



Sudan: What's Next?

Factors and scenarios

**** DISCUSSION DRAFT – December 2021 ****



**CONFLICT
DYNAMICS[®]**
INTERNATIONAL

Factors and scenarios

This briefing presentation illuminates possible scenarios in Sudan – within a 6-month timeframe – based on **four important factors:**

1. Coordination of actions of civilian opposition
2. Internal coherence of coup-accepting actors
3. International support to military coup
4. Civilian re-engagement in the transition

Factor 1: Coordination of actions civilian opposition

- This factor relates to the appetite, resilience, and cohesion of the civilian population to maintain high levels of public demonstrations and actions of civil disobedience throughout Sudan
- This factor will be strongly influenced by:
 - Degree of internal coherence within and between the different elements calling for a democratic transition, including resistance committees in urban and rural areas, the SPA, political parties, and certain armed groups
 - Whether military uses significant force to quell protests, and the effects
 - Level of perceived legitimacy of civilian leaders by the public
 - Ability of the resistance to withstand attempts to divide them
- Two precedents: Violence against protestors in June 2019 led to significant backlash against military/TMC; Violence against protestors in September 2013 forced many to abandon protests

Factor 2: Internal coherence of coup-accepting actors

- This factor relates to the degree of coherence or fragmentation within the actors accepting of the coup (SAF, RSF, remnants of intelligence services, NCP, SLA/M-MM forces)
- The initial success of the coup demonstrates a certain degree of coherence and support across and within the various groups
- However, allegiances within the military, paramilitary forces, and armed groups could change as the situation evolves
 - Hemeti is a controversial figure within the military
 - Regional support (Factor 3) directed to certain actors could divide the group
- Violent responses to protests could lead certain elements or 'second-tier' officers to object and disassociate themselves
- A prolonged stand-off between military and civilians could lead another faction within the military forces to try to take control

Factor 3: International support to military coup

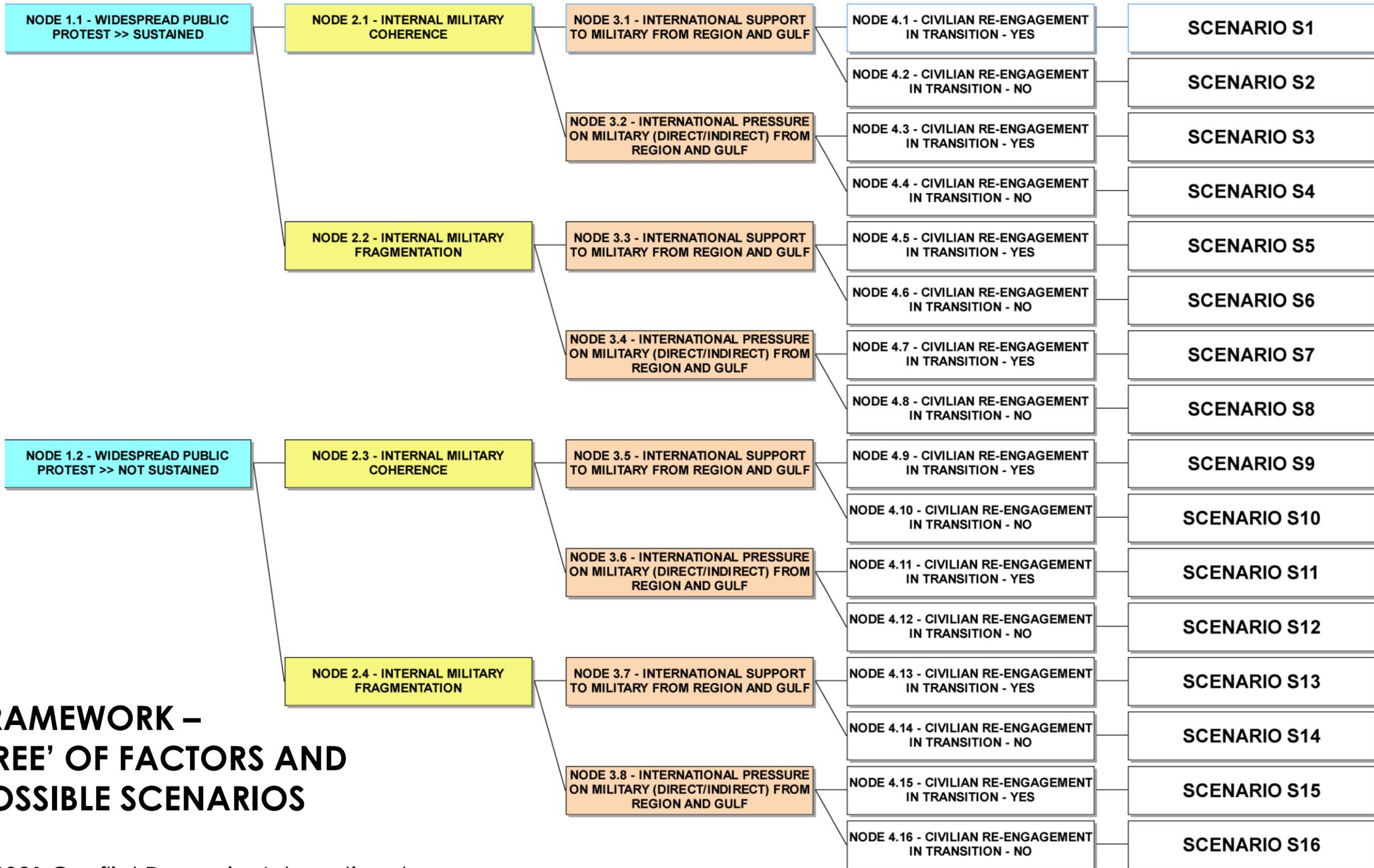
- This factor reflects the level of support for the coup from specific international actors, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Russia
- The approach of the Sovereign Council military leadership immediately prior to the coup (e.g. interactions with USA, UK) indicates that military leaders believe they have – and will continue to have – strong backing from allies
 - This may be a mis-calculation or it may hold true, depending on the extent (and success) of pressure exerted on Gulf states and other regional actors
- Supporters of Sudan's military leaders have their own regional-political, economic, resource-related and ideological interests in relation to continued military leadership in Sudan
- AU, IGAD, and Western leaders have denounced the military coup
 - Sudan was suspended from the AU on 27 October 2021

