



THE CIVIL WAR IN SUDAN: ANOTHER CASE OF THE “RESOURCE CURSE”

From 1899 to 1956, Sudan was a joint protectorate of Britain and Egypt, known as the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. In 1956 Sudan became independent and since then, very few Sudanese leaders were in power for longer than five years.

Sudan is an African country rich in natural resources - including minerals like gold, iron ore, and chromite, along with significant reserves of oil and natural gas. It also has extensive arable land and water resources, making it suitable for large-scale agriculture.

In this respect it is not unlike the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – which might indicate that it, too, suffers the so-called “resource curse.” In other words, its natural wealth has made it a target for predatory imperialism/capitalism, bringing to the country incessant warfare, misery and underdevelopment.

Interestingly, the imperialists who are guilty of pillaging the wealth of Sudan do not include the usual suspects – the US and Western Europe – but most notably, the UAE and Russia, whose interests include access to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

There are two major internal warring parties:

The Sudanese military, commonly referred to as the “SAF” (Sudanese Armed Forces);

The Rapid Support Forces (“RSF”). This was a militia formed by former dictator Omar al-Bashir in 2013, ostensibly to attend to any skirmishes/infringements along Sudan’s border.

The Sudanese Civil War is a proxy war, fought by the RSF against the SAF (the de facto government of Sudan) on behalf of the UAE and its allies. All of them are trying to get hold of Sudan’s wealth: its gold and other minerals, their rich agricultural lands (in which the UAE has already invested heavily) and access to Port Sudan. It is this access which is prompting other external players such as Russia to see Sudan as a strategic prize – Russia views Port Sudan as a perfect location for a naval base while the UAE is looking at the trading benefits it could obtain from access to Port Sudan.

In Sudan, both warring parties are ignoring the civilian population especially those in the rural areas. A case in point is the violence perpetrated by both the RSF and the SAF in the Darfur Region of Sudan; the RSF systematically looting and destroying hospitals, preventing aid from reaching the displaced in the Darfur area, killing non-Arabian people and subjecting the local population of Darfur to untold violence and sexual abuse, especially of young girls and boys.

The SAF, on the other hand, are not defending the people of Darfur but rather, have established militia groups to do their fighting for them, while the bulk of their army are ensconced in their military bases. In areas where the SAF has taken control from the RSF, extrajudicial killings are prevalent using the excuse that those killed were supporting the RSF. In this war, civilians have been ignored, their plight disregarded by both the government and more so by the RSF. The civilian population has been subjected to displacement, hunger, famine, violence and humanitarian crimes. In the meantime both Hemedti (RSF leader) and Burhan (SAF leader) have pilfered the wealth of the country and enriched themselves. Hemedti is considered to be one of the wealthiest persons in Sudan due to his control of gold mines.

That this is a class war between the belligerents and the Sudanese people is evident in the utter lack of concern for the civilian population.

The Sudanese conflict has been significantly shaped by a “divide and rule” strategy, both during and after colonial rule. This tactic, employed by colonial powers and subsequently by Sudanese regimes and their crim-

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inal militias, has exacerbated ethnic and regional tensions, contributing to the ongoing instability and cycles of violence. Belligerents have brutally exploited ethnic and religious differences, to the extent that credible accusations of genocide have been levelled against them. More than 11 million people have been internally displaced since the fighting erupted in April 2023, according to the United Nations, while millions more have fled Sudan. Hunger is widespread and famine conditions are present in several areas of the country, the UN has warned.

This is endorsed by the establishment of (peoples') resistance committees, even before the war started in 2023. These resistance committees did not support either the SAF or the RSF after April 2023 (when the current war started) and were violently attacked by the Burhan government (SAF) when they continued to protest and demand an end to military rule in Sudan.

These resistance committees were also against the introduction of liberalization of the economy, another factor which caused more violent attacks on them. The resistance committees (in which many young people are involved) were established by local communities to protest and see to the needs of the local populations disregarded by the SAF. They have established Emergency Rooms where locals can receive medical care, food and assistance. Crops are planted to feed the local people and they mount ongoing protest against both the SAF and the RSF.

