

# STAND | digest

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**NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS** – Following an almost unanimous vote in favour of Southern secession from North Sudan in January's referendum, South Sudan was scheduled to secede from North Sudan on July 9th of this year. It was announced this week that the soon-to-be-independent state of South Sudan is entitled to join the League of Arab States (LAS). Arab countries have since announced their intention to implement development projects in South Sudan, which will accord with the outcome of LAS's conference on South Sudan development held in Juba in February 2004. However, planning for an independent South Sudan was stalled as violence continues to escalate in the region of Abyei, located in the state of South Kordofan.

**SUDAN AND CANADIAN POLITICS** ■ On June 16th, in response to the violence, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, John Baird condemned the escalating attacks against civilians and urged a resolution via negotiation and the cessation of violence. Shortly thereafter, the United Nations and international community responded as well.

**DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH SUDAN** ■ On July 9th South Sudan officially becomes the world's newest nation, experts warn that it is teetering on the verge of being born a failed state. UN figures indicate that south-on-south violence has resulted in more than 1,500 fatalities since the January referendum. The southern government is currently at war with at least seven rebel militias in addition to dealing with rogue SPLA (the south's army) soldiers turning on the army; deadly battles over cattle are also contributing to the mounting death toll.

**HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY** ■ As the July 9th separation of South and North Sudan neared, the government in Khartoum was rushing to quell all areas of Sudan that could be a threat due to rebel activity. The ethnic cleansing that began by President Omar Al-Bashir's government in 2003 has thus regained its momentum, even though an end to the genocide has been officially recognized.

**DRC: MASS RAPE AS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY** ■ In the Walikale region of North Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo between the time frame of July and August 2010, at least 387 men, women and children were sexually assaulted by Rwandan FDLR and a local Congolese armed group. A year has passed and only one perpetrator has been indicted, while over 200 armed men committed the attack. Even to this day, victims of this horrific tragedy have not received medical attention.



**STAND** is a national advocacy organization that aims to make stopping genocide a cornerstone of Canada's foreign policy. We make it easy for Canadians to act against genocide by providing simple and effective ways for people to take action.

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## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS //

**1** In recent weeks, there has been a dramatic spike in violence in the South Sudan border regions of Abyei and South Kordofan. The UN estimates approximately 60,000 have fled Abyei and over 70,000 have left their homes in the Nuba mountains. Both the South and North have mobilized troops but the North has largely been responsible for most of the deaths, using aerial bombardments and ground forces to launch attacks and deny access to humanitarian organizations.

1. Canada should speak out at the UN against the escalating conflict and talk to its international partners to apply pressure on both parties to stop attacks and begin a troop withdrawal.
2. Canada's Foreign Minister should create a bilateral dialogue with his international counterparts to direct their attention to the grave nature of the situation.
3. Canadian personnel participating in the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), in Southern Sudan should influence UN mission commanders to take a more assertive role in protecting civilians.

**2** The people of South Sudan have voted overwhelmingly for independence. With the Comprehensive Peace Agreement coming to an end and South Sudan getting ready to announce independence in July, there is still much work to be done. In order to avoid future conflicts, the Canadian government needs to focus on facilitating a dialogue between both parties in order to resolve the following outstanding issues (among others):

1. Border demarcation
2. Nationality and citizenship
3. Oil revenue sharing
4. The future of oil rich Abyei
5. Sudan's external debts

**3** In December 2010, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE) issued a report on the referendum in Sudan, wherein one of the key recommendations reads:

*Canada should send a high-level delegation that includes Ministers and parliamentarians to both North and South Sudan [...] in order to communicate its continuing interest in a peaceful future for the Sudanese people, including in Darfur. The delegation should assess, with civil society, needs on the ground and establish with governments the most effective types of assistance Canada can contribute toward optimal outcomes.*

Because this recommendation was arrived through a bipartisan committee process and to signal Sudan Canada's continuing commitment in the region, STAND calls for the government to implement this recommendation as soon as the new session of parliament takes place.

**4** In order to effectively prevent, monitor and address grave human rights abuses and mass atrocities, the Government of Canada should:

- Create a Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity which should be attached to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. This would allow parliament to conduct:
- **MONITORING:** keep MPs informed about the onset of genocide and crimes against humanity, including the identifiable stages of these crimes
- **PREVENTION:** become proactive in its response to such crises, allowing MPs to act early and utilize a wider set of policy mechanisms
- **COORDINATION:** centralize Canada's institutional approach to the issue of mass atrocities by giving one central committee the mandate to comprehensively monitor, study and recommend courses of actions.

**NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS //  
CHELSEA SAUVE**

Following an almost unanimous vote in favour of Southern secession from North Sudan in January's referendum, South Sudan is scheduled to secede from North Sudan on July 9th of this year. It was announced this week that the soon-to-be-independent state of South Sudan is entitled to join the League of Arab States (LAS). In accordance with the LAS mandate, any Arab country that splits in two gives its splinters the right to become members of the Arab League. President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), Salva Kiir has welcomed the LAS announcement and has endorsed the League's presence in the region after independence. Arab countries have since announced their intention to implement development projects in South Sudan, which will accord with the outcome of LAS's conference on South Sudan development held in Juba in February 2004.

However, planning for an independent South Sudan has been stalled as violence continues to escalate in the region of Abyei, located in the state of South Kordofan. While a separate referendum was scheduled to be held in January to determine whether Abyei would remain part of the province of South Kordofan in central Sudan, or become part of the South in the region of Bahr el Ghazal, an agreement was never settled due to disagreements concerning voter eligibility. The NCP wanted the Misseriya to be permitted to vote, but the SPLM disagreed, suggesting that the Misseriya, who enter the region with their cattle for a few months each year, are not residents of the area. While the South has said that it will not go to war over Abyei, its actions are proving otherwise.

On May 21st, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) of Northern Sudan captured the disputed region of Abyei, which borders both the western region of Darfur and the northern part of South Sudan. Since the capture of the region, looting and destruction of civilian property and United Nations equipment has occurred as tensions continue to rise.

Increased fighting has erupted between the SAF and

Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the which has led to intermittent fighting, artillery shelling, military clashes, aerial bombardment by the SAF and violence towards UN peacekeepers in and around the state's capital of Kadugli. Local human rights organizations also spoke of wanton killings, summary executions, and a mass detention of the Nuba population that is sympathetic with the SPLA. While UNMIS has made efforts to protect Nuba groups, it has been criticized for a failure to protect and provide the citizens with adequate aid. To date, it has been reported that over 60,000 people have been displaced as a result of the violence. Hundreds of people have been killed by atrocities committed by the SAF and its allied militias.

On Thursday, June 15th, the African Union led a High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP), and reported that the SAF and the SPLA agreed to cease all hostilities in South Kordofan and begin negotiations. However, the violence has not diminished since this announcement. In fact, that same day, the SAF proceeded to spew violent rhetoric when an official spokesperson for the SAF declared that it would proceed with its military offensive in the region, implying that this would continue until the rebellion is quelled. While the army spokesman suggested that they were working to integrate SPLA's troops in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile into the SAF, he reiterated the NCP belief that South Kordofan would remain Northern, meaning that no SPLA troops could remain in the region once Southern independence is declared.

Progress towards a solution has been further stalled by accusations from north Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP), which suggests that UNMIS has contributed to the ongoing violence in Abyei and by extension, South Kordofan. Conversely, UNMIS has reported much abuse in the region by the SAF troops against UN peacekeepers and other personnel. On June 17th, the United Nations reported that the SAF shelled the North-South border region of Abyei, hitting near a base that belongs to UNMIS. UNMIS has also accused the SAF of hindering aid delivery to thousands of needy IDPS. Given NCP perception of UNMIS behaviour, and the coming expiration of the UNMIS mandate (upon independence), the NCP has

asked UNMIS to prepare for departure from North Sudan immediately after independence is declared. The NCP has warned that any resolution made by the UN Security Council to renew UNMIS's mandate beyond July 9th, on any pretext, would be considered a "declaration of war." The NCP has also stressed that it will not tolerate the presence of any SPLA troops in South Kordofan after Southern independence.

