nile and in Ethiopia is causing people to flee across the border from, and into, Sudan. The analysis concludes that no peace process will make progress without engaging the sponsors of conflict.[5]

We welcome the positive steps the UK government has taken in sanctioning entities linked to the UAE in July 2026. However, as the UN Fact Finding Mission makes clear, external actors and in particular the UAE, are sustaining the operations of the RSF, and they call for urgent action to "pursue accountability across the full chain of responsibility— including those who commit, order, finance, supply or otherwise facilitate international crimes."

October 26 will mark the one year anniversary of the start of the RSF attack on El Fasher. This was found by the UN fact-finding mission to bear the "hallmarks of genocide". The UK's Permanent Representative to the WTO and UN, said this was a "chilling assessment we cannot ignore". If the UK government accepts the UN Fact-Finding Mission's assessment of the nature of the abuses at El Fasher, it must also accept the UN Fact-Finding Mission's assessment of the UAE's central role in driving those abuses and the broader conflict, and act on its call for urgent action to "investigate individuals and entities involved in illicit military support to the parties, and impose targeted sanctions on those implicated in violations"[6]. As we outlined in our April 2026 submission, there is a strong body of evidence to suggest that Sheikh Mansour Al-Nayhan is a key interlocutor with the RSF. The UN Fact-Finding Mission's report bolsters our call that the UK government should investigate his role in more detail with a view to the imposition of sanctions.

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas McGeehan
Director, FairSquare



[5] Confidential briefing provided to FairSquare by an international humanitarian organisation, October 2026.
[6] Report of the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan, 1 September 2026, para 133.