These actions are signs that the civilians – the oppressed – are fighting back even though it may seem futile. That the opposition to military rule is ongoing is manifested by the extreme violence perpetrated against them by not only the RSF but also the SAF, the de facto government of Sudan. The lack of international support/intervention has dampened the enthusiasm and determination of the resistance committees who are doing all they can to stem the destruction of medical, educational and economic infrastructure and violence towards the civilian population of Sudan.

Whether the resistance committees can be a catalyst in bringing the violence in Sudan to an end remains to be seen but external actors also play a role in the search for peace in Sudan. The UAE, as stated above, supports the RSF for a specific purpose, for gold, to safeguard their investments in fertile agricultural land in Sudan and to get access to Port Sudan. Whether they will gain access to Port Sudan is questionable. Why then do they continue to support the RSF and therefore prolong the war? What will they gain from ongoing warfare? Is it because Hemedti published a new constitution in February this year stating that he is the new leader of Sudan? (He is beholden to the UAE who buys his gold and supplies him with weaponry.)

It is looking more likely that Sudan will become fragmented into two states, western Sudan under the RSF and the UAE, and the land left after the partition which will be Sudan under the SAF and Burhan's leadership.

Reflecting on the way forward for the resistance movement in Sudan, journalist Muzan Alneel contends:

... lasting liberation requires moving beyond spontaneous resistance to build organized revolutionary capacity. Only with an objective analysis of state and economic power, as well as the impacts of the colonial legacy — combined with disciplined organization that unites urban and rural struggles — can Sudan break its cycle of violence and underdevelopment. The alternative is the perpetual recurrence of today's tragedies under different guises, as the root causes remain unaddressed and the structures of oppression persist.

(“The structural roots of Sudan's ongoing devastation” published in Links on 19 June 2025)

There can be no gainsaying Alneel's position, yet, with the fierceness of the onslaught against ordinary people in Sudan, the resistance committees are faced with the dilemma – do we put all our energies into resisting and mitigating the real ongoing suffering of the people, or do we step back and focus on a longer-term strategy aimed at destroying the structural roots of oppression? Mao's red army was faced with a similar dilemma during the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and 1940s – should the struggle against the nationalist forces in China continue notwithstanding the Japanese invasion, or should the Red Army unite with the Chinese nationalist forces to oust the Japanese? The latter route was followed, and one might say, is vindicated by history. In the case of Sudan, an article in “Africa is a Country,” touches on both issues facing the resistance movement:

On a more material level and following the collapse of state services and infrastructures at the onset of the ongoing war, the networks and organizational skills of the RCs were rapidly repurposed into life-saving initiatives. These included emergency rooms, collective kitchens, and displacement shelters, providing critical support to millions across the country. This once again underscored the resilience of these grassroots organizations and the effectiveness of their horizontal structures in mobilizing, resisting, and deeply engaging with the collective needs and struggles of their communities. *But this tactical brilliance—while essential—remains politically vulnerable without a parallel strategy for contesting power.* (Our emphasis)

(Razaz H Basheir, February 2025)

In terms of Basheir's position, what is needed is that the struggle should take on the nature of a permanent revolution, such that it should be based on the idea of a “single, continuous, and uninterrupted revolutionary process” which simultaneously addresses the real current crisis facing the people of Sudan, as well as the structural roots of oppression.

NB: This article deals with Sudan as it is currently constituted - that is, as a national entity separate from South Sudan. The split took place in 2011, and will be considered in a separate article.

SOUTH AFRICA'S "PASSIVE REVOLUTION" – THE ROLE OF THE UDF

Today, South Africa is an ailing constitutional democracy that many would characterise as a “failed state.”

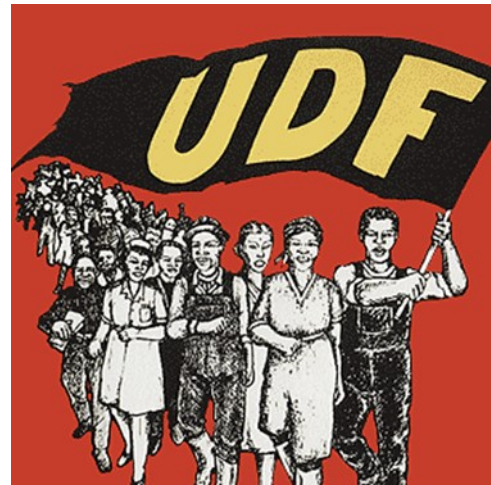
The dismal conditions under which the majority of our citizenry suffer are reflected in virtually all or any statistics which one might care to access.