The NCP has also rejected warnings by US President Obama that it will face international isolation if it does not "immediately" cease its military actions in the state of South Kordofan. In a recorded message on Wednesday June 15th, Obama expressed his country's deep concern about the eruption of violence and abuse in South Kordofan. Obama then warned the Sudanese government that there would be major consequences for their actions, stating, "there is no military solution...the government of Sudan must prevent a further escalation of this crisis by ceasing its military actions immediately, including aerial bombardment, forced displacement and campaigns of intimidation." Roger Winter, the former US special envoy to Sudan, has suggested that military action against the NCP will actually be necessary in order to strengthen the SPLA and put an end to attacks on civilians, as he believes diplomatic discussion with the NCP will be unproductive. In his speech, Obama took the opportunity to remind both the SAF and the SPLA about the obligation they maintain towards the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (as signed in 2005). Should these obligations be ignored, Obama warned that Sudan would face immense international pressure and isolation, as well as further destabilization in relations with the US. But the NCP has accused Obama of ignoring the role of the SPLA in the ongoing violence, claiming that it was in fact that SPLM who began the military escalation. The NCP has also accused the US of pursuing intimidation tactics that will remain ineffective.

**SUDAN AND CANADIAN POLITICS // STEPHANIE BROWNSTEIN**

Throughout the month of June, violence in Sudan has continued to escalate within the region of Southern Kordofan, northern Sudan's only oil-producing state. On June 19th, Northern Sudanese President Bashir announced that he was prepared for war. That same day, seven air strikes took place. As a result of the ongoing violence between the Northern army (the Sudan Armed Forces or SAF) and the South (Sudan People's Liberation Army or SPLA), more than 73,000 civilians have fled Southern Kordofan. Eyewitnesses claim to have seen innocent civilians shot in the streets, mass arrests, and burning of both private and public institutions. Many believe that the violence stems from ethnic tensions.

On June 16th, in response to the violence, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, John Baird condemned the escalating attacks against civilians and urged a resolution via negotiation and the cessation of violence. Shortly thereafter, the United Nations and international community responded as well. The United Nations Under-Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, stated that the manner in which civilians were treated was "reprehensible," and called for the liberation of the thousands who have been displaced. The next day, US President Obama urged an immediate ceasefire: "The situation in Southern Kordofan is dire, with deeply disturbing reports of attacks based on ethnicity."

Another issue of great concern is that the mass displacement of civilians will have a detrimental impact on agricultural production, which could lead to severe food shortages in the future.

The international community is holding its breath for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's upcoming visit to Beijing. Given the growing trade relationship between Sudan and China, many question whether China will choose to play a fundamental role in resolving the crisis in Sudan. If expressed in tones of sustained trade and economic ties, this would be China's first venture into the position of peacemaker.

**DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH SUDAN // JESSICA DUFFY**

With just weeks until South Sudan officially becomes the world's newest nation, experts warn that it is teetering on the verge of being born a failed state.

UN figures indicate that south-on-south violence has resulted in more than 1,500 fatalities since the January referendum. The southern government is currently at war with at least seven rebel militias in addition to dealing with rogue SPLA (the south's army) soldiers turning on the army; deadly battles over cattle are also contributing to the mounting death toll. Skirmishes between these rebel militias and the SPLA are common, and the south continues to insist that these rebels are following orders from the north.

Since the 2005 peace deal between north and south Sudan, the SPLA has absorbed as many as 20 to 25 different militias. This partly explains why certain groups are classified as rogue soldiers who have turned on the army. The army ranks have swelled to around 150,000 to 200,000 soldiers, who have varying degrees of loyalty and discipline. The UN has called for the south to halve its army post-independence, in hopes that with time it will become more professional and effective so that the country can avoid potential insecurity.

Deadly cattle raids are often a result of competition between ethnic groups over scarce resources. Tensions are particularly high in the dry season, when cattle-herding pastoralists roam further in search of food and water for their herds. During this time, frequent clashes between groups occur as they compete for the same watering spots and grasslands.

A report released in June by the Minority Rights Group (MRG) has drawn attention to these volatile ethnic tensions, which are fuelled by unequal access

to resources and political influence. There are approximately 50 ethnic groups and almost 600 sub-groups in the south. The MRG report claims that such tensions could lead to even more violence, threatening the stability of south Sudan.

The SPLM (the political arm of the SPLA) do not seem to be making a satisfactory transition from a rebel movement to a democratic government. There are a number of worrisome provisions in the interim constitution, wherein the passage limiting the President to two terms has been removed. Observers fear that these kinds of decisions could be laying the groundwork for a one-party state and perhaps even another enduring African autocrat. The interim constitution is currently before parliament, and is expected to pass into law during the July independence celebrations.

