

Advisory

MITMUNC III, 2011



Committee Welcome Letter

Hello MITMUNC 2011 Delegates,

I am thrilled to welcome you to the conference and the Advisory Panel on the Question of Darfur. I am Eyas Alsharaiha, Head Chair for this year's Advisory Panel, and a Sophomore in Computer Science and Engineering. I, along with my co-chair Pranav Ramkrishnan, am looking forward to having you on the committee!

The Advisory Panel is an exceptional forum, aimed to allow strong delegates to engage and collaborate, unrestricted by the Rules and Procedures of other forums. The committee is not a UN body, but instead an ad-hoc panel constituted of representatives and prominent figures, convened to present a proposal to the United Nations Secretary General for a plan of action.

This year's panel gathers representatives of involved parties and mediators: Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and others convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity, state and NGO representatives, and activists, to put forth a solution to the Question of Darfur.

Can the panel's MITMUNC delegates conjure up a starting point for a solution where real politicians have failed for decades? Can the Panel target specific issues where real change is possible, thereby influencing progress in Darfur?

MIT's forte in every field is the art of problem solving, and that is what we in the Panel will also aim to do, together as a committee try to find the best possible solution to an issue that has paralyzed political leaders of today.

See you in February,

Eyas Alsharaiha

The Advisory Panel on the Question of Darfur

Preamble

The situation in Darfur is ambiguous to say the least, and has been subject to much intentional propaganda, and unintentional misappropriation of facts. Since the beginning of the War in 2003, the Western media covered the events simplistically, with one side - Nazi-like - committing genocide and ethnic cleansing, and the other victimized. With such black-and-white approach, the solution appears simple: condemn, convict, and stop one side, and empower another. This was the basis for past failed solutions, such as those of the International Criminal Court, and is the basis for those advocated by the Save Darfur Coalition.

Rather than painting the conflict in a simplistic manner, we will provide you with historical context, details of atrocities committed by both sides, and the solutions advocated by both sides.

Note: As the conflict and negotiations are unfolding rapidly, and many developments still arise, we will be using the Advisory Panel Home Page (at mitmunc.org/advisory) to post news updates and links to relevant news articles on the matter.

“Darfur’s historic identity has been both “African” and “Arab” with no sense of contradiction between the two.”

- Alex de Waal, from “War in Darfur” p.2

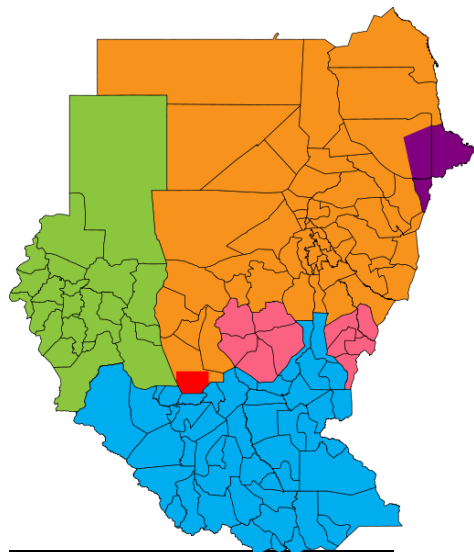
Background and Historical Context

Darfur

The Darfur Sultanate was an African and later Islamic independent pre-colonial state of East Africa. The Sultanate was established somewhere between 1596 and 1630¹, and functioned independently without much Arab or pan-Islamic influence until 1874, when the Sultanate was overthrown and extended into the Egyptian Sudan, under the Ottoman Empire.

The Darfur Sultanate was incorporated into the Sudan region of the Khedivate of Egypt, the *de facto* autonomous Egyptian province of the Ottoman Empire. Darfur was part of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan condominium throughout its lifetime, until Sudan gained independence from Egypt and Britain in 1956.

As Sudan gained independence, Darfurians became integrated into a new Sudanese National Identity, but not for long; Darfur continued to be treated as a periphery of the Khartoum-based Sudanese core, and was marginalized by the center even as it attempted to participate in the political process. Still, for the better half of Sudanese history, Darfurian discontent did not get the limelight, as the nation’s political tensions were concentrated in the North-South political divide and Civil Wars.



Map of the Sudan, License: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic. Credit: Lokal_Profil at Wikimedia Commons. Label: Orange: Northern Region. Blue: Southern Region. Green: Darfur..

¹ 1596 According to (GlobalSecurity.org n.d.), 1603 According to (Museum of Learning n.d.), 1630 According to (de Waal 2007, xv)

Sudan

The history of the Sudan North-South Divide goes back to 1946 in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, when the Northern and Southern administrative regions were unified. The North, the bigger of the two, was culturally Arab and predominantly Muslim. The South, on the other hand, was culturally sub-Saharan, with diverse religious groups including Christianity and Islam. The unification started tensions that would last for the better half of the century, where the South felt it would be absorbed and assimilated into the North. As such, political scientists studying Sudan often understood and analyzed the climate of Sudan as a North-South division between Arab Muslims and Africans.