- *Income inequality:* South Africa has seemingly forever had the highest income inequality in the world, with a Gini coefficient around 0.67. This means a significant disparity exists between the richest and poorest individuals, with the top 10% of the population holding a disproportionately large share of the country's income and wealth.
- *Unemployment:* Our income inequality is reflected in our unemployment rate, which currently stands at 32.9% in the first quarter of 2025.
- *Housing:* Against the background of an increasing demand for housing, the number of houses being delivered declined from 75 000 units in 2019 to 25 000 units in 2023. (Adriano Mazenda in *The Conversation*, December 2024)
- *Lack of service delivery:* Poor or even absent service delivery is often attributed to inadequate infrastructure, and President Ramaphosa is known for making big promises about the GNU's intention in coming years to heavily invest in infrastructure development and renewal as the silver bullet to all our woes. We will have to wait and see.
- *Crime:* Crime remains despairingly high and virtually out of control, as any stat would show. South Africa has the highest crime index in Africa and ranks as the fifth most dangerous country globally.
- *Corruption:* Corruption in high places ceases to go away. This is understandable (though far from acceptable) when no consequences arise from the Zondo Commission's report, or when a sitting president can get away with a scandal such as that of Phala Phala. The storm that has recently broken around allegations by KZN Police Commissioner, Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, against the minister of police, is just the latest and probably not the last in a long, long line of top political figures being implicated in corruption involving many millions of rand.

And so we can continue.

How did it come to this? Looking back, it is no exaggeration to say that SA was on the cusp of socialist revolution in the 1980s. How did we lose our way? How did the people of this country hand over the emancipatory process to the ANC to negotiate away the real prospect of social change?

According to an analysis by Levenson and Pareti (in



their March 2025 article, *Absorbed in Struggle: South Africa's Passive Revolution From Below*) we should look no further than the role of the UDF (and other groupings such as COSATU) in steering the whole process into the reformist backwater of a neoliberal accommodation. As we can see clearly now, the intention of the negotiators at CODESA was never to initiate real social change, but to retain the capitalist structures of power. We (the people) got a constitutional democracy while they (the capitalists and their hangers-on) got to keep their wealth and the country's wealth-generating structures and assets.

Amid the dramatic transition from apartheid to democracy, South Africa's highly unequal racial capitalism seemingly emerged unscathed. Capital accumulation proceeded apace, while the Black majority continued to live in poverty (Ashman et al., 2011).

Levenson and Parenti argue that the UDF “represented a linchpin of the passive revolution in South Africa, serving as an *organ of absorption*, a means of incorporating the increasingly radicalized masses into a reformist political project.”

Key points in their argument include the following, as outlined in their article:

- The UDF, which lasted from 1983 to 1991, represented a *multi-class coalition*. It's more than 500 affiliates “were ideologically diverse.”

Some UDF affiliates and their members were certainly committed revolutionaries, with aims far more radical than the umbrella under which they operated. The broader UDF's goal, meanwhile, was far more moderate: achievement of a racially inclusive liberal democracy.

- The Freedom Charter became a key tool used by the UDF and the ANC to hijack the grassroots struggles which were gaining ascendancy in the early 1980s. The Charter was “an ambiguous platform, which combined reformist demands for political and racial equality with potentially more radical demands for collective ownership of wealth, land reform, and the right to housing and health care,” stopping short of calling for socialist transformation.
- The three founding UDF presidents were all ANC members; UDF NEC members were almost exclusively from ‘the ANC political underground’; and the UDF Planning Committee identified ‘veteran Charterist leaders from the 1950s as patrons for the front.’”
- A clear indication of the UDF’s reformist direction was that it “‘avoided discussions of economic transformation’ and did not call for socialism in order to appeal to business groups, including a number of prominent white industrialists.”
- ... It thus played a “mediating [role] between the masses and the conservative goals that the ANC would eventually promote alongside representatives of capital and the apartheid state.”

