

Reading Packet on Sudan

1. The Perpetual War The Week, Oct. 22, 2010
2. Violence in Darfur, Sudan Choices supplement Fall 2010
3. Eyes on Darfur Conflict Analysis
4. Timeline Sudan BBC
5. Sudan's Secession Crisis Can the South Part from the North Without War? Foreign Affairs January/ February 2011
6. Oil and Politics in Sudan
7. Attention Grabber for Sudan's Cause NYT 12-6-2010
8. Sudan President vows to adopt Islamic constitution Financial Times Dec. 19. 2010
9. Help for Sudan: bombing Africa to save it?
10. Sudan: Guarantee Post-Referendum Citizenship Rights Human Rights Watch 12-16-2010
11. Long Way Home In Sudan UNMIS June 2010
12. Lost Boys Poem
13. For Lost Boy, Vote in Sudan is Homecoming NYT November 27, 2010

Sudan Assignment

You are a journalist covering the Sudanese Referendum . Based on what you have learned about Sudan's recent history, write a story that provides your take on the events of this month. It may take the form of an editorial, a feature story or an interview.

Your article should:

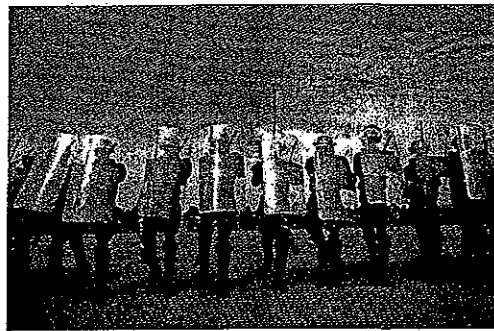
- Be no less than 1000 words
- Include at least three direct quotes from people on the ground in Sudan.
- Include references to Darfur, the civil wars of the past, the Lost Boys, outside involvement in the conflicts, and anything else that you think provides needed context.
- Provide an indication of what you think is going to happen.

The perpetual war

After decades of violence, Sudan may soon vote on whether to split the country in two. Is civil war on the ballot?

Why is Sudan so violent?

The roots of conflict run deep, nurtured by racial and religious hostility. In the early 20th century, Britain, which administered Sudan, sought to limit the influence of the Arab, Muslim north on the largely black, Christian and animist south—even restricting travel between the two regions. As Sudan prepared for its 1956 independence, a civil war broke out between north and south, in part because southerners feared domination by the north. Sudan's civil war evolved into Africa's longest, raging intermittently over the next half-century, at a cost of more than 2 million lives. In a separate conflict in Darfur, in western Sudan, Sudanese government troops have worked with vicious Arab militias known as *janjaweed* to crush a rebellion by black Africans, resorting to systematic rape and genocide. Civil war is now so deeply ingrained in Sudanese culture that it's not uncommon to see 12-year-olds toting submachine guns in the streets. Indeed, in Khartoum, the north's capital, the standard school uniform is camouflage fatigues.



Sudanese police preparing for the secession vote

What are they fighting over now?

Oil, power, race, and religion. Traditionally, power and wealth in Sudan have rested in the hands of a small Arab elite who live along the banks of the Nile in the north. But in 1978, oil was discovered in a southern state (ironically named Unity), and 80 percent of the country's oil still comes from the south. Sudan's government earned about \$2.8 billion in oil revenue last year, accounting for more than half its entire budget. The south's oil has transformed Khartoum from a sleepy backwater into a modern metropolis of gleaming skyscrapers and shopping malls, providing the funds for new schools and roads. Over the years, however, southerners have profited far less from the oil beneath their feet; southern Sudan remains among the least developed regions in the world. Northerners say the south's economic problems are its own fault; ever since a 2005 peace agreement between north and south, the south has claimed 50 percent of the country's oil revenues. But southerners still complain of being bullied by the north. "We're fourth-class citizens in our own country," said Salva Kiir, the president of southern Sudan.

Is the south entirely powerless?

Not anymore. In a 2005 peace accord that the U.S. helped broker, the south got a share of power—and more importantly, an option to become independent six years later via a referendum. That six-year deadline is now drawing near, with a referendum scheduled for Jan. 9. All indications are that voters in the south will vote overwhelmingly to secede.

☛ Southerners deem self-rule the culmina-

tion of a long struggle. "The date of Jan. 9, 2011, is written not with words," says John Duku, the south's former mission chief in Kenya. "It is written with the blood of 2.5 million southern Sudanese who perished during the war."

Will the north accept secession?

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and his ruling National Congress Party say they will abide by the vote, but they appear determined to undermine it at every step. They insist that a referendum cannot take place until numerous conflicts are resolved, including the contentious matter of a border between north and south; since a resolution is unlikely, a referendum may never happen. The head of the national referendum commission wasn't appointed until July due to disputes over commission personnel. Meanwhile, logistical issues—from the means of registering voters to the designation of voting centers—remain up in the air. In the south, there is widespread concern about the lack of preparation for the vote. "People here are waiting eagerly for the chance to decide their future, and expectations are extremely high," said Charlotte Scawen of Oxfam.

What happens if the vote is blocked?

It could get ugly. Both sides have been aggressively arming in recent years, and neither the south nor international observers have faith in Sudanese President al-Bashir. He is currently under indictment by the International Criminal Court on five counts of crimes against humanity for his government's genocidal actions in Darfur, where hundreds of thousands have been killed and an estimated 2.7 million displaced since 2004. (Separatism is a powerful current in Darfur, as well, and could receive a jolt if the south secedes.) With so many tensions simmering, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently called Sudan a "ticking time bomb."

Can war be averted?

Both the U.S. and the United Nations are seeking to avoid a conflagration, and U.N. Security Council representatives were recently in Sudan for meetings. The U.S., eager to contain al Qaeda-linked militants in nearby Somalia and Yemen, desperately wants to avoid another failed state—and a potential terrorist training ground—in Sudan. But with the referendum date fast approaching, the situation is hardly encouraging. The Anglican archbishop of Sudan, Daniel Deng, this month asked directly for international assistance to avert catastrophe. "People may resort back to war," he warned, "and because of that we are asking our friends to help because we don't want people to be sorry tomorrow."

A lost chance

In July 2005, John Garang, the leftist intellectual who led the south's long guerrilla war against the north, arrived in Khartoum to sign a peace deal. Even in the north's capital, people clambered up trees or onto rooftops to get a glimpse of the towering Dinka tribesman. One month after signing a peace accord, however, Garang was killed in a helicopter crash. Buried along with him, some believe, were hopes for a unified Sudan. Though the government declared three days of mourning to honor him, the period was marred by rioting and dozens of deaths, many of them resulting from attacks by southerners on northerners. The violence seemed to preview a grim turn in Sudan's fate. "He was one of the few senior southerners who really believed in the concept of a united Sudan," says Sudan analyst Peter Moszynski.

Violence in Darfur, Sudan

Sudan is the largest country, by area, in Africa and the tenth largest country in the world. Sudan has been embroiled in internal conflicts since independence in 1956. Most recently, a violent conflict involving the central government, armed militias, and several opposition groups has devastated Darfur, the westernmost region of Sudan.

“For years, the people of Sudan have faced enormous and unacceptable hardship. The genocide in Darfur has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and left millions more displaced. Conflict in the region has wrought more suffering, posing dangers beyond Sudan’s borders and blocking the potential of this important part of Africa. Sudan is now poised to fall further into chaos if swift action is not taken.”

—President Barack Obama,
 October 19, 2009

The conflict in Darfur is complex, involving many factions and spreading into neighboring countries. Some in the international community, including the United States, have called this conflict a genocide. Others have argued that the conflict, although exceedingly violent, cannot be called genocide.

Conflict in Sudan

The borders of Sudan encompass more territory than all of Western Europe. The country is made up of hundreds of different cultures with diverse ethnic, religious, and geographical backgrounds, and with many languages. Both Christianity and Islam have ancient roots in the area. There are two main ethnic groups



in Sudan: black Africans and Arabs. Indigenous Africans have lived in the region since the Stone Age. Arab peoples were prominent traders in Sudan as early as 800 CE and the area was heavily involved in the Arab-African slave trade.

Sudan is made up of two distinct geographic regions. To the north, the area is very dry and is home to part of the Sahara Desert. In the south, the climate is tropical, with lush rainforests and swamps. The majority of the population lives in urban areas in the north. The north is largely Muslim and Arab, and tends to have closer ties to Egypt. African farmers make up most of the population in the south, and the majority are Christian or practice traditional religions. African populations in the west, east, and south tend to have closer ethnic ties to populations in neighbor-

Note:

“Darfur: Violence and the Media” is an online supplement to *Confronting Genocide: Never Again?* published by the Choices Program. Information on this and other resources from the Choices Program is available online at <www.choices.edu>.

ing East African states such as Chad, Uganda, and Kenya. Much of Sudan's population lives in poverty; the country ranked 150 out of 182 countries in the United Nation's Human Development Index (which measures things like life expectancy, literacy, and average income) released in 2009.

Sudan was a colony of Britain and Egypt in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Britain ruled Sudan as two distinct territories, with separate laws governing the north and south. Upon independence, northern Sudanese nationalists and the British planned to unify these two regions. Even before official independence in 1956, a civil war broke out between the north and south over control of the central government. This war lasted until 1972, and a second civil war, again between north and south, began in 1983. Millions of southern Sudanese were killed or displaced by violence in this second war.

What caused the second north-south conflict?

There were a number of issues at the root of the second civil war between north and south Sudan. Northern, Islamic Arabs have retained control over Sudan's central government since 1956. The 1972 peace agreement ending the first civil war granted southern Sudan a great deal of independence from the north. The second civil war began in 1983 when the north-controlled central government broke this treaty and tried to assert more power over the south. That year, the government implemented Islamic law across the entire country, angering many non-Muslims in the south.

Another source of tension between the two regions was oil, discovered in Sudan in the 1960s. Most of the oil reserves are located in the central and southern regions, yet

the north-controlled government took all of the oil revenues. The second civil war lasted for twenty-one years, ending with a peace agreement in early 2005. The peace agreement was negotiated with the help of the United States and the African Union and provided the people of the south with three basic things: the right to greater participation in government, the right to a portion of the oil revenues, and the right to hold a referendum in 2011 to decide whether to secede from Sudan and become an independent country.

What is the Islamist National Islamic Front?

The Islamist National Islamic Front (NIF) is a powerful political party that took over Sudan's government by coup in 1989. Led by Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the current president of Sudan, the NIF controls both the military and the oil reserves. After coming to power in 1989, President Bashir dissolved parliament and banned all political parties. Many within the international community believe that the Sudanese government pursues an aggressively Islamic agenda. In the 1990s, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, which all border Sudan, formed an alliance backed by the United States to limit the influence of the NIF outside of Sudan. In 2010, Bashir won multiparty elections, Sudan's first in more than twenty years.



August 1998: The 2.5 million people displaced by the war in southern Sudan also faced famine. Here, these displaced people wait their turn for water.

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Observers believe the elections were flawed by voter intimidation. Bashir is quite popular in the north where increased oil revenues have helped the region's economy.

Nevertheless, there is dissatisfaction in other regions of the country. Many Sudanese are frustrated with high levels of poverty and the lack of infrastructure such as paved roads, sanitation, and medical facilities outside Sudan's major towns.

Groups in some regions are upset over what they consider to be a lack of representation within the government, while others wish to have a larger degree of self-rule. The 2005 peace agreement set January 2011 as a date for a referendum in which people in southern Sudan will decide whether to secede from Sudan. With the vote approaching, tensions between north and south have increased. Many worry that if southern Sudan votes to become independent, civil war could erupt again. The north's access to oil resources in the south is one particularly thorny problem.

“[T]he situation North-South is a ticking time bomb of enormous consequence.... But the real problem is what happens when the inevitable happens and the referendum is passed and the South declares independence.... What happens to the oil revenues? And if you're in the North and all of a sudden, you think a line's going to be drawn and you're going to lose 80 percent of the oil revenues, you're not a very enthusiastic participant, what are the deals that can possibly be made that will limit the potential of violence?”



UN Photo/Tim McKulka

April 14, 2010: Sudan's first multiparty elections in twenty-four years. Voters chose their national and regional presidents, governors and legislative representatives.

...And so we've got to figure out some ways to make it worth their while to peacefully accept an independent South and for the South to recognize that unless they want more years of warfare and no chance to build their own new state, they've got to make some accommodations with the North as well.

—U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton,
September 8, 2010

What are the origins of the conflict in Darfur?

In early 2003, while peace negotiations to end the civil war between north and south Sudan were underway, opposition groups in Darfur (a region in western Sudan) rose up against the government led by President Bashir. The government and pro-government militias responded brutally to crush the new opposition. This began a new, even more violent conflict within Sudan.

The region of Darfur is roughly the size of France. The people of Darfur are predominantly Muslim, and there are large populations of both Arabs and Africans. Tensions over land and grazing rights between Arabs, most of whom are nomadic herders, and Africans, who

are mainly farmers, have existed for most of the region's history.

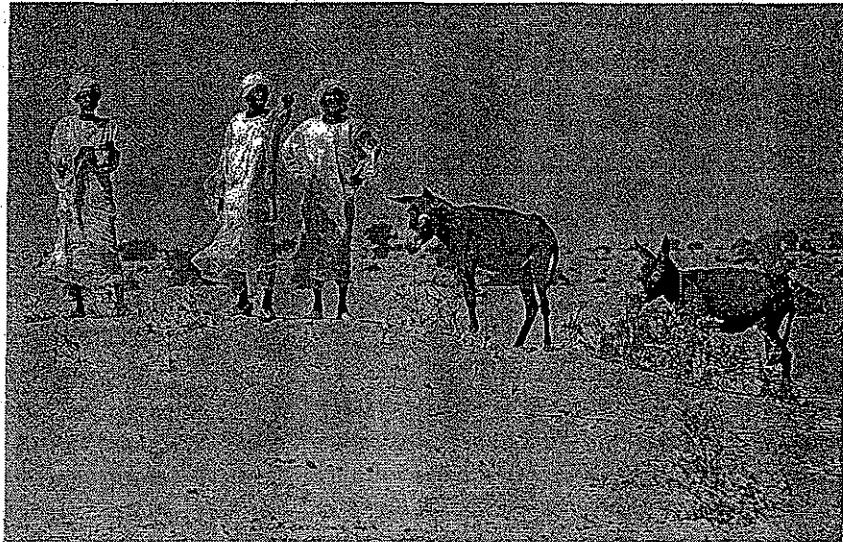
More recently, the African population has been frustrated by what it claims is the central government's lack of support during prolonged droughts and near-famine conditions. Many believe the government favors Darfur's Arab population. Opposition groups also say that the government has long marginalized the African populations of Darfur. They say that Darfur was left out of the peace negotiations with southern Sudan in which issues such as representation within the government were discussed. The Sudanese government, on the other hand, claims that the conflict in Darfur is rooted in competition for land among various ethnic groups in the region. With the 2011 referendum approaching, tensions in Darfur are high. President Bashir's government wants to discourage any possibility of Darfur trying to break away from Sudan.