*Note: the main enemy of the Government of Sudan in the North-South divide, and the North-South Civil War is the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which became Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and is also referred to as (SPLM/A). The SPLM/A is **not** to be confused with the SLA (also known as SLM/A), which is the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, one of the main active forces in Darfur. While the SPLM/A is known to support the rebel groups, these two groups are different and must be distinguished. The SPLM/A is a South Sudan movement and army, while the SLM/A is a Darfur movement and army.*

Roots of Arab Militias in Darfur

According to Young et al. "The central riverain Arabs have a long history of [mobilizing] tribes to support various causes, dating back to the [...] nineteenth century."² Groups of Arabs from tribes known as the *murahaleen* were armed and mobilized to support different causes. The *murahaleen* came from tribes in Southern Darfur and Southern Kordofan. Sadiq al Mahdi used the *murahaleen* in the North-South civil war. These militia men were "responsible for a number of atrocities, not limited to the war areas but extending also into central Darfur"³. These resulted in the death of 1,000 previously-displaced South Sudanese Dinka people, who had been displaced to Southern Darfur. As current Sudan President Omar al-Bashir came to power as the result of a bloodless coup he lead, the *murahaleen* were incorporated the Popular Defense Force (PDF).⁴

Note that the murahaleen included many militia men from Darfur. Thus, mobilization of militias is not always a criticism of anti-Darfur action by the government, but rather: a criticism of action taken by the ruling party that increased the militarization of Darfur, both by empowering its militias and by oppressing it.

The 1990s also saw Arab Militias in Darfur; in which a former member of the ruling party mobilized militias known as the *Fursan* to enter Darfur, in an effort to "defend" it from rebel groups of Southern Sudan. The problem, according to Young et al., is that Arab militias were used instead of "[mobilizing] the Army or Darfurians".⁵

Sudan, Darfur, and the Roots of the Conflict

According to de Waal, "the hyper-dominance of the national capital is the single most important reality in Sudan today." Indeed, many of the national conflicts of Sudan can be summarized by the dichotomy between the status of the center and the periphery. Sudan's capital, Khartoum, is the economic center of the country, possessing the bulk of the private wealth, professionalism, and a "political culture [with] a strong liberal tradition". The reality of the peripheries stands in stark contrast: disadvantaged areas, politically and economically subjugated. "Many leading Sudanese political scientists", de Waal argues, "have attributed their country's crisis to the central elite's greed and grip on power."⁶

And thus, with political and economic injustice, and feelings of exploitation, discontent in Darfur as a periphery was on the rise. After all, the area - like many other peripheries - was vastly ignored by the center. In the year 2000, members of the Islamic Movement published The *Black Book*, criticizing the center's monopoly on power. Dr. Abdullahi Osman El-Tom, who translated the book to English, tells the story of the Book:

In 2000, a mysterious book appeared in the streets of Khartoum under the title "The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in the Sudan". The mystery of the book was strengthened by its impeccable method of distribution necessitated by the Regime's firm grip over information in the country. The launch of the work consisted of a once-off distribution at gates of major

² Young, Helen, Abdul Monim Osman, Yacob Aklilu, Rebecca Dale, and Abdul Jabbar Abdullah Fuddle. "Darfur – Livelihoods under Siege." *Feinstein International Famine Center*. Tufts University. June 2005.

http://nutrition.tufts.edu/docs/pdf/famine/darfur_livelihoods_under_seige.pdf (accessed December 10, 2010). 22

³ Ibid. 22

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ de Waal, Alex. *War in Darfur and Search for Peace*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. 4

mosques, following Friday prayers. Soon after, the circulation of the Book gained momentum. Spontaneous photocopying made the Book available all over the country and abroad. The book soon became the most talked about document in the country. [...] The thesis of the Book is simple but disturbing. Using statistics, the authors claim that Sudan is controlled by only one Region (Northern Region) with just over 5% of Sudan's population. Within this hegemonic Region, power is monopolised by only three ethnic groups. The Book then gave detailed statistics about the hegemony of the Northern Region over the whole the county. All Sudan's Presidents and Prime Ministers came from this Region. Members of this Region also controlled all key positions in the country ranging from ministerial posts to heads of banks, developmental schemes, army, police, etc.

It was the Black Book that sparked popular dissent in the peripheries of Sudan, and armed opposition to the regime was born in Darfur in May of 2000⁷. The period of 2000-2003 was thus characterized with civil unrest, quickly making Darfur a real problem within Sudan.

In the meantime, the North-South Civil War was calming down, and a comprehensive peace treaty was being discussed as early as 2003, with substantial progress. The treaty being forged already indicated plans on increased autonomy for the South, more favorable resource sharing, better policies on jobs, etc.

That same time, Darfur and the other peripheral regions were still disadvantaged and marginalized. The direction of the peace talks with the South infuriated many Darfurians, as the region was Muslim, and yet was ignored by the Muslim center while the South was being favored. With such feeling of betrayal amongst the masses, little reasons remained *not* to fight against the center for equality.

In February 2003, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) announces its existence and, on February 26, the Darfur Conflict officially began. The SLA - then originally known as the Darfur Liberation Front - attacked district headquarters of Forces of the Government of Sudan (GOS) in the West Darfur town of Golo. A BBC News Report, aid workers in the village were supposed to flee, and around 30 soldiers and policemen were killed. Since the aid workers fled, other fatalities could not be reported.⁸

Note: the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), is sometimes referred to as the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) to describe its political activities. As a consequence, an alternative naming for the SLA is the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A).

