

## **Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)**

### **Interest in Sustainable Peace in Darfur**

#### **Darfur Conflict**

Darfur is the western area of Sudan that shares border with Chad, Central African Republic and its northern part mostly desert with Libya. Historically the entire area was ruled by the Tunjur and Dajo sultanates between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and by the Kira sultanate of which Sultan Ali Dinar, who was killed in 1916 was the last. The sultanates were divided into hakuras and tribal dars that were affirmed by the British Condominium and left them unchanged up to the independence. Darfur had continued to resist colonial rule and many revolts such as the Suheini uprising in Nyala in 1921; the 1927 Feki Muahjir uprising and the burning of the British flag in Fasher in February 1952 were recorded. It is to be noted that Darfur was annexed to Sudan in 1916.

The current conflict in Darfur is the third in less than twenty years; historically they were conflicts between the farmers and the pastorals which intensified during the drought of 1984-85. In 1986, a new phase of conflict, that had ethnic dimension developed in south Darfur between Fur and Arabs was a significant one because for the first time an Arab alliance was formed to fight Fur around Jebel Merra, by the time the conflict ended in 1990, Greater Darfur population was divided into two main ethnic groups of Arabs and non Arabs. Tribal conflicts became more frequent and intense in West and South Darfur especially the period of 1998 –1999. In the center of this crisis are the hakura, administrative borders and historical leadership structures. These tribal conflicts were moved to another level as a result of the NCP led government militarization of the camel herders in western Darfur and the abolishing of /playing down of the native administration role thus eroding the peoples' capacity to manage their conflicts.

It is to be noted that Darfur people did not benefit from the Sudanisation of the civil service because there were no Gordon college graduates, thus it did not get any of 900 posts. Successive governments after the Independence neglected Darfur resulting in disparity in development between it and central Sudan. labor migration from Darfur to Jezza and Gadaref depleted agricultural labor force from Darfur .

Darfurians participated in many of the nationalist movements, the Nimairi coup, Hashim Al Atta, Hassan Hussain and the July 1976 movement in the hope of getting their rights. They have also participated in the Islamic movement and at various levels of government. However many of them came to conclusion that wealth and power are not shared on fair basis and this led to revolts and joining SPLA/M beginning with Engineer Daud Bolad who moved the rebellion to Darfur to the present movements. The current conflict between the central Government of Khartoum and Darfur people broke out in 2003.

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The ethnic polarization has become stronger as the conflict raged on. It is to be noted that the majority of the fighters in the movements are non Arabs while the Arabs who allied themselves with Khartoum Government were armed and participated in uprooting the people from villages to end up as captives in big camps near the towns.

The current conflict in Darfur has generated huge number of displaced and refugees totalling to two millions. Health indicators are worse as indicated by high maternal mortality rate of 1700/10000 and an acute malnutrition rates at 40% in the camps. It has resulted in rapid urbanization where a town like Nyala has a population of one million plus, it is to be noted that most of the IDP camps are around big towns. This conflict is characterized by atrocities and violence against women often expressing itself mostly in form of rape. It has been described as a humanitarian disaster and by others as genocide. To SPLM the Darfur conflict is linked to the general marginalization issues and the concentration of the power in the centre.

### **SPLM interest in a sustainable Peace in Darfur:**

The SPLM Interim Political Bureau (IPB) meeting in Juba (14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>) September 2006 resolved SPLM position on Darfur. There were 11 resolution of these, six were directly linked to the Darfur, these were:.

Engage the Armed Movements in Darfur (SLM/A and national Redemption Front) with view to addressing their concerns on the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA)

Call for cessation of hostilities and reconciliation process among the ethnic groups in Darfur including their armed militia/Janjaweed

Convene a meeting in Southern Sudan for the Darfurian Armed Movements in order to achieve comprehensive peace in Darfur

Call for a dialogue between the parties to the Darfur Conflict

As a conclusion to the process, call on the African Union (AU) to convene the Darfur-Darfur dialogue and consultation

Mandated the Chairman of the SPLM to form a contact and follow up high committee on Darfur Under his leadership

In response to these resolutions the SPLM chairmen constituted the Darfur Task Force, under his leadership vide the SPLM Chairman's decree dated 31<sup>st</sup> march 2007 under the leadership of rev. Canon Clement Janda

**SPLM interest in addressing the Darfur conflict is:**

To consolidate the vision of new Sudan;

Break the hegemony of centre on the governance, resources access and control.