Who is involved in this conflict?

Initially, there were two main African opposition groups in Darfur: the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM), also known as the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Both of these groups splintered into smaller factions over the course of the conflict. The UN estimates that there are now as many as thirty opposition groups in Darfur. Many of these factions are competing with each other for power and influence.

On the opposing side of the conflict are the central government and pro-government militias, such as the Arab Janjaweed. Most

parties in the conflict say that the Janjaweed, a group of armed horsemen, is responsible for the majority of violence. Opposition groups claim that the government supports the Janjaweed and the "Arabization" of Darfur because it wants to eliminate opposition from the black Africans in the region. The government denies any connection to the Janjaweed and asserts that it only supports government forces fight-



UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Ferran

January 25, 2010: The men pictured here are among three thousand Sudanese who have migrated to Dar al Salam in northern Darfur. They were forced out of their towns across Darfur by local warring factions. With few vital resources in Dar al Salam, such as water, food, and material for proper shelters, the migrants have needed help from UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

ing rebel groups in Darfur. But many within the international community believe that the Janjaweed does have ties to the government. Although the government has called the Janjaweed "thieves" and "gangsters" it has done little to limit the violence of this group.

What has been happening in this conflict?

Since the initial rebellion in 2003, violence between rebel forces and government militia and the Janjaweed has spread across the region. The government militia and the Janjaweed have targeted civilians and villages that they claim are harboring rebel forces. Aerial bombing has destroyed numerous villages.

Although the government denies its involvement in the bombings, it is the only force in Sudan that owns helicopters and planes. At the same time, the Janjaweed have looted and burned villages and crops, and poisoned water supplies. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed by various groups in the conflict, and many more have been raped. Opposition groups have forced many young boys within refugee camps to join their forces. Fighting among rebel factions occurs both within the camps and outside of them. Other groups, capitalizing on the instability, rob supply convoys and international aid efforts.

UN officials currently estimate that about 300,000 people have been killed in the conflict through violence, starvation, and disease. Well over two million people have been displaced from their communities, and some have fled to refugee camps in neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR). Refugees are dependent on foreign aid for survival. The majority of victims are farmers, mostly African civilians. But many Arab farming communities have also been displaced by violence from African opposition groups. Humanitarian groups have struggled to access the region because of the violence and lack of government cooperation. Rebel groups have targeted peacekeeping operations. As of July 2010, sixty-eight UN peacekeepers and personnel had been killed in Darfur.

There are fears that the violence in Darfur could spread to other parts of Sudan and beyond. In 2007, it spilled across the border into Chad and the CAR, and threatened to destabilize the region. Refugees, militia, rebels, and bandit raiders flow across Sudan's porous borders. Africans in bordering regions of Chad and the CAR have been attacked by armed Arab groups on horseback, similar to the pattern of violence in Darfur. At the same time, some observers believe that the Arab population in eastern Chad is facing persecution as well. By July 2007, more than thirty thousand Chadian Arabs had fled across the border into Sudan and claimed refugee status. The governments of Chad and the CAR accused Sudan of supporting rebel groups in

their countries, while Sudan accused Chad of supporting opposition groups aiming to destabilize its government. In February 2010, Chad and Sudan agreed to increase cooperation and security while reducing tensions between the two countries.

The Response of the International Community

There is disagreement in the international community over whether the conflict in Darfur is genocide. In July 2004, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution calling the conflict genocide. In September 2004, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell made a public statement declaring Darfur a site of genocide.

“We concluded—I concluded—that genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed bear responsibility—and genocide may still be occurring.”

—Colin Powell, U.S. secretary of state,
September 2004

In early 2005, the UN released a report saying that although there was massive violence in the region, it could not be called genocide because there was no evidence of intent to kill an entire racial, ethnic, or religious group.

“The Commission established that the Government of Sudan and the Janjaweed are responsible for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law amounting to crimes under international law.... However, the crucial element of genocidal intent appears to be missing, at least as far as the central Government authorities are concerned. Generally speaking, the policy of attacking, killing and forcibly displacing members of some tribes does not evince a specific intent to annihilate, in whole or in part, a

group distinguished on racial, ethnic, national, or religious grounds.

—UN report, January 2005

In March 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Sudan's president for his role in the violence accusing him of crimes against humanity and war crimes. In July 2010, the court added three counts of genocide to the charges.

Although the Sudanese government claims that the ICC has no jurisdiction in Sudan, the court has charged others involved in the conflict. In early 2007, the ICC issued arrest warrants for a government minister and a Janjaweed leader, both of whom the Sudanese government refused to turn over to the court.

How has the UN responded to the conflict?

Until recently, international troop presence in Darfur was minimal. In late 2004, a regional organization called the African Union (AU) sent troops to serve as a small observer mission. The AU force was funded largely by the United States, European Union, and Canada. But with only six thousand troops, the force was too small and ill-equipped to quell violence over such a large area. Additionally, AU soldiers were targeted in shootings and kidnappings.

Starting in March 2006, many in the international community began to call for a UN peacekeeping force to be sent to Darfur. Initially, Sudan's government was hostile to this suggestion, claiming that the presence of international troops would be tantamount to occupation. After months of negotiations with UN officials, the Sudanese government relented. In July 2007, the UN Security Council



UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran.

August 4, 2010: Sudanese women from Kassab Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp in Kutum, Darfur, venture out to collect firewood. Female IDPs often fear being raped by rebel fighters or criminals when they leave their homes. These women were escorted by UNAMID peacekeepers.

unanimously approved a resolution to create a combined AU-UN force of up to 26,000 troops and police in Darfur. The Council approved the use of force for self-defense as well as for the protection of civilians by these troops. The UN, along with the European Union, also pledged to send troops to help stabilize Chad's eastern border with Sudan.

The African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has been in charge of all peacekeeping operations in Darfur since December 31, 2007. As of July 2010, only 21,000 troops had been deployed and many critical supplies were still missing. Some point out that even 26,000 troops is too few to cover the large area of Darfur. Others argue that peacekeepers can do little until there is a peace agreement to enforce.

What are the prospects for peace in Darfur?

Thus far, peace negotiations have achieved little. Only the government and one rebel faction signed a peace treaty mediated by the AU in 2006. Further negotiations led by the AU and UN in Libya in 2007 also were unsuccessful. In 2010, AU and UN officials held a new round of talks in Qatar, but have struggled to

keep representatives from all of Sudan's many rebel factions at the negotiating table.

The arrest warrant for President Bashir has also complicated the peace process. Many in the international community opposed this measure, fearful that it will further inflame tensions in the region. Some within the UN Security Council have supported a proposal to suspend the case against Bashir in return for his full cooperation in negotiating a peace agreement. Others have argued that suspending Bashir's case would undermine the international criminal justice system.

The international community has stepped up efforts to mediate the many disputes in Sudan to prevent the referendum from creating instability, violence, and even civil war. In 2010, violence and killing has escalated in the Darfur region. International observers worry that the intense focus on the referendum will distract the international community from making a comprehensive effort to improving the situation in Darfur. 2011 is certain to be in an important year for the peoples of Sudan.

“What happens in Sudan in the days ahead may decide whether a people who have endured too much war move forward towards peace or slip backwards into bloodshed.”

—President Barack Obama,
September 24, 2010



EYES ON DARFUR

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[CONFLICT ANALYSIS](#)
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CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Early on the morning of April 25, 2003, rebels from the Darfur Liberation Army, later becoming the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), attacked the Sudan government's air base in El Fasher, capital of North Darfur state. The force destroyed multiple Antonov bombers and helicopter gunships, and seized a large amount of ammunition and heavy weapons.

The government had not suffered such a humiliating defeat in more than 20 years' war in South Sudan. It refused to negotiate with the armed opposition group, whose demands included recognition as a political movement, autonomous powers within a federal system and development for Darfur - one of Sudan's most neglected regions. The government of Sudan (GoS) instead responded by mobilizing the Army, Air Force and militias recruited among some of Darfur's Arab tribes. The militias later came to be known as the Janjawid. It was the beginning of a brutal counter-insurgency campaign against the non-Arab tribes which formed the backbone of the armed opposition groups - primarily the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit.

From time immemorial, seasonal fluctuations in water and grazing land had led to conflict over natural resources in Darfur. These tensions exploded into a Fur-Arab war in 1987 after drought and famine in North Darfur drove many Arabs south towards Fur lands in South Darfur. Earlier conflicts had been settled by traditional reconciliation mechanisms. But these had been weakened by a series of measures beginning in 1971, when President Gaafar Nimeiri abolished the tribal-based Native Administration. Conflicts and insecurity escalated in rural areas as those with access to firearms took the law into their own hands and started resolving their disputes by force rather than by mediation.

From the mid-1980s to the outbreak of rebellion in 2003, Darfur suffered high-intensity, large-scale armed conflicts fought with modern weapons - many of them brought across Darfur's long and virtually unpoliced desert borders with Chad and Libya. When Arab nomads attempted to occupy traditional Fur land with the support of the government, the Fur responded with the mass burning of pastureland.

Initial recruits to the government war in 2003 came mainly from two Arab groups - the failed nomads of North Darfur, and immigrants from Chad without land of their own. With the exception of urban areas, almost all land in Darfur is utilized according to a customary tenure or *hakura* system of land grants initially conferred by the Fur sultans. In South Darfur, the sultans gave *hakuras* to each of the four main cattle-herding or *Baggara* Arab tribes - the Rizeigat, Ta'aisha, Beni Halba and Habbaniya. The camel-herding Abbala of North Darfur received no land but were allowed right of passage though the tribal lands of sedentary groups.

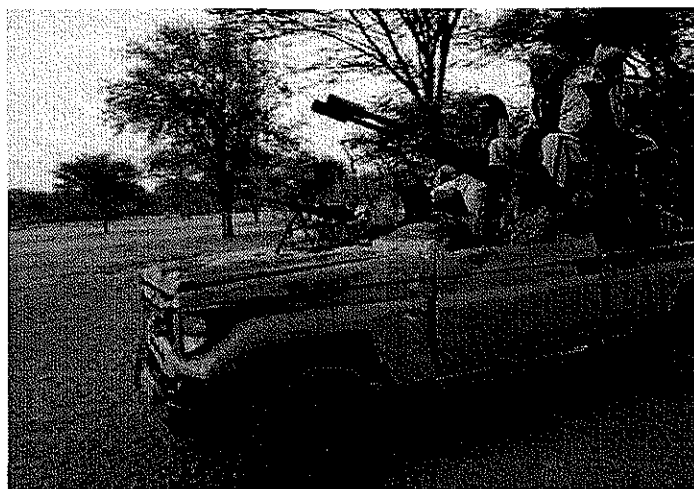


photo: Jerome Tubiana

Rebels of the Sudan Liberation Army in North Darfur.

The Crisis At-a-Glance

People who have died as a direct result of the conflict:

Over 200,000

People displaced from Darfur:

Over 2 million

When war erupted in 2003, most Arab tribes with land remained neutral. But many landless Abbala joined the Janjawid, believing that land occupied by force would be theirs.

Government forces and Janjawid emptied wide swathes of land with a scorched-earth campaign war that destroyed everything that made life possible, including wells, pumps, orchards and mosques. As international criticism of the conflict grew, the Sudanese Army took a back seat and the militias became the spearhead of the government's strategy, as they had in southern Sudan.

The rebellion, and the government's response to it, caused death, displacement and destruction on an epic scale. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed. Another two and a half million were driven into camps for the displaced where African Union troops had neither the mandate nor the resources to guarantee their

People displaced from Darfur into Chad:**260,000****Displaced Chadians:****160,000****People displaced from the Central African Republic:****155,000****TOTAL at risk:****Several million**

safety and where the Janjawid roamed with impunity. More than 200,000 others fled across the border into camps in Chad.

The Government of Sudan and Minni Minawi's faction of the SLA signed the Darfur Peace Agreement on May 5, 2006 after seven rounds of AU-led negotiations. JEM and the SLA faction led by Abdul Wahid Mohamed el Nur refused to sign, saying power, wealth-sharing and compensation provisions were unacceptable and demanding stronger guarantees for the disarmament of the Janjawid.

A handful of individual commanders and splinter groups signed Declarations of Commitment to the agreement but, like Minawi himself, were armed by the government and turned against their former comrades-in-arms - most importantly, the Group of 19, SLA non-signatories who controlled most of North Darfur. Subsequent attacks by signatories on non-signatories displaced tens of thousands of civilians.

In mid-2006, the Sudanese Army was put in the front line of a new offensive against non-signatories. The commander of the Western Military Region was replaced and huge amounts of weaponry were flown into El Fasher. A short-lived alliance between the Group of 19 and JEM handed the government forces a series of crushing battlefield defeats. By the end of 2006, the government

offensive in North Darfur was stymied, the UN Department of Safety and Security had declared almost a third of South Darfur a no-go area and a militia-led offensive in West Darfur had spilled deep into Chad.

Eastern Chad is plagued by three separate, and sometimes interlocking, conflicts: cross-border attacks by Sudanese Janjawid in coordination with Chadian militias; Chadian armed opposition groups activity against the regime of President Idris Deby; and local ethnic conflicts compounded by the formation of self-defense village militias. The conflict has displaced more than 160,000 Chadian civilians, who have exacerbated the humanitarian problems caused by the 260,000 Sudanese refugees already in the country. There are also more than 155,000 refugees from northern Central African Republic.