In March of that year, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), announces its existence as well. The founders of the JEM were the same Islamic Movement members who published the *Black Book*, and went on to acquire arms in Darfur. Of the founders of JEM, is Dr. Kahlil Ibrahim, who had previous militia experience in the South of Sudan.

In April, the SLA and JEM groups joined forces in an attack on Al Fasher Airport. This is regarded by many as the official start of the conflict. After the "success" in Al Fasher, the rebellion groups gained much momentum:

"In late May the SLA north of Kutum [in North Darfur] destroyed a Sudanese battalion killing 500 and taking 300 prisoners. In mid-July they attacked Tina (*alt. spelling*) [near al-Fasher] leaving 250 soldiers dead. [Then] on 1 August they captured Kutum, inflicting heavy casualties on the garrison before retiring four days later."⁹ May also including a similar rebel attack on Mellit. Tina was previously also attacked in May by the SLA.

July of 2003 witnessed the beginning of a shift in the government's attitude towards Darfur. Instead of ignoring Darfur and the rebellion, the government decided to fight back and engage in a counteroffensive. Yet, instead of deciding to take matters in its hands, the government decided to heavily fund Arab militia men known as the *Janjaweed*. July also witnessed the first Janjaweed attacks against in Darfur.

In January 2004, the Government of Sudan (GOS) launched a major offensive in Darfur. The offensive included violence by the Janjaweed and GOS forces against civilians (and rebels) of "the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massalit" ethnic groups¹⁰. According to GlobalSecurity, "Conflict-affected populations describe recurrent and systematic attacks against towns and villages,

⁷ Ibid. xvi

⁸ BBC News. "Rebels battling for Darfur town." *BBC News*. January 26, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4650014.stm> (accessed December 10, 2010).

⁹ Burr, Millard, and Robert O. Collins. *Darfur: The Long Road to Disaster*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2008. 292

¹⁰ GlobalSecurity. "Darfur Sultanate - 1596-1916." GlobalSecurity.org. n.d. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/darfur1.htm> (accessed December 10, 2010).

burning of buildings and crops, arbitrary killings, gang rape, and looting. The GOS has used aerial bombardments to terrorize civilians who the GOS claims are harboring SLM/A or JEM forces.”¹¹

In March of that year, UN Coordinator Mukesh Kapila refers to Darfur as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis”, comparing it to the genocide in Rwanda¹². In April, the GOS, JEM, and SLA engaged in negotiations that resulted in a 45-day ceasefire. However, the continued exclusion by the GOS of the Darfur rebel groups from the North-South peace negotiations--which, in turn, allowed the South to hold a referendum on its independence--lead to much disappointment amongst such groups. Indeed, SLM/A leader said in May that rebel activities would continue at include attacks on the nation’s capital if these groups were continued to be excluded from the peace talks.¹³

In the meantime, Janjaweed attacks against civilians of ethnic groups that back the rebels up continued¹⁴. This is despite the GOS agreeing as part of the ceasefire to disarm the Janjaweed.

In May, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) demanded Sudan to respect its commitments to disarm and stop the Janjaweed, and prevent further Janjaweed attacks. President Omar al-Bashir responded by ordering the disarmament of the Janjaweed and other rebel groups. Such order was meant by the international community with skepticism. The same promises were made after a July visit of United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) Kofi Anan to the region¹⁵.

Back in May, the African Union also sent its peacekeeping forces as part of the newly-established African Union’s Mission in Sudan (AMIS). These forces were expanded frequently as a response to recurring calls by the United Nations to do so. In January 9, 2005, the GOS and the SPLM/A signed an agreement that effectively ended the North-South Civil War. The terms of the agreement included near-equal sharing of labour, oil resources, a decentralized semi-autonomous interim government, and a referendum to take place in 2011 to decide a complete independence of the South from the rest of Sudan. A new South Sudanese government was in place, with SPLM/A leader John Garang as its president.

Then, in July of 2005, a “Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Sudanese Conflict in Darfur” was signed, detailing a comprehensive framework in which the JEM, SLM/A, and the GOS would deal with one another on a variety of different issues. These include the status of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and Darfuri refugees currently residing in Chad.

Global Research states that, “[while] the SLM and Janjaweed are primarily to blame for many of the attacks and raids, the Sudanese government has done virtually nothing to help the AU force that was assigned to enforce the ceasefire. Furthermore, Khartoum has failed to carry out its ceasefire obligation to disarm or control the Janjaweed.”¹⁶

In 2007, the African Union’s AMIS was replaced by a joint peacekeeping effort by the United Nations and the African Union. The peacekeeping force is known as the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). In terms of mortality rates, research conducted by Dr. Olivier Degomme and Prof. Debarati Guha-Sapir, published in the peer reviewed journal “The Lancet”, estimates the number of death resulting from the Darfur Conflict to be 298,271 as of January 2010. For a 95% margin of certainty, the range of deaths is 178,258 - 461,520.¹⁷

The paper’s summary states: “Although violence was the main cause of death during 2004, diseases have been the cause of most deaths since 2005, with displaced populations being the most susceptible. Any reduction in humanitarian assistance could lead to worsening mortality rates, as was the case between mid-2006 and mid-2007.”¹⁸

Timeline of Events

Adapted from BBC Timeline

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² de Waal xvi

¹³ GlobalSecurity

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Degomme, Olivier, and Debarati Guha-Sapir. "Patterns of mortality rates in Darfur conflict." *The Lancet*. January 23, 2010. <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2809%2961967-X/abstract> (accessed December 10, 2010).

