International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

The Chaos in Darfur

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I. Overview

Violence in the Darfur region of Sudan's far west continues unabated. Some 450,000 persons were displaced in 2014 and another 100,000 in January 2015 alone, adding to some two million long-term internally displaced persons (IDPs) since fighting erupted in 2003. The government remains wedded to a military approach and reluctant to pursue a negotiated national solution that would address all Sudan's conflicts at once and put the country on the path of a democratic transition. Khartoum's reliance on a militia-centred counter-insurgency strategy is increasingly counter-productive – not least because it stokes and spreads communal violence. Ending Darfur's violence will require – beyond countrywide negotiations between Khartoum, the rebel Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) coalition and unarmed players – addressing its local dimensions, within both national talks and parallel local processes.

Darfur's complex and multiplying local conflicts are increasingly ill-understood, due to lack of information and the limitations of reporting from the hybrid UN/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Intensification of combat with rebel factions prompted the government in 2014 to fall back again upon notorious military auxiliaries, this time its new Rapid Support Forces (RSF), thus worsening violence and displacements. Arab militias and paramilitary forces like the RSF attacked non-Arab communities accused of being pro-rebel, fought each other, took part in communal conflicts and even hit at regular government troops.

Increasingly divided over Sudan, the UN Security Council has been unable to develop consensus around a new peace strategy and largely supports the untenable status quo. Discussions are now underway with the government about a possible UNAMID drawdown. Without strong support from New York and the African Union (AU) when the government obstructs it, the mission has been too deferential to Khartoum and systematically presented a narrative of an improving situation divorced from reality. It has also frequently failed to intervene and protect civilians, leading the UN to acknowledge "record levels of civilian displacement not seen since 2004".

Peace in Darfur is unlikely separate from a solution to Sudan's wider national problems, for which a number of processes need to be revived, modified or initiated, including an effort, especially in the UN Security Council, to review and rethink policy on Darfur and toward Khartoum generally. This briefing has a more limited purpose. It concentrates on Darfur dynamics, in particular a mapping of the complex conflict lines between and among communities and armed groups and militias, some sponsored by the government.

Suffering from a weak economy and without a military breakthrough, Khartoum appeared more open in 2014 to the inclusion of armed opposition in an AU-facilitated

national dialogue. The AU mediation hoped to obtain separate ceasefires for Darfur and the "Two Areas" (South Kordofan and Blue Nile) in a "synchronised" way, paving the way for SRF inclusion in the dialogue. However, the process stalled, largely over Khartoum's reluctance to negotiate with Darfur rebels on a basis other than the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). While this may suit the government in the short term, the region's continued fragmentation into competing armed communities will become increasingly difficult to arrest and reverse.

Darfur's different conflicts cannot be addressed all at once or in the same way. Crisis Group analysed the limits of the existing peace process in January 2014, and many of its recommendations are still relevant, in particular to review the DDPD, some of whose provisions require establishing a national consensus around the relationship between central government and peripheries, while others – chief of them the increasing communal violence – are too local to solve by national dialogue only. While Sudan's government has remained reluctant to compromise on the DDPD and invokes as justification the document's importance for Qatar – which indeed considers it a major diplomatic achievement despite the lack of implementation – it would be in Khartoum's own interest to address swiftly both the national and local dimensions of the violence in Darfur. For the latter, the government should in particular:

- progressively control and disarm paramilitary forces and militias, via a mix of incentives, such as participation in local peace processes and the national dialogue, as well as development and services, but also coercion, including arrest and prosecution of those responsible for crimes; and
- initiate and support communal dialogue and durable local peace and reconciliation mechanisms involving traditional and militia leaders, while leaving mediation to respected, neutral Sudanese, including from outside Darfur, and limiting the government's role to facilitating, supporting and guaranteeing agreements.

To advance resolution of Darfur's conflicts, the government and armed opposition should:

- reach a ceasefire in Darfur, synchronised with a similar one in the Two Areas, including provisions for unfettered humanitarian access in both; and
- develop proposals to address concerns of all Darfur communities on issues such as security, land ownership, services and development.

International players, particularly the AU, arguably have a more important role to play in national than local processes. However, the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council should:

- agree on a Sudan strategy and then properly support it with political backing and appropriate resources.

II. The Unending Rebellion and Its Costs

The war in Darfur began in 2003. Rebels were mostly recruited from local non-Arab communities, in particular the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit. The government responded with a counter-insurgency strategy based on mobilisation of Arab militias (known pejoratively as Janjawid) and attempts to divide the opposition.[1]

The first main deal was signed in 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria, with a single rebel faction, as the rebellion increasingly fragmented along ethnic lines. Non-signatories and factions fought against signatories and each other, and disgruntled Arab militias turned against each other and sometimes the government. Widespread, though less intense violence continued despite deployment of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in 2004 and the larger UNAMID in 2007. With South Sudan's independence in 2011 and resumption of the war in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, Darfur rebels allied with the older Sudan People's Liberation Movement "northern" wing (SPLM-N) to form the SRF and established new rear bases in South Sudan and South Kordofan.

The DDPD was signed with the militarily weak and loosely united Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) and other minor rebel factions five days after South Sudan's independence and a month after the resumption of the war in South Kordofan. While it remains largely unimplemented, Khartoum insists, in spite of mediators' initial commitment to continue talks with non-signatories, that it is not renegotiable.

The Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) was the most active rebel group in Darfur in 2013-2014. It continued fighting in the eastern plains between Mellit, in North Darfur, and Gereida, in South Darfur state, regularly taking and briefly holding towns.[2] The other, weaker faction of Abdelwahid Mohammed Ahmed Nur (SLA-AW) controlled much of the Jebel Marra massif in the centre of Darfur, despite determined government offensives.[3] In 2013, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), one of two main original Darfur rebel groups, sent most of its troops to fight beside the SPLM-N in South Kordofan.[4] However, it may re-

[1] Crisis Group has written on Sudan since 2002, recently including Crisis Group Africa Reports N°198, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (I): War in South Kordofan*, 14 February 2013; N°204, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (II): War in Blue Nile*, 18 June 2013; N°211, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (III): The Limits of Darfur's Peace Process*, 27 January 2014; and N°223, *Sudan and South Sudan's Merging Conflicts*, 29 January 2015. Government restrictions prevented field research in Darfur in 2013 and Sudan in 2014. To the extent possible, this has been compensated for in the briefing by interviewing Darfurians of various ethnic and political backgrounds and officials elsewhere.

[2] It suffered losses, including its deputy chief of staff, Mohammed Hari, and vehicles, in a government ambush in Urshi, North Darfur, in January 2015, and defections in 2014. SLA-MM sometimes fought jointly with smaller factions like SLA-Justice led by Ali Abdallah "Kerubino" and SLA-Unity led by Abdallah Yahya. Crisis Group interviews, rebel leaders, March 2014; Darfur and Chad rebel leaders, Paris, March 2015. The army and paramilitaries, including the RSF, defeated SLA-MM and SLA-Justice in Ba'ashim (North Darfur) in March 2014. Crisis Group interview, government official, October 2014. "Kerubino" was killed in June 2014. His group became the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM)-Taher Hajer (its new leader). "Sudanese forces kill Darfur rebel leader Ali Karbino", Sudan Tribune, 28 June 2014.