Today, the conflict between the GoS and the Janjawid against armed opposition groups is not the only source of insecurity in Darfur. After more than six years of conflict, armed men on all sides are benefiting from the total collapse of law and order to loot the livestock of vulnerable people, hijack humanitarian vehicles and relief supplies, impose war "taxes" and extort "protection" money. The emergence of a strong war economy threatens to perpetuate the conflict. The camps for the displaced have become so crowded and volatile, with so many uncontrolled small arms, that they present a danger even for those who are attempting to provide humanitarian services. In some camps, government police and AU forces are no longer allowed entry and there is no institution entrusted with guaranteeing security and administering justice.

In March 2009, the government of Sudan expelled and suspended the operations of 13 international humanitarian aid organizations and at least 3 domestic aid organizations operating in Darfur and across Sudan. Organizations working in South Sudan were exempted from the government's order. The government's action followed a decision by the International Criminal Court to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Without the food, water, and medicine provided by these aid groups, millions of vulnerable men, women, and children in Darfur and throughout Sudan face starvation and disease.





Timeline: Sudan

A chronology of key events:

1881 - Revolt against the Turco-Egyptian administration.

1899-1955 Sudan is under joint British-Egyptian rule.

1956 - Sudan becomes independent.

1958 - General Abboud leads military coup against the civilian government elected earlier in the year

1962 - Civil war begins in the south, led by the Anya Nya movement.

1964 - The "October Revolution" overthrows Abbud and an Islamist-led government is established

1969 - Jaafar Numeiri leads the "May Revolution" military coup.

1971 - Sudanese Communist Party leaders executed after short-lived coup against Numeiry.

1972 - Under the Addis Ababa peace agreement between the government and the Anya Nya, the south becomes a self-governing region.

1978 - Oil discovered in Bentiu in southern Sudan.

1983 - Civil war breaks out again in the south involving government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), led by John Garang.

Islamic law imposed

1983 - President Numeiri declares the introduction of Sharia Islamic law.

1985 - After widespread popular unrest Numayri is deposed by a group of officers and a Transitional Military Council is set up to rule the country.

1986 - Coalition government formed after general elections, with Sadiq al-Mahdi as prime minister.

1988 - Coalition partner the Democratic Unionist Party drafts cease-fire agreement with the SPLM, but it is not implemented.

1989 - National Salvation Revolution takes over in military coup.

1993 - Revolution Command Council dissolved after Omar Bashir is appointed president.

US strike

1995 - Egyptian President Mubarak accuses Sudan of being involved in attempt to assassinate him in Addis Ababa.

1998 - US launches missile attack on a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, alleging that it was making materials for chemical weapons.

1998 - New constitution endorsed by over 96% of voters in referendum.

1999 - President Bashir dissolves the National Assembly and declares a state of emergency following a power struggle with parliamentary speaker, Hassan al-Turabi.

Advent of oil

1999 - Sudan begins to export oil.

2000 President Bashir meets leaders of opposition National Democratic Alliance for first time in Eritrea.

Main opposition parties boycott presidential elections. Incumbent Bashir is re-elected for further five years.

2001 Islamist leader Al-Turabi's party, the Popular National Congress, signs memorandum of understanding with the southern rebel SPLM's armed wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Al-Turabi is arrested the next day, with more arrests of PNC members in the following months.

Government accepts Libyan/Egyptian initiative to end the civil war after failure of peace talks between President Bashir and SPLM leader John Garang in Nairobi.

US extends unilateral sanctions against Sudan for another year, citing its record on terrorism and rights violations.

Peace deal

2002 - Government and SPLA sign landmark ceasefire agreement providing for six-month renewable ceasefire in central Nuba Mountains - a key rebel stronghold.

Talks in Kenya lead to a breakthrough agreement between the government and southern rebels on ending the 19-year civil war. The Machakos Protocol provides for the south to seek self-determination after six years.

2003 February - Rebels in western region of Darfur rise up against government, claiming the region is being neglected by Khartoum.

2003 October - PNC leader Turabi released after nearly three years in detention and ban on his party is lifted.

Uprising in west

2004 January - Army moves to quell rebel uprising in western region of Darfur; hundreds of thousands of refugees flee to neighbouring Chad.

2004 March - UN official says pro-government Arab Janjaweed militias are carrying out systematic killings of non-Arab villagers in Darfur.

Army officers and opposition politicians, including Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi, are detained over an alleged coup plot.

2004 May - Government and southern rebels agree on power-sharing protocols as part of a peace deal to end their long-running conflict. The deal follows earlier breakthroughs on the division of oil and non-oil wealth.

2004 September - UN says Sudan has not met targets for disarming pro-government Darfur militias and must accept outside help to protect civilians. US Secretary of State Colin Powell describes Darfur killings as genocide.

Peace agreement

2005 January - Government and southern rebels sign a peace deal. The agreement includes a permanent ceasefire and accords on wealth and power sharing.

UN report accuses the government and militias of systematic abuses in Darfur, but stops short of calling the violence genocide.

2005 March - UN Security Council authorises sanctions against those who violate ceasefire in Darfur. Council also votes to refer those accused of war crimes in Darfur to International Criminal Court.

2005 June - Government and exiled opposition grouping - National Democratic Alliance (NDA) - sign reconciliation deal allowing NDA into power-sharing administration.

President Bashir frees Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi, detained since March 2004 over alleged coup plot.

Southern autonomy

2005 9 July - Former southern rebel leader John Garang is sworn in as first vice president. A constitution which gives a large degree of autonomy to the south is signed.

2005 1 August - Vice president and former rebel leader John Garang is killed in a plane crash. He is succeeded by Salva Kiir. Garang's death sparks deadly clashes in the capital between southern Sudanese and northern Arabs.

2005 September - Power-sharing government is formed in Khartoum.

2005 October - Autonomous government is formed in the south, in line with January 2005 peace deal. The administration is dominated by former rebels.

Darfur conflict

2006 May - Khartoum government and the main rebel faction in Darfur, the Sudan Liberation Movement, sign a peace accord. Two smaller rebel groups reject the deal. Fighting continues.

2006 August - Sudan rejects a UN resolution calling for a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur, saying it would compromise sovereignty.

2006 October - Jan Pronk, the UN's top official in Sudan, is expelled.

2006 November - African Union extends mandate of its peacekeeping force in Darfur for six months.

Hundreds are thought to have died in the heaviest fighting between northern Sudanese forces and their former southern rebel foes since they signed a peace deal last year. Fighting is centred on the southern town of Malakal.

2007 April - Sudan says it will accept a partial UN troop deployment to reinforce African Union peacekeepers in Darfur, but not a full 20,000-strong force.

War crimes charges

2007 May - International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for a minister and a Janjaweed militia leader suspected of Darfur war crimes.

US President George W Bush announces fresh sanctions against Sudan.

2007 July - UN Security Council approves a resolution authorising a 26,000-strong force for Darfur. Sudan says it will co-operate with the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (Unamid).

2007 October - SPLM temporarily suspends participation in national unity government, accusing Khartoum of failing to honour the 2005 peace deal.

2007 December - SPLM resumes participation in national unity government.

2008 January - UN takes over Darfur peace force.

Within days Sudan apologises after its troops fire on a convoy of Unamid, the UN-African Union hybrid mission.

Government planes bomb rebel positions in West Darfur, turning some areas into no-go zones for aid workers.

2008 February - Commander of the UN-African Union peacekeepers in Darfur, Balla Keita, says more troops needed urgently in west Darfur.

Abyei clashes

2008 March - Russia says it's prepared to provide some of the helicopters urgently needed by UN-African Union peacekeepers.

Tensions rise over clashes between an Arab militia and SPLM in Abyei area on north-south divide - a key sticking point in 2005 peace accord.

Presidents of Sudan and Chad sign accord aimed at halting five years of hostilities between their countries.

CONTROVERSIAL CENSUS
The 2008 count could have an big impact on Sudan's political future

2008 April - Counting begins in national census which is seen as a vital step towards holding democratic elections after the landmark 2005 north-south peace deal.

UN humanitarian chief John Holmes says 300,000 people may have died in the five-year Darfur conflict.

2008 May - Southern defence minister Dominic Dim Deng is killed in a plane crash in the south.

Tension increases between Sudan and Chad after Darfur rebel group mounts raid on Omdurman, Khartoum's twin city across the Nile. Sudan accuses Chad of involvement and breaks off diplomatic relations.

Intense fighting breaks out between northern and southern forces in disputed oil-rich town of Abyei.

2008 June - President Bashir and southern leader Salva Kiir agree to seek international arbitration to resolve dispute over Abyei.

Bashir accused

2008 July - The International Criminal Court's top prosecutor calls for the arrest of President Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur; the appeal is the first ever request to the ICC for the arrest of a sitting head of state. Sudan rejects the indictment.

2008 September - Darfur rebels accuse government forces backed by militias of launching air and ground attacks on two towns in the region.

2008 October - Allegations that Ukrainian tanks hijacked off the coast of Somalia were bound for southern Sudan spark fears of an arms race between the North and former rebels in the South.

HAGUE WARRANT
President Al-Bashir is sought by The Hague on war crimes charges

2008 November - President Bashir announces an immediate ceasefire in Darfur, but the region's two main rebel groups reject the move, saying they will fight on until the government agrees to share power and wealth in the region.

2008 December - The Sudanese army says it has sent more troops to the sensitive oil-rich South Kordofan state, claiming that a Darfur rebel group plans to attack the area.

2009 January - Sudanese Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi is arrested after saying President Bashir should hand himself in to The Hague to face war crimes charges for the Darfur war.

2009 March - The International Criminal Court in The Hague issues an arrest warrant for President Bashir on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

2009 May - An estimated 250 people in central Sudan are killed during a week of clashes between nomadic groups fighting over grazing land and cattle in the semi-arid region of Southern Kordofan.

Alliance strained

2009 June - Khartoum government denies it is supplying arms to ethnic groups in the south to destabilise the region.

The leader of South Sudan and vice-president of the country, Salva Kiir, warns his forces are being re-organised to be ready for any return to war with the north

Ex-foreign minister Lam Akol splits from South's ruling SPLM to form new party, SPLM-Democratic Change.

2009 July - North and south Sudan say they accept ruling by arbitration court in The Hague shrinking disputed Abyei region and placing the major Heglig oil field in the north.

Woman journalist tried and punished for breaching decency laws by wearing trousers. She campaigns to change the law.

2009 August - Darfur war is over, says UN military commander in the region, in comments condemned by activists.

2009 October - SPLM boycotts parliament over a Bill allowing intelligence services to retain widespread powers.

Independence vote

2009 December - Leaders of North and South say they have reached a deal on the terms of a referendum on independence due in South by 2011.

2010 January - President Omar Bashir says would accept referendum result, even if South opted for independence.

2010 Feb-March - The Justice and Equality Movement (Jem) main Darfur rebel movement signs a peace accord with the government, prompting President Bashir to declare the Darfur war over. But failure to agree specifics and continuing clashes with smaller rebel groups endanger the deal.

2010 April - President Bashir gains new term in first contested presidential polls since 1986.

2010 July - International Criminal Court issues second arrest warrant for President al-Bashir - this time for charges of genocide. He travels to Chad.

2010 October - Timetable set for southern independence referendum, due to be held on 9 January, 2011.

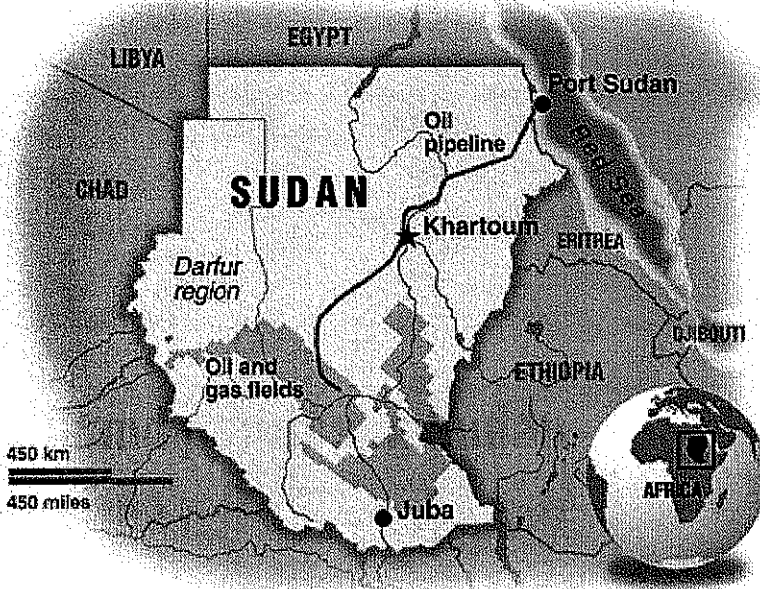
2010 November - Voter registration begins amid doubt that referendum schedule can be met.

Tension as North and South accuse each other of massing troops in border areas.

2010 December - SPLM publicly backs independence for south for first time. The statement is at odds with terms of 2005 peace deal, under which north-based government and southern rebels agreed to work for unity.

Oil and politics in Sudan

Fueling the current unraveling of a 2005 peace deal between north and south Sudan is southerners' claim that northerners are not sharing oil proceeds – and political power – as agreed.

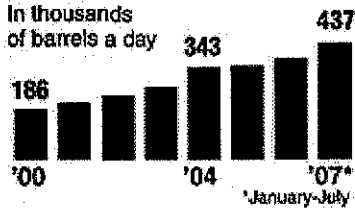


The South's oil ...

Oil exports now account for 70 percent of Sudan's export revenues

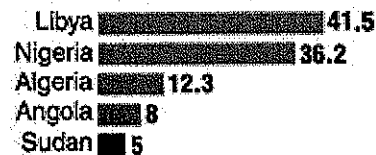
Production

In thousands of barrels a day



Reserves

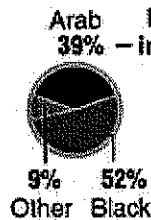
Top African proven oil reserve holders, 2007, in billions of barrels



... the North's control

- The northern government continues to control the oil sector and keep troops in southern oil fields in violation of the accord
- North-south ethnic and religious differences contribute to the strife

Ethnic groups



Religions



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, CIA World Factbook, ESRI
Graphic: Pat Carr, Lee Hulteng

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December 2, 2010

Attention-Grabber for Sudan's Cause

By DANIEL BERGNER

"I do human rights the way I played basketball," John Prendergast said. We were sitting in the outdoor restaurant of an unfinished hotel in Juba, a boomtown of mud and shanties beside the White Nile in southern Sudan. It's a restaurant where the South's liberation leaders tend to gather, and these days they are in a buoyant mood. They have traded their fatigues for dress shirts and suits. A half-century of civil war seems to be culminating in independence. If a referendum on Jan. 9 goes as expected, the map of Africa will be redrawn — with a new nation around the size of Texas. But for the moment, Prendergast, who is America's most influential activist in Africa's most troubled regions and who huddled on a White House patio with President Barack Obama a few days earlier, talked about basketball guards.

