

NAI NEWSLETTER

20 September 2004

WITH FOCUS ON DARFUR

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CRISIS IN DARFUR

The peace process between the government of Sudan and the southern based Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) had a breakthrough in the summer of 2002 when the Machakos protocol was signed. This process has received considerable coverage in international media, but more recently the conflict in Darfur has often been mentioned as a counter-balance to triumphs at the negotiation table. The two rebel movements, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) have displayed military capabilities that clearly threaten the central government's position in the region. Despite massive coverage the crisis in Darfur is still presented as an isolated event. A broader perspective in terms of history and implications for political processes elsewhere in the Sudan and within the region helps to explain the causes of the conflict and the way it is being fought.

Conclusion

The crisis in Darfur is not caused by a local conflict going out of control. It is a reflection of a governance crisis at a national level in the Sudan. The background to the conflict is similar to that of the South: a late and weak integration in the central state combined with marginalisation and struggle over resources. The peace process in the South is part of the reason why the people in Darfur chose open rebellion, and the Government of Sudan's heavy-handed response may be motivated by fear of similar outbreaks elsewhere in the North. Also the way in which the government of Sudan chooses to fight the rebellion – relying on local militia groups to attack civilians suspected of belonging to ethnic groups that support the rebellion – resembles government strategies in Kordofan as well as in the South. The vested interest of Chad and to some extent Libya in the outcome of the conflict lifts the crisis up to the international level. As the African Union is deploying troops and extensive international interventions are being debated it is important to be aware of these factors or else such interventions might turn into another Iraq or Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.

The above are extracts from an article with the same title written by Øystein H. Rolandsen, Horn of Africa Advisor at the Norwegian People's Aid, to be published in the forthcoming issue of *News from the Nordic Africa Institute*. The full article is attached to this Newsletter as a pdf file.

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All three are scholars with in-depth knowledge of Sudan.

USEFUL WEBSITES:

Amnesty International
<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/sdn-index-eng>

Conflict in Sudan: the case of Dafur,
<http://asc.leidenuniv.nl/library/webdossiers/dossierconflictinsudan.htm#media>

Human rights Watch
<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/09/13/darfur9341.htm>

International Crisis Group
<http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=2920&l=1>

Refugees International (several articles)
<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/>

Rift Valley Institute: Sudan internet Resources 2004
<http://www.riftvalley.net/inside/slinks.htm>

IRIN on Sudan
http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=East_Africa&SelectCountry=Sudan

<http://www.sudansupport.no>

This is a solidarity website in Norwegian, with lots of useful links and background information.

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=254>

An analyses provided by the Washington based Migration Policy Institute's associate Erin Patrick in the Migration Information Source Special Issue on Africa.

<http://www.sudanmirror.com>

This link takes you to the Sunday Mirror newspaper, based in South Sudan.

<http://www.newsnow.co.uk/newsfeed/?name=Sudan+Crisis>

This British web site searches the net every five minuets and provides an extensive overview of the latest news.

<http://allafrica.com/sudan> and <http://www.sudan.net>

also provides a good sample of the latest news.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/africa/default.stm>

The BBC has a daily coverage of the Darfur crisis

USEFUL NAI RESOURCES:

<http://www.nai.uu.se/bibl/bibleng.html>

A Guide to Africa on the Internet : Sudan Information Sources:

<http://www.nai.uu.se/links/country/estafrica.html#Sudan>

COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER ARE WELCOME

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