¹⁸ Ibid.

- 1899-1955 Sudan is under joint British-Egyptian rule.
- 1956 - Sudan becomes independent.
- 1958 - General Abboud leads military coup against the civilian government elected earlier in the year.
- 1962 - Civil war begins in the south, led by the Anya Nya movement.
- 1964 - The "October Revolution" overthrows General Abbud and an Islamist-led government is established.
- 1972 - Under the Addis Ababa peace agreement between the government and the Anya Nya, the south becomes a self-governing region.
- 1978 – Oil discovered in the south. The oil becomes a vital component of the friction between the north and the south.
- 1983 - Civil war breaks out again in the south involving government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), led by John Garang.
- 1983 - President Numeiri declares the introduction of Sharia Islamic law.
- 1986 - Coalition government formed after general elections, with Sadiq al-Mahdi as prime minister.
- 1988 - Coalition partner the Democratic Unionist Party drafts cease-fire agreement with the SPLM, but it is not implemented.
- 1993 - Revolution Command Council dissolved after Omar Bashir is appointed president.
- 1998 - US launches missile attack on a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, alleging that it was making materials for chemical weapons.
- 1998 - New constitution endorsed by over 96% of voters in referendum.
- 1999 - President Bashir dissolves the National Assembly and declares a state of emergency following a power struggle with parliamentary speaker, Hassan al-Turabi.
- 1999 - Sudan begins to export oil.
- 2001 Islamist leader Al-Turabi's party, the Popular National Congress (PNC), signs memorandum of understanding with the southern rebel SPLM's armed wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Al-Turabi is arrested the next day, with more arrests of PNC members in the following months.
- 2002 - Government and SPLA sign landmark ceasefire agreement providing for six-month renewable ceasefire in central Nuba Mountains - a key rebel stronghold.
- Talks in Kenya lead to a breakthrough agreement between the government and southern rebels on ending the 19-year civil war. The Machakos Protocol provides for the south to seek self-determination after six years.
- 2004 January - Army moves to quell rebel uprising in western region of Darfur; hundreds of thousands of refugees flee to neighboring Chad.
- 2004 March - UN official says pro-government Arab Janjaweed militias are carrying out systematic killings of non-Arab villagers in Darfur.
- 2004 September - UN says Sudan has not met targets for disarming pro-government Darfur militias and must accept outside help to protect civilians. Then US Secretary of State Colin Powell describes Darfur killings as genocide.
- 2005 January - Government and southern rebels sign a peace deal. The agreement includes a permanent ceasefire and accords on wealth and power sharing.
- 2005 March - UN Security Council authorizes sanctions against those who violate ceasefire in Darfur. Council also votes to refer those accused of war crimes in Darfur to International Criminal Court.
- 2005 June - Government and exiled opposition grouping - National Democratic Alliance (NDA) - sign reconciliation deal allowing NDA into power-sharing administration.
- 2005 9 July - Former southern rebel leader John Garang is sworn in as first vice president. A constitution, which gives a large degree of autonomy to the south, is signed.
- 2005 October - Autonomous government is formed in the south, largely administered by former rebel leaders. 2006 October - Jan Pronk, the UN's top official in Sudan, is expelled.
- 2006 November - African Union extends mandate of its peacekeeping force in Darfur for six months.
- 2007 April - Sudan says it will accept a partial UN troop deployment to reinforce African Union peacekeepers in Darfur, but not a full 20,000-strong force.
- 2007 May - International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for a minister and a Janjaweed militia leader suspected of Darfur war crimes.
- 2007 July - UN Security Council approves a resolution authorising a 26,000-strong force for Darfur. Sudan says it will co-operate with the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (Unamid).
- 2007 October - SPLM temporarily suspends participation in national unity government, accusing Khartoum of failing to honour the 2005 peace deal.
- 2008 March - Russia says it's prepared to provide some of the helicopters urgently needed by UN-African Union peacekeepers.
- Tensions rise over clashes between an Arab militia and SPLM in Abyei area on north-south divide - a key sticking point in 2005 peace accord.
- 2008 July - The International Criminal Court's top prosecutor calls for the arrest of President Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur; the appeal is the first ever request to the ICC for the arrest of a sitting head of state. Sudan rejects the indictment.

