

Sudan: Conflict and minorities

SUDAN: CONFLICT AND MINORITIES

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MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

Minority Rights Group works to secure rights and justice for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. It is dedicated to the cause of cooperation and understanding between communities.

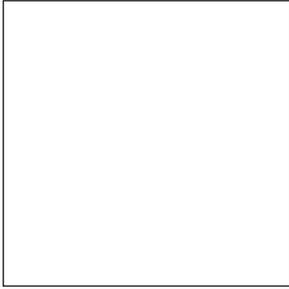
Founded in the 1960s, Minority Rights Group is a small international non-governmental organization that informs and warns governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and the wider public about the situation of minorities around the world. This work is based on the publication of well-researched reports, books and papers; direct advocacy on behalf of minority rights in international fora; the development of a global network of like-minded organizations and minority communities to collaborate on these issues; and **the challenging of prejudice and promotion of public understanding** through information and education projects.

Minority Rights Group believes that the best hope for a peaceful world lies in **identifying and monitoring conflict** between communities, **advocating preventive measures** to avoid the escalation of conflict and **encouraging positive action** to build trust between majority and minority communities.

Minority Rights Group has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and has a worldwide network of partners. Its international headquarters are in London. Legally it is registered both as a charity and as a limited company under the United Kingdom Law with an International Governing Council.

THE PROCESS

As part of its methodology, MRG conducts regional research, identifies issues and commissions reports based on its findings. Each author is carefully chosen and all scripts are read by no less than eight independent experts who are knowledgeable about the subject matter. These experts are drawn from the minorities about whom the reports are written, and from journalists, academics, researchers and other human rights agencies. Authors are asked to incorporate comments made by these parties. In this way, MRG aims to publish accurate, authoritative, well-balanced reports.



*Sudanese Shilluk youth
with fishing spear.*
F. SINGER/HUTCHISON

Sudan: Conflict and minorities

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Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

(Adopted by the UN General Assembly; Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992)

Article 1

1. States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.
2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

Article 2

1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.
2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.
3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.
4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.
5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group, with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

Article 3

1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights including those as set forth in this Declaration individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.
2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

Article 4

1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.
2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.
3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.
4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.
5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

Article 5

1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.
2. Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

Article 6

States should cooperate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, inter alia, exchanging information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

Article 7

States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights as set forth in the present Declaration.

Article 8

1. Nothing in this Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.
2. The exercise of the rights as set forth in the present Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. Measures taken by States in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights as set forth in the present Declaration shall not prima facie be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. Nothing in the present Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Article 9

The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles as set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)

Article 2

1. States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races, ...
2. States parties shall, when the circumstances so warrant, take, in the social, economic cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no case entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)

Article I

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

Article IV

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

Preface

Since 1956, Sudan has only known 11 years of peace. Millions of Sudanese have been killed or displaced by the civil war. MRC's experience has been that minority groups are among the most vulnerable in conflict situations. Sudan has proved to be no exception with minorities such as the Nuba, Uduk and Ingessana having been targeted by both sides.

Sudan is the largest country of Africa, a land of extraordinary geographical and cultural diversity. A total of 28 million people speak a total of over 400 languages. Yet Sudan's civil war is often portrayed as a conflict between the Muslim North and the Christian South. This simplistic perception disguises the complexities of a war fought by multi-ethnic groups where religious differences colour struggles over access to land or political power. This MRC report describes the background to the war, the groups which are fighting, and those minorities caught up in the conflict. Victims, such as the Nuba people in the mountains of central Sudan, give the lie to a simple religious or geographical interpretation of the war. The Nuba adhere to Islam, Christianity and traditional African religions. Despite this religious mix, the Nuba have suffered human rights abuses by both the government forces and the factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

The Islamic fundamentalist regime which currently rules Sudan came to power in a coup on 30 June 1989. The report argues that this regime is responsible for a dramatic increase in human rights violations in Sudan. It has systematically dismantled the institutions of civil society such as trade unions, the judiciary and professional associations; crushed political opposition; and installed a security apparatus which routinely uses torture. The regime of Lt-Gen. Hassan al-Bashir, guided by National Islamic Front leader Dr Hassan al-Turabi, has demonstrated its intolerance of political dissidence, and ethnic and cultural diversity. However, some of the current actions, including its interpretation of Islamic *sharia* law represent an extreme of trends already evident under previous civilian and military governments.

This new report on Sudan is intended to promote greater understanding of the background to the current situation. The coordinating editor, Peter Verney, is a well-known authority on the country and the report uses a clear analysis and a historical context to explain the civil war in Sudan. The report ends with a set of recommendations which reflect the wider current debate on how best to encourage and further the process of peace-building and is intended as a contribution to that very debate.

Conflict resolution and peace-building will be a difficult and lengthy process following so many years of fighting and animosity between communities. Development agencies will need to persevere with many initiatives to promote reconciliation, participation and an equitable sharing of resources long after the fighting stops. This

report gives some indications of the issues that such programmes need to address after the media attention has moved on. Tragically, too little was done in the earlier peaceful interlude from 1973-83 to ensure that a robust, democratic, multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-lingual state was secured. The implementation of minority rights was and is an essential ingredient in this process.

The report stresses that a way forward must be found by the Sudanese themselves. The role of the international community can only be to facilitate and assist. With this important caveat noted, the international community does have a role to play in resolving the war in the Sudan. It can contribute to the process of peace-building by ensuring that international human rights standards are respected by all sides. The appointment of the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur in 1993 was an important first step. However, the evidence accumulated by the Special Rapporteur and the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) decision in March 1995 to condemn Sudan's human rights record, suggests that further steps are necessary. The UN's decision in March 1995 to appoint human rights monitors outside the country is not enough. The long-standing culture of impunity which has led to increasing human rights violations needs to be tackled. Prevention of new human rights violations necessitates deployment of civilian human rights monitors throughout the country.

Finally, this MRC report emphasizes the deterioration of the rights of women and of minority groups such as the Beja in eastern Sudan, who are not directly involved in the civil war but who have also been marginalized by the current regime. Therefore, the future development of Sudan depends on finding a peace in which all groups in Sudan can have a real stake.

Alan Phillips
Director
July 1995

ABBREVIATIONS

DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HEC	High Executive Council
IGADD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NIF	National Islamic Front
NGO	Non governmental organization
NMGU	Nuba Mountains General Union
OLS	Operator Lifeline Sudan
PPP	Progressive People's Party
SANU	Sudan African National Union
SAC	Sudanese African Congress
SAPCO	Sudanese African People's Congress
SCP	Sudan Communist Party
SNP	Sudanese National Party
SPFP	Sudanese People's Federal Party
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army – military wing of SPLM
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
SSPA	Southern Sudan Political Association
<i>Note:</i>	After the SPLM split in August 1991: John Garang faction: SPLM/SPLA (Torit or Mainstream) Riek Machar faction: SPLM/SPLA (Nasir or United)
	After October 1994: The Riek Machar faction of SPLM/SPLA United was renamed Southern Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/SSIA).
	After he was dismissed by Riek Machar in February 1994, Lam Akol claimed the title of SPLM/SPLA United for his group in west central Upper Nile in October 1994.

CHRONOLOGY

- Middle Ages:** Christian kingdoms along the Nile coexist with Muslim neighbours.
- End of Middle Ages:** Collapse of Christian kingdoms; rise of Funj Sultanate.
- Seventeenth century:** Emergence of Sultanate of Darfur.
- 1821:** Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan 'unifies' small independent Sudanese states.
- 1885:** Mahdist forces (of Mohammed Ahmed-'al-Mahdi') capture Khartoum after a long siege.
- 1885:** Al-Mahdi dies; the Khalifa Abdullahi takes over.
- 1892:** Belgians capture Western Equatoria up to Mongalla – the 'Lado enclave' is made part of the Belgian Congo. French forces under Major Marchand occupy parts of Bahr al-Ghazal and western Upper Nile.
- 1896:** Belgians agree to release the Lado enclave to British control when King Leopold of Belgium dies.
- 1898:** Anglo-Egyptian forces led by General Kitchener overthrow the Mahdist state.
- 1899:** Condominium Agreement signed. French forced to withdraw.
- 1900-1920s:** 'Pacification' of the country, frequently characterized by violence.
- 1930s-1940s:** Nationalist politics develop rapidly in the North.
- 1947:** Juba Conference organized by colonial government – Southern chiefs agree with Northern nationalists to pursue a united Sudan. A crash programme of integration follows.
- 1953:** 'Self-rule' is introduced. In the South, 'Sudanization' is regarded as 'Northernization'.
- 1955:** In Equatoria, the Torit mutiny of Southern soldiers refusing transfer to the North marks the beginning of the first civil war. Massacres of Northern administrators, teachers and traders in the South follow 'Sudanization'.
- 1956:** Independence on 1 January. Ismail al-Azhari becomes Prime Minister of the first national government, formed by the Unionist and Umma parties.
- 1958:** Military takeover headed by General Abboud. Abboud dissolves the political parties and institutes a state of emergency.
- 1963:** The Anyanya movement for Southern secession is formed.
- 1964:** The Abboud regime steps up military action in the South, forcing thousands of Southerners to seek asylum in neighbouring countries.
- October 1964:** A general strike and popular uprising bring down the military regime. Transitional civilian government headed by Sirr al-Khatim Khalifa.
- March 1965:** Most parties from North and South attend Round Table Conference on the 'Southern Problem'.
- 1965:** Parliamentary elections are held; government formed under Mohammed Ahmed Mahjoub, an independent turned Umma Prime Minister.
- 1966-7:** Sadiq al-Mahdi becomes Prime Minister (26 July 1966 – 15 May 1967) after an acrimonious challenge to Umma leadership.
- 1967:** Sudan sides with the Arab world and declares war on Israel, it breaks relations with the United States and looks to the Soviet Union for assistance.
- May 1969:** A group of officers led by Colonel Jaafar Mohammed Nimeiri takes power in a military coup with leftist and Communist support.
- 1970:** Joseph Lagu becomes sole leader of the Anyanya.

- July 1971:** After a short-lived coup by officers of the Sudan Communist Party, Nimeiri is returned to power. He purges the leftists from the army and government.
- 1972:** Relations with the US and the West are reopened.
- March 1972:** Addis Ababa agreement ends the civil war. Signed by Nimeiri and Lagu, it is based on regional autonomy for the South and the ending of discrimination on the basis of religion, sex or ethnic background.
- April 1973:** Sudan adopts a 'permanent constitution' as a one-party state under Nimeiri's Sudan Socialist Union. The judiciary is made answerable to the president, who also commands the armed forces. The State Security Act is adopted, which creates numerous political offences and gives the security services broad powers of search and arrest.
- 1976:** Failed coup attempt by Brig. Mohammed Nur Saad, using elements of the army with exiles trained in Ethiopia and Libya, involving Ansar, Muslim Brotherhood and the DUP.
- 1977:** Nimeiri embarks on 'national reconciliation' with elements of the Umma, DUP and Muslim Brothers.
- 1978:** The IMF negotiates the first of several structural adjustment programmes.
- 1979:** Fall of Idi Amin in Uganda leads to the return of many well-qualified Equatorians to Southern Sudan. The balance of power in the South starts to shift away from the Dinka and Nuer.
- May 1983:** South is 'redivided' into three regions, and the single regional government is abolished.
- September 1983:** Nimeiri introduces *sharia* or 'September' laws.
- End of 1983:** Civil war resumes after several mutinies leading to the formation of the SPLA/SPLM.
- 1984-5:** Severe famine in western and eastern parts of the country follows successive years of inadequate rains.
- 16 March – 6 April 1985:** Widespread strikes and demonstrations follow rises in food prices. Nimeiri is overthrown after a popular uprising leads to a military coup by his army chief of staff, General Abd al-Rahman Swar al-Dahab. A Transitional Military Council (TMC) is set up.
- 1985:** SPLA incursion into the Nuba Mountains: 100 Baggara Arabs are killed at Gardud. TMC begins supplying arms to Baggara.
- March 1986:** Koka Dam agreement in Ethiopia reaches formula for peace and a constitutional conference. Endorsed by the Umma Party, it is rejected by the DUP and NIF.
- April 1986:** Elections – Sadiq al-Mahdi becomes Prime Minister of a coalition Umma/DUP government. There is no voting in half the 86 Southern constituencies on grounds of 'insecurity'.
- June 1986:** Sudan signs the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- 1987:** Sadiq al-Mahdi abandons Koka Dam Agreement and a state of emergency is declared. *Kasha* campaigns introduced.
- 1987:** SPLA starts a unit in the Nuba Mountains.
- 1988:** Famine in Southern Sudan – 250,000 die of hunger-related diseases in 1988. Deliberate 'scorched earth' and relief denial policies of government, militias and SPLA are the primary cause of food shortage, compounded by drought, floods and pest infestations.
- November 1988:** 'November Accord' negotiated by the DUP with the SPLA/SPLM, agreeing in principle to freeze *sharia* laws, a ceasefire and cancel the state of emergency.
- March 1989:** NIF leaves government; DUP rejoins coalition. Sadiq begins peace talks with SPLA/SPLM; a ceasefire is announced. UN Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) resumes famine relief to the South.
- June 1989:** With Sadiq due to meet Garang in Addis Ababa on 4 July, a military coup on 30 June thwarts the peace process and Lt-Gen. Hassan al-Bashir takes power. All political parties are banned, but the NIF is behind the army.
- October 1989:** The ceasefire between Khartoum and the SPLA breaks down.
- 21 October 1989:** The formation of the National Democratic Alliance, a coalition of Northern and Southern Sudanese opposition forces including the Umma, Democratic Unionist and Communist parties and (at a later date) the SPLM.
- 5 November 1989:** With the Popular Defence Act, the paramilitary Popular Defence Force (PDF) is established.
- December 1989:** War escalates in the South; Sadiq orders large shipments of arms from China, paid for by Iran.
- April 1990:** Twenty-eight officers are executed a few hours after a failed coup attempt.
- May 1990:** Four privately-owned newspapers, ostensibly non-political, are banned.
- November 1990:** Widespread arrests in major Northern towns including Wad Medani, Atbara, Al-Obeid and Khartoum, following demonstrations by students and trades unionists against government policy.
- 31 December 1990:** Bashir announces that *sharia* law is to be implemented with immediate effect in Northern Sudan.
- End of 1990:** UN Food and Agriculture Organization warns of wide-scale famine in Sudan.
- May 1991:** After the fall of the Mengistu regime in Addis Ababa, some 300,000 Southern Sudanese are forced to return to Sudan from border areas in Ethiopia, and are bombed by the Sudanese air force.
- August 1991:** SPLA commanders Machar and Akol lead a 'creeping coup' attempt against Col Garang. The coup is unsuccessful but leads to the formation of a breakaway 'Nasir' faction.
- September 1991:** Rising malnutrition, especially in the western region. Tens of thousands die by the end of the year from hunger-related disease.
- October 1991:** Army seals off the Nuba Mountains and begins operations to drive out the Nuba and destroy SPLA strength in the area.
- November-December 1991:** Over 200,000 flee Bor district after 5,000 civilians are massacred by forces loyal to SPLA-Nasir.
- 7 January 1992:** International protests at the mass bulldozing of displaced people's homes in Khartoum camps, after 16 were killed on 22 December 1991.
- January 1992:** *Jihad* declared in Nuba Mountains at Al-Obeid meeting of regional governors of Southern Kordofan.
- February 1992:** Three hundred member transitional national assembly appointed as legislature until parliamentary elections promised for an unspecified date.
- March 1992:** Khartoum launches its largest-yet offensive against the SPLA – 100,000 people are displaced.