By the mid-1980s, the passive revolution was coming into focus both organizationally and ideologically. At the organizational level, the formation of the UDF laid a foundation for the ANC’s transformation into a mass party. Ideologically, the UDF’s unifying aim of a non-racial, democratic state signalled a moderate political project that would remain entirely compatible with capitalist preservation.”

- By the late 1980s “the UDF’s alignment with the ANC began to come into much greater focus. This went hand-in-hand with a growing orientation toward negotiations, rather than mass mobilization.”
- In 1988-1989, COSATU and the UDF established a formal partnership that became known as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). In addition to the UDF and COSATU, the MDM also included outspoken members of the clergy. What united them was a commitment to the reformist goals that lay at the centre of the UDF’s program.”
- “The UDF had prepared the ground for the ANC’s triumphant return to the country and the party’s consolidation of hegemony over a reformed South Africa. The strategy of formal negotiations sealed the transfer of movement leadership from the UDF and the MDM to the ANC. A UDF discussion document identified the main battle as

‘between apartheid forces on the one hand and the democratic forces on the other’, noting that the ‘two main protagonists in this conflict are clearly the ANC and the government.’ While simultaneously calling for a ‘mass democratic movement’, the UDF had already relegated itself to a merely supporting role: ensuring that the ANC could negotiate the transition to democracy.”

- The UDF disbanded itself in August 1991, with many of its leaders “being pulled into top positions in the ANC.”

In their concluding remarks, Levenson and Pareti comment:

... the ‘elite transition’ of the early 1990s as a top-down process, a negotiated settlement had more to do with appeasing transnational capital than it did in realizing the desires of the varied and countless activists who mobilized against the apartheid regime for decades prior. But these talks (i.e. CODESA) constituted the tail end of a process that began a decade prior and revolved around the role of the UDF and other *organs of absorption*. The UDF was ideally positioned in relation to organic civic revolt: adequately radical to serve as a national coordinating body in the most insurgent period under apartheid, but sufficiently moderate so as to enable the ANC-led march toward the restabilization of capital accumulation.

The past 30+ years of ANC rule have been richly rewarding for many UDF stalwarts in terms of their personal career trajectories, and, importantly, in terms of their skyrocketing income and wealth levels. This, as the authors contend, is what happens in an “elite transition.”

One is apt to recall Orwell’s immortal words at the end of *Animal Farm*:

The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again: but already it was impossible to say which was which.



THE 2026 LOCAL ELECTIONS – A GIANT LEAP BACKWARD

South Africa's seventh local council elections are set to take place in 2026. Several paradoxes present themselves. Principally among these are the following:

Democracy, as it is known, has failed the mass of the working class.

Finances rather than the will of the people control the balance of power. *"He who pays the piper calls the tune."*

The trade union movement largely allied to the ruling party and others share the ideals and objectives of the party.

Many reasons have been advanced for the working class seemingly legitimising elections from 1994 onwards. These include the mass of the people treasuring the "franchise" as a hard-won right in the victory over apartheid. However, what we have in South Africa is a *qualified franchise*. The demand by the liberatory organisations was for the *full franchise* - this encompasses the right to vote (as at present), that there be a resolution of the national question, that discrimination and inequality in all respects be eradicated, that there be a resolution of the land question amongst all other rights.

However, it appears that many of the workers are now realising that their dreams of *UHURU* are not being met, and less of the working masses are participating in the elections. In fact, the Government of National Unity (GNU) is a product of the lack of interest in the electoral process. 27.8 million citizens of a possible 42 million registered for the 2024 elections. Of that total only 16.3 million citizens actually voted in the national and provincial elections. This constitutes approximately 38.8% of the population. A massive 26 million citizens did not participate in the elections.

The parties comprising the GNU will be pulling out all stops to get voters and especially the youth to the polls in the 2026 local elections.