Pistol Pete Maravich, the N.B.A. All-Star of the '70s, with his floppy socks and flashy ball-handling, was a childhood hero, Prendergast said. He spoke about his own brief high-school glory, his own attempts to dazzle and, now, his celebrity-strewn methods of making Americans turn their eyes to Africa. He raked his fingers through wavy gray hair that fell to the shoulders of his T-shirt. The hair, along with the unshaven scruff on his chin, made for a look of dashing flamboyance that was undercut by bursts of boyish energy. "There are a lot of criticisms that it's about me and not the cause," he went on about his work in the field of human rights. He declared that he can't be bothered by the complaints, some of which arise from his habit of dropping into conflict zones with actors like George Clooney and Angelina Jolie. At 47, he has devoted all of his adult life to Africa, especially the Horn and Congo, formerly known as Zaire. He's been jailed in southern Sudan. He's had militiamen's assault rifles jammed into his stomach in Congo. While we sat in the Juba restaurant in October, he was fighting off a rare infection that is a precursor to elephantiasis, contracted in Sudan a week or two before. Swollen glands throughout his body made him wince as he walked across the restaurant.

Prendergast laid a small map of Sudan — of the nation as it looks for the moment, not yet divided in two — on a table in front of Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, an insider in the South's government in waiting, a towering man with tribal scars, six raised horizontal lines,

spanning his forehead. The two men discussed the chances of the new country's being born without causing more cataclysmic warfare. Scribbled notes cluttered the map as Gatkuoth brought Prendergast up to date on developments in the South, on fresh pacts being sealed between the main liberation group and an array of factions. The rebel leaders know from CNN, and from Prendergast himself — "So George Clooney and I met with President Obama last week . . ." — that Prendergast has pull with their ally America. And for Prendergast, the information that he can learn from those leaders is currency. The mix of his exhaustive knowledge and his marshaling of movie stars has placed him near the heart of the American administration's role in Sudan's impending rearrangement.

If the vote isn't derailed by disputes between North and South, it seems certain that the southern Sudanese will cast their ballots in January overwhelmingly for secession. After that, it's possible that the South — an expanse of parched scrub and swamp, a land of seminomadic herders whose cattle have gorgeous lyre-shaped horns and whose dung fires send a blue-tinted gauze into the air at dusk — will emerge quietly into statehood. But many worry that it all will explode. During the phase of fighting from 1983 until the signing of the fragile current peace agreement in 2005, it's estimated that more than two million people, mostly southern civilians, were killed. Many were slaughtered by marauding militia on horseback — forces armed by the northern regime based in Khartoum. More perished in war-sown famine. Now many analysts warn that a vote to break away will spur Khartoum back into belligerence, that there is no way the North will relinquish the oil fields that fall largely in southern territory and that the next phase of the conflict will be even more catastrophic than anything before it. Earlier this year, Dennis Blair, then America's director of national intelligence, told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that in thinking about the next five years in all the world's unstable places "a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur in southern Sudan."

Prendergast insists that the United States can prevent the resumption of warfare. "I live in the country with the greatest influence in Sudan," he said. He was thinking back to the underuse of American power that outraged him during the Rwandan genocide and during the initial crisis in the western Sudanese region of Darfur, a situation mostly separate from Sudan's North-South fighting. He is determined not to let the same kind of abdication bring disaster with the referendum. "Do I sound like a zealot?" he asked me. "I *am* a zealot." His faith in America's capacity to stave off war in Sudan is all but absolute — though some experts aren't nearly as confident — and his fear that he will not be heard, that his faith will not be heeded, runs deep. "I am not a tree falling in a forest," he said. For much of his career, he was heard faintly at best as he journeyed alone throughout the Horn, writing about atrocities and failed states in Human Rights Watch reports and journals with names like The

vocation shifted from education and youth employment toward wars and starvation in Africa," he said. Two and a half years later, Prendergast was in southern Sudan, in camps for the displaced, documenting war-caused starvation for an American advocacy group.

By 1991, he was traveling along the reedy shallows of the Sobat River, a tributary to the Nile, in a dugout canoe, going to meet with Riek Machar, one of the South's rebel generals. Prendergast was 28. He was employed, at that point, by a small American nongovernmental organization; he envisioned himself absorbing everything he could about the Horn and Central Africa — where he was living for about two-thirds of each year — and then one day putting his knowledge to use in a midlevel State Department job that would give him a role in promoting peace and preventing famines. He was making his way to Machar with the ambition of learning more thoroughly about the South's resistance movement — one that stirred his deep sympathy — and with the belief that Machar would prove to be a pivotal hero among its commanders. "I had the glow of naïvety," he recalled. He'd met Machar before; now he was going to immerse himself in his thinking. He approached the general's swampy base of crouched mud huts. "There was a bit of 'Apocalypse Now' about that trip," he said. "I was arriving on the river to understand the man. His soldiers were all around us. We sat outside in plastic chairs, and I listened straight through the night."

By the time Prendergast had his audience with Machar amid the crackle of military radios and the flicker of kerosene lanterns, Sudan had been ravaged by civil war for decades. The fighting started just before independence from joint British and Egyptian colonial control in 1956, with the southerners, who are predominantly black and who practice, for the most part, traditional animist religions or Christianity, battling for freedom or partial separation from Khartoum's Arab and Islamic rule. In 1972, an accord was reached, allowing the South a measure of autonomy; but in 1978, Chevron discovered oil just to the southern side of the North-South line. It wasn't long before Khartoum decided that the South's semi-autonomy, which included resources and revenues, wasn't a good idea. In 1983, Khartoum effectively reunified the country. It declared, too, that Shariah law would be imposed throughout the nation. Southern rebels quickly stormed one of Chevron's bases and resumed their resistance against the North. In the early '90s, the rebels became appealing freedom fighters in the eyes of the U.S. government. This was partly because the Khartoum regime supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and provided a home for numerous jihadists, including Osama bin Laden, earning Khartoum a spot on America's list of state sponsors of terrorism. And it was partly because Christian evangelicals saw the southern cause as a movement of religious brethren.

"He had a vision," Prendergast said of his night with Machar. As clouds of insects hovered around the kerosene lamps, the general declaimed that he just split from the South's main

rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army, and that his new force would be the one to carry southerners, at last, to their independent destiny. "He was charismatic. I was very impressed. He said all the right things about inclusiveness; I thought he could see exactly what the southern rebel movement should look like." The S.P.L.A.'s leadership was dominated by members of the Dinka tribe, the South's largest, and was faulted for perpetrating the abuse of other southerners. Machar, who belongs to the Nuer, the South's second-biggest tribe, pledged that his army would fully represent the land's diverse people. After spending three days at Machar's base, Prendergast traveled on. "I was inspired," he said. "I felt promise."

Soon, though, he started hearing accounts of a rampage by Machar's new faction on a Dinka area in the Bor region. Prendergast headed in that direction and was horrified to find Dinka corpses and torched Dinka villages. In what came to be known as the Bor massacre, Machar's troops killed around 2,000, mostly women and children. "It was such a betrayal," Prendergast said. "It was a very, very confusing moment. It left me with a desolate feeling." He paused. "It was a good step in my education about the realities and politics of war."

Southern Sudan's realities have forever involved outbreaks of warfare between its scores of ethnic groups, but in the '90s, the North was adding fuel to these enmities by backing southern militias. It was a tactic Khartoum had already employed, in a slightly different form, by arming Arab herders in areas bordering the South, herders at odds with southern tribes over scarce water and grazing land, and then watching as the Arabs terrorized southern settlements, forcing civilians to flee, to let crops go unplanted, to face starvation. The North employed a similar strategy in supplying weapons to outfits like Machar's and then to other southern splinter groups in the confidence that, though the factions billed themselves as freedom fighters, they would turn their firepower on each other. "Mission accomplished, Khartoum," Prendergast said bitterly. And in the territory of the oil fields, the North fully co-opted southern commanders to clear the land of people, so that drilling could be done without resistance. In the second half of the decade, a Chinese-led consortium began partnering with Khartoum and started pumping most of what is now nearly 500,000 barrels of petroleum a day from Sudan's fields.

After the Bor massacre, the S.P.L.A. carried out revenge attacks on the Nuer. And Prendergast threw himself into recording, in Human Rights Watch publications, the horrors committed by all southern forces, as if he could reset the moral compass of the liberation movement by holding everyone accountable. For his efforts, Prendergast was arrested by the S.P.L.A. "You have violated the laws of southern Sudan" was the only explanation he remembers receiving. For three days, he was held in a metal shipping container — retching violently from the foul water he was given — before he was let go.

Many things have changed since Prendergast's stay in that shipping container. For one, Machar realigned himself with the S.P.L.A. nine years ago and is now slated to become the new country's vice president, a situation with which Prendergast has made his own private peace. We went to his Juba compound shortly after Prendergast met with Gatkuoth. Machar was hosting a bull sacrifice.

The killing was to sanctify the fact that another Nuer militia commander, Gabriel Tanginye, was joining the S.P.L.A. after years of fighting fellow southerners. When Gatkuoth told Prendergast in the restaurant about this development, Prendergast exclaimed, "This is a friggin' success story!" As Gatkuoth added that the South's incipient president, Salva Kiir, wooed Tanginye with a pledge of forgiveness and the offer of a major general's rank in the S.P.L.A. and that Kiir was in the process of making the same deal with a number of brutal factional leaders, Prendergast, thrilled by Kiir's embracing of old enemies, burst out, "This is a moment!" To me, he said that he worried about the South's ability to stitch itself into one country, yet his natural optimism seemed to overwhelm the concern that today's freshly made major generals will soon return to staking their divisive claims. Tanginye told us that the Nuer are the true southern liberationists. Kiir, in a separate meeting, said that the Nuer can't be trusted. But Prendergast's upbeat vision of the emerging southern nation couldn't be repressed. At times, it was almost as if all his years there hadn't completely dimmed the glow of naïvety.

At the sacrifice, Machar wore brown wingtips and khakis and had a pen clipped to the pocket of his light blue shirt. Prendergast talked amiably, guardedly with him on a couch in a sparsely furnished living room, gathering information as always, taking in Machar's thoughts on last-minute negotiations with the North — over borderlines, over oil revenue — that could jeopardize the referendum. To converse this way with Machar was a compromise; the need to hold perpetrators accountable, the drive that impelled him after Bor, had calmed. "I'm very relativist in my views," he explained to me. "If these leaders, if these ethnic groups have decided to bury the hatchet, literally to bury the spear, bury the AK-47, I'll bury it." Peace, he said, must trump accountability.

After his talk with Machar, we went out into the courtyard. Soldiers chased a black-and-white bull, then roped each of its hooves and held it still. Wearing dark slacks and a tailored shirt with blue and black vertical stripes, Tanginye, the newly integrated commander, raised a wooden spear. He pierced the animal's side once with the spear's slender blade. The bull crumpled and lay dead on the mud, having absorbed, according to this Nuer ritual, a wealth of malign spirits — forces that had long torn the South apart.

In the town of Bentiu, with the oil rigs pumping nearby on a vast, flat landscape of low trees and scarce huts, the area's governor spread a colonial-era map in front of Prendergast, showing him where the North-South border should be drawn, as if Prendergast, with his access to Obama, could make it so. Prendergast's connections to Washington power can be traced back to 1996, when he was invited to be on a panel at a Princeton University conference about U.S. policy in Somalia. At the conference, he seized the opportunity to catalog President Bill Clinton's failures not only in Somalia but also during the Rwandan genocide and in Sudan. Susan Rice, then the senior director for African affairs in Clinton's National Security Council and now the American ambassador to the United Nations, was the conference's keynote speaker. The two had a spirited conversation afterward, and Prendergast again imagined the possibility of working in government. Less than a year later, he was employed under Rice in Clinton's administration. Rice was passionate about peacemaking in Africa, and Clinton was, in Prendergast's telling, increasingly invested. The administration put its energy into resolving war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Yet Sudan, Prendergast said, never got the engagement it needed. The U.S. government sent nonoffensive military equipment, ranging from boots to transport helicopters, to neighboring countries intending to support opposition to Khartoum. But Prendergast said: "It was way too little. It was a waste of damn energy."

In 2003, Prendergast was back to his old existence, doing field research and analysis for the International Crisis Group, an NGO focused on international-conflict resolution. He met Angelina Jolie at a Congressional event where she spoke about her visit to a Congolese refugee camp in Tanzania. After suggesting that she could strengthen her impact by traveling to Congo itself, he took her there. When they returned from the conflict zone — where he'd long tried to raise awareness — her photographs of the trip were exhibited on the Web site of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. They received so much traffic that the site crashed. "You can't get slapped in the face any harder than that," he said. "If I had made that trip alone, maybe a few hundred people would have paid attention."

It was a lesson fresh in his mind as Khartoum was reacting to a new separatist movement — in the West, in Darfur. Much as it did in the South, the regime sent local Arab forces, some on camelback, to kill and rape civilians, to chase them from their homes and into deathly disease and malnutrition in order to leave the rebels with no base of support. Prendergast played a central role in drawing American eyes to Darfur's devastation through a campaign that enlisted Clooney along with fellow actors like Mia Farrow and Don Cheadle (with whom Prendergast has paired up to write two books, one of them a best seller, about responding to the world's atrocities). Save Darfur raised millions of dollars for advertising and grass-roots organizing; drew 70,000 people to a rally on the Washington Mall in 2006; and lent

momentum toward this year's International Criminal Court indictment of Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir, for the genocide of Darfurians.

