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**Darfur -  
A Cultural Handbook**

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## **Preface**

Prior to 2003, if there was any interest in the Sudan, eyes would be drawn to the south, where a civil war had been waging for at least 25 years and during which an estimated 500,000 Sudanese had died as a direct or indirect result of military action. By 2003, the country was tired, the army was tired, the nation's infrastructure was audibly and visibly creaking, but the balance of trade had recently returned to surplus after years of financial mismanagement after discoveries of oil in the south in the 1970s. President of the Republic and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, who had risen to power in 1989 on the back of a coup, was by now fairly comfortable and reasonably content, having largely overcome internal opposition.

Internationally, the runes looked good as well. Osama Bin Laden and his second in command Ayman al-Zawahiri had been thrown out of Sudan long before the events of 9/11, and the US bombing of the Khartoum pharmaceutical factory in 1998 was an increasingly distant memory – despite the site being still a pile of rubble in 2006. The threat from Libya had after several attempts, including the aerial bombing of Omdurman, withered away. Foreign investment was increasing, with considerable new industrial plant being constructed in North Khartoum; the Chinese and South Koreans were buying up the oil; a new black-topped multi-lane highway from Khartoum to Port Sudan was nearing completion. The Great Omdurman Souk had never been busier; a new western style shopping mall had just opened next to Khartoum Airport. Sudan was on the up. But all was not well.

Nationally, Al-Bashir was in trouble. Protracted internal political wrangling, repeated successful coups and unsuccessful coup attempts, and above all the growth of radical Islamism had undermined internal stability and growth. This was in turn complicated by the rise of the National Islamic Front under the guidance of Osman Al-Tarabi, a radical fundamentalist leader and former mentor of the president, who after repeated meddling in affairs of state and his own reported coup attempt against Al-Bashir in 2004 was considered too powerful to be removed permanently, and placed under house arrest.

On 9 September 2004, the then US Secretary of State Colin Powell focused international attention on something unpleasant that was happening in Sudan's western region. Has genocide taken place in Darfur? If the raw figures are to be believed between 200,000 and 300,000 people have died in little more than three years, but these figures are those circulated in and by the West. Conversely and from the Sudanese perspective, the level of fatalities is stated as being much lower, between 20 – 50,000. This is still a considerable figure to the western psyche, but in the context of an African nation which accepts it lost 500,000 in the southern war, and would in any case expect the mortality rate for Darfur to be high, the lower end of Darfur mortality is not too far from their normal statistical curve.

However, without doubt the ethnic cleansing which has occurred across Darfur either by direct militia or rebel action, fear amongst the affected communities, encouragement and aid given by the international communities, or as a result of environmental change has brought a change to the traditional way of life. The manner of that ethnic cleansing has gained notoriety, with the verified use of government air and logistic assets to move sometimes uniformed armed groups committing rape, murder, mutilation and abduction against essentially unarmed civilians. With their villages burned and flattened, a complicit 'police' force to which they are unable to turn for support, the loss of earning capacity through the theft or killing of cattle, donkeys and camels, and the destruction of water sources, little else is left for the villagers to do than move to seek the security of the refugee camps to which others had fled before. From an estimated population of about 6,000,000, the World Food Programme estimates there are currently between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps in Darfur or refugees who have moved across the border into Chad, all dependant on food aid. Inevitably, this huge movement and then concentration of the populace has forced a change in traditional and regional subsistence and trade, and brought with it a dependence which may now never allow the clock to be turned back.

But how accurate are these figures in the context of Darfur and its culture?

Death is a way of life to the Darfuri. In all communities, whether in Europe, Africa or Asia, there are certain conventions, protocols and etiquettes to be followed, and I learned very early in my contact with those Sudanese with whom I interacted - whether government, official, military, villager or IDP - of those matters which one never discussed, just one of them being how many cattle, camels or children they had. I did learn the normal tendency to exaggerate, as the more assets a man owns the greater his status, and communal expectations that follow from that. So, perversely, the more casualties his tribe may have taken, also implies how important the tribe, individual or village was or might have aspired to being. There were many instances of arriving in a village to investigate the circumstances of an attack or incident, when the cadaver could not be located, or had already been buried in accordance with their custom. I am not suggesting there has been deliberate dishonesty or inflation of the figures, but more an elastic approach to the accounting process, because no-one really knows. Without doubt there has been, and continues to be, considerable suffering and loss of life, but with the tendency for some cultural groups to be more expressive, needing symbolism and demonstration as part of their grieving process, there is the possibility for levels of fatalities to be flawed.

The aim of this piece is to explore the broad issues which are part of and associated with the culture of Darfur. Although much has been written on the north and south of Sudan, there is still very little currently available regarding the culture in the west, due mainly to its remoteness, and that it continues to be 'out of bounds', with access by Westerners strictly restricted by the Sudanese Government.

Sudan and, specifically, Darfur are difficult and expensive to get into and difficult to travel through and across. But Sudan is very strategically placed and has played an important part in the history of civilisation through the millennia. Through its location it has the ability to contribute considerably to wider regional stability and the prosperity of a key part of Africa in the future.



## **Sudan: Geography, History, Statistics and Economy**

Sudan's history is long and complex. The size of the country and difficulties in moving around are for many the most difficult to grasp, Darfur itself being roughly the size of France but without the infrastructure.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Key facts about Sudan can be found at Annex B. Sudan is divided into three distinct geographical regions.

The northern area, comprising about 30% of the country, consists of barren desert plains, the stony Nubian desert lying to the east of the River Nile and the sandier Libyan desert to the west. The River Nile cuts through these desert lands, and in many places the arid landscape reaches right up to its banks. In some places, a narrow fertile strip separates the river from the desert.

The central region of the Sudan consists of steppes and low mountains. Near Khartoum, the two main sources of the Nile, known as the Blue and the White Nile, converge. The Blue Nile rises from Lake Tana in Ethiopia and flows across east central Sudan. The much longer White Nile has its source at Lake Victoria on the border with Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The southern region, known as the *Sudd*, contains vast swamps and rain forests. On its journey through this region on the way to Khartoum, the White Nile loses about 60% of its water through evaporation. Once the two headstreams converge to become the Nile proper, they are fed by many tributaries as the river flows north.

There are several mountain ranges. In the west in Darfur, the old volcanic Jebel Marra is the country's highest range. Others include the Nuba Mountains near Khartoum, the Matong and Dongatona ranges in the south and the rugged Red Sea Hills to the east, which give way to a narrow coastal strip about 700 km long.

Sudan's highest peak is Mount Kinyeti, which rises to a height of 3187 metres (10,456 feet) in the south-eastern Immatong Mountains.

### **HISTORY**

#### **Early History**

Several histories have taken the arrival of Islam as the beginning of the Sudanese era. This may be partly true in the context of a state structure, but there is recorded evidence that the area along the Nile was settled from before the Middle Paleolithic period (a chronology can be found at Annex C), and that by 300AD there were at least one million Christians in the general area of the Nile.

Sudan's early history is tied to Egypt. First Dynasty Pharaohs (2900 – 2500BC) led expeditions into Sudan in search of slaves, thereby starting an industry which would persist for millennia, and in the process put Darfur 'on the map'. By the end of the Sixth Dynasty (2345 – 2181 BC), Egyptian forces had withdrawn from above the third cataract leaving a flourishing culture centred on Kerma, whose forays north to above the second cataract defeated by the Egyptians, who then created their New Kingdom around 1500BC.

New Kingdom aspirations were towards the south and the abundant mineral resources in the Nile valley. By 1500BC, Kerma had been sacked, with forces advancing to almost the fifth cataract, subjugating the Nubian peoples en route. Such was the sense of achievement that Rameses II temple at Abu Simbel is decorated with reliefs of conquered Nubians, and Tutankhamun was buried wearing Nubian sandals, symbolising the trampling of the Nubian state.

### Kingdom of Kush

In around the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Upper Nubia was unified, and the worship of Egyptian gods resurrected. This set the stage for the Nubian conquest of Egypt and the creation of the Nubian Dynasty. Kushite culture enjoyed a renaissance of ‘all things Egyptian’ including the construction of pyramids for their kings. At its height, Nubian rule extended to the borders of Libya and Palestine, but fell back with the ascendancy of the Assyrians from Babylon and a resurgent Egypt to the north.

Little is known about the day to day running of this kingdom during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, other than the king was all-powerful and supported by the priesthood. Interestingly, queens ruled as much as kings, fuelling the belief amongst classical writers that after the move to Meroe the kingdom was ruled exclusively by women.

After the fall of the Ptolemies with Anthony and Cleopatra in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the Romans looked upon Kush as a client state, a view not shared or welcomed by the Kushite kingdom. Although a Kushite force was sent north, they were soundly beaten, with the Romans sacking Napata and establishing an unsuccessful occupation. Negotiations ensued, and a 300 year period of entente ensued. But by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD the kingdom was in irrevocable decline, a fate sealed by the 5<sup>th</sup> century when Christian missionaries had arrived.

### Medieval Sudan

With the fall of Kush, Nubia was occupied by the Nobatae, possibly originating from the general area of Darfur, Libya and Kordofan, but it too succumbed to the Christian Romans by both strength of arms and proselytising by the missionaries. Prosperous, mineral rich Nubia became threatened by the rise of Islam which had quickly enveloped Egypt, in the process cutting off Nubia from its parent church. Although the Arab armies achieved some success and sacked cities en route, they were eventually fought to a standstill, forcing negotiations and a peace treaty (Baqt) for about 600 years, both sides profiting from the agreement.

By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and after Egyptian merchants had exploited gold and emerald mines in Nubia, the rise of the Mameluke kings marked the end for the Nubian kings. By 1275, their own nominee was established on the throne in Nubia, intermarriage between the Arabs and the Dongola elite culminating in the cathedral at Old Dongola being converted into a Mosque.

### The Funj Kingdom

The Funj were non-Arab and non-Muslim, and it remains unclear to this day precisely from where they originated, but by 1504 the Black Sultanate had been founded at Sennar.

At its height, the Funj Kingdom had crossed the White Nile, had brought Muslims from the north under its patronage, and had prospered to the extent that a five storey palace of considerable substance had been completed at Sennar. Slavery was the cornerstone of Funj wealth and power, reinforced by a slave army which by 1762 had become so powerful it deposed the then king, Badi IV and sent him into exile. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were a spent force.

### The Fur Sultanate

Concurrently with the rise of the Funj, the Fur were carving out a kingdom of their own in Darfur, expanding their boundaries, raiding and slaving throughout the region. Critically positioned along the 'Forty Days Road',<sup>1</sup> the Fur were ideally placed to capitalise on the incessant demand for slaves both from the north and east, as all were required to route through the oasis and trading town of El Fasher.

### The Turko-Egyptian Conquest

Napoleon's failure to conquer Egypt in 1799, leaving the country in turmoil, left a power vacuum where the Ottoman Empire exerted its influence on the placing of Mohammed Ali on the throne. By 1821, a 4,000 strong force of mixed nationalities and adventure seekers led by his son sailed up the Nile, deposing the Mamelukes as they went along with any tribal leaders they encountered. Swords and spears were no match for the firearms of the invaders.

Turko-Egyptian rule was harsh, taxes were oppressively high, land was confiscated, and slaves were readily sought for transport as human cargo north to Egypt. Rebellion by the indigenous Arabs took four years to suppress, only the appointment of a new governor seeing an end to the uprising. Trade flourished, the White Nile was opened to steam navigation, and the great Sudd swamp breached.

Slavery boomed, with the Dinka, Shilluk and Azande hit so hard the ingress into their lands became known in their languages as 'the time the world was spoiled'. The great slave market in Khartoum became the biggest in the world, and the slave trade became the mainstay of Sudan's economy. Lobbying from European powers and the closure of the Khartoum market merely saw a transfer of the business to a second in the Shilluk kingdom. By the time Mohammed Ali died in 1848, Sudan was being plundered.

### The Mahdist Rebellion and the Mahdiya

After the accession of Mohammed Ali's son Ismael to power, various exploratory, and bloody, military expeditions south by Sir Samuel Baker eventually caused him to resign in 1874, to be replaced by Charles 'Chinese' Gordon, who was subsequently appointed the governor-general of the whole of Sudan. Gordon's suppression of the slave trade brought him few friends where the slave trade was the bedrock of Sudanese life. However, Gordon was more successful in bringing Darfur and Bahdr al-Ghazal under control, but he made little impression elsewhere.

Following Gordon's replacement by two ineffective governors-general, Mohammed Ahmed, a devout and charismatic *faki* proclaimed himself Mahdi, his aim being to set up a theocracy and liberate the holy cities of Arabia. Alarmed at the turn of events, Khartoum reacted by sending a military force to arrest the Mahdi, who escaped into Kordofan from where he gathered followers and began to build an army. By the end of 1882, the whole of Kordofan had fallen to the rebellion, including Sudan's then second largest town.



Alarmed by the loss, an Egyptian Army led by Lt Colonel William Hicks was sent to recapture the town and restore rule. The Battle of Sheikan (1883) was a disaster, the Mahdi's followers massacring the entire army of 10,000 men. Darfur and Bahr al-Ghazal fell soon after and tribes in eastern Sudan rose in support of the Mahdi.

While Gladstone in London reappointed Gordon for a further term, the Mahdi's grip on a now besieged Khartoum protected by high tidal waters was complete. Although a flying relief column was despatched to save Gordon, falling river levels and exposure of city defences through dropping water levels, combined with a belief that Gordon would prevail no matter what the opposition, and inadequate logistic preparation, saw Gordon and Khartoum fall on 26 January 1885. This was two days before the arrival of the flying column, which was repulsed and sent back to Egypt.

By mid 1885, Mohammed Ahmed was dead from suspected typhoid. He was replaced by Khalifa Abdullah, a Baggara from Darfur, who maintained the expansionist dreams of his predecessor, and yet had not learned from the country's history that previously beaten adversaries from the north had the annoying habit of reappearing stronger and more emboldened than before.

The Mahdiya was little better than the Turko-Egyptian regime it had replaced. The slave markets were reopened, the taxation burden returned, Mahdism became the orthodoxy and pilgrimage to the Mahdi's tomb incumbent on all Muslims. The Baggara tribe were exempt from taxation and sent to Khartoum to become the de facto army of occupation.

Elsewhere the Kalifa's army were beaten back, his best troops being severely beaten in an attempted invasion of Egypt in 1897, only just prevailing against an Ethiopian force with the loss of 1000 of his own men.

### The British Conquest and Anglo Egyptian Condominium

By 1895, the 'Scramble for Africa' was at its height, and the re-conquest of the Sudan was ordered, ostensibly to avenge Gordon's death, the reality being more about European politics, as the French had been reported to be sending a force to claim the Nile, and the Belgians were keen to add parts of Sudan to the Congo Free State.

Kitchener took first blood at Dongola in 1896 and after laying the railway from Wadi Halfa in the north, smashed the Ansar at Atbara in early 1898 before engaging with the Mahdist army outside Omdurman on 2 September 1898. Like the 1821 incursion, this was a mis-matched battle between the medieval and industrial worlds. By the end of the day the Khalifi was forced to flee west to El Fasher in Darfur leaving 10,000 Sudanese dead on the field of battle, following the route of future sultan Ali Dinar who had anticipated the outcome and fled before the first shot was fired.

The Egyptian expectation that as they had largely paid for the expedition they would regain control of the country was thwarted, leaving the way open for an Anglo Egyptian Condominium to grow in its place. By 1899, the Khalifi has been tracked and killed in Kordofan, and in Darfur, with tacit British approval endorsed by Kitchener, and after promising a £500 annual tribute, Ali Dinar had re-established the Fur Sultanate, where he proved adept at controlling nomad raids and maintaining order.

Britain set about remodelling Sudan along the lines of its other colonies, the primary purpose being commerce to supply raw material to stoke the domestic economy. The Governor General, Sir Reginald Wingate, instigated a major programme of building, agricultural expansion and infrastructure development. The railway was expanded, dams were built to improve irrigation - a throwback to the Kushite kingdom when dams and reservoirs were in common use - and an educational system established with the opening of the Gordon College in 1902.