[3] On 1 January 2015, a joint army/RSF offensive retook strategic Fanga, north east of Jebel Marra. The government also tried to consolidate its own mountain strongholds, though some Arab militias with non-aggression pacts with SLA-AW reportedly refused to help. "Report of the Secretary-General on [UNAMID]", UN, 26 February 2015, p. 8.

[4] As in the rest of Sudan, fighting varies seasonally. Darfur rebels generally move north from rear bases in South Sudan during the rainy season in the south. Within Darfur, there is similar rainy-

sume fighting in Darfur out of dissatisfaction with the situation in South Kordofan, where there are tensions with allied SPLM-N over troop behaviour and strategy.[5]

Violence spiked in all three theatres as Khartoum opted for what it designated "decisive summer" offensives in 2013-2014. Arab militias that were only notionally government controlled again attacked communities accused of supporting the rebels and increasingly each other.

The cost of wars in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan to the government and its people continues to increase.[6] The estimated number of IDPs in Darfur alone is above 2.5 million. The international community has also spent enormous sums on the humanitarian crisis. UNAMID's 2014-2015 budget is $1.1 billion, down from the yearly average of close to $ 1.5 billion since 2007.[7] Together with some $700 million in annual humanitarian aid, the international cost of the Darfur conflict alone likely is $20-25 billion since 2003.

III. Spiraling Communal Conflict

Violence in Darfur has continually evolved. In 2003-2005, it was mostly due to attacks by pro-government, largely Arab militias targeting non-Arab communities accused of supporting the rebels. While those continued and intensified again in 2014, violence has mutated since 2006, with Arab communities and militias fighting each other and, to a lesser extent, non-Arab militias targeting non-Arab communities. Arab militias also turned against their government backers, while rebel factions fragmented and fought against each other as well.

The UN and UNAMID often fail to identify armed players and label attackers only as "unidentified armed groups". For UNAMID to prevent violence and all international players to promote solutions that address the different types of violence beyond the government-rebel conflict, however, it is vital to understand exactly who is fighting whom. A proper understanding of Darfur local dynamics should inform AU attempts to synchronise ceasefires there and in the Two Areas, without which the promised dialogue would be national in name only. Similarly, the Qatari-funded and UNAMID-facilitated Darfur International Dialogue and Consultations (DIDC), a long-delayed DDPD provision launched in January 2015, will be another exercise in futility unless it is based on an impartial and up-to-date mapping of the evolving violence. In any case, those internationally backed processes should be calibrated not to harm more locally owned ones.

season movement north. In dryer northern areas, major rebel victories regularly took place during this period. Less mobile government troops are more active during the dry season.

[5] The SPLM-N vetoed JEM's proposals to raid further into North Kordofan and the Nile Valley. "Report of the Secretary-General on [UNAMID]", UN, 26 November 2014, p. 3. JEM support to the Juba government has led to increased attacks by South Sudan rebels on Darfur communities in that country, causing JEM concern and differences with its allies. Crisis Group Report, Sudan and South Sudan's Merging Conflicts, op. cit.

[6] Hamid E. Ali, "Estimate of the economic cost of armed conflict: a case study from Darfur", Defence and Peace Economics, 16 November 2012.

[7] "Report of the Secretary-General", 26 February 2015, op. cit., pp. 15, 31-32. "Sudan: Darfur New Displacement in 2015", Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 5 February 2015.

A. *Arab Militias against Non-Arab Communities and the Advent of the RSF*

Attacks of increasingly uncontrolled forces continued, particularly in 2012-2014, in the Kutum and Hashaba areas of North Darfur.[8] They intensified in other, previously relatively spared areas after the 2013 creation of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitaries under National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) command.

The first RSF regiment of 5,000-6,000 was mostly recruited from South Darfur *abbala* (camel-herding) Rizeigat forces under Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo "Hemmeti", who was then appointed brigadier general in Sudan's army.[9] It was trained in central Sudan, then sent to South Kordofan for the first "summer campaign" against the SRF. In the unfamiliar Nuba Mountains, it reportedly suffered heavy casualties, then moved to North Kordofan, where it wreaked havoc around the capital, al-Obeid. Returning to South Darfur, it attacked non-Arab communities accused of rebel support, displacing some 30,000 in February 2014.[10] In May-June 2014 National Umma Party (NUP) and Sudanese Congress Party (SCoP) leaders Sadiq al-Mahdi and Ibrahim al-Sheikh were arrested for censuring RSF abuses.[11] In January 2015, a constitutional amendment gave NISS, and thus the RSF, "regular force" status.[12]

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[8] Attacks on non-Arab communities in Kutum and Hashaba increased when Arab militias commanded by An-Nur Ahmad, a Mahamid Rizeigat war chief, moved to neighbouring Gubba in 2008. An-Nur had broken with his paramount chief, Musa Hilal, and fought against the government in 2006, then rejoined Hilal but kept distance from him while getting closer to a rival, North Darfur Governor Osman Kibir. An-Nur forces are reportedly responsible for the mass killing in Tabara (northern Jebel Marra) in 2010; the 2011 murder of the Hashaba traditional chief's son, Faysal Adam Mohammed Nur (an SLA leader who had negotiated a peace with them); raids against Kutum town and neighbouring Kasab IDP camp in 2012; and attacks on artisanal gold miners and UNAMID in the Hashaba area in September-October 2012. They also fought various rebel factions between 2012 and 2014. Crisis Group interviews, government officials including *abbala* Rizeigat, Khartoum and other locations, August 2013, September 2014; Jérôme Tubiana, Victor Tanner, Musa Adam Abdul-Jalil, "Traditional Authorities' Peacemaking Role in Darfur", U.S. Institute of Peace, 2012, p. 72; "Military report on attack on UNAMID patrol to Hashaba North", UNAMID, 18 October 2012 (leaked document); "Letter from the [UN] Secretary-General", 29 October 2014 (leaked document), p. ii.

[9] Hemmeti is the nephew of Juma' Dagolo, the traditional chief of the Awlad Mansour section of the Mahariya Rizeigat who, originally from Chad, migrated to North Darfur before settling north of Nyala (South Darfur) in the 1980s. He was reportedly briefly in Chad's army in the early 2000s (he is related to ex-army chief of staff Bichara Issa Jadallah), before joining government paramilitaries at the start of the Darfur conflict. His men, like most *abbala* militias, were in the Border Guard. Crisis Group interviews, ex-Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) officers, Khartoum, other locations, August 2013, May 2014; Darfur Arab traditional leaders and politicians, Khartoum, other locations, August 2013-January 2015; UNAMID officer, April 2014. Crisis Group analyst interviews in another capacity, Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo, Nyala, 2009; "Report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan", UN Security Council, 19 January 2015, p. 14. Hemmeti is considered "operational commander" of RSF's first regiment.

[10] As early as mid-2013, army officers, officials and opposition politicians warned RSF forces might fight their own local conflicts, not rebels, and even turn on the government. After an attack on Ba'ashim (North Darfur) in March 2014 retaliating for SLA-MM and SLA-Justice raids, the government reportedly reclaimed several hundred vehicles and restationed units in Nyala. Hemmeti, reportedly worried he could lose control of his troops, was said to be behind the unusual action. Crisis Group interviews, army officer, August 2014; government official, October 2014.