By escorting Clooney to Juba and along the Nile this fall, Prendergast hoped to spread the star's light from Darfur to the South — and to jolt Obama, who appeared, to Prendergast along with other activists, to be half-asleep when it came to what might be visited upon southerners and who has been accused of being less invested in Africa generally than he once promised. The Clooney tour typifies the approach of the nonprofit Prendergast co-founded in 2007, the Enough Project, with backing from a foundation started by Pam Omidyar, the wife of the creator of eBay. The project's rationale is that U.S. human rights and international-policy organizations take an elite tack on trying to influence American government involvement in the world's ignored places. The groups struggle for coverage by foreign correspondents and offer to testify in front of Congressional subcommittees. But the organizations usually fail to stir public opinion that could generate political will for their ideas. Enough's plan is to combine thorough field reporting with Web campaigns and celebrity glare. "If you don't get people in Des Moines to write their congressman or senators," Prendergast said, "you're not going to get anything done in godforsaken regions like eastern Congo and southern Sudan."

Attracting attention is — and isn't — a new goal for Prendergast. He is, after all, a man who once modeled himself on Pistol Pete Maravich, and there are human rights advocates today who see his recent methods as more about self-display than substance. One afternoon in the Juba airport, I caught a glimpse of the pleasure Prendergast takes in the limelight when he crossed the waiting area to let a stranger know that the book she was reading, "The Worst Date Ever" — a jokey nonfiction narrative about tracking down a handsome activist in Africa in the hope of romance — is about him. Some critics raise other issues. Andrew Natsios, former special envoy to Sudan, worries about Prendergast's vision of American power. "Prendergast and advocacy groups often grossly overestimate the ability of American diplomacy and power to direct the course of events in other countries," Natsios told me. "And local groups engaged in civil war often believe the overestimates and think they'll be rescued by American influence — and this can distort negotiations, sometimes disastrously."

No one, though, seems to doubt Prendergast's success in implanting Sudan in the consciousness of Americans. Right after Prendergast and Clooney returned from the South, there they were on "Today" and "Larry King Live," among other shows, speaking to millions of viewers about a place and people those viewers barely knew existed and about America's ability to protect them. They also sat at a small garden table on the Oval Office's stone patio with Obama.

Prendergast's aim was to intensify the president's attention on Sudan. Back in 2005, the North signed the current peace deal with the South, an accord that includes the upcoming referendum on independence, partly because President George W. Bush made it a priority. Impelled by Christian evangelicals, Bush dispatched Secretary of State Colin Powell to signal America's seriousness and help broker an agreement. And Khartoum signed, perhaps believing that this was a key step in getting free of U.S. sanctions dating to its harboring of bin Laden and maybe figuring, many Sudan analysts speculate, that it could find ways to postpone the referendum forever.

The Enough Project's effort to compel Obama included full-page ads over the summer in The New York Times. The ads featured Obama in profile and proclaimed: "The lives of millions of Sudanese hang in the balance. The choice is clear — and it's yours." The Enough Web site accused Obama of being "AWOL" on Sudan. Before their recent talk, Prendergast had spoken with Obama a number of times at various events going back to Obama's term in the Senate, and their most recent brief exchange had been cordial, Prendergast said, despite Enough's campaign. But, he added, "I wouldn't be getting a 45-minute meeting with the president if it weren't for Clooney."

In that meeting Prendergast reiterated, he told me, the main points he'd been making for months. He discussed with the president the need to let Khartoum know that America would not look away if the North undermined the South's vote and that the U.S. would reward Khartoum's compliance and punish any belligerence. And he wanted Obama to dispatch a major political or diplomatic figure to the pre-referendum negotiations so that both sides would recognize the strength of America's desire that war be left permanently in the past.

Within a month of the meeting, Obama added Senator John Kerry to what had previously been a low-profile diplomatic effort. The president sent Kerry with an offer to Khartoum: if the North doesn't obstruct the January vote, if the North respects the results and peacefully resolves issues like oil-revenue-sharing, Obama will remove Sudan from America's list of state sponsors of terrorism.

This would be a first step in the awarding of further benefits — the lifting of sanctions; help with debt relief — if Khartoum merits them in the future. Prendergast has spoken to administration officials about going as far as working toward a United Nations Security Council deferment of Bashir's indictment for genocide, though he stresses that this is not a current consideration. The mere possibility would outrage some in the human rights community, but again, he'd prefer peace to principles. "I'm not a human rights purist," told me. "Human rights and peace have to coexist." He also wants harsh consequences if Khartoum flouts the vote and stokes North-South war or fails to improve the bleak situation

in Darfur. The potential reprisals he mentioned to me progress from aggressive asset seizure to supplying anti-aircraft artillery to the South so it can deter the North's bombing. Sending weaponry may seem like an extreme and unlikely option, but Prendergast said that if such artillery becomes necessary, he would work to mobilize support behind it. For the moment, he is reassured by Kerry's role as a sign that Obama has a major stake in Sudanese peace.

It is difficult to measure exactly Prendergast's importance in Obama's surge of public focus on Sudan. Two weeks before Prendergast and Clooney arrived at the White House, the president addressed a U.N. ministerial meeting to emphasize America's watch over North and South as the referendum nears, a speech that could be attributed in part to Enough's campaign or traced to Obama's long-stated commitment to Africa, a commitment that may be obscured by issues like the economy and Afghanistan but that is never unfelt. One way to understand Prendergast's influence, suggested Samantha Power, who is the National Security Council's senior director for multilateral affairs and human rights and who counts Prendergast among her close friends, is not to see Obama as lacking a sense of urgency on Sudan were it not for Prendergast's recent activism, but rather to view the president as long-engaged on Sudan partly because of the highly successful advocacy movement Prendergast helped to start several years ago around the crisis in Darfur. And now, she continued, on North-South peace, Prendergast is "creating a political space; he's putting political wind in the sails of people who care about this issue: the president, Denis" — she nodded toward McDonough, the deputy national security adviser — "me. He's elevated Sudan to Himalayan proportions on the mattering map in Washington." While this may be an overstatement, Prendergast has surely helped to pull an expanse of scrub and swamp, and the people who live upon it, into American sightlines.

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Sudan's Secession Crisis

Can the South Part From the North Without War?

Andrew S. Natsios and Michael Abramowitz

Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the 2005 deal that ended the lengthy civil war between the north and the south of Sudan, voters in the south are supposed to vote on January 9, 2011, to decide whether their region should secede and form the world's newest country. The civil war, which lasted 22 years and during which an estimated 2.5 million southerners died, was fought over several issues: the central government's long-standing neglect of Sudan's periphery; the excessive concentration of jobs, wealth, and public services in the region known as the Arab triangle, along the northern part of the Nile River valley; the government's brutal attempts to impose Arab culture and Islam on the south, where Christianity and traditional religions prevail; its persistent refusal to grant the south any autonomy (except for a brief period in the 1970s); and its exploitation of the south's resources,

particularly its oil, to fill government coffers. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which was signed by Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan, and John Garang, the leader of the southern rebellion, who was killed in a helicopter crash soon after the deal, was intended to correct some of these problems. It gave the south its own semiautonomous government and an independent standing army and required the upcoming referendum on secession. But now Khartoum's stalling tactics are threatening to delay the vote, with potentially disastrous consequences.

During a visit to southern Sudan in late September and early October, we met nearly 100 people, including the south's president, Salva Kiir Mayardit, and vice president, Riek Machar, civil-society groups, church leaders, international humanitarian workers, UN officials, and many others. We traveled outside Juba

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to the southern cities of Malakal and Rumbek but were denied permission to travel to the north. In the course of our conversations, we came to see clearly that Garang's vision of a unified, democratic Sudan died with him. Given the deprivations and atrocities that the southern Sudanese have suffered for two centuries at the hands of the northern Arabs, getting southerners to vote for unity would have been difficult even with Garang in power. One cause of the ongoing tensions is the condescending attitudes of some Arab elites in Khartoum: they continue to refer to the southerners as *a'bid*, the Arabic term for low-caste black slaves. For them, the south's revolt during the civil war was no liberation struggle; it was an uprising of slaves that needed to be crushed. Now, these northerners cannot abide dealing with southerners as equals. The southerners, for their part, wish to be rid of the Arabs and Islamism once and for all.

In the fall, as the date of the referendum neared, international observers and southern officials reported that Khartoum was redeploying its army, with newly purchased heavy weaponry, along the disputed north-south border. In response to the north's muscle-flexing, the southern government, which is based in the city of Juba, sent the toughest units in its own armed forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and also equipped them with new heavy weaponry. The south's leaders threatened to issue a unilateral declaration of independence if the north manipulated or canceled the vote. They also privately warned that if the north attempted to occupy the oil fields in the south—where 80 percent of the country's known oil reserves are located—they would destroy the country's oil infrastructure. And they

have the troops and the weapons to do so. If Khartoum thinks it can protect Sudan's oil infrastructure, it should reflect on the failure of the U.S. military to protect Iraq's during its occupation of that country.

Some balloting will likely take place in early 2011, but if the north tries to manipulate the referendum or postpone it by more than a few weeks, the south could erupt. Stonewalling might even precipitate war—and perhaps a war even bloodier than the north-south conflict or the rebellion in Darfur, where the government troops' scorched-earth tactics left a lasting imprint of misery, displacement, ongoing violence, and atrocities. On the other hand, the path to a peaceful partition as provided for by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is full of dangers, not all of which are adequately recognized in the West. The peace deal calls for a six-month period of transition after the scheduled date for the referendum, during which the north and the south are supposed to work out any remaining details about their split. According to many people we spoke to in the south, it is during this time that the threat of violence will be the greatest—either because the vote has been held, in which case the international community is likely to turn its focus elsewhere, or because the vote has been delayed by the north's dilatory tactics and violence has broken out.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Even though they signed the peace deal nearly six years ago, Khartoum and Juba only recently began serious negotiations over their divorce settlement. As we were writing this article last November, many of the thorniest questions were still unresolved. Where should the north-south border be

Sudan's Secession Crisis

drawn? How will the citizenship of southerners living in the north and of Arabs living in the south be established? How should the dispute over the oil-rich area of Abyei, which straddles the current, tentative border, be settled? How should the country's debts be apportioned? How much oil revenue should Juba give Khartoum for the construction of the north's oil pipeline and port and the south's use of them? And how much water from the Nile River, which flows from the south, will the north (and Egypt) be allowed to use? To gauge the difficulty of working out any one of these matters, just consider the question of how oil revenues should be distributed. Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the two sides were supposed to split the proceeds evenly. Will that arrangement continue even though the south, where most of the resources are, thinks that the north's leaders have cheated it out of billions of dollars?

The Bashir government believes that the way these issues are resolved will determine whether its party, the National Congress Party (NCP), remains in power. And the south's leaders are wary of compromising the long-term development of their region by granting the north too many concessions. Khartoum wants to negotiate the terms of any divorce before the referendum—one reason it is trying to delay the vote—but Juba is refusing to settle until after the ballot for fear that Khartoum might hold the vote hostage to these questions. With the parties' strategies clashing, negotiators are at an impasse. The south did win a symbolic victory last September, when during a high-level summit at the United Nations in New York virtually the entire international community lined up behind the south and insisted

that the referendum be held on time. But the government in Khartoum is not budging, worried that it might be signing its own death warrant if it fulfills the final terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Some Sudan observers fear that if the south secedes, the world's newest country will be born a failed state. UN officials in the country distribute to visitors a fact sheet entitled "Scary Statistics" showing that southern Sudan's health and education indicators are extremely poor, even compared to other troubled states in Africa. But those who focus on such data overlook the fact that the south has effectively been a functioning state for the last five years and that it has made remarkable progress under very difficult circumstances. During our trip, we found Juba to be unexpectedly vibrant. Since 2005, the city's population has grown from roughly 100,000 to roughly 1.1 million (which is about 13 percent of the south's entire population). A dozen government ministries and offices and the University of Juba, which were wrecked by the war, have been rebuilt. Major city streets have been paved and are lined with a new electrical system, and 7,000 new businesses have been registered, including eight banks, seven water-bottling plants, and a brewery. There were only three hotels and two restaurants in 2007; there are now 175 small hotels and dozens of restaurants. Some 300,000 southerners have cell phones. There is a serious shortage of trained teachers, but encouragingly, school attendance has increased fourfold.

The south still faces serious challenges. In 2009, there was an upsurge of violence in the south, the root causes of which were historic rivalries among the region's 50 tribes. This fractiousness has long

been the south's greatest weakness, and successive governments in the north have exploited it, arming one tribe to attack another, in order to keep the south divided. But some international officials we met in Juba said that the latest bout of violence was due not to any shortcomings on the southern government's part but to failed harvests and the suspension of salaries to southern militias on the SPLA's payroll— itself the result of a large drop in oil revenues after the 2008 financial crisis. The government in Juba is already functioning as a state, and it is likely to continue to do so as long as a new war does not break out and its oil fields keep producing revenues.

That said, a new South Sudan would surely be a fragile state. Although the south's elite is very able and bright, it consists of a few hundred senior officials at most, and the large state bureaucracy beneath them is short on skills and managerial experience. The rural areas of the south know little of the prosperity now evident in Juba; whether a new state could spread these benefits more equitably will determine its viability over the long term. Opposition leaders in the south also complained to us that the SPLA used heavy-handed tactics to force some 20 independent tribal militias—the source of 80 percent of the violence in rural areas, according to a senior UN official—to give up their small arms.

Judging from our interviews, however, the south's ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, and Kiir, its leader, appear to be genuinely popular among the southern people. (Kiir won 93 percent of the vote when he was up for reelection as the south's president in April 2010.) Still, the south's leaders will have to be careful that their new country is launched on a

genuinely open and democratic path. In the long run, they will also have to ensure that oil and mineral revenues do not corrupt their political culture or get misused, diverted, or distributed unevenly.

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The north has its share of challenges, too. It already is a fragile state, and it may be approaching state failure. The NCP's traditional means of exercising control—brutally repressing the opposition, turning its adversaries against one another, using oil revenues to buy off opponents—no longer work. Khartoum has lost control of southern Sudan, faces nonstop rebellion in Darfur, and could soon confront uprisings in the Nuba Mountains, at the center of the country, and, in the east, from the Beja people of the Red Sea Province and the Funj people of Blue Nile, El Gezira, and Sennar Provinces. Bashir's NCP knows that its authority is slipping away; it is circling its tattered and rickety wagons to maintain state power in the Arab triangle, an area it believes is more secure and whose inhabitants it takes to be more loyal to Arab interests. During the past three years, the north's leaders have canceled large-scale development projects in the El Gezira and Sennar regions and moved their investments in dams, irrigation schemes, roads, and bridges to the Arab triangle. Now, many opponents of the Bashir government in the north fear that it will impose even more repressive measures and after the referendum abrogate the national constitution in order to prevent the dissolution of the country.

