

STAND | digest

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR: MY TIME IN RWANDA ■ Christine Johnston shares her experiences and stories from her journey through Rwanda.

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY ■ The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against President Omar al-Bashir on July 12th on counts of genocide in Darfur. Bashir dismissed these allegations. The Sudanese media reported that 300 Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) fighters and 75 soldiers died in clashes in mid-July. The clashes were confirmed by peacekeepers. On July 21st, the UN Children's Fund and JEM signed an agreement to protect children in Darfur. Heavy rains and floods across Darfur destroyed hundreds of homes, killed animals and affected hospitals, schools, and camps for displaced people.

NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS ■ In recent days the possibility of demarcating the North-South Sudan border prior to the 2011 referendum has grown all the more unlikely as the technical committee tasked with this project have temporarily stopped their activities. Representative of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) Riak Degol, has suggested that the demarcation will not be ready prior to the referendum, while the NCP remains insistent that final borders must be decided upon prior to the occurrence of the referendum. This week, an Arab League sponsored forum took place in Khartoum where tensions rose between the NCP and the SPLM. At this time, the SPLM suggested the presence of democracy is only one of many obstacles faced by North and South Sudan while the NCP suggested that the SPLM have damaged efforts to achieve unity. On July 27 two Darfuri rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army-FREES (SLA-FREES) and the Justice and Reform Movement (JRM), signed a peace deal in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur State.

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN SUDAN ■ The developments in South Sudan this past month once again show the same consistent patterns of censorship and internal struggle that have been the norm in previous months. With the referendum to determine North and South separation approaching, Southern secessionist sentiments are becoming expressed with greater frequency, and Northern efforts to quell them are becoming increasingly regular. Negotiators on both sides of the border are beginning to meet in hopes of brokering a harmonious relationship between the two states upon the South's almost inevitable secession.

DARFUR AND CANADIAN POLITICS ■ With Parliament out of session for the summer there is no news to report from the House of Commons. The Canadian government maintained a very low profile throughout the month, with only a condemnation from Lawrence Cannon and an envoy sent to low-level talks in El Fasher. However, the government committed additional relief funding for food assistance in Chad and Niger. Both countries are struggling with a prolonged sub-Saharan drought, while Chad is also burdened by a swelling population of refugees fleeing conflict and the same drought in neighbouring Darfur.



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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS //

- 1** Sudanese Elections: Stand's Reaction
On April 11, 2010 the people of Sudan went to the polls to vote in their first multi-party election in 24 years. Despite this landmark event, it must be recognized that the elections were neither free nor fair, and fell significantly short of international standards. Serious irregularities undermined the process and it is clear that the government could have done more to ensure a more free and fair election process.

That said, the elections were a necessary step stipulated in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended decades of war and called for a referendum by 2011. Before the referendum on independence for South Sudan can take place, it is essential that progress be made to correct the shortcomings experienced and to expand the democratic space in Sudan.

Shortcomings:

- Most of the major opposition candidates boycotted the election (Sudan's People Liberation Movement (SPLA), Umma Party).
- Voter registration was unequal across the country.
- Insecurity in Darfur prevented a great number of people from voting.
- Census data did not accurately reflect large segments of the population in some regions of Sudan (e.g. Darfur).
- Too few voter education programs set up across the country.
- High incidence of intimidation and threats to voters coming from the South
- Lack of sufficient safeguards and transparency in the electoral process.
- Significant technical and logistical problems (inaccurate polling station lists, not enough ballots printed, late delivery) – result of weak preparation.

Steps Forward:

- Prohibitions on freedoms of speech and assembly under the 1997 emergency laws in Darfur need to be lifted to ensure fair campaigning and outreach
- The National Security Law which gives government authorities the "power of detention without cause," must be revised or suspended before any future elections take place.
- To improve the democratic deficit, increase voter education programs across the country through organizations like the Carter Centre and the National Democratic Institute (NRI).
- Support efforts to train domestic observers (it takes only 1 week to train a local observer).
- All parties must be encouraged to run in future elections and this encouragement will only materialize if the above stated shortcomings become addressed and the aforementioned steps are taken.