Voters will be inveigled to give the ANC one last chance to give effect to their slogan of *"a better life for all"* and then declare to the voting public that only the ANC is capable of "running" the country. The DA will be on their hoary tale of *"rescuing"* South Africa. The smaller parties mostly nationalist and tribalists (not that the ANC and DA are not) are merely appendages giving credence to the lie that we are living in a *"democracy"*.

Further to this, the tribalists are retreating into the unreservedly racist parties where they are cowering in their funk holes, where they feel comfortable. The "new" SA still has vestiges of the colonial days of *"divide and rule"*. There has been a vigorous and sustained revival



Potholes an everyday occurrence

of the outdated system of tribalism and chieftainship – this is encapsulated in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act.

The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act entrenches and legalises tribalism is part of the country's constitutional democracy. Can we thus expect the 2026 elections to be any different from the 2016/2021 municipals elections, the 2024 national and provincial elections? **CERTAINLY NOT!**

Even the government realises that the calibre of the candidates for the elections are not persons who are contenders for the "Citizens of the Year Award". Fraud and corruption at this level are more than just rife. They are astronomical – such that the Zondo commission did not even go there.

Tokyo Sexwale, for the second time has posited that R41 quadrillion was stolen in South Africa. He alleges that this obscene amount of R41,380,513,104,000,000 was stolen. If this is true – consider this R41 quadrillion distributed to the 64 million citizens equally, will give each citizen (including children) R640,625,000 making every citizen a multi-

millionaire. Poverty will be eradicated! No homelessness! This just boggles the mind.

Now, Police Commissioner Mkhwanazi's allegations of corruption in the judiciary and related departments, in conjunction with the Sexwale assertions, more than just intimates that we are living in a failed state.

Peter Alexander, a South African sociologist and activist, currently holding the South African Research Chair in Social Change at the University of Johannesburg, avers that political protests are becoming an everyday occurrence and in some cases, these have escalated to insurrectional level. It is reasonable to assume that this can be seen as the "*rebellion of the poor*". Thirty years into constitutional democracy, it appears that the crisis is deepening.

To pacify the oppressed, the National Dialogue has been initiated by Ramaphosa. The ANC is pulling out all stops to first infuse the elections with some sort of vigour and secondly to win back lost support. Even the 90-year old Mac Maharaj has been resurrected to promote the idea of a National Dialogue. However, the trump card was the idea of getting all the former "*liberatory movements*" to a summit. The summit will bring together key figures from the former liberation movements across Southern Africa. The six former liberation organisations are: the ANC (SA), MPLA (Angola), SWAPO (Namibia), FRELIMO (Mozambique), ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe) and CCM (Tanzania). It is however significant that all former liberatory movements, (*now political parties*) are riddled with corruption and have lost electoral support. Voters, the mass of the people seem to have become impervious to the machinations of these "*former liberation movements*".

This is another attempt to hoodwink the oppressed into regaining lost ground by the former liberation movements, in particular the ANC. This, in preparation for the upcoming local elections.

Locally in Gqeberha, potholes are being filled with blobs of tar as a show of "doing something" as part of service delivery in preparation for the upcoming elections. Potholes will temporarily disappear (to be flattened by vehicles) only to become gaping holes after the first rains. Attempts at the provision of water to every household will be made but real change will elude the poor and vulnerable. In Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB) Municipality, estimates suggest that between

42% and 48% of the city's potable water is lost due to leaks and ageing infrastructure.

Constant fires, sweltering heat in the tin towns dotted around the country and regular floods will always be the bane of the poor. No proper and planned housing will be provided, the shantytowns, the degradation of township life, gangsterism and drug-induced psychosis in our communities will continue to be the order of the day. In the meantime, councillors (the politicians) will be creaming off millions in salaries and benefits, including travel allowances, pension contributions, and even housing and vehicle allowances.

For the oppressed people, participation in these elections will amount to a great leap backward as did the 1994 national elections. It is the system of capitalism-imperialism that is the root cause of all our ills.

We therefore have to bluntly tell our fellow compatriots that the democracy ushered in with the parliamentary elections of 1994 is a near total failure and that it needs to be replaced by a true Peoples Democracy which is predicated on the rooting out of that evil system.