However, in Darfur things were very different. The principle underlying the relationship between Sudan and Darfur was laid down by Cromer in March 1900 when he vetoed Wingate's suggestion that the British flag should be raised in Darfur. Cromer insisted that the administration of Darfur from Khartoum would be costly, useless and inefficient, and that Ali Dinar should be left in peace. This policy was endorsed by the British government and duly carried out by von Slatin and Wingate. As a consequence, no senior official of the Sudan government was allowed into Darfur during Ali Dinar's reign. Communications were carried out by messengers, so as not to interfere with Darfur's internal affairs.<sup>2</sup>

But with the outbreak of WW1, Ali Dinar had become increasingly unreliable and something of a firebrand. He had aligned himself with the Senussi, a powerful Muslim sect in Egypt and the Sahara, which had designs on Egypt and of forming a grand Muslim alliance, announcing in a letter to Wingate his refusal to pay further tribute and his intention to invade Sudan and overthrow British rule. Wingate's reply was diplomatic and measured, concluding he 'would be in Ali Dinar's capital long before Dinar was in his'. However, with eyes focussed elsewhere, nothing was done for 18 months, during which Ali Dinar had declared a Jihad, gathered his forces, and occupied the town of Jenl el-Hilla close to the Kordofan border.

In early 1916 an expeditionary force supported by four BE2c of C Flight 17 Squadron RFC, the first aircraft seen in Darfur, was sent against him. After a series of skirmishes and battles, the Sultan's main force was confronted and overwhelmed in May 1916. Ali Dinar accompanied by up to 200 of his followers fled to the Jebel Marra, where in November 1916 he was ambushed by British forces and killed.<sup>3</sup>

Under the condominium, Darfur was run by native administrators, with the help of a handful of British officials appointed to the Sudan Political Service. Ali Dinar's demise was not mourned by his subjects: *'Almost within 48 hours of the end of the fighting, the normal life of Fasher was resumed. The villages round were all unoccupied by their inhabitants, and troops were quartered in each of them... The civilian population of the country welcomed the Egypt troops, and everywhere seemed only too pleased to be rid of the yoke of Ali Dinar, who was both cruel and rapacious, and who took their Sharra for himself and brought many of them to El Fasher as slaves.'*<sup>4</sup>

As early as the 1920s nationalist organisations were springing up with the goal of self determination. Strikes and mutinies amongst the military were commonplace, which in the fashion of the country were generally put down with considerable force.

By the 1930s, the Graduates' General Congress (GGC), a forum for graduates of higher secondary schools and universities, had formed which despite its name included government and military officials, and was backed by the heads of the main religious movements. By 1945 fully fledged opposition parties formed: the Umma and Unionist, backed by the Mahdi and Mirghani families respectively, and

from which evolved the attitudes to national government that have continued to this day.

Elections to the first Sudanese parliament were held between November-December 1953, and in January 1954 the country's first Sudanese prime minister at the head of his own government assumed office. In December 1955 it was announced that on 1 January 1956 Sudan would become independent from Britain and Egypt, despite much residual support for full unification with Egypt.

Unsurprisingly and as prophesised almost 60 years earlier by Bennet Burleigh, senior governmental and military positions following the elections went overwhelmingly to northerners, and the south looked on with apprehension. With economic and social conditions already markedly inferior to those in the north and with rumours circulating that southern troops were about to be transferred to the north away from their families, a mutiny broke out at Torit garrison in eastern Equatoria. Over three days in August 1955, some 260 northern military officers, merchants, civil servants and their families were killed.

### **INDEPENDENCE AND POST INDEPENDENCE**

By 1959, power had transferred to the military to prevent political turmoil, setting the scene for ensuing years when governments would alternate routinely. By 1969 a left of centre secularist government under Numayri assumed power, followed in 1970 and again in 1971 by suppression of dissent and coup attempts. By the late 1970s, political Islam was growing into the system, and by 1983 Shariah Law was introduced.

Oil was discovered in the late 1970s in the south, but the outbreak of fighting prompted further revolt. In 1983, elements of the National Army mutinied in the south, prompting the creation of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). Two years later Numayri was overthrown in a popular uprising. Elections in 1986 saw the return of northern-based parties to power.

Uneasy with the prospect of peace in the south and concession being given to non-Muslims, in June 1989 the National Islamic Front (NIF), led by Hassan al-Turabi, installed Brigadier General Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir as president. Intent on the Islamisation of Sudan, the NIF suppressed human rights, executed dissident military officers, repressed opposition, and forced millions of south Sudanese from their homes.

Almost concurrently it invited Islamist militants from many countries to set up in Sudan, established the "Popular Arab Islamic Conference" (PAIC) in Khartoum and hosted Osama bin Laden between 1991–5. After accusations by Egypt and Ethiopia that Khartoum was involved in the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the Organisation of African Unity summit in Addis Ababa in 1995, the United Nations imposed sanctions against the regime. In 1998, after the bombing of US embassies in East Africa, a cruise missile strike was conducted against Sudanese industrial facilities in the Khartoum area.

The sidelining and partial house arrest of al-Turabi and the appointment of Ali Osman Mohamed Taha as Vice President delivered dialogue with the West which has continued. Hussan Al-Turabi still continues to have influence.

## THE ECONOMY

The US, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) nations have traditionally supplied most of Sudan's economic assistance. Sudan's role as an economic link between Arab and African countries is reflected by the presence in Khartoum of the Arab Bank for African Development. The World Bank had been the largest source of development loans. (See Annex D for Key Economic Indicators).<sup>5</sup>

Until the early 1970s Sudan's agricultural output was mostly dedicated to internal consumption. In 1972 under Numayry's leadership, the Sudanese government became more pro-Western and made plans to export food and cash crops. However, commodity prices declined throughout the 1970s, causing economic problems for Sudan. At the same time, debt servicing costs, from the money spent mechanizing agriculture, rose. In 1978 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) negotiated a structural adjustment programme with the government. This further promoted the mechanized export agriculture sector, but caused great economic problems for the pastoralists of Sudan.

Failure by the government to grasp the economic nettle continued to require high levels of programme assistance and debt relief to manage a foreign debt which exceeded the country's entire annual GDP, and made it one of the world's largest foreign debts. By 1984, a combination of factors, including drought, inflation and confused application of Islamic law reduced donor disbursements, and capital flight led to a serious foreign exchange crisis and increased shortages of imported commodities. More significantly, the 1989 revolution caused many donors in Europe, the US and Canada to suspend official development assistance, but not humanitarian aid.

However, as Sudan became the world's largest debtor to the World Bank and IMF by 1993, its relationship with the international financial institutions soured by the mid-1990s and even now has yet to be fully rehabilitated. The government fell out of compliance with an IMF standby programme and accumulated substantial arrears on repurchase obligations. A 4-year economic reform plan announced in 1988 was not pursued. A year after its proposed end a further 3 year economic restructuring plan was announced, designed to reduce the public sector deficit, end subsidies, privatize state enterprises, and encourage new foreign and domestic investment. However, In 1993 the IMF suspended Sudan's voting rights and the World Bank suspended Sudan's right to make withdrawals. Lome Funds and EU agricultural credits, totaling more than one billion Euros were also suspended.

On 3 November 1997, the US government imposed a trade embargo against Sudan and a total asset freeze against the government of Sudan under Executive Order 13067. The US believed the government of Sudan gave support to international terrorism, destabilized neighbouring governments and permitted human rights violations. A consequence of the embargo is that US corporations cannot invest in the Sudan oil industry, so companies in China, Malaysia and India are the major investors.

After oil discoveries in 1999, Sudan began exporting crude oil and with oil export earnings around \$500 million in 2000–1 Sudan's current account entered surplus for the first time since independence. This with the adoption of macroeconomic reforms stabilised its exchange rate, allowing previous exchange controls to be liberalised. Oil exports to the end of 2005 amounted to 401,000 barrels per day, slightly below forecasts. Increased oil production, reviving light industry, and

expanded export processing zones helped sustain GDP growth at about 10% to the end of 2006.

Sudan has broadly turned around a struggling economy with sound economic policies and infrastructure investments, but it still faces formidable economic problems, starting from its low level of per capita output. Agricultural production remains Sudan's most important sector, employing 80% of the workforce, contributing 35% of GDP, but most farms remain rain-fed and very susceptible to drought and climate change.

The country's transport facilities consist of one poorly maintained 4,800-kilometre single-track railway,<sup>6</sup> supplemented by limited river steamers on the Upper Nile, Sudan Airways,<sup>7</sup> and about 1,900 km of paved and gravel road—primarily in greater Khartoum, Port Sudan and the north. Some north-south roads that serve the oil fields of central/south Sudan have been built; and a 1,400 km oil pipeline goes from the oil fields via the Nuba Mountains and Khartoum to the oil export terminal in Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

Sudan's limited industrial development consists of agricultural processing and various light industries located in Khartoum North. In recent years, the GIAD industrial complex introduced the assembly of small cars and lorries, some heavy military equipment. Although Sudan is reputed to have great mineral resources, exploration has been quite limited, and the country's real potential remains unknown. Small quantities of asbestos, chromium and mica are exploited commercially. There are indications of significant potential reserves of oil and natural gas in southern Sudan, the Kordofan, Darfur, and the Red Sea provinces.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Darb el-Arbein*, the 'Forty Days Road', so named because of the length of time it took to travel from Dar Fur province in western Sudan to southern Egypt; although a good rider, with a strong camel and little in the way of provisions, could make the journey in as little as eighteen days. The caravans comprised as many as 5,000 camels and in 1782 one was recorded as having 24,000 camels. Because of the size of such caravans travel times were often up to three months, as the caravan had to be divided into several groups so as not to deplete wells and pasture along the route.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sudan under Wingate (Administration in the Anglo Egyptian Sudan (1899-1916) – G R Warburg, Frank Cass (1971)*

<sup>3</sup> Some accounts of the ambush have suggested Ali Dinar was ambushed by the RFC from the air. This is not corroborated by the detailed diary of Flt Lt (later Air Marshal) Slessor.

<sup>4</sup> J C Slessor Diary 1916

<sup>5</sup> Sources for this section and Annex D are the CIA Fact Book and the IMF.

<sup>6</sup> In 1973 80% of freight and 60% of all passengers went by rail.

<sup>7</sup> In recent years there has been a proliferation of small independent air transport companies. Most fleets use ex-Russian military aircraft with Russian crews either owned direct or on wet leases. Many are poorly maintained and overused. The safety record is poor, with outside Khartoum crashed aircraft remaining where they fall.

## Origins of the Fur and the Social Culture

This section will attempt to address the important issues of where did the Fur population originate from and develop, and how Darfuri society operates. Little has been written regarding the culture of the region, and the social mix has been forced to change with the massive population movement away from the countryside to the relative security of IDP camps and towns.

### ORIGINS OF THE FUR – ARAB OR AFRICAN?

There has been much reference in the Western (partially US) media about the present Darfur humanitarian situation being caused by the Arab attempting to drive the African from his homeland. This is partly true, yet the ethnic cleansing, or at worst the genocide, must be viewed in some context.

A cursory glance at the chronology at Annex C will identify the frequency with which the area of Sudan, including Darfur, has been fought over, populated and depopulated. Darfur does indeed have both Arab and African tribes and families, and mixtures of both, as any visit to any souk in the province after Friday prayers would reveal.

However the position is complicated in that some African groups have adopted Arabic, while others also use local languages or dialects depending upon the circumstances. Close observation reveals different styles and customs amongst different groups, and the Sudanese do make distinctions, even if the superficial appearance of the different individuals may be identical. Facial features and height will vary, which will assist an observer position the possible origin of an individual he encounters. A Negroid Rizeyqat will be Arab, whereas the paler and thinner featured Zaghawa would be African. To further complicate an analysis, a Zaghawa from the Sudanese side of the border area will, when compared to the Zaghawa from the Chadian side, appear to have similar facial features but a slightly different style of dress and will have a slightly different accent.

This similarity in appearance is routinely exploited by all parties in the Darfur conflict. To attribute blame in a broadly un-policeable environment it is relatively easy to present a corpse for viewing, which looks like, is dressed like, and has the trappings and amulets of originating from one particular place, but which may have been prepared in that way to deliberately deceive the observer as to its real origin.

Intertribal marriages and the practice of taking slave concubines played further havoc with visible racial distinctions, a tendency still exploited by the reported systematic raping of women of African appearance by the Arab militias to dilute the ethnic mix still further and 'whiten the skin' or seek 'Arab babies'.

K M Barbour observed:

*The term "Arab" is used in the Sudan in a variety of ways and on different occasions its meaning may be based on race, speech, an emotional idea or a way of life. Not all who claim to be "Arabs" would be universally accepted as such and there are those who at one moment claim 'we are Arabs' and at another will dismiss a ragged stranger contemptuously as "he is only one of the Arabs".<sup>8</sup>*

This ambivalence has to do with the way of life, as nomads are viewed as Arabs, and not being seen to have a base, would be poor. In reality, a nomad with a herd of several hundred camels worth several hundred<sup>9</sup> dollars each is considerably wealthier than his village based African counterpart to whom he is supposed to defer. However, "Arab" is seen as both a mark of "civilization" (as opposed to "African" savagery) and in the context of nomad versus sedentary.

So where did the Fur of Darfur originate?

Historical population movements were generally west to east. The northern deserts were too inhospitable, and the southern areas with abundant rainfall would not have encouraged movement but settlement and development.

Prior to the advent of Islam in the fourteenth century, and the introduction of the written record, the oral tradition and linguistic evidence suggest three early sources of population migrations in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries with groups from the Nilo-Saharan, who today can be recognized in the Berti, Zaghawa and Bidayat groups. From Egypt via the Nile valley came the Nubian speakers such as the Birged and Meidob, and from the northeast came the Arabs such as the Ziyadiyya, Tia'aisha, Bem Halba, Habbaniya and Rizeyyat. These groups sometimes are called "native Arabs" to differentiate them from the more recent arabized migrants who came directly from the Nile valley in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Further waves of migrants arrived during the seventeenth century from regions well to the west of Darfur, reaching all the way to what is today the north of Nigeria. These were the ancestors of the populations described today as Hausa, Fulbe, Kanuri, Kotoko or Maba. Many of these African groups were gradually culturally arabized during their long migration. Sections of these migrants intermarried with earlier Arab migrants to form the Fellata nomads of Southern Darfur, who are today considered to be a "Baggara" tribal group.

The third major migration into Darfur were the "*awlad al-Bahar*" ("sons of the river", i.e. riverine Arabs) from such tribes as the *Ja'aliyin* or the Danagla who sat at the heart of the Sudanese power structure in colonial times and still occupy it today. These late comers, who started to arrive during the period of Darfur's economic prosperity in the eighteenth century, were almost exclusively *fuqara* (religious preachers) or *jallaba* (traders) and settled in the towns. Although "Arabs", they had almost nothing in common with the old nomadic "native Arabs". They, and not the "native Arabs", constituted the embryo of the colonial "foreign elite". In Darfur those "*awlad al-Bahar*" were termed "Bahhara" ("those of the river"), and did not establish themselves until about 1874, blending with the population as a nativised, yet external elite.

## SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND CULTURE

Broadly speaking, Darfur's population live in a number of different social systems and structures each largely independent of the other.

- Nomadic societies of pastoral peoples
- Village societies of cultivators in the fertile and accessible north and along river beds
- Homestead societies of cultivators
- Urban societies living in the cities and larger towns
- The family group.

In principle patrilineal descent provides the basis for the formation of all structural units - from the smallest to the largest - amongst the nomads. The members of the largest entity, the tribe, are descended through males from a remote male ancestor. The tribe is divided into smaller units, and each of these into still smaller ones. This process of subdivision is such that there may be as many as five or six levels between the largest group and the smallest, which is likely to consist of a man, his sons, their sons, and those of their daughters who have either married within the group or have yet to be married. Whatever the level of tribal section, each unit claims descent through males from a common male ancestor.