- 2** Civil society participation in the Darfur peace process is essential if a sustainable peace is to occur. The recent inclusion of Darfuri civil society in the Doha peace consultations in Nov 2009 was a positive step in the right direction but mired with impediments. As this process continues, the government of Canada should:
- 1) Ensure that Darfuri society is widely and fairly represented.
 - The first meeting was overrepresented with government National Congress Party (NCP) members as well as other war crimes perpetrators and underrepresented with Darfur diaspora, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and northern Darfur leaders.

- 2) Make sure that the government of Sudan is not imposing restrictions of any kind or hampering civil society members in any way from participation in the consultations.
 - The first meeting was hampered by bureaucratic delays, airport and airline restrictions as well as threats from the government of Sudan against some program participants (the underrepresented).

The best way to avoid these problems is if the Doha organizers define what is meant by civil society and impose specific criteria for member participation. Canada has the capacity to share its expertise about including civil society in public consultations.

- 3** In order to effectively prevent, monitor and address grave human rights abuses and mass atrocities, the Government of Canada should create an institutional apparatus that is capable of carrying out this mission on a permanent basis. Stand calls on the government to:
- 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.

MY TIME IN RWANDA //

Last month I participated in the Reflections on Rwanda program run by SHOUT Canada. A group of students from across Canada went to Rwanda for twelve days to travel around the country, listen to the stories and learn about the 1994 genocide.

We began our educational journey in Kigali and continued travelling through Nyamata, Ntamara, Kibuye, Butare, Bisesero, Murambi and Gisenyi.

We listened to story after story of people's personal accounts of the events they witnessed during 1994. While it would be easy to lose faith in humanity and become cynical, these survivors felt an overwhelming sense of perseverance, a responsibility to ensure that the international community knew about the events of 1994 and stopped them from ever happening again. The citizens of Rwanda are the inspiration that Canadians need to engage in conflict and genocide prevention. All we need to do is listen.

When we got back to Kigali, we met with a representative of the Rwandan Defence Forces, at the RDF Headquarters. He briefed us on, among other things, Rwanda's contribution to the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Rwanda is committed to the prevention of conflict, and their unwavering support of UNAMID should serve as an inspiration to Canada, and to the international community as a whole. Only 16 years after the country experienced some of the worst atrocities of the 20th century, it is active in supporting other countries and their struggle against conflict. Canada and the international community have a lot to learn from Rwanda.

As Canadians, it is easy to dismiss such stories as simply history, or instances to which we are unable to relate. Lying under the bodies of your family members to avoid detection by militia and survive, watching your mother or sister be raped before she is hacked to death, scared for your life and the lives of your family simply due to where you were born and into what family, are things that we have not had to address here in Canada. However these stories are integral to educating future generations about preventing these atrocities from ever happening again. They are not statistics or theories. They are hundreds of thousands of personal stories; each just as horrific as the next.

Darfur saw its bloodiest month in May of this year. The instances of death and numbers of Internally Displaced Persons have been increasing in general in the region over the past year. These events cannot go unaddressed. The international community has the power to limit the number of horrific personal stories which come out of this conflict. Canada should do its part and continue to support UNAMID and the rights of the Darfuri citizens.

CHRISTINE JOHNSTON
MANAGING EDITOR

NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS //

BY CHELSEA SAUVÉ

In recent days the possibility of demarcating the North-South Sudan border prior to the 2011 referendum has grown all the more unlikely as the technical committee tasked with this project have temporarily stopped their activities. Set to reconvene this October, the committee has suggested that it would be irresponsible for them to continue their task throughout the rainy season which is known to alter the Sudanese terrain. Throughout the duration of this pause, the committee has stated that they will continue to pursue office work and engage in discussions with the many stakeholders involved. The committee is set to submit a report to President Omar-al-Bashir, detailing the various disagreements between the North and South with regards to final borders. The representative of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) Riak Degol, has suggested that the demarcation will not be ready prior to the referendum – a statement which is likely to give rise to further tensions between the NCP of the North and the Sudan Liberation People's Movement (SPLM) of the South. The NCP remain insistent that a referendum cannot occur in the absence of a completed demarcation between North and South.

This week, an Arab League sponsored forum took place in Khartoum, where tensions rose between the NCP and the SPLM. While the forum was meant to focus upon the challenges of unity between the North and South, as well as the consequences associated with their separation, the NCP broadened this horizon. Not only did the NCP express their disappointment with the international community, namely the failure to meet previously established aid pledges to the Southern Sudan recovery and development program, they also sought to alienate all opposition parties. The NCP proceeded to criticize the position of the opposition forces concerning the upcoming 2011 referendum suggesting that betrayed governmental efforts aimed at the preservation of Sudanese unity. This criticism specifically referred to a group of meetings held by opposition leaders in Juba prior to the recent.