- June 1992:** Forcible mass relocation of the Nuba from the Nuba Mountains by the government. Thousands are moved to 'peace villages'.
- September 1992:** Catholic bishops from SPLA-controlled Southern Sudan accuse government troops of genocide in Juba.
- December 1992:** UN General Assembly condemns Bashir regime for gross violations of human rights.
- December 1992:** Government troops in the South are allegedly offered financial rewards for impregnating Southern women. The 'largest ever' massacre of Nuba people, at Heiban, is carried out on 25 December, and Amnesty International later reports operations tantamount to 'ethnic cleansing'.
- December 1992:** The three factions of the SPLA agree at UN-supervised meetings in Nairobi to guarantee the flow of relief supplies to citizens affected by war in Southern Sudan.
- January 1993:** Egypt and Sudan at loggerheads over territorial rights to the Red Sea region of Halaib. Each accuses the other of harbouring opposition elements.
- April 1993:** World Bank and Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development suspend loans to Sudan, which has failed to pay its arrears.
- April 1993:** Garang proposes a referendum on Southern self-determination, shortly before resumption of Abuja (Nigeria) peace talks.
- May 1993:** Peace talks collapse at Abuja.
- June 1993:** Mosques and headquarters of the Ansar, Khatmiyya and Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiya are the targets of crackdowns by NIF security.
- July 1993:** Egypt's President Mubarak and Sudan's Lt-Gen. al-Bashir meet at the Cairo summit of the Organization of African Unity. Hostilities over the Hailab territory are temporarily patched up.
- 18 August 1993:** US State Department adds Sudan to its list of states sponsoring terrorism.
- August 1993:** Some 60,000 Southern Sudanese flee to Uganda in three weeks, after government troops begin an offensive against SPLA in Western Equatoria. Another 42,000 cross into Ethiopia in August, and 4,800 into Zaïre.
- September 1993:** The heads of state of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda and Kenya establish a committee to resolve the civil war in Sudan, in their capacity as members of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD).
- 4 October 1993:** Three days of riots in Omdurman, Wad Medani and Al-Obeid in response to the economic crisis, following a fuel shortage and rises in fuel prices.
- 22 October 1993:** Washington declaration signed by rival SPLA faction leaders Garang and Machar. They concur on 'self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan, Nuba Mountains and marginalized areas', and on opposition to the NIF regime and any subsequent regime that denies the right to self-determination.
- 10-11 November 1993:** Khartoum University students protest at alleged vote-rigging of union elections in which National Islamist candidates won all 40 seats. Over 300 are arrested amid the most militant demonstrations since 1991.
- 20 November 1993:** Foreign ministers of the Horn of Africa countries belonging to IGADD meet in Nairobi to address the conflict in Sudan.
- November 1993:** Interim report by UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Gaspar Biró corroborates the 'grave violations' that have taken place in Sudan.
- January 1994:** Eritrea's President Afeworki complains that 'foreign Muslim extremists' have declared war on his nation after 20 invaders from Sudan are killed.
- January 1994:** Archbishop of Canterbury flies to Southern Sudan for three days. A diplomatic row over his cancellation of a visit to Northern Sudan leads to the mutual expulsion of ambassadors from Britain and Sudan.
- February 1994:** Two dozen worshippers are killed in an attack on a mosque of the Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiya religious sect, whose leader had recently criticized the religious credentials of the Bashir regime.
- April 1994:** Members of the ultra-conservative minority Ansar al-Sunna sect stage a sit-in protest to demand the release of their leader, Sheikh Abu Zeid Muhammad Hamza, and the return of mosques 'confiscated' by the authorities.
- April 1994:** Student demonstrations at Gezira University lead to 1,000 arrests.
- July 1994:** SPLA-United advances into Wunrok, Northern Bahr al-Ghazal. Battles with SPLA-Mainstream lead to 1,000 mostly civilian deaths; both factions loot from local people.
- July 1994:** More than 50,000 displaced people are expelled from Khartoum in a series of night raids over two weeks.
- July 1994:** Fighting is reported among groups loyal to different leaders within SPLA-United, with hundreds of lives lost.
- August 1994:** The Venezuelan terrorist 'Carlos the Jackal' is captured in Khartoum and taken away by French forces. It emerges that in addition to assisting Khartoum to obtain right of passage for its armed forces through Central Africa, Paris has made available satellite photographs identifying the positions of the SPLA in Southern Sudan.
- August 1994:** The Beja Congress in Cairo reports that a 'terror' campaign is being waged by the government against Beja people in eastern Sudan.
- September 1994:** The IMF reverses its decision to expel Sudan.
- October 1994:** Lam Akol, dismissed from the breakaway SPLA-Nasir (United) faction in February, challenges Machar's leadership.
- October 1994:** Squatter settlements in Gamayir and Khuddair, Omdurman, are destroyed during the forcible removal campaign. At least five squatters are killed and 14 severely injured.
- October 1994:** Over 100 civilians are killed in an attack on Akot by Machar's 'Southern Sudan Independence Movement' – 5,000 families are made temporarily homeless.
- December 1994:** Eritrea breaks diplomatic relations with Sudan, claiming that 300 Islamic Jihad members are being trained inside Sudan. Sudan responds with a claim that Beja dissidents are using Eritrean territory for training.
- December 1994:** Chukudum agreement – Umma Party and SPLA-Mainstream concur on self-determination for South using existing boundaries.

Introduction

Sudan's civil war is often portrayed as a struggle between an Islamic 'Arab' North and a Christian or pagan 'African' South. This simplistic perception does not help in understanding the real plight of the Sudanese people, nor does it contribute to a resolution of the war.

In the 1990s Sudan has become an internationally isolated pariah state, an abuser of human rights accused of harbouring terrorists, notwithstanding its cooperation with France over the capture of 'Carlos the Jackal' in 1994. What strategic value this gigantic country possessed during the cold war has faded, while a militarized legacy remains. Entrenched in internal conflict, its rural economy collapsing, Sudan receives little development assistance and gains a large proportion of its foreign income from emergency relief aid. It narrowly avoided expulsion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1994, and the Khartoum government has struggled against international pressure for its behaviour to be debated by the UN Security Council. Both government forces and the guerrilla Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) stand accused of widespread gross abuses of the civilian population.

The military coup of 30 June 1989 by officers loyal to the National Islamic Front (NIF) has been followed by a dramatic increase in human rights violations at all levels of society and a stifling of internal criticism. Unprecedentedly harsh in its treatment of opponents, it has manifested disregard for human rights on a massive scale in the 'relocation' and 'cleansing' of minority populations in Northern and Southern Sudan. However, these current actions represent an extreme of policies and attitudes that were already evident under previous governments.

While its expansionist policies and discriminatory attitudes towards indigenous non-Arab and non-Muslim peoples are consistent with those of previous governments in Khartoum, the regime of Lt-Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir, guided by NIF leader Dr Hassan al-Turabi, has demonstrated a significantly greater intolerance of political dissidence and religious, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Sudan's political boundaries with neighbouring countries have little to do with ethnic distinctions and affect numerous population groups which overlap them. Additional confusion stems from the legacy of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, which strove at first to keep the South separate from the North in order to limit 'Arab' influences but then abandoned any possibility of incorporating the South into Uganda. Peoples in the middle of the country including the Nuba and Ingessana ended up neither 'Southern' nor 'Arab', but were deprived of opportunities for development, education and exposure to the outside world, leaving them ill-prepared when Sudan became independent in 1956.

The aspiration to an Arab-Islamic cultural identity among Northern Sudanese is directly linked to the institutionalized discrimination against non-Arab peoples. The

Northerners' sense of social prestige – in the face of discrimination from 'purer' Arabs in Egypt and the Gulf – is defended by looking down upon the ethnic groups further south and west.

The re-emergence of slave trading¹ in Southern and Nuba children, reported persistently in the south west, is the ultimate symbol of the devaluation of human life in Sudan and the starkest highlight of the social divisions of Sudanese society. The same mentality is shown in the government's growing exploitation of dispossessed labour on giant agricultural schemes. The sequestration of land for these schemes, and the added pressure of environmental degradation further north, are primary motivational elements in the war, along with control of oil reserves and access to water.

Elsewhere, new 'peace villages' are being established for displaced marginal peoples. Parastatal 'Islamic endowment' agencies under the Ministry of Social Planning are given exclusive permission to provide facilities for education and development, but of a highly controversial nature. The bodies responsible for mass indoctrination such as 'al-Da'awa al-Shamla' (Comprehensive Call) and the 'Bina al-Sudan' (Sudan Construction) are inherently intolerant of social diversity and operate by means of inducements or threats. People from the so-called marginalized areas are under intense pressure to adopt a Muslim identity merely to survive, or, if they are already Muslim, to conform to a narrower, NIF interpretation of Islam, and to aspire to Arab-Sudanese culture in denial of their own background.

The civil war, re-ignited in Southern Sudan in May 1983, has been intensified by the Bashir regime's drive for a military solution, bringing the estimated death toll in Southern Sudan to over 1.3 million by May 1993.² Millions of people have been displaced: massive and repeated upheavals of communities have been prompted by killings, rapes and destruction of villages and crops. The government has increasingly used armed militias or Popular Defence Forces (PDF), as a vanguard for the regular armed forces, intensifying a process initiated by the civilian government of Sadiq al-Mahdi.

Both the Khartoum government and the SPLA leaderships appear willing to contemplate the war as an opportunity to break the constraints of social tradition and homogenize Sudanese society according to their own authoritarian models. If the Khartoum government is Islamizing and Arabizing the North, then the SPLA is militarizing and Christianizing the South. At the same time, regional administrators and military/security personnel are often free to impose their own methods without reference to central leadership, which is able to deny responsibility for atrocities.

map – admin. districts

History of the conflict

The current power structure in Sudan, and the impact it has on its people, reflects the development of over 400 years of centralized political bodies whose élites enriched themselves by exploiting the human and material resources of the periphery. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the Kingdom of Sennar on the Blue Nile and the Sultanate of Darfur in the west were established as independent states, where the centres built their power on the resources of the outlying regions. During this period the rulers of these increasingly Islamic states adopted an 'Arab' identity. Being a Muslim – and in Sennar and the North being both a Muslim and an 'Arab' – became virtually synonymous with the privilege of full membership of the state, and a defence against exploitation. Slave-raiding into the peripheral lands was originally a state activity, a means of obtaining soldiers and slaves for the domestic and international slave trade. Social status was generally defined by proximity to the centre of the state, and religion and ethnic origin became key factors in social status.³

State expansion southwards was effectively halted by such Southern Sudanese peoples as the Dinka and Shilluk, until the Turco-Egyptian conquest of 1821-83 tipped the balance of regional power. Egyptian forces penetrated the Southern Sudan, bringing in their wake Northern Sudanese and European merchants. Commercial networks of itinerant Northern Jellaba traders expanded deep into the South and west, and the growth in the supply of slaves led to their being used increasingly as domestic servants throughout the Egyptian territories in Northern Sudan. This marked the beginning of a North-South divide, with the independence of Southern Sudanese peoples and kingdoms either destroyed or seriously undermined by a Muslim state in collaboration with its Arabic-speaking Muslim subjects.⁴

Southern Sudan at this time had no internal political or cultural unity. The Western Nilotes (Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk and Anuak) were, and are, the largest linguistic group. Predominantly pastoral, they shared a number of common social and cultural features but were frequently mutually hostile. They lived, and live, mainly in northern and central Southern Sudan, stretching from what is now Ethiopia across the plains to the Western Bahr al-Ghazal, occupying parts of Southern Kordofan and a long stretch of the White Nile.

Further south, merging into East Africa in what is now Equatoria, are the Eastern Nilotes (often misleadingly called Nilo-Hamitic), who include the Bari-speakers, Latuka, Taposa and Turkana; the Central Sudanic group (Moru and Madi); and the West African-related Azande.

Northern Sudanese generally regarded the South as an anarchic land of opportunity where fortunes could be made in trading and warfare, and the Southern Sudanese as part of a large labour reservoir. Because Southerners

were needed for indentured labour, this weighed against converting them to Islam, which would have given them theoretically equal status with Northerners and ruled out using them as slaves. In this way the potentially integrative forces of Islam and Arabization were blunted and a separate identity was created.

Condominium rule

By the time of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1898-1955) the attitudes of the North to the South, and those of Southerners to a government centred in Khartoum, were entrenched. The British accepted the idea of the South as a single region. Although the precise administrative outline of Southern Sudan altered occasionally, the Northern Sudanese and British perceptions of the South's distinctness generally coincided. The government adopted an administrative policy of 'devolution' for the entire country, whereby rural areas were administered by 'tribal' leaders who, under the guidance of British officials, regulated their internal affairs according to their own customary law. Muslim rural communities in the North regulated themselves according to a combination of custom and *sharia* (Islamic) law. The absence of *sharia* law in the South (except among small urban Muslim communities) meant that administrative structures developed along different lines. Today, many Northern Sudanese believe there was a deliberate attempt to eliminate Islam in the South when the British formulated a separate 'Southern' policy in 1930 and introduced the 'Closed District' Ordinance, which attempted to prevent Northern access to the South.

The main defect of British administration in Southern Sudan was its failure to develop local economic and administrative infrastructures. The emphasis on 'tribal' administration and its limited aspirations regarding social and economic development meant that there was very little need for educated Southern Sudanese. Education in Southern Sudan was badly neglected. Economic development was also severely restricted, and commerce remained in the hands of Northern Sudanese merchants and Khartoum or Omdurman-based companies. Regional exploitation may have been halted by the British, but the inequalities of regional development increased. By the time Britain realized that it had to prepare the South for Sudanese independence, the South lacked a substantial educated élite who could significantly contribute to the running and maintenance of education, commerce or administration. A large percentage of educated junior administrators were appointed to the legislative council in Khartoum and eventually became the founders of the first Southern political parties. In this way Southern infrastructure was cannibalized to fill seats in higher government circles. This pattern continues today.

At the root of the anxiety which educated Southerners

expressed before independence was the realization that self-government for Sudan would not result in self-government for the South. The transition from colonial to self-government meant the transfer of administrative structures to Northern Sudanese officials, who had no experience in the South; thus perpetuating a colonial system of government. For this reason Southern leaders first attempted to delay independence, and later proposed a federal system of government for the entire country. When this option was decisively rebuffed in 1958, secession began to appear to be the only alternative.

The first civil war: independence up to 1972

The national political scene from 1956 to 1969 was characterized by Muslim sectarian domination of the main Northern political parties, weak Southern political organizations, regional discontent in the under-developed east and west of Sudan, and a failure to reach a national consensus on the form of constitution to be adopted after independence. Southern demands for a federal constitution attracted the support of some Beja in the east and Fur and Nuba of the west, but these were circumvented when Gen. Abboud, commander of the army, formed a government in 1958 after the collapse of the civilian government. The military ruled with civilian assistance until 1964, when public discontent in Khartoum over the weak economy, political repression and the escalation of civil war in the South forced the army out of government. Parliamentary politics returned until Col Jaafar Nimeiri overthrew the government on 25 May 1969.

Religion became a political issue when Khartoum attempted to create an Islamic national identity. The first military government of Gen. Abboud had attempted to remove foreign (English or Christian) influences from the South. Arabic was introduced as the administrative and educational language (although English remained the medium of instruction in all Sudanese secondary schools until 1967), Friday replaced Sunday as the weekly day of rest in the South, Islamic conversion and education were encouraged, and all Christian missionaries were expelled from the South by 1964. Up to this point religion had not been a major factor in the 'Southern problem'.

An all party round table conference was convened in 1965 to discuss the South, but it failed to agree on a formula. The main Northern parties (including the Umma Party and what is now the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP]) insisted on a unitary national government. The Southern parties wanted a united Southern region which elected its own leader and had some control over its finances and security. The Umma, DUP and Muslim Brothers were committed to an Islamic state. Southern delegates walked out when it became clear that the Muslim majority in the assembly would not accept Southern objections.

By 1969 the civil war had spread to all three Southern provinces. The Sudanese exile movement, which had developed in the early 1960s, fragmented, and guerrilla armies proliferated along ethnic lines. Some received

funding from external church groups and foreign governments, especially Israel, Ethiopia and Uganda. It was largely through Israel's support that Joseph Lagu, a former army lieutenant, was able to pull together the disparate guerrilla bands and form the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) in 1970.

The Addis Ababa agreement and the regional government, 1972-81

The Addis Ababa agreement, which ended the war in March 1972, led to the formation of a Southern regional government and was the first serious attempt to give constitutional guarantees for Southern institutionalized autonomy. The Addis Ababa agreement provided for a single Southern region with a regional assembly which elected a president for its own high executive council (HEC). The HEC was responsible for internal administration and security, and the assembly had legislative powers and the right to raise some of its own revenues. The agreement also provided for the absorption of the guerrillas into the national army, police and prison service.

The relationship between the central and regional governments, however, remained ambiguous. Nimeiri intervened several times in Southern regional elections and in decisions concerning the economic development of the South. Central government ministries regarded the regional ministries as departments under their authority. Policies were frequently established in Khartoum without reference to the regional government. The autonomy of the region was seriously restricted, and disparities in regional economic development continued to grow.

In Khartoum, Nimeiri had to contend with those who thought he had conceded too much to the South, while in Juba, Abel Alier – the leader of the regional government's negotiating team at Addis Ababa and the first president of the HEC – was accused of being too subservient to the North. Attempts by both presidents to meet the complaints of their critics weakened this one governmental link between the North and the South, imperilling the effectiveness of the entire agreement.

Nimeiri's incremental betrayal of the South is often seen as the most puzzling aspect of Sudan's descent into civil war, since Southern leaders were his most loyal supporters against Northern opposition in Khartoum. However, after various coup attempts, for Nimeiri, the retention of power increasingly became a matter of life or death. Potential rivals within his government were shuffled into obscurity and former enemies were co-opted into the government. Nimeiri progressively shed his liberal-minded Northern Sudanese allies from his first coalition, and with National Reconciliation in 1977 brought in such conservative Muslim groups as Hassan al-Turabi's Muslim Brothers and Sadiq al-Mahdi's Ansar. The inclusion of the Muslim parties required concessions that could be made only at the expense of the South. All Muslim parties opposed the Addis Ababa Agreement as an obstacle to an Islamic Sudanese state.

From 1977 to 1980 the Southern region was preoccupied with its own internal divisions. The pace of development did not meet expectations. In 1978 Lagu, now retired from the army, was elected president of the regional assembly. Lagu was a popular orator but lacked administrative and political skills. He quarrelled with the judiciary and provoked a constitutional crisis when he dismissed the regional assembly's officers and replaced them with his own supporters. This gave Nimeiri the opportunity to remove him. Nimeiri dissolved the regional assembly, declared new elections, and appointed an interim regional government. He had doubtful constitutional authority to do this, but his action was accepted by Lagu's enemies in the Alier camp.

Alier was elected for a second term by the new assembly in 1980. He appointed a large number of Dinka, including some of Lagu's former allies, to his new cabinet. Alier's second government was marked by a more aggressive pursuit of regional autonomy and economic development when dealing with Khartoum, and a growing estrangement between the politicians of Equatoria and the regional government. Nimeiri regarded this more assertive regional government as a threat and tried to neutralize it as he had all other rivals. In this he was helped not only by the Muslim parties in Khartoum, but by disunity in the South itself, with the disaffected Equatorians calling for 'redivision'. This double assault on the regional government ultimately led to the outbreak of the second civil war.

Origins of the second civil war, 1980-3

The three main issues over which the regional government confronted Khartoum in 1980-1 were regional borders, exploitation of oil resources, and financing regional development. The central government counter-attacked on issues of further regionalization and internal security. Behind this confrontation lay the increasing shift towards Islamic government in Khartoum.

The Addis Ababa agreement stipulated the return of the mineral-bearing Kafia Kingi district to the Southern region, and the holding of plebiscites in border areas on joining the South or remaining in the North. Neither of these provisions were implemented. The border issue, especially with the discovery of oil in disputed territory, brought to a head four distinct but related issues: the incomplete implementation of the Addis Ababa agreement; the South's dependence on the goodwill of the president of the republic against its opponents in Khartoum; the vulnerability of the South's economic development to decisions taken in Khartoum and the potential importance of the issue of further regionalization. It set the tone for future Khartoum-Juba confrontations.

At this time Lagu and his supporters raised the issue of sub-dividing the South, ostensibly as a logical continuation of the recent regionalization in the North, but this was really a ploy to oust Alier and the Dinka. The proposal was a product of resentment in Equatoria (and especially Juba) over alleged diversion of resources out of Equatoria to

other areas of the South. This resentment was based on the perception that Equatorians, the initiators of the guerrilla movement, had been cheated out of the benefits of peace.