### NOMADIC SOCIETIES

Take for example the *Homr*, who are Baggara Arab cattle herders and a major tribal group in Darfur. Whilst there will be minor differences between tribes, this description is broadly representative of societies in other tribes.

The tribe (*Gabily*) is descended from the founder called *Heymir* (living 10 to 12 generations back). The tribe has two main sections (also called *Gabily*), each subdivided further into 5 sections. Traditional tribal sections are also called *Gabily* even at the subdivided level, but become administratively known as *Omadiya*, a word the *Homr* have been using since 1911. An *Omadiya* varies in size from about 2,000 to 9,000 people.

The *Omadiya* is divided into a number of primary sections each called *Khashm Bet* (literally a house or tent); nearly every one of these is subdivided still further, sometimes to 2 levels, sometimes 3. To complicate the lineage, each subdivision is also called *Khashm Bet*, except for the smallest which is called *Surra*. Members have a common ancestor 5 or 6 generations back. A *Surra* comprises a number of smaller groups, in which the youngest male is at least 3 generations removed from the group's founder. Such a group, together with those who have married into it, constitutes an extended family.

Tribal divisions are most readily apparent in connection with the exploitation of economic rights, principally to land and water. For grazing purposes all *Homr* have rights to all *Homr* tribal territory as long as they stay clear of land under cultivation; however, tribal sections acquire, through frequent use, rights to specific areas for the cultivation of gardens. Members of a *Surra*, for example, return year after year to the same land, which they regard as their home, even if their actual place of residence or camp may be elsewhere. Within this area, land rights to specific plots become personal and are often handed down from father to son.

The constant subdividing of lineages gives great fluidity to *Homr* society. Tribal sections secede, move away, or may join with others for various reasons. The composition of even the smallest units of local cooperation constantly varies in size and composition according to the season of the year and the natural environment. Individuals, families and larger units move about with considerable freedom to seek a more favourable social environment; the moves are usually induced by quarrels, crowding, or personal attachments, or in recent years pressure exerted on them by militias or rebel groups. Most lineages, therefore, are represented over a wide area within the bounds of their tribal territory and sometimes outside it. The size and composition of various groups, and ultimately of the tribe itself, depend on such things as the amount of grazing land available and the policy and personality of the leaders.

Cooperative obligations are strongest within a *Surra*, as compared with more comprehensive lineage segments such as a *Khashm bet* or a *Gabily*. All *Surra*



members are considered brothers.<sup>10</sup> They address each other as such and are expected to show a united front. The name of the Surra usually includes a form of the name of its founder.

Ideally, Surra members belong to one camp (*ferig*), whose members migrate and herd together. The achievement of this ideal, however, is often thwarted by economic necessity or for personal reasons. Men and women are constantly on the move. They go on visits, get jobs elsewhere, and quarrel. When the grazing herd becomes too large, a camp splits up into two or more camps. Despite its shifting size and composition, a camp always retains an identity through its association with one particular Surra. No camp exists of which the regular male members belong to more than one Surra.

The fluid character of Homr society has a bearing on political power. Each camp has an accepted leader called *reis al ferig* (head of the camp), usually the wealthiest cattle owner. When there are no splinter camps with their own leaders, the *reis al ferig* is identical with the *reis* (head) of the Surra. Each *Khashm bet*, at whatever segmentary level, is headed by a sheikh; and each of the two main divisions of the Homr tribe, the *Gabily*, by a *nazir*. The leaders are always members of a family seen as wealthy by its peers.

Wealth is a way to power among the Homr, and wealth among nomads means cattle or camels. A man rich in cattle is sure to attract followers and thus has power thrust upon him. Industry, thrift and hardiness, needed to build and increase a large herd, are considered highly desirable qualities. At the same time, a rich man is expected to be generous. If he lives up to that expectation, his fame will spread, and he will attract more followers. To uphold his reputation he will need more cattle. Thus the urge to own cattle is paramount: even if the pressure of the environment on the overall number reduces the quality of the herd, it is 'hooves on the ground' which count.

In the traditional system the offices of *reis*, sheikh and *nazir* carried prestige but little authority. His power depended largely on the strength of his personality. Leadership was limited to situations in which his tribal section acted corporately. Moreover, his power rested on consent and discussion. No one was forced to follow a particular leader, and the size and composition of his following were constantly changing.

The establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in 1899 had a profound influence on Homr society by stabilizing the floating power positions in the traditional system. For purposes of taxation, justice and the maintenance of public order, the new government needed representative authorities over identifiable groups. Locality could not serve as a basis in a nomadic society. Thus the traditional leaders of patrilineal descent groups were given a formal power they had previously lacked. Before the condominium era the tenure of a *nazir*, as traditional leaders of *Gabily* were known, was short lived. When their position became permanent, the division of the Homr tribe into two main sections was made rigid. In the same way, the five subdivisions of each *Gabily* were "frozen" for administrative purposes. They were from then on called *omadiya* and headed by an *omda*.

The government did not fix leadership positions of sheikhs below the *omadiya* level. Sometimes members of a Surra followed two different sheikhs; in other cases more than one Surra were grouped behind one sheikh. The government did not care whether a sheikh led ten people or several hundred, but it wanted to make sure that every Homr was responsible to one sheikh, as far as the payment of his taxes

was concerned. A sheikh who was able to collect the entire assessment was allowed to keep one-tenth, with the effect of increasing his wealth and personal status still further. He also assisted the *omda* in locating people wanted by the police or administration and gathered his followers for a cattle census or inoculations.

Surra leaders, however, were given no official function. The administration regarded them as notables through whom surra members could sometimes be reached directly.

After independence the general trend was toward elimination of the traditional system from the political scene as more power devolved on the national government. All local offices were abolished in 1970.

### VILLAGE SOCIETIES

Village societies exist where conditions permit relatively dense settlement, intensive agriculture and marketable surpluses to accumulate, as in the riverine regions along the major wadis in all parts of Darfur. Such societies congregate in relatively large-scale territorial units under a centralised administrative authority which regulates the exploitation of natural resources and provides protection in return for the payment of taxes. The ideal is the patriarch, a man of means and influence who dispenses patronage.

Control emanates from an urban centre located on one of the principal trade routes, such as El Fasher in Darfur. The settled people of these societies live in villages that constitute the smallest political unit. Divisions in village society are therefore linked to territory and use of land, and are not tribal as in nomadic society.

Within the village society, kinship remains important. A man inherits land and social position from his father and farms near his brothers and other kin. If he must move, he will probably choose an area in which he already has relatives - perhaps his wife's or his mother's family. As a result the inhabitants of a village are generally linked by a complex network of marital and kinship ties. Often the majority of people within a settled area, encompassing several villages, belong to a single descent group, whose members share certain ritual observances and recognize some obligations toward each other.

When ancestors are remembered beyond the grandfather of the present elders, it is done for religious and social reasons. Nomads who adopt a settled way of life eventually replace loyalty toward the lineage with that toward the village community.

The village headman is usually either the head or the representative of the leading family and related to most of the council members who elect him. He is also the lowest ranking official in the central government hierarchy. In an economy based primarily on settled agriculture, seasonal cooperation between villages is not required, as it is between groups of nomads during certain parts of the year. Thus the importance of a village headman lies less in his actions with neighbouring communities than in his dealings with the central government. He collects taxes, takes care of local administrative matters, and settles disputes. In much of Darfur and Kordofan provinces where land is plentiful, the headman apportions the communal holdings among individual users, who are then accepted as members of the village.

The formal religion in Darfur is Islam, and a village is also to some extent a religious community. Thus the characteristic institutions of village society include

kinship groups, hereditary leaders, a corporate relationship to the land, a religious community, and the headman, who is at once an official and an intermediary. These various elements combine to establish a system of patronage that becomes the principal social link between village-based society and the urban elite responsible for national policies. The coordination of the several aspects of community leadership at all levels is illustrated by the meanings of the honorific title 'Sheikh' that is given to headmen and higher officials and is used as a general term of politeness in addressing any man of political, religious or social importance. Primarily it designates an old and experienced man and hence one who is the head of a family and who is important in the community. It is also the specific title of the head of a religious order, a position that is itself often hereditary.

Practically, in Darfur the linkages between the remote or detached village society through marriage or kinship to an 'urban' are demonstrated by those displaced people (IDPs) who have been forced to leave the land co-habiting and seeking refuge with relatives in the larger provincial towns. This has been seen acutely in the Kabkabia IDP concentration where at the end of 2005 over 60,000 IDPs had assembled, the majority of whom were living with relatives through marriage.

### HOMESTEADERS

Autonomy, isolation and heterogeneity characterize homestead society, which occurs wherever the economy is limited to subsistence agriculture and communities are separated from each other, as but not exclusively in the southern regions of dense vegetation towards the borders with the Central African Republic and Republic of Congo. Normally, no formal secular authority exists within the community, and each homestead is an independent social unit. Neither are there permanent links with neighbouring communities other than those of language and culture and the personal ties of individual families

Homestead societies also occur in the less accessible areas of North Darfur. There, however, they are closer to the village societies of more prosperous neighbouring groups, which provide the models for the development of modern local government institutions, a process closely related to the arabisation of the province.

The homestead will include a man's married children and his grandchildren. Each adult member has formal rights to living space, food crops and animals. The senior male may also have more than one wife, maintaining a separate household for each within the homestead, which is an economic as well as a social unit. The head of a prosperous homestead may become a 'Big Man' in the neighbourhood. When that happens, his position is usually given formal recognition by a special ceremony of investiture, upon which he is expected to distribute most of his livestock and grain in feasts and gifts. Thereafter the 'Big Man' is a respected local figure, whose advice is accepted. He may attract some of the poor and unattached to become his clients - that is, to give their services and allegiance in return for protection, help in emergencies and sometimes sustenance. A 'Big Man', however, has no clearly defined authority outside his own homestead.

Other local figures become Big Men by virtue of their tenure of ritual offices. The offices may include those of chief of the path (ambassador), cattle welfare supervisor, maker of war magic and many others connected with particular community activities. Most important and most nearly universal are those of 'Father of the Land' and of 'Rainmaker', who is sometimes a woman. In some communities one of these offices is given paramount importance; in others all of them may be filled by one man. None of them carries any inherent secular

authority, but occasionally individuals have been able to exploit the prestige of their position. The various offices are nearly always hereditary, restricted to particular clans or families who are said, for example, to "have rain".

Rainmakers attempt to control the water upon which all families of the area depend. Unlike the rainmakers of the Dinka, who are chiefs or kings at the same time, those elsewhere do not personify their group's guardian spirit. The rainmaker's influence, like that of the 'Father of the Land', is confined to his community. In the past a sentence of death was sometimes imposed for failure to produce rain. In modern times the rainmaker may be arraigned before the local court. On the other hand, a successful rainmaker might acquire considerable influence over a wide area and become, in effect, a political leader in a similar role to that of 'sheikh' in the nomadic society.

The 'Father of the Land' is usually the descendant of the pioneer settler in the area. He apportions land to those who want it, sometimes receiving a token payment in return. Rights to the use of a lot remain with a family for as long as they assert them, after which they revert to the community. There is no shortage, and land is usually neither sold nor rented. The main function of the father of the land, a religious figure rather than a chief, is the conduct of practices and traditions to assure good harvests.

In the indigenous social organization of homestead societies the concept of religious or secular order does not imply a universally applicable system of rewards and punishments. Murder and incest, for example, are considered crimes if committed by a member of the community and are punishable by expulsion or death. The same offences committed by someone not belonging to the community, however, are not regarded as crimes but as private misdemeanours for which compensation may be paid to the injured party. In circumstances in which compensation is expected but refused, a feud usually develops between the two groups. When an offender is considered to have unintentionally incited the guardian spirits of the area to inflict disease and misfortune, the father of the land or the rainmaker may conduct expiatory ceremonies.

### URBAN SOCIETY

Among the small but growing Darfuri urban population, whose growth is closely related to that of the modern sector of the economy, distinctions of race and tribe are decreasing in significance. Whilst they will be found in the main population centres of Darfur, El Fasher, El Geneina and Nyala, they do occur elsewhere and reflect the ongoing movement of people started with the arrival of the '*awlad al-Bahar*' in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This group will be the administrators, lawyers, teachers, technicians, business managers and senior college students (if there is a tertiary education college); the minor employees of government, business and development agencies; and increasing numbers of unskilled workers who try to escape dependence on agricultural and pastoral occupations and who like the choice of alternatives offered. They will not necessarily be, but increasing numbers are, indigenous Darfuri and have been driven by economics from almost any part of Sudan. They will generally have a modern outlook not restricted to the traditional Islamic norms. Typically a greater proportion of their female children will attend school than those in rural areas. However, they revert to their societal profile on return, permanent or temporary, their the home location.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

In Sudanese and Darfuri societies the family is an important unit of social organization. Family connections and obligations regulate many social activities that in Western countries are the function of other institutions.

The Sudanese family, except for the modern elite, should be considered as a cooperative economic, social, religious and often political unit. The rare person who remains unmarried is excluded from many social roles. Whatever the background or tribe, marriage will include the slow firming of the marriage bond, lasting many years from the first negotiations until several children are born; the close tie that a woman retains with her own family; the formality observed toward parents-in-law; the internal organization of polygamous households; and the part played by the community in witnessing the marriage.

Marriage is therefore a contractual arrangement between established families rather than between two individuals, and procreation and continuance of the family group its principal objective. The main division in family life is not between generations but between the sexes. Companionship between husband and wife is exceptional. Men and women do not eat together, and both rather seek the company of their own sex.

At the time of Independence almost all Sudanese saw polygamy as the ideal form of marriage with about 15 percent of all married men having more than one wife. The wars in the south and the attrition rate in Darfur have recently seen a resurgence in polygamy, with it being accepted several wives will be taken. This also serves a useful social purpose as the extended family provides social services: traditionally the family was responsible for the old, the sick and the mentally ill, although many of these responsibilities had been eroded by urbanization. Whether in rural or urban society, however, the burden of these social services fell upon the women. A Muslim is permitted four wives, and a non-Muslim as many as he can afford.

At Independence, the balance between the sexes was approximately equal in numbers; many men, competing for women with older and wealthier men, remained bachelors until the age of twenty-five or thirty. Girls usually married much earlier. Thus there was often a considerable difference in age between a wife and her husband or between her and other wives of the polygamous marriage. With the relative scarcity of men through wars, famines and inter tribal fighting, the balance has been skewed and the age gap dropped by several years. In the women's sphere the dominant figure is the senior wife, or more often the husband's mother, who remains as part of the extended family. When more than one wife lives in the same domestic group, each has her own establishment. Divorce is easy and frequent in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies.

In Muslim communities family organization is theoretically governed by religious law; however, pre-Muslim elements often survive. For example, many non-Arab Muslims retain the conventions of their former social order and forbid marriage within the kinship group.

Among the Arabs there is much concern with social distinctions and purity of lineage. An 'Arab' prefers marriage with his father's brother's daughter (cousin), since no question of social disparity arises, and keeps the property that is transferred to the bride within the family. In such communities, this arrangement is seen as a preemptive right, especially in the case of a first marriage. Lacking a paternal cousin, the Arab male seeks a bride who is related in some other close

fashion. In this respect Arab practice contrasts strongly with that of other Muslim or non-Muslim Sudanese, most of whom are less concerned with preserving the purity of their lineage than with establishing widespread family ties and social connections.

Although rare in Darfur, non-Muslim forms of marriage vary considerably from one ethnic group to another but show common differences from orthodox Muslim practices. The most striking is the prohibition of marriage between people who are related or considered to be related – as in the West. Within the kinship group all men of the same generation are thought to be brothers, and relationships are ordered between them as though they were actually born of the same mother.