Khartoum is increasingly coming under pressure from all sides. Bashir has been indicted for genocide by the International Criminal Court for the atrocities committed

Sudan's Secession Crisis

in Darfur, and in the fall of 2010, he and his colleagues came under assault from politicians and the press for having ever agreed to hold the referendum on secession. When Bashir consented to peace with the south in 2005, he was acting under duress: the national army was losing the war to the rebels, casualties were rising, and the war had grown unpopular in the north—all of which was exacerbating the country's chronic economic problems. Bashir's government also feared the military power it saw the United States exercising in Afghanistan and Iraq. But a deal that may have made sense then appears now to have come at too high a cost, at least to some Arab nationalists and Islamist groups in Khartoum. If the south does secede, Khartoum will have to negotiate to get access to the region's natural wealth: not only its vast oil reserves but also mineral resources in the region—gold, diamonds, copper, and coltan—that have yet to be fully explored, the plentiful water from the Nile River watershed and the Sudd marshlands, the region's luxuriant soil, and its thousands of square miles of open range with the greatest concentration of cattle per capita in sub-Saharan Africa. A growing chorus of Bashir's opponents in Khartoum are asking what the north has received for making peace with the south.

In late 2010, newspapers in the north were making vitriolic attacks on the referendum. Some are allied with the Islamist Hassan al-Turabi, a former ally of Bashir's—Turabi helped Bashir seize power in a coup in 1989—who is now his archenemy. The Bashir government, which is already accustomed to repressing the regime's more liberal opponents, moved to close some of the newspapers. Concerned

about Islamists, it reviews all the sermons prepared for Friday prayers in mosques looking for incendiary language.

The NCP is essentially worried that it could be deposed by political upheaval in Khartoum—for instance, a military coup, a conspiracy in the dreaded National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), a popular uprising, or the mobilization of a rebel movement from outside Khartoum—before, during, or after the referendum. The most likely beneficiary of any such coup would be Turabi or other Islamists. Turabi, who is in his late 70s, is the only opposition figure with both an extensive political organization, including networks of fanatically loyal followers in the military and security apparatus, and a serious grudge against Bashir and the NCP, which expelled him from the party, removed him as Speaker of the National Assembly in 1999, and has jailed him repeatedly for criticizing the regime. Until his falling-out with Bashir, Turabi had dominated the regime from behind the scenes. In his heyday, he brought Osama bin Laden to live and work in Sudan—the two are related by marriage—and invited numerous violent Islamist groups to locate their headquarters and training camps in the country. He supported multiple rebellions against moderate Arab regimes and even orchestrated the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995. In his fiery sermons, Turabi has called for a worldwide Islamist revolution that would start in Sudan and spread throughout Africa. Were the government of Sudan to fall to him or one of the Islamist factions he has inspired, its first action would likely be to abrogate the north-south peace agreement; for them, the south would be an ideal base from which

to spread their Islamist movement to the rest of Africa.

The NCP is understandably nervous; the threat from Turabi and the Islamists is real. Turabi is suspected, for example, of plotting the overthrow of the government with Khalil Ibrahim, a rebel leader from Darfur. Ibrahim, once a radical follower of Turabi (whom he has called his godfather), has since tried to distance himself from him—Turabi is radioactive politically—but many Sudan watchers suspect that their friendship endures. In May 2008, Ibrahim led 130 heavily armed trucks with 2,000 troops across 700 miles of desert from the Chadian border all the way to Khartoum. Fighting its way through the city, the force made it as far as a bridge close to the presidential palace, where it was turned back by troops from the NISS. The northern army, which had been given orders to stop the rebels, refused to intervene. Many of the well-connected southerners to whom we spoke in the fall were certain that Turabi and Ibrahim had planned the attack on Khartoum together. Apparently, so was Bashir: he had Turabi arrested the day after the incident and publicly accused him of being involved. The attack was the first time in over three decades that street fighting had occurred in Khartoum, and it is the closest the Bashir government has come to being deposed during its reign of more than two decades.

The response by the government was swift and severe, according to human rights reports. It executed dozens of the rebel soldiers its troops had captured. It purged the army of hundreds of suspected Turabi loyalists and Darfur officers. (Historically, Darfur was the main recruitment ground for the Sudanese army, but by

2008, many Darfur soldiers had grown furious about the atrocities that Khartoum's forces had committed in their home province.) The government also began building a network of underground weapons caches and safe houses throughout Khartoum in order to defend the city street by street should another attack take place. It moved all but 4,000 of the most loyal soldiers out of the capital for fear of a coup. And Bashir placed the army under the effective control of the NISS.

The episode underscored the Byzantine nature of politics in the north, which are opaque even to longtime Sudan analysts. Bashir and his government could almost certainly be convicted of serious crimes, responsible as they are for massive suffering among civilians in the south and Darfur. Yet Bashir is also the man who signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and he may be one of the few politicians in Khartoum willing to fulfill its final provisions. It is theoretically possible that if he were suddenly to depart from the scene, he would be succeeded by a more humane, enlightened government; however, many observers we spoke to believe that a new regime would probably be worse. Even if a decent government were to take power instead, the centrifugal forces pulling Sudan apart today are accelerating at such a rapid rate that following the south's likely secession, the eventual dissolution of the remaining north Sudanese state might be inevitable.

ON THE BRINK

All-out war is, of course, the gravest danger facing Sudan, especially for civilians and ethnic groups such as the Beja, the Dinka, the Funj, the Nuba, and the Nuer, all of which have been targeted by Khartoum

Sudan's Secession Crisis

and its allied militias in the past. It is unlikely, however, that either Bashir or Kiir would ignite a new conflict. Both are military officers who know the cost of war—unlike some of the militant Islamists who are demanding blood but have never heard a shot fired. Bashir might also fear that his army would not fight: Khartoum's soldiers have been demoralized by repeated purges, some have grudges against the government for its actions in Darfur, and many do not understand anymore why they are fighting.

The greater risk comes from rogue commanders. Under one scenario, Turabists in the army might try to depose Bashir and the NCP before, during, or soon after the referendum. This would almost certainly mean war. The south has a large standing army and will not tolerate any interference in its secession. On this question, all the tribes in the south are united; they have long sought independence from Khartoum. However unlikely it would be to attempt to invade the south with ground forces, a successor government in Khartoum might well use the country's new air force to bomb the region. The SPLA would probably be outgunned by the north's superior weapons, but its soldiers would be highly motivated: once more, they would be fighting to protect their families and their farms from the north's aggression.

War would also endanger the one million southerners who are still internally displaced around Khartoum and other northern cities—one and a half million have already returned to the south—as well as members of the Funj, the Nuba, and other African Muslim tribes who are similarly displaced. Since Sudan's independence from the United Kingdom in 1956, successive governments in the north

have feared these people. When Garang returned to Khartoum after signing the peace agreement in 2005, he was greeted by a jubilant crowd of two, some say three, million people. After he died in a helicopter crash that summer, southerners who thought the accident was an assassination by the NISS rioted and burned down parts of the city. (No evidence incriminating the service has surfaced yet.) In both instances, the authorities lost control of Khartoum, and they remain terrified of the displaced population. Last fall, the minister of information and the minister of foreign affairs announced that if the south voted to secede, southerners living in Khartoum would lose their right to get a job, conduct financial transactions, obtain medicine, and even buy food. Bashir was quick to rebut these claims and said that the government would protect all southerners living in the north. But if war broke out and the southern army advanced toward Khartoum, the NISS might well begin targeting southerners living in the north. Northern officials have reportedly mapped out the locations of all the settlements of internally displaced people in Khartoum and bought hand guns for mass distribution to the Arab population.

MUTUAL ASSURED DEPENDENCE

Although the international community must continue to make clear to both the north and the south that resorting to violence or attacking civilians is unacceptable, its efforts to encourage a resolution of the impasse in Sudan will not be decisive: both sides know their own interests well and are skilled at negotiations. The southern Sudanese we spoke to dismissed as ineffectual the threat of applying new economic

Andrew S. Natsios and Michael Abramowitz

sanctions against the north if it does not cooperate. They believe that Khartoum, regardless of who is in charge, will be deterred from aggression only by military force, either by the SPLA or by the U.S. Air Force. Inducements on the part of the Obama administration to encourage the north to compromise—for example, removing Sudan from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, normalizing diplomatic relations, lifting economic sanctions—would provide ammunition to Bashir against critics of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. But because the Bashir government is fighting for its survival, any outside pressure short of military force is unlikely to change its fundamental calculations.

For all their differences, the north and the south will remain dependent on each other after the referendum, if only because both need oil revenues. And so one way to avert violence might be to encourage the two sides to cooperate in the name of their economic codependence. The vast majority of Sudan's oil reserves may be in the south, but most of the infrastructure necessary to export that oil—pipelines and a port—are in the north. Thus, without cooperation between the north and the south, oil revenues could quickly dry up for both. Any new pipeline running from the south through either Ethiopia or Kenya is a decade and billions of dollars away. Meanwhile, some energy experts predict that Sudan's oil production may peak and then decline over the next decade. (The government in Juba, 98 percent of whose revenue comes from oil, is now racing to get international mining companies into the south to explore its mineral resources and thus help the government diversify its sources of revenue.) If oil

revenues precipitously decline because of a war or a political crisis between the north and the south, Khartoum and Juba would have to lay off their huge public-sector work forces, which would destabilize both governments over time. And thanks to corruption, the elites in both capitals have personally profited from the oil revenues. In other words, maintaining oil revenues is in the interests of many parties—and thus a powerful incentive to find a peaceful way out of the current impasse.

Given these stakes, the Sudanese, in both the north and the south, might very well manage on their own and do once more what they have done over the past six years: pull back from the brink of catastrophe, averting the worst violence, and patch together an inadequate but functional compromise that protects both parties' interests. Considering the circumstances today, Sudan could do a lot worse. ●

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Sudan president vows to adopt Islamic constitution

KHARTOUM, Dec 19 - Sudan's president said the country would adopt an Islamic constitution if the south split away in a referendum due next month, in a speech on Sunday in which he also defended police filmed flogging a woman.

"If south Sudan secedes, we will change the constitution and at that time there will be no time to speak of diversity of culture and ethnicity," President Omar Hassan al-Bashir told supporters at a rally in the eastern city of Gedaref.

"Sharia (Islamic law) and Islam will be the main source for the constitution, Islam the official religion and Arabic the official language," he said.

An official from south Sudan's main party criticised Mr Bashir's stance, saying it would encourage discrimination against minorities in the mainly Muslim north and deepen the country's international isolation.

South Sudan, where most follow traditional beliefs and Christianity, is three weeks away from the scheduled start of the referendum on whether to declare independence.

The vote was promised in a 2005 peace deal that ended a north-south civil war and set up an interim constitution which limited sharia to the north and recognised "the cultural and social diversity of the Sudanese people".

Analysts expect most southerners to choose independence in the poll, due to start on January 9 and last for a week.

Yasir Arman, from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), said Mr Bashir's statements would encourage repression in the north. "This type of discourse is preparing the ground for a police state. The north, whether alone or with the south, is an extremely diverse place."

Mr Arman said it was the north's hardline stance that had pushed southerners towards separation. "If it (the north) continues like this it will encourage other areas like Darfur, the Nuba mountains and eastern Sudan to walk out as well," he added, referring to areas on the peripheries of northern Sudan.

"It will also result in Sudan having worse relations with the outside world," Mr Arman said.

Southern leaders have said they are worried about how hundreds of thousands of southerners living in the north might be treated after a split.

Mr Arman, Mr Bashir's main challenger in April presidential elections, is from the northern sector of the SPLM. He said his group would form a separate opposition party inside the north if the south seceded.

Mr Bashir also defended police shown lashing a woman in footage that appeared on the video-sharing website YouTube. "If she is lashed according to sharia law there is no investigation. Why are some people ashamed? This is sharia," he said.

Senior NCP member Nafie Ali Nafie said on Thursday efforts to keep the country united had failed, in the first acknowledgement from the northern elite that the south would probably secede.

Floggings carried out under Islamic law are almost a daily punishment in northern Sudan for crimes including drinking alcohol and adultery.

Help for Sudan: bombing Africa to save it?

BY MICAH ZENKO AND REBECCA R. FRIEDMAN

A gloomy consensus is emerging among policymakers, experts, and advocates that genocide may explode again soon in Sudan. In a referendum scheduled for Jan. 9, the south and the oil-rich Abyei region – which faces a choice between remaining with the north or forming a new state – will vote on self-determination.

As tensions mount over whether the vote will occur, politicians from the north and south are warning of war if the referendum does not go their way.

Given Sudan's bloody recent past, renewed conflict there could be horrific. Yet, in a familiar pattern, the international community – despite its “never again” commitment to genocide prevention – is struggling to marshal the political will and resources to stop it.

The Obama administration's approach to Sudan – a case of “too little, too late” – isn't getting results. So pundits have defaulted to suggesting far-fetched military schemes in Sudan, exemplifying the paternalistic militarism that often characterizes Westerners' approach to Africa.

Columnist Nicholas Kristof recently proposed complementing the Obama administration's diplomatic carrots toward Khartoum with an aggressive stick: “Why shouldn't we privately make it clear to Mr. [Omar al-] Bashir that if he initiates genocide, his oil pipeline will be destroyed and he will not be exporting any oil?”

Oil, of course, is the foundation of the Sudanese economy, constituting 95 percent of export revenues and 60 percent of government revenues.

This is not the first time Mr. Kristof has proposed force to bring the Sudanese government to its knees. In 2006, Kristof suggested that the United States could easily “enforce a no-fly zone” in Darfur

by using the nearby air base in Abéché, Chad, and in 2008 he recommended that the US “warn Sudan that if it provokes a war with the South ... we will destroy its Air Force.”

Quixotic militarism is not limited to Kristof, nor is it aimed only at Sudan. Two years ago, Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen called for a Predator drone to intimidate Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe – a scheme one-upped by former diplomat and human rights advocate John Prendergast, who suggested a “messy in the short run” multinational military invasion to oust Mr. Mugabe.

Despite the complexity and duration of African nations' strife, Kristof, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Prendergast, and others think that US intervention can solve entrenched problems by taking a forceful show-them-who's-boss attitude, bolstered by American might.

