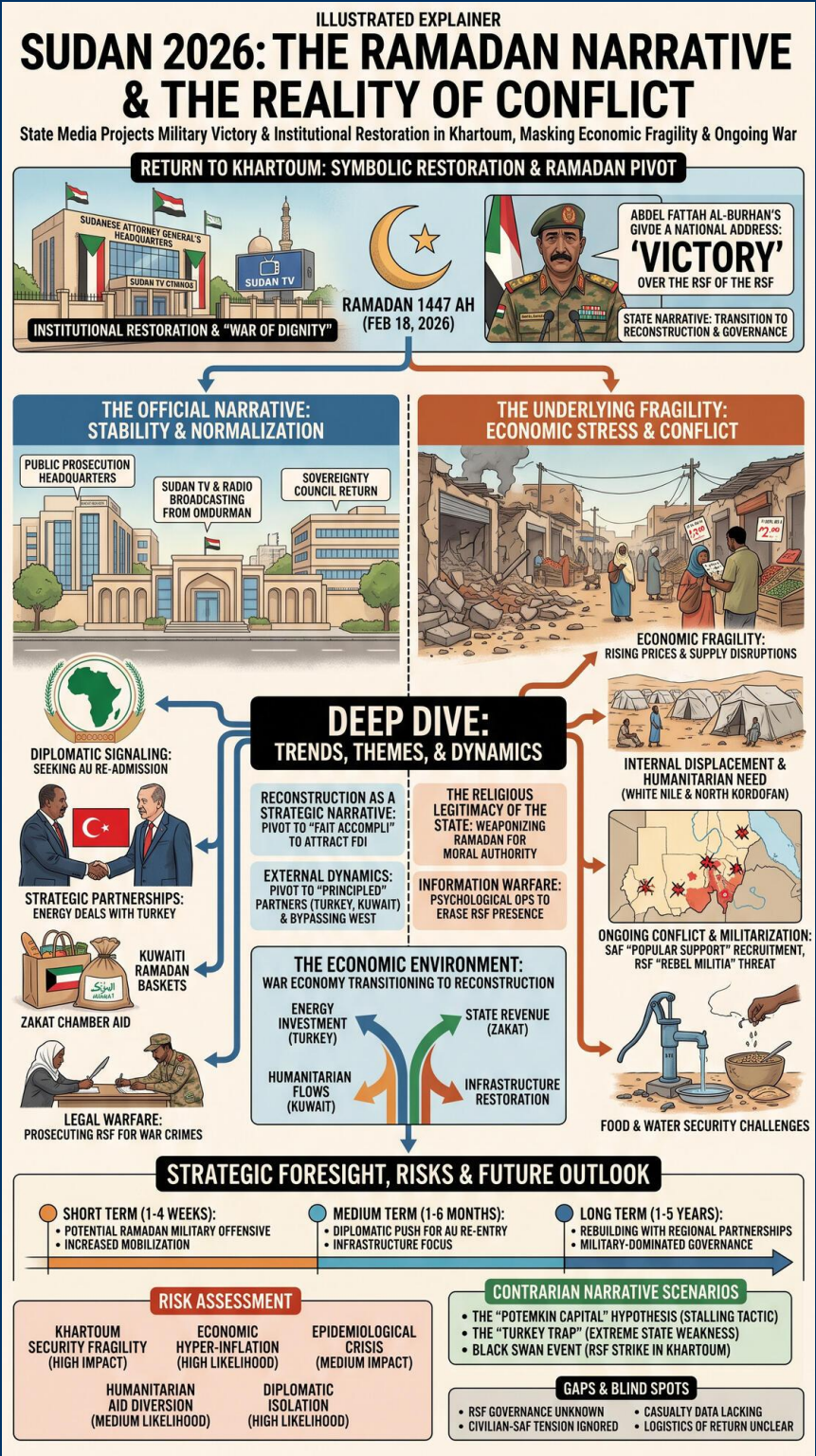


TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

SUDAN

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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SUDANESE STATE MEDIA
LEVERAGES THE START OF
RAMADAN TO PROJECT A
NARRATIVE OF MILITARY VICTORY
AND INSTITUTIONAL RESTORATION
IN KHARTOUM, MASKING
PERSISTENT ECONOMIC FRAGILITY
AND ONGOING CONFLICT.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The Sudanese state narrative on February 18, 2026, is dominated by the symbolic and physical "Return to Khartoum." The start of Ramadan 1447 AH serves as a pivot point for the military-led government to signal a transition from active defense to reconstruction and governance. The high-profile [relocation of the Attorney General's headquarters](#) from Port Sudan back to the capital, alongside the return of Sudan TV broadcasts to Omdurman, is framed as an irreversible marker of the Sudanese Armed Forces' (SAF) success in the "War of Dignity." This institutional restoration is intended to project stability to both domestic audiences and the international community, specifically targeting the African Union (AU) as Sudan seeks to end its diplomatic suspension.