Another characteristic common to non-Muslim forms of marriage is that obligations of contracting families do not lapse, even after the death of the marriage partners. If the wife dies - especially if she has not borne any children - her family may be expected to provide a substitute. If the husband dies, the woman usually joins the household of one of his brothers or a son by another wife. Future children count as offspring of the deceased.

Also contrary to Muslim usage is the custom of making marriage payments not to the bride but to her family, the family reserving its corporately owned wealth generally for precisely such payments. Among cattle-raising people, for example, each of the men has rights in turn to a share in the family herd, to be used in providing a wife for himself or one of his sons.

The chief source of wealth for a family is therefore seen as the marriage of women relatives. It is used only to arrange for the marriage of male relatives. Through a succession of marriages - each of which ultimately earns a material return - a family strengthens its social and political influence. An equal number of sons and daughters is considered ideal because the payments received for the daughters provide the marriage payments for the sons' wives. The introduction of a cash economy has meant the introduction of new forms of marriage payments, such as national currency or imported manufactured goods, especially in areas where cattle are less important. This has had far-reaching effects compounded by the loss of village property and the movement of IDPs.

Except for a small number of liberated, educated young women from families of the elite, women remain within the household and are segregated at all festivities, eating after the men. This is particularly the case with Muslim households. Men entertain in their own quarters, and males of an extended family eat together. In a small family, the husband eat alone or, more frequently, will take his bowl to join his male neighbours.

A young university couple might live much as in the West, in a house without relatives, and might live, eat and entertain together. Nevertheless, traditional patterns are deeply rooted, and the husband may often be away visiting his male friends in the market and cafes. At home a servant will help with the children. Although the educated young married or unmarried woman may have greater mobility because of her job, she will not be exempt from the traditional restrictions and the supremacy of the Muslim husband. She will be aware that her education and job are not a licence to trespass upon male-dominated social norms.

In some respects, the uneducated woman has greater freedom so long as it is with her peers; for even among well-to-do families a young woman will be restricted to her household and female friends until transferred to similar seclusion in the house of her husband. Paradoxically, this segregation can create a spirit of independence,

particularly among educated women, for a host of aunts, cousins and grandmothers to look after the children will allow the mother to work outside the home. Nevertheless, social traditions govern the way of life of Darfuri woman. The segregation and subordination of women in Darfuri society should not obscure the fact that women dominate the household just as their men command public life. The home and the rearing of children are their domains - so long as they uphold the established social norms.

The government generally leaves the regulation of family life to local and religious courts. Marriages between members of different ethnic groups usually present serious difficulties because of different customs. This practical difficulty prompted the Islamic prohibition of marriage with non-Muslims, a prohibition that is, however, disregarded by some Sudanese groups. The Homr Arabs sometimes take Dinka wives but without recording it in their genealogies. Generally, however, people marry within their own group, for example nomads rarely marry villagers.

Two traditional customs among Sudanese women have an enormous impact upon their private and social relationships - the *Zar* cult and female circumcision. *Zar* is the name given to the ceremony conducted only by women practitioners to pacify evil spirits and to cleanse women of afflictions caused by demons or jinn. *Zar* cults continue to be numerous throughout Muslim Africa. Illnesses, including depression, infertility and other organic and psychological disorders, were attributed to possession by hostile spirits. Although *Zar* ceremonies vary widely, they not only free the one possessed but are great social occasions where women can communicate together as men do within male circles.

### INTERGROUP RELATIONS

The various components of Darfur society have long had emotionally charged attitudes toward one another. Broadly, nomads and settled people distrust each other. The nomad is basically a man of strife fighting for existence in a hostile environment. He relies on himself and his relatives for survival and for the maintenance of his flocks and of his standing. He is contemptuous of the villager whom he sees as free to raid and rob with impunity, a practice made worse through and ineffective policing and judiciary systems.

The villager values peace above all, feels a mixture of resentment and fear toward the nomad, and counts on the support of his local patron and thus ultimately on the government for his safety. Usually there are few marriages between nomads and villagers, and contacts between them are limited to disputes caused by straying animals and to the exchange of produce in the markets.

Nomads and villagers of North Darfur generally have in common an attachment to Islam and to Arab culture. They also use the same criteria for ranking, which apart from such personal qualities as hospitality, generosity, piety and honesty, include being male, being old and belonging to a prominent lineage, especially one claiming descent from the Prophet or some other noted religious personage.

Both groups share a disdain for manual labour, it being commonplace to see women and girls undertaking heavy manual labour - including the construction of causeways, while the men and boys look on. The bulk of Sudan's agricultural labour has traditionally been performed by 'Africans', originally either southern or west African in origin, slaves or serfs who depended socially and economically upon their master. Those who do work, do so for wages or as tenants under modern contractual arrangements; however, the social relationship appears unchanged. An

'African' who becomes a tenant for a landlord helps the landlord maintain his status as traditionally defined. The effects of the legacy of slavery are most obvious when economic development and other government agricultural schemes force changes.

This refusal by men to undertake manual work also extends to cultivating the land. Only when economic necessity forces them to do so will they do it unwillingly and will feel frustration and shame at having to compete with those whom they consider socially inferior. Whether their property consists of a single holding or tenancy or of many, their ideal is to pay others to work their land while they assume the leisured dignity of property owners. Their actual income may, however, be no more than that of a labourer, and a marked difference between wealthy absentee landlords and landless peasantry is not a feature of the Darfur social structure.

Nomads, villagers, homesteaders and those who have never left the province also share a dislike and distrust for city people, seeing them as agents of the state, which they may well be, although local government is oddly not seen as an extension of the national government. In effect, they see emissaries from Khartoum as representatives of a foreign power. Urban dwellers in turn have often turned their back on the customs and occupations of rural people - considering them backward, primitive and ignorant.

Thus within Darfur divisions exist between nomads and villagers, between patrons and labourers, and between urban people and rural people. This breach is frequently presented as a distinction between Arab and African, although, these terms are ambiguous and imprecise. Also, there is no clear-cut division because of the considerable ethnic mixing that has occurred for many centuries, and continues to occur.

Ideally, the Arab sees himself as a light-skinned man with an undisputed claim to direct descent from the family of the Prophet, who knows the Koran, follows Islamic laws, and is eloquent in classical Arabic - a man who wears white robes and keeps his women in seclusion. To the Arab the African's beliefs, his eating and clothing habits and the freedom of his women are proof of his disregard for the social and moral integrity of family and lineage. Therefore the Arab considers the African as physically, morally and economically inferior. He does not understand that an African may have different standards; he assumes that he has no standards at all.

No such single image is available to Africans, who are more aware of their immediate differences than of an overall community of interests. They have only one bond in common, and that is fear and distrust of the Arab, whom they see as unscrupulous and treacherous exploiters, for centuries intent on African assimilation. Through the oral tradition, they will have learned about the former slave raids and forcible enlistment into the army. Although organized slave raiding on a commercial scale was put down at the beginning of the twentieth century, Africans have bitterly resented the Arab's attitude toward them. Most Arabs have regarded the 1989 coup, the adoption of Sharia law, and progress and unification of the country as implicitly synonymous with arabization. The Africans have viewed it as an extension of the process of conquest.

#### DOING BUSINESS WITH THE DARFURI

Business agreements are largely but not exclusively made on trust. Memories are long, and allegiances and loyalties developed through negotiation take time. Failure to deliver on a deal, the sale of cattle, disposal of crops or of manufactured goods will not be regarded favourably and could well be taken as a slight against the



extended family and potentially the whole community and tribe. However, and despite the lack of transport and commercial infrastructure, a visit to any of the souks in the provincial capitals across Darfur reveals almost as wide a range of basic commodities and goods as might be required to satisfy any day to day needs and necessities.

Western business practices and 'Just in Time' or short business cycles therefore do not fit comfortably with the Darfuri. Timekeeping is elastic, and deadlines should be expected to slide, provision for unforeseen delays needing to be built into any planning cycle. However, it is possible to do business, which will be cash or resource based and needing careful management throughout.

Doing business of whatever kind demands respect for traditions and cultures which may be far removed from the experience of someone more accustomed to a 'Western' way of conducting business. To provide a framework and starting point Annex H is an account of the manner in which a village community might be approached, the circumstances recounted not being too dissimilar to a business discussion which might be observed between a Sudanese and Chinese business party in the far grander surroundings of the Grand Holiday Villa Hotel on the banks of the Nile in Khartoum, many miles but not culturally removed from Darfur.

## RELIGION

Christian missionaries, if they ever went to Darfur, had no impact on the religious mix. The region is Islamic, and in general, beliefs in an all-powerful God and in magical processes for controlling the supernatural are always present. Although a belief in traditional African religious systems persists, it is not widely promoted, as is a reliance on faith healers and witch doctors, most of whose skills are passed from father to son.

Most if not all Darfuris express belief in a remote and all-powerful God, religious observances consisting of prayer and supplication intended to incline them toward favourable actions. Mosques are prominent in the towns, and most villages have at least a roughly fenced area set aside for public prayer. Often the mosque is also a *khalwa* (Islamic school) conducted by a *fiqi* (village teacher), who is the resident imam. Education, meaning knowledge of the Koran and the sharia, is emphasized much more than worship.

The *fiqi* is the central religious figure of popular Islam; originally the term meant "one who has knowledge of the law". Usually he belongs to a religious order, but his most characteristic function is to teach the Koran in the village school. His next most important duty is writing texts and magical figures to be used as amulets and cures. He may also act as imam of the mosque and, if there is one, be in charge of the tomb of a local saint. His blessing is sought at births, deaths, marriages and other occasions of special importance. He is asked to practise divination and exorcism and, in some remoter parts, he participates in ancient harvest rites. Particularly accomplished *fuaqaha* are credited with the ability to fly, to change the shape and substance of themselves and other people and objects, to raise the dead, and to bring rain.

The religious orders that developed in Sudan owe much to the concept of sainthood. The term *wali*, used in the Koran to mean "friend", soon came to mean "friend of God" and may be translated as saint. In general the living *fiqi* is not as revered as the dead saint, who also is called *fiqi*, or more commonly, *wali*. After death the saint's *baraka* is thought to increase and to inhere in the persons and particularly

the places associated with him, such as his birthplace or especially his tomb. He often becomes the guardian spirit and protector of the locality or social group in which he lived, and his intercession is sought on all important occasions. Persons seeking blessings, especially barren women and the sick, visit his shrine to perform rituals and absorb some of his blessedness through osmosis.

Shrines may be a square building (*qubba*) with a domed roof or a mere ring of stones. They are protected zones in which, for example, hair clippings may be left to keep them from falling into the hands of sorcerers and excess merchandise may be stored that elsewhere would be stolen. A saint's annual holy day is the occasion of a local festival that may attract a large gathering.

Belief in various forms of magic is widespread, and witchcraft and sorcery are used to explain misfortune in personal terms. The "evil eye" is feared almost everywhere in Sudan, Darfur being no exception; blue ornaments are considered effective against the "evil eye", devils and other dangers and are worn in profusion by children, brides and bridegrooms. Any person expressing undue interest in the private concerns of another may be suspected of inflicting deliberate harm by his glance. Everywhere, holy men provide charms to be worn or displayed about the person and house.

Witchcraft<sup>11</sup> is held responsible for all illnesses; a large number of plant preparations and other drugs sold openly in the souk are prescribed by witch doctors and others, but it is more important to discover the source of the witchcraft and to counter it. The case is diagnosed either by a magic oracle, of which there are several varieties, or by a witch doctor, who through taking certain medicines has himself acquired power over witchcraft. Witch doctors do not form a tightly organized professional body, although they often act in groups. They receive fees for their services and may have some local influence.

Witchcraft and the "evil eye", which are regarded as emanations of the personality, are theoretically quite distinct from magic, which is the knowledge and performance of special techniques, but they do have a similar social value. Magic is of two kinds, white and black, distinguished according to the motives of the operator. White magic, intended to procure personal benefits, may be purchased from local practitioners of mysterious arts, including *fugaha*, witch doctors, rainmakers and medicine men.

Black magic or sorcery is intended to harm others. In most common techniques an image, piece of wood or other object is made to represent the victim and then buried or burned. Sometimes objects closely associated with the victim, such as pieces of his hair or clothing, are similarly employed. Black magic is condemned in most areas; in earlier times sorcerers, if identified, were killed.

## CULTURE

In rural areas people work mainly as members of a family - not for cash but for food, shelter, protection and marriage payments, which were theirs by right of kinship. Many subsistence producers sell or barter their produce at local souks. The cash economy is limited due to the lack and poor security of any transport.

Artistic expression is usually a group process. Apart from literary recitations, group participation is more common than individual performances, and few participants are remembered by name for their individual talents. The major exceptions are Koranic readers and specialists in oral recitations, who are held in high esteem.

Oral literary traditions are the most pervasive literary forms to have developed within the region. Oral literary forms - including legendary histories, sacred myths or rituals, folktales, scenes from family life, riddles and children's stories - vary in length and seriousness. Oral forms were not always rigidly memorized, and there has been considerable flexibility and variation in their development. Common themes exist among many ethnic groups, although the same tale may be told differently from village to village.

Written literary traditions are limited to the Arab group located in the northern half of the country. They consist largely of religious works, poetry and, to a lesser extent, chronologies. The most commonly known piece of written literature is the Koran. Other religious works include the litanies of religious brotherhoods, various biographies of the Prophet and assorted hymns and prayers. The two major Sudanese secular histories are the *Tabaqaat of Wad Daifallah* (Generations of Wad Daifallah) and the *Fung Chronicle*. Writing is highly revered by the people, and portions of the Koran or other Arabic inscriptions on paper are regarded by some to possess special power.

Music is rarely heard in Darfur. Instrumental music is seldom performed independently and usually serves as an accompaniment to songs, hymns, folktales or dances. Koranic music is regulated by religious prescriptions. Dance is rarely seen other than as part of organized celebrations.<sup>12</sup> Such performances tend to replicate the circle dance of the Baggara Arabs, executed with little thought to rhythm.

Cinema and related visual arts were encouraged until the 1989 coup. The pre-Independence community cinema at El Fasher has not been maintained and has fallen into disrepair. Only two radio stations serve Darfur, Omdurman Radio and El Geneina Radio, both under strict government control, but the availability and spread of radios is very low. Many remote communities do not have access to radios. A limited, and strictly controlled, television service does exist, TVs being rarely seen outside hotels.

## Endnotes

<sup>8</sup> K M Barbour, *The Republic of Sudan: A Regional Geography*, Univeristy of London (1961).

<sup>9</sup> Or, if racing camels destined for the great Omdurman camel market, thousands of dollars.

<sup>10</sup> I was frequently referred to as 'our brother' during periods of informal discussions when after a day's activity a small group would sit to discuss politics, the weather, the AU, or US.

<sup>11</sup> I witnessed at first hand an example of a local 'witchdoctor' curing, within 15 minutes, a toothache which had been a source of serious discomfort for the preceding two weeks to the representative of the Justice and Equality Movement. The malady was cured with nothing more than a small block of wood, a nail, the incantation of passages from the Koran, and the co-operation of the subject.

<sup>12</sup> Such as that seen on the arrival of the West Darfur Wali to celebrate the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in May 06.

## **Regional Government in Darfur**

Darfur – the land or home of the Fur, was incorporated into the government of Sudan after the defeat of Ali Dinar in 1916. It was administered and run as a single province until 1973 when the area was split into three separate provinces, North, West and South, each with its own Wali and government infrastructure, not so much for ease of administration but to discourage any movement which might wish to cede from the Republic.

The location of each provincial capital at El Fasher (North), El Geneina (West) and Nyala (South) conveniently mirrors the government's own military footprint with at least brigade, if not divisional, headquarters located at each under the command of a army major general. Each military area has its own air support, the main hub for which is El Fasher which has 24 hour capability, those at Nyala and El Geneina each having flights of attack and support helicopters. Whether control of the regional military structure is local or national continues to cause some debate amongst observers.