- 2008 September - Darfur rebels accuse government forces backed by militias of launching air and ground attacks on two towns in the region.
- 2008 November - President Bashir announces an immediate ceasefire in Darfur, but the region's two main rebel groups reject the move, saying they will fight on until the government agrees to share power and wealth in the region.
- 2008 December - The Sudanese army says it has sent more troops to the sensitive oil-rich South Kordofan state, claiming that a Darfur rebel group plans to attack the area.
- 2009 January - Sudanese Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi is arrested after saying President Bashir should hand himself in to The Hague to face war crimes charges for the Darfur war.
- 2009 March - The International Criminal Court in The Hague issues an arrest warrant for President Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.
- 2009 June - The leader of South Sudan and vice-president of the country, Salva Kiir, warns his forces are being re-organised to be ready for any return to war with the north.
- 2009 October - SPLM boycotts parliament over a bill allowing intelligence services to retain widespread powers.
- 2009 December - Leaders of North and South say they have reached a deal on the terms of a referendum on independence due in South by 2011.
- 2010 January - President Omar Bashir says he would accept referendum result, even if the south opted for independence.
- 2010 Feb-March - The Justice and Equality Movement (Jem) main Darfur rebel movement signs a peace accord with the government, prompting President Bashir to declare the Darfur war over.
- 2010 April - President Bashir gains new term in first contested presidential polls since 1986.
- 2010 July - International Criminal Court issues second arrest warrant for President Bashir - this time for charges of genocide. He travels to Chad.
- 2010 October - Timetable set for southern independence referendum, due to be held on 9 January, 2011.
- 2010 November - Voter registration begins amid doubt that referendum schedule can be met. Tensions increase as north and south accuse each other of massing troops in border areas.
- 2010 December - SPLM publicly backs independence for south for first time. The statement is at odds with terms of 2005 peace deal, under which north-based government and southern rebels agreed to work for unity.

See Also: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/827425.stm

Past Actions

Over the years, there have been several efforts by states in region, international bodies and the United Nations to resolve the ensuing conflict, and bring peace to the people of Sudan. In 1993, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional peace initiative was set up in region and was closely monitored by the United Nations. However pursuing a larger presence in the conflict region, the UN Secretary General appointed Mohamed Sahnoun as his special advisor on Africa, in December 1997.

Under the guidance of the IGAD, the Sudan peace process made significant progress. In July 2002, the parties to the conflict signed the Machakos Protocol, which set specific agreements, such as the future principle of governance, the transitional process, the administrative structures, as well as the right to self-determination for the people of south Sudan on issues of state and religion.

In order to intensify peace efforts, the UN Security Council, established by *Resolution 1547 (2004)*, a special political mission - the United Nations Advance Mission in Sudan (UNAMIS). UNAMIS was mandated to facilitate contacts with the parties concerned and to prepare for the introduction of an envisaged UN peace support operation. Jan Pronk, was appointed the Special Representative for Sudan and the head of the UNAMIS by the then UN Secretary General. As the head of the UNAMIS, Pronk led UN peace making support to the IGAD-mediated talks on the north-south conflict.

Furthermore, in July 2004, the African Union (AU) led international efforts to seek a solution to the crisis in Darfur, launching negotiations at the inter-Sudanese peace talks, known famous as the Abuja talks. At the same time, the United Nations and several other non-governmental organizations launched massive humanitarian operations in Darfur. The Special Representative and the UNAMIS were deeply engaged in the issue, particularly in supporting the efforts of the African Union and its mission in Sudan.

On January 2005, the Government of Sudan, the SPLM/A signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Nairobi, Kenya. The CPA included agreements on outstanding issues remaining after the Machakos Protocol and had provisions and security arrangements, power distribution in Khartoum (the capital), an equitable distribution of wealth and economic resources, including oil. The parties involved set up a six-and-a-half year interim period during which institutions would govern the country and international monitoring mechanisms would be established and operationalized.

The United Nations Secretary General, recommended the deployment of a multidimensional peace keeping organization, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). On March 2005, the Security Council, established the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. The UNSC decided that the tasks of the UNMIS, among others, included; to support the implementation of the CPA, to provide assistance and humanitarian relief to displaced persons, to protect and promote human rights in Sudan. Over the years, the United Nations has constantly strengthened the UNMIS, by deploying a large number of military personal and civilian police units, seeing the increasing need to prevent the situation in Darfur from escalating again. See more: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmis/background.shtml>

Current Developments

The States of Qatar and Chad had launched mediation and brokering efforts between Sudan and JEM. On Saturday, February 20th, 2010, Chad brokered a framework agreement, which brought into effect a ceasefire. JEM Spokesperson Ahmed Hussein stated: "We will discuss of many issues -- return of the IDPs (internally displaced persons), power and wealth sharing, compensation, detainees,"¹⁹

On Tuesday, February 23rd, JEM and the Sudan Government met in Doha, Qatar to sign a landmark deal, thought to be the "beginning of the end" of the conflict. According to an Al-Arabiya report²⁰:

The 12-point provisional deal offered the JEM, long-seen as Darfur's most heavily armed rebel group, a power-sharing role in Sudan, where the first presidential and legislative polls in 24 years are to be held in April. [...] JEM and Khartoum agreed to "the participation of the Justice and Equality Movement at all levels of government (executive, legislative, etc.) in a manner to be agreed subsequently between the two parties." [...] The two sides agreed that the JEM would become "a political party as soon as the final agreement is signed between the two parties" by March 15, the fourth article of the document says. [...] A ceasefire with the JEM would close the most active front in Darfur, but smaller rebel groups such as the faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army of France-based exile Abdelwahid Nur have refused to enter talks with Khartoum. [...] One of the smaller factions, the JEM-Democracy, also has turned its back on the accord, saying it was biased.