[11] In February 2014, SAF major-general and NCP parliamentarian Bandar Abu-al-Balul joined JEM after RSF abused his Misseriya Arab community in West Kordofan, and the government did nothing. Crisis Group interview, Abu-al-Balul, May 2014; "Sudan arrests ex-PM over state abuse claims", Al Jazeera, 18 May 2014.

[12] "Sudan in 2015: more presidential powers", Africa Confidential, 23 January 2015, pp. 5-6. In December 2014, a UN Security Council Panel of Experts on Sudan report noted the RSF "could be

Initially the retraining of some Darfur Arab militias, their integration into supposedly more professional regular units and deployment outside Darfur could have been seen as a way to neutralise restive militias and reassert government control.[13] It is not what happened: RSF abuses in Kordofan may have contributed to a policy change – the strategy seems now to deploy them in their own areas, Darfur RSF to Darfur and new RSF components, locally recruited, to South Kordofan and Blue Nile.[14] But RSF abuses (and impunity) have not ended, including in Darfur and, more surprisingly, in central Sudan, where militia misbehaviour was long seen as a peripheries issue. In September 2013, RSF took part in government repression of protesters in Khartoum, and in December 2014, RSF recruits in training caused great damage in villages north of Khartoum, reportedly fighting with locals and killing several.[15]

Other recent, more localised violence pitting Arab militias against non-Arab communities included attacks by Beni Halba Arabs against the South Darfur Gimir community in 2013 over land; by *abbala* Rizeigat militias against Gimir and Tama communities in Saref Omra (North Darfur) in March 2014, over local disputes; and between Habbaniya Arabs and Fellata (Pula) in the Buram area (South Darfur) in September 2014, over rustling.[16]

B. *Intra-Arab Conflicts: The Politics of Land and "Chieftaincies"*

Intra-Arab conflicts appear the main cause of increased fighting in Darfur since 2013.[17] These were particularly intense, because the government was losing control of heavily armed militias fighting on both sides. Since 2006, largely unreported clashes have gradually multiplied.[18] Except for the conflict over the Jebel Amir goldmine in North Darfur, most are due to long-running competition over land and power, some dating to the colonial period.[19]

Then, as now, most community conflicts pitted a community holding traditional land rights (and paramount chieftaincies tied with those rights) against others considered as newcomers, hosts and tributaries of the "landowners". Since the restoration of both the traditional land tenure system and "native administration" (traditional authorities) in the 1980s, newcomers increasingly seek land rights and chief-

classified as a regular government armed force under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Service". "Report of the Panel", op. cit., p. 17.

[13] Crisis Group interview, Amin Hassan Omar (state minister in charge of the Darfur file), Khartoum, August 2013.

[14] Crisis Group interview, government official, October 2014; "Report of the Panel", op. cit., p. 14.

[15] Crisis Group interview, Darfur Arab politician, January 2014; "Clashes erupt in north Khartoum between villagers and RSF militia", Sudan Tribune, 26 December 2014.

[16] "Report of the Secretary-General", 26 November 2014, op. cit. p. 9. Initially the Fellata, Gimir and Tama communities mostly sided with the government, so began to be considered and consider themselves "Arab" and were not targeted; this perspective may not survive the current violence.

[17] "Report of the Secretary-General", 12 July 2013, op. cit., pp. 6, 21. According to the UN, "intercommunal clashes over access to land, pasture and other resources continued [late 2014-early 2015] although the level of intensity decreased". "Report of the Secretary-General", 26 February 2015, op. cit., p. 11.

[18] Julie Flint, "The Other War: Inter-Arab Conflict in Darfur", Small Arms Survey Working Paper no. 22, 2010.

[19] It is estimated that between 1970 and 1990, roughly half local Darfur conflicts were between Arabs, 30 per cent between Arabs and non-Arabs and 20 per cent between non-Arabs. Tijani Sese, "The root causes of conflict in Sudan and the making of the Darfur tragedy", Wilton Park talk, November 2007; Youssif Takana, "Darfur conflict mapping analysis", November 2007 (unpublished).

taincies. Obtaining them from the government has also been a way for a community to acquire its own administrative unit.[20]

In recent years, the government has created numerous, increasingly mono-ethnic administrative units, with officials from dominant local tribes, as well as new positions in the native administration, rewarding government allies but also triggering new conflicts. This tribalisation is criticised by officials and Arab communities that benefited from it but now worry it creates more conflicts. They sometimes also accuse the central government of "divide and rule" tactics to keep Darfur elites busy with local conflicts and away from power struggles in the centre. Since 2006 moreover, Arab communities and militias have grown increasingly disillusioned with promises of development and services, money (including salaries for combatants and compensations for the killed or wounded) and posts in the government and army. The economic crisis further undermines the government's ability to provide patronage.[21]

Intra-Arab conflicts have pitted against each other communities and militias that have been fighting on the government's side. Khartoum has generally been cautious about taking sides lest it drive the other to the rebels. All blame the government for non-support, so the conflicts have increased resentment among Darfur's Arabs. All sides also tried, with limited success, to paint their adversaries as rebels, so as to get government backing.[22] They have been more successful in mobilising kinsmen in paramilitary forces (more rarely the army). Tribes also asked kinfolk army officers and politicians to find support in Khartoum; their intervention sometimes switched the balance of intra-Arab conflicts, for instance in favour of the Ta'aisha against the Salamat, and the Rizeigat against the Beni Husein.[23] Three main intra-Arab conflicts have been a main cause of recent deadly violence in the Darfur states.

1. Salamat versus Misseriya and Ta'aisha in Central Darfur

Communities of the Salamat, a large tribe in Chad,[24] have migrated since the 1970s to Darfur, where they gained mid-level chieftaincies (*omodiya*) under Arab paramount chiefs, including the Ta'aisha, one of four *baggara* (cattle herding) tribes holding a *dar* (traditional administrative unit) and a *nazir* (paramount chief). In Um Dukhun area, they co-existed with other guests, in particular Misseriya, a large Arab people with land in Chad and West Kordofan. The Salamat sought government support by joining paramilitaries to obtain land rights and paramount chieftaincies.[25]

Conflict was reportedly triggered by theft of a Salamat's motorbike by Misseriya in April 2013, followed by mutual killings. The Ta'aisha, long in dispute with the Salamat, sided with the Misseriya, and fighting expanded over central Darfur. By June, Salamat and Misseriya had an estimated 300 casualties each.[26] Some 50,000

[20] Jérôme Tubiana, "Darfur: A Conflict for Land?", in Alex de Waal (ed.), War in Darfur and the Search for Peace (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 68- 91.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Like the government, rebel movements appeared to try to avoid taking sides. Ibid.
[23] Ibid and Crisis Group interviews, traditional and political leaders from Arab tribes (*baggara* and *abbala* Rizeigat, Beni Husein, Ma'aliya, Salamat, Misseriya, Beni Halba), Khartoum, August 2013.
[24] In particular in the Salamat region and around the Salamat river, up to Tissi and Um Dukhun areas at the border between Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR).
[25] Crisis Group interview, Tijani Sese, Khartoum, August 2013; Crisis Group analyst interview in another capacity, Salamat chief, Darfur, 2011.
[26] Crisis Group interviews, Salamat, Misseriya leaders, traditional and political leaders, Arab tribes (Beni Husein, baggara and abbala Rizeigat, Ma'aliya), Khartoum, August 2013. No Ta'aisha esti-

civilians, largely Salamat, took refuge in Chad. All sides called on members or ex-members of paramilitary forces, reportedly including Misseriya Border Guards from Nateiqa, South Darfur. Ta'aisha Central Reserve Police (CRP) forces allegedly were led by the International Criminal Court (ICC)-indicted Ali "Kosheib".[27] In July 2013, during unrest in South Darfur's capital, Nyala, he was wounded by a Salamat Border Guard, who was then arrested and reportedly died after torture. The Ta'aisha were said to enjoy political backing from Finance Minister Ali Mahmoud, a kinsman.[28]