Each province has a provincial government, the Wali or provincial governor being personally appointed by the President of the Republic from a short list of three or four nominees. Within each province are ministerial departments which theoretically mirror the national ministries in Khartoum, each with a ministerial head nominally holding executive power, although in practice any major decision will be referred to the Deputy Wali who controls much of the day to day running of the region.

Within each province are administrative centres, each having a centrally appointed representative for his area. At the local level, Umdas and sheikhs have various roles and responsibilities: see Annex F. At the very local, typically village level, the village chief or sheikh, either hereditary or elected by his community, will hold sway. The title of the 'sheikh' will vary depending upon tribe, location, whether the community is seen as 'Arab' or 'African' and its size.

Visibility as to who runs what and who's who continues to be difficult. The position has been complicated by the institutionalised culture of secrecy, the political and religious system, and the fear of yet another coup attempt.

Naming and transliteration difficulties in the Sudan are exploited fully by the Sudanese government, which has no intention of improving transparency, being fearful individuals might be held accountable for their actions by the international or the national community. Annex G expands on the difficulties associated with the naming culture in Sudan, which certainly applies in Darfur at many levels.

### **SUDANESE NATIONAL SECURITY**

Sudanese national security is run centrally from Khartoum. The local national security apparatus operates virtually autonomously from the other organs of provincial government, has a separate reporting chain and decision making cycle, and is generally well supported by its own facilities, materiel and medical facilities. Although each has an headquarters, it operates on a covert basis, will infiltrate provincial ministries, and plays a long game. It does not operate on an Islamist constituency, but uses a mixture of tried and tested workers who support it on

ideological grounds, and the inevitable fellow travellers who receive remuneration or power in return. It will employ whatever means are required to achieve its objectives, including ideology, power broking, bribery and blackmail to intimidate, control and overwhelm any opposition. It has credibility, manpower, and is very effective. Dissenters who prove difficult disappear.

It should be assumed any contact between provincial Sudanese and Westerners is monitored in some way, either directly by national security personnel or their proxies from within the Border Intelligence organisation which recruits from the local community.

Key appointment holders within provinces should not be assumed to be those with the power or access to the security apparatus. There continues to be speculation among observers that national security direction continues to be influenced by al-Tarabi, supposedly sidelined and under house arrest.

## **North Darfur Provincial Structure (El Fasher)**

**Wali / Governor** - Uthman Muhammad Yusuf Kibir

Deputy Wali: NOT KNOWN

Head of Security: NOT KNOWN

6xx Commander: NOT KNOWN

Head of the Popular Defence Force: NOT KNOWN

Commander of Police: NOT KNOWN

**Minister of Civil Planning and Public Utilities** - Isma'il al-Hajj Yusuf

**Minister of Economy and Finance** - Al-Tayyib Salih al-Qadal

**Minister of Local Government and Civil Service** - Idris Abdallah Hasan

**Minister of Education** - Umar Muhammad al-Bashir

**Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports** - Abd-al-Shafi Isa Mustafa

**Minister of Health** - Nasr-al-Din Baqal Siraj

**Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation** - Adam Hirri Bush

**Minister of Social Affairs** - Ahmad Salih Ahmad

**Minister for the Provincial Government** - Khalid Ali Faqiri al-Juburi

**Representative of the Governor's Office** - Al-Jili Khadr Muhammad

**Representative of the Governor's Office and Provincial Government Adviser** - Ahmad Isa Abd-al-Mahmud

**Provincial Government Adviser** - Abdallah Muhammad al-Zubayr

**Provincial Government Adviser** - Muhammad Ali Muhammad

**Provincial Government Adviser** - Abu-Bakr Harun Sulayman

**Adviser on Women's and Children's Affairs** - Fawziyah Abbas Abd-al-Hamid

**Representative in Al-Fashir** - Al-Tijani Ahmad Sinayn

**Representative in Kabkabiyah** - Abd-al-Rahman al-Sadiq Isma'il

**Representative in Kutum** - Isa Muhammad Abdallah

**Representative in Mellit** - Muhammad al-Tayyib Abidin

**Representative in Umm Kaddadah** - Al-Fatih Abd-al-Aziz Abd-al-Nabi

**Representative in Al-Wahah** - Husayn Muhammad Hamid al-Nahlah

**Representative in Al-Tinah** - Al-Tijani Abdallah Salih

North Darfur Administrative Centres

State Capital: El Fasher

<b>Locality / Administrative Centre</b>	<b>Rural District Council / Responsible for:</b>
Al Fasher	Al Fasher & Kuma Tawila & Korma Dar al Salem
Kabkabiya	Al Sireaf & Saruf Umra Kabkabiya & Jebel Si
Kutum	Kutum Rural & Fato Borno Komi, Um Baru & Tina
Mallit	Malha Mallit & Sayeh
Um Kadada	Um Kadada Al Tawisha Al Lait

North Darfur Local Structure (sometimes called *Dimangawi*)

Sultan
Foursha
Umda
Sheikhs

Shartai
Umda
Sheikhs

## **West Darfur Provincial Structure (El Geneina)**

**Wali (Shartai) / Governor:** Abu-al-Qasim Imam al-Haj Adam

**Deputy Wali:** Mohamed Yousef Al-Telaib

Head of Security: NOT KNOWN

**7xx / 22x Commander:** Major General Shama Al-Din

Head of the Popular Defence Force: NOT KNOWN

Commander of Police: NOT KNOWN

**Minister of Local Government and Civil Service** - Abdallah Khatir Hasab al-Rasul

**Minister of Civil Planning and Public Utilities** - Mustafa Muhammad Ishaq

**Minister of Social Affairs** - Abdallah Hamis Muhammad

**Minister of Economy and Finance** - Muhammad Uthman Hashim

**Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation** - Bashir Hammad Ibrahim

**Minister of Education** - Nur-al-Din Barakat Muhammad

**Minister of Health** - Jamal Ramadan Adam Da'ud

**Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports** - Tariq Abd-al-Rahman Bahr

**Adviser on Women's and Children's Affairs** - Badriyah Abd-al-Rahman Yusuf

**Representative in Al-Junaynah** - (not listed)

**Representative in Baydah** - Abd-al-Fattah al-Birhan Abd-al-Rahman

**Representative in Habila** - Husayn Abd-al-Rahman Hasan

**Representative in Jabal Marrah** - Kamal-al-Din Uthman Abdallah

**Representative in Kalas** - Adam Abakar Uthman Muhammad

**Representative in Mukjar** - Hashim Abbas Za'id

**Representative in Wadi Salih** - Ahmad al-Tijani Adam Sikkah

**Representative in Zalingei** - Musa Adam Yusuf Nur

**Representative of the Governor's Office** - Abashar Jama

**Representative of the Governor's Office** - Muhammad Musa Ahmad Abdallah

**Provincial Government Adviser** - Isma'il al-Azhari al-Hajj Adam



West Darfur Administrative Centres

State Capital: El Geneina

<b>Locality / Administrative Centre</b>	<b>Rural District Council / Responsible for:</b>
Al Geneina	Kerenek Masteri Mournei
Habillah	Habillah Beida Fora Buranga
Jebel Marra	Rokoro Golo Galado Nertiti
Kulbus	Kulbus Seleia Sirba
Mukjar	Mukjar Um Dukhum
Wadi Salih	Um Kher Garseila – Delaige Bundis
Zalingei	Abala Azoum Zalinge Riural-Triage

West Darfur – Local Structure (sometimes called Dimangawi)

Amir
Umda
Sheikhs

## South Darfur Provinvial Structure (Nyala)

**Wali / Governor** - Al-Haj Ata al-Manan

Deputy Wali: NOT KNOWN

16xx Military Commander: NOT KNOWN

Head of the Popular Defence Force: NOT KNOWN

Head of Security: NOT KNOWN

Commander of Police: NOT KNOWN

**Minister of Economy and Finance** - Hashim Ahmad al-Fikri

**Minister of Labour and Governance** - Abd-al-Rahman al-Zayn

**Minister of Education** - Muhammad Khayr Hasan Muhammad Khayr

**Minister of Health** - Abd-al-Latif Muhammad Sharif

**Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation** - Umar Abd-al-Rahman Adam

**Minister of Civil Planning and Public Utilities** - Ramadan Salim Abu-Kalam

**Minister of Culture, Youth, Sports and Tourism** - Abu-Bakr al-Tawm

**Minister of Social Affairs and Information** - Farah Mustafa

**Representative of the Governor's Office** - Ali Muhammad Sulayman Abu-Dira

**Representative of the Governor's Office** - Ali Adam Uthman

**Representative of the Governor's Office** - Al-Hadi Hamad Bitu

**Provincial Government Adviser** - Ibrahim Abdallah

**Provincial Government Adviser** - Ahmad Abd-al-Jabbar

**Representative in Adilah** - Hasan Mahmud Ibrahim

**Representative in Al-Da'in** - Talhah Mahmud Musa Madibu

**Representative in Buram** - Sulayman Ahmad Umar

**Representative in Idd al-Fursan** - Qadir Ali Zakin

**Representative in Kas** - Shaykh Ahmad Babikir

**Representative in Nila** - Muhammad al-Ajab Isma'il

**Representative in Rahad al-Bardi** - Abd-al-Rahman Adam

**Representative in Sha'iriyah** - Mansur Hasan Umar

**Representative in Tulus** - Ya'qub Muhammad al-Tayyib

### South Darfur Administrative Centres

State Capital: Nyala

<b>Locality / Administrative Centre</b>	<b>Rural District Council / Responsible for:</b>
Adayla	Abu Karaynka Adayla
Al Deain	Al Deain Fardus

## Darfur – A Cultural Handbook

	Asalaya Abu Matariq Abu Gabra
Buram	Girayda Buram Wad al-Ugam Suntah-al Guhayna-al Guz-al Radum-al
Edd al Fursan	Kubum Um Lubasa Edd al Fursan Katayla Madkandi Antikayna
Kass	Kass Shataya
Nyala	Sharq Gabal Mara Malam Abu Agura Nyala Balil
Rehad al Birdi	Um Dafig Nyimeri Rehed al Birdi
Shearia	Shearia Natiqa Mahagriya Yasin
Tulus	Tulus Damsu

South Darfur - Local Structure (sometimes called Dimangawi)

Nazir
Amir
Sheikhs

## **Darfur: the Crisis**

The aim of this section is to provide some general background to the conflict and the political manoeuvring which has taken place. It is not intended to provide a complete and detailed picture, but an overview of the recent historical context.

### BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

Although the ethnically diverse people of Darfur are predominantly Muslim, more than 40 percent are not 'Arabs' and generally have more affinity with related groups in neighbouring Chad and the peoples of the Central African Republic than with Khartoum and the Sudan.

The civil strife in Chad during the 1980s, fomented largely by Libyan expansionist and imperialist dreams, inevitably spilled over into western Darfur, exacerbating historical tensions between the non Arab Fur and Zaghawa ethnic groups. This general sense of antagonism toward Khartoum was reinforced by the drought in Darfur in 1984 and the near-famine conditions that have pervaded the area ever since, given Khartoum's inability to manage the social and economic fallout of the environmental disaster. By the early 1990s, much of Darfur was lawless and in a state of anarchy.

The Fur, who are largely peasant farmers, occupy the highly fertile central belt of the region, including the Jebel Marra massif, an extinct volcanic range. Also in this central zone are the non-Arab Masalit, Berti, Bargu, Bergid, Tama and Tunjur peoples, who are all sedentary farmers.

The northernmost zone is Dar Zaghawa, part of the Libyan Sahara, inhabited by camel nomads, principally the Zaghawa and Bedeyat, who are non-Arab in origin, and the Arab Mahariya, Irayqat, Mahamid and Beni Hussein. Due to the more luxuriant nature of the country, cattle rather than camels are herded by the Arab nomads of the eastern and southern zones of Darfur, the tribes comprising the Rezeigat, Habbaniya, Beni Halba, Taasha and Maaliyya.

Historically, north Darfur and parts of west and south Darfur have suffered recurrent droughts. Despite an abundance of ground water in some areas, crop yields have remained low and unpredictable due to erratic rainfall, pest infestation – particularly locusts, the lack of agricultural inputs, and interference by hostile groups. This has impacted on livestock densities due to pasture shortages and water scarcity compounded by mismanagement and failure to maintain pumping and irrigation systems. More mobile elements of the local labour force have continued to migrate east in search of employment leaving behind children, women and the elderly, these factors combining over several years to systematically erode the coping capacities of communities.

The government of Sudan (GoS) maintains that conflict in this region of Darfur is primarily a tribal one, centred on the competition for land between pastoralists and crop farmers. However, leaders of the Fur tribe insist that the depopulation of villages and consequent changes in land ownership are part of a subversive government strategy to change the whole demography of the region, thereby opening the vast tracts of land to the camel herders who have lost most of their

traditional areas through the effects of climate change, deforestation and desertification.

Annex E contains details of the different rebel groups operating along the Chadian / Sudanese border area and across Darfur. Fighting between two main opposition groups - the SLA and the JEM - the GoS military, and GoS supported militia groups collectively known as Janjaweed intensified in the three states of Darfur during late 2003. Insecurity has steadily increased since the Darfur-based opposition SLA attacked GoS military forces at El Fasher, north Darfur, in April 2003, with conflict-affected populations describing recurrent and systematic attacks against towns and villages, burning of buildings and crops, arbitrary killings, gang rape and looting.

## CHRONOLOGY

### **2003**

By early 2003 exiled Sudanese rights activists claimed that the conflict in Western Sudan's Darfur region was developing from ethnic cleansing into genocide. The United Nations estimate that up to this time 600,000 people had been displaced by the conflict. Further fighting in April causes hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes into camps following the outbreak of fighting between JEM and GoS Army.

Sudan's border area with Chad is declared a military zone by the GoS following a meeting between Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir and Chadian President Idriss Deby.

The SLA also mounts attacks in Darfur during April 2003. In response, the GoS steps up its military presence in Darfur, and according to some reports, begins to attack local villages in an effort to stamp out the insurgency. On 25 April, the SLA seized the airport at El-Fasher. In late May 2003, almost 500 government soldiers were killed near Kutum, in July about 250 near Tinay, and on 1st August Kutum fell and a large part of the garrison shot.

The SLA states that it does not seek independence, but demands greater political autonomy and a more equitable share of resources from the central Sudanese authorities. The GoS disputes the SLA's claims to be a political organization, labelling the rebels "bandits and armed gangs".

The SLA begins battling a militia force, the Janjaweed, as well as regular government troops in Darfur. Critics accuse the Sudanese government of manipulating traditional ethnic tensions and pursuing a policy of "Arabisation" in Darfur, in order to maintain a support base there. The government denies backing the Arab militia, stating it intends to bring them under control, yet has been unwilling to explain how they had been armed and re-supplied, or how GoS aviation assets had 'coincidentally' been operating in the same area at the same as the Janjaweed were pushing forward against their opponents. The Sudanese government continues to vehemently dissociate itself from the militias, despite evidence, merely acknowledging it has urged all tribes in Darfur to "defend" themselves against rebels in the region.

By November 2003 the United Nations called for nearly \$23 million to help people suffering in this little-known war. In December 2003 an estimated further 10,000 Sudanese refugees fled into Chad. Reports of killings, rape and the burning and looting of entire villages continue. Peace talks on Darfur resume on 10 December 2003 in Abeche, Eastern Chad.

A UN WFP assessment mission to South Darfur concludes 46 of the 62 village locations visited had been completely burned, while the other 16 had been looted. The number who have fled across the Chadian-Sudanese border over the previous seven months is 75,000.

## **2004**

In April the GoS and two rebel movements in Darfur agreed to a 45-day ceasefire to allow humanitarian assistance to reach several hundred thousand people affected by the fighting. Chadian government mediators persuaded the Sudanese government and representatives of the rebel SLA and JEM to also agree to the truce. This agreement also saw the release of prisoners of war and other detainees arrested during the 14 month long fighting, agreements to stop laying mines<sup>13</sup> and committing acts of sabotage, and to permit the free movement and passage of people and goods.