To champion democratic transformation in Sudan; The Darfur movements are strategic allies in this transformation process.

To maintain the gains in the CPA while it champions the liberation of the other marginalised groups.

It is to be noted that SPLM has not participated in the generation of Darfur conflict; is not in conflict with the Darfur people but is bias to the people of Darfur in their quest for a Just political settlement to their plight. This bias had been expressed in the formation of a Darfur Task force with a wide mandate ranging from the unification of Darfur movement through to assisting them to articulate their negotiating positions to the monitoring of the resultant peace agreement. It is worth mentioning that during the coming negotiations, as a result of the CPA, the power, wealth or security arrangements to concede to the Darfur people are the power, wealth in Northern Sudan sates of which Darfur is a part.

By the time the CPA was signed there were only two Darfur movements namely the Sudan liberation movement (SLA/M)and Justice and Equality movement (JEM). These two movements went into negotiations with the NCP government and by May 2006 a Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed by an SLA/M faction led by Mini who was the general secretary while the chairman of the organization Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nure did not. Since that time the SLA/M had continuously divided into small factions. It is to be noted that neither the vision nor desired political solution were the driving force of the divisions.

Darfur movements are amorphous and somehow tribal and ethnic in nature. They have visions and political programs that have been articulated. The major dilemma is how to deal with power now and access to power and resource after the resolution of the conflict, this creates a dilemma on how to meet individual aspirations while ensuring that the Darfur people by the end of the negotiations will have a just peace that addresses their development and Human Rights needs

**Darfur Movements Unification:**

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The DPA did not end the hostilities in Darfur thus there had been search for a comprehensive solution. It has been noted that a solution can not be reached with so many factions and the unification of factions had dominated many discussion. The SLA/M factions had tried many times to unite, the Eritreans, the Libyans the UN and SPLM had had various programs aimed at unification of these factions in order to facilitate the negotiations

SPLM in preparations for the unification of the Darfur movements included;

Conducting researched and analysed the Darfur Conflict and the DPA

Field visits to Asmara, Libya, Chad, Europe and the three Darfur States

The fist activity was the consultations that was conducted in Juba with some of the movements in which they requested the SPLM to assist them to unify their movements into single movement (August 2007)

Unification Meeting was carried out in October –Dec. 2007

**Objectives of this meeting were:**

Assist non DPA Signatories to harmonize and unify their Negotiating positions

Assist the movements to have one negotiating team

**Expected outputs;**

Movements have one negotiating position with one coordinated team with agreed leadership and mandate/terms of reference

Movements are ready to enter the peace negotiations after the process

The meeting was organized for fifty field commanders and it was to last for one month, while the actual meeting was scheduled for two weeks. The invitations were negotiated with the field commanders.

The relationship between the factions was considered when they where accommodated, groups hostile to each other were accommodated in different hotels. One week was spent discussing about who should be in the meeting hall. During this week groups could meet in the hotel with the presence of the security and members of task force who were observers in these meetings. By the second week they had formed two negotiating teams to negotiate the unification and one committee to deal with their social needs such as sick persons or communications with the field

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During the second week there was capacity building by SPLM members who had participated in the negotiations of the CPA. When two groups were formed by the third week they started revisiting their structures and political programs. One group decided to complete the unification in Juba. Juba meeting resulted in the formation of two new groupings: while three groups did not either participated in the meeting or where there but did not join any group. The groups were;

- 1 Different SLMs factions plus JEM faction plus PDF .These have now become SLM/A under the leadership of Ahmed Abdel shaafi

**Established SLM/A**

SLM/A	Ahmed Abdel Shaafi
SLM/A northern Command	Dr. Salah Adam Ishag
SLM/A	Mohamed Kelai
SLM/A	Sadig Masalit
SLM/A	Ibrahim Ahmed ibrahim
SLM/A unity one	Haroun Ahmed haroun
JEM	Mohamed Salih Harba
PDF	Sadig Ander