What these ideas have in common is a fundamental lack of understanding of the limits of force, which does not always achieve its military and political objectives. Intelligence fails, missiles misfire, and the target rarely alters its behavior substantially and constructively.

Moreover, military force does not constitute a strategy for dealing with an adversary; rather, force must be accompanied by a whole-of-government approach that includes robust diplomacy and development components. Force alone is risky and potentially escalatory, with little promise of resolution.

However, the punditocracy is not entirely to blame for proposing to save Africa by bombing it. Belying this Hail Mary approach is the grim reality of America's limited appetite for engaging in African conflicts.

The US provides many words and some money but not manpower. While the US funds 27 percent

of the United Nations peacekeeping budget – the overwhelming portion of which is spent in Africa – the US government has largely abandoned active participation, with only 84 police, military experts, and troops deployed.

Since the 1993 “Black Hawk Down” episode, the United States has avoided sending a significant number of troops in support of African peacekeeping.

This hands-off approach applies equally to genocide prevention, as was absent in Rwanda and Darfur, and to bolstering failed states that may serve as terrorist havens, as in Somalia today, where special-operations raids and cruise missile strikes substitute for real American involvement.

The US must end its half-hearted and sporadic engagement with Africa. Time after time, Washington focuses on conflicts only when they approach boiling point – and when military force seems the sole yet untenable option.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton recently called Sudan a “ticking time bomb,” but the clock has been ticking since 2005 when the Bush administration helped broker the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Sudan is only the latest example of the inefficiency of the United States' 11th-hour preventive efforts. Consequently, it is past time for Washington to get serious about sustained, long-term conflict prevention.

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Sudan: Guarantee Post-Referendum Citizenship Rights

Parties Should Protect Minority Communities, Allay Public Fears of Mistreatment

December 16, 2010

(New York) - Sudan's ruling political parties should guarantee protection of national minorities and allay public fears of discrimination following the January 9, 2011 referendum on southern secession, Human Rights Watch said today.

Human Rights Watch research in Sudan over the past month indicated that the absence of a clear agreement on citizenship has contributed to heightened anxiety that minority communities in both the North and the South will suffer from mistreatment and targeted reprisals in the event of the South's secession. That fear is especially pronounced among the estimated 1.5 million southerners living in northern states. The often hostile rhetoric and cross-allegations by political parties has made an already tense situation worse, Human Rights Watch found.

"With less than a month to the referendum vote, political parties and governing authorities need to reassure the public that they will not expel anyone and will fulfill their duty to protect all minorities within their jurisdiction during and after the referendum," said Rona Peligal, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "This acknowledgment will help promote a peaceful, free, and fair voting environment."

Human Rights Watch urged both the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), as they negotiate the terms of future citizenship and residency, to adopt a progressive and inclusive framework for addressing citizenship in the event of secession. Although the parties have reportedly rejected dual citizenship, they should agree to an arrangement whereby minority nationals living in both northern and southern jurisdictions may choose to continue to live there with basic civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights on an equal footing as citizens, Human Rights Watch said. A similar arrangement already exists between Sudan and Egypt.

"Many people displaced from Southern Sudan have lived in northern states for decades and many northerners have lived in the South for just as long, and they need to know they won't be forced out," Peligal said. "The referendum may change the existing boundaries of Sudan, but it does not change the human rights standards in force."

International law prohibits mass expulsions, forced evictions, statelessness, and discriminatory rules of citizenship. Sudan should consider becoming a party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, or at a minimum make a commitment to respect the standards contained therein. Sudan is already a party to the Convention on Elimination of All

Related Materials:

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Rona Peligal, Africa director at Human Rights Watch

Forms of Racial Discrimination, which guarantees equality between citizens and non-citizens in all core human rights recognized under international law. These guarantees will continue to exist regardless of the referendum outcome.

Hostile Statements and Political Manipulation

In the absence of a formal agreement, the political parties have played on public fears to further their own political agendas, Human Rights Watch found. Officials in the ruling NCP, which is openly in favor of Sudan's continued unity, have made hostile statements threatening to strip southerners of their rights should the South vote to secede.

The information minister said in September, for example, that southerners would not receive treatment in hospitals - "not even ... a-needle" - in the event of southern secession. Other party officials subsequently repeated the threats that southerners will lose their property, residence rights, civil service jobs, benefits, and access to social services. On December 7, the deputy head of the party for Khartoum state, Mandour al-Mahdi, said that only southerners who are members of the ruling party will be able to retain their citizenship rights if the South votes to secede.

The December 15 statement of Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, delivered at a sports tournament in Omdurman, that southern Sudanese living in northern Sudan would be protected, regardless of the outcome of the referendum, is a positive example of the message the parties should be giving. Human Rights Watch called on the ruling party to go further and issue a more definitive statement, and to continue to allay public concerns of targeted violence and mistreatment.

"The NCP should firmly and immediately denounce all threats made by its officials, and should adopt definitive and consistent messages that reflect Sudan's human rights commitments," Peligal said. "Both ruling political parties need to refrain from any form of coercion of voters and respect their right to participate in this historic process."

The parties accused each other of manipulation during voter registration, from November 15 to December 8, exacerbating the climate of suspicion and fear. Human Rights Watch received credible reports of what appeared to be politically-motivated arrests of several party agents in both the NCP and the SPLM. In addition, officials from both parties pressured registrants. SPLM officials urged southerners living in the North not to register, while officials linked to the NCP reportedly forced thousands of southern prisoners and southern employees in the police security forces to register to vote and retained their registration cards. Such steps suggest efforts to control their votes.

Fears Prompting Southerners to Return

Southerners' fears about post-referendum conditions in the North appear to have influenced the decision of many southerners to move south in recent weeks, particularly during the voter registration period.

"The situation is no good in Khartoum," said one woman, who left after seven years and decided to return to her village in Unity state. "We are beaten in the night and we are taken to prison if we make beer," she said, referring to searches and arrests by public order courts, which apply discriminatory and vaguely worded morality laws that have a disproportionate impact on women and southerners. "We are better off here."

A chief in a way-station for returnees in Malakal, Upper Nile said, "I lived for 35 years in Khartoum and always faced problems there. The situation is not going to get any better for us."

In October the Southern Sudan government began a program to transport southerners from northern towns to various locations in Southern Sudan. According to UN sources, more than 55,000 southerners returned to the South in October and November.

Many who returned also cited fears of ethnic violence in the North if the South votes to secede. One woman who arrived to Aweil, Southern Sudan, in early November told Human Rights Watch that she feared a repeat of the ethnic violence that erupted in Khartoum after the SPLM leader John Garang died in 2005. "My relatives were killed and injured after Garang died," she said. "We are safer here."

Background

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement calls for a referendum on southern self-determination on January 9, 2011, and provides for a six-month interim period following the vote. In November the parties agreed in principle to resolve all outstanding issues, including post-referendum arrangements according to a framework proposed by the African Union, but they have yet to formally agree on the details. Voter registration for the referendum began November 15 and, following a one-week extension, ended on December 8.

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Long way home



Hand-dug well containing dirty water near Alap village, Western Bahr El-Ghazal.

The grey and stale-looking water in an uncovered hand-dug well in a Western Bahr El-Ghazal village looked unfit for human consumption.

But until the non-governmental organization (NGO) of a former Sudanese refugee appeared on the ground, villagers were forced to drink it.

On a hot and humid April day, men of Alap village were standing next to Water for Sudan's drilling machinery, illustrated with the emblem of a blue water drop in a black hand.

The atmosphere was tense, as the first drilling of that day had failed. A young man named Salva Dut, wearing cargo pants, a

Hand-dug well with dirty water near Alap village.

long-sleeved shirt and a baseball cap was giving instructions.

"If the mud from under the ground is not coming up, the water in the borehole will never be clean enough for drinking, so we'll have to try a third spot," said Mr. Dut, Water for Sudan President and Team Operations Leader.

The NGO provided water mainly in Upper Nile and Bahr El-Ghazal states. Located 20 kilometres from Wau in Roc Roc Dong payam, Alap village, with a population of a few hundred, desperately needed a safe water source.

A slim woman of about thirty named Adut Malong Akwat said she had been walking at least two hours daily to collect water from the nearest open well since she had become an adult.

Women walked to the next village to fetch water in jerrycans, taking an hour each way in the mornings. As they carried water for large families, they usually had to repeat the trip in the evenings.

Ms. Akwat has three children, who had been sick with cholera several times. No wonder, as the wells she used contained unclean water. Cattle also drank from them and defecated nearby.

The reason Salva Dut, a former Sudanese "Lost Boy" during the country's civil war, founded Water for Sudan was also health-related. While studying in the United

States, he learned that his father, whom he had last seen 17 years before, had fallen ill from a water-borne disease and been admitted to a hospital near Rumbek.

"I knew in my heart that some day I would go back to Sudan, but I didn't know what I would do to help people," Mr. Dut told *In Sudan*. Only when his father got sick did he realize the great need for water.

Mr. Dut established his organization in 2004, beginning by fundraising in the United States and contracting a drilling company. He himself was a student of international development and lacked experience with water and sanitation projects.

Due to two decades of war, the NGO founder said, it was difficult at first to find Sudanese workers with good skills. But now he had more than 20 employees, about one-third Sudanese.

After setting up hand pumps, Water for Sudan also trained beneficiaries about their use and maintenance. The local community contributed hard labour as well as gravel and bricks for the pump platform.

Another initial hardship was that land-mined roads made many areas inaccessible. Moving equipment long distances still posed a challenge, Mr. Dut admitted, but security had been much more stable since the 2005 peace agreement.

Village chief Michael Majak Yuo acknowledged that the area had been severely hit during the civil war. Though the situation was calm now, lack of clean water





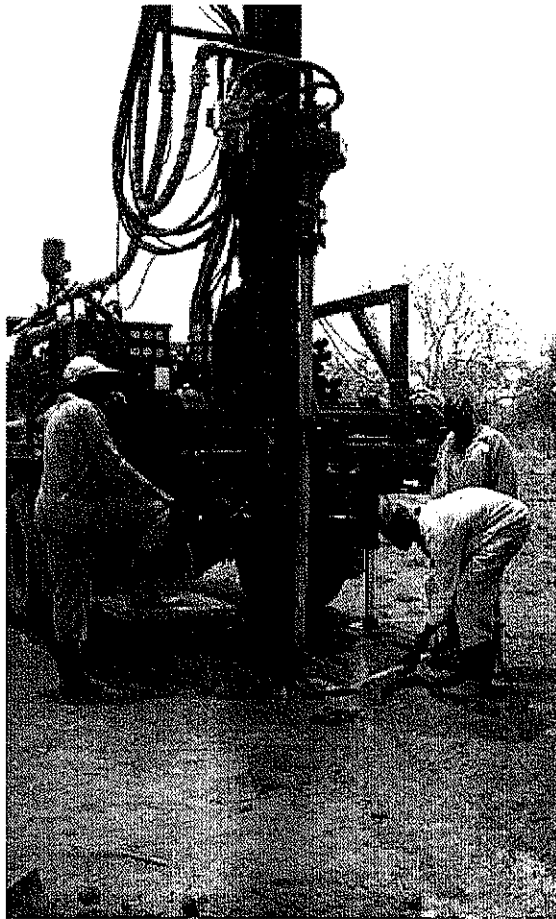
Water for Sudan

jeopardized health and education. At times young girls and children were tasked to fetch water, skipping school.

Despite constant challenges, seeing development was rewarding, Mr. Dut said. The prevalence of diseases had dropped, children were attending school and the long daily journey of women to collect water was becoming a past burden.

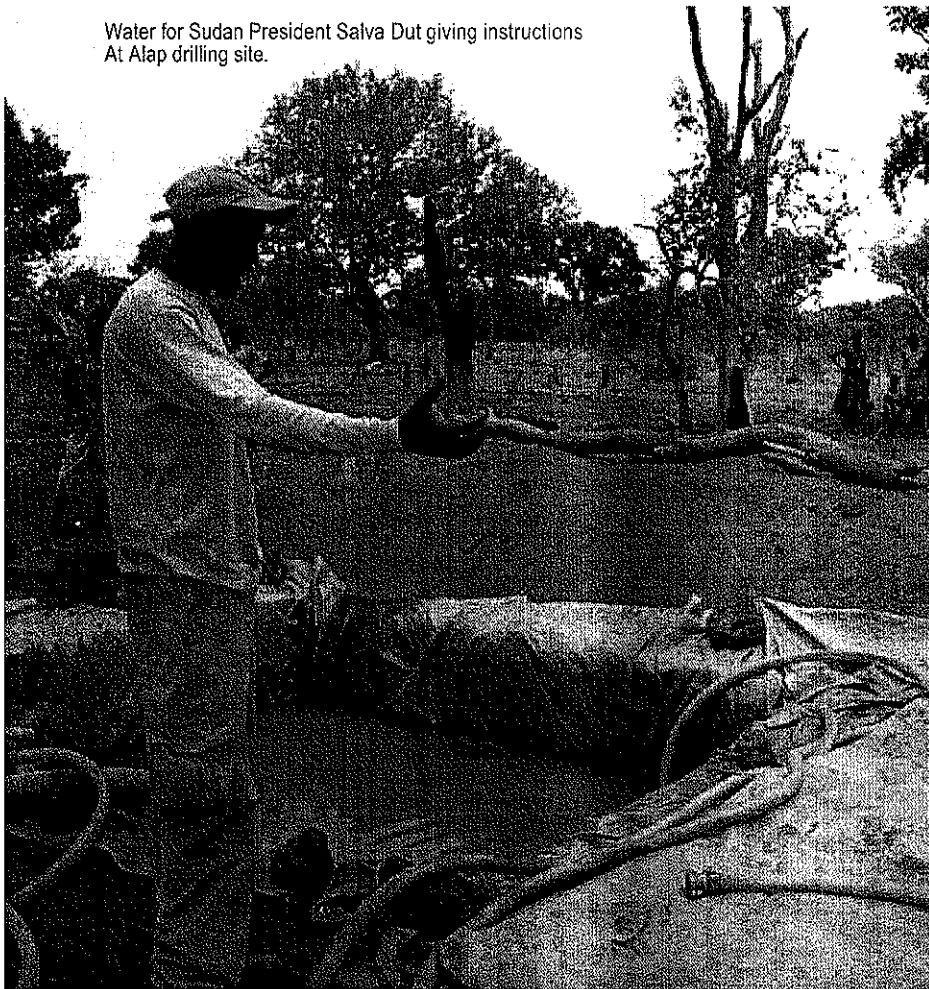
"If I didn't have to walk so far, it would improve my life," Ms. Akwat remarked as men were tirelessly working at the drilling. "I could finish all the other housework that now I don't have time for."

