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EXODUS ON BUS:

INVESTIGATING THE SUDAN-EGYPT BORDER
JOURNEY DURING POLITICAL CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

On the 15th of April 2023, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) launched a full-scale invasion of Khartoum, Sudan's capital. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) swiftly responded, resulting in urban warfare and intense fighting at strategic locations. The conflict spread to hospitals, power stations, and other crucial infrastructure, rendering Khartoum uninhabitable for most residents, forced to flee, many sought refuge in Egypt by enduring a bus journey across the border. Khartoum has witnessed a major exodus, most civilians left their homes seeking safety in other states or neighboring countries. The majority of residents could not use their personal vehicles due to the danger of hijacking, they instead rode buses to aforementioned destinations, most of whom were headed to Argeen, the border-crossing port of entry towards neighboring Egypt.

This research investigates how tens of thousands of passengers fled the war in Sudan towards Cairo using buses. Highlighting their crossing via the land border points of Argeen and Ashkit, from when they left their houses until they arrived at their destination. It studies the conditions of the port of crossing at the time of crisis, crowdedness and the days-long waiting periods passengers had to endure under inhumane conditions. I aim to study the spatial configuration of the busses and the port in the context of the ongoing situation of the 15th of April war, which I will refer to as **The Absurd War** throughout this master thesis. Crowdedness and prolonged waiting times at the border crossing, how stranded passengers managed to withstand the lack of services, and to portray this in the historical context of transportation and politics in Sudan and how it lead to the ongoing war.

Due to the nature of this developing situation, methods and means of research must be adapted, by applying some of the **Forensic Architecture Research Agency's** methodologies. To correlate eyewitness testimonials, against footage and documentation, to reconstruct a physical model for the case study of Argeen and Shlatin, documenting and collecting footage evidence and stories of the fleeing refugees. This research articulates more on 'How have they survived', to uncover the facts of what has happened. The developing conflict was not anticipated by civilians, and the situation is dire and still developing, thus there is no academic publication in regard to this topic, and the consequences of the fighting. Some humanitarian organizations are periodically publishing reports and statistics, but no thorough analysis of what this war will lead to is evident yet. This study will contribute to **Forensic Architecture** methodologies in investigating places of crisis.

I stand hand-in-hand with the people in Sudan, and my family who have suffered and were forced to flee for safety abroad. And as the situation is in my home country, I am privileged to have access, speak the language, and be able to make use of the embodied knowledge I have to conduct this study.

Keywords: Transportation & Politics in Sudan; Crowdedness & Waiting Times; Forensic Architecture; Situated Testimony; Crisis Investigation; Spatial Configuration; Political Crisis; The Absurd War, Exodus; Urban Warfare; Sudan/Egypt Border