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ROOTS OF THE CRISIS **SUDAN**

SUDAN

Sudan, Africa's largest country, owes its existence as one unit to its colonial history. Sudan is divided by religion, ethnicity, tribe and economic livelihood (between nomadic and sedentary cultures). Since independence in 1956, the country's most significant conflict has been that between the north and south, with the first civil war lasting from 1955-1972, and the second from 1983-2005.

The loose Ottoman-Egyptian administration of what is now Sudan collapsed in the 1880s after a national-religious revolt led by the Islamic Mahdi, or prophet. Anglo-Egyptian forces captured Khartoum in 1898 and established a jointly-administered condominium government. The British administered the north and south separately until 1947, with political power given to the northern elites prior to independence in January 1956.

Southern army officers mutinied in 1955, eventually forming the Anya-Nya guerrilla movement. A few years later, General El-Ferik Ibrahim Abboud seized power in Khartoum, but was forced out by a popular uprising in 1964.

A number of northern-dominated governments succeeded each other for the next few years, with General Gaafar Nimeiri leading a successful coup in 1969. Nimeiri came to power as a socialist, then recast himself as a moderate, and ultimately adopted the mantle of Islamic nationalism, all in order to maintain power in the face of opposition from across the political spectrum and ensure a prominent role for Sudan in what was then the superpower rivalry of the Cold War. As a series of coup attempts left him politically isolated, he began to seek peace with former adversaries in neighboring Ethiopia and Uganda, and with southern rebels. The Addis Ababa peace agreement was signed by the Nimeiri government with Anya-Nya in March 1972, and allowed for Anya-Nya integration into the national army and provided limited autonomy for the south.

However, consistent violations of the agreement by the government eventually led to a resumption of the war. The agreement was unconstitutionally revised by the Khartoum government in 1977, and northern troops were deployed to the oil-rich southern town of Bentiu. In response, southern troops mutinied against the government in June 1983. Khartoum then imposed Islamic or sharia law in September 1983, further alienating the non-Muslim southern population.

Southern grievances eventually crystallized around the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement, or SPLA, a rebel group led by Dr. John Garang. As political tensions rose in the north, the economy fell into decline and the war in the south re-escalated, Nimeiri was overthrown by a popular uprising in 1985 and, following a brief transition led by the military, a democratic government led by the northern-based Umma Party's Sadiq al-Mahdi was voted into power in 1986.

Moves towards a peace agreement between the SPLA and the government were dashed when the National Islamic Front, or NIF, led a bloodless coup in June 1989, a day before a bill to freeze sharia law was to be passed by Parliament and in the midst of what might have been promising discussions between the government and southern rebels. Led by General Omer al-Bashir, the NIF unravelled peace efforts, revoked the constitution, banned opposition parties, and pursued the war with the SPLA by proclaiming jihad against the mostly non-Muslim south.

Though its cause gained greater attention at home and abroad, the SPLA was weakened in 1991 by the fall of a key regional ally, the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, and by a major split within its own ranks. This led to serious inter-ethnic fighting in the south. The SPLA survived through a series of alliances with northern opposition movements and strong regional support. Over time, Eritrea became an important base of operations after Eritrea fell out with Khartoum over the NIF's support for Eritrean Islamic insurgents.

Around this same time, Sudan was implicated by both Ethiopia and the UN Security Council of involvement in the June 1995 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during his visit to Addis Ababa for an annual Organization for

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African Union (OAU) Summit. Subsequently, Ethiopia increased its support for the SPLA. Khartoum's harboring of Osama bin Laden and a broad array of terrorist groups throughout the 1990s led to its further international isolation, culminating in the U.S. cruise missile attack on Khartoum following terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

On-and-off negotiations between the government and the SPLA under the Kenyan-led regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, or IGAD, made little progress from 1994-2001. But in 2002, the Machakos Protocol—which granted the south the right to a referendum on self-determination following a six-year interim period and dictated that sharia law would remain in force only in the north—provided the framework for future, successful negotiations.

IGAD worked closely with a quartet of western countries—the U.S., UK, Norway, and Italy—to press the government and SPLA to reach a final deal. High-level U.S. diplomatic engagement, notably the White House's appointment of former Missouri Senator John Danforth as special envoy, provided much needed leverage to move the process toward its conclusion.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was officially signed on January 9, 2005. The CPA had sufficient momentum to survive the death of SPLM leader and Vice-President elect John Garang, and by October 2005, a new constitution had been ratified, a new government sworn in (with 52 percent of the executive posts for the ruling NCP and 28 percent for the SPLM), and the south's autonomous legislature and government became operational.

Darfur emerged as the next chapter in Sudan's civil wars when the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel groups took up arms against the government in February 2003. The rebels claimed years of political, economic and social marginalization of the region, and hailed primarily from the African Fur, Zaghawa, and Massaleit tribes.

After a string of rebel victories in the spring of 2003, the government responded by arming Arab Janjaweed militia to clear civilian population bases of those accused of supporting the rebellion. Violence and broken ceasefires continued throughout 2004 and 2005—despite intermittent peace talks and the presence of a 7,000-strong African Union protection force that was deployed in August 2004.

Divisions between and within the two rebel groups have exacerbated the conflict and hindered negotiations. Hundreds of thousands have died in Darfur, and roughly 2.5 million have been displaced and today rely on external assistance for their survival. In March 2005, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court prosecutor for investigation, though the Sudanese government continues to oppose ICC involvement.

Peace talks mediated by the African Union culminated in the Darfur Peace Agreement on May 5, 2006. However, only one of the main rebel factions—the SLA faction led by Commander Minni Arkou Minnawi—signed the deal with the government, and the non-signatory rebel groups vowed to fight on.

Since the signing of this agreement, the security, human rights, and humanitarian situation in Darfur have continued to deteriorate. Khartoum continues its policy of support for Janjaweed militias and their attacks on civilians. Humanitarian access remains extremely poor, as relief workers are targeted by government-supported militias, rebel groups, and bandits. Meanwhile Khartoum continues to oppose the deployment of an AU/UN "hybrid" force mandated by the UN Security Council.

No one can guarantee what will work with a regime as tough-minded and inscrutable as Sudan's, but patient diplomacy and trust in Khartoum's good faith have proven to be a patent failure. Although the United Nations General Assembly and UN Security Council have endorsed the doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" civilians when their own governments are unable or unwilling to do so, the world has yet to act to protect Darfur's civilians, ensure a lasting peace, or hold the perpetrators accountable.

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