Largely displaced to Chad, the Salamat vowed return and revenge, including by mobilising kin in Chad. This might have expanded conflict into Chad, where many Salamat, Misseriya and Hemat (from whom the Ta'aisha are said to originate) live. The government prevented this and in mid-2013 interposed the joint border force with Sudan between Salamat and Misseriya. Clashes in June 2014 prompted Central Darfur Governor Jaffar Abdelhakam to sack chiefs on both sides, an unusually strong reaction.[29] By October, the conflict was said to have calmed, but a government-led reconciliation process has been limited to the immediate Salamat-Misseriya conflict in Um Dukhun area without addressing older, deeper tensions with the Ta'aisha.[30]

2. Gold and land: Beni Husein versus *abbala* Rizeigat in North Darfur

The Beni Husein is the only Arab tribe that obtained land in Darfur during colonial times.[31] It enjoyed relatively good relations with non-Arab neighbours, but in 2012, gold was discovered in the Jebel Amir hills in Dar Beni Husein (land of the Beni Husein).[32] Perhaps 100,000 prospectors rushed in from all over Sudan, as well as Chad, CAR, Niger and Nigeria. In January 2013, a particularly rich gold mine became the object of fighting between Beni Husein, arguing historical rights, and *abbala* Rizeigat miners. Violence quickly spread.[33] By mid-2013, the Beni Husein said they

mate is available. "The ajaweed conference on reconciliation between Salamat and Miseria tribes", Central Darfur State, June 2013 (confidential Arabic document, UNAMID translation). In August, a Salamat leader claimed his tribe had suffered 486 casualties. Crisis Group interview, Khartoum.

[27] Crisis Group interviews, Salamat, Misseriya leaders, West Darfur Governor Haydar Galukuma, Khartoum, August 2013. "Kosheib", the only militia leader indicted by the ICC, is accused of ordering mass killings at the start of the conflict. Crisis Group interviews, Khartoum, August 2013.

[28] "Document on the assassination of the soldier who shot the leader of the Janjaweed", Alrakoba.net, 8 October 2013 (leaked medical report, Crisis Group translation); "Tensions high in Nyala, assassination attempt on ICC suspect", The Niles, 18 July 2013. Crisis Group interviews, Arab tribal leaders (including Salamat), Khartoum, August 2013; "The Economics of Ethnic Cleansing in Darfur", Enough Project, August 2013.

[29] Crisis Group interviews, Salamat and Misseriya leaders, Khartoum, August 2013. The joint force reportedly suffered casualties. It is not clear whether the fighting was on the Sudan or Chad side, possibly when Salamat armed elements were trying to cross into Chad. "Central Darfur governor relieves Salamat, Misseriya leaders after tribal clashes", Sudan Tribune, 22 June 2014.

[30] Crisis Group interviews, government official, October 2014; Salamat and Misseriya leaders, Khartoum, August 2013.

[31] They did so with the support of the colonial administration and several non-Arab chiefs who gave bits of land in an area north of Kebkabiya.

[32] Some members joined the Border Guard. Crisis Group interviews, Beni Husein and Rizeigat leaders, Khartoum, August 2013. Sudan doubled gold production in 2013. "Sudan gold production reaches 64 tonnes", Sudan Tribune, 24 November 2013.

[33] Crisis Group interviews, gold miners, Beni Husein, *abbala* Rizeigat and other leaders, Amin Hassan Omar, Khartoum, August 2013; UNAMID officer, June 2013.

had suffered nearly 840 dead and 420 injured (the better-armed Rizeigat had fewer). Some 150,000 persons, mostly Beni Husein, were reportedly displaced.[34]

Paramilitary troops or ex-members, particularly Border Guards, were on both sides. Rizeigat, a large part of those forces, could mobilise from all over Darfur; more Rizeigat fighters reportedly also came from Chad and CAR and took over the mine.[35] From January to July 2013, Governor Kibir organised tribal conferences. Musa Hilal, the main North Darfur Rizeigat leader, boycotted them and in August began his own process, culminating in a Kebkabiya conference that Beni Husein participants and external observers deemed more successful, but sporadic violence continued, notably when Beni Husein rustlers targeted Rizeigat and associated communities.[36]

3. Rizeigat versus Ma'aliya in East Darfur

The conflict between the *baggara* Rizeigat, East Darfur's majority tribe, and the Ma'aliya, is among the oldest. The Ma'aliya inhabit the border areas between West Kordofan and East Darfur, into which they migrated more than a century ago. They were initially hosted by the Rizeigat, whose well-established *nazir* holds authority over large swathes of land. After several conflicts and peace conferences, the Ma'aliya acquired their own *nazir* and land rights, but clashes continued, with the Rizeigat suspecting Ma'aliya communities, notably the Agarba Ma'aliya of Kilekil Abu Salama, of seeking additional land rights and chieftaincies.[37]

Fighting resumed in August 2013, after Ma'aliya rustled Rizeigat cattle, and quickly escalated into full-scale war involving both *baggara* and *abbala* Rizeigat from other states. The Rizeigat said they suffered 126 dead and 156 wounded in the first days; Ma'aliya casualties are unclear, but many were displaced. Members of government militias, in particular Rizeigat Border Guards, were involved. Both sides claimed the other was in rebellion, based on the involvement of ex-SLA-MM.[38]

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[34] Crisis Group interviews, traditional and political leaders, various Arab tribes (Beni Husein, *abbala* Rizeigat), Khartoum, August 2013; "Report on the conflicts of El-Sireif Beni Husein locality", April 2013 (local government's confidential Arabic document, Crisis Group translation).

[35] Crisis Group interviews, gold miners, Beni Husein and *abbala* Rizeigat leaders, Khartoum, August 2013. Beni Husein army General al-Hadi Adam Hamid intermittently led the Border Guard in 2003-2010. He said Rizeigat were much better represented in the paramilitaries. The Rizeigat accused him of mobilising the army against them. He denies this, saying he repeatedly rejected Beni Husein calls for protection or arms. When Rizeigat attacked the Beni Husein capital, Siref, they reportedly mobilised civilians, even women. Others, including miners, say the army tried to avoid taking sides but finally repelled the Rizeigat. Khartoum was accused of triggering conflict to introduce more profitable industrial mining, which officials denied. It would have been counter-productive: fighting put the mine under Rizeigat militia control and encouraged smuggling, as production fell. By 2014, some miners had joined gold rushes in Chad, Niger and Algeria. Ibid; Crisis Group interviews, other leaders, Khartoum, August 2013; Darfur Arab politician and UNAMID officer, April 2014; government official, October 2014; "The Economics of Ethnic Cleansing in Darfur", op. cit.

[36] Crisis Group interview, Beni Husein, Rizeigat and other Arab leaders, including participants, UNAMID officer, Khartoum, elsewhere, August 2013-April 2014. UNAMID became involved in local reconciliation in June 2014. In September, armed Beni Husein reportedly attacked an Awlad Rashid settlement near Siref. Originally from Chad, North Darfur Awlad Rashid communities are associated with the *abbala* Rizeigat. Crisis Group interview, government official, October 2014.