The people of what is now the Equatoria region are mostly settled agriculturalists. They came under administrative control long before the pastoral Nilotes further North who, living in a seasonally swampy area, could be contacted only part of each year. What little economic and educational development there was in the South under the British was concentrated mainly in Equatoria. Equatorian schools produced most of the clerical staff for the administrative service, and the police and army were recruited mainly from the Azande, Moru and Latuka. Moreover, Equatorians had been used by the condominium government to control the pastoralists in other parts of the South, therefore there was little affinity between Nilotes and Equatorians at independence.

During the first civil war Equatorians were able to flee to the safety of related peoples across the international border. In Uganda many Equatorians were brought into Idi Amin's army and administration. Far fewer Nilotes were able to take refuge outside of Sudan and relied instead on the protection of their seasonal swamps. The expansion of the war in the 1960s brought many more Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk into the guerrilla forces, operating in their own provinces. By the end of the war the Nilotic peoples contributed sizeable numbers to the Anyanya, and when the Anyanya was absorbed into the national army and the police, Nilotic representation increased considerably. There were also more educated Nilotes to be absorbed into the provincial and regional administrations, and with the introduction of electoral politics on a regional scale the large Nilotic population achieved greater representation in government. At the same time many Equatorians remained in exile where the standard of living was better.

However, with the fall of Amin in 1979 many Equatorians returned to the South and felt that their opportunities for public employment were being blocked by the 'backward' Nilotes who form the majority in the region. They returned just as Lagu's confrontation with the regional assembly was reaching its climax. The confrontation between 'Equatorians' and 'Nilotics' began to take on overtones reminiscent of Amin's anti-Nilotic campaign in Uganda. The large numbers of Nilotic Dinka from Alier's Bor district who had moved to Juba, complete with their cattle, became a particular focus of resentment.

Lagu's proposal that Equatorians should have control of their own region won considerable support in the North but was less favourably received in the South. Its most ardent supporters were the younger generation of returnees and former exiles who had spent most of the period of the civil war (and later) outside Sudan. Many Equatorians who had remained throughout the war opposed 'redivision', as the regionalization proposals became known. At issue was the South's potential vulnerability. Lagu's opponents pointed out that only the South's unity protected it from complete subservience to Khartoum.

In March 1981 the regional assembly voted decisively against redivision, but in October Nimeiri again dissolved both the national and regional assemblies. He dismissed the

HEC in Juba, appointed an interim government, and proclaimed new national and regional elections to decide the issue of further regionalization. The constitutional legality of this act was again questionable, but the Alier camp, having accepted it in 1980, could scarcely protest in 1981.

Throughout this period US military support for Nimeiri against Libya and Ethiopia increased and became more public. Sudan also signed a military defence pact with Egypt. Nimeiri appeared to believe that with this military backing he could meet any insurrection in the South. His attempt to transfer a number of ex-guerrillas from the South and replace them with Northerners, however, precipitated mutinies in Bor, Pibor and Pochalla in May 1983. The Bor mutiny was soon followed by a presidential decree dividing the South into the three regions of Equatoria, Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal.

By July 1983 the various Anyanya II and mutinous army units met in Ethiopia and formed the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). With Ethiopian backing Col Dr John Garang (an American-educated Dinka from Bor district) was elected both commander of the SPLA and chair of the SPLM. The SPLA/SPLM fought for a restructuring of the entire Sudan. At Ethiopian instigation the main SPLA forces inside Ethiopia attacked the dissident units of Anyanya II which withdrew from the SPLA/SPLM. Most were Nuer from the Nasir and Akobo areas, but the SPLA-Anyanya II split was never completely tribal. By the end of 1984 the Anyanya II began cooperating with the national army against the SPLA. At the time of Nimeiri's fall later the same year SPLA activities were still largely confined to parts of Upper Nile, Jonglei, Eastern Bahr al-Ghazal and Lakes provinces.

The fall of Nimeiri

Regionalization did not bring Equatoria the financial and political autonomy it expected, and Nimeiri's declaration of *sharia* law in September 1983 (although never implemented in the South) brought the Islamic threat closer to home. This led Southern leaders (including Alier and Lagu) to collaborate in opposing Islamic amendments to the constitution. It was around this opposition that Northern members also grouped themselves. Debt, a ruined economy, corruption within the government, famine, the war in the South and an increasingly oppressive application of *sharia* law in Khartoum, finally produced enough popular dissatisfaction to overthrow Nimeiri while he was on a state visit to the United States in April 1985. Gen. Suwar al-Dahab formed a transitional military council (TMC) and appointed a civilian cabinet composed of politicians and trade union leaders. The 1973 permanent constitution was suspended, but the September 1983 *sharia* laws were retained, although amputation and flogging were no longer imposed. Political parties were allowed to organize freely, and in addition to the traditional parties, several new parties were formed throughout Sudan. However the SPLA refused to recognize the TMC, and the SPLA/SPLM also refused to take part in the proposed national elections

until a new constitutional formula for the country had been agreed. It did, however, agree to a dialogue with the trade unions and political parties of the National Alliance which had precipitated Nimeiri's removal.

Koka Dam peace talks

A meeting was arranged at Koka Dam outside Addis Ababa in March 1986. The National Alliance was prepared to accept Southern autonomy, but the SPLA/SPLM insisted that it would not discuss the 'Southern problem' in isolation from the issue of unequal regional development throughout the country. The end to the civil war lay not in asking what kind of government the South needed, but what kind of government the nation needed. The SPLA/SPLM and the National Alliance (including representatives of the Umma Party but not the DUP) agreed that:

- future discussions were to be about national problems and not the 'Southern problem';
- the state of emergency was to be lifted;
- the September 1983 laws 'and all other laws that are restrictive of freedoms' were to be repealed;
- the temporary constitution adopted would recognize regional government;
- all military pacts between Sudan and other nations were to be annulled;
- an effective ceasefire was to be established;
- the government of the day must agree to dissolve itself in favour of an interim government of national unity which would include the SPLA/SPLM;
- a constitutional conference was to be convened to discuss the 'nationalities' question, religion and human rights, among other issues.

Parliament, parties and militias

Parliament and the Islamic parties

The peace talks were followed in April 1986 by elections, resulting in the formation of an Umma/DUP coalition government under the prime ministership of Sadiq al-Mahdi. Garang and Sadiq met in Addis Ababa in July 1986, and the SPLA/SPLM agreed to link the lifting of the state of emergency to the establishment of a ceasefire. However, differences between the government and the SPLA/SPLM persisted over what was expected by the repeal of *sharia* law. The SPLM wanted a return to secular laws, while Sadiq and his government insisted that they be replaced by 'sound' Islamic laws.⁵

The three largest parties in the parliament, the Umma, DUP and NIF (which grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood), were committed to an Islamic constitution. Before the fall of Nimeiri, Sadiq had advocated the gradual Islamization and Arabization of Southern Sudan. In public statements to Southern Sudanese he appeared conciliatory, promising a Muslim commitment to 'the full citizenship, human, and religious rights' of non-Muslims, yet in other statements he proclaimed that the most non-Muslims could expect would be the protection of minority rights *dhimma* within the context of the Muslim majority establishing new laws on Islamic principles.⁶ Sadiq's sometime coalition partner, the DUP, was more blatantly committed to an Islamic republic and opposed to both the 'atheism' of a secular state and 'paganism' in the South. The NIF/Muslim Brothers were closely associated with Nimeiri's September laws and the *sharia* courts, proclaiming *sharia* to be the main source of legislation in the country. An NIF charter of January 1987 also reaffirmed freedom of religious expression and respect for local cultures, but this did nothing to assuage the fears of non-Muslims.

Southern parties

In the late 1980s Southern solidarity gradually increased, but regional, generational and personal differences between leaders remained. The Khartoum-based Southern Sudan Political Association (SSPA) and the Sudan African Congress (SAC) favoured the return of a single Southern regional government, while the People's Progressive Party (PPP), the Sudan African People's

Congress (SAPCO) and the Sudan People's Federal Party (SPFP) originally supported the retention of the existing three regions. The SSPA did manage to elect representatives from all three Southern regions to the national assembly, but the others, despite their grandiose titles, were restricted in their support to small areas of their home regions. However, many younger Southerners regarded the SSPA, which was largely composed of older Southern leaders, as inextricably linked with the political failures and corruption of the past.

Southern leaders grew increasingly impatient with Sadiq's manoeuvres in Khartoum as he lurched from coalition to coalition. The actions of the army and militias throughout the South provided an additional incentive for Southern leaders to seek greater cooperation among themselves and to reaffirm their commitment to the Koka Dam declaration.

Throughout 1983-4 the SPLA operated mainly in Upper Nile, Jonglei, Lakes and Eastern Bahr al-Ghazal provinces (the Nilotic heartland). However, it soon expanded its operations outside the South into Blue Nile and Kordofan provinces, and it also began a successful recruitment drive in Equatoria, especially around Kapoeta, Torit, Maridi and Mundri. By late 1987, the SPLA was in a good position to control a long stretch of the Ethiopian border and consolidate its hold on the central portion of the Southern region.

Southern and Arab militias

Khartoum kept its main garrisons in the South supplied by air, but since the early 1980s, and especially under the TMC, governments have increasingly relied on armed militias to fight the SPLA and its rural support on the ground. The militias are given arms and ammunition and operate mainly independently of the army.

Government policy appeared to be the depopulation of Northern Bahr al-Ghazal through Arab militia activity, just as earlier raids tried to drive the Dinka out of Abyei. The outcome of such a plan, if successful, would be to place the crucial pastures of the Bahr al-Ghazal completely under Baggara control, and also place any oil found in the Muglad-Abyei area beyond dispute. The Arab militias concentrated almost exclusively on Dinka civilian targets, looting cattle, women and children. In addition, numerous cases of slave-trading have now been documented in a report drawn up by two Northern Sudanese lecturers in the University of Khartoum.⁷ A number of militias were

responsible for planning the massacre of Dinka and other Southern civilians in Ed-Da'ain in Southern Darfur on 27-8 March 1987. Ed-Da'ain has a population of about 60,000, some 17,000 of whom were Dinka labourers and refugees from the war. It was also an Umma Party stronghold. Attacks by local armed civilians began on the town's one Christian church on 27 March and culminated in the massacre of over 1,000 Dinka and other Southern civilians the following day. The massacre appears to have been planned days in advance. This was not a sudden act of revenge for a recent SPLA victory over the militia, as the government originally contended. Many children captured during the massacre were subsequently reported sold into slavery. Far worse in scale was a series of massacres of civilians in Wau by the army and the militias at the end of 1987, in which thousands of people were reported killed.

Food and displacement

The activities of the militias have massively widened the scope of the war. Their targets are mainly civilian and they have contributed greatly to the destruction of food supplies and the creation of a large displaced population. Many independent armed groups add to the insecurity by interfering with relief food deliveries outside the major towns.

By 1988 over a quarter of a million people were said to be dependent on food aid in the South, ranging from 70-90,000 around Juba to some 80,000 in Aweil district alone. Provision of aid was often interrupted: relief supplies in Malakal, a town of about 125,000, ran out at the end of January 1988. Neither the government nor the SPLA were willing to allow the distribution of food relief in areas outside their control. Over a million persons from Blue Nile, Upper Nile and Southern Kordofan are also living in camps around Khartoum.⁸

By February 1988 there had been no progress in lifting the state of emergency, implementing a ceasefire, or coordinating relief, and the government broke off contacts with the SPLM.

The fall of Sadiq al-Mahdi

During the final year (1988-9) of the Sadiq al-Mahdi government there was growing pressure within Sudan for a negotiated settlement with the SPLA. The Southern parties, which had arisen as a democratic alternative to the SPLA, overcame many of their differences, formed a coalition within the national assembly, and met several times with Garang and other SPLA leaders in order to agree on fundamental Southern demands.

Early in 1988 the army issued an ultimatum to Sadiq supporting peace negotiations. The DUP withdrew from the Umma-led coalition government and signed a declaration with the SPLM, which agreed to a suspension of *sharia* laws while a constitutional conference settled the future of the country. Sadiq was thus forced to form a new coalition with the DUP and to come closer to negotiating

a peace settlement with Garang himself. The NIF, refusing to compromise on the goal of an Islamic state, left the government. Just before Sadiq was scheduled to meet Garang in Addis Ababa for further talks, a group of NIF army officers staged a pre-emptive coup on 30 June 1989, bringing the peace process to a complete halt.

Immediately prior to the coup the military situation in Southern Sudan had dramatically shifted in the SPLA's favour. Throughout 1990, the military initiative remained with the SPLA. However, the fall of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia in May played a dramatic role in the reversal of the SPLA's military fortunes.

Mengistu and the SPLA

With the flight of Mengistu from Addis Ababa, the SPLA had to withdraw not only all its troops, but also some 200,000 Southern Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia. The SPLA thus lost its secure bases outside of Sudan and its main source of supplies, while the government of Sudan gained the potential to outflank SPLA positions along the border by moving troops through a now-friendly Ethiopia. The government also managed to resupply its army with finances from Iran and other Muslim sources, and weapons from China and South Africa. It was thus able to regain the military initiative in the dry season of 1992. The subsequent political split within the SPLA (see below) further weakened the SPLA's military position within Sudan.

The disappearance of Mengistu's patronage of Garang allowed dissension within the SPLA command to surface. In August 1991 three commanders based in Nasir (Riek Machar, Lam Akol, and Gordon Kong) announced their own coup. However, what had been presented as a takeover ended up as a split, with two SPLM/SPLAs eventually claiming to speak on behalf of Southern Sudan. Fighting broke out between the two factions (then identified by their respective headquarters, as SPLA-Torit (Garang) and SPLA-Nasir (Machar), but subsequently as SPLA-Mainstream and SPLA-United) in October 1991 and continued intermittently into 1993.

The main SPLA faction under Garang was both distracted and weakened by this fighting. Government troops thus made significant inroads into SPLA-Torit territory throughout 1992-3. There was a ferocious confrontation between the two SPLA factions in the area between Kongor, Ayod and Waat which resulted in many civilian deaths in 1993, and fighting continued in Equatoria between Garang's SPLA and troops under the defected commander William Nyuon. While the government did not directly participate in this fighting, there are reliable reports that it did supply both Machar and Nyuon with weapons.

The government resumed its major offensive in the dry season of 1994. Its main objective was to reach and seal off the Sudan-Uganda border. By the end of 1994 the situation inside Southern Sudan was far worse than it had been at the end of 1988. The political consensus within the SPLA had broken down, just as the government's position on negotiations hardened, making it difficult to agree even an agenda for peace talks. Hundreds of thousands of civil-

ians had been attacked and displaced, either by SPLA-factional fighting or by renewed government offensives. The rural economy had suffered further disruption, and effective relief efforts were hindered both by the fighting and the lack of political consensus. The attention of the international community had become more narrowly focused on relief issues, rather than on the fundamental political and economic issues of the war.

Political divisions within the SPLA

At its inception, the SPLA/SPLM combined its political and military wings under a single commander, as a deliberate attempt to avoid the divisions which had weakened the guerrilla and exile movements of the first civil war. The activities of the members of the political wing (SPLM) declined in importance soon after the early years of the war, and those prominent civilian figures in the movement who argued for an increasingly autonomous role (such as Joseph Oduho and Martin Majier) were detained. Disagreements between Garang and others in the SPLA/SPLM were frequently resolved by their detention. Garang used Mengistu's security apparatus to prevent an opposition developing within his own organization. However, this did not prevent the formation of a hard core of leaders personally hostile to Garang.

The announcement of a coup against Garang was made by the two commanders in an interview broadcast over the BBC *World Service* on 28 August 1991. They justified their action by reference to Garang's authoritarian rule, specific human rights abuses, and a disagreement over the ultimate objectives of the movement. The Nasir commanders came out for total independence of the South, a platform which they hoped would appeal to the majority of Southern Sudanese, and especially the majority of SPLA soldiers. However, the announcement of the coup produced insufficient momentum within the SPLA to force Garang's removal and replacement. Militarily, Garang remained in control of Equatoria, Bahr al-Ghazal and part of Upper Nile, while the SPLA-Nasir commanders could claim the loyalty of the mainly Nuer districts which formed part of Machar's command. There were many within Garang's SPLA (including among the Dinka of Bahr al-Ghazal) who sympathized with the Nasir commanders' critique of Garang's leadership, but they were also mindful of the inherent dangers in splitting the movement at that juncture.

Faction fighting

Fighting between the SPLA factions appears to have been initiated by the Garang command, when Nyuon, a Nuer commander then still loyal to Garang, was sent with a force from Bor to enter Machar's territory from the South. The force was repulsed, and retaliation followed with raids into Dinka territory of Kongor and Bor. The invading force met little resistance and targeted the Dinka civilian population. In the first of many bloodbaths to

result from the SPLA split, civilians of all ages were killed, women abducted, and cattle stolen.⁹

The sacking of Bor by SPLA-Nasir forces put an end to any immediate hope of reconciling the leadership of the two factions. It also added an ethnic dimension to the split, making the Dinka of Bahr al-Ghazal highly suspicious of the intentions of the Nasir faction, and characterizing the Nasir SPLA as being a Nuer army. By late 1993 the Nasir faction (renamed SPLA-United) had failed to live up to its earlier humanitarian and democratic rhetoric. It had been responsible for human rights abuses, and had allowed the perpetrators of abuses to go unpunished. It had not introduced greater democracy in its own organization, (some accusing Machar of dictatorial behaviour), and it had made little advance in the creation of administrative institutions, beyond the appointment of a short-lived 'cabinet' of ministers. Cooperation with the Khartoum government also began to alienate many of the lower level officers and soldiers.

A US Congressional attempt to bring about a reconciliation between Garang and Machar in October 1993 produced agreement on most major issues but was, in the end, blocked mainly by objections by secondary commanders within SPLA-United.