Extreme poverty is yet another headache for the south, with the UN claiming that it helped feed around half the population in 2010 (approximately four million people). South Sudan languishes at the bottom of most indicators for access to education, and in a UN report released in June, it was claimed that children in south Sudan are more likely to die before the age of five than complete basic education.

But the situation is not entirely bleak. The World Bank has unveiled a plan to create a \$75 million trust fund for south Sudan, intended to provide health care, infrastructure and employment. The money, which would be provided by the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, would be made available to the nation in the first few months after independence. South Sudan has applied for membership in both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but is eligible to receive aid even before the completion of this process. Nevertheless, the World Bank has said it is working closely with the IMF to ensure that the application procedure is completed as quickly as possible.

**HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY // SHAUNA C. KEDDY**

As the July 9th separation of South and North Sudan nears, the government in Khartoum is rushing to quell all areas of Sudan that could be a threat due to rebel activity. The ethnic cleansing that began by President Omar Al-Bashir's government in 2003 has thus regained its momentum, even though an end to the genocide has been officially recognized. Bashir is still wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, and he continues such action against innocent civilians in the Nuba Mountains. Families have been forced to take cover in dark, unbearably hot caves to avoid Russian-made Antonov bombers. There are tens of thousands of rebels in the Nuba Mountains, and the government is demanding that the rebels disarm and give up on their pleas for more autonomy for the distinctive Nuba people.

As has consistently occurred under Bashir's government, the militia have not done anything to prevent civilian casualties—in fact, bombs have been dropped on huts, on farmers while in their fields, and even on girls getting water together, "slicing them in half with buckets in their hands."

Women are the leaders here, as older men do little to help cook and take care of the many children perched precariously on the mountains to avoid the bombings. The attacks have been more prevalent to the west recently, away from the Lewere Valley and closer to an area called Korchi, which seems to be a frontline. Near Lewere, an entire village has been uprooted and has relocated in the mountains.

The rebels, who call themselves freedom fighters, fight with sticks because they have no guns. The Nuba people fight vigilantly because their land is a crucial part of their identity. Almost every major set of hills in the mountain range is home to a unique language, and the land is among the most fertile in all of Sudan. The Nuba are known for their singing, dancing and fierce wrestling tournaments.

The caves were used for protection during the North-South civil war as well, during the 80s and

90s when the government was wiping out villages and incarcerating hundreds of thousands of Nuba people in "peace camps," where they were forced to convert to Islam at gunpoint.

There was a peace treaty signed in 2004 calling for Nuba to have a stake in decisions about their autonomy, but little came of the agreement. The South will become independent this Saturday, and the suspicion is that even though the North will separate, the government is attempting to send a clear message that the secession does not mean the Nuba will succeed in their own uprising.

The Bashir government's sudden interest in Nuba matters is timed perfectly to coincide with the Saturday's official declaration independence. Khartoum is signalling that even after the South breaks off – the result of decades of struggle for liberation – it absolutely will not tolerate other movements towards sovereignty.

## **DRC: MASS RAPE AS CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY // SAGAR GUPTA**

In 2008, the United Nations Security Council passed its first resolution (15-0 victory) wherein conflict-related sexual violence and other acts (including rape) could be considered war crimes.

Yet only very recently has the UN recognized rape as a weapon of war, and only due to the worldwide directed towards a video that went viral of a Libyan woman storming into a Tripoli hotel protesting the rape and torture used by Muammar Qaddafi's troops.

In the Walikale region of North Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo between the time frame of July and August 2010, at least 387 men, women and children were sexually assaulted by Rwandan FDLR and a local Congolese armed group. A year has passed and only one perpetrator has been indicted, while over 200 armed men committed the attack. Even to this day, victims of this

horrific tragedy have not received medical attention. There are hundreds of stories like this, which are not offered any media attention at all.

The UN has still not fully committed to labeling these gruesome and appalling actions, and instead states, “mass rapes may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity” (*italics added*). [1,3]

A recent report (June edition) published by the American Journal of Public Health has suggested that the UN may be grossly underestimating the

magnitude of rape in Congo. According to their results at least 1,152 women are raped every day. In the last 12 months, over 400,000 women were sexually assaulted, whereas the UN estimates the number to be 15,000 throughout the period of one year. In reality, it is likely 27 times that amount. [1]

The report gave further detail stating that that over 1.8 million Congolese women have been raped in total. [1]

If this isn't a definitive war crime, what is?

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