By the end of May the leader of the SLA, Abdel Wahed Mohammad Ahmad Nour, announced his group would expand its fighting into the central Sudanese area of Kordofan, the capital Khartoum, and areas in the east if the group was not represented at the long-running peace talks in Kenya.

Attacks by the Janjaweed militiamen continued and refugees still flowed across the border into Chad. In New York, the United Nations Security Council condemned attacks on civilians and called on the Khartoum government to prevent the Janjaweed from carrying out strikes on the black African population. The resolution expressed concern at reports of large-scale violations of human rights and international humanitarian law such as "indiscriminate attacks on civilians, sexual violence, forced displacement and acts of violence, especially those with an ethnic dimension" and demanded that the perpetrators be held accountable.

Following a UN appeal for emergency funding of \$236 million, and the UN Security Council proposing to send an advance party to assess peacekeeping requirements, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir ordered the disarmament of all fighters in the Darfur region, including the Janjaweed. It did not happen.

On June 24th the US Congress approved a humanitarian aid package for Sudan's Western Darfur region as an amendment to a defence spending bill. The measure included \$70 million for the US Agency for International Development's disaster and famine programmes in Darfur, and \$14 million to assist refugees in Chad. On June 29th Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Sudan to urge Khartoum authorities to rein in Arab militiamen accused of human rights abuses. He met President Omar el-Bashir and visited displaced people in Darfur, threatening unspecified UN Security Council action unless the government brought an end to militia violence.

Following the visit and meeting, the United Nations described the 15-month Darfur conflict as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and UN relief groups estimated

that up to 2 million people are in need of food, while a million more have been forced to flee their homes. The US government claimed that the casualties of fighting between the Janjaweed and black Africans range from 10,000 to 30,000 people to this point.

The Islamist Khartoum government continued to deny links to the Janjaweed, concurrently prohibiting aid workers, journalists and independent human rights monitors from entering Darfur to assess the situation, in violation of earlier agreements.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan visited the troubled region on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The following day, several villages all controlled by the rebel SLA were attacked and bombed.<sup>14</sup> At the end of Annan's visit the Sudanese government formally committed to the immediate disarmament of Janjaweed militias and other outlaws operating in Darfur in a joint communiqué with the United Nations.

Khartoum also promised to ease restrictions on humanitarian aid workers in the region, an action that encouraged the World Food Program to increase its food shipments to Darfur.

The Sudanese government and two rebel groups operating out of the Darfur region opened talks on July 15<sup>th</sup> in Addis Ababa. Two days later, the rebel groups pulled out of the African Union mediated peace efforts, saying they would not return until the Sudanese government fulfilled conditions set for the talks.

On July 23<sup>rd</sup> the US Congress declared the mass killing of civilians in Darfur to be genocide. In a non-binding resolution, lawmakers urged President Bush to do the same. However, the Bush administration declined, because the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide would require that such a classification justify an intervention by all signatories. The Pentagon made it clear that there were no US plans to intervene in the conflict militarily.

African Union military observers in Darfur reported that Sudanese militias had burned civilians alive, and on July 27<sup>th</sup> the AU's peace and Security Council announced it was actively considering expanding the military observer mission into a multinational peacekeeping force with particular emphasis on disarming the Janjaweed if the Sudanese government did not do so. This would be the AU's first military intervention in a member state.

The United Kingdom raised the possibility of sending troops to Darfur, but US Secretary of State Colin Powell insisted it was premature to speak of military intervention. Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Oman Ismail warned that Sudanese soldiers would repel any advance by foreign troops in Darfur. Khartoum summoned UK and German diplomats to protest at EU-sponsored sanctions.

The UN Security Council also discussed possible sanctions against Sudan. EU foreign ministers supported the resolution, but veto powers Russia and China argued that the Sudanese government should have more time to comply. Pakistan and Algeria were said to also oppose immediate sanctions. The Arab League advised the Security Council to "avoid precipitate action" and give Sudan more time to honour its pledges. African leaders sought an "African solution" to Darfur at a special summit in Ghana on July 29<sup>th</sup> called by the AU Chairman, President

Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. As a contingency, the AU requested British and Dutch assistance in airlifting 300 African troops to Sudan, which is agreed.

By July 2004, aid agencies reassessed the death toll to be in the region of 50,000. More than a million people had fled their homes.

On November 19 Sudan's government and southern rebels signed a pledge to end the 21-year civil war. The pledge was signed in front of the 15 UN Security Council members in Nairobi, remarkable for the fact that it is the first time in 14 years and only the fourth time ever that the Security Council has met outside its New York home. While the two groups had made similar, failed pledges in the past, the presence of the Security Council members was assessed as giving this pledge added credibility. Officials also hoped that the agreement could be later applied to the situation in Darfur. Human rights groups such as Oxfam and Amnesty International expressed scepticism with the agreement, claiming it to be little more than empty words and promises. While the UN Security Council promised that it would consider taking appropriate measures should either side fail to follow through on its commitments, both China and Russia said that they are opposed to any penalties.

## **2005**

On 23 May, a Chapter VII UN Security Council Resolution 1591 was passed, authorising the creation of a No Fly Zone over Darfur, imposition of economic and financial sanctions, and restrictions on movement against individuals who have been party to the militia's activities.

A Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Sudanese Conflict in Darfur was signed in July 2005. The agreement of the Government of Sudan, SLA(M) and JEM to the Declaration's 17 points provided a framework for negotiations on wealth and power sharing as part of a wider Darfur political settlement. The agreement, in which the African Union played a pivotal role, also formulated the creation of security conditions that would permit the return of IDPs and refugees.

When linked to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Southern Sudan and the 9 July installation of the Presidency of the Government of National Unity this constituted significant progress toward the goal of achieving peace throughout the whole of Sudan, the south and east where JEM had undertaken successful attacks just weeks before against GoS Army barracks.

Initial optimism was severely tested on July 31 when the helicopter carrying 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president Garang back to Sudan from peace talks in Uganda crashed in bad weather. The death of the influential and charismatic leader from the south and crucial architect of the peace process set off riots across the country from Port Sudan in the North to Juba in the South. In Khartoum, tens of thousands of protesters began looting, cars were burned, fire-fights broke out between the crowds and the Sudanese police force, and protesters were shot, resulting in 130 deaths. Curfews over three days were declared, and Khartoum International Airport was closed for 24 hours. Order was restored by deploying the heavily armed internal security-controlled Special Police supported by APCs.

Salva Kiir Mayardit, who had served as Garang's deputy for the SPLM/A and was named his successor for both the SPLM/A and the vice-presidency, pleaded for



calm. On August 2, Jan Pronk, head of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) attempted to dispel the rumours that the helicopter had been shot down or sabotaged. It was feared that the death of Garang would undermine the new government and prevent further negotiations with the remaining Darfur rebel groups. However, amidst these concerns and the deterioration of the nation's security and economic condition, new hope came on August 24. After pushing back the date to September 15, the two largest rebel groups, JEM and the SLA agreed to continue peace talks with the Sudanese government in Abuja, Nigeria. The AU continued its commitment to mediate the talks and pledged to increase its peacekeeping troops to 7,000 by the end of September.

But, as talks began in Abuja, violence continued in Darfur, including looting, pillaging, and attacks on humanitarian convoys as well as violations of the ceasefire between rebel and government forces, as negotiations failed to gain any ground. Claiming retaliation for a raid by the SLA in late August which killed six and stole 2,000 camels, the nomadic tribesmen attacked a rebel stronghold in Jebel Marra, Darfur on 20 Sept, resulting in the death of 30 tribesmen and 10-15 rebels. In the wake of this incident, tribesmen began mobilizing. On September 21, SLA rebels took the government fortified town of Shareya, northeast of Nyala in South Darfur. The violence drove out humanitarian agencies working in Shareya and nearby Mohajuria, leaving behind nearly 77,000 people who had been receiving assistance.

By late September, the situation in Sudan remained dire, the rainy season making all but essential movement impossible. The AU, despite assistance from NATO, was forced to suspend the deployment at around 6,000 AMIS personnel. This was well short of the 11,000 mandated. At that time it was estimated that there were 2 million people in various camps or concentrations across Darfur, with between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 dependant upon food aid, and a further 200,000 refugees in Chad. Despite the ceasefire and the presence of the AMIS force, the security situation deteriorated significantly. Not only were IDPs and AMIS members attacked, but aid and humanitarian workers were also attacked and raped and stores looted, bringing international aid virtually to a halt. Subsequent investigations by the AU CFC concluded the attacks and related incidents had been carried out by the Janjaweed. By the end of November, the UN had temporarily withdrawn all non-essential staff from West Darfur.

While the SLA and Janjaweed are primarily to blame for many of the attacks and raids, the Sudanese government had done little to intervene or help the AU force that was assigned to monitor the ceasefire. To add insult to misery, Khartoum continued to fail to disarm, control, or withdraw support from the Janjaweed.

In December, Chadian Rebels of Mahamat Nour's RDL faction mounted a cross border attack on the strategic town of Adre in Chad and El Geneina, the provincial capital of West Darfur. Chadian security forces supported by Darfur rebels repulsed the attack in a matter of days.

## **2006**

On February 2006, the UN Security Council asked Kofi Annan to "initiate contingency planning" and to produce various options in consultation with the AU for UN peacekeeping operations. There was also talk of NATO reinforcements. Some 70,000 people fled the town of Mershing after militiamen attacked.

In April, the GoS backed Chadian rebels of the RDL faction mounted a two pronged attack into Chad. The first again attacks Adre, to be thrown back a second time, the second and more ambitious, strikes at the Chadian capital N'Djamena, where pitched battles are fought in the streets. French air assets become involved for the first time in the conflict. The RDL eventually withdraw to Sudan and Libya via a northern route.

After many delays and missed deadlines, the Sudanese government and the largest rebel movement active in Darfur, struck a deal in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, on May 5th. Despite the optimism, two other significant rebel groups refused to sign it, JEM and the SLA(W). The agreement delivered the political opportunity to facilitate the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces with a more robust mandate replacing the existing AMIS contingent. Additionally the agreement called for the disarming of the Janjaweed, and the return of the IDPs to their home villages, which would be nigh on impossible.

Further cross-border incursions into Chad continued, being repulsed with many casualties and loss of materiel, but now complicated by attacks and artillery exchanges from the Chadian side. Aid agency and NGO support continued to be undermined, personnel killed, and support withdrawn. In late May, a deep strike mounted from Chad by the G19 rebel group attacked the SLA(M) headquarters at Birmaza, which was not recaptured until two months later by a joint SLA(M) and GoS air and ground operation.

AMIS forces were increasingly harassed and ambushed, with camps and facilities being targeted. There was growing evidence of logistical co-operation between the GoS and the SLA(M) against JEM and the SLA(W), complicated following the DPA by the SLA(M) having access to AMIS air and ground assets, which further compromised the AMIS position in the eyes of the IDPs. AMIS nevertheless remained positive and continued to draw up plans for an enlargement of the force, US and EU funding being authorised for the expansion of essential infrastructure. By the end of June all Chadian observers and mediators attached to AMIS were expelled amid accusations of spying.

By July the Khartoum government continued to procrastinate regarding a UN force, the AMIS force had not been paid for months, was bankrupt and ineffective, and the GoS sponsored rebels were openly moving around the region unchallenged. DPA provisions had not been complied with, and breaches to the ceasefire agreements were commonplace. The SLA had split into two rival factions, the SLA(M) and SLA(W), and the re-supply of the rebel factions by the GoS in direct contravention of the DPA increased with the airlifting of materiel by fixed and rotary wing aircraft, in some cases painted in AMIS, UN and humanitarian organisation colours and markings. The UN assessment mission in the region had been inadequately briefed, and did not appreciate the difficulties of the ground or operating conditions.

In August, the Sudanese government finally rejected a UN resolution authorizing a peacekeeping force in Darfur on the grounds that it would be a violation of Sudanese sovereignty. That plan had been to enlarge the existing force from 7,000 to 20,000. On September 3, Khartoum asked the African Union force to leave the country at the end of its mandate at the end of that month.

Also in September, Sudanese Intelligence Services managed to unite the different Chadian rebel groups into a single command, and engage Chadian regular forces all

along the Sudanese / Chadian border. Darfuri based rebel factions on the Sudanese side also engage the Chadian rebelse. French military aircraft again prove crucial in the fight on the Chadian side.

At the 22 September emergency international meeting on the Darfur conflict, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that “time is running out”. She called upon those in attendance to continue to press Sudan to accept a larger peacekeeping force and it agreed to extend the mission to the end of the calendar year, subject to Sudanese agreement. On 6 October, Sudan sent a letter to the Security Council declaring that any contribution to a peacekeeping force would be considered “a hostile act”. On Oct 24, a ground to air missile is fired at a French reconnaissance aircraft<sup>15</sup> supporting the Chadian government.

In late October, UN envoy to Sudan Jan Pronk was expelled from Sudan, Khartoum claiming that he had violated his neutrality on the situation. At issue was a ‘blog’ Pronk maintained during his time in Sudan.<sup>16</sup> The government considered the blog to be propaganda because it contained an entry claiming that the Sudanese army was suffering from low morale due to defeats in Darfur. After consultations between Kofi Annan, Pronk, and Sudan’s UN ambassador, the UN announced that he would keep his position.

The Darfur crisis threatened to become a regional conflict on 7 November when Chad accused Sudan of “exporting the genocide”, 200 people having been killed during attacks on villages just inside the Chadian border, and an assault on the town and airport of Abeche. Chad declared a state of emergency on the 13th and was backed by a UN warning against the incursion.

On the 17th, Sudan said it would welcome a hybrid UN-AU force as long as the UN was not in command. Specifically, Sudan stated it would accept “all financial, material, logistic, or technical assistance from the UN in order to strengthen the AU mission in Darfur”, following which the UN agreed to deliver two support packages to bolster AU capability. On the same day, Chad proposed an anti-Sudan alliance with the Central African Republic, both nations having previously accused Sudan of backing rebels fighting against that government.

Hopes of a deal between the UN, AU, and Darfur were put in jeopardy on 18 November when the AU accused Sudan of launching a new ground and air offensive in Darfur, which it explained as a further attack against bandits. The AU CFC reported that there had been heavy casualties. On 30 November the AU voted to extend the peacekeepers’ mandate for another six months after January, but hoping it would be replaced by the UN; it would require \$343 million to implement it.

On 28 November a Chadian military aircraft was shot down<sup>17</sup> by Sudanese Chad based rebels, the first successful downing of an aircraft in the Darfur region.

The United States, on 14 December, proposed a no-fly zone over Darfur to prevent attacks against civilians. The State Department proposed other UN-sanctioned options including a naval blockade or air strikes. Meanwhile, the UN Human Rights Council agreed to send a team of experts to Darfur to investigate allegations of abuse. By mid December, the security situation had deteriorated further, forcing the withdrawal of all US and EU monitors from the region.

**2007**

In January, the first UN military support staff arrived to assist AMIS, during their first 2 weeks being subject to a raid and assaulted by GoS police in Nyala on the pretext of an illegal drinks party being held.

A 60 day ceasefire was brokered by the US and between the GoS and NRF.

At the annual AU conference, the Sudanese President failed to gain the AU Presidency for second time.

Suggestions of a UN observer force to monitor the Chadian side of the border area were rejected by Chad.

In February, the International Criminal Court cited two named Sudanese for crimes against humanity, the GoS responding that they would never surrender them.

By 8 March, following a region-wide deteriorating security situation, attacks on AMIS facilities, civilian personnel, theft of AMIS equipment, the death of two Protection Force soldiers, and further inter-faction disputes in SLA(M), the AMIS Force Commander threatened retaliatory action against SLA(M). Hassan al-Turabi, the architect of al-Bashir's elevation to the Sudanese Presidency in 1989 suggested Sudan may finally be willing to allow a UN Force under direct UN command into Darfur.