The factionalism within SPLA-United in 1993-4 was contrasted by attempts at consolidation within SPLA-Mainstream. For the first time a National Convention was held inside Southern Sudan. Critics have dismissed it as merely a rubber-stamp assembly, in that it reconfirmed Garang's leadership without dissent. Others hailed it as a milestone, and noted the attendance of several dozen Baggara representatives. Despite such public displays of confidence, SPLA-Mainstream's organizational weaknesses are still apparent, and Garang has yet to overcome the distrust which has accumulated around his leadership. The belated admission of the execution of three prominent Dinka detainees, including Martin Majier, one of the founders of SPLM, did nothing to restore general confidence in Garang.

Impact of the war

By 1988 the war had caused widespread disruption to civilian rural activity. The areas worst affected – Northern Bahr al-Ghazal, Abyei, the Upper Nile – were those which had been subjected to systematic raiding by government-backed militias whose main targets had been civilians. There was a massive decline in the cattle and small-stock population, both through raiding and through the spread of diseases which went unchecked after the collapse of the veterinary service. The displacement of hundreds of thousands of persons from their homes meant the disruption and contraction of subsistence agriculture, and the reduction of reserve stocks of food. The expansion of fighting throughout most areas of Southern Sudan meant that the pre-war network of bush shops had virtually disappeared by 1986, leaving most civilians with no source for buying food or replacing worn-out tools.

The SPLA strategy of dealing with civilian displacement prior to 1989 was to encourage, and in some cases organize, large-scale movement out of Southern Sudan into Ethiopia. In 1989 the international climate had changed and it was possible to set up a relief distribution network inside Southern Sudan. The SPLA, through its relief organization the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA), did attempt to encourage the resettlement of displaced persons in some areas, although there was no systematic effort to bring refugees back from Ethiopia. This was partly because the relief operation of UN Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) never reached those areas worst affected by the war, and could offer very little effective incentive for resettlement, and partly because donor governments (especially the USA) were unwilling in the early years of OLS to finance ‘rehabilitation’ projects (as opposed to emergency relief). In addition, the SPLA and the SRRA themselves continued to view relief in terms of the delivery of large stocks of foodstuffs, rather than the targeted distribution of items which would help assist the revival of the rural economy.

Civilians in towns

It is difficult to give a number for both townspeople and internally displaced people living in government-held towns, as exaggerated figures have been produced in order to secure large quantities of relief supplies, which have then been diverted to the army and/or sold in shops. The most extreme case is that of Juba, which the government claimed contained 500,000 people in 1991. A UN census taken later that year (which many observers thought still gave too high a figure) reduced that number to 250,000.

Civilians living in government towns have often been treated as hostages. Some came into the towns to get away from the SPLA, others merely to get away from the fight-

ing. The siege tactics which the SPLA has employed against many major towns and government outposts, have increased the hardship of those living in the towns, especially as land mines have been used and they do not discriminate between soldiers and civilians. It has been reported that the SPLA did leave corridors open for civilians to leave the towns (as in Torit and Juba), but very often government land mines have closed these corridors as well.

The SPLA has assisted some civilians to leave government-controlled centres, but it has not been consistent in its policy. The SPLA has frequently treated townspeople as government sympathisers and has imprisoned those remaining in the towns which have been taken by the SPLA. Townspeople also face retaliation from the army for acts committed by the SPLA. Numerous civilians were arrested and executed following the failed SPLA assault on Juba in 1992. A number of educated Nuer resident in Malakal were also detained (though most were released) following the attack on the town by SPLA-United forces the same year.

Inter-community warfare

The level and organization of inter-community warfare in Sudan has been difficult to gauge. In the early years of the war it was common to characterize much of the fighting in the South as ‘inter-tribal’ warfare (a claim repeatedly made by Sadiq), however, a good deal of the ‘tribal’ participation in violence was government organized and supplied. Nevertheless, the proliferation of cheap modern weapons has led to the development of a ‘Kalashnikov culture’. At \$45, an AK-47 automatic rifle can cost less than a cow.

Much of the fighting involving the civilian population can be traced back to patterns established in the early years of the war, when Khartoum governments (first under Nimeiri and then under Sadiq) supported militias as surrogate armies: the Murahalin of the Missiriya and Rizeigat to attack the Dinka of Northern Bahr al-Ghazal, the Murle to attack the Dinka and Nuer, the Mundari to fight the Dinka, the mainly Nuer Anyanya II to attack the Dinka and Nuer SPLA, and the Toposa to take on nearly anyone. The ability to raise such militias had its origins in local pre-war disputes (very often over land, water and cattle), which persuaded some members of the communities that an alliance with the government would not only be beneficial in the short-term, but would also lead to a permanent change in their favour in disputes over local resources.

The SPLA response to such opposition alternated between meeting violence with violence and attempting reconciliation. The SPLA–Murahalin conflict was fought out mainly via conventional warfare, with the SPLA

attacking the Murahalin forces rather than their civilian base. Conflict between the SPLA, Mundari and Murle, however, was much more general, and civilians were frequently the target of SPLA retaliation.

The creation of militias by various Khartoum governments did not mean, however, that these militias themselves represented a consensus of 'tribal' feeling. There were significant divisions among the Missiriya, Mundari and Toposa, for instance, concerning these active alliances with the government and the SPLA has, at times, been able to use these divisions to their advantage. In the South the Mundari were always split in their attitude towards the SPLA. Relations between the SPLA, the Murle and Toposa were never easy, and SPLA retaliation in both areas was often severe. Some Murle chiefs were willing to collaborate with the SPLA by 1990, and these were involved in a peace-making conference between the Murle, Anuak and Nuer held at Akobo in the early rains of 1990. The Toposa continued to be split.

The wholesale attack on Dinka civilians in Kongor and Bor helped to rally support for Garang among the Dinka of Bahr al-Ghazal. Many in the province were critical of the SPLA leadership and felt they had been neglected in favour of other areas of Southern Sudan (there was a particularly strong grievance concerning the lack of relief programmes in Bahr al-Ghazal). The openly anti-Dinka sentiment of the Nasir SPLA left them feeling exposed. Many of the reinforcements which Garang sent to the Kongor area in 1992-3 came from Bahr al-Ghazal. They were not inhibited by any ties of community or kinship with the Nuer of Waat and Ayod. In the devastation visited on Yuai, Waat and Ayod a number of displaced Nuer-speaking Dinka civilians were killed by the Bahr al-Ghazal troops, who accused them of having thrown in their lot with the Nuer.

A similar retaliation was meted out against the Pari of Jebel Lafon in 1992-3, when Nyuon split off from Garang and passed through that area. The Pari were punished by SPLA-Mainstream troops for not opposing Nyuon and his cadre. This led to the alienation of the Pari from Garang and their subsequent alliance with Nyuon and SPLA-United.

More serious inter-community fighting has broken out among the Nuer within the territory under SPLA-United control. This is partly related to internal dissatisfaction among the Nuer about the distribution of relief aid, and has also been fostered by power struggles within the SPLA-United command. There was some decline in inter-community fighting throughout 1994, however, such fighting has by no means been extinguished.

International involvement

The resumption of civil war in Sudan in the context of the cold war made it subject to a number of distortions from external influence. In the early 1980s Khartoum under President Nimeiri was receiving military and economic support from a variety of allies, including the USA and Egypt, while the SPLA was supported by Ethiopia, the USSR, Cuba and Libya. A decade later there had been sweeping changes. Khartoum's supporters and

friends in 1995 included Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan, Malaysia and China, with France adopting an ambiguous position. The governments of Idris Deby in Chad and Col Gaddafi in Libya had embarked on economic integration pacts with Sudan, which seemed to be more evident on paper than on the ground.

Khartoum's relations with neighbouring countries in the Horn of Africa were deteriorating; Eritrea severed diplomatic relations at the end of 1994, Ethiopia and Kenya were exasperated at Sudan's intransigence in the IGADD peace talks, and Uganda was more or less openly siding with Garang's SPLA.¹⁰ All objected to the role of the Bashir regime in promoting radical Islamic movements in their countries and feared the spread of instability.

The SPLA, meanwhile, was trying to recover from the loss of overt Ethiopian assistance in 1991 and to build a support network in Africa. It sought arms from the US, which by 1995 had come to associate the Khartoum government with international terrorism, including the bombing of the New York World Trade Center in 1993.

Both the US and Egypt initially accepted the Bashir regime after the 1989 coup, playing down its Islamic aspect. Alarm grew when Sudan was declared an Islamic state in December 1990, and a year later, when it openly aligned itself with Iran. The US then went on to denounce Sudan as a supporter of terrorism. However, the American intelligence community's attitude to Sudan was slow to change. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam was seen as a bulwark against communism, and there was an alliance of convenience between militant Muslims of the NIF and the US government in opposition to Mengistu's Marxist government in Ethiopia. Even after the 1991 Gulf War, when the Bashir regime remained firm in its support of Iraq, certain US officials (especially in the intelligence services) were still favourably disposed towards members of the NIF regime, and their perception of the SPLA was still coloured by its earlier collaboration. Residual hostility to Garang and his circle also led some to give encouragement to the dissident commanders in Nasir. How much this influenced their actions remains difficult to assess, but it is clear that Machar's breakaway faction expected greater international support and recognition from Western governments (especially the USA) than they received.¹¹

Egypt's traditional attitude to Sudan has been proprietorial, and is conditioned by its utter dependence on the Nile for water. The dismissively hostile response from Cairo to the SPLA's proposal for self-determination for Southern Sudan is a reflection of its instinctive fear of losing influence over territory through which the (White) Nile flows. It is also wrangling with Khartoum over the Halaib district adjoining the Red Sea: both sides claim authority over the area, largely because of the possibility of oil extraction.

Furthermore, Cairo and Khartoum have accused each other of harbouring opponents of each other's governments. Since Sudan's independence the two have had a reciprocal arrangement which eliminates the need for visas and residence permits; however, Sudanese in Egypt cannot obtain refugee status. Since the 1989 coup, thousands of Sudanese have fled to Egypt to escape persecution, but have been unable to obtain assistance from refugee bodies such as UNHCR. The Northern Sudanese

opposition parties now have bases in Cairo, while Islamic militants from Egypt are sheltered in Khartoum. As a result of these tensions, Egyptian property in Sudan – particularly the University of Cairo's Khartoum extension and housing for government employees – has been confiscated by the security forces.

Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS)

Following the build-up of domestic and international pressure for humanitarian assistance to Southern Sudan, OLS was launched by the UN on 1 April 1989. It sought to deliver relief assistance to civilians on both sides of the conflict with the consent of both parties. This was initially made possible by the temporary ceasefire and resumption of peace talks between Sadiq's government and Garang's SPLA. At that time the Sudanese negotiating on both sides accorded less importance to relief aid than did the international organizations. At first its provision nurtured the embryonic peace process, but after the collapse of those talks with the advent of the Bashir regime, wrangling over OLS and the external provision of relief became part of the process of war.

Public concern among the international community has tended to focus not on the politics of the war but on means of providing 'relief'. In many ways the OLS was a unique development in international humanitarian relief operations; it has been able to achieve some form of regular agreement to provide relief to all sides in a current conflict. However the main UN agencies involved have tended to respond to relief needs in Southern Sudan in terms of a 'natural disaster', never fully appreciating the role of the war in producing the relief crisis.

The UN's most serious weakness has been its inability to adhere to its own strict doctrines of impartiality. Khartoum could and did obstruct UN deliveries to SPLA-held territories, but the UN never suspended its deliveries to government-held areas, in order to insist on an impartial distribution of relief. Khartoum and the various factions of the SPLA have been rightly criticized for manipulating relief and redirecting relief supplies. While donors and a concerned international public must insist that the main parties in the war be fully accountable in humanitarian matters, the UN itself has evaded being held internationally accountable for its own lapses. All parties to the OLS agreement have contributed to its failure, but the main blame must be shared between the government of Sudan and the UN.

Food as a weapon

The famine of the war zones in Sudan was brought about through the deliberate disruption of agriculture and uprooting of communities by the military forces. A crucial balancing factor in conflict – the responsibility of military commanders for the needs of civilians in areas under their control – has to varying degrees been supplanted by the provision of relief by outsiders. This produces various repercussions which are rarely fully

acknowledged by any of the participants. New patterns of dependence have been created in a situation prone to manipulation and antagonism. The inefficient, costly and supposedly short-term response of external relief provision becomes a habit with its own momentum. Relief food, which rarely accounts for more than 10-15 per cent of total consumption in afflicted areas, has nonetheless become a weapon of war and a source of political power. Meanwhile the stimulus towards enabling people to resume local food production and other economic activities – far more effective in overcoming famine and stabilizing communities – is lost.

In contrast to the expenditure on emergency relief, official international development aid to Sudan has dwindled dramatically under the Bashir regime. To some extent this reflects the hostility that characterizes its international relations. However, the failure of the international community to address the long-term needs of the Sudanese people is not solely a consequence of the regime's use of force to seize power, its alleged sheltering of terrorists or its abuse of human rights. Nor is it confined to the war zone.

In the economic climate of the 1980s and 1990s, Western intervention in Sudan, as in Africa generally, has operated via structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the World Bank and the IMF, aiming to promote 'market forces' and reduce public sector expenditure. This has meant a slashing of government budgets for social welfare, education and health. The poorest groups, may – if they are fortunate – find a safety net of 'relief aid' provided by non governmental organizations (NGOs) in a contractual agreement with the government.

While development investment has virtually disappeared, to be replaced by a system geared to respond to emergencies, famine has brought benefits to the traders who exploit the grain shortages with the subsequent collapses in livestock prices. Fortunes were made in the mid-1980s by those with transport and warehouse facilities to rent to the aid agencies working in Darfur and the South, from Port Sudan, through Kosti and beyond. Facilitation of the aid operations is not necessarily their aim. In the war zones in particular, the profits of traders, politicians, army and militia leaders may be maximized by manipulating, limiting or blocking relief efforts.

Women in Sudan

The social turbulence in Sudan has had a particularly acute impact on the lives of women, including the disadvantaged minorities and the middle and upper classes. The political freedoms won by bodies such as the Sudan Women's Union and decades of progress towards social equality now face a backlash under the guise of religious law. Although some women from the élite classes still hold public office, strategic dismissals have ensured that the few who remain are sympathizers with the regime.

In major Northern towns displaced Southern and non-Arab families, where the women are often the heads of households, have encountered unprecedented harassment. Women play a major role in agriculture, which has been disrupted by war. The introduction of mechanized farming has also altered female economic roles and imposed new constraints, for example in areas where it is unacceptable for women to work alongside migrant male labourers. In the war zones, women have suffered rape and abduction by all sides in the conflict, to the extent that the ending of hostilities between the factions of the SPLA will depend in part on the return of 'wives' seized in raids on villages. Women's status as economic chattels is also underlined by the dowry system, usually paid in cash or kind in the North, and in cattle in much of the South.

The introduction by Nimeiri of *sharia* law in September 1983 caused considerable upset at all levels of society, not least in the way it allowed law enforcers to exercise prejudice against women and minority groups. One of its measures forbade women to be seen in public with men other than family members or approved guardians. Although the overthrow of Nimeiri in 1985 brought a temporary suspension of the penalties, the *sharia* laws were never revoked, and in 1989 the military-Islamist Bashir regime introduced dramatic and systematic attacks on all elements of women's lives in Sudan. The 1991 Public Order Act, part of the regime's new penal code, is framed so widely that it allows almost any mixed social gathering to be considered a setting for fornication, and enables the virtual exclusion of women from the male-dominated public sphere.

The supposedly 'Islamic' nature of the strictures on women is highly controversial. It is argued by progressive Muslims that the Prophet Mohammed was responsible for advancing the status of women at a time when unwanted girl children were disposed of by being buried alive. However, the male clerical interpretation of Islamic law after his death, with its emphasis on the letter of the law rather than its spirit, halted the process. In this way the Koranic injunction that both men and women should dress and behave modestly became a mechanistic requirement for women to cover their bodies. Similarly, the Prophet's admonition of a midwife about to circumcise a young girl, that she might 'reduce, but not destroy', which amounted to criticism of the already established practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), has been treated in reactionary circles as an endorsement rather than a condemnation of the practice. The NIF's claims that

Islam is incompatible with female economic activity outside the home is equally unwarranted. These attitudes have more to do with tradition, nationality and class than with religion.

The 1990s began with alarming developments in the treatment of women, including imprisonment, torture, intimidation and harassment; and interference with the rights of movement, association, employment and dress. In the name of protecting morality, the energies of law enforcement bodies have been directed towards the persecution of women in public. Young women in particular are primary targets for quasi-religious propaganda in the name of chastity, obedience and domesticity, voiced repeatedly through government-controlled media. Persistently made to feel ashamed of their bodies, they may be stopped on the street at the whim of police and security organizations. The reasons given for this include being inadequately covered, not having an escort, being seen with a man not properly accredited as an escort, or simply walking in a 'provocative' manner.

While women in government offices were immediately forced to adhere to the dress code, the response of the majority of women has been a mixture of defiance, passive resistance and practicality. For some young women in the 1980s, the *hijab* combination of headscarf and long-sleeved blouse was more practical – and much cheaper – than the unwieldy *tobe* traditionally worn outside the home by Northern Sudanese. However, the attempt to impose an Iranian-style *chador* was unsuccessful.

A ban on unaccompanied women travelling abroad was framed with the declared purpose of protecting the honour of Sudanese women and clamping down on vice. In practice it did more to restrict the movement of perceived opponents of the regime, for example by preventing the attendance of respected academics at conferences abroad, than to limit prostitution. Most of the detentions regarding prostitution are on the grounds of 'reasonable suspicion' rather than evidence, since Islam dictates that any such act must be witnessed by four (male) individuals.

In the towns of Northern Sudan, any non-Northern woman risks classification as a brewer of alcohol and a prostitute. She may be accosted on the streets for sex, especially if she does not conform to Islamic dress, and if she sells food or tea outside she risks confiscation of her utensils and arrest under the frequent *kasha* purges of the informal economic sector.