**2 United Resistance Front**

JEM collective leadership ( Bahr Abu Garda) Plus SLM ( HayderAdam Galo Kuma) SLM/A field Command (Abde Aziiz Ahmed Omer) plus National Movement for Reform and Development(NMRD) plus United Revolutionary Forces .The process of unification of both the political and military structures had been completed in the field

**3 SLM/A united Command ( Abdalla Yahya)**

had discussed with Khamis group believes in the process but had declined to join any of the groups. They believe that the unification is a process and need to be linked to the military strength. Their condition for unification is to keep the political and the military leadership of the newly formed groups

**4 JEM ( Khalil Ibrahim)**

is ready to discuss with the Task Force members outside Juba

**5 SLM/A (Abdell Wahid)**

some are attending the Juba meeting unofficially they stated the importance of visiting Abdell Wahid in Paris. It is to be noted that Abel Wahid has large following amongst the IDPs in the different camps in Darfur

### **Phase Two:**

After the Unification meeting review of the SPLM Task Force on Darfur, as a result there was restructuring vide Chairman 's decree No 02/2008 dated January 2008 which named Cde Abdel Aziz Alhilu as the new chairman and Cde Yasir Arman and Cde Dr. Anne Itto as members and Cdes Edward Lino, James Kok, Dr. Priscilla Joseph and Dr. Achier were retained from the previous Task Force

### **Unification and Capacity building meetings:**

While the groups have developed clear vision and political programs, they had not developed a joint negotiating position or team thus there is need to continue the unification and capacity building activities

### **Mobilization of Darfur Community for Peace**

The conflict in Darfur has resulted in displacement of the rural population, it is estimated that 60% are captives in IDP and refugees camp. This conflict had generated massive violence against women as they had been raped, and traumatised.

The Interim Political Beroué (IPB) in October 2007 resolved the institutionalization and integration of the Darfur Peace activities into the SPLM general political program especially in the three Darfur States . SPLM activities range from mobilization of the IDPs for peace to neutralization of the Janjweed and take them off the war.

### **Discussion with the NCP on the Darfur peace Process**

The SPLM- NCP political committee has formed a joint SPLM-NCP committee to develop the Government of National Unity program for comprehensive resolution of the Darfur conflict

### **Diplomatic Activities**

The Diplomatic activities were under taken by the chairman of the SPLM who is the First Vice President and the President of Southern Sudan. These included the visit and discussions

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in the region (Chad, Eritria, Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia) with an objective of building regional consensus on the peaceful resolution of the Darfur conflict. Harmonization of Sudan's relations with Chad and assisting the Chadians to resolve their conflict is important and will facilitate the resolution of Darfur Conflict. The SPLM chairman can play a vital role in this given his personal relationship with Idris Debi, the president of Chad.

**Challenges;**

Confidence building between the SPLM and NCP so that the meeting takes place Juba,

How to have an inclusive peace process

Obtaining clearances from the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and security organs to airlift Darfur Movements field commanders to Juba especially after JEM's incursion into Omdurman

The continuous declaration of new factions even when there were unification negotiations

The interest that the meeting had generated thus more movement's related people were coming to Juba

Management of parties who are in conflict during the meetings

Coordination with the UN and other international programs

Mobilization of resources to continue the unification process and the capacity building so that the movements can develop negotiating skills

Dealing with the movements aspirations such as self determination for the Darfur People

The presence of Kordofan people amongst the movements and the frequent incursions into North Kordofan

**Conclusion:**

Initiative is widely appreciated by regional and international leaders, and is seen as a valuable contribution towards the resolution of Darfur Conflict because this is the only initiative that has resulted in reduction of the numbers of Darfur movements factions

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Confidence has been build between the SPLM and the movements and between the movements themselves.

The initiative has resulted in the formation of a joint committee between the SPLM and the NCP

SPLM has gain skills in management of conflicts

SPLM will continue the Diplomatic activities, the unification process and prepare and encourage the movements to engage in peace negotiation.