[37] Crisis Group interviews, traditional and political leaders, Arab tribes (Beni Husein, *baggara* and *abbala* Rizeigat Ma'aliya), Khartoum, August 2013.

[38] Crisis Group interviews, government officials, Rizeigat and Ma'aliya leaders, Khartoum, August 2013. "Report of the Panel of Experts on Sudan", UN Security Council, 11 February 2014, p. 49.

Officials quickly tried to stop this third intra-Arab conflict in 2013, but with limited success. Rizeigat East Darfur Governor Abdulhamid Musa Kasha was the first to try, but his ethnicity made this impossible.[39] North Darfur Governor Kibir then hosted a conference in Taweisha immediately north of Dar Rizeigat, but though ethnically neutral, he was suspected of siding with the Ma'aliya due to his conflict with Musa Hilal.[40] Ultimately, and for the first time, Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) officials, including former Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) rebels, mediated with slightly more success. Yet, fighting resumed in August-September 2014, with reportedly 300-400 dead, mostly Ma'aliya. By February 2015, a new reconciliation process outside Darfur stalled, unable to address the conflict's root cause: land.[41]

The renewed conflict led to a new East Darfur state government on 30 August. Yet, many, including among the Rizeigat elite, began to criticise that state's creation (some had once supported the idea of a Rizeigat-dominated state), realising the change not only undermined their importance in the former (larger) South Darfur, but also created conflict with minority tribes, including the Ma'aliya. Many now see East Darfur as an example of the danger of creating additional mono-ethnic states.

Further intra-Arab conflicts at the East Darfur-West Kordofan border threaten to merge with the Rizeigat-Ma'aliya conflict. One, a Ma'aliya-Hamar struggle over land in West Kordofan that erupted in December 2013 and displaced 38,000 in March-April 2014, seems to have been contained since a July peace conference.[42] Another involves the persistent Rizeigat-Misseriya tensions in West Kordofan, aggravated by Rizeigat RSF violence against Misseriya civilians in early 2014.

C. *Arab Militias against the Government (Including Hilal's rebellion)*

There are estimates of as many as 200,000 Arab militia members in Darfur, partly integrated into official paramilitary forces.[43] They have increasingly felt abandoned and turned against the government.[44] Since 2013, Khartoum's inability to protect Arab civilians from attacks by militias of other Arab communities has further increased anti-government animosity. For political and economic reasons, Khartoum stopped

[39] Elected in South Darfur in 2010, Kasha was sent to smaller East Darfur, seen as a Rizeigat state. "Bashir establishes two states in Darfur, reshuffles governors", Sudan Tribune, 10 January 2012.
[40] "East Darfur Ma'alia abductees released", Radio Dabanga, 21 August 2013; "Rizeigat set conditions for reconciliation with Ma'alia", Radio Tamazuj, 13 April 2014.
[41] Crisis Group interview, DRA official, October 2014. "Report of the Secretary-General", 26 November 2014, op. cit. p. 8. "Darfur reconciliation process stalled over land ownership", Sudan Tribune, 28 February 2015.
[42] "Report of the Secretary-General on [UNAMID]", UN, 15 January 2014, p. 6; "Sudanese troops to be deployed between Darfur, W. Kordofan to prevent tribal clashes", Sudan Tribune, 25 May 2014.
[43] This includes Border Guard, Popular Defence Forces (PDF), CRP and RSF members, other paramilitaries in principle under army or security officer control and tribal militias or armed nomads under traditional chiefs or war leaders (*agid*). Crisis Group interviews and analyst interviews in another capacity, Arab traditional and political leaders, government officials, Khartoum, 2011, August 2013; Crisis Group Report, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (III)*, op. cit., p. 13; Helen Young et al., "Livelihoods, Power and Choice: The Vulnerability of the Northern Rizaygat", Feinstein International Center, 2009, p. 76; "SAF and Allied Forces", Small Arms Survey, November 2010.
[44] Crisis Group interview, al-Hadi Adam Hamid, Khartoum, August 2013; Jérôme Tubiana, "Out for Gold and Blood in Sudan", Foreign Affairs (online); Julie Flint, "Beyond 'Janjaweed': Understanding the Militias of Darfur", Small Arms Survey Working Paper no. 17, 2009, pp. 30-31.

paying some militias and delivering food and ammunition; some of these turned against it, calling themselves Jundi al-Mazlum (the "neglected soldiers").[45]

Musa Hilal, chief of the Mahamid branch of North Darfur's *abbala* Rizeigat, was the main Arab militia leader at the start of the conflict. From 2005, he became more independent and began to negotiate (directly, or through commanders or intermediaries abroad), non-aggression pacts with different rebel factions, as well as with the Chad government then fighting a proxy war with Sudan.[46] In an attempt to win back his loyalty, Khartoum appointed him presidential adviser on tribal and local affairs, and he was elected to the national assembly. He soon resented his positions in Khartoum as a golden cage, however, and in mid-2013 returned to Misteriha, from where he continued to try to change his "Janjawid" image into one of a local peacemaker (notably in the Jebel Amir conflict) and grew increasingly anti-government. In January 2014, he defected from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) party to form the "Sudanese Awakening Revolutionary Council" (SARC), claiming to represent the interests of Darfur's Arabs.[47] In July 2014, SARC representative Ismail Aghbash signed, in Addis Ababa, a "memorandum of understanding" with the SPLM-N.[48]

Rebels long demanded Hilal prove commitment to Darfur by attacking government strongholds, but he has stayed on the rebellion's edge.[49] Some of his commanders have crossed the line, signed agreements with rebel factions and repeatedly attacked government convoys, apparently with his blessing.[50] In February 2014, he went further, when his troops attacked a convoy of paramilitaries reportedly sent to retake Jebel Amir from Rizeigat militias. A month later, he took over Saref Omra town, expelling the commissioner.[51] Fighting between the Rizeigat and the commissioner's (non-Arab) Tama guards escalated to tribal conflict in which 50,000 civilians were reportedly displaced.[52] In March 2014, some fifteen Hilal vehicles reportedly fought beside SLA-MM and SLA-Justice rebels against RSF in Ba'ashim, North Darfur.[53]

[45] Crisis Group interviews, Arab politicians, Khartoum, August 2013. The cost is both political and financial. For example, the government reportedly paid Hemmeti's forces to leave North Kordofan's capital al-Obeid, where they had wreaked havoc. "$3 million for withdrawal of North Kordofan's Janjaweed", Radio Dabanga, 14 February 2014.

[46] Each government supported the other's opposition, and Qadhafi's fall did not fully end Libyan encouragement of Darfur Arabs to rebel. Crisis Group interview, Arab rebel leader, January 2015.

[47] "I didn't rebel against the state, but if the government doesn't want to find solutions, we will get to that goal". "Al-Meghar discusses with Sheikh Musa Hilal from his residence in Darfur", Al-Meghar al-Siyasi (Khartoum), 25 August 2013 (Crisis Group translation); Crisis Group interview, Hilal's associate, Khartoum, August 2013.