It thus appears that merely participation in these elections, without the aim of destroying such institution, will take us back some 50 years. It was in the late thirties and early forties that the leadership of the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM) was able to study, understand and formulate a system of thinking that amounted to a great leap forward; this was a great discovery. The basic ideas of that discovery were:

1. To build a single undivided, independent, non-racial, democratic and socialist South Africa.
2. Socialism is the highest form of democracy – it may even be argued that it is the only form of democracy – voting in an election alone does not determine whether you live in a democracy.
3. The disabilities of the oppressed people, in the form of landlessness, poverty, exploitation, lack of education flowed directly from their lack of the FULL FRANCHISE,
4. Oppression must be fought everywhere and in totality. Therefore, for liberation to have any meaning, it must be TOTAL.
5. The road to that solution must be the road of political struggle for the control of parliament.

6. There can be no SEPARATE SOLUTIONS for various classes and groups of workers, peasants, intellectuals, teachers, students, women and other sections of the oppressed people. The propagation of the idea of building a single nation must be sought after.

7. There has to be a single solution for the whole country. It was from this discovery that political organisations drew up programmes of demands like the Ten Point Programme of the Unity Movement and the Azanian Manifesto of the National Forum and Black Consciousness Movement.

in order for us to advance the struggle for true liberation, we should be developing a programme of action that will reflect a socialist approach to dealing with the notion that socialism is the highest form of democracy. Community struggles should be directed through a non sexist, non-racial and egalitarian approach that will reinforce the democratic objective of socialism.



THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!!!

CORPORATE PROFITEERING FROM GENOCIDE

“Follow the money” can be a helpful catchphrase for identifying those who are profiting from Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza. It could also help to explain whose interests are being protected by the silence of (especially Western) governments who have the power to curb Israel’s murderous impunity but get no further than ongoing, direct support, or (often simultaneous) hypocritical hand-wringing.

Early in July, UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine, Francesca Albanese, produced a report which sent shockwaves of anger through the Netanyahu and Trump camps. Appropriately named, “From economy of occupation to economy of genocide,” the report lists companies which are complicit in Israel’s genocide. According to the report, why is Israel’s genocide continuing? *“Because it is lucrative for many.”*

Not unexpectedly, Trump’s lieutenant, Marco Rubio immediately sought to punish her by imposing sanctions on her. It is worthwhile quoting from the summary of the report:

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 investigates the *corporate machinery* sustaining the Israeli settler-colonial project of displacement and replacement of the Palestinians in the occupied territory. While political leaders and Governments shirk their obligations, *far too many corporate entities have profited from the Israeli economy of illegal occupation, apartheid and now genocide*. The complicity exposed by the report is just the tip of the iceberg; ending it will not happen without *holding the private sector accountable*, including its executives. International law recognizes varying degrees of responsibility – each requiring scrutiny and accountability, particularly in this case, where a people’s self-determination and very existence are at stake. This is a necessary step to end the genocide and dismantle the global system that has allowed it. (Our emphasis)

The report names 48 corporations, and states that “colonial endeavours and their associated genocides have historically been driven and enabled by the corporate sector.” Israel’s expansion on Palestinian land is one example of “colonial racial capitalism”, where corporate entities profit from an illegal occupation.

The full report can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5923-economy-occupation-economy-genocide-report-special-rapporteur>

The following summary is from Aljazeera’s website, accessed on 26 July 2025

Shortly after Oct. 7, the U.S. government started transferring massive amounts of weapons to Israel.

By Dec. 2023, Israel received more than 10,000 tons of weapons in 244 cargo planes and 20 ships from the U.S. These transfers included more than 15,000 bombs and 50,000 artillery shells within just the first month and a half.

These transfers have been deliberately shrouded in secrecy to avoid public scrutiny and prevent Congress from exercising any meaningful oversight.