However, four of the smaller rebel movements have announced their intention to merge to form the Liberation Movement for Justice (LMJ), and expressed their hope to reach a deal with the government²¹. By March, the LMJ has already become an umbrella rebel movement in Darfur, encompassing 10 movements.

Note: The Movement is known both as the "Liberation and Justice Movement" **LJM**, and the "Liberation Movement for Justice" **LMJ**. News agencies use both terms inter-changeably. We decide to be consistent and use LMJ throughout this guide.

As early as February 24th, al-Bashir told supporters: "Now the crisis has finished in Darfur. Now the war is finished in Darfur ... We must start fighting the war for development"²².

In March, the GOS and the LMJ agreed on a timetable for talks. According to Stratfor Global Intelligence, a spokesperson for the LMJ "said the group intends to sign a framework peace agreement with the Sudanese government between March 17-18, after which Khartoum and LMJ representatives will begin negotiations for a separate peace agreement"²³.

¹⁹ Press TV. "Darfur rebels near truce deal with Sudan gov't." *Press TV*. February 21, 2010. <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/119129.html> (accessed December 21, 2010).

²⁰ Al Arabiya. "Khartoum, Darfur rebels sign peace accord." *Al Arabiya*. February 23, 2010. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/02/23/101203.html> (accessed December 21, 2010).

²¹ —. "Sudan president declares Darfur war over." *Al Arabiya*. February 23, 2010. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/02/24/101346.html> (accessed December 21, 2010).

²² Ibid.

²³ *Starfor Global Intelligence*. "Brief: LMJ, Sudan's Government To Sign Framework Pact." March 12, 2010.

The JEM was unhappy “about the attention Sudanese authorities are paying to the LMJ, [and wanted] to be recognized by Khartoum as the sole representative of the Darfuri people”. The GOS-JEM deal, which was supposed to be finished by March 15, was already facing difficulties²⁴.

With the JEM, the deadlines for making an agreement were missed, and difficulties were being faced in every step of the way. While the truce was still relatively effective, sporadic outbreaks of violence continue to take place. On November 28, Djibril Bassolé, AU/UN Chief Mediator in Darfur, stated that the rebels require more time to reach an agreement.²⁵

Attempts to reach a comprehensive agreement were particularly damaged by the strong divisions within the rebel movements, namely the LMJ, SLM/A, and JEM. The GOS wishes to sign an agreement in Doha by the end of 2010, or before the January 9th referendum on the independence of Southern Sudan, at the latest²⁶.

1. While JEM signed the Doha framework in February, “the talks ran into trouble” and the March deadline passed with no accord. JEM also refused to participate in the talks between the GOS and the LMJ. The JEM, however, “suggested “reforms” to the [upcoming] Doha process”.²⁷
2. The LMJ on the other hand, began indirect talks with the GOS on June 7, building on its March framework.²⁸
3. The SLM/A’s “Nur held talks with members of his faction in Nairobi to prepare for a Paris conference where they could decide whether or not to participate in Qatar.”²⁹

As such, Bassolé encouraged waiting until the rebel groups sort out their internal issues before going further with the Doha proceedings. Bassolé’s hope is that movements like the SLM/A will join on the talks, and that displaced persons within Sudan and Chad are addressed before hand.

By the beginning of December, Sudan President Omar al-Bashir announced that “any rebel group that wants a political settlement to Darfur conflict” has to join the negotiations in Doha before the month’s end.³⁰

According to the Sudan Tribune, “[the] Sudanese government announced since this summer a new strategy to end the seven year conflict in Darfur. This strategy aims to domesticate the solution of Darfur crisis through the development and with an important role to be played by the hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID)”³¹.

On December 19, 2010, the LMJ delayed its deal in Doha, and the JEM rejoined to negotiate a ceasefire framework. The return of the JEM to the table is highly important, as the JEM is the militarily most powerful rebel group in Darfur, followed by the SLM/A. The SLA still did not determine its participation in the negotiations, as of December 19³².

According to a JEM spokesperson, “We have not been having face-to-face meetings but we are exchanging proposals with the mediation ... We are not talking about a final agreement. Now we are discussing the issue of a cessation of hostilities”³³.

Notable Players and Country Blocs

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Lavalée, Guillaume. “Darfur rebels need more time for peace deal: mediators.” *AFP*. November 28, 2010. http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g4ox8WFOt3j_p_apzLFv8zL2qQDg?docId=CNG.caa947eb1ef1c68668f8ac4bd71f5355.bc1 (accessed December 21, 2010).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Sudan says no more talks with Darfur rebel groups.” *Sudan Tribune*. December 2, 2010. <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-says-no-more-talks-with,37151> (accessed December 10, 2010).

³¹ Ibid.

³² DAFUR: Sudan and JEM rebels negotiate ceasefire as LJM deal delayed. *Sudan Tribune*. December 19, 2010. <http://www.sudantribune.com/DAFUR-Sudan-and-JEM-rebels,37346> (accessed December 21, 2010).