[48] Hilal renounced the document. It was not signed by the whole SRF, and Darfur rebels criticised it, though they had older, better connections with Hilal; they preferred to pursue more discreet non-aggression pacts in the field. It was also unpopular with civil society, due to Hilal's reputation. "Memorandum of Understanding", SPLM-N and Awakening Revolutionary Council (ARC), 10 July 2014; Crisis Group interviews, Darfur rebel leaders, March 2014, Arab rebel leader, January 2015.

[49] Crisis Group interview, Hilal's associate, Khartoum, August 2013.

[50] Crisis Group analyst interviews in another capacity, Musa Hilal, 2009-2011; Jérôme Tubiana, "'Seule une tortue peut mordre une tortue': accords entre groupes rebelles et communautés arabes au Darfour", Politique Africaine, no. 118, June 2010, pp. 216-217.

[51] Crisis Group interviews, rebel leader, March 2014; Darfur Arab politician, UNAMID officer, April 2014; government official, October 2014. "Report of the Secretary-General", 15 April 2014, op. cit., p. 2. The commissioner was a Berti, like Governor Kibir.

[52] Close to the Tama, the Gimir community was also targeted by the Rizeigat. The Tama are a non-Arab tribe with a sultanate in eastern Chad and communities in Darfur since pre-colonial times. They are one of the few non-Arab communities to side with the government. In 2005-2006, Suda-

Hilal's more direct anti-government involvement seems largely due to his feud with Governor Kibir. They fell out for various reasons, including Kibir's alleged role in the 2010 Mawasir market (in El-Fasher) Ponzi scheme, in which many *abbala* lost money, and his close relations with rival war chiefs like An-Nur Ahmad in Gubba.[54] In 2013, Kibir appointed a new *nazir* for the Awlad Tako, a clan in principle under Hilal.[55] There were also rumours that Hilal aspires to replace Kibir or for the government to carve out a new state encompassing the Kebkabiya and Kutum areas, over which he would have de facto authority.[56] In March 2015, as the old conflict between Kibir's Berti tribe and the Zeyadiya Arabs resumed, Hilal held a conference in Mellit, the Berti capital, and, while again presenting himself as a peacemaker, reportedly tried to rally the Zeyadiya to his struggle against the governor.[57]

Beyond Kibir's anti-Hilal machinations, Hemmeti's rise appears a government attempt to groom a more loyal *abbala* Rizeigat war leader. Persistent rivalries (and risks of open conflict) between his Mahariya and Hilal's Mahamid give Khartoum a divide-and-rule option.[58] In March 2014, Hilal reportedly demanded that Hemmeti's RSF leave North Darfur.[59]

Chad's president, Idriss Déby, who long had friendly relations with Hilal and even married his daughter, reportedly urged him to reconcile with Khartoum.[60] In January 2015, after Hilal was said to threaten to prevent April elections in some parts of

nese Tama militias were recruited into the Khartoum-backed Chadian rebel United Front for Change (Front Uni pour le Changement – FUC), some members of which then joined or returned to Sudanese militias. Hilal seems to have stopped the conflict. Crisis Group interviews, rebel leader, March 2014; Arab politician, April 2014; UNAMID officer, April 2014; government official, October 2014; "Report of the Secretary-General", 15 April 2014, op. cit., p. 2.

[53] Disgruntled rebel elements (LJM and JEM-Dabajo) that signed the DDPD and Chadian rebel remnants also reportedly fought the RSF in this battle. SLA-MM units also fought alongside Hilal's troops in a February 2014 ambush of government militias but then joined the government themselves shortly afterwards. Crisis Group interview, LJM official, October 2014.

[54] Crisis Group interviews, *abbala* politician and government official, Khartoum, August 2013; "Hundreds of defrauded investors clash with police in Darfur", Sudan Tribune, 29 April 2010.

[55] Kibir's ability to co-opt Hilal's former supporters is largely due to Deputy Governor Adam an-Nahla, a Mahamid Rizeigat.

[56] Crisis Group interviews, North Darfur politicians, Khartoum, August 2013.

[57] Crisis Group interview, Arab politician, March 2015.

[58] In 2007, the Mahariya accused Hilal of killing Mohammed "Dagersho", the main Mahariya war chief, who died shortly after falling out with him. Hemmeti's rise began then. Flint, "Beyond 'Janjaweed'", op. cit., p. 34. Kibir and Mahamid Rizeigat renegades like An-Nur Ahmad are said to have good ties with Hemmeti. Hilal was once backed by now weakened NCP barons like ex-Vice President Ali Osman Taha and ex-security chief Salah Abdallah "Gosh", Hemmeti by Second Vice President Hassabo Mohammed Abderahman and ex-Governor Kasha, both South Darfur Mahariya Rizeigat, and ex-security chief (Gosh rival) Nafie Ali Nafie. Crisis Group interview, government official, October 2014. In 2011 Hilal was briefly arrested, suspected of coup plotting with Gosh.

[59] Crisis Group interview, Darfur Arab politician, January 2014. In August, he reportedly opposed government attempts to integrate Mahamid combatants into the RSF, yet by December some Mahamid Border Guards, notably under An-Nur Ahmad, were being rehatted as "RSF". Crisis Group interviews, government official, October 2014; Arab politician, March 2015.

[60] Hilal was invited, with President Bashir, to attend Déby's second Darfur conference, in March 2014. Crisis Group interview, conference participant, October 2014. "Sudan president Omar al Bashir visits Chad", Radio Tamazuj, 29 March 2014; "Chad president weds Sudan's Janjaweed chief's daughter", Al Arabiya News, 21 January 2012.

Darfur, Presidential Assistant Ibrahim Ghandour tried to return him to the fold.[61] Yet, in February and March, after SARC spokesperson Ahmed Mohammed claimed "agreements" concluded with Ghandour and earlier in Chad were not implemented, Hilal threatened again to "sabotage" the polls.[62] He reportedly says he asked for (and was promised) the position of first vice president (replacing Bakri Hasan Saleh), as well as for Arab officials to be appointed governors in South Darfur, East Darfur and West Darfur and deputy governors in the two other states into which Darfur has been divided. There is no indication the government agreed to this, but in March, Hilal toned down his rhetoric about the elections.[63]

Arab militias have also clashed with regulars, including in and around Nyala and El-Fasher. In July 2013, after *abbala* Rizeigat CRP Commander Ahmed Abdallah Sharara "Dakrom" ("rough") was killed by an NISS officer, *abbala* militias attacked the NISS in downtown Nyala.[64] Darfur Arab militias, or ex-members, are said to have played a crucial role in the Seleka rebellion in CAR, in particular under former militia commander General Moussa Suleiman as-Simeh, who controlled the main force that occupied Bangui until June 2013, when most of those troops withdrew.[65]

Governors attempted to show strength in response to the spread of militia violence to state capitals. In July 2014, South Darfur Governor Adam Mahmoud Jar-al-Nabi declared indefinite state of emergency measures.[66] Though imitated in other states, Khartoum's continued backing of forces like the RSF limits enforcement.[67]

D. *Non-Arab Conflict with the Zaghawa*

Conflicts are also taking place between non-Arab tribes, particularly in the eastern Darfur lowlands between El-Fasher and Nyala, where the Berti, Bergid, Mima and Tunjur suffered both Arab militia and rebel (in particular SLA-MM) predation. In retaliation for the latter, the Zaghawa, considered "newcomers" and the most prominent tribe in the rebel movements, have been targeted by locally recruited, non-Arab militias since 2011. Kibir, the Berti governor, reportedly armed the non-Arabs.[68]

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[61] Crisis Group interview, Arab rebel leader, January 2015; "Sudan's NCP seeks to pacify Janjaweed leader", Sudan Tribune, 12 January 2015.