Factor 4: Civilian re-engagement in the transition

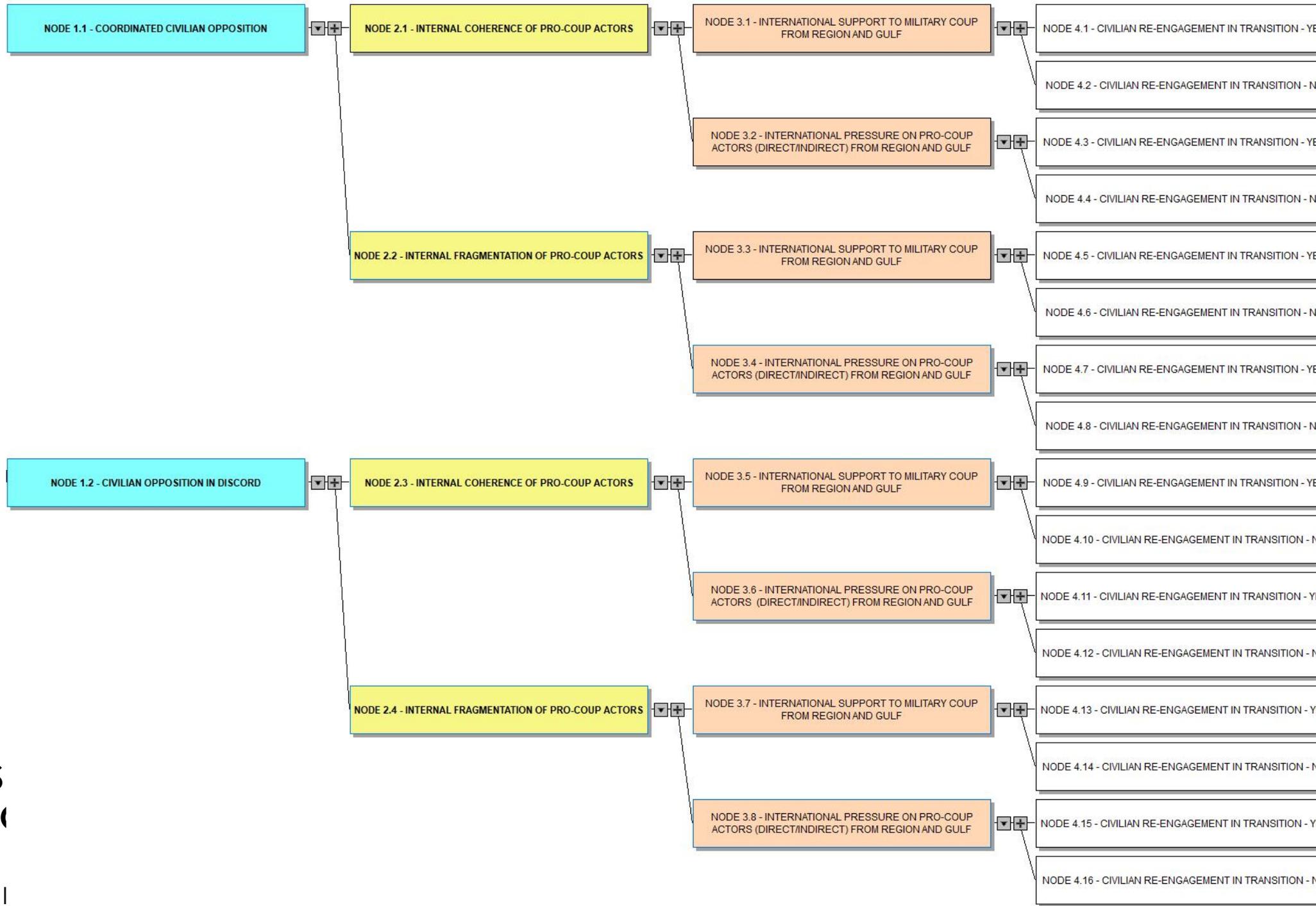
- This factor relates to the re-engagement of civilian elements – including recent political leaders who have participated in the Sovereign Council/TGOS
- This factor will be strongly influenced by the coordination of civilian resistance (Factor 1) and the perception of civilian leaders acting in the streets' interests
- Following PM Hamdok's agreement with Burhan (21 Nov.), there has been pushback from many civilians to any arrangement with the military. Continued violence against protestors has reinforced this stance among the street
 - The approach of the coup leaders makes it difficult to return to the *status quo ante* (e.g. detention of civilian leaders; suspension of certain transition structures; etc.)
 - UN SG Guterres called on protestors to view the agreement as a victory and key step
- The coup is resulting in further fragmentation among members of the SRF: SPLM-N factions have denounced the coup, though Malik Agar participated in SC meetings; SLA-MM has voiced support; JEM is trying to be 'on the fence'