However, beneath the veneer of normalization lies a state heavily dependent on external patronage and humanitarian aid. Major diplomatic and economic activity centers on [energy and oil exploration agreements with Turkey](#) and large-scale food aid from Kuwait. The government is aggressively using the "reconstruction" narrative to court foreign investment, even as the transcripts acknowledge significant "destruction and sabotage" caused by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), referred to consistently as the "rebel militia." The convergence of religious observance and state propaganda suggests a strategic effort to consolidate public support during a period of high economic stress, characterized by [rising prices and supply chain disruptions](#) in traditional markets like Omdurman.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Institutional Restoration of the Capital

- The Public Prosecution officially [inaugurated its return to Khartoum](#), moving operations from the temporary capital in Port Sudan back to its permanent headquarters.
- Sudan TV and Radio resumed broadcasting from [renovated studios in Omdurman](#), a move hailed by the Minister of Culture and Information as a defeat for the "rebel militia's" attempts to silence the state.
- The return of the "Sovereignty Council" and government ministers to Khartoum is being presented as proof that the [state has not collapsed](#).

Deepening Strategic Ties with Turkey

- Sudanese energy officials met with the Turkish "B-Way" group to discuss immediate [investments in oil exploration](#), field services, and refinery rehabilitation.
- The Minister of Energy praised the "distinguished relations" with Turkey, highlighting ongoing cooperation in [electricity and power infrastructure](#).

Ramadan 1447 AH Commences Amidst Conflict

- The Islamic Fiqh Council announced Wednesday, February 18, 2026, as the [first day of Ramadan](#), a declaration immediately followed by a national address from Sovereignty Council Chairman Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.
- Burhan framed the holy month as a [period of "victory"](#) for the Sudanese people and the military over the RSF.

Diplomatic Signaling to the African Union

- Prime Minister Kamil Idris met with the [Swiss Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa](#), Stefan Stier, to discuss peace initiatives and the protection of civilians.
- A significant portion of the diplomatic discourse focused on [Sudan's return to the African Union](#), with the government arguing that its institutional presence in Khartoum warrants a reversal of its current suspension.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The SAF continues to label the RSF as a "terrorist/rebel militia" and is actively [recruiting and training "popular support" units](#) to assist in the defense of liberated areas.
- Military leaders are emphasizing the "War of Dignity" as a struggle for national survival, using media to [document RSF atrocities](#) and celebrate SAF "martyrs."

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- The transition of Prime Minister Kamil Idris into a more visible diplomatic role suggests an effort to [civilianize the face of the government](#) while the military retains control over the Sovereignty Council.
- Internal governance is focused on [recovering "war remnants"](#)—specifically stolen civilian vehicles—as a way to restore public trust in the rule of law.

Food & Water Security

- The "Ramadan Basket" initiative, supported heavily by Kuwait, is the primary [food security strategy](#) for the month, targeting 80,000 beneficiaries across seven states.
- The Zakat Chamber is playing a critical role in distributing aid to [orphans and widows](#) in the Blue Nile and North Kordofan regions.

Legal Warfare & Regulatory Risk

- The Attorney General's office is prioritizing the [prosecution of war crimes](#) and international humanitarian law violations, creating a legal framework to delegitimize the RSF on the global stage.

- A "National Committee for Investigation" is actively [documenting crimes](#) to prepare for future international or domestic trials.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

Reconstruction as a Strategic Narrative

The government is pivoting from a "war footing" to a "reconstruction footing" to signal the end of the RSF's viability. By focusing on [reopening the Omdurman market](#) and restoring the [national broadcaster](#), the state is attempting to create a "fait accompli" regarding its control over the capital. This narrative is essential for attracting the foreign direct investment (FDI) required to sustain the economy, particularly from partners like Turkey who are interested in long-term infrastructure and [energy projects](#).

