

## **Panellists for 'Beyond Darfur: Sudanese identity and the roots of conflict'**

**Ahmed Ibrahim Diraige** (b. 1935, Zalingi, Darfur)

Ahmed Ibrahim Diraige is the former governor of Darfur, and currently the Chairman of the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance, which he co-founded in 1994. He is also a member of the National Democratic Alliance Leadership Council.

The son of a tribal chief, Diraige inherited his father's position at the age of 11. He later resigned as tribal chief, at the request of the British administration, in order to pursue his with university studies in Arts and Economics.

In 1964, Diraige established the Darfur Development Front, and in 1965 he became a Member of Parliament. Between 1966 and 1967 he was Minister of Labour and Cooperatives. From 1968 to 1969, he was leader of the opposition, but left the country when Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri seized power in 1969.

Between 1970 and 1972, Diraige was advisor to the Rule of Um el Quein in the Gulf Trucial States and member of the Constitutional Committee, which laid the groundwork for the establishment of the United Arab Emirates. He set up a private business in Abu Dhabi between 1975 and 1980, after which he returned to Sudan and established the Middle East International Financing and Development Company.

### **Abdelwahab El-Affendi**

Abdelwahab El-Affendi is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster and co-ordinator of the Centre's Democracy and Islam Programme.

Educated at the Universities of Khartoum, Wales, and Reading, he is author of *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (1991), *Who Needs an Islamic State?* (1991), *Revolution and Political Reform in Sudan* (1995), *Rethinking Islam and Modernity* (2001) and *For a State of Peace: Conflict and the Future of Democracy in Sudan* (2002), and has contributed to many leading journals.

Dr El-Affendi is a member of the Consultative Council of the Arab Human Rights Organisation in the UK, and a trustee of the International Forum for Islamic Dialogue and contributes regular columns to *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London) and the *Daily Star* (Beirut).

### **Jok Madut Jok**

Jok Madut Jok is currently an associate professor of history at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and a fellow of the Rift Valley Institute.

He attended University of Alexandria in Egypt and received his Ph.D in Anthropology at the University of California Los Angeles.

Jok Madut Jok is the co-director, with John Ryle, of the Sudan Abduction and Slavery Project, which is working towards the creation of a database of persons abducted from Bahr-el-Ghazal province during the civil war. He is the author of *War and Slavery in Sudan* (2001).

## **Jon Snow**

Jon Snow is a leading TV journalist, and has been the presenter of Channel Four News since 1989. He often does his own reporting on the major stories of the day, drawing on his experience as ITN's Diplomatic Editor and Washington correspondent. Snow is a Trustee of the National Gallery (since 1999); Trustee of the Tate Gallery (since 1999); and Chairman Council Tate Modern (since 2002). In addition, he is Chairman of the New Horizon Youth Centre; Deputy Chairman of the Media Trust; Trustee of the Stephen Lawrence Trust; Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University; and a Director of the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn.

## **Neil MacGregor**

Neil MacGregor has been director of the British Museum since August 2002. He was previously director of the National Gallery, London, 1987-2002. From 1981 to 1987 he was editor of the Burlington Magazine.

Mr MacGregor is a fellow of New College, Oxford, an honorary fellow of the British Academy and an honorary member of the Royal Scottish Academy. He is a member of the Board of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the chairman of the UNESCO Advisory Group of the Hermitage, St Petersburg, on the Board of the Arts and Humanities Research Board and a member of the Governing Board of the Courtauld Institute. Mr MacGregor has also written several books and has presented a number of television programmes.

## **John Ryle**

John Ryle is chair of the Rift Valley Institute. He has worked in Sudan as an anthropologist, writer, film-maker and human rights researcher, and is the author of *Warriors of the White Nile* (1984) a book about the Dinka people of Southern Sudan.

Ryle was a UK-Government nominated member of the US State Department-sponsored International Eminent Persons Group reporting on abduction and slavery in Sudan (2002) and has acted as consultant to numerous local and international organisations in the region. He is a research associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University, and has contributed articles about Sudan to numerous publications.

The Rift Valley Institute (RVI) is a UK and Kenya based association of specialists in the countries of Eastern Africa. Fellows of the Institute are recognised specialists from the region and elsewhere, representing a range of scholarly and practical disciplines. The purpose of the Institute is the collection, analysis and dissemination of local knowledge and its application in advocacy and planning. Current RVI research projects in Sudan include a survey of locally-based peace initiatives in north and south, field training programmes for aid workers, and the Sudan Abduction and Slavery Project.