Other factors and triggering events

- Four important factors presented here. Other factors to consider include:
 - Fragmentation among former-TGOS civilian elements
 - Economic blockades in the East
 - Sudden deterioration in economic conditions
 - Relations between events in marginalized areas and Khartoum
- Triggering events can be very important; some potential triggers:
 - Violent crack down on protests by military resulting in higher number of deaths and injuries
 - Killing of prominent activist(s) or detained civilian leaders



FRAMEWORK – ‘TREE’ OF FACTORS AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS



**FRAMEWORK –
‘TREE’ OF FACTORS
POSSIBLE SCENARIO**

As of 8 December – Possible scenarios (1)

- A selection of the possible scenarios to show a range:
 - S1: If widespread, coordinated civilian opposition actions, military may seek to re-establish civilian components of SC/TGOS on its own terms, retaining veto on key decisions. Full civilian re-engagement unlikely unless significant compromises from mil.

Factor 1: +	F2: +	F3: +	F4: +
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- S2: Military will hold steady and try to 'ride it out', availing of econ support from friends, and promising that elections will come in 2023 and people should wait for that. Widespread public protests sustained.

Factor 1: +	F2: +	F3: +	F4: -
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- S3: If sufficient pressure from regional/Gulf supporters, internally coherent military may seek to more actively re-engage civilian elements and step back, 'rally the troops' and seek to re-establish SC and TGOS. Most civilian elements do not agree to engage.

Factor 1: +	F2: +	F3: -	F4: +
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As of 8 December – Possible scenarios (2)

- S5: If regional/Gulf support directed to specific mil faction(s), there is possibility of further soft coup to push aside Al-Burhan/current coup leadership. New military leaders reach out to civilian elements to re-form SC with civilian leadership; offer to stay in background with conditions negotiated with civilian leaders. In this scenario, supported military faction has more leverage because of int'l support. |

Factor 1: +	F2: -	F3: +	F4: +
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- S6: If regional/Gulf support directed to specific mil faction(s), potential of further soft coup to push aside Al-Burhan/current coup leadership. New military leaders reach out to civilian elements to re-form SC but with continued mil leadership and conditions imposed by military. Most civilian elements do not agree to re-engage. |

Factor 1: +	F2: -	F3: +	F4: -
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As of 8 December – Possible scenarios (3)

- S7: Coordinated opposition + mil fragmentation + pressure from mil supporters leads military to reverse course and acquiesce to civilian leadership of transition/SC/TGOS. Civilians likely to accept under the conditions of limited military involvement. In this scenario military has reduced leverage due to pressure from regional/Gulf allies.

Factor 1: +	F2: -	F3: -	F4: +
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- S10: Military will hold steady and try to 'ride it out', availing of econ support from friends, and promising that elections will come in 2023 and people should wait for that. Repression keeps protests under control.

Factor 1: -	F2: +	F3: +	F4: -
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- S11: If civilian opposition actions not coordinated, while military+ remains coherent, and international pressure, coup actors may seek to may seek to re-establish civilian components of SC/TGOS on its own terms, retaining veto on key decisions. Some civilian leaders may accept, while protests likely continue.

Factor 1: -	F2: +	F3: -	F4: +
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Notes on the scenario analysis

- The scenarios listed are meant to be representative of the range of possibilities. S4, S8-S9, and S12-S16 are not detailed currently as their likelihood is assessed to be low and/or the scenario outcome repetitive. Scenarios will continue to be reviewed and updated.
- Scenarios are currently not given a likelihood, but could be rated based on “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” likelihood, based on the current events and perceived positions of actors on the ground.
- The possibility of each scenario is not static, but in fact fluid and evolving based on the variable influence of each factor. Certain scenarios do have a conclusory outcome, but many scenarios are interim phases that will depend on the shifting factors to arrive at a more permanent result.
- Each factor is not analyzed as an absolute value (+1, -1), but can have a gradient of magnitude that depends on the position and commitment of different actors. As a result, some factors may be more influential in the analysis based on their perceived strength or weakness.