The Religious Legitimacy of the State

The start of Ramadan is being weaponized to grant the military moral authority. State media is saturated with imagery of the military protecting the faithful and [distributing aid](#). By framing the war as a defense of the "dignity" and "values" of the Sudanese people, the government seeks to drown out criticism of its own role in the conflict's devastation. The repeated calls for ["victory" in Ramadan](#) suggest a planned military offensive or a desire to achieve a decisive psychological breakthrough during the holy month.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The government's primary internal challenge is the massive displacement of its population and the breakdown of local commerce. While

the "return to Khartoum" is touted, transcripts reveal that [thousands remain in displacement camps](#) in White Nile and North Kordofan, facing "harsh conditions." The reliance on the [Zakat Chamber and international NGOs](#) to provide basic sustenance indicates that the state's own social safety nets are largely non-functional. There is a palpable effort to maintain "popular support" through the ["People's Committee for Supporting the Armed Forces,"](#) suggesting that the military is aware of the need to keep the civilian population mobilized and invested in the conflict to prevent internal dissent.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Sudan is portraying itself as a resilient state emerging from a crisis, rather than a failing state. The framing of the ["outside world"](#) is bifurcated: hostile actors (implied supporters of the RSF) and "principled" partners (Turkey, Kuwait, Switzerland). The government is leveraging its strategic position on the Red Sea and its mineral wealth to [forge new alliances](#) that bypass traditional Western pressure. The diplomatic push toward the African Union is a defensive reaction to [external shocks](#)—specifically the AU suspension—which the government views as a major hurdle to its international legitimacy and access to multilateral funding.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Sudanese economy in early 2026 is a "war economy" transitioning toward a reconstruction model, characterized by heavy state intervention and reliance on strategic bilateral partnerships. Inflation and supply chain instability remain critical risks, as

evidenced by the [varying prices](#) and "noise" reported in newly reopened markets.

Key Economic Vectors

- **Energy Investment:** Turkey's B-Way group is actively negotiating [oil exploration and refinery rehabilitation](#) contracts.
- **Humanitarian Capital Flows:** Kuwaiti aid, specifically the "Ramadan Basket," represents a [significant injection of food commodities](#) into the local market, potentially stabilizing prices for the month.
- **State Revenue:** The Zakat Chamber continues to be a primary vehicle for [wealth redistribution and social spending](#), targeting the most vulnerable populations.
- **Infrastructure Restoration:** Government spending is focused on [railway and bridge repair](#) as essential precursors to broader economic recovery.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day's reports highlight a consolidation of the current military-civilian leadership structure, with a focus on institutional continuity.

- **Abdel Fattah al-Burhan:** Remains the central figure of authority, using the [Ramadan address](#) to reinforce his role as the "Commander-in-Chief" and head of the Sovereignty Council.
- **Kamil Idris (Prime Minister):** Emerging as the primary [diplomatic interlocutor](#) for the state, handling high-level meetings with European and regional envoys.
- **Intisar Ahmed Abdel-Al:** As the [Attorney General](#), she is leading the "legal war" against the RSF and overseeing the symbolic return of the judiciary to Khartoum.

- **Ibrahim al-Bez'i:** Head of the General Authority for Radio and Television, spearheading the [return of state media](#) to the capital.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The editorial posture is overtly nationalistic and pro-government. The **Lead Stories** are the [announcement of Ramadan](#) and the [return of the Attorney General](#) to Khartoum. These are presented with a tone of "inevitable victory" and "restored dignity." **Buried Stories** include the actual status of the conflict in RSF-held areas, the total casualty count of the war, and the specifics of the current economic inflation. The tone is highly reassuring, intended to project a sense of "normalcy" to a population weary of conflict. **Conspicuous Omissions** include any mention of internal political friction between the military and civilian wings of the government, or any detailed report on the humanitarian crisis in areas currently beyond SAF control.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The Sudanese media frames the international environment as a battleground between those who respect Sudanese sovereignty and those who facilitate its destruction.

COUNTRIES and LEADERS

- **Turkey:** Portrayed as a **principled and competent strategic partner**. The "distinguished relations" and [cooperation in energy](#) are framed as a model for Sudan's future international engagements.

- **Kuwait:** Characterized as a **brotherly and generous friend**. Their aid is seen as a ["bridge" of solidarity](#) during the holy month.
- **Switzerland:** Framed as a **competent and neutral mediator**. The Swiss envoy's visit is used to show that Sudan remains [open to dialogue](#), provided its institutional legitimacy is respected.
- **African Union (AU):** Portrayed as **skeptical and potentially inept** for maintaining the suspension of a state that is demonstrably [restoring its institutions](#).

