

Factsheet on the |
Justice and Equality Movement
August 2012

JEM has been fighting for equality in Western Sudan since 2003.

Background |

The Justice and Equality Movement is a group that operates in Western Sudan originally founded by Khalil Ibrahim. The rebellion in the Darfur region formally started in 2003. The establishment of armed groups like the Justice and Equality Movement in Darfur, was driven by economic hardship and political marginalisation amongst other factors.

The rebellion in Darfur resulted in a decisive and sharp reaction from the government in Khartoum, who sought to quickly put down the rebellion with the assistance of allied militia, most notably the Janjaweed militia. In the process of trying to force an end to the rebellion an estimated 300,000 people were killed (according to the United Nations). The immense loss of life ultimately resulted in President Omar el-Bashir becoming the first sitting head of state to be indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The government eventually engaged in negotiations with the Darfur rebels, including the Justice and Equality Movement. A cessation of hostilities agreement was signed between



Agenda / Factions

JEM

the government and some of the Darfuri rebel groups, including JEM, in February 2010. JEM withdrew from the agreement four months later, citing alleged violations of the agreement by the regime in Khartoum.

Agenda |

The Justice and Equality Movement was setup with the stated agenda of addressing the economic and political marginalisation of the Darfuri people. Since the breakdown of the February 2010 agreement between JEM and the Sudanese government, the agenda has changed. The Justice and Equality Movement have now escalated their agenda beyond seeking improved economic, political and security conditions for the people of Western Sudan, and are now overtly calling for the overthrow of the National Congress Party (NCP) government in Khartoum. They are working to accomplish this objective with the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM-N), Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and over thirty other rebel groups and factions operating in Sudan. This coalition of Sudanese rebel groups is collectively known as the Sudan Revolutionary Front.

Factions |

JEM has over 100 leaders, and is divided into several factions. There have also been additions to the group in the form of a merger with the Federal Alliance of Eastern Sudan (FAES) in January 2011. A further addition took place in October 2011, when a new group called the Sudanese bloc



Major attacks

JEM

to liberate the Republic (SBLR), led by Mahgoub Hussein, also joined JEM.

Major Attacks |

The most notable attack by the Justice and Equality movement occurred in May 2008, when JEM attacked a suburb close to Sudan's capital, Khartoum. During the two-day raid, a number of JEM fighters are alleged to have been detained and summarily executed following the attack.

The main focus of JEM attacks tends to be on members of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in Darfur, in addition to seizing control of Sudanese territory.

Since the death of Khalil Ibrahim, the intensity of JEM's rhetoric and rebel activity has calmed. The most dramatic incident was the detention of UNAMID peacekeepers in February 2012, when they apparently entered a JEM-controlled area without seeking permission first.



Government response

Government response |

Following the failure of a military solution to the uprising in Darfur, the government of Sudan sought a negotiated solution to the conflict. The main problem with the attempts to negotiate a settlement to the conflict is that not all the groups are in agreement on what the most desirable end-goal should be. This has meant that current efforts to settle the crisis in Darfur are best described as piecemeal. As an example, in July 2011 the government of Sudan signed a peace deal with the Liberty and Justice Movement, which has no real military power on the ground.

Asides from seeking a negotiated settlement, the government of Sudan has sought to eliminate regional support for all Darfuri rebel groups including JEM. In December 2009, it reached an agreement with the Republic of Chad that saw both governments suspend their assistance to all armed groups operating on both their territories. Both governments have since commenced the joint patrol of their common border to prevent JEM and other groups using Chad as a territorial safe haven. Sudan has shifted its focus to South Sudan and Uganda, and alleges that both countries are serving as a safe haven for senior JEM figures.

In addition to bilateral arrangements to deprive JEM of a rear operating base, the government of Sudan has opted to pursue decapitation as a strategy for subduing the Darfuri rebellion. In December 2011, the government (with assistance from unknown parties) killed Khalil Ibrahim with the assistance of an air strike, as he was allegedly making his way to South Sudan. He was replaced by his brother: Dr. Jibril Ibrahim.