The majority of displaced family households are headed by women. Men may be absent for a number of reasons: some are part of the migrant agricultural labour force; others are fighting for the SPLA or the government. Many of the women are widows of government soldiers, trying to sustain their families without the pensions to which they are theoretically entitled. In Omdurman, groups of women are organizing themselves into cooperatives so that they can sell tea, peanuts or *kisra* (sorghum pancakes) from licensed kiosks without suffering the penalties of the *kasha*, but these initiatives are prone to interference.

The severest interpretation of *sharia* law is used to flog and incarcerate women from minority groups who brew alcohol, which they do to support their families in the absence of any alternative source of income. The role of alcohol in Sudanese society is surrounded by hypocrisy: at least 50 per cent of Northern males consume *aragi* (distilled date or sorghum liquor) and *marissa* (millet beer) brewed by women from the South or west of the country. Police may visit the drinking houses to consume illicit alcohol and return later to raid the premises. Informers are encouraged to report to the NIF People's Committees and Popular Police Forces, who may carry out raids without warrants at any time.

Men with grudges against individual women may make allegations of prostitution against them if their own sexual advances are refused. Sometimes the police demand bribes in order to drop charges; if the amount offered is insufficient, the woman is charged with attempted bribery. Subsequent trials at the Public Order courts are characterized by pressure for conviction. The judges are often junior military officers with little or no legal training who act as hostile prosecutors, and the presumption is of guilt rather than innocence. Appeals are discouraged, and floggings are administered without checking the fitness of the accused for corporal punishment.

In prison the women are often raped. Prison warders demand sexual favours in return for small essentials like soap, or for granting visits by relatives.¹² Little shelter is available and the quality of food and water is poor, even by local standards. About 75 per cent of the women in detention are either pregnant, breast-feeding or caring for small children. The number of detained women has grown rapidly. Omdurman women's prison, the largest in the country, often holds 10 times its original capacity of 30-50 women. In October 1994 the government announced the release of most of the inmates of Omdurman women's prison, in a manner suggesting that this was an act of clemency. In fact the women had rioted, after promises that they would be freed if they underwent PDF training were not honoured. Non-Muslim women are often offered gifts or early release as a reward for conversion to Islam, and proselytizing organizations have become part of daily prison life.

Zar

Sudanese Muslim women who have not even attempted to diverge from the traditional patterns of life have found themselves under attack. One of the central female institutions, the communal practice known as *Zar*, has been targeted under the Public Order Act. *Zar* incorporates a belief system which existed before Islam and has survived by never challenging the religion. It is a major factor in binding female society together, and acts as a cathartic safety valve for the frustrations of daily life. *Zar* is described by anthropologists as a cult of spirit possession, and is found in Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, with related activities in West Africa, East Africa and across the Red Sea in Yemen, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Gulf states.

Religious conservatives began to move against the *Zar* in 1988, before the Bashir regime seized power, on the grounds that it was contrary to Islamic practice. Few men attend the *Zar* and the freedom it gives women to snub male

society is considered subversive. In *Zar* gatherings, which may continue for three to seven days, drums are used in conjunction with incense and chanting to address the *Zar* spirits, and to create a trance-like state. The inherent power of women's drumming in Sudan is seen by male religious conservatives as dangerous, because of its capacity to arouse excitement, and young men have been known to attempt to destroy the drums because they bring down 'devils'. The women's use of alcohol and tobacco at the ceremonies, albeit in smaller quantities than their menfolk, is also condemned by extremists, but until the advent of the Bashir regime this was not sufficient to bring down the wrath of the authorities upon the practitioners. By 1994, however, the *sheikhat* leaders of the *Zar* had suffered multiple arrests and a full-blooded government campaign seemed intent on its eradication. However, some believe that by this time its significance for women was already waning.

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM), already practised comprehensively in Northern Sudan, has also spread to the non-Muslim community in the South and west, and among urban migrants who are responding to social pressure to conform. It is mistakenly regarded as an Islamic practice, and as a safeguard against immorality and HIV/AIDS, although it has been suggested by medical experts that the opposite is true. Medical complications regularly result from the practice, which always involves the excision of the clitoris and the outer vaginal labia, and in the severe form most widely carried out includes infibulation – the sewing up of the vaginal orifice leaving only a small outlet for menstrual flow. Abnormal scar tissue formation, pain on sexual intercourse, retention of menstrual blood and the need for extensive cutting to permit childbirth are commonplace. In the early 1990s FGM was carried out on women in areas of Southern Sudan recaptured from the SPLA by government forces, notably in Eastern Equatoria, where the PDF vanguard are understood to have included the practice in their Islamization campaign. This contrasts strongly with the efforts by enlightened women in the 1970s to reduce the extent and severity of the practice.

Resistance

Women have played a distinctive role in opposition to repression, and are vital in the safety nets that have been organized to help the families of those who have been executed, arrested or dismissed from their jobs. They also engage in the monitoring of human rights inside the country. Moreover, middle class women have formed a vanguard in public demonstrations, partly because they are not punished as severely as men. Symbolically, they have been most visible in annual protests commemorating the summary execution of 28 army officers in April 1990 for an alleged coup attempt. The women relatives of the dead were arrested on several of these occasions, including when they protested to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Sudan during one of his fact-finding visits in 1993.

Children

Children who have left or been taken from their families constitute significant numbers in Northern and Southern Sudan respectively. War and famine have brought growing numbers of unaccompanied children from rural areas – especially the South and west – to the streets of Northern Sudan’s urban centres. Mostly boys, they have often smuggled themselves on to lorries and trains in search of a new life. When they arrive in the towns they are prey to many dangers, including sexual abuse and the unsympathetic attentions of the authorities. Estimates of their numbers are unreliable, but around Khartoum alone they run to tens of thousands. Often fiercely independent, these children find very little provision from local NGOs, and in the forced resettlement of squatters and displaced people they are at risk whether they stay in the new centres or escape back to the town centres. They are frequently taken to the *inqaz* (salvation) camps located far out in the desert, which are administered by the ministry of social planning under the scheme known as ‘Bina al-Sudan’, where the apparent aim is to train them for fighting in the militia forces. Many of these locations are kept strictly secret, but it is known that such camps have been established near Derudeb in Red Sea state, at El-Fau and Wad Medani in El Gezira. These sites are generally so far from human habitation that those who attempt to escape may die of exposure. The children are subjected to intensive ‘Islamic’ indoctrination, and severe flogging is the penalty for disobedience.

Child soldiers

In Southern Sudan, the issue of child soldiers was brought to international attention in 1991 when it briefly became one of the issues used by the Nasir commanders to justify their quarrel with Garang. It is alleged that the SPLA has forcibly recruited several thousand boys who were first sent to Ethiopian training camps under the guise of receiving an education, and were subsequently absorbed into the army. Linked to this issue has been the destruction of the education system in Southern Sudan and the failure of the SPLA to replace it.

The movement of boys to Ethiopia was the only way, prior to 1989, that civilians in the SPLA territories could receive systematic deliveries of relief supplies. Because Khartoum objected to relief work in SPLA-controlled territory before OLS began – and because NGOs, international aid agencies and donor governments generally accepted that prohibition – Itang and subsequent camps became the main centres for food distribution, health care and education. These were either lacking in the rural areas, or in very precarious supply. Itang became a place where the families of many SPLA soldiers lived. However, because of displacement, especially in Bahr al-Ghazal

where families were disrupted, a number of boys were taken to Ethiopia by themselves. Towards the end of the 1980s the SPLA began a more systematic transportation of boys to Ethiopia.

Some of the children were enrolled at schools in Itang, however the quality of the education and training Southern Sudanese children received, whether in Ethiopia or inside SPLA-controlled territory, was uneven, to say the least. Education was a contentious issue in the plans for OLS, with Khartoum objecting to any education being undertaken in SPLA territory, and many donors and agencies thus being inhibited from supporting the full range of educational plans proposed by the SRRA. The SRRA’s education programme often involved little supervision, and what education did take place often included a large amount of physical training and drill.

Teenage boys were regularly recruited from the Ethiopian refugee camps into the SPLA at an age which international agencies have declared to be ‘too young’, i.e. under 18. There are certainly teenage soldiers in the SPLA (mainly ranging from mid to late teens), but the claims of ‘child’ soldiers, of the pre-teen age, have yet to be substantiated on a wide scale. The disruptions of war, the different definitions of adulthood, and the collapse of the rural education system, more than a coherent and consistent policy on the part of the SPLA, are the real causes of the appearance of teenage soldiers.



Displaced people and migrants

The early 1980s saw the escalation of famine in western Sudan leading to an exodus to the towns of the North, and to the capital in particular. Displaced people came and set up camps on the fringes of Khartoum under atrocious living conditions, bringing the problems of the periphery to the doorsteps of the more prosperous townspeople. However, instead of sympathy for their plight it was more common to hear how cheaply they could be employed.

An influx of Southern Sudanese displaced by the SPLA's operations and pro-government militia attacks were causal factors. The aim of these militia attacks was depopulation: to get Southerners out of the oilfield areas, and expand large-scale mechanized agriculture into the fertile areas which they had been occupying. The government also wanted to fight the SPLA at minimum cost, and deflect the resentment of marginalized groups like the Baggara by turning them against other marginalized tribes, like the Dinka and the Nuba.

The havoc caused by militia raids in the mid-1980s led to famine in the areas of Bentiu and Gogrial in the South and the Abyei area of Southern Kordofan. The first large exodus of displaced Southerners to the towns of the North occurred in 1983, a process which reached a peak between 1986 and 1988. They fled to the three towns of the capital (Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman), and to Al-Obeid, Al-Muglad, Ad-Daien, Kosti and Jebelein.

The displaced were not granted access to urban land. The only sites available were rubbish dumps and other wasteland. They built shelters of corrugated cardboard boxes and tin cans in part of the Haj Yusif area of Khartoum North in 1984, which later came to be known as Haj Yusif Karton. By 1992 there were 60-120 sites holding Southern squatters and the displaced around the capital, with a total of 250,000 displaced and 837,000 squatters. The people in these camps had no access to clean water, medical services or schools.¹³

Churches and voluntary organizations started to provide education, medical services and food but they faced continual harassment from a government resentful and mistrustful of Christian influence. In contrast, Islamic agencies faced no such difficulties and came to exercise a virtual monopoly on education in the camps, as well as provision of aid.

As economic conditions in the country deteriorated and the crime rate in the towns increased, the residents of the Northern towns put the blame on the newcomers.

Their discontent was combined with the army's suspicion that the displaced and squatters were part of a subversive 'fifth column'. This suspicion was fuelled by an attempted coup by Southern and Nuba soldiers in 1985, which prompted the accusation by the Arab élite in Khartoum that the 'blacks wanted to take power'. The Prime Minister at that time called it a 'racist conspiracy'.

The government was also concerned about the electoral effects of migration, which led in one case to a candidate of Nuba origin, Father Philip Abbas Gabosh, being elected to the assembly as MP for the Haj Yusif constituency in 1986, when elections were first held after the fall of Nimeiri.

Expulsion and demolition

The call for the demolition of the squatters' settlements started in 1985, and by April 1987 the Sadiq government was so concerned that it took draconian measures to get squatters and the displaced out of Khartoum. It began a campaign of forced expulsion, known as *kasha*. Thousands of the displaced were driven out of the city, falling victim to looting, rape and murder as they went, and any documents they possessed were taken.

The background to the mistreatment of the displaced Southerners is described in the US State Department's 1987 report on worldwide human rights:

*'There is ... a widely held perception among Northerners that the large number of displaced Southerners in Khartoum is a potential security threat. Furthermore, representatives of pro-Islamic political groups hold the view that refugees, most of whom are non-Muslim, dilute the "religious purity" of Khartoum and other Northern regions.'*¹⁴

In October 1987 the council of ministers set up a Squatter Settlement Committee which defined squatters as those who arrived in the city before 1984, and displaced as those who arrived later. The displaced, unlike the squatters, were to have no official recognition of their right of residence. The committee decided to relocate the squatters onto new sites in the vicinity of Khartoum, and to move the displaced from the region.

In June 1989, the Bashir government came to power with its repressive policies. One of its targets was the displaced people. The government passed a decree number 941 in May 1990 which gave legal justification to the demolition of squatters' homes. An amendment to the

Civil Transaction Act followed, this automatically negated any rights under customary law which squatters may have obtained. The new law decreed that no legal recourse was possible for those subjected to expulsion, and sealed its legal framework by decreeing that any legal procedures underway before the date of implementation of this law were now considered invalid.

Under the new act, the government proposed two kinds of relocation sites: transit camps for the displaced and resettlement camps for squatters. The main transit camps are Jebel Aulia, 45km south of Khartoum, and Es-Salaam, on the arid plain west of Omdurman. A third is near Haj Yusif. The population of these camps, which reached 100,000 according to 1992 statistics, was to be relocated to 'production areas' in rural regions, or repatriated to Southern areas. The three sites designated for permanent resettlement are known by the generic term Dar-es-Salaam, which means 'peace towns'.

While relatively few people have so far been moved to the production areas, there is no doubt that this remains part of government plans, which aim in the longer term to control migration throughout the country, confining those from the west and South to areas near their homes. This may also serve as a counter-insurgency measure against the SPLA, and help to keep Northern cities as 'Arab' as possible.

The government started its campaign of demolitions at the end of October 1990, when water supplies were cut off at Hillat Shok (Southern Khartoum), a shanty town inhabited mostly by Dinka and Nuer. A week later, the police and security forces moved in, and the houses were bulldozed and burned. Three people were killed. Demolitions followed in other small camps.

Between 10,000 and 30,000 people were forcibly removed to the unprepared settlement of Jebel Aulia. A long-established squatter settlement at Karmuta predominantly occupied by western Sudanese, including some police officers, resisted the army and police who came to demolish it. There were 21 casualties. By 24 December the demolition had been finished, and some 72,000 people were removed to Jebel Aulia.¹⁵ Relocations affected the displaced in other towns: about 72,000 in Kosti, 23,000 in Damazin (Blue Nile), a similar number from Gedaref (eastern Sudan), and unknown numbers in En Nahud, Al-Obeid, Wad Medani and Atbara.¹⁶

The NGOs and churches which had difficulty in obtaining permission to operate clinics and schools in the displaced camps, faced even greater opposition when they tried to move their services to the relocation sites. Meanwhile unlimited access was given to Islamic paras-tatal organizations, which aimed to convert the residents to Islam. As life in the new transit camps was particularly harsh, with no basic services, many residents headed back to the war zones. Others, especially teenagers, left the camps for the streets of Khartoum, which gave the government the opportunity to send them to institutions such as the Al-Turabi centre for militarized religious training and indoctrination.

Southerners and Nuba people living in residential areas of Northern towns faced extortionate rent increases from landlords, as well as abusive treatment from the police. Minorities who have lived in the North for a long

time often attempt to conceal their identities for fear of harassment, with racial discrimination being justified in religious commentaries from the mosques. Migrants, squatters and displaced people have been publicly condemned as heathens who brew alcohol in their homes and sully the Muslims' houses with their evil behaviour. Ironically, these migrants were generally the families of government officials who had fled the war zones. Many of them took refuge in Egypt, where they were looked after by the churches.

The Khartoum government, which was already neglecting the health of its displaced citizens by limiting their access to the health services, introduced a new system for drug distribution. Because the poor cannot afford to pay for the drugs, they are advised to go and seek help from the 'Zakat' ministry in the department of social welfare. However, when Southerners go there they are denied money on the grounds that they are not Muslims, even though this restriction contradicts the Islamic rules for *Zakat*.

Education

The exclusion of the displaced from education led the Southerners to establish their own schools during the period of quasi-democratic government under Sadiq, initially with funds provided by the Federal Republic of Germany. When the Bashir regime seized power, it ordered the closure of all the schools for the displaced, depriving up to a million students of educational opportunities. When they applied to established Northern schools, Southern students were often rejected on the grounds that the schools lacked space. The few who were accepted frequently faced subsequent expulsion on the grounds of unruly behaviour or a low standard of achievement in key subjects, especially Arabic language. Having started their studies using English as the language of instruction, they were in no position to compete with native Arabic speakers or those who had received Arabic instruction from an early age. Higher education presented an even greater hurdle. The university system has been Arabized without any consideration for the students who were studying in English in the Southern regions. Southern students who are studying in Egypt and funded by their regions have had their funds blocked by the Khartoum government, leaving the students stranded in mid-course.

In October 1994 the relocation programme brought further deaths, this time in the settlements of al-Khuddayir and al-Gamayir in Omdurman, as inhabitants protested against the destruction of their homes. Eye-witnesses described mass protests and said that government forces had opened fire on demonstrators.¹⁷

The Copts

The Copts, followers of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church, can be found in Northern Sudanese towns including Dongala, Atbara, Wad Medani, Port Sudan, Al-Obeid, Khartoum and Omdurman. They have 23 churches and two bishops. There are less than 200,000 members of the Coptic Christian community in Sudan,¹⁸ but their presence in the country dates back over 1,300 years, and because of their advanced literacy and numeracy their role has been more significant than their numbers would suggest. Their adoption of a passive, non-confrontational role coupled with their light skin colour, has helped them to avoid the worst excesses of religious and racial discrimination, but in recent years they have been harassed and intimidated by the NIF regime. However, the Copts tend to be overlooked in the debate on religious persecution, which focuses on the Christians in Southern Sudan.

Copts began moving to Sudan in the sixth century AD to escape from periods of oppression in Egypt. Under Islamic rule, which began in Egypt in the seventh century, they became subject to the code of *dhimma*, which offered them protection while according them second-class citizenship. Initially this was an improvement on their vulnerable status under previous rulers, but it became more oppressive as the Islamization process consolidated, and strict regulations were imposed on the building of churches.

Emigration from Egypt peaked in the early nineteenth century, and the generally tolerant reception they enjoyed in Sudan was interrupted by a decade of persecution under Mahdist rule at the end of the century. Many were obliged to relinquish their faith; they adopted Islam and inter-married with the Sudanese. The Anglo-Egyptian invasion in 1898 allowed the Copts greater religious and economic freedom, and they extended their original roles as artisans and merchants into trading, banking, engineering, medicine and the civil service. Their proficiency in business and administration made them a privileged minority.