**Endnotes**

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<sup>13</sup> During the course of the Darfur crisis, there has only been one recorded incident of a vehicle being mined. This was in 2004 and destroyed an AMIS vehicle. At the time the only source of anti-vehicle mines was from the GoS Army, and there remains speculation the mine-strike was a specifically targeted attack by the GoS to intimidate AMIS, which was largely successful.

<sup>14</sup> There have been several instances of visits by prominent individuals to Darfur being followed by the area they visited being attacked, bombed or compromised in some other way after the visit leaves.

<sup>15</sup> Initial reports stated the aircraft was an Atlantique, later reports suggested a Mirage was the target.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.janpronk.nl/index.html>

<sup>17</sup> Using a SA 7 / 9K32M Strela-2 / HN-5 type MANPAD.

**ANNEX A****Glossary of Arabic Terms and Abbreviations**

AMIS	African Union Mission to Sudan
AU	African Union
AU CFC	African Union Cease Fire Commission
<i>Awlad Az Bahar</i>	Sons of the River
<i>Bahhara</i>	Those of the river
<i>Baqt</i>	Peace Treaty
<i>Dar</i>	Land / Land of
<i>Darb el-arbein</i>	Forty Days Road
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
<i>Faki</i>	Holy Man
<i>Ferig</i>	Camp
<i>Fiqi</i>	Village Religious Teacher – ‘One who has the knowledge of the Koran’
FUC / FUDP	United Front for Democratic Change
<i>Gabily</i>	Tribe
GoS	Government of Sudan
GSLM/A	Greater Sudan Liberation Movement / Army
IDP	Indigenous Displaced Person
Janjaweed	Man on a horse/camel/donkey with a gun
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
<i>Kashum Bet</i>	House or Tent
<i>Khalwa</i>	Islamic School
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NMRD	National Movement for Reform and Development
NRF	National Redemption Front
<i>Omadiya</i>	Tribal Administrative Group
PFT	Popular Forces Troops
<i>Qubba</i>	Square sided Shrine
<i>Reis al Ferig</i>	Head of Camp
<i>Seif el Din</i>	Sword of the Faith
SFDA	Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance
SLA (M)	SLA Mini Minawi Faction
SLA (W)	SLA Wahed Faction
SLA / M	Sudanese Liberation Army / Movement
SPLA / M	Sudanese People’s Liberation Army / Movement
<i>Tabaqaat</i>	Generations
<i>Wali</i>	Friend / Provincial Governor
WFP	World Food Programme
<i>Zar</i>	Practice of Exorcising Spirits
<i>Zurug</i>	Hereditary Background

**ANNEX B****Sudan Key Facts**

**National name:** Jamhuriyat es-Sudan

**Government:** Military government.

**Area:** 967,493 sq mi (2,505,810 sq km) (Darfur 540,000 sq km)

**Population** (2003 est.): 38,114,160 (growth rate: 2.7%); Birth rate: 36.5/1000; Infant mortality rate: 65.6/1000; Density per sq mile: 39

**Life Expectancy** 55 years (men), 58 years (women) (UN)

**Capital** (2003 est.): Khartoum<sup>1</sup>, 5,717,300 (metropolitan area), 1,397,900 (city proper)

**Largest cities:** Omdurman, 2,103,900; Port Sudan, 450,400

**Monetary unit:** Dinar (Formally the Sudanese pound)

**Gross National Income** US \$640 (World Bank, 2006)

**Languages:** Arabic (official), English, 115 tribal dialects

**Ethnicity / Race:** Black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, foreigners 2%, other 1%

**Religions:** Islam (Sunni) 70%, Indigenous 20%, Christian 5%

**Agriculture:** cotton, groundnuts (peanuts), sorghum, millet, wheat, gum arabic, sugarcane, cassava (tapioca), mangos, papaya, bananas, sweet potatoes, sesame; sheep, livestock.

**Industries:** oil, cotton ginning, textiles, cement, edible oils, sugar, soap distilling, shoes, petroleum refining, pharmaceuticals, armaments, automobile/light truck assembly. Natural resources: petroleum; small reserves of iron ore, copper, chromium ore, zinc, tungsten, mica, silver, gold, hydropower.

**Geography:** The Sudan, in northeast Africa, is the largest country on the continent. Its neighbours are Chad and the Central African Republic on the west, Egypt and Libya on the north, Ethiopia and Eritrea on the east, and Kenya, Uganda, and Democratic Republic of the Congo on the south. The Red Sea washes about 500 mi of the eastern coast. It is traversed from north to south by the Nile, the Blue and White Nile merging in Khartoum, all of whose great tributaries are partly or entirely within its borders.

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<sup>1</sup> The Khartoum Metropolitan Area consists of three cities: Khartoum, Khartoum North (to its North), and Omdurman to the West North West and North

**ANNEX C****Chronology of Sudanese Development and Key Events**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Approximate Timescale</b>	<b>Event / Activity</b>
	3 – 1.5 million years Before Present (BP)	Australopithecus Africanus & Homo Habilis (fossils found)
	750,000 BP	Homo Erectus established in Africa.
	200 – 100,000 BP	Sudanese Acheulian tradition near Omdurman
Middle Paleolithic	50,000 BP	Homo Sapiens in Nile Valley
Upper Paleolithic	20 – 9,000 BP	Advanced hunting and collecting skills in Sudan
Late Mesolithic / Early Neolithic	7 – 5,000 BC	Settled populations around Khartoum
	5 – 3,250 BC	Development of pastoral, riverine agricultural systems
Dynastic	3,100 – 1900 BC	Further industry and agricultural development Colonisation of Nubia by New Kingdom Egypt
	1,570 – 715 BC	Series of military campaigns, building development and mineral extraction
Kingdom of Kush	950 – 760 BC	Kush attacks Egypt from the South Reunification of the Nile Valley
Kushite rule in Egypt (Dynasty XXV)	760 – 555 BC	Reign of the Pharaohs & references in the Old Testament (Genesis 10(7)). Various wars with the Assyrians and Egyptians, culminating with withdrawal back into Sudan. Kingdom of Kush moves to Merowe
Persians enter the Nile Valley	529 – 315 BC	Herodotus reaches Aswan. Last Egyptian Pharaoh flees into Sudan
Greeks enter the Nile Valley	332 – 50 BC	Alexander conquers Egypt; Greek expeditions into Sudan. Raid (Ptolemy II) into Sudan for captives, livestock & elephants Expansion of cattle and Elephant rearing Increased iron production
Romans enter the Nile Valley	48 – 20 AD	Further raids by Romans into southern Sudan Southeast Asian crops (rice, yams, sugarcane, egg plant, bananas & mangos) arrive in southern Sudan

Christianity enters the Nile Valley	37 – 580 AD 284 – 304 AD 300 AD	Persecution of Christians Christian population reaches one million
Islam enters the Nile Valley	640 – 1382 AD	Arab Muslim conquest of Egypt and beginning of Muslim contacts with northern Sudan Nubians forced to pay tribute in slaves and livestock (300 slaves in exchange for 1300 'Kanya' of wine)
Islam enters Nubia	1260 1400 AD	
Islam reaches Central Sudan	1504 – 1819 AD	Rise of the Funj and Fur Sultanates
Turkiya	1820 – 1879 AD  1871 – 1874	Ottomans from Egypt conquer much of northern Sudan ending the Funj sultanate and establishing the Turco-Egyptian regime in the Sudan Zabayr Pasha conquers Bahr Al-Ghazal and Darfur
Mahdiya	1881 – 1897 1883  1884 –5  1889	Mahdist conquest of Sudan begins – 10,000 British-led Egyptian force annihilated Congress of Berlin partitions Africa Khartoum falls to Mahdist forces Mahdist expansion into Egypt stopped at the Battle of Toshki
British Colonialism	1898	Battle of Omdurman
	1899	British-French clash averted at Fasoda Condominium rule between Egypt and Britain established.
	1901	Sudan Political Service created
	1916	Sultan Ali Dinar defeated in Darfur ending the Keira dynasty (Darfur becomes Sudan's 15 <sup>th</sup> province)
	1944	Sudanese cell of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood formed, establishing the Islamic Charter Front in the 1950s.
	1945	Umma political party formed – political vehicle of the Mahdi family and Ansar followers
	1946	Sudanese Communist Party formed
	1952	Democratic Unionist Party formed – political instrument of the Mirghani family, the leaders of the Khatmiyya sufi order



Sudan Independence	1 January 1956	
	1956	Equatoria Corps (part of the Sudan Army) mutiny, the result of Southern fears of northern dominance
	1958	Coup d'état by military establishes the Abboud regime
	1959	Sunday abolished as the weekly holiday, replaced by the Muslim Friday
	1962 - 1963	Intensification of conflict in the south
	1963 - 1964	All Christian missionaries expelled
	1964	October Revolution ousts Abboud Regime
	1966	Government brought down
	1967	Sudanese forces sent to fight in 6 Day War against Israel
	1969	Al Nimeri Revolution
	1970	Revolt by Al Hadi and Al Mahdi defeated
	1971	Abortive coup by Communist backed officers
	1973	Darfur split into three separate provinces, North, South, and West
	1974	Libya accused of attempted overthrow of Sudanese government
	1976	Attempted coup by Al Mahdi and Libya fails after force of 1200 Tripoli trained personnel attack Khartoum; 3000 killed
	1980s	National Islamic Front established by Hassan al-Turabi, the umbrella organisation for the Muslim Brotherhood
	1983	2 army mutinies crushed Sharia Law introduced to replace civil penal code
	1984	Libya accused of bombing Omdurman
	1984 - 1985	Famine in Darfur kill 95,000 of estimated 3 million population
	1986	Economy at crisis level as IMF refuses more credit General elections held, National Islamic Front fail to win any directly contested seat Libyan aid convoys start
	1987	2000 Libyan troops in Darfur to support operations against Chad. Expansion of Libyan airbase close to El Fasher
	1988	Tripoli Radio announces Libya's intention to annex Darfur. Libyan action in Darfur against Chadian rebels leaves an estimated 9,000 dead

	1989	Chadian government forces invade Darfur occupying major towns and countryside, routing the GoS army where and when found. Counter-strikes by Sudanese sponsored, trained and equipped Chadian rebels confront the Chadian Army on the Djararaba plain leaving 2700 killed.
	1989	Al Mahdi <sup>2</sup> government toppled. Al Bashir becomes president
	1991	Al Qaeda headquarters established in Sudan but closed in 1994
	1997	US imposes economic sanctions against Sudan <sup>3</sup>
	1998	US cruise missile strike at Khartoum pharmaceutical factory leaves many Chinese dead and injured
	1999	Sudanese oil exports commence
	2003	Raid by Darfur rebels on El Fasher destroys 2 x Antonov 12, <sup>4</sup> 3 x Mi 17, kills 30 government soldiers, captures air force general, and executes <sup>5</sup> 200 others who had surrendered
	2004	US SoS refers to 'genocide' in Darfur African Union observer force starts to deploy into Darfur
	2005	UN Security Council Chapter VII Resolution 1591 passed South Sudanese peace deal signed John Gurang to become Sudanese 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-president
	31 <sup>st</sup> July	John Gurang killed in helicopter crash
	2006	Darfur peace Agreement signed in Nigeria; repeatedly broken by all sides. Humanitarian situation deteriorates. Three further UN resolutions, 1672, 1679 & 1706 passed. Adam Yacoub, Gabril Abdul Kareem Badri, Sheikh Musa Hilal, and Gaffar Mohammed el-Hassan all named as responsible for genocide British government supportive of a No Fly Zone being imposed over Darfur
	2007	International Criminal Court names Ahmed Haroun, Sudan's Interior Minister and Head of Sudan's Security Services, and Ali Muhammed Ali Adb al-Rahman as responsible for crimes against humanity during 2003 – 2004

<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Al Mahdi – grandson of the Mahdi defeated by Kitchener at Omdurman in 1898

<sup>3</sup> Broadened in 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Since 2003, the GoS have used modified An 26 with external bomb racks

<sup>5</sup> according to US sources

## ANNEX D

**Economic Statistics**

<b>GDP (purchasing power parity):</b>	\$96.01 billion (2006 est.)
<b>GDP (official exchange rate):</b>	\$25.5 billion (2006 est.)
<b>GDP - real growth rate:</b>	9.6% (2006 est.) Average of about 6% since 1995
<b>GDP – per capita (PPP):</b>	\$2,300 (2006 est.)
<b>GDP – composition by sector:</b>	<i>agriculture: 35.5%</i> <i>industry: 24.8%</i> <i>services: 39.7% (2006 est.)</i>
<b>Labour force:</b>	7.415 million (1996 est.)
<b>Labour force – by occupation:</b>	<i>agriculture: 80%</i> <i>industry: 7%</i> <i>services: 13% (1998 est.)</i>
<b>Unemployment rate:</b>	18.7% (2002 est.)
<b>Population below poverty line:</b>	40% (2004 est.)
<b>Inflation rate (consumer prices):</b>	9% (2006 est.) 130% in 1996
<b>Investment (gross fixed):</b>	25.3% of GDP (2006 est.)
<b>Foreign Investment:</b>	\$1.5 billion (2003)
<b>Foreign earnings:</b>	\$2.43 billion (of which oil was about \$2 billion in 2003)
<b>Budget:</b>	<i>revenues: \$7.943 billion</i> <i>expenditures: \$10.1 billion; including capital expenditures of \$304 million (2006 est.)</i>
<b>Public debt:</b>	59.6% of GDP (2006 est.)
<b>Industrial production growth rate:</b>	8.5% (1999 est.)
<b>Electricity – production:</b>	3.845 billion kWh (2004)
<b>Electricity – production by source:</b>	<i>fossil fuel: 52.1%</i> <i>hydro: 47.9% (2001)</i>
<b>Electricity – consumption:</b>	3.576 billion kWh (2004)
<b>Electricity – exports:</b>	0 kWh (2004)
<b>Electricity – imports:</b>	0 kWh (2004)

<b>Oil – production:</b>	365,000 bl/day (2006) 344,700 bl/day (2004 est.)
<b>Oil – consumption:</b>	66,000 bbl/day (2004 est.)
<b>Oil – exports:</b>	275,000 bbl/day (2004)
<b>Oil – imports:</b>	0 bbl/day (2004)
<b>Oil – proved reserves:</b>	1.6 billion bbl (2006 est.)
<b>Natural gas - production:</b>	0 cu m (2004 est.)
<b>Natural gas - consumption:</b>	0 cu m (2004 est.)
<b>Natural gas - proved reserves:</b>	84.95 billion cu m (1 January 2005 est.)
<b>Current account balance:</b>	\$-4.51 billion (2006 est.)
<b>Exports:</b>	\$7.505 billion f.o.b. (2006 est.)
<b>Exports - partners:</b>	China 71.1%, Japan 12%, Saudi Arabia 2.8% (2005)
<b>Imports:</b>	\$8.693 billion f.o.b. (2006 est.)
<b>Imports - partners:</b>	China 20.7%, Saudi Arabia 9.4%, UAE 5.9%, Egypt 5.5%, Japan 5.1%, India 4.8% (2005)
<b>Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:</b>	\$3.552 billion (2006 est.)
<b>Debt - external:</b>	\$29.69 billion (2006 est.)
<b>Economic aid - recipient:</b>	\$172 million (2001)
<b>Exchange rates:</b>	Sudanese dinars per US dollar - 217.402 (2006), 243.61 (2005), 257.91 (2004), 260.98 (2003), 263.31 (2002)

**ANNEX E****Darfuri and Chadian Region Rebel Groups**

In the early stage of the crisis, there were essentially just two rebel factions, the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), the military wing of the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM); and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

Alliance of Revolutionary Forces of West Sudan

Formed on 20 January 2006 through a merger between the JEM and the SLA(M) faction (see also G19), later announcing it would also merge with the NMRD.

The Alliance was set up by Chad to establish a Zaghawa front to counter Chadian rebels based in Sudan.