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **RSF (Rapid Support Forces):** Consistently framed as **chaotic, corrupt, and "rebel militias."** They are the [sole antagonist](#) in the national narrative, responsible for all "sabotage and destruction."
- **World Bank:** Mentioned in the context of [funding for the health sector](#), framed as a necessary partner for the "reconstruction" phase.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The Sudanese government is expertly using the "media return" to Omdurman to conduct a **psychological operation** against the RSF. By broadcasting from the capital's twin city, they are signaling that the RSF's physical presence is being erased. The ["We Have Come to You" \(Jinakum\)](#) slogan used by the broadcaster is a direct message of restoration. Furthermore, the [meticulous documentation of the Attorney General's return](#) is a form of "narrative seeding"—establishing a record of institutional continuity to counter any

international claims that the state has lost its mandate to govern. The "delta" between media spin and ground truth is likely the security of Khartoum; while the media projects total control, the emphasis on ["cleaning up war remnants"](#) suggests that the city remains a volatile and dangerous environment.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Ramadan Offensive:** The heavy symbolic investment in "Ramadan victory" suggests that the SAF may be planning a [major military offensive](#) during the holy month to capitalize on high nationalistic fervor.
- **Diplomatic Normalization Push:** Sudan will likely use the return of its institutions to Khartoum as a primary leverage point to demand the [reversal of its AU suspension](#) by mid-2026.
- **Pivot to the East:** Continued [economic engagement with Turkey](#) and other "non-Western" partners will accelerate, as Sudan seeks to insulate itself from Western sanctions or pressure.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a surge in military activity and "popular mobilization" events during Ramadan. Food prices will remain under pressure despite aid, and the [relocation of further ministries](#) to Khartoum will continue.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The focus will shift to large-scale infrastructure projects. If the security situation in Khartoum holds, the government will push for the [return of foreign embassies](#) to the capital.

Long Term (1-5 Years): Sudan will attempt to rebuild its economy through [energy partnerships](#) and regional trade, while likely maintaining a military-dominated governance structure "stabilized" by civilian front-men.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Khartoum Security Fragility:** The "return to the capital" is a high-risk symbolic move. **Triggers:** A successful RSF counter-attack or large-scale bombing of a restored institution. **Likelihood:** Medium. **Impact:** High—would shatter the "normalization" narrative. **Mitigations:** Heavy military presence and ["clearing" of remnants](#).
- **Economic Hyper-inflation:** Despite aid, the cost of reconstruction is immense. **Triggers:** Failure of the Turkey energy deals to materialize or a total collapse of the Sudanese Pound. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** High—could lead to [civil unrest](#). **Mitigations:** Subsidized ["Ramadan Baskets"](#) and Zakat distributions.
- **Epidemiological Crisis:** The focus on war often masks health crises. **Triggers:** An outbreak of [Hepatitis B](#) or other communicable diseases in displacement camps. **Likelihood:** Medium. **Impact:** Medium. **Mitigations:** Targeted [health training and vaccination campaigns](#).
- **Humanitarian Aid Diversion:** High risk of aid meant for "martyrs' families" or "displaced persons" being weaponized. **Triggers:** Reports of aid [only reaching SAF-affiliated groups](#). **Likelihood:** Medium. **Impact:** Medium—would damage ties with donors like Kuwait. **Mitigations:** Independent [oversight by NGOs](#).

- **Diplomatic Isolation:** Failure to re-enter the AU. **Triggers:** AU demand for a full civilian transition that the military [refuses to meet](#). **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Medium. **Mitigations:** Continued [engagement with neutral actors](#) like Switzerland.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **RSF Governance:** The broadcasts provide zero information on how the RSF is governing the territories it still controls, which is necessary to gauge the total state of the country.
- **Civilian-SAF Tension:** The transcripts present a unified front, but historical context suggests significant [friction over the "day after" the war](#).
- **Casualty Data:** There is a total lack of hard data on civilian and military [casualties](#), which is essential for a real risk assessment of societal stability.
- **Logistics of the "Return":** While the "Attorney General" moved, the transcripts do not explain how the [thousands of rank-and-file civil servants](#) will be housed or paid in a destroyed capital.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Potemkin Capital" Hypothesis:** The return to Khartoum is a **desperate stalling tactic**. The military knows it cannot win a war of attrition and is creating the appearance of control to force a favorable peace settlement before the economy totally collapses. The high-profile [relocation of the Attorney General](#) is the centerpiece of a PR campaign rather than a functional governance move.