In a later statement made by the SPLM official in attendance, it was suggested that the democratic transformation of Sudan is one of the greatest obstacles, yet most basic, of steps which must take place in order to ensure unity amongst the North and South of the country. According to the SPLM, further obstacles which must be overcome in an effort to achieve unity between the North and South include the lack of national reconciliation, the lack of uniform media policy to address issues of unity, as well as the toxic atmosphere throughout which the provisions of the CPA have been implemented.

On July 27 two Darfuri rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army-FREES (SLA-FREES) and the Justice and Reform Movement (JRM), signed a peace deal in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur State. Observed by UNAMID, the peace deal states that all future interactions be mediated by a reconciliation committee consisting of native administrators as well as local community leaders. Both the JRM and the SLA-FREE are factions of other larger Darfuri rebel groups for reasons pertaining to ideological differences- namely a clashes which occurred between the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the SLA-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) in Jebel Moon in February 2010. These clashes ultimately resulted in the expulsion of the SLA-AW (the group from which the SLA-FREE resulted) from the Jebel Moon region to Geneina. The rebels are in the process of seeking involvement in the Doha peace process.

At the African Union summit held in Kampala this week, a new resolution was adopted with regards to the indictment of Omar Al-Bashir initiated by the International Criminal Court (ICC). At the AU Summit, the heads of states in attendance adopted a radical stance in the form of a final resolution which explicitly stressed non-cooperation with the tribunal located in the Hague. The resolution even went so far as to condemn the prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo for what they perceive as being inappropriate conduct and urge member states to balance their obligations to the ICC and those to the AU. Despite being the topic of conversation, Bashir himself was not present, as he skipped this summit in an act of

retaliation to Museveni's absence from his inauguration as President of Sudan this Spring.

Despite efforts to reason with the AU, African states who are members of the ICC have been defeated in their attempts to lessen the severity of the AU resolution by means of removing such language that reiterates previous positions on granting immunity to Bashir in Africa and criticizing the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo. Some ICC states including South Africa, Botswana and Uganda have expressed their disappointment with the harshness of the final AU resolution. Last year, both South Africa and Botswana publicly dismissed the non-cooperation decision of the AU and stated that should Bashir enter their country, they will arrest him.

It is actions such as this which have led to accusations such as that made by Amnesty international, suggesting that the AU is complicit in human rights abuses within Africa and should be held accountable for the culture of impunity. At this summit, the AU rejected the ICC's request to open a liaison office to the AU in Addis Ababa, due to fears associated with the demonization of the African continent by the international community. Recently, African leaders have engaged in discussions pertaining to whether Bashir could stand trial within an African court - namely the Arusha based African Court of Justice. However, it was determined that at the moment, Africa lacks the proper mechanisms and infrastructure to follow through with such a task.

**HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
AND SECURITY //**

BY SABRINA IRIARTE

The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against President Omar al-Bashir on July 12th, for orchestrating genocide in Darfur. Bashir dismissed these allegations saying the ICC's decision is part of a Western conspiracy. Similarly, Sudan's ambassador to the United Nations, Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem, condemned the arrest warrant and said it is a "malignant desperate attempt" to destabilise Sudan1.

Clashes between Sudan's army and Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) occurred this month, where 300 JEM fighters and 75 soldiers died, as reported by the state media on July 17th. Peacekeepers have confirmed the clashes near the Adola Mountains and near Kuma and were also investigating a third clash in Daba Tago in north Darfur2.

Talks between the UN Children's Fund and JEM led to the signing of an agreement to protect children in Darfur. The negotiations began in 2008 and continued despite the rupture of peace negotiations between the Sudanese government and rebel groups. UNICEF representative for Sudan, Nils Kastberg, states that the goal of the agreement is to protect children during conflict and to prevent attacks to schools and hospitals. Kastberg said that JEM claims not to have child combatants and highlights that independent verifications can be carried out to confirm this information. As well, he said that the UNICEF is negotiating agreements for the protection of children with another three rebel groups in Darfur3.