The return of militant Islam in the mid-1960s and the subsequent demands for an Islamic constitution prompted the Copts, hitherto quiet and non-political, to join with the public opposition to religious rule. The May 1969 coup of Gen. Nimeiri, initially secular and left-leaning, temporarily dispelled their fears: in the 1970s they benefited from government assistance in establishing community clubs, and a Coptic civil servant was appointed as a senior minister.

Nimeiri's introduction of *sharia* law in September 1983 began a new phase of oppressive treatment of non-Muslims. Although the Copts did not immediately suffer the extremes – such as amputation – which were inflicted on the lower classes, they felt sufficiently threatened to join the campaign against the new laws. These laws reduced the Copts' status as court witnesses, and the abo-

lition of the legal sale of alcohol affected non-Muslim traders, who were not compensated when their goods were confiscated.

A 'Christian Alliance' including Copts was formed to defend the rights of Christians of all denominations, and after the overthrow of Nimeiri the Coptic leaders encouraged support for secular candidates in the 1986 elections, speaking against the NIF programme for a religious state. The newspapers of the NIF wrote angrily of a coalition of 'Communists and Christians' undermining Islam and a concerted effort was launched to encourage the Copts to leave the country.

When the NIF-backed military regime seized power in 1989, discrimination resumed in earnest. Hundreds of Copts were dismissed from the civil service and the judiciary. Their non-confrontational attitude no longer protected them. For example, in February 1991 a Coptic Sudan Airways pilot was executed – along with two Muslims – for illegal possession of foreign currency although, ironically, the government abolished the restriction not long afterwards. Since he was the son of a Coptic priest, the government-controlled media repeatedly referred to him as 'Girgis the Priest', and he was offered a pardon and money if he converted to Islam. Thousands attended his funeral, and the execution was taken as a warning by many Copts, who began to flee the country.

Restrictions on the Copts' rights to Sudanese nationality followed. Before 1989, it was relatively easy for Copts to obtain Sudanese nationality by birth or by naturalization, under the 1957 Nationality Act. Today, they report difficulties with the authorities in obtaining either form of nationality, with consequent problems when attempting to travel abroad. The confiscation of Christian schools and the imposition of an Arab-Islamic emphasis in language and history teaching have been accompanied by harassment of Christian children and the introduction of *hijab* dress laws, ignoring the traditional modesty of Coptic dress. In addition, a Coptic child was flogged for failing to recite a Koranic verse and, in contrast to the extensive media broadcasting of the Muslim Friday prayers, the radio has ceased coverage of the Christian Sunday service.

Military service for young people is now compulsory, as is militia training for civil servants. The forcible recruitment of Copts into the army and the PDF for the *jihad* in the South and the Nuba Mountains, has pitched them into a holy war against other Christians in the South.

Coptic businesses have been subjected to subtler harassment through government controls on licences, taxes and inspections, which have been applied to benefit NIF loyalists at the expense of non-NIF traders. It is extremely difficult for the Copts to renew their trading licences, and they are often subjected to visits from local authorities officials who 'inspect' their workplaces and find spurious reasons to impose fines or to shut down the business. Many Coptic businesspeople have fled the country.

The Beja

The Beja of the deserts of eastern Sudan are among the country's longest-established peoples. For the 4,000 years of their known history they have watched civilizations flourish and decay while their own lives remained almost unchanged until very recently. During the 1950s the Beja population in Sudan numbered 285,000; it is probably double that figure today. As well as extending into Egypt and Eritrea, they inhabit a large area of Sudan between the Egyptian border and Eritrea and the River Setit; from the Red Sea coast to the River Atbara and the Nile.

Most of the Beja are regarded as being of Hamitic origin and are sub-divided into three main groups: the Hadendowa, the Amar'ar, and Bisharyyin. There are also groups of Arabic/Semitic origin who gradually adopted the Beja language (To-Bedawei) and culture and have been largely subsumed into the Beja. Another large group, the Beni Amer, who live mostly in Eritrea or around the border town of Kassala, share a common ethnic background with the Beja. Some of the Beni Amer are To-Bedawei speakers, while others speak Tigre. Smaller groups in the area include the Helenga of Kassala (supposedly of medieval Arab and Beja origin), Tigre, and other Sudanese tribes, who speak a 'pidgin' form of To-Bedawei; and the once powerful tribe of Hamran who reside further South along the basins of the Setit and Atbara rivers. Finally, there are the Rashaidah, who migrated to Sudan from Arabia in the last century and have maintained their distinct identity. Apart from the Rashaidah, all the other tribes and groups may be regarded as part of the 'Beja confederation', whilst the Hadendowa, the Bisharyyin and Amar'ar constitute the 'Beja proper'. Among the three main groups of the 'Beja proper' the Hadendowa are possibly the most numerous and powerful.

The Beja have traditionally followed a nomadic way of life, mostly as camel herders. The Bisharyyin, and to a lesser extent the Amar'ar, raised only camels, while the Hadendowa also tended cattle and sheep. The various Beja sub-groups were also involved in grain cultivation and caravan services. In the early twentieth century under the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, new economic ventures were introduced which partially affected the Beja's lifestyle. These included the development of cotton plantation schemes in the deltas of the Baraka and Gash Rivers, and the opening of a new port at Port Sudan. Several of the Amar'ar clan took jobs as dockworkers, whilst some of the Hadendowa and Bisharyyin took up seasonal cultivation in the Tokar and al-Gash schemes. Pastoralism, however, continued to be the main Beja livelihood, especially for the Hadendowa, who showed less inclination towards urban life.

In addition to their direct influence on the Beja and their mode of living, the colonial economic ventures attracted various groups from outside the region, particu-

larly from riverain and western Sudan, as well as from West Africa. The same pattern was repeated decades later when mechanized farming was introduced in eastern Sudan during the 1940s. Most significantly, as a result of the construction of the Aswan High Dam (1964-7), the Nubian inhabitants of Wadi Halfa were resettled around the Khashm al-Girba scheme, in the south western part of the Beja land. These demographic changes had an inevitable impact on the social fabric and ecology of the Beja country.

Environmental degradation

Drastic change began with marked ecological degradation and constraints caused by the increased numbers of 'intruders'. A three year drought in the early 1940s seriously affected the animal wealth of the Beja and set it on a declining path. This was particularly evident among the Amar'ar, who by the 1970s had shifted the emphasis of their livelihood from camel rearing to breeding smaller animals and working in the port. The devastating drought of the 1980s caused gross depopulation of the Beja herds, with losses estimated at 80 per cent of their animal wealth.

Famine apart, the area available for Beja livestock rearing was rapidly diminishing. The development of cotton plantation schemes robbed the Hadendowa of their grazing reserves. The expansion of mechanized farming further South has caused a general decrease in humidity in the area, which has affected the vegetation. The construction of the Aswan Dam had inundated important pastures for the Bisharyyin, causing massive impoverishment for the Bisharyyin Beja. Those who survived were forced to move South, thus imposing further constraints on the grazing areas of their cousins, the Hadendowa. The other impact of the Aswan Dam was, as mentioned above, the resettlement of the Nubians in the New Halfa area and the development of the Khashm al-Girba scheme. Though the scheme lay outside the Beja territory, it was a zone of population concentration, and eventually a source of pressure on scarce land resources.

The lengthy civil war in Eritrea drove the Beni Amer, who used to graze near and across the Eritrean border, further North into the Beja heartland. The Rashaidah, who were able to increase their herds as a result of their smuggling and commercial activities between Saudi Arabia, eastern Sudan, and Ethiopia/Eritrea, also moved in. The arrival of ethnically diverse groups complicated social compositions and increased tensions. There was competition over resources: water, land (both for pasture and cultivation); and potential and actual conflicts arose from the divergent social groups, customs, and cultures, particularly in the rapidly growing urban centres.

The destruction of the animal wealth of the Beja has led to increasing urbanization. This is radically different

from the pattern of urbanization to which they were partially exposed when the dock was first constructed at Port Sudan. Then the choice of reverting to pastoralism, regarded by the Beja as socially superior, was viable. The current wave of urbanization has no apparent alternatives. Socially, the process might take some time to generate substantial changes in culture and tradition, but some of its political manifestations may already be observed.

Politics

The Beja were effectively integrated into the political structure of Sudan only during the condominium era. Then, and throughout most of post-independence history, they were administered indirectly through their tribal structures, which continued almost intact. The majority of the Beja are Muslim, and tended towards the DUP. After independence, however, the Beja decided their interests could be better served through other means, and the Beja Congress was formed in 1964 by educated Beja and prominent personalities within their tribal administration. In the 1965 elections the Beja Congress returned 10 MPs to the constituent assembly, and three MPs in the 1968 elections. (The high number of seats in 1965 was mostly due to a boycott of those elections by another faction.)

Nimeiri's coup in 1969 suppressed the activity of the Beja Congress, as it did other political organizations, which it attempted to supplant with the Sudan Socialist Union, as the sole legitimate party. The Congress surfaced again after the ousting of Nimeiri in 1985, its re-emergence coinciding with substantial changes in eastern Sudan, as elsewhere. The most conspicuous changes were the increased urbanization of the Beja, the numerical rise of non-Beja groups in the region (particularly in Port Sudan and other urban centres), the intensification of the Ethiopian/Eritrean civil war with a resulting influx of refugees, and the arrival of some of the drought-stricken groups from western Sudan. These radical demographic changes have had a severe impact on the Beja.

The politics of the region underwent an important shift after 1985. Whereas in the 1960s the aim of the left-leaning Beja Congress was to draw the attention of the central government to the problems of eastern Sudan and its lack of development, the emphasis in the 1980s was on regional changes. Faced with demographic transformation the Beja worried about the preservation of their identity, and their place in their own land. The central government, in which the DUP was a partner, conceded a compromise in which the governor of eastern region was to be from the Beja, while the deputy was to be appointed from the 'Northern' groups in the region. Throughout most of the democratic era the governor of eastern region was retired Maj.-Gen. M.O. Karrar, a Beja from the Amar'ar. However, the region remained almost as marginal as the rest of Sudan's periphery.

The NIF coup in June 1989 brought no positive changes for the Beja. On the contrary, the NIF was alarmed by the Beja's pride in their ancient culture and tradition, which is considered incompatible with the regime's emphasis on an Arab-Islamic identity. This tense situation became potentially explosive when the present

regime summarily executed former governor Karrar on charges of involvement in a coup plot in April 1990. Thereafter the relationship between the Beja and the regime was characterized by mutual mistrust. After Karrar's execution some members of his clan attacked NIF elements in Port Sudan, followed by sporadic attacks on security personnel in the town.

In October 1994 Sudan accused Eritrea of training some 3,000 Sudanese 'rebels' in camps in Eritrea. Some (mostly pro-government) media reports associate these camps with the DUP, while informed sources from the Beja suggest a Beja Congress connection. Whether the camps are sponsored by the DUP or the Beja Congress or both, there are certainly sufficient economic and political grievances to breed armed insurgency in eastern Sudan.

Darfur

The three and a half million people living in Darfur region, geographically isolated and neglected by the Khartoum government, have been adversely affected by conflict since the early 1980s. The relatively peaceful equilibrium between its ethnic groups has been destroyed by environmental degradation – the spread of the desert and the effects of the Sahel drought – coupled with the divide and rule tactics of central government and the influx of modern weaponry. Members of the élites of the major ethnic groups are engaged in a struggle for political status; failing to tackle the underlying problems of equitable allocation of water and land. Meanwhile, outside access to the region is now so tightly controlled that detailed information about the current plight of the indigenous peoples is increasingly difficult to obtain.

Darfur was an independent sultanate until 1916, when it was the last region to be incorporated into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The Arabic word *dar* roughly means homeland, and its population of nearly 4 million is divided into several *dars*; not only of the Fur people, as its name suggests, but also of other communities, determined by livelihood as much as ethnicity. These ecological and social distinctions are more meaningful than the administrative divisions imposed by government. Ethnicity is not in itself clear-cut, given the long history of racial mixing between indigenous ‘non-Arab’ peoples and the ‘Arabs’, who are now distinguished by cultural-linguistic attachment rather than race.

Darfur and its peoples

The Fur, largely peasant farmers, occupy the central belt of the region, including the Jebel Marra Massif, the richest and most stable area in terms of soil fertility and water resources. Also in this central zone live the non-Arab Masalit, Berti, Bargu, Bergid, Tama and Tunjur peoples, who are all sedentary farmers.

The northernmost zone is Dar Zaghawa, part of the Libyan Sahara, and inhabited by camel nomads: principally the Zaghawa and Bedeyat, who are non-Arab in origin, and the Arab Mahariya, Irayqat, Mahamid and Beni Hussein. It is the most ecologically fragile of the three main zones and the one most acutely affected by drought. Its occupants have frequently been active in armed conflicts in the region – either against settled farmers or among themselves – amid growing competition for access to water and pasture.

Cattle rather than camels are herded by the Arab nomads of the eastern and Southern zone of Darfur, who comprise the Rezeigat, Habbaniya, Beni Halba, Ta’aisha and Ma’aliyya. The area is less severely affected by drought than the Northern zone, although still highly sensitive to fluctuations in rainfall and less ecologically stable than the

central zone. In addition to the cattle and camel herders and settled farmers, there is a significant urban population of traders, government officials and other professionals.

Armed raids on rich agricultural areas and skirmishes with rival groups are part of the historical way of life for the nomadic herders, and constitute a survival strategy in the face of natural calamity and threatened destitution. While the Fur and other cultivators did not traditionally have the same degree of military organization, their relations with the nomads alternated between negotiation and hostility over the intrusion of nomads’ herds on to farming land.

The pattern of conflict changed from low-intensity, small-scale outbreaks from the 1950s to the 1970s, to high-intensity, persistent and large-scale battles in the mid-1980s. The earlier conflicts were predominantly clashes between nomadic groups over access to pasture and water, or theft of animals. Since the mid-1980s there has been a more systematic drive by the nomads to occupy land in the central Jebel Marra Massif, on the scale of a civil war, with entire villages wiped out and thousands of lives lost on both sides. While drought-stricken livestock herders attempt to survive by encroaching on the fertile central zone, the Fur have fought back to retain what they see as their land.

The attempts of successive governments to achieve peace have been alternately ineffectual and heavy-handed. Arms were channelled into Darfur by the central government under Sadiq al-Mahdi (1986-9), which armed the Southern Baggara Arabs as a militia to fight against the SPLA (at that time threatening insurgency in the region), and also armed the Northern Arab tribes, who were loyal to the Ansar of the Prime Minister’s Umma Party. Although the Fur farmers are also largely supporters of the Umma Party, the government’s preference appears to reflect the influence of the Jellaba merchants, whose primary commercial interest was in the nomads’ livestock. This contrasts with the situation in eastern Sudan, where the mercantile interest in large-scale farms predominates, and where nomadic pastoralists are treated as a hindrance – a more common scenario in many African countries.

The power struggle in neighbouring Chad spilled over into Darfur, with Idris Deby, then leading the opposition, using Sudanese territory to launch attacks on the government of Chadian President Hissene Habre. In this way the Zaghawa – who were aligned with both the Ansar and with Deby, since their ethnic group straddles the border – also obtained modern weapons. In response, Habre helped to arm the Fur. Libya’s Col Gaddafi encouraged the notion of an Arab ‘corridor’ into central Africa, which lent at least moral support for the Darfur Arabs’ incursion into the fertile Jebel Marra area hitherto occupied by the Fur. Arabs and Fur clashed bloodily around Jebel Marra and in the south west of the region in 1988-9. A peace conference in mid-1989, mediated by the Sultan of the minority Masalit, tem-

porarily settled some of the issues: the government was forced to admit publicly that the problem was not merely one of banditry.

The civil war in Darfur

The drought of the early 1980s drove nomadic Zaghawa and Arab groups southwards into the central Fur region of Jebel Marra. Some sought water and pasture for their animals, but many had lost so much animal wealth that they were seeking to settle permanently. The Zaghawa who moved to urban centres had some success in petty trade, but those who kept to rural areas encountered hostility from the Fur farmers – who realized that the move might this time be permanent – and from government forces who accused them of camel rustling. The Fur élite in local government resisted the nomads' intrusion. Police and army burned down numerous Zaghawa settlements and also executed local Zaghawa leaders.

The element of racial prejudice became further entwined with the environmental roots of the conflict with the formation of an alliance of 27 Arab nomad tribes and their declaration of war against the 'Zurug' (black) and non-Arab groups of Darfur. The response of the Fur was to form their own militias, at first for self-defence and later as part of a short-lived but significant linkage with the SPLA.

The main aim of the nomads was to seize land, and they would often give notice to Fur villagers before the raids to make way for the 'liberating' forces. Nonetheless, the toll was high. By the time of the 1989 peace conference, an estimated 5,000 Fur and 400 Arabs had been killed; tens of thousands had been displaced and 40,000 homes destroyed.¹⁹

The Sahel drought, coupled with interference by government and the struggle for local political power, appears to have polarized the various ethnic groups. The only way out of the crisis will be through the recognition of the conflict's environmental and developmental origins, and the negotiation of equitable access to resources in a fragile environment.



map - ethnic groups in Sudan

Southern Kordofan

The Nuba

The indigenous peoples collectively termed Nuba inhabit the hilly region known as the Nuba Mountains (Jubal an-Nuba) in central Southern Kordofan. They are among the most ancient peoples of Sudan, and are believed to have retreated to the mountains several centuries ago in response to invasion. There are an estimated 1.6 million Nuba, about five per cent of the total population of Sudan.²⁰ Although some 70 per cent of the population of the Nuba Mountains area are Nuba, they constitute a minority because of their social and economic marginalization. The Nuba are doubly marginalized by their ambiguous position in the North-South conflict. As a consequence of colonial and Northern Sudanese political decisions, the wholly African Nuba became geographically part of the 'Arabic' North.