Story and photos by Eszter Farkas



Water for Sudan staff and local residents busy drilling.

Water for Sudan President Salva Dut giving instructions At Alap drilling site.



Lost Boy bond

Salva Dut was 11 years old when civil war came to his hometown, Lounariik, Tonj North County, Warrap State, in 1985. According to the 35-year-old man, his whole classroom ran in all possible directions when government troops attacked the village "accusing (it) of sponsoring rebels".

"The incident happened around 10 a.m. while I was in school," Mr. Dut recalled. "There was no opportunity to run back to your family."

After two months of walking initially with 25 boys, Mr. Dut arrived with about 75 Lost Boys to Itang refugee camp in Ethiopia, which he left two years later for the country's Pinyudo camp.

In 1991, due to the Ethiopian civil war, masses of Sudanese refugees fled back to Southern Sudan and then to Kakuma camp in Kenya.

As a teenager, the now lanky man with boyish features ended up leading over 1,000 displaced boys after years of walking. "When I was 11, I was leading about 30 boys, then 250 and then 1,500."

Although calm and positive, Mr. Dut remembered horrors of the war. "I swear to God ... I saw a lot of death."

They were about 12,000 when they arrived in Kakuma in 1992. About 5,000 had died since they left Ethiopia due to disease, bullets, hunger and other causes.

"There was a guy from my class, Marial, he didn't make it," Mr. Dut said. "He died but he wasn't shot. It was something else ... wildlife actually."

Mr. Dut had been displaced for over 10 years when he was finally resettled, along with about 3,800 other Lost Boys, in the United States in 1996, under the auspices of the US State Department and the United Nations.

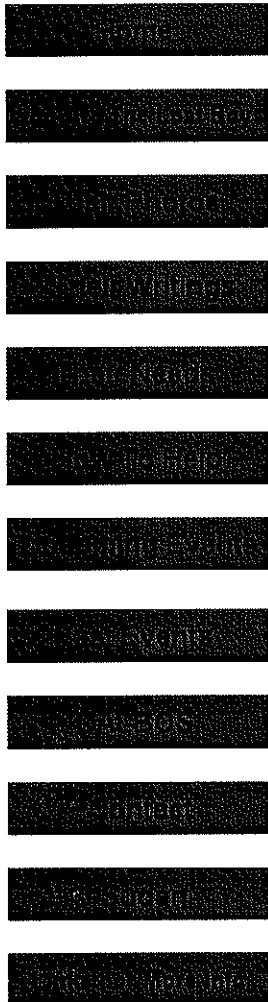
But he still considers himself partly homeless, as he stays in the Sudanese bush for six months when drilling, and travels back to the US for the rest of the year.

Lost Boys still meant family to each other, he said, sometimes spending more time together than with their spouses.

"We've been together supporting each other ... if you get sick, no one else will help you but your comrade," Mr. Dut said. "You have all the challenges together ... that will really build a good bond. That will never go away."

Lost Boys Of Sudan

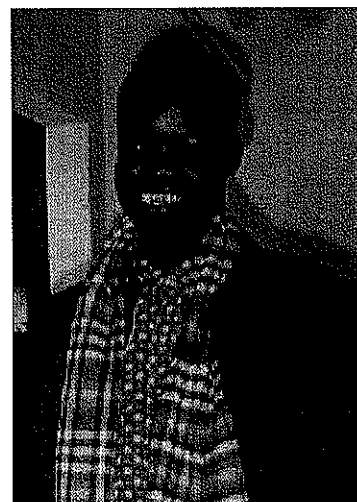
in Chicago



A Poem About the Lost Boys

by Abraham Wal Deng, 5/30/02

Abraham is in college studying to be a pharmacist. He is 25 and currently works in food service.



They, the Lost Boys of Sudan,
began their traveling since 1987,
to acquire a better life,
to rescue their lives in the eyes of the enemies,
to inform the whole world about suffering through Christ,
to reclaim the landmark,
to avoid nepotism, tribalism, discrimination and socialism.

They lived their lives in the bush since 1987;
it's something interesting to know but difficult to endure.
They usually slept on the ground without anything to lie on,
over the rocks,
under the trees,
with no mosquito net,
in the rain,
in the desert,
woke naked.
Crises has been with them.

Imagine the young generation who left between the ages of five and twelve
having to experience the hard life at that stage?

Would their enemy not collect and kill them?

God was their protection,
shield;
compassionate,
powerful;
like the hen with her chicks, he sustained them day and night...
their houses being burnt down,
crops being destroyed,
famine and starvation taking place.

What causes war in Sudan?
landmark,
politicians,
religion and other desired things.

Two groups at war -
South and North,
where the south was occupied by a variety of people,
Dinka Jur, Dinka Nuer and Dinka group themselves.

Their occupations:
farming,
rearing animals,
and following up events.

Early in 1987, they, the Lost Boys of Sudan reached Ethiopia - they left their parents undeliberately and unfortunately. Their approximate number was 20,000 at that time. They were first rescued by the United Nations High Commission of Refugees in the Ethiopian camp... in the mid-four years, they became acquainted with the worst condition and endured some more.

They also learned more and more in their own interest and started to build their houses using grasses. Day and night they went into the forest to find grass and alternative materials for building the houses - They also learned how to cook foods in different styles. And they learned how to read and write.

Eventually they, the Lost Boys of Sudan, had to move when the Ethiopian war broke out in 1991. They must leave right away - leave the land empty for the soldiers to do the action. They moved back to their country.

At that time, the Lost Boys were again in troubles. While their enemies drove them out, they settled nearby a river. Some forces were going between, in between those areas. Those who settled near the River Gilo waited to move; they were attacked and scattered all over by the soldiers. As they ran into the river, hundreds of hundreds drowned and some were shot to death with a gun.

Back to Sudan, for a month they settled in a small force. Diseases and starvation - they all grew weak and thin. In other words, they had no food to eat in those days... and nowhere to sleep. However, all spent time picking leaves and edible roots for their survival. They slept on the grass and the mosquitos didn't allow them to rest comfortably as they bit... In a bad time, The Lost Boys didn't lose their hopes and the continued praying to their God.

In a few weeks, the organization called the Red Cross arrived shortly and began to rescue them from the bad conditions. Everything became quite good in a moment.

The Lost Boys moved to Kenya. In 1992, they reached Nairus, where there was a local force on the border of Sudan and Kenya. In a few days, the Lost Boys of Sudan had to move while the enemy was looking for them, hopeful to capture them. That was in May 15, 1992. Suddenly, it was not the Lost Boys alone...but including everyone in Nairus. All had to move to Lokichogi. They were escorted to safety by the Red Cross in those days.

In June 21, 1992, the whole group moved to Kakuma Camp. Their lives were not compared to their lives in Ethiopia... a little similar. Somehow they had less than before. For instance, they had shortage of food and water in the camp. Most of them received high education levels - that was the only good thing and what they enjoyed most. Limited by supplies and shortages of things they needed in their lives made some boys drop from schools and started doing social work instead of going to school. The population of Lost Boys at Kakuma Refugee Camp was 16,000... later, the number dropped down.

Then in 1998, the United Nations Commissioner of Refugees
decided how they could be helped.
So the meeting was held in Jenifer...
and all sides agreed that they should be resettled.
They brought all the materials for the medical checkups and examinations
for some diseases like AIDS and TB.
In 2001, the exit flights began for the Lost Boys of Sudan.

What was old and new to them now?
They have met with wonderful people...
and found a great time to enjoy their lives...
and are hopeful to end the nightmare for all the Sudanese, too.
Volunteers, we thank them a lot for what they have done
for the southerners.

God's grace will be upon them.

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**I KEPT MY EYES  
OPEN FOR  
127 HOURS**

November 27, 2010

# For 'Lost Boy,' Vote in Sudan Is Homecoming

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN

NYAL, Sudan — Joseph Gatyong Khan made a vow, uttered in the back seat of a Land Cruiser on a very bumpy road, as he headed home for the first time in 22 years: I will not cry.

He had not seen his parents for two decades. He had not set foot in his village since he marched off in 1988, an 8-year-old boy on a barefoot odyssey through one of Africa's worst civil wars.

His story would be repeated thousandsfold, and a generation of southern Sudanese boys, scattered by the conflict, would come to be known as the Lost Boys. Sent off by their families at the height of the violence, they ended up trekking hundreds of miles through swamps, deserts and hostile territory — often in packs, sometimes chased by government bombers and slave traders, sometimes forced to be child soldiers.

Several thousand, including Mr. Khan, were eventually resettled in the United States, where they faced another difficult trial: fitting in. Mr. Khan spent the last seven years working his way up from the midnight shift in a casino, to dean's list at the University of Iowa and buying a white Isuzu Rodeo.

But now he was coming home, as southern Sudan is finally rounding the bend of its own epic journey.

On Jan. 9, the people of southern Sudan will vote in a referendum to decide if they will split off from the north and form their own country. The election will be the capstone to a 50-year liberation struggle in which more than two million people were killed, as the Christian and animist southern part of the country fought against Arab rulers in the north. As in Darfur, the government unleashed local militias to do its dirty work, and the militias razed villages, raped women, massacred civilians and kidnapped children to sell as slaves.

Few people have forgotten those days, and the referendum is widely expected to pass, drawing a new line on the map of Africa and rearranging commercial and political alliances across this stretch of the continent.

Voter registration sites have been set up in the United States, Europe and even Australia for southern Sudanese living overseas. Still, many Lost Boys are flocking back here, to cast votes in their homeland.

"We want to be in Sudan to feel that connection, to look at the graves, to think about the fallen," said Valentino Achak Deng, whose nightmarish life on the run was the subject of the best-selling book "What Is the What?" "All that was about one thing: self-determination. Now is the time."

But the joy of their homecomings is mixed with ambivalence, uncertainty and fear.

Will the north really let the south break away? Will there be another war?

"I'm afraid," Mr. Khan said.

His journey home began in Juba, the region's main city, in early November, just in time to register for the independence referendum.

Juba is a city in flux; since a peace treaty with the north was signed five years ago, southern Sudan has been preparing for self-rule. There are new ministries and new roads, new diplomats, aid workers, merchants and oil prospectors, all circulating through a tiny airport that suddenly has 80 flights a day. But Mr. Khan was vexed by the striking inequalities — the new Hummers cruising by endless shantytowns — and the growing rumblings of tribal politics. He is a Nuer, considered the second most powerful ethnic group behind the Dinka, who control the key posts.

"Everybody knows what's going on, but nobody's talking about it," he said. "My friends told me to shut up, for my own safety."

He then flew to Bentiu, the big town closest to his village, not far from the heavily militarized north-south border. This is where Sudan's oil is. Part of the problem of dividing Sudan is that 75 percent of the country's oil is produced in the south, but the pipelines flow through the north, meaning the south will remain dependent on the north to export its crude.

Bentiu is a strange place. Not far from town, 21st-century oil pumping stations sit next to grass huts. The main road is dirt, but lined with impossibly tall, dilapidated street lights that do not work. There are a lot of guns, and a lot of crushed beer cans littering the streets. It is

not uncommon to see men beating on the doors of ramshackle pubs for the proprietor to open up at 7:15 a.m.

Here Mr. Khan met Stephen Gatloy Tunguar, a fellow Lost Boy he had not seen for years. They talked about all the friends who died on their childhood trek across Sudan and into the Kenyan refugee camps, from malaria, starvation, gunshots, thirst.

"We'd just step over them and keep going," Mr. Khan said.

From Bentiu, it is only 150 miles home. But it is very difficult to get there. There are few buses, and Mr. Khan and his half brother, Gatluak, spent two days trying to find a car to hire. Entrepreneurship is not one of southern Sudan's strong suits. Nearly all the skilled or semi-skilled jobs are filled by foreigners — Ugandans, Kenyans, Eritreans and Ethiopians. United Nations officials call this a "lack of capacity" and say it could be a crippling problem for an independent southern Sudan.

The dirt road to Nyal runs past oil fields and into the Sudd, where the Nile River breaks into numerous capillaries. At last, Mr. Khan arrived in a lush green place that he recognized.

"My God, I used to climb that mango tree," he said.

He stepped from the truck in a daze. With his half brother steadying him, he began to tread the sandy footpaths of his youth, this time wearing a pair of \$135 Air Jordans.

Up the road, a tall, emaciated figure came running toward him. Her face was beautifully scarred in the traditional Nuer fashion, with swirls of tiny raised bumps, almost like little droplets of sweat, but skin. "Tell me it's not my son! Tell me it's not my son!" she screamed.

His mother collapsed into him. He closed his eyes and hugged her. But he did not cry. His father would come tomorrow. He was a day's canoe trip away, guarding the family's cattle by the river.

Nyal is a place that looks hard to leave. Peace and community seem to flow out of the Hershey Kiss-shaped huts and among the unusually tall people. The civil war mostly missed here, and as Mr. Khan explained, some of the Lost Boys like him were not initially fleeing the conflict. They were sent into it, by the rebels.

"My father was asked to give up his eldest son, for future purposes," he said.

Later, he was more specific. "We were child soldiers."



That first night back home was fine. Mr. Khan kept it together. He did not share his future plans, like how he wanted to go back to law school in the United States, if he could get the money.

But the next morning was different. He was sitting in a plastic chair, dozens of women in ripped dresses singing and dancing around him, little children with runny noses and distended bellies squeezing his hand. He later said he saw himself, 22 years ago, in those children. He broke the vow he made in the back of the Land Cruiser.

"They were more happy than me," he said. "They don't have schools, they don't have good hospitals, there's a lot of mosquitoes around here, but still, still, within them, they were so happy, happier than all of us with bank accounts."

And that made him rethink his plans.

"I belong here," he said. "The rest of the world doesn't need me, no, but these people, they need me. I have a reason why I'm still alive, the reason to tell the whole world that these people are good people. They are human beings, they need help, they need shoes, at least."

But at the time, he did not say a word and just cried.

His mother was confused.

"Why would you cry?" she asked. "Nobody died. We're still here. You've seen us. Your daddy's coming. You should be happy."

She touched his eyes. "Don't cry," she said. "Never cry."