- **The "Turkey Trap":** The aggressive courtship of [Turkish energy investment is actually a sign of extreme state weakness](#), where the government is selling off long-term mineral and energy rights for short-term survival capital, potentially compromising future sovereignty.
- **Black Swan Event:** An unexpected RSF "strike from within" using sleeper cells in Omdurman that **assassinates the Sovereignty Council leadership** during a Ramadan event, leading to a complete and sudden collapse of the SAF command structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Condition diplomatic support for "reconstruction" on [transparent investigations](#) into war crimes by all parties, ensuring the National Committee's work is not purely a partisan tool.
- Encourage the African Union to use the "return to Khartoum" as a [negotiating chip](#) for a roadmap to broader civilian inclusion in the government.
- Monitor the [Turkish-Sudanese energy deals](#) for their impact on regional Red Sea security dynamics.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain Risk:** While the Omdurman market is "reopening," [logistics networks into the capital](#) remain high-risk; prioritize routes through Port Sudan.

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure that any "war remnant" property (like vehicles) purchased or used is [properly vetted by the new Prosecution headquarters](#) to avoid future legal liabilities.
- **Energy Opportunity:** Turkey's entry into the [oil sector](#) signals a potential for subcontractors in field services and refinery tech, albeit with significant political risk.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Governance activity is focused on restoring the legal and administrative framework of the capital. The [Attorney General's return](#) is the catalyst for a series of decrees aimed at reclaiming stolen property and initiating war crimes prosecutions.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Decree on War Remnants:** Establishing a legal process for the [recovery and return](#) of civilian property, particularly vehicles, stolen during the conflict.
- **National Investigation Mandate:** Formalizing the [Committee for Investigating Crimes and Violations](#) to handle international humanitarian law cases.

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Islamic Fiqh Council Ramadan Briefing:** Official announcement of the [start of the holy month](#).
- **Ministry of Energy-Turkey Investment Summit:** High-level discussions on [oil and electricity partnerships](#).
- **Attorney General's Inauguration in Khartoum:** A televised event marking the [judicial return to the capital](#).

KEY STORIES

- **Ramadan 1447 AH Start:** The Islamic Fiqh Council officially announced Wednesday, Feb 18, 2026, as the [start of Ramadan](#) after the sighting of the crescent moon.
- **Attorney General Returns to Khartoum:** Intisar Ahmed Abdel-Al [opened the permanent headquarters](#) of the Public Prosecution in Khartoum, moving from Port Sudan.
- **Turkey-Sudan Energy Cooperation:** The Minister of Energy met with the Turkish B-Way group to discuss [oil exploration and refinery rehabilitation](#).
- **Sudan TV Resumes Khartoum Broadcasts:** The national broadcaster resumed operations from [studios in Omdurman](#), emphasizing the return of state media presence.
- **Kuwaiti Ramadan Baskets:** A humanitarian initiative launched to distribute [80,000 food baskets](#) to war-affected families across seven states.
- **Hepatitis B Training in Gezira:** A health initiative launched in Gezira state to train [community health workers](#) on Hepatitis B prevention and care.
- **Swiss Envoy Meeting:** PM Kamil Idris discussed [peace initiatives](#) and humanitarian corridors with the Swiss envoy, Stefan Stier.
- **Omdurman Market Reopening:** Reports from the [Omdurman market](#) showing a return of vendors and shoppers despite significant war damage and price volatility.
- **Zakat Chamber Aid in Blue Nile:** The Zakat Chamber distributed aid to [orphans and vulnerable families](#) in the Blue Nile region as part of Ramadan preparations.

- **Prosecution of War Crimes:** The Attorney General's office is prioritizing [investigations into RSF crimes](#) as part of its new Khartoum-based mandate.
- **Popular Support for SAF:** Reports on the ["People's Committee for Supporting the Armed Forces,"](#) emphasizing civilian mobilization for the "War of Dignity."
- **Rehabilitation of Infrastructure in River Nile State:** Focus on [railway and bridge repairs](#) in Atbara to support the logistics of reconstruction.

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.

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