Heavy rains caused floods and destroyed 200 houses in Seraf Umrah, as well as the death of sheep and donkeys. In El Fasher, flies and insects proliferated following the floods, causing an increase in the number of sick children received at the hospital. The rains also affected the Zalingei, Abu Shouk and As Salaam camps for displaced people near El Fasher. In South Sudan, rains affected hospitals and schools and damaged hundreds of homes4.

DARFUR AND CANADIAN POLITICS //

BY JOHN MATCHIM

Worsening drought in sub-Saharan Africa has prompted the Canadian government to grant \$6.5 million dollars for food relief to Niger and Chad. The money comes on top of the two million already offered to Niger this year and \$7.2 million to Chad. Refugees fleeing war and

desertification in Darfur are swelling the number of people in Chad struggling with the same drought.¹ United Nations officials have been calling for humanitarian aid to ease suffering in Niger and Chad, as well as Mali and Mauritania. Over ten million people in the region are affected by last year's drought, while the rainy season remains six weeks away. However, it is not clear how the food will be delivered to remote parts of the affected countries after the first rains churn the road network into mud.²

In early July special envoys from Canada and the European Union, as well as from Austria, Finland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden met in El Fasher, Darfur, met to discuss the peace process. The meeting was hosted by UNAMID which invited all five members of the Security Council. However, key envoys from the United States and the United Kingdom failed to appear. It is believed UNAMID head Dr. Ibrahim Gambari, who is interested in taking a more proactive approach to peace negotiations, has had disagreements with American envoy Scott Gration over the amount the UN should intervene in the political process. Gambari hoped that the meeting would convince hold-out rebel groups to attend the Doha peace talks; though it appears that talks have accomplished little.³ There is no information regarding Canada's participation.

Meanwhile negotiations in Doha have been derailed by renewed fighting in Darfur between government forces and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). JEM walked out of talks early in July and has engaged government units throughout the month. With the South Sudan referendum scheduled for January 2011, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon has urged the warring parties to resume negotiations before a potential conflict in the south has time to erupt. He also spoke of the severe water shortages and desertification that adds additional, and more critical, challenges to the peace effort.⁴ Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon condemned the breakdown in negotiations.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN SUDAN //

BY STEVEN CHUA

Violence has continued to break out this past month, with nomadic Misseriya tribesmen, associated with North Sudan attacking a village associated with the South's Dinka Ngok tribe in the Abyei region (which resides in the unclearly defined North-South border area). The area is a prime grazing spot and very close to the oil-rich regions of the country. Abyei Chief Administrator, Deng Arop Kuol has accused the attackers of attempting to undermine the ongoing voter registration for the referendum next January. Analysts fear that this conflict is a foreshadowing of the further tension that will occur in this region during the months to come.

Predictably, the occurrence of media censorship is increasing steadily as the date of referendum draws closer. Government forces cracked down and 'suspended indefinitely' the pro-secessionist Al-Intibaha newspaper for publishing material that the government claimed would strain North-South relations. The newspaper which is widely known to be harshly critical of the South, is renowned for calling upon the North to secede from the South. While Sudan has technically enshrined freedom of the press in its laws, a number of conditions inherent in these policies allow the government to exercise media censorship with virtual impunity. Media censorship is not the only result of the incoming referendum; pro-secession activism and demonstrations have also been subject to government crackdowns as well.

Negotiations have also begun to occur in anticipation of Southern secession. Delegates from both North and South Sudan have met to discuss a number of options available to the two parties in the event of secession. So far, four options that were formulated during Thabo-Mbeki's African Union panel have been discussed: two separate countries with shared governance institutions, two separate countries with soft borders that permit the easy movement of peoples and goods, total separation with visas required to cross borders, or in the unlikely occasion that the South should choose it, unity. Delegates from

both sides stressed the need for cooperation between the two parties, and also discussed the need to address a number of other issues, the two most important being: the fate of Southerners in the North and Northerners in the South should a secession occur, and the clear demarcation of the North-South border, which would be essential to preventing conflict over the oil rich regions.

In economic news, the government of Egypt has continued its campaign to establish good-will between the countries that reside around the Nile river; this country's only source of water. Its latest attempt to further this aim has resulted in the government of Egypt granting 300 million non-refundable US dollars to the government of South Sudan for building potable water complexes, wells, river ports and electricity and water networks.

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