During the Anglo-Egyptian colonial administration, the Nuba were administratively integrated into Kordofan, but kept separate by the 'Closed District' Ordinance of 1926 whose ostensible aims were to stem the influence of Islam and the practice of slavery. The spread of Christianity in the Nuba Mountains during the colonial era and in post-independence Sudan was a contributing factor in the persecution and denial of political rights they endured under successive Sudanese governments.

The Nuba can be broadly divided into two main categories. There are those with a linguistic affinity with originally non-Arabic-speaking Sudanese, such as the Northern Nuba (Dilling, Nyimang) who are linguistically related to the Nubian-speaking peoples of Northern Sudan. The other group in this category are the Daju Nuba, who trace their origin to the Daju rulers of Darfur.

The second category consists of Nuba groups who trace no common origin or ethnic, linguistic or cultural affinity with Northern Sudanese apart from recent influences. These include the Nuba/Mesakin-speaking Talodi, Mesakin, Toucho and Eliri peoples; the Koalib/Moro-speaking Koalib, Moro, Heiban, Otoro, Tira, Kau and Fungor peoples; and the Kadugli/Korongo-speaking Korongo, Kadugli, Miri, Keiga, Kamdang, Tulushi and Tumtum peoples.

The term Nuba is a geographical label for people who share a common environment and stand out from the surrounding tribes, despite being differentiated among themselves. It should be borne in mind that it is a regional grouping term and not a monolithic tribal name. The name Nuba is a comparatively recent construction, used by the Anglo-Egyptian rulers to refer to the mountain peoples of Kordofan who had no collective name.

Owing to the smallness of communities, and the aloofness and multitude of Nuba groups, the Anglo-Egyptian colonial administration federated various Nuba groups into larger administrative units based on linguistic and

cultural affinity. For example, the Moro-speaking people were federated under one *mekk* (chief) supported by a number of junior chiefs from the surrounding hill communities. In some cases, geographical proximity rather than linguistic or cultural affinity was used as a base for creating larger administrative units.

Attempts were made during the colonial period to create an autonomous Nuba administration, with the formation of the Nuba Mountains province in 1910, with its headquarters in Talodi. However, this structure was abandoned in 1928 after stiff resistance from Baggara and Jellaba migrants, who feared the erosion of their economic and political power under a Nuba-dominated administration.

Although the Nuba have marked internal linguistic and cultural differences, they use their collective name to distinguish themselves from the Baggara and Jellaba Arabic-speaking Muslims who migrated to the Nuba Mountains from the turn of the seventeenth century. There is also a large number of Fellata (West Africans) whose migration dates back to recent colonial history, following the introduction of cotton during the 1920s and subsequent droughts in the Sahel.

This mosaic of peoples and cultures has been complicated by religious divisions and influences. During the pre-colonial era the Tegali kingdom of the Northern Nuba (1330-1881) established contact with the Muslim kingdom of Sennar at the start of the seventeenth century. The first Nuba were introduced to Islam under Turco-Egyptian rule. Christianity spread during the colonial and post-colonial periods through different missionary activities.

The religious map of the Nuba Mountains can be divided into predominantly Christian Nuba (Moro, Heiban, Tulushi, Koalib, Tira, Katcha and Nyimang); and predominantly Muslim Nuba (Miri, Kadugli, Tegali, Ghulfan, Debrri and Talodi). Other Nuba groups are internally divided between Christianity, Islam and traditional Nuba beliefs and religious practices. Religious divisions have played an important role in recent Nuba history and to a large extent shaped Nuba political life. The most important aspect of these divisions is found in the development of Nuba political aspirations alongside Afro-Islamic and Afro-Christian ideologies. However, neither Islam nor Christianity has saved them from the carnage of the contemporary political turmoil.

The history of the Nuba Mountains, from slave trade to post-independence Sudan, is a history of domination by the Baggara and Jellaba Arabic-speaking Muslim migrants. Regionally, the Jellaba and the Baggara dominate trade as well as the administration of the Nuba regional and local affairs. This occurs despite the existence of many qualified Nuba with skills in development work, education, administration, health and other fields.

Nuba political organizations and parties such as the Nuba Mountains General Union (NMGU) and the Sudan

National Party (SNP), and their members, have been subjected to political persecution, arrests and torture under the guise of 'national security', but in reality for no other reason than their peaceful struggle to redress the injustices inflicted upon their peoples.

Jellaba appropriation of Nuba land and Baggara response

The Baggara constitute the second largest group in the Nuba Mountains, but in general they are confined neither to western Sudan nor the Nuba Mountains. The Baggara are scattered throughout the south western parts of Darfur and South Kordofan to the western banks of the White Nile. They comprise tribes such as the Missiriya (Humur and Zurug), Ta'aisha, Beni Helba, Hawazma, Rezeigat, Ma'alia and Kenana. The name Baggara does not denote any ethnic homogeneity apart from the fact they are all cattle-owning tribes, belong to Arab migrants of Juhayna origin who intermarried with African groups across the Sudanese-Chadian borders. The Baggara are believed to have moved from Lake Chad into Jebel Marra in the eighteenth century, and finally settled in Kordofan and Darfur. The largest waves of Baggara migration into the Nuba Mountains occurred after the defeat of the Mahdist troops in the Battle of Omdurman (1898).

The Baggara therefore arrived earlier than the Jellaba, whose presence as settled populations was felt only after the lifting of the 'Closed District' Ordinance and the opening up of the Nuba Mountains in 1937. Due to security improvements, the pacification of Nuba and Baggara resistance, and the establishment of government authority, many Jellaba began to settle. Moreover, encouraged by the introduction of cotton and the flow of cash, many Jellaba traders from Northern and central Sudan found the Nuba Mountains conducive to trading in cash crops and manufactured goods.

Even though the present crisis in the Nuba Mountains has a political aspect, the Baggara–Nuba–Jellaba conflict originated over land. From their earlier period of settlement in the Nuba Mountains, the Jellaba took an interest in agriculture and became cotton growers, first by borrowing Nuba land and later by purchasing the most fertile lands in the distant plains. Most of the Nuba still lived on the hills – as they did in the past in order to protect themselves against slave raiding – and rarely ventured to the distant, but fertile plains. The Jellaba took over large portions of Nuba cultivable lands, which infuriated many Nuba who began to revolt during the mid-1960s.

Jellaba appropriation of Nuba land continued well into 1968 when the Mechanized Farming Corporation (MFC) began to implement large-scale mechanized schemes, privately owned by wealthy Jellaba and a few Baggara. Most of the schemes were initially distributed in Habila, and by 1984 they covered most of the clay plains in the Nuba Mountains. Nuba resistance to land appropriation by the state in favour of non-Nuba ethnic groups, mainly Jellaba and Baggara, had increased since they found that they were losing land to the Jellaba at an accelerated rate.

Jellaba appropriation of Nuba land also enraged the

Baggara who, with the intensification of the war in Southern Sudan, found themselves losing migratory routes, water points and traditional farms to the Jellaba in the central parts of the Nuba Mountains. The war in Southern Sudan also meant that the Baggara were continuously squeezed between the semi-desert in the North, the large-scale mechanized schemes in the centre and the war between the government troops, the SPLA and the Missiriya militia in the southern parts of Southern Kordofan.

The Baggara joined the Umma Party during the early years of the formation of Sudanese party politics. In 1986 Sadiq al-Mahdi, then Prime Minister of Sudan, openly pledged military support to the Baggara (who formed the backbone of the Umma Party supporters in western Sudan) against SPLA attacks. The Sudanese army was weakened by the war, and its morale was low, hence the Baggara could be used as a buffer to prevent the SPLA forces from reaching the North.

The Baggara strategy was to take advantage of the precarious government position and its need for soldiers to support its campaign in the South, by allying themselves with the Sudanese army; to weaken the Nuba resolve to regain their lands; and to make up for losses incurred during the war. The Baggara tribal militia devastated Nuba lives and shattered Nuba hopes for peaceful coexistence within Sudan's unjust political structures and institutions.

The Nuba predicament

Incidents of Nuba political persecution are rampant throughout post-independence Sudan, and the most glaring ones are those of 1969, when members of the NMGU and other Southern Sudanese political parties were accused of attempting to overthrow the Nimeiri government. Such fabricated accusations were levelled against the Nuba several times and many Nuba intellectuals and politicians were detained or imprisoned by the authorities. Those who suffered most are the Nuba migrants who live in the squatter settlements of Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman and major Nuba towns such as Kadugli, Dilling, Talodi and Rashad. Nuba are still persecuted today by the Bashir government under the pretext of 'national security', accused of supporting the SPLA, and subjected to Islamization policies.

Religious persecution

Non-Muslim Nuba have been the subject of religious persecution since Sudanese independence, and educational favouritism for Nuba Muslims has been a common policy.

The imposition of *sharia* law has reinforced this discrimination, with Muslim charity organizations operating in the Nuba Mountains in close cooperation with the regional ministries of health, education and religious affairs aided by a number of Muslim banks. The Nuba Mountains became an easy target of Muslim finance and investment institutions, with keen interest in land follow-

ing the departure of most Jellaba traders from the Nuba Mountains due to instability and the present war.

Like many non-Muslims in the Sudan, the Nuba fell prey to *sharia* law and suffered amputations for what under most secular laws would have been considered minor offences. In addition, the government has embarked on the 'Comprehensive Call' campaign, which aims at Islamizing the Nuba via the imposition of Islamic teachings, intimidation of the clergy, resettlement and torture.

Ethnocide

However, the destruction of the Nuba peoples' culture and their forcible conversion Islam or Northern culture is not a new theme in the government's policies. In 1972 Nimeiri's regime instructed government departments in the Nuba Mountains to refrain from rendering services to any Nuba who raised pigs or was 'unable to dress properly'. Many Baggara local communities took the law into their own hands and killed tens of thousands of pigs, thereby denying the Nuba an invaluable source of food and cultural pride.

Some local authorities went as far as prohibiting stick fighting, which relates to Nuba cosmology and agricultural and religious practises. Prohibitions of these rituals imply an indirect obstruction to the basic cultural traits and value systems which maintain and foster Nuba ethnic identity.

Nuba pupils are forced to speak Arabic, and are punished if they speak their vernacular languages in school. Schools in non-Muslim areas are often starved of government funds, and officially rate second in priority to schools attended by Muslim pupils or in dominantly Muslim areas in the Nuba Mountains.

The depopulation of the Nuba Mountains is another way of denying the Nuba the opportunity to live within their own communities and undertake collective political action. Between 1991 and 1993 an estimated 20-30,000 Nuba were deported from the Nuba Mountains to semi-desert areas largely not conducive to agricultural production. The so-called 'peace camps' are part of the Comprehensive Call campaign, and are located beside some of the most desolate desert towns such as Shaikan, Bara and Um Ruwaba. Other deportees are forced to work in the large-scale mechanized schemes in agricultural lands which originally belonged to them, before their distribution by the government to wealthy Jellaba and Baggara. The deportees are increasingly dependent on food charity provided by Islamic relief organizations and are gradually distanced from their Nuba cultures and way of life. These and other practices committed by the Sudanese government amount to an act of ethnocide.

Genocide

Unlike the first civil war between the North and the South (1955-72), since 1985 the Nuba have found themselves embroiled in the present conflict neither by choice nor chance, with Nuba grievances finding

expression in the political programme of the SPLA/SPLM which accepted within its rank and file a number of Nuba politicians.

Subsequent Sudanese governments have perceived the Nuba as an ally of the SPLA/SPLM. This has meant that a blanket approach has been applied to the Nuba, and indiscriminate acts of genocide have been committed even against Nuba Muslims, some of whom have no relationship to the SPLA/SPLM. The chronology of this genocide is as follows:

In the 1986 national elections, the Umma Party lost several seats to the NMGU and the SNP. As a punishment to the Nuba, the Sudanese government ignored a series of atrocities committed jointly by the national army and the Baggara militia against Nuba villages which they claimed supported the SPLA. About 200 Nuba were killed in Liri, Kalogi and Gardud villages.

In November 1987 the Baggara militia attacked several Nuba villages, including Shatt, el-Azrag, Taroji, Fama and el-Mesakin, under the pretext of preventing them from aiding advancing SPLA forces. The raids on Nuba villages induced widespread famine as granaries were looted or burned. Displaced Nuba began to migrate *en masse* to seek refuge in Kadugli and other towns. By the end of 1987, the internally displaced Nuba in Kadugli town alone exceeded 40,000.

In 1988 the SPLA intensified its attacks on the southern regions of the Nuba Mountains. In a counter-attack, the government began a systematic arrest of Nuba intellectuals, ex-politicians, even government employees – including some Nuba police and military. More than 120 people were arrested, some were executed, and others were sent to prisons in Northern Kordofan and other Northern provinces, in order to isolate them from their political base.

In 1989 the Popular Defence Forces Act was decreed and the Baggara and other militia forces were officially recognized as paramilitary forces, acting on behalf of the Sudanese government in cooperation with the national army. This period also witnessed the arrest of many supporters of the NMGU and SNP who were accused of being a 'fifth column'. By November 1989, the combined forces of the Sudanese army and the Baggara militia attacked many Nuba villages including Kamda, Taroji, Tulushi and Tima. More than 100 people were killed and several hundred were detained, tortured or imprisoned.

In 1990-1 the Baggara militia sustained their attacks on the Nuba peoples, including Koalib, Tira, Shatt, Miri Barah, Lima, Otoro, Moro and Heiban. The call for *jihad* in the Nuba Mountains came at the end of 1990, and some of the villages which were attacked in 1987-9, were attacked again to inflict maximum damage and destroy the resistance to Islamization.

In April-May 1992 the Tulushi was attacked again, because of an anticipated SPLA attack which did not actually take place. The brutality with which the PDF responded was unparalleled. Heavy artillery was used, property and granaries were burned, and some 350 people were killed or injured.

By 1993 most of the Nuba Mountains were pacified by Sudan Armed Forces' military campaigns, supported by the PDF and the Baggara militia.

The future of the Nuba

The Nuba campaign has always been for greater autonomy from central government, with the desire to revive the Nuba Mountains province, within which they could administer themselves without intimidation by the present Northern-dominated political structures of Sudan and Kordofan state in particular. Nuba Christians are particularly persecuted under an Islamic state, which has relegated them to 'second class' citizenship.

The Nuba leadership within the SPLA/SPLM is aware of public pressure to develop a Nuba identity cooperating with, but independent of, the South. Many Nuba are wary of Southern domination as much as Northern domination. Therefore the present South/Nuba alliance is more tactical than strategic, albeit an important political act to foster solidarity between the oppressed peoples of Sudan. Given a democratic situation and a secular Sudanese state, the Nuba and other marginalized nationalities would have a better chance of coexistence. This view takes into account the fact that many radical Nuba intellectuals and politicians foresee the possibility of creating their own state. However, it should be borne in mind that the radicals are in the minority.



Southern Blue Nile

The Ingessana

The indigenous people in the Ingessana Hills of eastern central Sudan's Southern Blue Nile province call themselves Gâmk. The largest of a number of indigenous groups in the area who follow a mixture of religions, the Gâmk are geographically and administratively connected with Northern Sudan, but like their neighbours the Uduk, they are generally regarded by Northerners as Southerners and 'infidels'. Although the SPLA has included the Ingessana in its call for 'self-determination' for marginalized peoples, the Gâmk have had little constructive contact with the South, and until recently lived a self-contained and self-sufficient life. Through their traditional religion and their livelihood as farmers they have a strong spiritual identification with their land. In their language the words for hills *gamk* and for people *gâmk* are closely associated.

Because of their isolated location the people of the Ingessana were relatively unaffected by outside influences until the early twentieth century, when the Anglo-Egyptian government sent punitive expeditions to put down rebellions against taxation and in 1926 when they were brought under the British 'Closed District' Ordinance. The apparent aim was to incorporate the area into the Southern educational sphere. However, as is evident from the experience of the Nuba Mountains and Southern Sudan, this short-sighted ordinance created more problems than it solved. When it was eventually abandoned, the indigenous people were at a disadvantage with regard to education and trade. They had no schools or shops, and when Arab and Fellata traders moved in to open markets in the 1950s, the pattern of secondary status was perpetuated, since schools and other facilities were still not provided. The Gâmk were unprepared for the challenges of the outside world.

The influence of Islam was initially benign, however Northern Sudanese traders and government officials were exploitative and contemptuous in their attitude to the Gâmk. During the 1985 famine the Islamic relief organization 'al Dawa al Islamiyya', which had established an institute in the hills, brought in food aid which they declared was only available to those faithful to Islam. The Gâmk regard such attempts at Islamization with understandable cynicism, and Gâmk *kujurs* or holy leaders have pledged to protect the old faith, in secret if need be.

Aggressive extraction of timber and mineral resources and the encroachment of giant, Northern-owned mechanized farming schemes on the fertile lowlands around the Ingessana Hills threaten not only the livelihood of the indigenous peoples but also the viability of the land itself. The efforts of the Gâmk to advance their own agriculture have been met with scorn. When a consignment of tractors was donated to the Ingessana, the villagers asked local Arab traders how to use them. Instead of providing assistance,

the traders convinced the authorities that the Gâmk were too ignorant to use them, and the tractors were sold off to the traders. They later began charging the Gâmk extortionate rates whenever they wanted to use the tractors.

Since the 1930s the plains around the Ingessana Hills have been seasonally occupied by Rufa'a Arab pastoralists. The Gâmk, who established settlements and farms on the more fertile areas around the foothills, found themselves in dispute with the pastoralists, who disregarded the farmers' requests for compensation when their animals damaged the crops. This contrasted with the cooperative relations that were established with the Umbororo pastoralists from West Africa, who moved into the region in the 1950s. Pressure on both pastoralists and farmers increased with the expansion of commercial mechanized farming and the livestock industry by the Jellaba. The 1970 Unregistered Land Act abolished traditional rights of access and land use, leaving the state free to demarcate areas for development. Large concessions were granted to Northern-owned agricultural companies, financed by external loans from Gulf investors and other international bodies through the Mechanized Farming Corporation. The Ingessana Hills were encircled. Vast areas of savannah woodland formerly used by the Gâmk for shifting cultivation were seized and cleared of tree cover. Population pressure also increased, since the new schemes needed large amounts of labour and migrant workers were drawn to the area. In addition, war-displaced people were relocated in government village projects, in order to work on the privately owned schemes. The Gâmk are aggrieved that outsiders are exploiting their land; with Beni Amer pastoralists collecting gum arabic from the acacia trees, and timber traders from El Gezira cutting down trees with official permits.