³³ “Darfur rebels resume ceasefire talks with Sudan.” *Reuters*. December 21, 2010.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE6BK01I20101221> (accessed December 21, 2010).

Government of Sudan (GOS)

The GOS is controlled by Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir and his National Congress party. The GOS has been involved in the institution of state-wide Islamic Shari'a Law, was a party of the North-South Sudanese Civil War, and is currently involved in the Darfur Conflict as the target of rebellion. The GOS is accused of backing the Janjaweed and purposely engaging in genocide against Darfurians. The government represents Sudan in the Arab League, and is involved in some mediation attempts.

Arab League

The Arab League has distanced itself from the crisis in Darfur. It backed Sudanese President Bashir's refusal to accept United Nations peacekeeping troops, a complete reversal of stance from 2006, when the Arab League urged President Bashir to accept such a force. This shift in policy illustrates the ambiguous relationship with Sudan. For most of the 1990s the Arab League ostracized Khartoum for allowing training camps within its territory for Afghan and Arab mujahedeen. The Arab League played very little role in the process that brought about the May 2006 peace agreement with some rebel groups. As of recently, the Arab League has been paying more attention to the Darfur Conflict, which has been the subject of deliberation in the 2010 Arab League Summit in Libya. Qatar is also amongst the mediator countries between Sudan and the rebel groups.

African Union

The AU has been reluctant to take a strong stand against the atrocities occurring in Darfur. However it should be noted that the African Union, lacks both the military and financial resources to sustain peacekeeping missions in Sudan. Nonetheless, the AU maintains a 7000 strong peacekeeping force, which by the end of 2007 become part of the joint, UN/AU peacekeeping force authored by the July 2007 UN Security Council resolution. Politically, the AU has increased its authority in the region, refusing to elect Bashir as its head in both 2006 and 2007.

Chad

Chad has been very involved in the Darfur Conflict in multiple ways. It has been the country that received the largest number of Darfurian refugees, and became very unstable as a result. Violence in Darfur has spread to Chad, and internal conflict and rebel movements in Chad are now active. Also, "Khartoum has long accused Chad of aiding the rebels, while Ndjamena accused Sudan of backing its own rebel groups"³⁴. The two states reconciled however in early 2010 as part of the Chadian mediation efforts.

United States of America

The US is the only government to officially declare the Darfur conflict as a "genocide." The US has provided the majority of the funding for the Africa Union peacekeepers in the region. In spite of this, the US has taken little concrete actions to curb atrocities in the region. It is claimed that the US counter-terrorism interests take priority in Washington's ties with Khartoum. The US would like to see stronger sanctions imposed against the Sudanese government.

European Union

The European Union passed a resolution calling the atrocities in Darfur "tantamount to genocide." The European Union has done little to persuade President Bashir to accept the UN peacekeeping force. The NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) provided logistical support to the African Union force in Darfur, but Europe has made it clear that NATO will not send troops to the region. France, which maintains military bases in Africa, mounted small raids on behalf of governments in Chad and the Central African Republic, whose stability is paralyzed by flow of rebels and refugees from Sudan.

Asia

Historically, China has tended to vote against any sanctions opposed to the Sudanese government. China pursues the largest importer of Sudanese oil, buying two-thirds of its total output. The Russian Federation, also an importer of Sudanese oil, opposes sanctions against Sudan. Nonetheless, the Russian Federation has in the past, shown a growing interest in the deployment of peace keeping forces in the region.

Janjaweed

The Janjaweed is an armed militia and an involved party in the Darfur conflict. The Janjaweed is fighting against the rebel groups of Darfur, defending the government's presence. While the GOS continuously denied allegations of using the Janjaweed to commit targeted attacks against Darfurians, there is some evidence, and many allegations, that the GOS actually

³⁴ Al Arabiya. "Khartoum, Darfur rebels sign peace accord."

contacted and encouraged such attacks. The Janjaweed is a Sudanese Arabic word meaning Armed Horsemen, and are predominantly nomadic Sudanese Arab. The Janjaweed has not been part of any negotiations, though it is assumed that they will line up with the government on any settlement.

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is a rebel group led by Khalil Ibrahim. As a member of the Eastern Front, a rebel coalition formerly active in the east of Sudan, the JEM is fighting against the Sudanese Government. The JEM embraces an Islamist ideology and while the Sudanese Government linked the group with Hassan al-Turabi, a prominent Islamist leader in Sudan. On January 2006, the JEM merged with Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) to form the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces of West Sudan. On October 2007, the JEM attacked the Defra oilfield, which was controlled by a Chinese-led consortium. Ibrahim claimed that "We oppose them coming because the Chinese are not interested in human rights. It is just interested in Sudan's resources." The JEM claims that the revenue from oil sold to China funds the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed militia.

Liberation Movement for Justice (LMJ)

The Liberation Movement for Justice (LMJ) is comprised of previously smaller separate rebel movements in Darfur. The LMJ tried to independently pursue its own treaty with the GOS and succeeded in some basic steps, though it failed to achieve anything in the Doha conference. JEM accuses LMJ of not seeking a solution to the Darfur Question, and states that the LMJ has no real presence on the ground, or military presence, to give an LMJ treaty any significance.