[62] Crisis Group interview, Arab politician, March 2015. "Ex-Janjaweed leader threatens to sabotage Sudan elections", Sudan Tribune, 26 February 2015.

[63] Crisis Group interviews, government official and Arab politician, March 2015.

[64] "Report of the Secretary-General", 15 April 2014, op. cit., p. 3. Alleged causes for Dakrom's murder include opposing NISS speculation on Nyala fuel deliveries and competition over cars looted by Arab militias in CAR. Crisis Group interviews, Rizeigat, other politicians, government official, Khartoum, August 2013; civil society activist, South Darfur politician, April 2014; "Aid worker killed as Sudan violence escalates", Agence France-Presse, 5 July 2013.

[65] "Non-state armed groups in the Central African Republic", Conflict Armament Research, January 2015; "Centrafrique: retour au Soudan du général Moussa Assimeh ex-Seleka", RFI, 21 October 2013. Darfur Arab militias also reportedly fought in Libya, first in 2011, alongside some Darfur rebels on Qadhafi's side; currently several hundred Darfur Arabs are said to fight in Libyan Islamist militias. Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, February 2015.

[66] Crisis Group interview, government official, September 2014; "Report of the Secretary-General", 26 November 2014, op. cit., p. 10.

[67] Differences reportedly increased between some governors and SAF officers, and NISS-RSF. Crisis Group interviews, government officials, September-October 2014; "East Darfur state imposes emergency order", Sudan Tribune, 14 October 2014; "State of emergency declared", op. cit.

[68] Crisis Group interviews, non-Arab politicians including militia mobilisers, government official, Khartoum, August 2013; Claudio Gramizzi, Jérôme Tubiana, "Old Tactics, New Players", Small

After the 2011 attacks, Zaghawa politicians obtained a government investigation into the Abu Zerega mass execution of civilians by non-Arab Popular Defence Forces (PDF) members, six of whom were sentenced to death.[69] In 2012, however, ten Zaghawa civilians were killed in Sigili by Berti and Bergid PDF.[70] This time, attempts to lift the suspects' immunity failed, and the cycle continues. In 2013-2014, Zaghawa civilians were again targeted in an RSF reprisal for SLA-MM operations.[71]

E. *Rebel Factional Fighting*

Almost from its beginning, the rebellion was threatened by fragmentation along tribal lines and leadership rivalries. This was aggravated by efforts of Khartoum and its allies (particularly Chad and Qatar) to divide the most threatening movements, and of AU and UN mediators to bring more rebels to the negotiating table, all resulting in splinter factions signing piecemeal deals with the government.[72] At times, the UN, AU, U.S., Libya, Ethiopia and South Sudan attempted to reunite divided movements, but most efforts proved counter-productive, leading to further divisions.

The first important post-DDPD split, orchestrated by Chad with support from UNAMID (which had taken over the AU-UN joint mediation), was the 2012 creation of the JEM-Bashar faction. Its leader, Mohammed Bashar, was killed by JEM in May 2013 and replaced by Bakhit Abdelkarim "Dabajo". This enraged President Déby, who sent Chad troops into Darfur and forced JEM to leave.[73] With some of its leaders still held by JEM, JEM-Dabajo agreed to security arrangements with Khartoum, in return for integration of a few hundred of its troops into regular forces.[74]

In spring 2014, Mohammedein Orkajor, SLA-MM's main North Darfur commander, formed his own faction, reportedly at Chad's initiative.[75] In the same period, some of SLA-AW's main political and military leaders, including Abulgasim Imam, Mohammed Abdelsalam "Tarrada", Yusif Ahmad "Karjakola" and Nimir Mohammed, also left, angry with Abdelwahid's uncompromising negotiation stance. Loyal forces reportedly attacked the dissidents and targeted their villages and families.[76] Some SLA-AW dissidents seem to remain part of the SRF and signed a memorandum of understanding with SLA-MM in March 2015; others reportedly joined with non-SRF factions. Khartoum's strategy, with Chad's support, appears to be to buy field commanders in order to separate them from political leaders.[77]

Arms Survey Working Paper no. 28, 2012, pp. 30-33. The non-Arab paramilitaries were known as "Kibir's militias" (milishiyat Kibir).

[69] "Forgotten Darfur", op. cit., pp. 25-28; Crisis Group interviews, Darfurians close to the militias, human rights activist, Khartoum, August 2013.

[70] Crisis Group interviews, government official and human rights activist; Colum Lynch, "They Just Stood Watching", Foreign Policy (online), 7 April 2014; "Events in an around Sigili", UNAMID cable, 7 November 2012 (leaked); "Letter from the Secretary-General", op. cit., pp. ii-iii.

[71] Crisis Group interviews, Zaghawa politician, August 2013; UNAMID officer, April 2014.

[72] Crisis Group Report, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (III)*, op. cit., p. 25.

[73] Ibid, pp. 25-27. JEM now largely operates in South Kordofan and South Sudan.

[74] Crisis Group interview, LJM official, September 2014.

[75] Crisis Group interview, government official, September 2014. Orkajor led a 2011 raid from Darfur to Libya, where he seized many weapons.

[76] Crisis Group interviews, Abulgasim Imam, other SLA-AW dissidents, April 2014, SRF rebels, March 2014. "Report of the Secretary-General", 26 November 2014, op. cit., p. 3.

[77] Orkajor allegedly was bought off by Khartoum, but his troops occasionally fought the government, much like groups, including LJM and JEM-Dabajo, that joined the government earlier. SLA-AW

F. *Beyond the Militia Impasse*

In Darfur, as in Sudan's second civil war (1983-2005) and the renewed conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the government has relied on militias and paramilitaries, such as the PDF, Border Guards, CRP and RSF, but they have proved no more effective than the regular army in ending multiple rebellions. In Darfur, the militia strategy was counter-productive from the start: abuses drove civilians to support and join rebel movements, causing them to grow quickly from hundreds to thousands of combatants. Moreover, militias often pursued their own local and tribal agendas rather than the government's – in recent years, leading Arab militias to increasingly fight each other and in some cases regular forces, or even to join the rebellion.

Given the chaos, Arab and non-Arab communities demand arms and their own militias for protection. While the government has often supported this, some officials, including President Bashir, recognise it is a main reason for communal conflicts.[78] Several officials have advocated retaking control of militias, including gradually disarming them (beginning with heavier weapons), then retraining and integrating them into better controlled, more regular forces. Yet, RSF abuses show the limits of this.[79] Darfur's militia problem has spread to other parts of Sudan, becoming a national issue that will not be solved without sustainable national consensus. But beyond negotiations with formal rebels, the government's priority in addressing Darfur's security problem should be a strategy to neutralise and disarm militias. The DDPD required such disarmament, but Khartoum has been unable and unwilling to implement the provision, for fear this would turn the militias further against it.[80] That concern is real, and disarmament should not be rushed: past security arrangements show a realistic timetable would be years, not months.[81]

IV. **Conclusion**

Resolution of Darfur's diverse conflicts requires many things, including a rethink by the international community, in particular the UN Security Council, of many aspects of its relationships with Sudan. One element of that resolution, however, must be to involve as many armed groups and communities as possible in parallel peace processes, including local inter-tribal conferences (among them the DIDC and more locally owned ones); Darfur regional security talks; and the national dialogue. In particular, Arab militias need representation in all processes, and government and rebels must acknowledge that they do not fully represent those communities. Prom-

splinters also went to Chad but seem to remain in rebellion. Crisis Group interviews, government official, October 2014; SRF leaders, Paris, March 2015.