The civil war had its first impact in December 1985. After an attack – allegedly by SPLA forces – on the government-controlled chromium mine at Jam, a battle ensued 30km south of the mine at Jebel Moghaja, in which 500 people were killed and the 'rebels' were defeated. The villagers in the area fled, and when they returned they found the village had been looted and burned. Shop-owning Northern Sudanese and Fellata traders told police that the rebels and local collaborators had been responsible, fuelling government suspicion and leading to prolonged hostility. After the SPLA briefly captured the nearby towns of Kurmuk and Geissan in November 1987, there were massive government reprisals in Southern Blue Nile province. Villages were burned, churches were destroyed and scores of people were killed. In August and September 1990, SPLA forces numbering 2-3,000 attacked Ingessana villages for the first time, ransacking houses and shops and looting cattle, until the arrival of government troops with tanks, when they dispersed without direct confrontation. Several rapes and killings were reported.

The economic and social losses caused by the sequestration of Gâmk land and the tense relations between the Gâmk and government authorities have been extremely damaging. It is now common for local people to be denounced by the Arab traders as SPLA sympathisers if they protest about any form of exploitation, and security forces in the area are said to carry machine guns. Since the early 1990s the SPLA has been preoccupied in the South, and references to the Ingessana in its propaganda for 'self-determination' for marginal peoples do not reflect active dialogue or involvement in the area. By far the greatest threat to the Gâmk is that of displacement from their fertile farmland in the Ingessana Hills and the destruction of their culture and environment by the Northern regime. The relentless spread of externally funded commercial agriculture – for the benefit of the civil servants, army officers and merchants to whom the government grants land concessions – is both ecologically unsustainable and devastating in its social consequences.

The Uduk

The central section of the Sudan-Ethiopian borderland (from the Blue Nile to the Baro) saw a series of dramatic military and political events from 1987 onwards. These were caused by the changing fortunes of armed opposition movements in both countries. National attention from Khartoum and Addis Ababa was focused on this region at different times, along with international attention, mainly because of massive population movements across the border. The consequences for local civilian communities were enormous: there have been multiple displacements, high numbers of deaths because of the erosion of local economies, and the regrouping of populations under the patronage of either government garrisons, guerrilla movements and warlords, or the UN and other aid agencies. No area of this region remains unchanged by these processes. It is a frontier zone between the North and South of Sudan, and between Sudan and Ethiopia, therefore the choices faced by the civilians have been particularly stark – whether to seek security and protection from one party or another in the Sudanese war, or whether to cross the border, a movement which for many has had to be reversed, sometimes more than once. These circumstances have helped to sharpen 'ethnic' lines and to give visibility to some particular groups, who are 'listed' from time to time by the relief agencies in one place or another. It is not known how many survive quietly in the hills and valleys, without becoming 'visible' to the agencies, nor, perhaps, to the various political and military interests.

In early 1993, a major part of the 14,000 Uduk-speaking people from the southern part of the Blue Nile province of Northern Sudan were allocated a resettlement site by the Ethiopian government and UNHCR at Khor Bonga, upstream of Gambela in Ethiopia. Other Uduk-speaking communities at that time were still stranded in Southern Sudan under the control of the SPLA-United at Nasir; a handful had made a dangerous trek back to their home country in the Blue Nile under the Sudan government; a string of communities were living in Northern

Sudan, including Khartoum/Omdurman, having fled the war; and a number were serving or had recently served with either the Sudanese government forces or the SPLA (in roughly equal numbers). Some refugees had been carried far to the South with the SPLA, and obliged to retreat with them; among those Uduk who were separated very far to the South were women married to SPLA soldiers. There was even a group of Uduk among the camp populations in Eastern Equatoria; and another group in Kakuma in Kenya.

It is not clear how many Uduk-speaking peoples there were before 1987; but the number is likely to have been c. 25,000. Some of the later refugee camp figures were exaggerated, possibly because other minority peoples took shelter under the 'Uduk' umbrella (there were no clear social or cultural boundaries in the Southern Blue Nile and adjacent areas and there was always a good deal of intermixture and bilingualism). While it would be unreasonable to portray the situation as one of a people 'dying out', it is true that a great many people have been lost, and the people feel themselves as a whole to be facing death. Up to 1994 only a small number of deaths were directly caused by military or other violence, but a large number had resulted from illness or malnutrition. Because of political complications, relief aid has only reached the people intermittently. At no point in the period from 1987-93 were the people given permission to cultivate on a sufficient scale to help them feed themselves, although this is precisely what they have begged to be allowed to do. The difficulty arises partly from national and local political arguments, especially about land rights on behalf of the displaced, and also from the sharp line maintained internationally between emergency relief and development aid.

In 1986-7 the SPLA advanced northwards into the Blue Nile, provoking the Sudanese government to take reprisals against the local civilians. By March-May 1987, under SPLA encouragement, the population of the Uduk villages fled *en masse* to Ethiopia, and a new UNHCR camp was established for them and others of the district at Tsore, near Assosa. Other SPLA-government skirmishes caused further refugee influxes to Tsore.

The refugee relief programme at Tsore operated well throughout 1988. The UNHCR was very pleased with the cooperation of the people in the relief programme; the Uduk in particular acquired the reputation of being 'model refugees', as they had maintained their family groups and their patterns of leadership, had brought tools and equipment with them, and knew how to grow vegetables and put the forest and bush to productive use. They joined committee structures and built up their Christian activities. By 1989 there was heightened tension on both sides of the international border. In January 1990 as military activity gathered pace, forces opposed to the then government of Ethiopia overran Assosa, and in their approach from the north west destroyed the UNHCR camp at Tsore, causing the majority of the Uduk to flee yet again, with some fleeing to Ethiopia. These were subsequently bombed by the Sudanese air force on their return to Sudan.

The first half of 1990 was an extremely difficult time for the Uduk refugees as they received no relief aid. There

are many ironies to the political aspect of the Uduk saga. Originally perceived as SPLA supporters, they later found in Nasir an unsupportive and to some degree a threatening patron. On the Ethiopian side, where they had been welcomed in Assosa as SPLA protégés during the Mengistu regime, the new local authorities in Gambela in 1992 were willing to take on the role of protector towards them, as they could be represented as a group leaving the domination of the SPLA. On the international level, it must be admitted that the attitude of donors and governments in the region also affected the story. Even the UN is drawn into politically structured situations locally and internationally which constrain the form its actual activities can take.

By 1993-4 the Sudan government was endeavouring to encourage displaced people from the war zones to resettle in their home areas, areas in which there was a shortage of labour for new agricultural schemes. A substantial number were drawn back to the northerly region of Upper Nile and the Southern Blue Nile.

The Uduk in Ethiopia were approached both informally (which was illegal) and formally (in the presence of a UN observer) by representatives of the Sudan embassy in Addis Ababa, with the suggestion that they return home; a request they politely declined on the grounds that the war was not over. Given their increased commitment to the Christian faith it is difficult to see what reasonable future they could look forward to under the current regime in Khartoum, if they were to return to their home in Northern Sudan. Even if there were specific minority safeguards, this would only entrench their identity as a conspicuous and troublesome anomaly there, and leave the question of long-term security problematic. Unless there is to be a complete change of regime in Khartoum and a return to secular democracy, a redrawing of boundaries to include the Southern Blue Nile (and its culturally heterogeneous population) in a Southern-based province might be a more acceptable prospect.



Conclusion

The long-term stability of Sudan will depend on an equitable resolution of the causes of the civil war, and since these have barely begun to be recognized by the political leadership of the country and the international community, its attainment is still a long way off. The war is in large part a patchwork of smaller wars, compounded by the interference of central government. Both the local and central influences must be addressed, and the role of environmental pressures and unchecked militarization acknowledged alongside historical grievances of uneven development and racial or religious prejudice. Local mechanisms for conflict resolution have been seriously undermined, although they still have a vital role to play. In the event of any peace treaty between the major protagonists at the constitutional or political level, localized problems will continue to pose a threat to genuine peace. The bargaining between the political élites of the regions and the centre has obscured the ethnic antagonisms and struggles over environmental resources which drive the war at a deeper level.

It remains to be seen whether any deal will be made between Bashir and Garang which would lead to a peace agreement comparable with the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement, and it is questionable what lasting value any such deal might have. Unequal representation of the different elements of Sudanese society continues to distort the way in which the country as a whole is governed, and this is unlikely to change with a mere peace treaty between Northern and Southern leaders.

Representation of minorities in government is not an answer in itself, given the record of such representatives to date. Since independence, every Northern-dominated government has succeeded in finding Southern Sudanese to take up official appointments, and the Bashir regime is no exception. It has also profited from the compliance of (for example) several Nuba and Darfuri politicians and military. Although some of these individuals have subsequently resigned, justifying their prior collusion on the grounds that they believed they could do more for their people from inside the government, the attitude prevails among the Northern élite that the loyalty of Southern leaders, as well as those from other significant minorities, can be bought.

Minority representatives must themselves be held publicly accountable. Too often the prevalence of traditional deference to 'elders' has been exploited by élite members of minority groups to advance their personal interests, while losing sight of their wider responsibility to the people in whose name they wield political influence. Less powerful individuals are inhibited from criticizing even the most blatant exploitation of resources by those who claim to represent them. This apparent corruption is sometimes blamed on the pressure that results from the extended network of family responsibility interacting with

political manipulation. An individual who gains a political or economically powerful position is likely to be deluged by appeals for assistance from their kin. Those who control appointments are fully aware of this pressure, and will exploit the compromised situation in which such individuals find themselves. Nimeiri, for example, was skilled at the 'musical chairs' approach to appointing ministers and civil servants, in which the appointees were intimidated by the obviously temporary nature of their positions and pushed towards extracting maximum personal financial advantage in the limited time available. Their corrupt actions compromised them and made them politically malleable. This phenomenon must be understood and dealt with if equity is to be attained for less influential members of society. The interaction of traditional systems of favour and the mechanisms of the modern state can be socially divisive, and its role in creating the conditions for conflict should not be underestimated.

The divide and rule approach of the Northern government is exemplified in its courtship of the breakaway SPLA-United faction of Machar – renamed Southern Sudan Independence Movement in late 1994 – as well as in its use of militias and token members of minorities. By holding separate discussions with Lam Akol while he was still a member of Machar's group, avoiding military encounters and even allegedly providing the group with arms, the Bashir regime fuelled antagonism between the SPLA factions. Despite the claims of the Garang SPLA, Machar's group are as virulently opposed to the NIF as any other Southerners, but their military weakness has led them into a trap. Their negotiations and compromises with the government were at best a holding operation, a means of protecting themselves from direct attack by Khartoum, but their political cost in terms of unity within the faction and with other Southerners was devastating, and they were never likely to bring peace.

Ethnicity

A variety of labels has been used by outsiders – and sometimes by the protagonists themselves – to delineate and analyze ethnic groups in Sudan as elsewhere. It is vital to recognize the pitfalls in such labelling, and the ambiguities that exist in real life. For example, the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk are often categorized on a regional basis as 'Nilotic' Sudanese, distinguishing them from 'Equatorians'. Yet in terms of linguistic affinity, the 'Equatorian' Acholi can be grouped with the Shilluk and Anuak as speakers of Lwo languages, part of the Western Nilotic language group.

The rigid classification that was introduced during colonial administrations is an artificial construction. From the time of the Turco-Egyptian empire, and particularly the Anglo-Egyptian condominium with its policy of indi-

rect rule through 'tribal' chiefs, it has served the purposes of outsiders. Although the nomenclature has come to shape the identity of the people concerned, it does not match the fluidity of the situation on the ground.

The polarization of relations between the Nuba and the Misseriya Zurug in Kordofan illustrates how external forces and the rigidity of categorization can exacerbate conflict. Intermarriage between some Nuba groups (themselves highly diverse) and the 'Arab' Misseriya Zurug has brought convergence in appearance, language and livelihood to the extent that it would be hard for an outsider to distinguish between them. Their coexistence was reasonably peaceful, with disputes settled at local level, until the central government exploited spurious differences of identity for its own purposes, while sequestering land for mechanized farming and creating the real problem.

Religion and Northern opposition

Political rivalry between the Northern political parties makes it unlikely that the Umma and DUP will risk disentangling themselves from their religious sectarian roots in favour of whole-hearted secularism. (Only Nimeiri, in the permanent constitution he introduced in 1973, 10 years before resorting to *sharia* law, was briefly able to avoid political commitment to religion.) At different times each has presented itself as conceding to the need for religious pluralism in the country as a whole, so long as their own adherence to Islam does not come into question. The Umma attended the Koka Dam talks with the SPLA in 1986, while the DUP stayed away; the DUP negotiated the 1988 November Accord with the SPLA while the Umma, under Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, adopted a more aggressive stance. Since both parties were banned by Bashir, they have announced breakthroughs on the question of religion and the state which can only be put to the test if they regain power. In order to avoid political suicide in the climate of Islamic militancy, both the DUP and Umma would probably maintain the *sharia* in aspects of civil law in Northern Sudan, while amending the penal code to eliminate the *huddud* punishments such as amputation, flogging and stoning. This would return the country to the legal position before 1983. More disturbing is that each party refers to the 'Southern problem' as if it could be separated from the predicament of the rest of the country, consistently failing to acknowledge the social and economic fragmentation of the North.

At the end of 1994 the Umma announced the Chukudum agreement with Garang's SPLA, admitting the right of the South to self-determination, but confining this to the existing borders between South and North and excluding the Nuba and other Northern marginalized groups. Garang's apparent acceptance of this limitation indicates the expendability in Southern eyes of the marginal peoples of the North. The Garang SPLA has used Nuba military forces in the South, particularly against the rival faction – just as Northern governments have always used the Nuba as soldiers in the regular armed forces – but has done little to support the Nuba in their own homeland.

Recommendations

Human rights violations

The UN Special Rapporteur on Sudan has noted grave violations of human rights in Sudan. The Special Rapporteur's full report, submitted to the UN Commission on Human Rights in February 1994,

'Firmly concludes that grave and widespread violations of human rights by government agents and officials, as well as abuses by members of the SPLA factions in zones controlled by them, continue to take place.'

The international community, especially the UN and the Organization of African Unity, should stop further violations of human rights in Sudan by strengthening the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, and by ensuring that the government of Sudan and SPLAs enable the Special Rapporteur to visit areas where human rights abuses are reported. Effective punitive measures should be taken immediately if human rights abuses continue to occur.

Monitoring of the situation

In March 1995, the UN decided to appoint human rights monitors outside the country. However, this is inadequate. Civilian human rights monitors should be deployed throughout the country to prevent further human rights violations. The UN should also fund and give effective support to the monitoring of the situation in Sudan by local organizations and international NGOs, in order to provide impartial and objective reporting of the situation on a regular basis.

Slavery and other practices similar to slavery

There have been reports of slavery and slavery-like practices, including abduction and kidnapping of women and children by security forces. This issue was raised at the UN Working Group on the Contemporary Forms of Slavery on a number of occasions. The Special Rapporteur also noted reports of grave violations and abuses against women and children, including:

'Abduction, traffic, enslavement and rape carried out by persons acting as agents of the government or affiliated with the government.'

The government must honour its international obligations under the 1926 Slavery Convention and the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery which it has ratified.

The government must take measures to effectively put an end to the sale, trafficking and enslavement of women

and children by armed militia. The government must also ensure that military, security, administrative officers and others stop the practice of taking women and children from camps into domestic and other forms of slavery.

Ending impunity

The practice of impunity has prevented peace in Sudan. It is essential that it is immediately halted if peace is to be achieved. Impartial and independent investigations into reported extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations should study:

- the government of Sudan's record on extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations in the Nuba Mountains; and the abduction of women and children by PDF forces in Northern Bahr al-Ghazal;
- the SPLA-United's record on the killing of Nuba at Baliet in 1992;
- the SPLA-Mainstream's record on the killing of civilians in central Upper Nile in 1992 and 1993.

The government of Sudan should take measures to bring all perpetrators of grave violations of human rights to justice.

International legal standards

The government must apply and implement the international instruments it has ratified. These include: the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the Slavery Convention (1926), the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956); ILO Conventions No. 29 on Forced Labour (1930) and 105, on the Abolition of Forced Labour (1957); the Genocide Convention (1948); and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981).

The rights of minorities and indigenous peoples

The government of Sudan must respect the rights of minorities as part of achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict. It should take into account the principles embodied in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities, and the Draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The government must allow the Nuba, Beja, the peoples of Southern Sudan and other minorities to actively participate in any democratic decision-making process in Sudan.

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Sudan

Conflict and minorities

The civil war in Sudan is often portrayed as a battle between the North and the South of the country, between Islam and Christianity. This report, **Sudan: Conflict and minorities**, explains how this over-simplification obscures an understanding of the war and how it hides the position of minority groups and women within today's Sudan.

A clear understanding of the causes of the conflict is necessary if the war is to be brought to an end and the people are to have a right to development. That this is desirable has never been in doubt, with government forces, militias and the factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army committing gross human rights abuses against the civilian population.

The report's coordinating editor, Peter Verney, is a well-known authority on Sudan and its peoples, and **Sudan: Conflict and minorities** examines the position of various minority groups, ranging from the discrimination faced by the Copts, to the massacres of the Dinka and many others. Yet this repression is placed within a clear historical context.

This context is important, given that the current government, since seizing power in 1989, has orchestrated a widespread increase in human rights violations on a scale previously unknown in Sudan, which has stifled both dissent and difference, repressing opposition forces and minority groups alike. The report ends with a series of recommendations which should be enacted immediately.



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An indispensable resource, which will prove of great value to academics, lawyers, journalists, development agencies, governments, minorities and all those interested in minority rights.