Bases in Eastern Chad close to the Sudanese border.

The SLA (M), JEM, and NMRD do, however, continue to operate as separate entities.

Conseil Démocratique Révolutionnaire (CDR)

A Chadian based group, possibly backed by Libya, and led by Sheikh Ibn Omar (Salamat). There have been allegations of connections with Musa Hilal (Northern Rizeigat) who is subject to UN Security Council sanctions.

Field Revolutionary Council (FRC)

Formed in 2005 under the leadership of Muhammed Salih Harba, the former JEM 3<sup>rd</sup> in command and possibly with the encouragement of the Chadian government.

Chad unsuccessfully tried to legitimise the FRC by sponsoring it in vain at the Abuje DPA talks.

G19

A splinter group from the SLA(M), originally composed of 19 officials who attended the Abuje talks as part of the SLA(M) delegation.

Led by Khamis Abdullah Abaker, former vice president of the SLA(M)

G19 draws its support from Northern Darfur, and is a member of the NRF. It gained notoriety through a successful assault in May 2006 against the headquarters of the SLA (M) faction at Birmaza. Bases in Chad, and alleged to have the support of former members of the Chadian president's inner circle and twin nephews, Tom and Timian Erdimi. G19 is armed and equipped by Chad.

Formed in January 2006 on the merger of the SLA(W) and JEM, but see also the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces in the West.

Greater Sudan Liberation Movement / Army (GSLM/A)

This the latest faction to break away from the SLA(M) / SLA(W) factions, being reportedly made up of elements from Minawi's faction, due to the perceived failure of the Abuje peace agreement, the DPA.

It is led by Mahjub Husayn, who was once Minawi's spokesman.

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

The JEM traces its origins back to the publication of the Black Book in 2000.<sup>6</sup> It espouses Islamic links and receives ideological support from Hassan al-Turabi, the former speaker of Sudan's parliament and ideologist of its Islamic revolution, who denies the claim, instead blaming the government for creating the environment for the JEM to emerge and evolve.

In January 2006, JEM merged with the SLA(W) faction to form the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces of West Sudan, although each continued to negotiate separately during any peace talks, and maintain bases in eastern Chad.

The JEM has national not regional ambitions.

National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD)

A breakaway faction of the JEM (Arab acronym: Hawat) formed in November 2004 by Jibril Abdel Karim, a former colonel in the Chadian republican guard. Most NMRD are Kapka Zaghawa (also known as Tiwir and Bigui), as well as some Fur and Masalit. At the time of the split there was a suggestion that it had been encouraged by Sudanese Intelligence.

The NMRD's political leader is Khalil Abdullah.

A ceasefire between the NMRD and the GoS was agreed in December 2004, only holding until March 2005 when further fighting broke out in the Jebel Moon area, followed shortly after by its fragmentation, one leader returning to JEM.

By late 2005, the then FRC head reportedly joined the NMRD.

In January 2006 the NMRD and the SLA reported they were planning to merge, followed shortly after by NMRD forces attacking a GoS base in Western Darfur killing 78 soldiers and taking a further 17 prisoner, for 2 killed and 5 injured of its own.

National Redemption Front (NRF)

This is an umbrella group opposed to the Abuje peace agreement, the DPA. It was founded on 30 June 2006 in Eritrea and led by Ahmad Ibrahim Diraji. It has links to Chad and Libya.

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<sup>6</sup> **The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in the Sudan**, known commonly as the **Black Book** (Arabic: دوس ال باتاكل al-kitab al-aswad), is a manuscript purporting to detail a pattern of disproportionate political control by the people of northern Sudan and marginalization of the rest of the country. It was published in two parts, the first in May 2000 and the second on August 2002. While published anonymously, it was later revealed that the writers had strong ties to the Justice and Equality Movement.

Among the founding groups are the JEM, the SFDA, and the G19.

The NRF represents a substantial portion of the fighting forces in Darfur and has a hard-line rebel stance. It has offices in Chad, and does not feel obliged to recognise any of the ceasefire or other peace agreements.

#### Popular Forces Troops (PFT)

The PFT was formed in December 2006, and is made up of Darfur Arab tribes who are against the marginalisation of the region. Believed to be operating in South Darfur.

#### Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA)

Also known as the Haraka Tahrir Sudan, started to form in 2001 when Fur and Tuer Zaghawa formed an alliance against Arab supremacists. Early military attacks against the GoS were conducted in 2002, the SLA only fully emerging in 2003 from the earlier Darfur Liberation Front (DLF), described as a secessionist movement seeking to break completely from Sudan. The SLA should not be confused with the SPLA of Southern Sudan which is quite a different organisation led by the late John Gurang, but in 2003 did enter into 'an understanding' with other opposition forces on the collective fight against the Islamist Government.

Of essentially Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit ethnic groups, the SLA in contrast to the DLF states it did not have secessionist ambitions, and claimed to be fighting against political and economic marginalisation by the Khartoum government.

Originally led by Abd al-Wahid Muhammad al-Nur (Fur), but split in November 2005 in two separate factions, the SLA(M) and SLA(W), after a power struggle between al-Wahid and Mani Akroi Minawi, the then self styled Secretary General.

#### SLA (Wahid / Al Nur) Faction

Formed under the leadership of Abd al-Wahid Muhammad al-Nur, when split along tribal lines in November 2005, the faction seeks 'a united, secular Sudan based on equal citizenship rights and serving the interests of all Sudanese people'. This faction did sign the DPA in May 2006, as it believes 'it cannot negotiate with a regime which commits genocide against its people'.

Strength of al-Nur's leadership and claims of loyalty remains suspect due to his absence from the field.

#### SLA (Minawi) Faction

Formed in November 2005, and signatories to the DPA, Minawi (Tuer Zaghawa from the Awlad Dirgain sub-clan) has since been rewarded by the Sudanese by being appointed special presidential adviser. Minawi also heads the Darfur Interim Authority.

Membership is drawn from Minawi's Zaghawa group in North Darfur, and its fighters regularly collaborate with the GoS operations.

Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA)

A member of the National Democratic Alliance, a coalition of political and military Sudanese opposition groups, with headquarters in Asmara, Eritrea.

United Front for Democratic Change (FUC / FUDP)

A Chadian rebel alliance of eight individual groups, whose collective goal is the overthrow of the Chadian President.

FUC's president is Mahamat Nour Abdelkerim a former leader of the Rally for Democracy and Liberty and Chadian army defector from the Tama ethnic group.

Supported ideologically and materially by the Sudanese government, the FUC conducted a series of attacks and raids against Chad. In April 2006, its forces attacked N'Djamena, being repelled by Chadian Forces assisted by French air assets. Further attacks along the Chad / Sudanese border occurred, and after considerable international pressure including engagement by Libya, a peace accord ending hostilities was made in December 2006. The intention is that a substantial part of the forces commanded by Mahamat Nour will be incorporated into the Chadian Army by early 2007. Remaining and dissident rebel factions have vowed to continue to fight. On 5 March 2007, it was announced that Mahamat Nour had been appointed Chadian Defence Minister.

The rebel groups that formed the FUC were:

- CNT – President Hassan Salleh al-Gadam
- Rally for Democracy and Liberty RDL (Rassemblement pour la Democratie et Liberte)
- Platform for Change, Unity and Democracy, SCUD (Socle pour le Changement, l'Unité et la Democratie)
- FIDEL - leader Abdelwahit About Makaye
- Front National du Tchad Renové (FNTR)
- Group 8 December – Co-ordinator Abakar Tollimi
- CNR - Chargé of Defence: Almada Awad Mardo
- FRRRT - President: Yaya Batit Ali al-Mahmoudi



**ANNEX F****The Community Hierarchy**

I have been the sheikh for 10 years now. The role was passed on to me partly by inheritance and partly by the votes of the villagers, though it is the tradition for sheikhs to be elected from one family line.

My responsibilities include collecting livestock taxes from the villagers. It is receiving and sending the money to the government, as well as controlling the tradition for dividing available land between village farmers. All the land belongs to the government and therefore cannot be sold, but the elected sheikh receives a small amount of money for supervising land allocation. There are certain boundaries to each sheikh's area of control; knowledge of these is most important, in order to avoid land conflicts with neighbouring sheikhs.

However, such conflicts do still occur, in which case the government is called in. If maps are available these are used to define people's territory; if there are no maps, disputes are generally solved through discussion and cooperation between neighbouring sheikhs and elders who know the boundaries well. The government, represented by the Umda and Nazir, are responsible for the keeping of the boundary maps, as well as for settling any other legal issues which cannot be settled by the sheikh.

The legal system works in the following way: each village has a sheikh, or an assistant sheikh if there is more than one village involved. Above the sheikh is the Umda, who controls the settlements over a larger area.

He is the first person a sheikh will approach during bigger disputes or issues. The Umda is installed by agreement between the local people and the district level government. Umda may have as many as 400 or as few as 20 sheikhs under him, depending on how populated his area is.

Usually he divides his area along tribal lines. A location takes its name from the majority of people living there. Higher up the scale of local government is the Nazir. Nazirs have greater authority than Umdas and are responsible for everything that happens over a very large area.

**ANNEX G****Sudanese Naming System**

Sudan uses the traditional Muslim naming system (including generally among non-Muslims/southerners) of changing name each generation. In other words, a person has a given name, followed by father's given name, followed by paternal grandfather's given name.

e.g. (Father) Mohamed Ahmed Ali is Mohamed, son of Ahmed, who was son of Ali.

(Daughter) Khadija Mohamed Ali is Khadija daughter of Mohamed, granddaughter of Ali.

This is why you get so much repetition of the same names in Sudan: very common male names include the above plus Hassan, Hussein, Osman, Salih, etc.

However, some families DO take a surname, either because they are a 'big family' i.e. rich or famous, or perhaps for political reasons, to sound different. Obvious example of the first is the Mahdi family (El Sadig Sadeeg el Mahdi) and of the second, President Ja'afar Mohamed Nimeiri, Hassan Abdullah el Turabi - he actually has other names between Abdullah and el Turabi).

Another caveat is double names. I am aware of two kinds: multi-word ones, and literally double names.

Multi-word ones that are most common are the 'Abdel' series;

Abdel (Abdul) means 'slave of' and is always followed by one of the 99 names of God, such as Abdel Rahman or Abdel Rahim. In the Roman alphabet, they can be written as one word (Abdelaziz) but in Sudan, often are not.

Another kind of multi-word name (always religious) is those such as Seif el Din ('Sword of the Faith') e.g. Zaki el Din, Izz el Din.

Literally double names are especially common in the west of Sudan and could be, for example, Mohamed Ahmed or Ali Osman (i.e. they might be one name or two, even Sudanese can't tell unless they know the name of the man's father). I know someone from Darfur who combines both: Ahmed Kamal el Din - and that's only his first, given name.

Second caveat: Sudanese who have lived in Europe or North America often slip into the Western surname habit, for obvious reasons of convenience. If you attend London University or go to Sandhurst, you are unlikely to want to explain all this and Mohamed Ahmed Ali becomes M.A. Ali (or possibly M. Ahmed or M. Ali). This habit has spread with globalisation and wider access to international media, etc.

HOWEVER: the Sudan government is extremely expert at using all this to disguise identities. When it calls Ali Osman Mohamed Taha (the Sudanese 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President) simply 'Taha', it knows Sudanese respond 'Taha who?' I don't know if Taha is his grandfather or even his great grandfather, as I have never been able to find a Sudanese who knew. This shows how powerful this all is, even domestically,

but especially to confuse foreigners. Sudanese set great store by knowing who someone is, i.e. where they came from, their background, their personal history, etc.

If you add this to the transliteration issue (Mohamed, Muhammad, Mohammed, etc), it is clear that it is a nightmare for those trying to, say, compare information on databases. That's why you will often find the regime supplying only two names, not the third. This may sound trivial; it is not. Africa Confidential nearly completely lost (as opposed to partly lost!) a court case brought by an Islamist group because of it.

Gill Lusk - Jan 2007

**ANNEX H****Doing Business with the Darfuri**

Arrival at any one of the hundreds of small Darfuri settlements follows much the same pattern.

On the outskirts of the community, a slow and cautious drive into the habitation aims to find the largest area of open ground, probably close to the Sheikh's residence. Vehicles would be parked, under whatever shade could be found, the Protection Force usually consisting of a platoon of three sections of about 10 soldiers each, taking positions in their section groups around the periphery, but always within eye contact of the patrol leader and his vehicle.

The patrol leader would dismount, accompanied by, his driver, a couple of AU observers, the translator, the inevitable GoS representative, and whichever faction representative saw that particular piece of pink and pale brown West Darfur earth as his and over which he believed he had influence. The difficulty in these situations was always who to talk to first, and then where to go. Waiting for no more than 5 minutes would see an individual cautiously approach, to be sent away to fetch a mat, something to drink, and to tell the sheikh visitors were here to see him and he should come right away.

Firstly the multi-coloured reed mat would arrive, and the party would sit cross legged, or lie casually in the fashion of the area, but all on the mat would have bare feet, shoes, boots or sandals having been left in a neat and orderly line at the mat's edge.

Within a further few minutes, water or 'juice' would be presented along with small drinking glasses into which the fluid would be poured, and from which drunk, without any consideration for how they might have been handled or stored. All this would be part of the symbolic gesture of welcoming the visitor after his 'long journey'.

Once refreshed, the representatives from the community would appear. The size of the group would vary, from the Sheikh accompanied by a handful of his community, to the Sheikh accompanied by a delegation. All would approach, and sit or lie on the mat. For the hosts this would be an important event, one they would recount for days, weeks and months to come.

The two groups would be separated by no more than a metre, and the discussion would ensue.

Most discussions followed much the same pattern, with greetings and thanks to the Prophet being offered. Introductions would be made on both sides, those from the community being limited to the key individuals, those from the visitors being all those present. Particular interest would be paid to those visitors who were not from Darfur, and if from outside Africa an explanation might have to be given as to exactly where the country of origin was, and why that individual had chosen that village to visit.

If writing material was available, notes would be taken by both sides throughout.

If visiting a community in a known faction area of responsibility, it would be normal throughout the discussion for individual or pairs of additional observers – some

armed, some unarmed, to arrive, squat down and listen to the proceedings. In only very few instances would these additional observers be told to leave.

By the end of these discussions in the larger communities, a camera would inevitably appear, and photographs of the host and his visitors taken. No photographs of any rebel fighter would be attempted without their consent, as taking his photograph without permission might deprive him of the 'whole' protection he enjoyed from wearing the many amulets and tokens around his neck intended to ward off the enemy's bullets. Even worse for the fighter, his photograph might end up on some Sudanese Security Service officer's desk for use as evidence against him sometime in the future.

If the timing was right, and the host of sufficient standing to warrant it, and the visiting party small enough, the offer of food would be made – inevitably accepted. This would usually be a type of *ful*, a type of bean soup, stewed for hours in a large pot or cauldron, before being lightly mashed and poured into bowls with oil and a sprinkling of spices added to improve colour, aroma or texture.

Departure would be the arrival in reverse but on a grander scale. Everyone would shake hands and offer thanks for a safe return journey even with those who arrived late or were listening from the periphery, short farewell speeches would be made and vehicles mounted. If the visit was to a location in which rebels were based, respects would be paid to the senior rebel commander if available, and the assistance of one of his men requested to take the visitors to the border point. It would be customary for the group of hosts to wait until all the guests and their vehicles had departed before they resumed their day.



It would be imprudent to publicly recognise by name all those who have assisted in the preparation of this work. However, specific mention should be made of the assistance given by those from Sudan, Kenya, Brussels, and at the Royal United Services Institute, BBC Monitoring, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the RAF Museum, and of course the Defence Academy.

Irrespective of how small a contribution each individual or organisation has made, I am grateful for their interest and realization there is an information gap regarding Darfur which needs to be filled.

### **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official thinking and policy either of Her Majesty's Government or of the Ministry of Defence.

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