Sudan Liberation Army (SLM/A)

The Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM or SLA), a rebel group, founded by members of three indigenous ethnic groups in Darfur; the Fur, the Zaghawa, and the Masalit. When General Omar al-Bashir and the National Islamic Front, overthrew the Sudanese Government in 1989, a large section of the population in Darfur, particularly the non-Arab ethnicities in the region, became increasingly marginalized. Such frustration gave foundation to the Darfur Liberation Front which was later renamed as the Sudan Liberation Movement. The Sudanese Liberation Army is a member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the umbrella opposition organization grouping. The SLM/A issued statements that it does not seek independence, but demands greater political autonomy and a more equitable share of resources from the central Sudanese authorities. The Sudanese Government disputes the SLM/A's claims to be a political organization, labeling the rebels "bandits and armed gangs."

Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)

The Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was the party involved in the North-South Civil War of Sudan. The SPLM is now the leading party in South Sudan and backs a South-Sudanese independence. The SPLM is known to support the rebel groups of Darfur against the GOS.

United Nations

The United Nations has been actively involved in the crisis in Sudan mainly through the two following organizations: The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), and the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The United Nations supports negotiation efforts, rejects the GOS's hurry in reaching a deal, is attempting to let all rebel groups including the SLM/A join the talks, and is trying to secure more time.

Contending Views

The majority of the academic community agrees on the above narrative for the conflict in Darfur and its roots. Still, numerous contending views exist, elaborating on the roots of the conflict.

The Role of Natural Resources

The United Nations Environmental Program report, argued that "there is a very strong link between land degradation, desertification and conflict in Darfur." The idea that more water and arable land could defuse such a complex crisis seems highly implausible. However, in July 2007, researchers from Boston University announced that a vast underground lake had been discovered beneath the barren soil of northern Darfur. Following this discovery, were high-flying debates about whether this underground water source could become the keystone of the solution to the Darfur conflict.

"It can be a blessing or also a curse. If the government acts true to form and tries to create some sort of oasis in the desert and control who settles there, that would simply be an extension of the crisis, not a solution./ These wider environmental factors don't have impact in and of themselves" in terms of fomenting conflict./ The question is how they are managed," argues notable scholar Alex de Waal.

Previous Sudanese governments have implemented agricultural policies that have almost inevitably led to conflict. They have been proponents of large mechanized farms and complex irrigation schemes, controlled by the government. Yet, what remains at the backbone of the Sudanese economy are small, rain-fed farms that are often over-manned and far less efficient. At the heart of the Darfur conflict remains the battle for control of resources. However what one often neglects by viewing the conflict as a rift between the north and south factions, is that the conflict is between those at the center of the country, the rich and elites who have controlled Sudan and its wealth for the past century and a half, and the extremely poor who have no means of livelihood and are often the most suppressed.

Arab-African Racism

The conflict is often understood in the context of the Sudan Civil War, as a continuation of the North-South divide. Through its Civil War, Sudan became polarized between North—Muslim and Arab—and South—non-Muslim and African. As such, some refuse Natural Resources or political subjugation as the reason for the conflict, and instead argue that a one-sided Arab campaign of ethnic cleansing has been launched against the Africans since the Civil War. Such, some claim, has been created from Arab supremacy towards Africans.

Some believe that such polarization, in addition to an Arab Nationalism movement projected from Libya unto Sudan in the 1970s, lead to strong anti-African racism by the Arabs of Sudan.

According to The New York Times, it is the militarization of the Arab tribes that was the starting point to the conflict, starting with prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi's decision in the 1980s to *"give arms to the Arabic-speaking cattle nomads [...] of southern Darfur, ostensibly to defend themselves against the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army[...]. No one was surprised when they started to turn the guns on their northern neighbors, the Fur, Masalit and others [the "African" ethnic groups of Darfur]. The SPLA exacerbated the situation by trying to open a front in southern Darfur. It was at this point that the Arab tribal militias, first called Murahilin, now Janjaweed, began to get out of control."*³⁵

The rise of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to power is said to have accelerated the growing trends of racism between Arabs and African. While al-Bashir's government was formed as an Islamic government, it is also said to be "Arab centric"³⁶—though this is denied by al-Bashir himself. O'Fahey of the New York Times elaborates, "This has injected an ideological and racist dimension to the conflict, with the sides defining themselves as "Arab" or ["Black"]. My impression is that many of the racist attitudes traditionally directed toward slaves have been redirected to the sedentary non-Arab communities."

Further Readings

1. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/darfur.htm>
2. http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?/site/reviewofbooks_article/5852/
3. War in Darfur, Alex de Waal
4. http://nutrition.tufts.edu/docs/pdf/famine/darfur_livelihoods_under_seige.pdf Section 2
5. http://www.cfr.org/publication/13129/crisis_guide.html
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7. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/02/23/101203.html>
8. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/02/24/101346.html>
9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Equality_Movement
10. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/darfur.htm>

³⁵ O'Fahey, R.S. "Darfur : A complex ethnic reality with a long history." The New York Times. May 14, 2004. http://nytimes.com/2004/05/15/opinion/15iht-edofahey_ed3_.html (accessed December 20, 2010).

³⁶ Ibid.

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