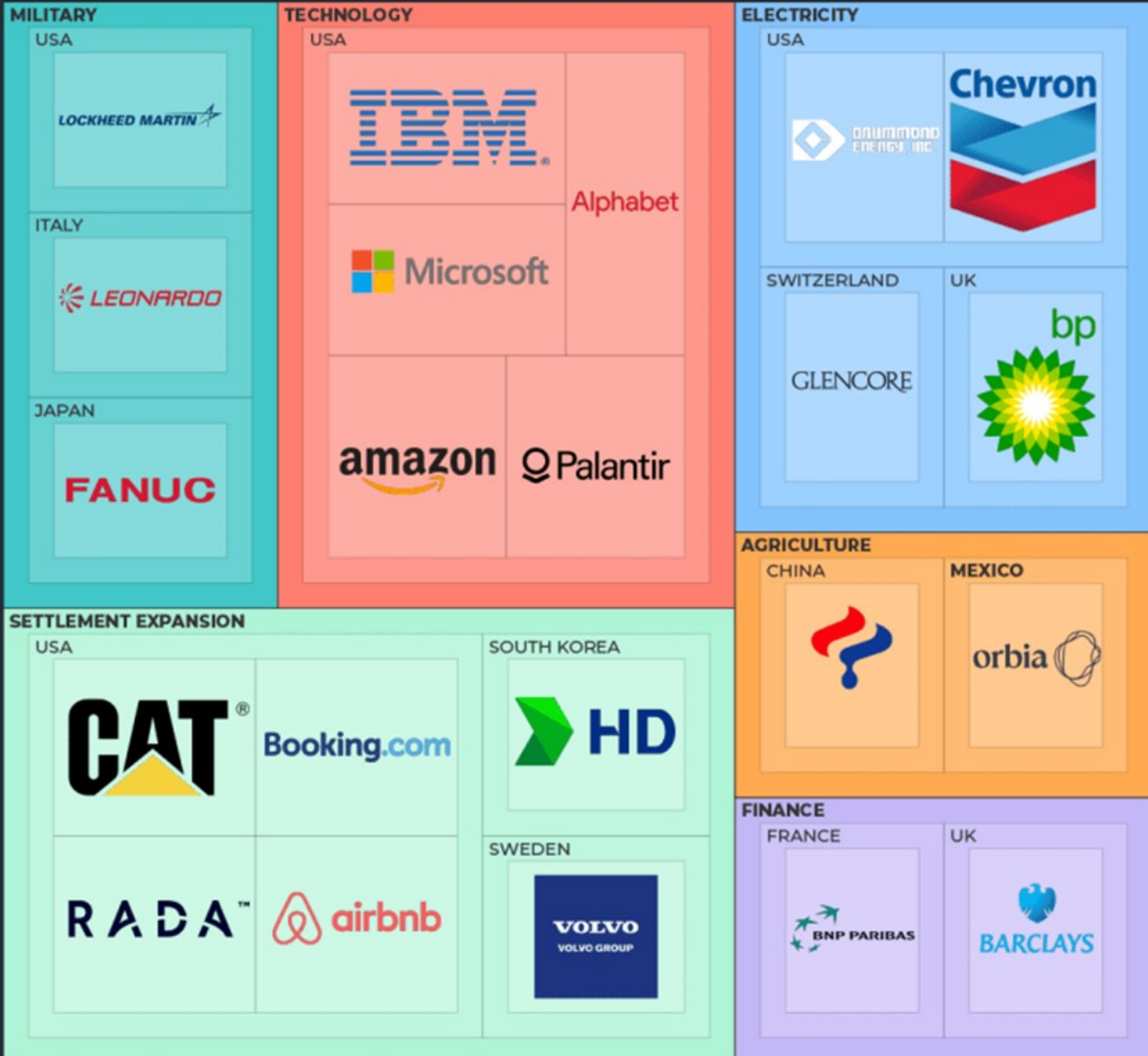
Between October and the beginning of March, the U.S. approved more than 100 military sales to Israel, but publicly disclosed only two sales. A list of known U.S. arms transfers is maintained by the Forum on the Arms Trade.

From the Internet Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory

ISRAEL

Which companies are supporting Israel?

The report by the UN special rapporteur lists companies aiding Israel's occupation and war on Gaza in sectors ranging from arms procurements and technology to finance and agriculture.



Source: UN Human Rights Council | July 1, 2025



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