[78] Crisis Group interview, Amin Hassan Omar, Khartoum, August 2013. "Sudan's ruling party to abolish elections of state governors", Sudan Tribune, 27 October 2014.

[79] Crisis Group interviews, Amin Hassan Omar, al-Hadi Adam Hamid, Khartoum, August 2013. In December 2014, the government repeated its intent to disarm "tribal militias", starting with heavy weapons; it is unclear how this would impact the RSF. "Sudanese government to disarm tribal militias in Darfur: official", Sudan Tribune, 20 December 2014. There are different opinions in the government on whether militias are less prone to perpetrate (unwanted) violence when deployed at home or far away. Crisis Group Report, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (III)*, op. cit., p. 16.

[80] Crisis Group Report, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (III)*, op. cit., pp. 13-16.

[81] Crisis Group interview, government official, January 2015.

inent leaders, such as Musa Hilal, should join talks as "native administration" or "traditional chiefs", as was tried in the 2010-2011 Doha "civil society" process, with UNAMID support. Civil society in general has been a useful voice in Darfur, when not hijacked by armed parties.[82]

In 2009, the AU rightly analysed the conflict as "Sudan's conflict in Darfur", which requires a national solution. Yet, community conflicts also have more local dimensions that need to be addressed through both local and Darfur-wide conferences, with only a limited role for government (including the DRA) and the international community (including UNAMID or a possible successor). Combining local ownership with an external role mostly limited to following-up the implementation of local conferences' decisions has proven crucial to avoiding resumed violence.

Ending violence also requires the gradual reduction and disarmament of militias and paramilitaries. This cannot be done by coercion alone; both government, which has been focused on military solutions and remains wedded to its traditional militias-based counter-insurgency strategy, and opposition need to address the concerns of the communities from which those forces are drawn, most notably Darfur's Arabs. As a first incentive and trust-building sign, representatives of those communities, including militia chiefs, should be included in all processes, including the national dialogue. Secondly, much needed development and services could be granted, including in exchange for disarmament. Difficult concessions may be needed: including, for the non-Arabs, granting Arab nomads places to access education, health and development services; and for the Arabs, acknowledging the responsibility of those among them who committed war crimes.

Another dimension of the conflict is cross-border or regional. Evolutions in Darfur, including good security arrangements, might push both militias and rebels to wreak havoc in neighbouring countries. That risk cannot be fully addressed in a national process, but the African Union High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP), because of its mandate for those two countries and its AU backing, is well placed to coordinate its efforts with those of others.[83]

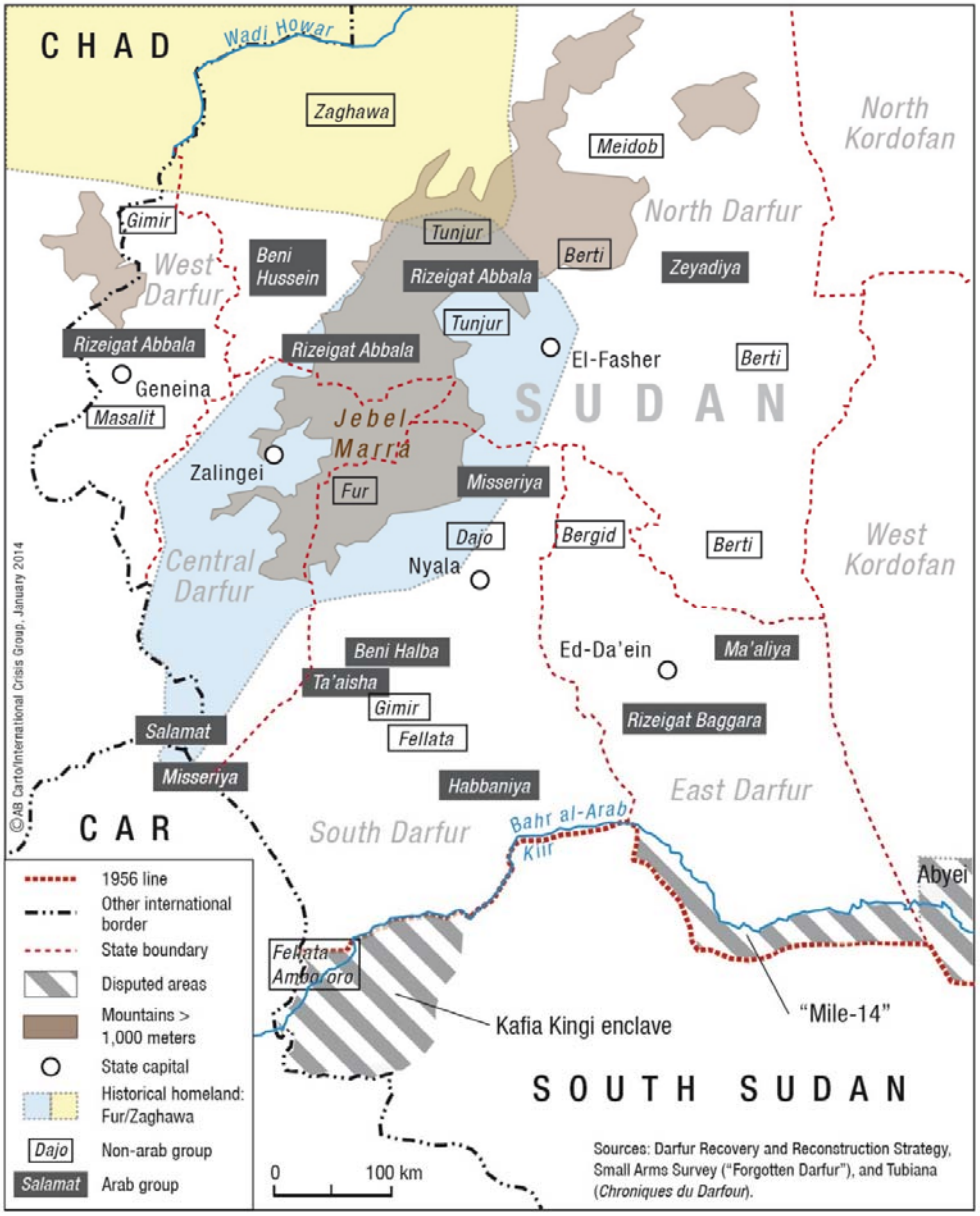
Finally, there will need to be a link between national and local solutions, not least because positive changes at the centre could give an essential signal to players in the local conflicts that resources might shift from war to peaceful activities, while ill-managed changes could unleash further violence.

Nairobi/Brussels, 22 April 2015

[82] Jérôme Tubiana, "Civil Society and the South Sudan Crisis", In Pursuit of Peace, blog.crisisgroup.org, 14 July 2014.
[83] Crisis Group Report, *Sudan and South Sudan's Merging Conflicts*, op. cit., p. 24.

Appendix A: Map of Sudan

Appendix B: Map of Darfur



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